

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the **month**, and we will meet at 4pm, except January, 2014 will be at 2. 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, February 18, 2pm (not 4pm), Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit Building**, "Proper Pruning Practices". Ben Rose, owner/operator of Four Winds Tree Experts, Inc., will present information about appropriate times and techniques used to prune plants, trees, and shrubs. Specifically, he will address pruning spring-blooming and/or flowering shrubs and trees; and the proper times to prune fruit trees and shade trees. He will let us know what we need to do now to clean up from fall and winter. He will also discuss proper pruning cuts such as heading cuts and thinning cuts.

Directions: On Route 11 a half mile south of VA 37, diagonally across from the Alamo Draffhouse Theater and Outback Steak House shopping center, turn west onto Prosperity Drive. A Mid Atlantic Farm Credit is on your left.

OTHER EVENTS

- **Sunday, February 8, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Piedmont Chapter Walk at Sky Meadows State Park**, led by tree expert Chris Lewis. For more information contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Friday, February 20, 10am-noon, Jr. MG Home School Program Planning Meeting, Frederick County Extension Building first floor conference room (called the Purple Room)**. Anyone thinking of helping to plan the program and/or volunteering to teach a class to the students is invited to attend. The classes cover the basic topics of gardening and horticulture and the students are 8 to 12 years old. We usually hold classes from mid-March to May. If you can't make the meeting but would like to instruct or be a helper to an instructor please email Lynn Hoffman at gwendydog@gmail.com.
- **Sunday, February 22, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Winter Speaker Series at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall**. Dr. Emily Southgate will tell why she felt at home, botanically, in Eastern Siberia and will tell a tale of drifting continents and volcanoes and glaciation to help explain why we share so many genera of plants with eastern Asia. For more information contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Sunday, March 22, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Winter Speaker Series at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall**. Marion Lobstein, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Northern Virginia CC will talk about our spring wildflowers and their western U.S. relatives. For more information contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- **Saturday, June 6, Garden Fest, Belle Grove Plantation**. Set up will be on Friday, June 5th. The kick-off meeting on Friday was well attended and we have leaders signed up for the many areas to be covered before, during, and after the event so everyone will have lots of opportunities to gain project hours. Garden Fest is set up on VMS and you can get signed up to volunteer now.

2015 MG CLASS by Cy Haley

The 2015 Master Gardener Class will kick-off on February 10th with 18 new trainees. Classes will be held at the Warren County Community Center, 538 Villa Avenue in Front

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Royal. The classroom has plenty of room to accommodate any Master Gardeners who want to sit in and audit a class. Any class you attend will be good for education hours. The exceptions will be the first night and the class presentations, which are at the end of April and into May. Class Helper and the class Pit Crew time will be good for project hours. Pit Crew and Helper volunteers can also audit the classes for education hours. Classes will start promptly at 6:00 PM and conclude at 9:00. If you get there late please be quiet when you enter the room and sit towards the back so you won't disturb the class in session. Also, please wear your MG badge so the students will know who you are.

I want to thank all those who have already put in many hours pulling everything together for the class. It's on projects like this that I feel honored to volunteer with such amazing people and humbled by your knowledge and expertise.

- 2/10 Tues Intro to VCE & NSVMGA VCE Mark Sutphin, VC, CCs, Board
- 2/12 Thurs Soils & Fertilizers VCE Bobby Clark
- 2/17 Tues Botany I Dr. Steve Carroll
- 2/19 Thurs Botany II Dr. Steve Carroll
- 2/24 Tues Composting Jimmy Messick
- 2/26 Thurs Plant Propagation Lynn Hoffmann
- 3/3 Tues Indoor Plants/Annuals Carolyn Wilson
- 3/5 Thurs Weed Control Angie Hutchinson
- 3/10 Tues Vegetables Paula Brownlee
- 3/12 Thurs Lawns/Turf Dr. Mike Goatley
- 3/17 Tues Trees & Shrubs Carrie Whitacre
- 3/19 Thurs Water Quality Charlie Newton
- 3/24 Tues Fruits & Berries Bill Mackintosh
- 3/26 Thurs Perennials Mary Stickley-Godinez
- 3/28 Sat Pruning Frank Baxter
- 3/31 Tues Native Plants & Invasives Richard Stromberg
- 4/2 Thurs Plant Path/Diagnostic key Debbie Dillion
- 4/7 Tues Entomology Dr. T'ai Roulston
- 4/9 Thurs Animal Control/Fire Wise Fred Frenzel/Mary Craig
- 4/11 Sat 10-12 1/2 class divide plants Carolyn Wilson's house
- 4/14 Tues PMG VCE Mark Sutphin
- 4/16 Thurs Landscape Design Mary Stickley-Godinez
- 4/18 Sat 10-12 1/2 class divide plants Carolyn Wilson's house
- 4/21 Tues Website, VMS Mark Sutphin, Donna Funk-Smith
- 4/23 Thurs Hort Therapy, Pub. Speaking Helen Lake, Anne Dewey-Balzhiser
- 4/28 Tues Volunteering/Class Presents. VCE Mark Sutphin, VC, CCs

