

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

May, 2012

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, May 20, 4pm, Frederick County, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.** Speaker, Mary Stickley on Roses

Directions: Take Interstate 81 to Route 37. Take Route 37 to Route 50 (Winchester/Romney exit). Turn east onto Route 50/Amherst Street. After approximately one mile, the entrance is on the right.

- **Sunday, June 24, 4pm, (Note CHANGE TO 4TH SUNDAY), Warren County, Home of Lee Ruddle**
- **Sunday, July 15, 4pm, Shenandoah County Government Offices**
- **Sunday, August 19, 4pm, Clarke County, The Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm.** Carrie Whitacre on Herbs in the Garden
- **Sunday, September 16, 4pm, Frederick County**
- **Sunday, October 21, 4pm, Shenandoah County**
- **Sunday, November 18, 4pm, Warren County Government Center, Front Royal.** Elections
- **December.** No meeting

OTHER EVENTS

- **Saturday & Sunday, May 5 & 6, 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 18 activities at http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012_WildflowerWeekend_Schedule.pdf.
- **Saturday & Sunday, May 12 & 13, State Arboretum Garden Fair.** Select vendors with perennials, small trees and fine items for garden and home. Also: children's activities, gardening information, food and much, much more. Directions at www.virginia.edu/Blandy.

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER SCHEDULE by Lynn Hoffman

May 8: Trees Teacher: Marianne Pagington

May 14 – 18: First work days in the Garden TBA

May 15: Composting Teacher: Helen Lake

May 22: Herbs Teacher: Pat Burslem

May 29: Succulents Teacher: Larry Haun

June 2: Belle Grove Plantation Gardenfest and Jr. MG Display table Saturday 9 A.M. – 11 A.M

June 5: Fruits and nuts Teacher: Angie Hutchinson

Field Trips – Open to all

June 12: Trip to the Shifflett Farm in Shawnee Land Helen Lake, Marsha Burd, Marianne Pagington, Lynn Hoffmann

June 19: Green roof and water quality Lynn Hoffmann - Shenandoah University

June 26 : Work in the garden

July 3: Garden Class Room Look for bugs and ID them

July 10	Garden Class Room	Make garden kids
July 17	Work in the garden	
July 24	Work in the garden	
July 31	Garden Class Room	Make bird houses and feeders
August 7	Work in the garden	
August 14	Garden Class Room	Make Hyapatufa pots
August 21	Work in the garden	Bring home your Hyapatufa
August 28	Work in the garden	
Sept 4	Garden Clean Up Day	

Sept. 11: Jr. Master Gardener Graduation Ceremony- Lunch at Wesley United Methodist Church

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER STATUS by Lynn Hoffman



The Jr. MGs are getting ready for the garden planting in their garden off of N. Kent and Sharpe Streets. The plot is behind the CCAP building in Winchester.

Last year we were very fortunate to get a nice donation from the Winchester Rotary Club and we were able to purchase a shed from Lowes. The store manager was very generous and gave us over a 50% discount on the shed. Friday, April 27, Tammy Epperson, the 4-H Specialist in Frederick County, and Mary Flagg and my husband Tom and I all jumped in to put the shed together. We started around 10:30 and ended a little after 3. The shed will hold all our tools and the lawn mower for the garden site.

We hope to plant the garden in a couple of weeks and could always use a few more hands helping the children plant. Weber's is going to donate vegetables for the garden, but we are still looking for some radish and carrot and bean seeds.



JANUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

See Board Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website

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FREDERICK COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Teri Merrill

May is the month when things really starting happening in the gardening world! This month we start our Greenline to answer gardening questions from the public. Remember, this is the essence of what we do, so be proud that you are helping with this effort and know that you are serving an important role.

