

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

March, 2013

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.)

- **Sunday, March 17th, 2pm (not 4pm), Miniature Gardens Workshop and Presentation by Lynn Phillips** of Natural Art Garden Center in 27358 Old Valley Pike, Toms Brooke, Va. The workshop/presentation and NSVMGA meeting will occur in the Natural Art Garden Center's heated greenhouse/garden area. If you are interested in building your own miniature garden, you will need to preregister with Helen Lake and send a \$15.00 check to her home address (861 Valley View Drive, Winchester, Va. 22603). The fee will cover all materials required. For more information, please read the events page on the NSVMGA web site. This meeting will also begin at 2pm, our Winter Hours, so we may enjoy working in a lush, warm greenhouse during daylight hours.

Directions: From **Strasburg:** Take Route 11 South out of Strasburg, we are 5 miles from the Old Mill Restaurant on the left after the Mt Olive Rd /I-81 intersection.

From **Woodstock:** Take Route 11 North to Toms Brook, go through town and we are on the right, sharing an entrance with Wymer's Auto Repair.

From **I-81/I-66:** I-81 to exit 291, Toms Brook. At stop sign, head east on Mt. Olive Road (from the South it is left or from the North, it is right) to stop sign at Route 11. Turn right, immediately on left sharing entrance with Wymer's Auto Repair.

- **Sunday, April 21, 4pm, "Being a Good Neighbor to Natural Areas" presented by Dr. Woodward (Woody) Bousquet**, professor of environmental science at Shenandoah University. Warren County Government Center, Front Royal.

OTHER EVENTS

- **Monday, March 11, 7-8pm, Fort Valley Nursery, 2013 Seminar Series, Introduction to Bonsai, presented by Tommy Tomforde, local Bonsai enthusiast.** Bonsai history and growing tips for the beginner.
- **Saturday, March 16, 8am-4pm, NSVMGA Garden in the Valley Symposium, Shenandoah University – Hester Auditorium.** See details below.
- **March 16 to May 22, MASTER NATURALIST TRAINING COURSE, Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 and on Saturdays from 9 AM to 2 PM.** The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. The Shenandoah Chapter, serving the northern Shenandoah Valley, is offering a 2013 training course. Cost of the program is \$150. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available. The evening classes will be held at Bland Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia located on Route 50 just East of Route 340. Saturday field work classes will be held at Bland and other locations. Classes include nature interpretation, research skills, wildflowers, trees, insects, fish, mammals, birds, geology, soil science, weather and climate, general ecology, land use, aquatic habitats, reptiles, and amphibians. The training is for adults or high school students accompanied by a parent or adult who also participates. For more information about the course contact: Tom Adkins at 540-532-3333 or via email at dunloch@gmail.com.
- **Sunday, March 17, 2 pm, "Now that you have the Flora..."**, Marion Blois Lobstein, retired professor from Northern Virginia Community College. She worked tirelessly in promoting a modern Flora for Virginia. Now that the Flora of Virginia has been published, Marion will present tips for using the book and explain some of the changes in plant relationships and names.
- **4 consecutive Thursdays, March 21 to April 11, 9:00 to 12:30, Workshop on Using the Flora, new research lab at Blandy**, limited to 15 participants. If you are interested in joining the class please contact Carolyn Martin, Administrative Assistant, @ 540-837-1758 Ext 223. \$40 for VNPS and FOSA members, \$50 for non-members,

Requirements: some background in basic botany and plant taxonomy. Required text: *Flora of Virginia*. Marion also suggests *Plant Identification Terminology: an Illustrated Glossary* by Harris and Harris

- **Sunday, March 24, 10am-1pm, Garlic Mustard Pull** Help eliminate invasive Garlic Mustard at Thompson Wildlife Management Area. Meet at the Trillium Trail Parking Lot. For more information, contact Richard Stromberg at piedmontvnps@gmail.com.

Garden in the Valley Symposium

March 16, 2013

Shenandoah University – Hester Auditorium
1460 University Drive, Winchester, Virginia
[Registration Form on Website](#)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Cy Haley

Let's talk history. Not history in the big picture but history in a small way. Not your history or my history but a gardener's personal history.

