

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

March, 2014

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the **month**, and we will meet at 4pm, except winter months will be at 2. 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 16, 4-6pm, Kim Nowak Mayfair Farm.** Mid Atlantic Farm Credit Office, 125 Prosperity Drive, Winchester.
Directions: On US 11 ½ mile south of VA 37 turn west onto Prosperity Drive. Mid Atlantic Farm Credit is on your left.
- **Sunday, April 27 (fourth Sunday instead of the third because of Easter), 4pm, Mackintosh Fruit Farm,** 1608 Russell Rd Berryville VA

OTHER EVENTS

- **Saturday 15 March 2014 "Garden in the Valley Symposium",** 7:30am-4pm, sponsored by NSVMGA at Hester Auditorium, Shenandoah University. Our annual educational forum for Master Gardeners and the public offers a full day of presentations and discussion by professionals in the field of horticulture, nutrition, health and environmental sustainability. MGs attending the symposium will get seven education hours. Check the symposium flyer and registration link on the Home page of our web site for additional details.
- **Sunday, March 23, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Winter Speaker Series at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall.** Charles Smith, Prince William Wildflower Society and Fairfax County Park Authority Natural Resources Protection Manager. For more information contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Saturday, April 12, 10am-Noon, 22nd Annual Calmes Neck Wildflower Walk.** Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist, Division of Natural Heritage, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), will lead this VNPS registry site walk along the Shenandoah River. Rich mesic forest and ravines promise a spectacular show of Bluebells, Twinleaf, Blue Cohosh, Columbines and many others. The walk is moderate, but expect to climb over downed trees. We plan a gathering by the river after the walk. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a sack lunch, water, and a folding chair. To RSVP and get driving directions contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Sunday, April 27, 10am, Trillium Walk ,** Trillium Walk at Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail at Thompson Wildlife Management Area. Contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Saturday & Sunday May 3 & 4, Wildflower Weekend at Shenandoah National Park.** Appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park, a haven for native woodland wildflowers. Choose from among many activities at the Park website, <http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/index.htm> .

March 15 to May 21, 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 2014 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 Blandy Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia located on Route 50 just East of Route 340. Saturday field work classes will be held at Blandy and other locations. Classes include nature

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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 Alex Newhart at vmnshenandoah@gmail.com or call 540-837-1626.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Susan Garrett

I guess you had to grow up in a more northern climate to enjoy the winter we've been having, but since I grew up in Connecticut, I am loving it! Lots of snow and really cold weather: for me, that's what winter should be about.



And even if you don't love it, we VCE Master Gardeners have many things to do in winter to prepare for the time when we can be out regularly in our gardens again. I hear from many of you that you are drawing garden diagrams and picking out seeds and plants to order. And because winter in Virginia has some of those odd sixty-degree days (like the weekend we had recently), you may even have been out clearing debris from your garden. Just like you plan for your gardens, we also have planning to do as a group—and winter is the time. Our counties are meeting and deciding on projects, and our big unit projects

like Gardenfest have begun the process of organizing leaders and implementing planning steps. Our newest Intern Class has begun, and the trainees are hard at work learning the things that will equip them to be Master Gardeners. Like the bulbs that spend these months underground, things are stirring in the NSVMGA.

And finally, as our fellow VCE MG Marianne Pagington's snowdrops remind us, winter is not forever, and the quiet planning period, the underground work, is almost over—and soon, all sorts of things will be bursting out—gardens, and our Symposium, and all the things we MG's love to do.

Until then, let us enjoy the quiet days when the snow is falling, and the sub-zero days which may be decimating the populations of pests like stink bugs—and the whole wonderful procession of the seasons!



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MASTER GARDENER SHIRTS by Carolyn Wilson

It's time to order your Master Gardener shirts so that we can get them before Blandy Garden Fair.

T shirts	\$8.50
short sleeve polo	\$12.50
long sleeve polo	\$15.50
Sweat shirt	\$14.50
(add \$2 for size 2X and 3X)	

Make your check out to NSVMGA and mail it to Carolyn Wilson at PO Box 70, Mt Jackson, VA 22842. Make sure that you write the size and style on your check. I must have your check by April 2. You can give it to me at our meeting but no cash please.

JANUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

See [Board Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

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See [Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

MEMBERSHIP by Mary Craig

The membership list has been updated on VMS and our webpage to include everyone who has paid dues to date. You can still pay dues if you haven't yet. If you see you are marked as "D" or Adjunct, it means you may not have turned in your hours from 2013. It is not too late. You can still turn them in.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Carolyn Wilson

We will have our spring planning meeting on March 17 at our extension office class room in Woodstock. We will start at 7pm and I hope to finish by 8:30. Please bring your calendars so that we can start scheduling our greenline help desk, which will start in mid-April. I want to thank those who have monitored the greenline over the winter including Bob Carlton, Rich Howell, Sharon Bradshaw and Ruth Garrettson. I encourage our Shenandoah MG trainees to come and meet their county veteran members. This meeting will count for project hours.

It is still very early in the gardening season but some Master Gardeners have been busy working with the FFA Signal Nob students. They are the number one junior high school FFA in the country, and our group, consisting of Bob Carlton, Belinda Palmer, Clarisse Bushman and project leader Larry Haun are helping them keep that title. About once a week the group meets to coach the students in the "plant science" section of their work. We know they will do well at the upcoming spring competition. Hopefully there are some future Master Gardeners in the group.

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WARREN COUNTY REPORT by Katherine Rindt

Volunteers needed!! The Belle Boyd herb garden really needs help!!



This is just one of the areas of that could use your attention at the Warren Heritage Society in Front Royal. There is a regular workday each Wednesday morning throughout the growing season. If you prefer not to get too dirty, we also need new plant signage for the boxwood perennial garden, the shade garden, and the herb garden and new brochures for the public.

This has been a Master Gardener project since the renovation of the perennial boxwood garden in 2003. If you would like to help, contact Marsha Burd at 540-635-2903 or marshaburd@yahoo.com for more details.

PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Lesley Mack

Meetings continue in Page County for the protection and increased appreciation of our Historic Chinquapin Oak on Court Street in Luray. The Page County Tree Board along with the Luray Tree & Beautification Committee met to discuss the 77 foot tree root radius (Yes, wow, 77 feet!) and the possible future use as a small informative park. Such a large, mature tree (200+ years) will not tolerate insults or injuries to the root system. Every bit of its root system is needed to feed the above ground growth. An old mower shed and a weedy stand of privet were left within the root system, and their removal will aid in the tree's continued health. But extreme care must be taken in the removal of the shed and privet to avoid any stress. Stop by to see the tree if you are in town.

Although not native, our *Eranthus*, *Galanthus*, and *Daphne* (almost) are blooming, ahhh more sunlight!

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CLARKE COUNTY REPORT by Mary Craig

We are having our Clarke planning meeting on Saturday, March 8th, at Kelly Kunkel's house. We plan to get started about 9:30 am. We will be reviewing our Clarke projects to identify leaders, go over what we did last year, and see if there is room for improvement. Come with your ideas and suggestions, both are welcome. We will continue to care for our Demonstration Xeriscape garden at Chet Hobert Park. We will have our usual booth at the Berryville Farmers' Market every Saturday morning from 9am to noon. We plan on having a booth at the Clarke County Fair again. And, of course, Mary Flagg continues her work with the Millwood Community Garden, along with other MGs. Anyone who would like to help can contact her at dazlmom@hotmail.com. It's a wonderful project and has garnered state-wide recognition. We will have one more rain barrel building session, towards the end of March. Anyone who would like to come see how we put the barrels together is welcome. We'll have the details soon.

FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT by Emily Wickham

The Frederick County Greenline is gearing up to start a new season in April. While the Greenline has been answering email questions over the winter months, we are preparing to start our second year staffing office hours at the Extension Office. During the last year we had over 170 client contacts served by more than 20 Master Gardeners and interns. Some of the volunteer comments from the past year include: "it was fun," the "Extension Staff were great," "I felt purposeful," and "the camaraderie was great."