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Mary Flagg



Valentine's Day is one of my favorite holidays. It can be so sweet and romantic. Nothing says romance more vividly than cards and flowers. Soon, retail shops everywhere will be bustling with customers looking for that perfect valentine. This Valentine's Day surprise your loved ones with a few of these ideas. Check the Pinterest website which is filled with ideas. Spring doesn't look like it is arriving soon, so visit your local florists for some inexpensive flowers. I happen to have some succulents over wintering in the basement so when I saw this arrangement, all I needed was red roses. My secret weapon was the same valentine cards we have been exchanging for the last 25 years from our first date. Every February, I pull it out of my hope chest and address it so lovingly. So, in honor of

Valentine's Day, use your imagination and make your own floral arrangement.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Susan Garrett

One of the goals of the Strategic Plan was to get to know our officers and committee chairs better. So here are pictures and short bios of the Executive Committee of the Board. In March we will have pictures and bios of our Volunteer Coordinator and County Coordinators, and in April, the rest of the Committee Chairs who meet as a part of the Advisory Board.

PRESIDENT - Susan Schweitzer Garrett became a Master Gardener in 2010, and has served in turn as the NSVMGA Timekeeper and then as the Volunteer Coordinator. She was elected President of the NSVMGA in November 2014. Susan retired as a United Methodist clergyperson 2008. She served Grace United Methodist Church in Middletown for 15 years, supervised 72 churches in the Harrisonburg District from 1996-2003, and was in charge of the staff and program of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church immediately prior to her retirement. Susan and husband Dan have served together as interim pastors in area churches during retirement. They have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren all in Orange County, California, so she is learning more about the plants of California every year. Susan loves orchids, perennials, and Virginia's springtime landscape. She grew up in Connecticut, lived in various places in the state of Virginia, and she is still figuring out what will grow well in Berryville, where she lives.



PAST PRESIDENT - Robert L. Carlton (Bob) earned a BS in botany and an MS in zoology from the University of Georgia, with additional graduate work in wildlife ecology from the University of Minnesota. He was a Fisheries biologist at the Fish control Laboratory, Warm Springs, Georgia; a Lecturer and Assistant Professor of biology, Concord College, Athens, West Virginia; an Extension Wildlife Specialist, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service; a Manager of wildlife and non-timber resources issues, National Forest Products Association, Washington, DC. Bob has been a Master Gardener and member of Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener



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Association from 2002 to present and served twice as Association President and once as Volunteer Coordinator.

VICE PRESIDENT - Karen Brill grew up on a twenty-five acre farm in Woodstock, Virginia. The family farm's one-third acre garden supplied the family with food year-round. They also raised beef cattle, several hogs that they butchered, chickens, ducks, sheep, horses, and ponies. She had a favorite pony, Ginger. She also participated in the Woodstock 4-H Club for about eight years. Through living on a farm and participating in 4-H, she developed an interest in gardening. She served as an officer in my local 4-H club, as Honor Club President, and later as the Big Chief (President) of the Shenandoah County 4-H All Stars.

Professionally, she taught English at Strasburg High School for ten years. Most recently, she served as an adult educator.

Currently, she is a member of a book club; delivers career workshops for the Valley Workforce Center; and tutors various subjects. She occasionally gives local history tours for area retirement communities. And, she is always experimenting with plantings, both in her indoor and outdoor gardens. She is married to William Meyer, who is employed by a major pharmaceutical company. They enjoy the company of their four-legged companion Grace, who provides them with great opportunities for outdoor activities. She had a goal to become a Master Gardener, which she accomplished seven years ago. However, she knows that being a Master Gardener is an ongoing process and an ongoing commitment. Our learning never ends--and that is a great challenge for her.



SECRETARY - Kris Behrends is originally from a small farming community in Central Illinois (no one has ever heard of the town so she usually doesn't mention it). She bought a home in Woodstock, VA, and works full time as an operations technology analyst for George's in Edinburg (She takes care of the computer systems at her division and helps support the other divisions: Harrisonburg, VA; Springdale, Arkansas, and Cassville, Missouri). She loves to knit, read, work out in her yard, take care of her houseplant herd, and cook. (She loves to try new recipes).



