

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

July, 2013

Don't forget—2nd quarter time sheets are due!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the month, and we will meet at 4pm. All will be pot luck. Each county coordinator will be responsible for providing the eating utensils, plates, coffee/drinks. (Check with hosts of private homes if you have any questions.)

- **July 21, 4:00 pm** Dr. Steve Carroll of Bland, topic is "Tomatoes and other Garden Obsessions". The meeting will be held in the Warren County Government Building in Ft. Royal.

Directions: From the north end of Front Royal (I-66 exit 6 or Virginia Route 55 from Strasburg), take US Route 522 south. After you cross the second bridge (South Fork of The Shenandoah River), turn left at the stop light. Follow until you come to the next stop light and turn left onto Commerce Avenue. Proceed through the 6th Street light and come three more blocks (Post Office sign will be at the corner of 3rd & Commerce Avenue). Turn right onto 3rd Street, and the County Government Building is on the left. From the south end of Front Royal, take US 340 north through town. Turn right onto 2nd Street at Autozone. Go 2 blocks and turn left after you pass Warren Avenue into the Government Center parking lot (just before you get to the stop sign at Commerce Street).

- **August 18, 4:00 pm** – Speaker TBA. John Stevens, former President of NSVMGA and active member of the Frederick County community. His home is located on the outskirts of Winchester.
- **September 15, 4:00 pm** Speaker: Carolyn Farouki, who will be hosting the meeting at her home and will be leading tours of her gardens Carolyn lives in Clarke County.
- **October 20, 4:00 pm** – MG Richard Stromberg will speak on, "Native Plants" at the Valley Farm Credit Site Bureau located in Winchester.
- **November 17, 4:00 pm** Annual Election to be held at the Warren County Government Center located in Front Royal.

OTHER EVENTS

- **July 14, 1pm** – Virginia Native Plant Society George Washington National Forest Walk. Join us on west side of Fort Valley as we seek Yellow Fringed Orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*) and other plants at the bottom of the east side of Green Mountain. For details, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.

PRESIDENTS REPORT by Cy Haley

MG College & Hour Service Awards (see Suzanne Boag's report below)

We just got back from the 2013 VCE MG College at Virginia Tech. Seven NSVMGA members attended, and I think we're all on bug, weed, and plant overload but it was well worth the brain expansion. I hope more will try to attend next year (June 25—30). Below is a picture of 6 of us: Carolyn Wilson, Mary Stickley-Godinez, Suzanne Boag, , Cy Haley, Malinda Gordy, and Angie Hutchinson. (We couldn't get Larry Haun to sit still long enough for a group picture).

Dr. Ed Jones, Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension, handed out the Hour Service Awards at an evening ceremony. Several MGs in other units have reached 10,000 plus hours and one received an 18,000 hour award. Below is a list of NSVMGA's who received Hour Service Awards.

3,000	Lynn Hoffmann	250	Rich Howell
2,000	Lesley Mack	250	Scott Hinkle
1,000	Mary Craig	250	Susan Garrett
1,000	Suzanne Boag	250	Donna Funk Smith
500	Cy Haley	250	David Freese
250	Luann Woodward-Laundry	250	Mary Flagg
250	Roberta Johnson		

We will be handing these out at the July Association Meeting so if you're on the list please try to make it. If you can't be there we will mail your certificates and pins to you.

2013 Garden Fest

Garden Fest was a BIG success and we need to thank Lynn Hoffmann for corralling us into a cohesive volunteer event. Another big thank you to all who grew plants, set up and took down tents and tables, worked with the kids, donated treasures and/or worked at Second Hand Rose, answered questions, took money, schlepped plants to attendees' cars, and just helped out where ever you were needed. This event cannot happen without your participation, and we really appreciate your efforts. Next year Lynn will be gone during Garden Fest so I will be co-chairing it with her. It is never too early to start working on Garden Fest, so, if you want to work on a section, please let Lynn or me know. This is also a good time to start thinking about educational displays. If you have an idea for one, start working on it as soon as you can because time has a way of flying by, and before you know it Garden Fest will be here.

New MGs

We have added several new members to our MG roster in June, and I want to congratulate Matt Windt, James Jones, Ginny Smith, and Barbara Gorham. I know it's been hard for Matt and James with full time jobs, but if they show it can be done, so, those of you still in the work force, stick to it and don't be afraid to ask for suggestions and/or help from the Volunteer Coordinator, any of the five County Coordinators, or any Board Member. We are all here to help you while we help the community. If I have missed any new members, I apologize, and please be assured that we appreciate all you've done and sacrificed to get to the honorable position of VCE Master Gardener Volunteer.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE 2014 by Suzanne Boag

Set aside a few days for total immersion gardening: **MG College 2014 will be held June 25-30, 2014**, so mark your calendars now! All Active MGs are eligible to attend, and those receiving a milestone award (500 or greater) will receive a tuition discount! MG College is held on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, and MGs are housed in the student dorms. Dorms come with linens, towels, a private bath, and air conditioning. MGs eat three meals a day (which are included in the dorm fee) in the VT Dining Hall, which is a great place to catch up with MGs from NSVMGA or new friend MGs met at the College. Registration will be held in the spring, so be on the lookout for emails because classes fill up quickly. Registration is a two part process, class registration (tuition) and VT dorm room reservations. The early bird registrants are most likely to get their top picks for classes, so register early!

