

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Sun., Nov. 16, 2-4pm – Warren County Government Center**, 220 N. Commerce Ave., Front Royal, Election/Annual Business Meeting

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 is at the corner of 3rd & Commerce). 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 Auto Zone. 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

- **Wed, Nov 19, 2pm, Computer Training Class** at the Frederick County Building in Winchester
- **Tue, Dec 9, Christmas decorating for Belle Grove Plantation.**

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Susan Garrett



Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! The picture is of a 16th century Dutch still life that I took at Amsterdam's Rijkmuseum during a wonderful October trip to Europe. The picture reminded me of our Thanksgiving feasts, even though it was painted before the first Thanksgiving in America was ever celebrated--and that is true whether you are of the Jamestown or of the Plymouth Rock persuasion when it comes to claiming the site of that "First Thanksgiving".

I just heard on the evening television weather forecast that they will no longer be posting freeze warnings because "the growing season is over". Some might argue with that, but many of us, even VCE Master Gardeners, are turning to indoor activities, one of which, for many, is getting ready to host a Thanksgiving table like the one above.

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

Another indoor activity I hope you will be engaged in during the next few months is entering your project and education hours on VMS, and, when you receive them, filling out your NSVMGA and VCE "Recertification Forms", and paying your dues for 2015. I know that it's a pain to remember to do this, but it would be nice if your new Volunteer Coordinator next year didn't have to spend a lot of his/her time reminding people to turn in things.

Anyway, that reminds me that I need to tell you all how much I have enjoyed being your Volunteer Coordinator. It's an awesome job! I am grateful for all the wonderful support you have given to our VCE-MG programs and educational opportunities, and look forward to seeing you for one last time this year at our very important November meeting. Thank you so much! And do have a wonderful holiday season!

FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT by Emily Wickham

Our outdoor growing season is quickly coming to an end, but Frederick Master Gardeners are not slowing down. We have two events coming up this month: Belle Grove Christmas decorating and computer training (see below).

We had several members join in the NSVMGA strategic planning meeting. Karen Brill and John Kummer joined me in attending the session. The organizer, Helen Lake, and the facilitator, Anne Dewey-Balzhiser, both from Frederick County, did an excellent job, and their efforts are much appreciated. It was very successful, rewarding and fun. I believe the Association will benefit from the time and energy expended by many.

We also had a successful Sixth Grade Conservation Day early in October thanks to John Kummer, Cindy Adams, and Tricia Boyd. They presented information on the invasive stink bug. They had interaction with hundreds of students through the 4-H organized event at several middle schools in the area. Thanks for their efforts it is wonderful when we can support Virginia County Extension outreach to the community.

Lynn Hoffman is organizing the **Christmas decorating for Belle Grove Plantation**. She had the education planning meeting on Colonial Decorating with natural materials on Nov. 5. She discussed the material used and also how to incorporate low-light plants. The theme this year is Christmas in the Valley. The decorating will take place on Dec 9. All Master Gardeners are welcome, regardless of your county.

We will hold a **computer training class** on November 19 at the Frederick County Building in Winchester. Thanks, in advance, to Deborah Byrd and Stacey Smith for their help. It is shaping up to be a multi-county class with students from Frederick, Shenandoah and Warren County. We will try to have another session after the New Year.

I would like to wish you all an early Thanksgiving. Thanks to you all for your time, effort, and help with our Master Gardeners Association.

PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Lesley Mack

We welcome Cheryl McDonald to Page County. Cheryl bought a house in town, in Luray. She says that he is quite excited about moving to such a beautiful town as ours. Cheryl was the registrar for the Fairfax County MG's. After being in such a large group as Fairfax, Cheryl thinks she will enjoy being in the smaller group of Page County. She will transfer into our group in the December or January. We are thrilled to have a new member!

If you are on Facebook, I hope you have "liked" the NSVMGA page. I thank the page manager for their interesting finds and for posting. Some of the posts are 'feel good', like this one, but the rest are quite informative...wow...kind of information, in fact!

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

Hope you all are enjoying the fall season, and even though some of you are grumbling about winter coming...it is a cycle...and cycles are good...that means the Earth is still suspended out in space as it should be. Yea, Earth!

EDUCATION REPORT by Helen Lake

Well fellow Master Gardeners, can't ignore the falling leaves, falling temps and wilting flower heads in our gardens. It's November, and my last newsletter to you as Education Chair. I made a commitment to the Board to provide three major educational events for NSVMGA during my tenure in 2014 and can now say I've accomplished them.

First was the Public Speaking Workshop at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in February, presented by Anne Dewey-Balhizer. Second was NSVMGA's annual Garden in the Valley Symposium at Shenandoah University in mid-March. Third is the Strategic Planning Workshop that took place in Front Royal and was facilitated by Anne Dewey-Balhizer in late October. The three events provided sixteen and a half Education Hours for the membership!

The Strategic Planning Workshop at the Warren County Government building was attended by fifteen veteran and several new Master Gardeners along with Mark Sutphin, our Extension Agent Liaison. Anne facilitated the full day workshop, but very much left it up to the attendees to come up with goals and actions that will be reviewed; prioritized and approved

**Mark Sutphin on the right;
as other members have
broken out into teams to
work on delineating goals
versus action items**



by the NSVMGA Board in early 2015. All came interested to participate and contribute their ideas and experience and it translated into open discussions. We learned a lot about each other (that we hadn't known before) and in some instances agreed to disagree. At the end of the day we came away with end products to pursue and a new comradery. Photos demonstrate our focus on our goals and body language demonstrates that we were enjoying the day together working in teams.