I recently received a box from my brother containing a few things from our grandmother's sewing chest. He didn't think they were of much value but he thought, as I also sew, that I could use them. In the box were several pamphlets covering everything from mending to small home repairs, from gardening to candle making, from reupholstering to crocheting. Everything a Kansas farm wife would need to know. These pamphlets dated from the mid 1930 to the late 1960 and carried a wealth of useful everyday information.

My grandmother had written her name on the cover of each one. She put her name on it because in our community you shared what you had so these were loaned out to other farmer's wives, and the name insured they would be returned to the correct person.

Now, you're thinking that I'm telling you about some of my family's personal history though it may or may not be of interest to you. We all have great memories of our grandmothers, and this sounds more like it's referencing my family's history. Well you're right there but you're also missing the significance, since I haven't shared with you the source of those pamphlets. They were all from the Kansas State Cooperative Extension Service and were available to farm wives from all over Kansas. They requested them by mail or picked them up at their county's Extension Office. My grandmother kept and used these pamphlets her entire married life. Reading these showed me where she learned some of the tips that she taught me. Other than techniques that have been automated or advanced over time, I still use a lot of those tips today.

I'm sharing all of this with you so you can see where your volunteering will help those in the future. When we teach a class at Garden Fest, a garden club, or to Junior MGs or hand a VCE pamphlet or flier to someone at a farmer's market or a fair we're creating history. We're teaching something that in all likelihood will be passed down in that person's family. And as more and more people are returning to gardening we're touching many people's lives with knowledge. A lot of homeowners today do not have a link to the agricultural past that a lot of MGs have. They weren't raised in the era of farm to market or backyard gardens that a lot of MGs were, so there is no one to learn gardening techniques from. That is why we volunteer and why we enjoy what we're doing. Some of what we teach today will possibly be passed on to the next generation and the next after that. Imagine someday a grandchild opening a box their grandparent left for them and discovering a VCE pamphlet explaining the proper way to plant a vegetable garden, and that grandchild remembering how their grandparent taught them to do it in the same way. History comes from many sources. So, in our small way, we're passing on history for that child too.

Now, it's unlikely the person receiving that pamphlet from a Master Gardener is going to remember who gave it to them, but you never know; you may be handing it to a future MG.

Keep teaching. Keep creating history.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Helen Lake

We've managed to survive February, with the help of the mounds of Snowdrops in our gardens and bursts of brilliant days filled with sunshine that keep the gloomier days at bay... now comes March. So what will it be? In like a lion, out like a Lamb or vice versa?

I have been having fun trying to figure out which container to bring to the Miniature Garden Workshop. Burrowing through my gardening shelves in the basement inevitably gets my creative juices flowing and all of a sudden its several hours later and another project on my workbench seem to have been born. Several of our Master Gardeners have written me notes or spoken with me about the containers they've decided to bring along: some are ceramic pieces others colorful bowls or rounded glass containers. Let your imagination fly! Lynne Phillips, our presenter at the Natural Art Garden Center is very creative and enthusiastic about these elfin sized garden pieces. You will see she is infectious!

For April's meeting we've been fortunate to have Dr. Woodward (Woody) Bousquet confirm that he will be presenting on "Being a Good Neighbor to Natural Areas". Dr. Bousquet is a professor of environmental science at Shenandoah University and a keen supporter of the natural landscape. Our meeting in April will be hosted by Warren County in the Warren County Government Building in Front Royal.

Shortly I will be posting the rest of this year's presentations and their locations on the NSVMGA calendar for your information and planning purposes.

Our Junior Master Gardener's Program at Greenwood Mill Elementary School has another two weeks of classes: Landscape Architecture and Plant Propagation. We who observe the classes in the back of the science lab get so much joy from watching these children fully engage with their MG instructor from the beginning of class until the very last minute. Don't forget these students have volunteered to participate in this program and given up their DEAR time (drop everything and read). There are very few wallflowers amongst them as you see in the photos taken during several class activities.