MG College 2013 drew seven NSVMGA MG attendees: Suzanne Boag, Mary Stickley-Godinez, Malinda Gordy, Cy Haley, Larry Haun, Angie Hutchinson, and Carolyn Wilson. On Award Night, Cy received her 500 hour Milestone Award and Suzanne her 1000. One amazing MG received his 1800 hour Milestone Award!!

MGs attended workshops and tours the first day, ranging from tree pruning and photography workshops to private garden and VT's Hahn Garden tours. Each morning thereafter, we listened to key note speakers talk about exciting topics like "Color in the Mixed Garden" (Tracy DiSabato-Aust), "Something to Bark About" (Alex Niemiera), "Profiles in Plants: Developing New Cultivars" (Holly Scoggins), and "Garden Lunacy" (Art Wolk), to name a few. Both Tracy DiSabato-Aust and Art Wolk also sold and signed their latest books.

Afternoons we attended classes we had registered for such as Designing with Color, Using the New Flora of Virginia, Back to Basics: Dehydrating Fruits and Vegetables at Home, Restoring Diversity Through Gardening, Bulb Forcing for Beginners & the Seriously Smitten, Meet the Natives, Gardening Techniques for Beneficial Insect Conservation, Rain Gardening: Beyond the Basics, and many more! The icing on the cake was that class hours count as MG Education hours, as do the keynote talks, workshops and tours.

In case you were thinking that evenings must be down time, you will be surprised to learn that evenings were jam packed with a variety of activities, including Awards Night, Dessert Reception, Search for Excellence Poster Session, VMGA Board Meeting, Endowment Reception, Silent Auction, and VT Summer Arts Festival musical events.

Did I mention plants? Well, each MG received a Goji Berry Plant upon arrival. Many plants were up for auction, and Mary was the proud winner of the coveted Dove Tree! Our last day, we had a catered Barbecue Picnic held in the Hahn Garden and VT grown peonies and bleeding hearts were available for a mere \$5 apiece! As you can imagine, they went like hotcakes!

All in all, MG College was a great experience, total immersion in gardening, a chance to get to know fellow MGs better and share camaraderie and a sense of purpose while pursuing the never ending quest to learn about everything garden centered! I hope that all MGs consider attending MG College sometime in the future. Why not next year? Mark your calendars now!!

VICE PRESIDENTS REPORT by Helen Lake

July! Time for serious discussions about the veggies in our gardens. With all the rain we have had, I have not had to hook up my drip irrigation hoses yet, and thankfully, all of my tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, squash and watermelons are looking pretty happy out there. But, as we all know, July's blazing sun and the 'dog days of summer' will soon be upon us, so I shouldn't procrastinate with the hose set up, should I?

June's NSVMGA meeting at David Sours Public Produce House Farm in Luray was pretty special for the thirty MGs in attendance. David's passion for farming and developing innovative approaches to growing crops and marketing them in Page County and in Northern Virginia provided all of us wonderful insights of the 'buy fresh buy local' movement. During a walking tour after his presentation at the barn, we stopped in front of his many rows of heirloom tomatoes, where he patiently answered our many questions on keeping them healthy and productive. We were all truly inspired by David's role in providing fresh produce to the Page County Public Schools. As in many cases, it all started with 'six dozen eggs' brought in by his daughter to her school cafeteria.

Many of us in attendance agreed that at least one of our monthly meetings should be at a working farm each year.

Our July NSVMGA meeting speaker is Dr. Steve Carroll, with a timely presentation on "Tomatoes and other Garden Obsessions." Dr. Carroll is well known to many of us as an instructor of Botany in the MG Training Class and Public Programs Director of the State Arboretum at Blandy. What many might not know about Steve is that he has also completed training and certification as a Master Gardener (in another state) and ardent grower of vegetables in his own garden. So, come ready to ask him lots of questions about the Red Fruit and all of its companions in our gardens!

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM AT GREENWOOD MILL ELEMENTARY by Helen Lake

On 26 June we held a planning meeting on the 2013 fall and 2014 spring sessions of the JRMG Program at Greenwood Mill Elementary School in Frederick County. Meeting notes and pending actions by specific MGs in attendance at that meeting will be sent out to all those who have expressed interest in participating as instructors, helpers, researchers (of topics) or observers. There are no limits in the many ways in which MGs can play a role in this program. Focus will be to provide the students more hands on opportunities and use the MG Handbook as an outline for the curriculum. Future preparation sessions:

- July 24, 10am-12pm in the purple conference room in the Frederick County Administrative Building. Solidify the class topics to be taught and subsequent activities both in the July Science Lab and at the raised beds during the fall and spring sessions. MGs will be asked to select topics that they would be interested in teaching or supporting.
- August 14, 10am-12pm in the purple conference room in the Frederick County Administrative Building. Submit final list of participating MGs and class topics to the Science Lead Teacher for review. All Volunteer Forms must be submitted to the Program Coordinator at this time for approval by the School Board.
- September 6, 9:30-11:30am Work Day for on for MGs to amend the soil and prep the raised beds for the upcoming JrMG classes set to begin on 12 September. One half of each raised bed will NOT be amended, providing the students the opportunity to use various materials (that will be provided) to get their hands dirty and plant cool weather vegetables and herbs.