We strive to have 3-4 volunteers each Friday with at least one with prior Greenline experience. It is a great way for volunteers to get their "feet wet" in helping and sharing their passion with the community. The public can contact the Greenline three ways: walk in, telephone, or email. The Extension Office has two computers and a physical library that MG volunteers can turn to when helping clients.

Thank you to all the volunteers for making the last year so successful. Most of our volunteers are from Frederick County, but we have several volunteers from other counties. A special thanks to Mark Sutphin and the Extension Office Staff, who are so welcoming and helpful.

This spring we will hold an Open House and training session at the Frederic County Extension Office. Mark, myself, and other MGs will be there to answer questions and to offer training on our procedures and on how to use the computer. We recognize that many people are not comfortable with email or computers. We would like to address those needs so it is not an obstacle for those who would like to volunteer for the Greenline.

The **Greenline Open House is March 28 from 9:00 to 11:00 at the Extension Office, 107 N. Kent Street (2nd Floor)**. Drop in to learn more or get training on how the Greenline operates. If you cannot make it but would like more information please contact Emily Wickham (teawick@aol.com ; (540) 504-7183).

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20 YEARS AGO by Mary Craig, Historian

The class of 1994 was held in Front Royal. Corey Childs was our extension agent and Frank Baxter was serving his second year as President. There were 18 students in the class that year. Sadly, none of them are active today. Most of the students were from Front Royal, with a few from Woodstock and Strasburg.

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS PROGRAM AT GREENWOOD MILL by Lynn Hoffmann

Kids and gardens need a little imagination and help.

The Jr MG Homeschool program kicks off on March 11th. We have big plans for the kids this year and are starting to make plans for some fun activities for them. They will be making terrariums and fairy gardens, and we hope they will be able to enter them into the Frederick County Fair in late July. We are also starting to look at our C-CAP garden and we hope to add some "Garden Whimsy" and garden art to put around.

So I am scrounging again and looking for items that MG can donate to the projects. We want the children to learn a little about recycling and a lot about creativity in the garden. We want the garden to be fun and not all work! I will put out the schedule for the classes and the work days at the garden. I hope some of you can come out and help with the students.

What we are looking for:

- Small figurines (gnomes or plastic animals)
- Unusual containers for dish gardens
- Fairy garden STUFF
- Marbles or tumbled glass
- Garden flags and poles
- Big pots or barrels
- Old rakes or shovels
- Anything that you think would fit, we will take.

You can email me at gwendydog@gmail.com, and we can arrange to get it or you can drop off your stuff at the Frederick County Extension Office or bring it to a monthly meeting and pass it along to Helen Lake or Angie Hutchinson.

VMS TIP OF THE MONTH by Mark Sutphin


To get an automatic email notice directly from VMS about a specific event, first click on "General Event Calendar" tab under the "Event Calendars" box in the left-hand navigation listing. Next, select the event in which you have an interest, and click to open the event. The event will open and at the bottom of the screen there is an **Event Reminder** section. Click the down arrow (see the red arrow on the screenshot below) beside **Remind Me** "Day of Event". This will give you a drop down selection where you may choose to receive a reminder the day of the event, 1 Day before, 2 Days before, and so on, up to 7 Days before. Once you select the day you want a reminder, click "Save Reminder".

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Northern Shenandoah Valley Event

[Edit This Event](#) | [Return to general Calendar](#) | [Download iCalendar File](#)

Event	NSVMGA Garden in the Valley Symposium
Start Date	Saturday, March 15, 2014
End Date	Saturday, March 15, 2014
Project	EDUCATION - NSVMGA Symposium
Contact	email Lynn Hoffman at gwendydog@gmail.com
Event Time	7:30 AM -to- 4:00 PM
Location	Shenandoah university-Hester Auditorium
Address	1460 University Drive, Winchester, VA
Description	
Documents	 2014 Garden in the Valley

Event Reminder

Remind Me	<input type="text" value="Day of Event"/> 	
	<input type="button" value="Save Reminder"/>	

Many thanks to Mary Flagg who is now posting events to the calendar in VMS! If you have a VCE-MG event that needs to be posted, please send Mary the details at dazlmom@hotmail.com. She will only post MG events, no outside events will be posted on this "internal" MG calendar.

