

## NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

October, 2013

### TIME SHEETS ARE DUE! by Sarah Kohrs, Timekeeper

The summer has gone and autumn is presenting its lovely colors. That means it's time for submitting your third quarter volunteer hours. All hours from July 1 to September 30, 2013 should be submitted as soon as possible. If you haven't had opportunity to add hours from previous quarters in 2013, please do that too. It will save a lot of work during this coming 4th quarter for all of us.

You can access the Volunteer Management System on-line to enter your hours at <https://virginia.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm>. If you have any questions about entering your hours, please do not hesitate to e-mail ([kohrs@shentel.net](mailto:kohrs@shentel.net)) or call (540-477-3257). I'm happy to help you get comfortable with the system. A couple of reminders and tips for entering hours:

1. Don't forget your Civil Rights Training module. You can access the module at [http://connect.ag.vt.edu/vce\\_vol\\_cr\\_training/](http://connect.ag.vt.edu/vce_vol_cr_training/). When you've completed the training, add it as 1 continuing education hour on VMS, selecting "Civil Rights Training" in the project list. Then, send me an e-mail so that I can get a request in for your training certificate.
2. Travel Time counts for overall hours that you can use to earn pins, which are appreciation awards for the time you volunteer. These are awarded each year. While they count toward such milestones, they do not count toward the 20 volunteer hours/8 educational hours or 50 intern volunteer hours needed for the year. To add Travel Time, make sure you select "Travel Time" from the project list.
3. Consider consolidating your hours for the quarter. You can easily lump together hours accumulated over the three months in a quarter for various projects. For example, consider putting "Third Quarter Travel Time" as an event and then just add together the total amount of hours you drove to and from all events during that time. You can put 9/30/13 as the event date, since that's when you're submitting the time. Just make sure you keep hours for each project separate (that is, do not add together hours for helping at an MG educational booth at a fair with hours for working at Belle Grove). It's important to keep hours for different projects separate; however, hours worked on multiple days for the same project can be added together.
4. Don't forget to count contacts! It can be difficult to determine ethnicity and exact age, but do your best. These are important statistics for Va Tech to have from our association.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **October 20, 4:00 pm** – MG Richard Stromberg will speak on, "Native Plants" at the Winchester MidAtlantic Farm Credit site.

**Directions:** On US 11 ½ mile south of VA 37 turn west onto Prosperity Drive. MidAtlantic Farm Credit is at 125 Prosperity Drive, on your left.

- **November 17, 2:00 pm** Annual Election to be held at the Warren County Government Center located in Front Royal. The November NSVMGA meeting is at 2 PM, as will be the January and February meetings, so that people do not have to drive in the dark during Standard Time.
- **December**, no meeting

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 12 & 13, 10-5 pm 44th Annual Page County Heritage Festival** – Antique tractor pulls, "Oh Shenandoah" pageant, Kunstler Print Raffle, entertainment, 100's of crafters, apple butter making, etc. MGs will be there to answer questions.
- **November 10, 1pm Virginia Native Plant Society Piedmont Chapter Second Sunday Walk** Shenandoah University Professor Woodward Bousquet will lead a walk around the University's recently acquired Cool Springs Battlefield conservation property in Clarke County. Contact [piedmontvnps@gmail.com](mailto:piedmontvnps@gmail.com) for details.
- Christmas Decorating at Belle Grove: The MG will decorate Sally's Room and the reception area this year at Belle Grove. If you are interested please let Lynn Hoffmann know at [gwendydog@gmail.com](mailto:gwendydog@gmail.com)
- Seed collecting: Start saving your seeds and package some up for the Blandy Seed Exchange in January. Donna Downing will be the contact with Blandy. The exchange will be in January 2014.

## VOLUNTEER COODINATOR'S REPORT by Susan Garrett

One of the fun things I have been doing lately as a Master Gardener is Home Consultations. I happen to be the VCE Master Gardener on call for the Clarke County Greenline. Generally when people call the Extension Offices they are concerned about something. Often that something is a destructive insect or a sick plant or tree. Either going out with another MG to visit the home or viewing the exhibit in the office both have their joys.