I'll send reminders to those volunteering each week. Please let me know if you run into any problems and can't volunteer during your scheduled week, and I will try to find a substitute. Remember too that we have veterans who have agreed to serve as mentors, so if you simply don't know how to answer a question, let me know and I will ask one of them to help you. As you serve on either the virtual Greenline or our new real Greenline, please jot down what people are asking and the answers that you give them. We could share these at a meeting or through the newsletter. It's important that we learn from each other, and this is one great way to do that.

Thank you to the many county members who stepped up this past month to either give a speech or judge a gardening contest or consult on a garden. Your flexibility and willingness to help out is simply incredible!

Our next new Extension project is to have a booth at the Frederick County Fair. I'll be sending out an email this month to begin scheduling for this effort. The fair runs from July 29-Aug. 4, and our booth will be open each night from 6 to 9 pm--so you'll have opportunities with this project to meet some members of the public, answer a few questions, and add to your volunteer hours for this year.

Karen E. Brill served with two James Wood High School FFA Horticulture students on the Give-A-Garden committee, a first-time event for the school. From the 27 applications from members of the community, the committee selected five gardening families and one organization to receive the baskets. The following week, Karen attended the FFA Horticulture Class luncheon and program. There, the six Give-A-Garden recipients received their gardening tubs, with items donated by Southern States Cooperative and other organizations. The tubs included small tomato plants, mulch, a variety of gardening tools, and a booklet with guidelines for gardening and pest management. During the program, two students discussed general gardening guidelines. After the luncheon, NSVMGA members, Helen Lake and Lynn Hoffman, presented information on horticulture as therapy and on pest management.

CLARKE COUNTY REPORT by Mary Craig



Our Farmers' Market starts this week. I'm sending around the schedule. We set up by 9:00am and stay until noon. It's really a lot of fun and you get to meet a lot of very nice people. You never know what they will ask about. We are going to start keeping a list of questions so that we can have something to reference down the road. We like to have a veteran MG with any new interns, but we welcome new people to sign up and learn how we do things at the Farmers' Market.

We will have MGs helping out at the Millwood Community garden this year . They will help with planning the plantings, giving advice on light and water requirements for the plants, companion planting and more. This is a very worthy project as it helps provide fresh vegetables and herbs for those less fortunate members of the community. If you are interested in helping out, contact Mary Flagg at dazlmom@hotmail.com.

Garden Fair

Garden Fair is Mother's Day weekend at Blandy. Suzanne Boag has already passed around the signup sheet, and I am happy to say we have all the time slots filled. I hope everyone who wanted to come got signed up . It's always a great way to reach the public. And you can come early and find those plants that are sometimes hard to find. I know I have a weakness for different varieties of mint. I can always find them at Garden Fair.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by Mary Craig

Out of 158 people on our membership list, 74 have enough hours to be active, and only 56 have paid dues. I have updated the list on the webpage, but it is still a work in progress. There are lots of people on the list we haven't heard from in a while. So, please, take a look at the list and see if your information is up to date and, if there is someone you know who is not listed as active, give them a call and see how they are doing and if they'd like to get back in the action.

The April meeting at Blandy was well attended and Angie gave a great talk on weeds. She had great pictures to help identify some of those weeds you've heard of but can't identify. if you missed it you not only missed a great talk, a great potluck and a great time visiting with friends, but you missed meeting Pete, Bob and Mary Carlton's new chocolate lab puppy. He is adorable and was not wanting for attention. See what you miss not coming to meetings?

HISTORIAN REPORT by Mary Craig

The Class of 1997 had 22 students, including Carolyn Wilson, our past VC and current Shenandoah County Co-Coordinator. Bud Gregory was President that year and the class graduation was celebrated with a potluck at the Woodstock Rescue Squad.