CLARKE COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Mary Craig

The Farmers' Market in Berryville is going strong. We have had a lot of help from our 2013 interns. They are a wonderful group. In fact, the first two interns to make their 50 hours are both Clarke County interns; Ginny Smith and Barbara Gorham. We welcome them as our newest official Master Gardeners! If you would like to sign up for a shift at the market, let me know at mcorneliac@centurylink.net or (540) 635-0688. We man an informational booth from 9:00am until noon every Saturday morning. Pets are welcome, too, but dogs must be on a leash.

We will be at the Clarke County Fair from Tuesday, August 13th through Saturday, August 17th. We will man a booth to answer garden related question and hand out VA Tech fact sheets and information. The project coordinator for the fair is Nancy Specht. If you are interested in helping out contact her at nspecht@comcast.net or (304) 229-3015.

The Millwood Community Garden, in its third year, was started to beautify an unsightly patch of land next to the Millwood Post Office that was visited daily by hundreds of postal customers. Several MGs have continuously volunteered time to planning the design of the garden, preparing the beds, planting and maintaining the beds, as well as harvesting and donating the vegetables to

the local food bank to feed the hungry. It is an opportunity to share your gardening knowledge with the Millwood community. Garden workdays are Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 12 noon. If you need further information or would like to help out, contact Mary Flagg at dazlmom@hotmail.com.

Thanks to Mary Flagg and Marianne Pagington for sprucing up the Xeriscape Demonstration garden at Chet Hobert Park in Berryville. It is a very nice garden. With a lot of foot traffic in the area, it' is a great spot to educate people on the benefits of low maintenance gardens. It has a bulletin board so we can post information about xeriscape gardens, as well. The garden is right next to the tennis courts, if you want to stop by and see it.

FIREFLIES by Mary Craig

One of my favorite sights is in early June when the fireflies come out. When I watch them, I still get that magical feeling, just as I did when I was little. I could stand for hours, just watching them blink throughout the yard and the trees. These little creatures are so unique and fascinating! I wanted to learn more about them.

Scientists know there is a sequence to their blinking. They are mostly calling for a mate, although they do blink for other reasons; to defend their territory or warn predators away.

The lifespan of the adult Firefly is about 2 months, just long enough to mate and lay eggs. The larvae live about a year, from one mating season to the next. Firefly larvae are primarily carnivorous. They usually eat snails and worms. Adult fireflies are believed to be omnivores. They may feed on plant pollen and nectar, or they may eat nothing at all, since their lifespan is so short.

Consider incorporating some areas of long grasses into your landscaping. Fireflies mainly stay on the ground during the day, and frequent mowing may disturb local firefly populations. Fireflies prefer to live in long grasses, and doing this may boost their population in your yard. Ponds and streams are crucial to firefly populations, even a small depression full of water can cause them to congregate. Cutting back on chemical fertilizers and pesticides is also very important, not just for fireflies, as we Master Gardeners know. Many communities overspray for mosquitoes at night just when fireflies are active, flashing and mating. Such over spraying can wipe out firefly populations.

One of the easiest ways to encourage their numbers is to reduce the amount of light in your yard at night. It is believed light pollution interrupts their flashes—making it harder for fireflies to find mates and breed. This leads to fewer fireflies mating and smaller numbers in subsequent generations. So turn off exterior lights in the evenings when fireflies are active. For more information about fireflies and how you can help, go to www.firefly.org.

There are so many beautiful things in nature, but fireflies are among my favorites. So turn off your lights, go out in the yard and watch them blink. Maybe even catch some in a jar (just don't forget to release them). You'll feel like a kid, again.

MASTERING THAT FIRST PRESENTATION by Anne Dewey-Balzhiser

For those of us who just earned our Master Gardener Intern badges, we still have to take the leap of faith and create a presentation to the public at large. Yes, we all “passed the test” and regaled our fellow trainees with all sorts of lively topics: creating a greenhouse for lemon and lime trees (true!), reconfiguring backyard space to house game hens, using software to map out a home vegetable garden. But soon—and very soon—we will need to share our gardening expertise with a garden club, a group of junior master gardeners, or a homeowner.

Master Gardener Larry Haun's presentation at the Virginia Herb Festival on June 8 was one to emulate. After donning a chef's toque, Larry gave a half hour talk on "Herbal Oils, Butters and Cheeses." He came prepared with a notebook full of information and a tableful of props—already prepared cheeses, attractively rolled butters, steeped vinegars in a variety of beautiful bottles, recommended herb plants. He spoke engagingly about needed ingredients, provided tips on where to purchase low cost bottles and stoppers, and encouraged us to use the sun to steep both vinegars and teas. His was a model talk. All I can say, Larry, is "we are not worthy!"

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

Who wants to climb stairs anyway?