TREASURER - Lee Demko and her husband moved to Middletown, Virginia in 2010 to be near family. They have nine grandchildren, seven of them living within an hour, so they get to see them often and do a lot of grandkid sitting. The other two grandkids live in beautiful Colorado, so that gives them a wonderful reason to travel to that part of the country and spend time with them. She loves to cook (has numerous cook books and is always trying new recipes), does yoga several times a week, has a passion for reading history, and loves the feel of yarn slipping through her fingers as she knits during relaxing moments (with all those grandkids she never runs out of projects).



She especially enjoys getting outdoors and working in her garden beds (loves to "dig in the dirt"). She became a Master Gardener three years ago because she finds growing things so satisfying and wanted to share this interest with others.

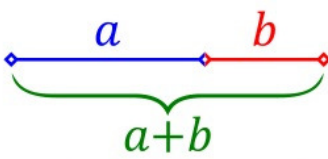
FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT by Emily Teawick

Frederick County is in winter down time, with preparations for the coming growing season. Elizabeth Bevan is running our Greenline from home. Several Master Gardeners are getting

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in project applications. I encourage this to continue! With nothing much to report I will write about one of my favorite natural phenomena.

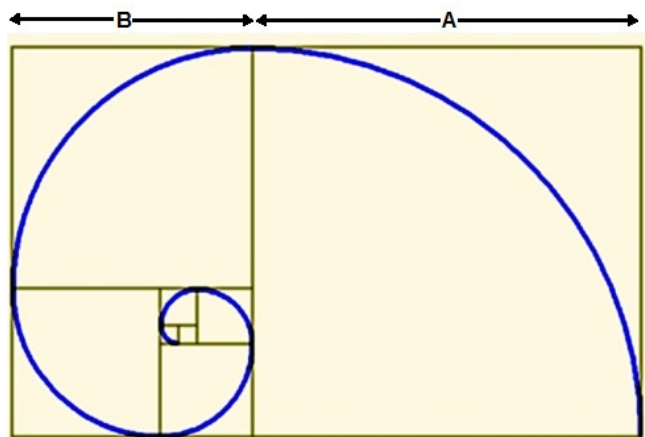
The petals of a rose, the curve or the human ear, the circulating winds of a hurricane. What do these all share? They are all examples of the *golden ratio*, also called the *divine ratio*. It is expressed with the Greek letter phi, Φ (1.618...). This mathematical relationship (ratio) has been studied for thousands of years and occurs in our natural world at the microscopic and cosmic levels. The ratio can be explained mathematically in line length comparisons:



The diagram shows a horizontal line segment divided into two parts, a (blue) and b (red). A green bracket below the entire segment is labeled $a+b$. Below this, the text reads: $a+b$ is to a as a is to b .

$$\frac{a+b}{a} = \frac{a}{b} = \varphi = \frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2} = 1.618$$

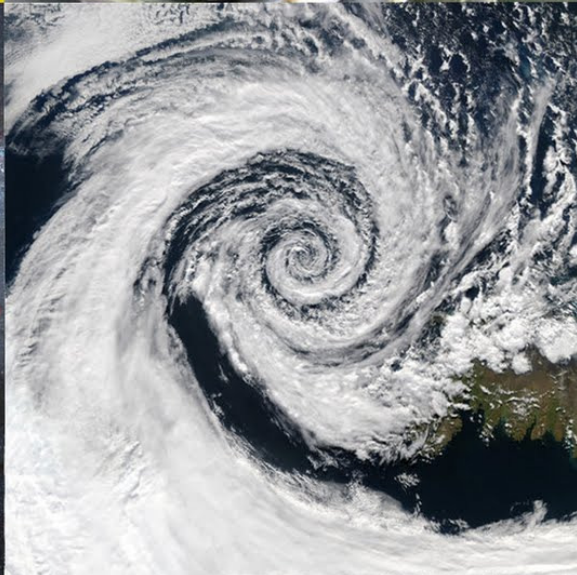
Using the Φ ratio you can construct this figure of the golden rectangle and golden spiral:



The Φ ratio in the plant world can readily be seen in many seed germinations, petal, leaf, and seed arrangements. It also occurs in the animal kingdom and in the physical world. Here is a very partial list: human proportions in face and form, our spiral Milky Way Galaxy, the nautilus shell, animal horns, sunflower seed heads, crystal growth, rose petals, pinecones, pineapples, corn. [editor's note: look at the leaves in the succulents in Mary Flagg's arrangement above]

This ratio is pleasing to the human aesthetic and has been used in architecture and art work since ancient times. These proportions even appear in the Bible as the Arc dimensions God gave to Noah.