If you have any questions about VMS (<https://virginia.volunteersystem.org>), contact Time Keeper, Sarah Kohrs, at kohrs@shentel.net or (540)477-3257.

THE GIRLS by Cy Haley

A good friend and fellow MG suggested I tell you about my feathered pets so I'll start off by introducing them to you.

After reading several articles about the benefits of backyard chickens I thought, "Why not try it." We had chickens on the farm when I was growing up so raising chickens wasn't a foreign undertaking for me. I purchased a small coop with a built on run, picked up the chick feed, founts

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(water trough), and feeders needed and got two bantam (which means small) chickens. One is a Cochin and the other I was told was a Silkie but she appears to be more of a mutt instead.



pets, which mean they were given names. The “Silkie” is named Smokey for her grey coloring and the Cochin is Honey due to her sweet disposition. I considered naming her Spot for her black and white interspersed feathers but thought that was just too silly even for me.

The girls, which are how we refer to them, have very different personalities and being different breeds of chicken they also have different traits. As I said before Honey has a sweet disposition whereas Smoke is rather indifferent. Smokey considers herself as the head chicken (chickens really do have a pecking order and they will establish this amongst themselves). She considers all worms, grubs, slugs, etc. are hers and has to constantly inspect what Honey might be scratching up. Smokey also likes to show off her flying abilities, which is a story in itself. They both come when called which is done by snapping my fingers and saying, “Here girls. Here girls. Here girls.” a dozen or so times until they decide to pay attention. I know it makes me look like an idiot in my back yard, and I see my neighbors shaking their heads whenever they catch me doing this, but I just figure 1) they’re jealous they don’t have chickens and 2) if they did have chickens they probably wouldn’t come when called. Honey likes to be stroked under her chin and will sit on my chair when I’m taking a break in the garden and talk to me. Now I’m not completely nuts yet so we don’t carry on a two way conversation. I just tell her how pretty she is and she just chatters back. I figure she’s letting me know they’re low on corn or sunflower seeds or else she’s scolding me for not letting them in the vegetable garden so they can get to the worms in there.

I wanted the chickens for insect control and free fertilizer, which they are more than happy to supply. I let them roam the back yard while I’m out there in the spring and summer and they get all day roaming rights in the fall and winter. If they see me on my knees they come running over hoping I’m digging a new hole for a plant, and they don’t mind getting in my way trying to get to any insects I may unearth.

Now, on the farm we didn’t name our chickens, they were a cash crop like the wheat, so they were never considered pets. The only fowl given names were the roosters. They had names like Killer, Spike, Devil, etc., and this was done to alert any adult within hearing range that, if I was screaming ‘Killer’ and running across the farm yard at great speed, to please come help, because the rooster was hot on my heels, and I was probably not going to win the race. The two chickens I have now are



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The fertilizer from their run and coop goes into the composters, then onto the gardens for enrichment.

I have no slug problems anymore or any other bug problem (less than one foot off the ground that is). They don't distinguish between good bugs and bad bugs though; all bugs are food to them so if I see a low lying beneficial I move it up so it doesn't go the way of the slugs. The real benefit is stink bug ratification. If I have a plant with any on it I'll call the girls over and give the plant a shake. The girls jump into motion grabbing up every bug that hits the ground. They'll even go hopping off chasing down an errant escapee.



Well, that's the intro to the girls. You can see in the pictures Honey and Smokey scratching away at something; Honey hanging out with our dog Sammy; and the cultivating Honey helped with along with the results later in the year. I'll share more stories throughout the seasons if you would like me to. Happy scratching.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

Still cold! But I do have a flower picture, Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) underneath some herbs. My "Arp" Rosemary, supposedly the most hardy variety, has survived several winters, but this winter it suffered with the low temperatures we have had. Some lower branches still look green and hopefully the roots are alive. The Oregano to the right of it doesn't look good either. I'll cut them back, if it ever warms up, and see what happens. BUT the Snowdrops are happy.

