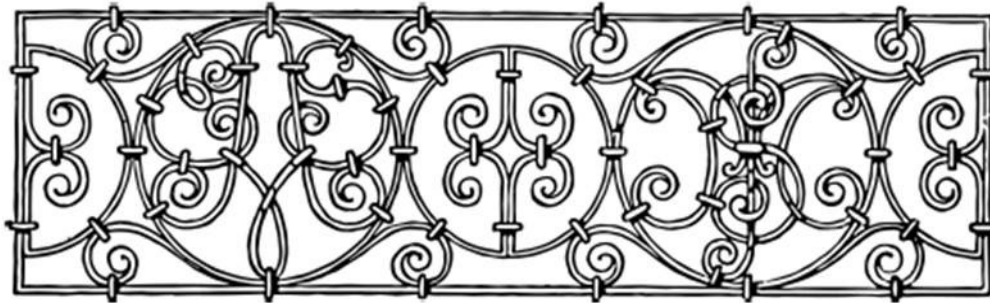


ALL YEAR LONG, YOU'VE VOLUNTEERED;
NOW BEFORE IT'S DISAPPEARED,
ADD THAT TIME TO VMS:
BY 1/1 AT THE LATEST!



Please add all your 2014 education and project hours to VMS by **January 1, 2015**. If you need help, contact Sarah Kohrs, NSVMGA Timekeeper, (540-477-3257 or kohrs@shentel.net) no later than **December 20th**.

[HTTP://VIRGINIA.VOLUNTEERSYSTEM.ORG](http://virginia.volunteersystem.org)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- No meeting in December

OTHER EVENTS

- **Tuesday, Dec 9, Christmas decorating for Belle Grove Plantation**
- **Sunday, Dec 14, 1pm, Shenandoah River State Park Walk.** Richard Stromberg will lead the Virginia Native Plant Society Piedmont Chapter walk along the banks of the South Fork of the Shenandoah and then up to the Park Visitor Center. For more information contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

VOLUNTEER COODINATOR'S REPORT by Mary Flagg

Many of you may already know me as the Millwood Community Garden project leader. For those of you that don't, I look forward to meeting you all. As a 2005 MG graduate, it's hard



to believe ten years has gone by. As I reflect on all the projects I have been involved with, I definitely want to get everyone interested. We will be starting a new year very soon. I encourage you all to focus on your favorite projects. The success of our organization depends on us as individuals and as a group. So, go ahead, pick your project, update your profile on VMS, contact the project leader, and let's get going.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Susan Garrett

I hope your holidays are good ones! December brings so many celebrations, and nature often cooperates to gift us with gorgeous pictures in the world around us. Although, as many of us were reminded on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, snow may be beautiful but it also has the ability to snarl our travel plans.

My holidays will be spent in California, so I will not have beautiful snow and ice images to look at outside my window. As we are celebrating Christmas and Hanukkah in Southern California, we will see an entirely different picture of the natural world. But it is all good, and all beautiful.



NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

So wherever and however you celebrate the holidays, I wish love and peace and joy to all the members of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association!

After the holidays, a new year begins. I wanted to introduce you to the leaders of the NSVMGA for 2015. (Officers new to their positions are shown in red.) If you have any questions or are interested in being part of a committee, please contact any of us.

2015 NSVMGA OFFICERS

President–Susan Garrett (Clarke, 2010)
Past President–Bob Carlton (Shenandoah, 2002)
Vice President–Karen Brill (Frederick, 2007)
Secretary–Kris Behrends (Shenandoah, 2013)
Treasurer–Lee Demko (Frederick, 2013)
Volunteer Coordinator–Mary Flagg (Clarke, 2005)
Clarke County Coordinator–Ginny Smith (2013)
Frederick County Coordinator–Emily Wickham (2013)
Page County Coordinators–Lesley & Tom Mack (1996) & Elke Thomas (2005)
Shenandoah County Coordinator–Sharon Bradshaw (2012)
Warren County Coordinator–Katherine Rindt (2003)
Communications and Publicity–Stacey Smith (Shenandoah, 2014)
Education–Brenda Powell (Frederick, 2011)
Membership–Mary Craig (Clarke, 2005)
Newsletter–Richard Stromberg (Warren, 1999)
Timekeeper–Sarah Kohrs (Shenandoah, 2012)
Webmaster–Donna Funk-Smith (Frederick, 2011)
Historian–Mary Craig (Clarke, 2005)
Scholarship Chair–Lynn Hoffmann (Frederick, 2001)
Coordinator of 2015 Intern Class–Cy Haley (Warren, 2010)
JrMG Co-Chairs–Lynn Hoffmann (Frederick, 2001) & **Helen Lake** (Frederick, 2005)
VMGA Liaison–

PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Lesley Mack

Happy Holidays to all the Master Gardeners in our area, and world! We can easily say that, more than any other similar organization, Master Gardeners provide a multitude of benefits related to new learning experiences in understanding, education, and personal growth. Also, just think of all the humanitarian concerns that are solved as we address other's environmental problems. Anyway...I rant. Thank you, you wonderful Master Gardeners!