A wonderful anecdote came to my attention during the preregistration for the ongoing Class of 2013--one of the teachers at Greenwood Mill who has students participating in our Junior MG program applied for the MG Training, but unfortunately was too late in signing up.

We, as master gardeners perhaps take for granted how we can spark an interest or plant the seed of wanting to learn more but looking into those eager young faces each week there's no doubt- plenty of budding going on in those little heads!



CLARKE COUNTY REPORT by Mary Craig

We will schedule our planning meeting in Clarke sometime this month. This year we will be at the Farmers' Market, the County Fair and the two Blandy events: Garden Fair and Arborfest. Our application for the Blandy events has been sent and accepted. Hopefully, we will get a good spot. We will be sending around a list for people to sign up for these at the March meeting. We like to have interns and trainees paired up with veteran Master Gardeners to learn how we interact with the public at these events. We will also have Master Gardeners at the Millwood Community Garden and helping get our Demonstration Xeriscape garden ready for the season. If anyone wants to participate in any of these projects, please let me know.

FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT by Angie Hutchinson

Frederick County is alive and well. Elizabeth Bevan, Mark Sutphin and Angie Hutchinson will attempt to coordinate events. We have two Rain gardens that need tiding up, one desperately, and Mark would like us to schedule bodies in the Extension Office this year. To continue Teri's work at Lowes, Frederick County, do we want to try spring and fall at Lowes this year. Please let me know your ideas and feelings. I promise to try to read my e-mail in a timely fashion.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Carolyn Wilson

On the last weekend in February the Shenandoah county MGs manned a MG info booth at the Strasburg Flower and Garden Show. Although the crowds were a little light since this was the first year for the event, the MGs made almost 100 contacts to tell the gardening public how Master Gardeners can help them with their gardening problems. On Sunday afternoon Carolyn Wilson gave a talk on the care of house plants. Not only did we talk to people from the surrounding counties but we were even visited by a Master Gardener from Rockingham county. It was fun to have a gardening event to participate in during the winter. Definitely a worth while effort!

Although things are still in winter slow time, spring is just around the corner so Shenandoah county is having their spring planning meeting on Monday, March 11th at 6pm at the Woodstock VCE office. We will talk about our projects for the year and give the veterans a chance to get to know our newest MG trainees.

MG SHIRTS by Carolyn Wilson

T shirt	\$8.50
short sleeve polo	\$12.50
long sleeve polo	\$15.50
sweatshirt	\$14.50

XXL and XXXL are \$2 more. Remember that these shirts are unisex sized and will run a little large for ladies. Mail your check, made out to NSVMGA, to Carolyn Wilson, POBox 70, Mt Jackson, Va 22842
Your check must be in Carolyn's hands by Friday April 5th.

MONTHLY MEETING by Mary Craig

The February meeting was held at the Alson H. Smith, Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Winchester. The speaker, **Robert McDuffie**, came all the way from Virginia Tech to present **The Gardens of Spain and Portugal**. It was a wonderful presentation and I hope everyone present enjoyed it. Thanks to Helen Lake, our new Vice President, for arranging this wonderful speaker. He is signing up people for his next trip, if interested contact Helen and she can get you the information. It was a very well attended meeting, followed by a finger food version of our usual potluck. The weather was very windy and cold, so we thank all those that braved the wind to join us.



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE by Mary Craig

Awards: The following were presented with their certificates for completing their 50 intern hours: Randy Embrey, Sharon Bradshaw and Lee Demko. Terri Flynn and Virginia Hisghman have also completed their 50 hours, but were not in attendance. Pictured are Randy, Sharon and Lee. Congratulations to our newest Master Gardeners!!

The membership list on the web site will be updated this month with dues paid and the new trainees. Then we won't be updating it again until after our recertification process.

As always, if you have any corrections or additions to your information, please let me know at mcorneliac@centurylink.net. The changes may not be immediately updated to the webpage, so be patient until the next update, please.