As always, if any of you have information to add about any of the past classes, feel free to send it to me. I would especially like to have class pictures, so if you happen to have a picture of your class send it at mcorneliac@centurylink.net.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

The word "orchid" conjures up something rare and exotic—those big, colorful, unusual blossoms you get from a florist to give to your mother on Mothers' Day or to a date to the prom. The Orchid family (known scientifically as *Orchidaceae*) is the largest plant family in the world, in terms of number of species. Estimates run from 20,000 to 50,000 species. Most orchid species are native to the tropics, but 25 species are native to the NSVMGA area. Most of the tropical orchids, including the fancy ones in the florist shop and for sale at the local garden center, are epiphytic, meaning they derive moisture and nutrients from the air and rain. The tropical ones



you buy in the store are easily grown, but, since they are epiphytic, they are potted in bark chips or stones rather than soil so water can run over the air roots. The local, native orchids are terrestrial, that is, they grow in the ground, but are difficult to grow in gardens because they have particular requirements, especially mycorrhizal fungi that provide nutrients. Even where they seem to be established, they may not flower for many years or the plants may disappear completely and return another year.



Yellow Lady's Slipper
Cypripedium parviflorum

Some of our showiest orchids are blooming now: Yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum*), Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) and Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*). The lowest petal of an orchid is often the dominant feature of the flower, and that is certainly true of the Lady's Slippers. Their lower petal is a pouch that resembles a slipper, hence the name. (*Cypripedium* translates as "Venus' shoe"). The yellow pouch of *Cypripedium parviflorum* yields its common name. Yellow Lady's Slippers have two long, narrow, twisted side petals and a banner-like sepal above the pouch and two joined sepals below. These flower parts are greenish-yellow or brown-purple or streaked with these colors, contrasting with the yellow pouch. The plants have three

or four large, alternate leaves clasping the stem below the flower. They are one to two feet tall. If you go up Freezeland Road from Linden to the Trillium Trail Parking Lot of the Thompson Wildlife Management Area to see the millions of Trilliums, you can also see Yellow Lady's Slippers growing on the banks of the fire road down the hill from the parking lot. If you walk the Snead Farm loop from the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center in Shenandoah National Park you can see a large population at the junction of Dickey Ridge Trail and the Snead Farm Trail. (It is a few feet from Skyline Drive.)

The Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), is similar to the Yellow, but the "slipper" is pink. It has only two basal leaves. Its side petals are not as long and curled as its yellow cousin. The Yellow Lady's Slipper will not tolerate acidic soil, but the Pink Lady's Slipper seems to prefer it. They are often found in acid-loving pine forests or under Mountain Laurel. The Wildflower Trail that connects the now-closed Massanutten Visitor Center on US211 in New Market Gap to the Massanutten South Trail used to be known for its Pink Lady Slippers, but I haven't seen any there for a few years. Maybe they will come back. Some are still blooming on the higher trails south of the Visitor Center. Hikers can find them in Sky Meadows State Park and in Shenandoah National Park at the Byrds Nest 4 shelter above Skyline Drive mile 27 and on many trails south of US 211.

The Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) lives up to its name. Though it is less than a foot tall, the spike of three to eight flowers springing from a pair of egg-shaped leaves is hard to miss. Each of the one to two inch long flowers has a long, bright white, lower petal topped by a magenta hood. It can be found in many places in the Virginia mountains such as Dickey Ridge Trail in Shenandoah National Park where a small wooden bridge crosses the creek a half mile from the trailhead on Skyline Drive just inside the Park entrance and on the way from the Dickey Ridge Visitor Center to Fox Hollow Trail and along the Appalachian Trail going north from Linden through Thompson WMA to Sky Meadows.



Pink Lady's Slipper
Cypripedium acaule

Richard Stromberg



Some species of our native orchids is blooming at every period of the growing seasons. Some are as spectacular as the three described above but are harder to find. Others are much smaller, some hardly noticeable. Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*) is very common along trails. It is noted for its evergreen, dark green leaves with a network of white veins (like the pattern on a rattlesnake) rather than its tiny flowers. Another, Lady's Tresses (*Spiranthes* species), may show up in your lawn if you don't mow often, as in one of our dry summers. I have seen them twice in my yard in fifteen years. They are tiny, but impress with the

way the flowers spiral/curl up the stem, whence their name.