We received about 5 inches of snow, November 26th, here in Page County. Always glad to get the additional water. Winter care for trees and shrubs is just as important as any other part of the year. So, minimizing winter injury includes

- Watering trees and shrubs, especially evergreens, during dry periods until the ground freezes.
- Using mulch to conserve soil moisture and insulate the roots from cold temperatures.
- Using a burlap barrier on the windward side of evergreens that need protection.
- Wrapping newly planted trees with burlap or tree guards to prevent sun scald.

And for those folks that get a real Christmas tree for their home, the NPR Christmas poem *Tree Incarnation: Christmas Trees Return to Nature* starts

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It's the week after Christmas, and in every town
You'll see Christmas trees dying — their needles turned brown.
30 million dead trees — that's what you'll find!
"Just some more numbers to boggle your mind."

The rest is at <http://www.npr.org/2014/01/04/259436930/tree-incarnation-christmas-trees-return-to-nature-a-poem>.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Sharon Bradshaw

Shenandoah County MGs had a project review wrap-up meeting on November 20. Carolyn Wilson officially turned the Shenandoah County coordinator's position to Sharon Bradshaw.

FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT by Emily Wickham

Holiday Greetings to all Master Gardeners. Our computer training class was a wonderful success. Nine master gardeners from 4 counties attended to further their computer skills. Thanks to Stacey Smith (Shenandoah), Deborah Byrd, Susan Garret, and Mark Sutphin, for their help. Stacey did the bulk of the training and taught all of us something new, instructors included! Thank you, thank you to Stacey!

We had a great year in 2014. Congratulations to *Lynn Hoffmann* who was awarded the Virginia Cooperative Extension Frederick County Volunteer of the Year! Her work with the Home School Junior Master Gardeners and the Belle Grove Demonstration Garden earned this award. So when you see her be sure to share your congratulations.

Frederick County Master Gardener volunteers contributed approximately 2,200 hours of volunteer time in 2014. This number reflects over 560 hours contributed by superwoman MG volunteer Helen Lake. Lee Demko and Lynn Hoffman also volunteered approximately 200 hours each. Master Gardener John Stevens was made an Honorary Master Gardener this Fall, a great achievement earned by his commitment to NSVMGA through the years. Finally, congratulations to Karen Brill who is our new vice-president.

Hope to see many Frederick Master Gardeners at our holiday party Dec 11.

MASTER GARDENERS AND THE BELLE GROVE HISTORIC TEACHING GARDEN

by Lynn Hoffman

The garden area behind the Belle Grove Plantation House has been a Master Gardener Teaching project since 2004. This garden was approved as a Master Gardener Intern Class project and community teaching opportunity for the new class of 2004.

The garden was commissioned by the Garden Club of Virginia in 1983 on the request of Belle Grove Plantation. At that time, Belle Grove was a private non-profit organization whose goal was to preserve the historical aspects of one of the first plantations started in the Shenandoah Valley in the late 1700's.

The garden design was created by Landscape Architect, Dr. Rudy Favretti. No records of the location for the colonial garden of the plantation survived, so the garden was placed in the area used by the last owners (early 1980's).

Dr. Favretti designed the beds, not to produce a "Preservation" garden (an attempt to restore or recreate the original garden), but rather a collection of herbs and plants that would represent the kitchen and household plants used at the manor house. He said the thought was to plant flowers that could be sold to visitors and to demonstrate a typical garden for the period. In his planting recommendations, he took into account the plants known to have

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been grown at Monticello, given the relationship between the Hites, (original owners of Belle Grove) and Thomas Jefferson, and Jefferson's supposed influence on the landscaping for Belle Grove.

The 1983 design is a fenced in plot, roughly square, about 68 feet on each side. The fence design was based on an 1837 drawing of the Plantation which illustrated the house area surrounded by a white board fence with finials. The garden has six distinct beds holding fruits, dye plants, culinary herbs, cutting flowers, medicinal herbs, and aromatic herbs. Peach and cherry trees were along the perimeter of the garden with creeping thyme planted under the trees, an entrance bed of mint, and a bed of antique roses.

Among the interesting features of the current Garden is the steel edging that surrounds the entire garden and define each bed. Obviously steel plates were not available to gardeners in the 1800s, but they are a great help in maintaining the separation between the plantings and the grass pathways.