Interesting things get brought into the offices, for example, a home owner who had peach trees brought a large buzzing jar of Green June Beetles he had collected on his trees, a whole bunch more of the little friends than were needed for identification. A good picture helps, especially when it is grayish sticky mucous-y beetle larvae (not my favorite part of creation), although this larva turned out to be a pretty nice fellow, a Pine Sawyer who does not destroy trees but is a dead wood scavenger. And of course, a lot of questions coming in now are about the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug's dreaded autumn house invasion.

Questions also come about strange looking things on arborvitae (in this case, simply seed-bearing cones) or about sick burning bush (I thought they were indestructible, but it turns out they are subject to anthracnose). [Editor's note: since *Euonymus Alatus* is an invasive alien, can we encourage the anthracnose?]

It is fun doing the research, and it is a joy to know that as Master Gardeners we have been given the tools to be of service to our neighbors. I'm not sure that when I became a Master Gardener I realized just how grateful people are to receive just a little help. One thing I learned quickly was that no questioner ever objects to hearing, "I'm not sure of the answer now, but let me do some research and I'll get back to you." And getting back to them with a correct and helpful answer--now that is one of the major rewards of being a Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener!

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Helen Lake

My majestic red maple tree has begun to display its showy colors enticing me to spend more time on the front porch viewing the daily changes in my woody lane. Caterpillars are bustling across our gravel road warning us with their bold black and brown stripes that we will have a snowy winter, reflecting much what the Farmer's Almanac has proclaimed. How do they do that?

Another season passes into the next but with that another opportunity to be digging in the garden before the first frost hits. With the crazy weather we've had this summer and early fall, who knows when that magic FROST will occur. With my cool weather veggies nestled in my long garden bed springing up (and daily watering) I am hoping not to install my hoop house any time soon. How are your gardens? I can't seem to give mine up yet.

Speaking of which, our October meeting will be hosted by Frederick County at the Farm Credit Bureau's Media Room in Winchester. The media/conference room will provide our very own MG'er Richard Stromberg, who is also a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, the forum for his presentation on the Native Plants and Flora of our area. The NSVMGA monthly newsletter has been the beneficiary of Richard's contributions of breathtaking photographs and descriptors of native plants for several years now. We are very much looking forward to learning more about our native plants in the area and where they can be discovered on a quiet walk on a Fall Day.

#### **SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING** by Helen Lake and Mary Craig

Our September NSVMGA meeting was pretty special. Mazon and Carolyn Farouki hosted us at their beautiful home in Clarke County. We had a brief business meeting on the stone steps and then toured the Farouki's wonderful gardens. The weather that day couldn't have been more cooperative. Skies were crisp blue and the sun warmed us gently as we strolled through her garden, rooms full of roses, anemones, herbs, showy perennials, lush groundcovers and vegetables. Both of our hosts are ardent gardeners, who admitted to scrubbing their nails right before our business meeting started at their stone patio. We had a generous attendance from all five counties eager to view Carolyn's gardens and enjoy her generosity sharing her home and garden seeds and plants that we were invited to take home. To my delight, Carolyn introduced me to the luscious fruit produced by her five fig trees. I now have a fig tree planted in my garden, impatiently waiting for it to bear fruit for me to savor at home. We had our potluck by the pool. All in all, enjoying the fellowship of our members in a lovely setting tended by a fellow gardener couldn't have asked for a lovelier way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

To see more pictures of the gardens, log into VMS and look for the photo album dated 2013, September 15 meeting.