EDUCATION COMMITTEE by Lynn Hoffman

The MG symposium will be held on Saturday March 16. We have a great line up of speakers for this year. Our emphasis was on vegetables and alternative outlooks to your garden and flower beds. If you have any ideas or suggestions for upcoming speakers please let the Board members know.

JUNIOR MG HOME SCHOOL GROUP by Lynn Hoffman

The first class for the Junior MG Homeschoolers will be on March 12 starting at 10:30 AM. We anticipate about 20 students for this year. Our schedule is on the webpage if you would like to attend any of the classes. I have 4 “garden” classes that I would like to schedule for the summer. These can be fun activities or ideas to make the garden more interesting for the students. If you think you might want to lead one of these classes please let me know. If you want to help, please let me know. We have lots of topics that we can do. The children meet on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 in the garden, N. Sharpe St and N. Kent St, Winchester.

We will have a clean-up day at the garden area. This area is a city plot and along the edges there are scrub trees and urban debris that needs to be cleaned up. We will have several pickup trucks available to throw the debris away and take it to the dump. If you think you can help, please let me know. I can do it on a weekday or we can do it on a Saturday morning. Please let me know your preference.

MG COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP by Lynn Hoffman

The first annual MG scholarship is in the process of being sent out to all the accredited colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. A rising junior, majoring in a horticulture type of field will be the recipient of a \$1,000 award to be used toward college costs. If you know of any college junior that graduated from a high school in our 5 county association, please let them know of this opportunity.

BELLE GROVE PLANTATION by Lynn Hoffman

We will start working on the demonstration garden, April 16. There are lots of clean-up to do if you are interested in helping. We meet on Tuesday mornings starting at 9:30. If it rains we do not meet.

GARDENFEST PLANNING MEETING by Lynn Hoffman

There will be a planning meeting at Belle Grove on March 5 at 10 AM. Please come if you are interested.

LOGO CONTEST!

2013 marks the 20th anniversary of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners! We would like to celebrate, in part, by having a 20 year logo contest. The rules will be posted on the members section of the webpage. I know we have some very creative



people in the group, so I can't wait to see what you all come up with. Send entries to mcorneliac@centurylink.net.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

What is a shamrock? The word shamrock derives from the Irish (Gaelic) word “*seamróg*” that means “little clover”. Clover’s green, three-leaflet leaf is a symbol of Ireland. Clover’s genus name, *Trifolium*, means three-leaf.

Clover is a member of the pea family. Pea family flowers have five petals with a unique form that is called papilionaceous (which means it resembles a butterfly): the upper petal, called the standard, is often larger than the two side petals, called wings, and the two lower petals are united by their lower edges to form a keel. A vegetable gardener knows this form from his pea and bean plants; a flower gardener, from his sweet peas. Look closely at a redbud flower next month to get the idea. You may think that a clover flower looks like a ball. But look closely and you will see that the ball is made up of many flowers, and each flower has the typical pea form though the standard may wrap around the wings.

Arguments have been made that the shamrock is really Common Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), but Wikipedia says that is probably because the Irish name, “*seamsóg*”, is similar to “*seamróg*”. Taxonomists have now decided that the European Common Wood Sorrel is the same species as our American Mountain Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis montana*). While clover leaflets are round or oval, most *Oxalis* have heart-shaped leaflets. Most pictures of a shamrock (including those on currency, heraldic shields, and stamps) show heart-shaped leaflets rather than round or oval leaves. So these pictures are portraying *Oxalis* leaves, not clover.

So what are the “shamrock” plants being sold in the supermarket? The flowers are arranged loosely or singly on the stem, not in a ball like a clover, and the flowers have five petals arranged symmetrically, not papilionaceously. The label says they are *Oxalis*. Their leaves have three leaflets, certainly a requirement for a shamrock, but the leaflets are large and triangular, not heart shaped. Some of the plants have green leaves and white flowers. Others have purple leaves with white or pink flowers. They are *Oxalis regnellii* or *triangularis*, which are called False Shamrock and are endemic to Brazil. No Irishness there. So enjoy the sham shamrocks as a house plant, and a happy St. Patrick’s Day.