In the spring of 2004 the Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Intern Class undertook their class project to revitalize the Belle Grove Historic Garden. 25 interns were asked to each donate 20 hours of their time. The project was divided into several areas. Four interns volunteered to research records at the Handley Library archives. They looked for references of crops and plants grown at the plantation and any reference to Thomas Jefferson or Monticello. The remaining interns took the existing planting diagram and determined which plants needed to be replaced. The roses were infested with rose borers. The research showed that the area had to be stripped of the roses as the soil could remain infested with borers for up to 5 years. The recommendation was to plant the rose bed with annuals until such time roses could be replanted if desired. The herb beds and fruit beds all

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needed to be revitalized. The interns saw that the plants were old, or had died out completely. Soil tests were done and 12 tons of fresh top soil were added to the garden beds.

The interns also determined that the cherry trees planted on two sides of the garden were also infested with borers and were being attacked by blight and leaf fungus. The Extension Agent assisted the interns with a class on the various diseases of the fruit trees and how proper pruning would open their canopy and prolong their vitality. The interns pruned all 10 cherry trees under the direction of VCE Agent Cindy Marston.

The herb beds were replanted based on the plant recommendations of Dr. Favretti. The flower beds were designed by several interns, who made recommendations for cut flowers that would have been present in the Shenandoah Valley during the 1800s.

Over 200 herb plants were donated by Ms. Billie Clifton, owner of Sunflower Cottage Gardens, Middletown, Virginia and planted by the Master Gardeners.

Since that first summer of 2004 the garden has continued as a Master Gardener project and teaching garden.

Belle Grove has been the site for numerous classes and meetings each year for the Master Gardeners, the public, and the Junior Master Gardeners. Local elementary schools visit Belle Grove to learn about Colonial times, a slave plantation and how the plantation had to support itself by what it grew. Tours of the garden tell students as well as garden clubs and the public what plants were grown and how they are used.

The garden has been used in several classes on How to Grow Herbs and How to Use Herbs. The garden has been used as a pruning class and a tree identification class for several years by the Junior Master Gardeners. Belle Grove is also the site for the Pollinators Class and Native Plant walks.

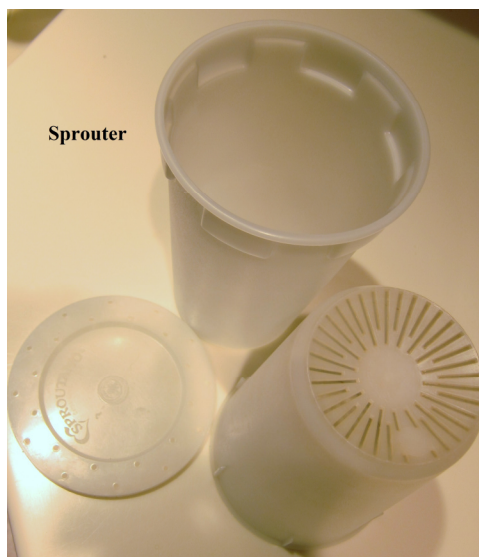
In 2009 the NSVMG Association designated \$250 each year toward the salary of a high school garden intern to work under the supervision of the Master Gardeners each summer. The students were taught about the garden and the types of plants. They were instructed on watering requirements, fertilization and weed control.

Since 2007 the MG held their spring public event at Belle Grove. The event grew from Master Gardeners Teach You How into GardenFest, attracting over 600 people each year.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

Do you want to grow something during the winter—something to eat? Try sprouts. After buying them at Martins for a few months to put on our sandwiches and in salads, I thought, “I can probably grow them much cheaper myself.” So I found a “sprouter” online for about ten dollars. I grow broccoli seeds. They have so many healthy things in them, and we like them. I buy a pound of organic seeds for \$21, and they last a year in the refrigerator. (None during the summer.)

The sprouter has three parts, shown in the picture: a solid outer container, an inner container with slots in the bottom like a sieve (shown upside down in the picture) and a lid with holes for ventilation. It also came with another sieve with smaller slits and a solid lid, but I have never used them.



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Sprouts Day 2

I put a quarter cup of seeds in the inner container, put it in the outer container and cover the seeds with water for eight hours and then drain them by pulling the inner container out of the outer container. By the second day they have started to sprout. I rinse/soak them once a day for a few minutes. By the third day you will see little fuzzy things on the seeds. They are rootlets. With rinsing they disappear. I keep them in the dark or shadows until most of them seem sprouted, then move them to a northeast window sill.

Many seed hulls float to the top during the soaking. Swirling will send the hulls to the



Sprouts Day 4



Sprouts Day 4 soaking

outside of the container, where you can scoop them out. The ones in the store don't seem to have any hulls, so I guess they do a more thorough job than I do. My wife says they are probably good roughage.

Within a week they are ready to eat. I fork them into another container to be kept in the refrigerator. A lot more hulls stick to the bottom of the sprouter. They keep for a few days.



Sprouts Day 7
ready to eat