**Bob Carlton talking
to Suzanne Boag**



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

**Siobhan O'Brien presenting
her team's goals**



**Matt Windt speaking with Anne
Dewey Balhizer during a break**



**John Kummer speaking
on behalf of his team**



**GinnySmith , Suzanne Boag, Stacey Smith
and Sharon Bradshaw preparing their**



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

As always, there is every effort made by the Volunteer Coordinator, county coordinators and members of the NSVMGA Board to provide to the membership various opportunities to earn Educational and Project hours that are approved and within the guidelines of our organization. But it is also incumbent upon individual MGers to be looking for programs either online or within our area (or within driving range) that would be appropriate and interesting to attend or complete. For example, if you find a course on Native Plants being taught at the Life Long Learning Center at Shenandoah University in Winchester, contact your county coordinator or volunteer coordinator to review the content and seek approval for NSVMGA Educational hours. This is the key part, reaching out to your county leadership to coordinate, review and gain approval before committing time and money to a class that may or may not fit our educational criteria.

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS PROGRAM AT GREENWOOD MILL ELEMENTARY

by Helen Lake, Program Coordinator

With two classes remaining in the Fall Session of 2014, I am amazed that the eleven week program is almost over. Once again, we master gardeners have been fortunate to work with students who brought enthusiasm, curiosity and exuberance for everything we introduced to them. The program only takes 24 students from the third, fourth and fifth grades, yet over eighty applied for the Fall Session 2014. The selection of the students fell to their science teachers. None were allowed to return from previous sessions.



interview several students at the end of each class using a video camera and ask, "What did you learn today at Junior Master Gardeners?" This video is then uploaded and shown on the next day's 'Morning Show' which comes into each classroom in the school.

Also this year, the majority of classes took place outdoors at the three teams' garden beds. The dynamics of the classroom naturally changed and the Master Gardener Instructor brought excellent organization and well thought out lesson plans to ensure the students got the most out of the forty-five minutes of class while having 'hands on' activity. Even a bit of

rain didn't deter the class from going forward, and the students showed flexibility in hanging in to listen to Stan Corneal and Cindy Adams present on Extending the Growing Season.

The new principal at Greenwood Mill, Mrs. Jennifer Muldowney, has been a terrific supporter of the JrMG Program. This year, based on a request from the science teachers at Greenwood Mill, a fifth grader was identified to

Chloe Owings interviewing a fellow student for the Morning Show



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS



Students writing in their journals about the progress of their vegetable seeds



A student's muddy hands



Stan Corneal and Cindy Adams teaching under the raindrops

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

Our cadre of Master Gardener instructors and helpers had some new additions this year. To all of them, I am so grateful for their substantial support and effort in providing to the students at Greenwood Mill unique opportunities to learn science, math, landscape design, horticulture, vermiculture, botany, pathology, etc. from a different perspective and hands on.



Cindy Adams the in classroom



Ginny Smith-
organizing herbs
before class



Kris Goff outside at garden beds

The Award Ceremony will be coupled this year with a Garden Feast on 13 November. Hopefully, there will be lettuce and radishes, perhaps some carrots and chard to harvest, wash and enjoy together, along with ranch dressing, of course!

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

I am just back from a week in California, hiking around Big Sur. The scenery was spectacular, and I was delighted to see a lot of flowers still blooming. So I got to test my plant identification skills. Right away I spotted a yellow flower and said, "That's a Monkeyflower". Soon thereafter I saw a spectacular red flower and said, "That's a Penstemon". That evening I got on the internet to determine what species they were.

Back home we have two Monkeyflowers: Allegheny Monkeyflower (*Mimulus ringens*) and Winged Monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*). Their purple flowers are similar, but they are readily distinguishable by the wings on the Winged Monkeyflower stems. Out west they have many species of Monkeyflower, and I have seen several on other trips. Specifying genus *Mimulus* and county Monterey on the Calflora.org website quickly



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

showed me Sticky Monkeyflower (*M. aurantiacus*).

Back home we have four native Penstemon species aka Beardtongue. Their flowers are white or tinged with purple. Like Monkeyflowers, out west they have many Penstemon species, and I have seen several on other trips, including one bright red one called Scarlet Bugler (*P. centranthifolius*). Scarlet Bugler was the only red Penstemon that showed up on my internet search. However, Calflora says it blooms in spring, and I was there in late October. I thought, "Well, maybe this was just a late leftover." But it preyed on my mind because I saw them every place we went. I broadened my search from genus to family, but Scarlet Bugler was still the only candidate.

Sticky Monkeyflower
Mimulus aurantiacus



Common Evening Primrose
Oenothera biennis



On our last day we drove to San Francisco, where we would catch our flight home. We stopped at the San Francisco National Wildlife Refuge on the way. In front of our parking space was a bush full of "Scarlet Buglers". In the Education Center we borrowed binoculars to see all the wetland birds, and they loaned us a spiral-bound book with pictures of the animals, birds and flowers we might see. It showed my red flower and identified it as California Fuchsia aka Hummingbird Trumpet (*Epilobium canum*). It is in the Evening Primrose (*Onagraceae*) family.

Hummingbird Trumpet
aka California Fuchsia
Epilobium canum



Knowing the characteristics of a family can greatly help in identifying a plant species. I can almost always tell if a flower is in the Pea family, or Rose family, etc. But nothing about an Evening Primrose (*Oenothera*) would lead me to put the California Fuchsia in *Onagraceae*. Looking at the *Onagraceae* genera, I have trouble seeing the family resemblances.