So if stymied about design in our world we can fall back on this natural proportions. We can use this in the design of ornamental gardens or floral arrangement. We can also simply appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature. So look for this relationship in the plant life in our world. If you want to learn more try *Wikipedia*, the source for the graphics above. Another source is the book *Divine Proportions, Φ Phi in Art, Nature, and Science* by Priya Hemenway.



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SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Sharon Bradshaw

Mid-winter is the traditional time for gardeners to pore over seed catalogs and dream of the perfect garden, landscape project or container design. Since most gardeners don't dream of borers and fungi this time of year, our Green Help Line has been a bit slow. That's OK. Volunteers are still monitoring it.

We are pleased to announce that three more Shenandoah County interns from the Class of 2014 began the year on active status - congratulations! We are also expanding our group with three transfers: one from Alabama and two interns who took classes in Arlington. Welcome to Donna Griffin, James Kirby and Liz Truong.

Our county planning meeting will be February 23 at 7:00 PM at the VCE classroom in Woodstock (600 N Main Street, Suite 100). We will discuss in-county projects as well as unit activities. Although the discussion is specific to Shenandoah activities, any MG is welcome to join us.

PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Leslie Mack

Wow!! What a "down home" January monthly meeting at Fort Valley Nursery. Fifty, or more, new folks, and familiar friends connected and made plans for this new year. The Golden Wheel Award, delicious food, terrific nursery deals, as well as fantastic statistics and numbers from Mark, were shared by all.

Chris Riley and Liz Osborne of Luray Middle School's Garden Club contacted me as they wish to 'liven up' a planting area that was dedicated to a former student. The club drew site plans of the area, listened to each other's planting thoughts and visions and discussed what their next list of "to dos" should be. I will be meeting with them again in February. The middle school garden club is working toward a 2015 spring planting.

Welcome to Page County residents Sari Carp from Rileyville and Herbert Cooper from Luray joining the Master Gardener class.

Shameless ad: Everyone is invited to our Third Annual Valentine's Day Ball. We would very much enjoy your company: <https://sites.google.com/site/svcwed/home-1/events-for-2015>

UPDATE ON THE "GIRLS" by Cy Haley

For those of you who don't know the "Girls", I'm referencing my two pet bantam chickens, Honey the Cochin and Smokey the Silkie.

On Sunday January 5th, one of those warm days we had last month, the crows outside my window were creating quite a racket, so I looked out to see what was bothering them. I was shocked to see a huge hawk, on the ground, with Honey in its talons. Sam the dog and I went tearing out side and Sam scared the hawk enough to get it to release poor Honey. As the hawk flew up to the fence top I looked down where it had been and saw my poor chicken laying limp, covered in blood with hundreds of her feathers strewn everywhere. After I checked on Smokey and determined she had been attacked too but had only minor wounds, I gathered Honey up and took her inside to the laundry room and placed her in the wash sink. I ran back outside and shoed Smokey back into the chicken run then ran back inside to tend to Honey. She was still alive, barely, and in pretty bad shape. A little gentle investigation had me convinced she had a punctured lung, a badly damaged wing and half her pretty comb was missing. I knew she wasn't going to make it. My husband, looking over my shoulder, shook his head and told me how sorry he was. That brought tears to my eyes as he's never been a big fan of my menagerie of critters but he truly looked sad. Then Honey took a big breath, closed her eyes, and stopped breathing. With tears streaming

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down my cheeks I started telling her how much I loved her and recounting the many funny antics she did to bring a smile to my face. As I was talking she opened her eyes and looked at me, raising her head a little and then started trying to move. Miracle of miracles, she wasn't dead but she was in pretty bad shape. I cleaned her up, snuggled her in an old towel and put her in a wicker basket. My husband asked if I wanted to take her to the vet. I told him if I ever took a chicken to a vet my grandmother would turn over in her grave. Having a chicken for a pet is bad enough but spending money on vet bills for one was really pushing it. Besides, where would I find an avian vet who works on chickens? I decided to let nature take its course.

Long story short, Honey is back in her run, and, if you didn't know it, you would never believe she'd almost been dinner for a hawk. She seems happy and comes running when she hears me call her, so I guess as far as Honey is concerned everything's back to normal. As for Smokey, she's almost featherless. Not due to the hawk attack but because she's weird and always molts in the coldest part of the winter. She looks more like the one who went through a plucking than Honey. And Sam and I have learned our lessons. She's more diligent about patrolling the yard and I'm not allowing the chickens to roam around outside their run until this spring when there's plenty of leafy vegetation to provide cover.

And the hawk? I never saw it before that day and haven't seen it since. I don't hold a grudge. I believe in live and let live, and it was just doing what hawks do. But I do have one tip for it; they say squirrel tastes just like chicken.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg





**Sweet Birch seeds
(*Betula lenta*)
look like little
jet fighters
on the snow**

