

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

November, 2011

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, November 20, 4pm, Warren County Government Center** in Front Royal. Elections and vote on proposed bylaw changes.

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).

OTHER EVENTS

- **Wednesday, November 9, Noon, Belle Grove Christmas Decorating Planning Meeting**, Belle Grove, Frederick County. The MG will again decorate the down stair's area of Belle Grove. We do all natural and most is all home grown materials. The decorating day will be sometime the first week of Dec. If you would like to help, make ahead of time, or just come and give moral support all are welcome. We have a great time and learn to work with fresh materials and dried plants. Please let Lynn Hoffman know (gwendydog@gmail.com or 304-874-3010) if you can make the meeting. If you cannot make the meeting but want to help with decorating, let her know also. All decorators get a free pass on that Thursday to view the house and attend a reception.

OCTOBER 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

Hello fellow Frederick County master gardeners! November brings a nice slow down to activities in the garden, except for raking up those pesky leaves that seem to pile up everywhere! I hope your piles are small and your back is strong this month.

If you like to decorate for the holidays, consider joining Lynn Hoffmann and other master gardeners at noon on Nov. 9 to begin planning holiday decorations for Belle Grove Plantation in Middletown. Send questions or commitments to Lynn at gwendydog@gmail.com

As of this reading, Kara Dean and I met a group of John Handley students in the Interact Club and weeded, trimmed and mulched the rain garden at Frederick Douglass Learning Center. I am having early discussions with a couple of community groups in the North End of Winchester who may be able to help us with maintenance. I would like to get someone to assume responsibility for this project, so contact me if you're interested. It's not a lot of work--just an annual maintenance. My hope is that we can eventually serve as consultants to any neighborhood group that takes it over the care of this rain garden. Cross your fingers on that!

I'm still waiting for your comments about turning our virtual Greenline into a real line. I have heard from the people who attended the county meeting last month, but responses from the rest of the county have been minimal. I'll assume that if I do not hear from you, you are all on board with our plans and will actively and eagerly volunteer at the table that we plan to set up somewhere in Winchester during the summer months. What's that? You haven't heard about these plans? Contact me if you want an update.

A FEW NOVEMBER IDEAS by Niles Hokkanen

- **Concrete Ladder base.** Not necessary if the ground around your house is flat, but if there is substantial slope, putting in a "**leveled**" piece of concrete, flat rock or large paver in the desired strategic location(s) can be a worthwhile convenience. When the rain is pouring down and leaves have totally blocked the gutter downspouts, who wants to be hunting up the right thickness board or rock to shove under one leg of the ladder to level it (and hope that it doesn't move when you're at the top)? I cast an 8"x 24" x 3" concrete block (with a rough pea gravel surface for better grip) and inset it right where the (18" wide) ladder needs be for climbing up and cleaning out that clogged drain gutter. Though the ground slopes, this base slab is perfectly level, minimizing all future hassle of putting up the ladder in just the right spot, especially when it is pouring down....at night. You can always paint it green if you want it to blend in better with the grass.
- **...just as functional an "exterior" Clock....and whole lot cheaper!** *Seen the prices of the metal/glass exterior clocks lately? Ouch!* Hang a cheap plastic (interior) clock from the (interior) window casing, or on the curtain rod, facing out. Drill holes in the casing at 10 and 2 for the string/wire. Though there may be occasional window glare/reflection, it is usually easy enough to read the clock face. On the big plus side, you won't have to deal with any of the issues (enclosing the clock a wooden box, waterproofing it, etc.) involved with mounting one outside.
- **Easy Window Bird Feeder.** At one end of a 30" dowel, screw in a big hook; at the other end, screw in a smaller hook/screw eye to attach your "plastic" feeder. Simply hang the whole thing from your rain gutter and have the birds visiting right outside your kitchen or bedroom window. Easy enough to reach out the window to grab the feeder and refill it, or move it to another window.

Note: I insert/attach a 3"-4" dowel into/to the bottom of the feeder and then mount a 4"-6" **flexible plastic lid** (i.e. a "*Kool Whip*" tub lid) to the other end which serves to catch the seed that would fall to the ground. If the lid has deep lip, drill several 1/8" holes around the circumference for water drainage. But as importantly, it's also acts a soft "bumper" to protect your glass window when high winds are blowing the feeder all about. If you have a heavier hanging/swinging metal tube feeder, especially one with metal perch pins, you risk a broken window if the wind slams it into the house. (This is also something to consider when you

hang a suet feeder from the rain gutter. Note the *stationary mounted* suet feeder in the clock photo above.)

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

Why do deciduous trees drop their leaves? The freak October snow storm shows why. The Red Maple down the hill from our house was in peak color on Friday, October 28th. When the leaf-laden branches got covered with wet snow, they bent terribly, and one large one cracked, and the branch tip touched the ground. As the snow melted away, the branches rose, except for the broken one, leaving a hole in the middle of the tree.

Behind the house, good-sized branches from a Silver Maple (a species known for branch dropping) just broke off and fell to the ground.