#### **PAGE COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT** by Lesley Mack

Luray's Chinquapin Oak tree appears page 74 of the book Remarkable Trees of Virginia, by N. Hugo and J. Kirwan. The tree is thought to have germinated in the 1750's about 60 years before the founding of Luray in 1812. It is the second largest Chinquapin Oak in the state, wow! New county offices are being built on the property adjacent to the tree's hillside location. MGs and Page County Tree Board folks, concerned about the tree's health and upkeep, met on site at the Chinquapin Oak to discuss its needs, and keep an eye on the construction crews' presence. Come see the tree on Court Street next time you are in Luray.

GOT FIGS? Lots of great recipes and info at <http://localfoods.about.com/od/summer/tp/Figs.htm> yummy...blue cheese stuffed figs, fig coulis, honey-fried figs, and more!

#### **CLARKE COUNTY REPORT** by Mary Craig

We will be scheduling our Clarke wrap up meeting soon. We'll go over all the projects for the year, see what worked and what didn't and identify leaders for each project heading into 2014. It was a

good year in Clarke County, starting with the class of 2013 being held at Blandy. Thanks to the wonderful group of Class Coordinators who did such a great job of putting everything together.

The booth at the Clarke County Fair gave us some good exposure and we answered a lot of questions for the public. The Farmers' Market was a lot of fun this year and we still have a few weeks left until it closes for the season. The Millwood Community garden produced a lot of vegetables this year and became a shining spot in Millwood. Our xeriscape demonstration garden at Chet Hobert Park continues to educate the public about drought tolerant, low maintenance plants. We will help man the booth at Arborfest at Blandy, where the rain barrel will be raffled off. Thanks to all the Clarke Master Gardeners for doing such a wonderful job volunteering for the various projects.

The 2013 class has added a lot to Clarke County this year. They are a great, enthusiastic bunch. I asked them for their thoughts about being a Master Gardener. Cathy Dickey said, "Master Gardening and the Master Gardener Program have been such a great activity for me! I would strongly recommend the program to anyone who enjoys gardening and people. There are so many opportunities to learn, to research, to share knowledge, and to spend time with folks who enjoy the same things. Opportunities to meet other gardening enthusiasts and to bring nature to others are such a pleasure."

#### **JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER'S PROGRAM AT GREENWOOD MILL** by Helen Lake, Coordinator

September 6 was the designated WORK DAY for Master Gardeners and our partners in the program, 4-H agents Amanda Simon and Tammy Epperson. Lynn Hoffman and her husband Tom brought from their home a trailer load of compost that was used to amend the soil in the existing beds for use by students in upcoming classes of the Fall Session of the JrMG Program. We had a great turnout of eight energetic MG'ers who quickly got the job done by noon. Painted signs (by Lynn H.) designating the three teams: Bumbly Bees, Mighty Mantis and Wiggly Worms were erected at each raised bed and readied for the students first class, Soil Profile.

Our first month of classes have gone very well and the students are very excited at the prospect of going outside to work at their team garden beds each Thursday afternoon.

#### **EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP** by Lynn Hoffman

The NSVMGA will be sending out notices about the 2014 scholarships for both HS students and College Juniors. If you know of any Virginia students who major in a field related to Horticulture or Agriculture, please let them know. Information can be obtained via the web page or contacting one of the Board members. You can contact me at [gwendydog@gmail.com](mailto:gwendydog@gmail.com) or Helen Lake.

#### **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** by Mary Craig

The pileated woodpecker is one of my favorite birds. A few weeks ago I heard them out back and grabbed the camera. I counted 4 of them going from one dead tree to another. These two spent quite a while circling the tree in my neighbors back yard. I included the squirrel just to show how big these magnificent birds are.

#### **EDITORS CORNER** by Richard Stromberg

Here are some more insects to go with the ones brought to Susan in the Clarke County Office. Interesting things cling to screens like the butterfly and caterpillar in the pictures. Do not touch any caterpillar with spines like that. They sting. My friend Raoul Drapeau sent me a couple pictures.

Wheel Bugs are voracious carnivores that might help us with the Stink Bugs, but I don't know if they eat them. The ferocious looking Stag Beetle eats little and larva feed on juices in decaying wood.