

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING

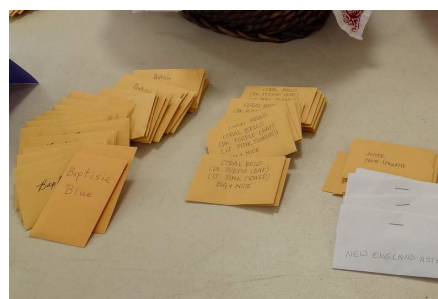
- **Sunday, January 17 2pm Fort Valley Nursery.** We look forward to renewing old friendships, as well as meeting and welcoming our new members from the class of 2015 to the organization. We'll learn about our exciting projects and programs for 2016. And, we know it's always a special treat to shop in the Fort Valley Nursery and Gift Shop. Finally, a special program will be provided by Terry Fogle or a member of the staff.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, January 30, 10am–2pm, Friends of the State Arboretum/NSVMGA Seed Exchange.** The Library of the Blandy Experimental Farm. (See details below.)
- **Master Gardener 2016 Class,** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 4pm starting February 9 at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit
- **Wednesday, February 10, 10:30am, Junior MG planning meeting,** Frederick County Extension office, probably in the first floor classroom
- **Wednesday, February 17, 8am-5pm, Piedmont Landscape Association Annual Seminar,** The Paramount Theatre, Charlottesville: **Claudia West:** *Planting in a Post-Wild World-Creating Resilient and Thriving Landscapes*; **Dr. Dennis van Engelsdorp:** *To BEE or Not to BEE*; **Tony Avent:** *Surround Yourself with Shady Characters*; **Claudia West:** *Designing Plant Communities: The Art and Science of Successful Native Planting*. Details at <http://www.piedmontlandscape.org/seminar.html>.
- **Saturday, March 12, 2016 Gardening in the Shenandoah Valley Symposium, Shenandoah University.** Sandy Ward and Karen Brill are requesting gently used or like-new gardening-themed books and magazines for re-sale. We would appreciate any children's books as well. Thank you to those NSVMGA members who have already contributed. If you would like to contribute to this scholarship fundraising effort, please bring any books, including children's books, and magazines to the January 17, 2016 meeting at Fort Valley Nursery.

FOSA/ NSVMGA SEED EXCHANGE by Elaine Specht

Thanks to NSVMGA and FOSA volunteers, we have *hundreds* of seed packets cleaned, counted, and labeled for the 6th Annual FOSA/NSVMGA Seed Exchange 10am–2pm on January 30, 2016, in the Library of the Blandy Experimental Farm, located on Rt. 50 in Clarke County, 10 miles east of Winchester, Va. Admission is free. The Seed Exchange is co-sponsored by the Foundation of the State Arboretum at Blandy Experimental Farm and the NSVMGA.



Everyone that attends is welcome to take up to five seed packets. Bring your own seeds, plants, or root cuttings, and you can help yourself to as many packets as you like. Please do not bring any alien invasive plants on the State Arboretum of Virginia's Invasive Species List: <http://blandy.virginia.edu/arboretum/virginia-invasive-plants>. You also can bring books and magazines, which will be shared on a one-for-one "exchange rate."

Several vendors will be on hand with live herbs, products made from dried herbs, and teas. In addition, Forrest Pritchard, seventh generation farmer and *New York Times* bestselling author will do a brief reading from his next book, *Growing Tomorrow*, (released Oct. 2015).

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Volunteers are needed for set up on January 29 and the day of the event (January 30). Please e-mail me with questions or to volunteer: especht@shentel.net.

FROM THE PRESIDENT by Susan Garrett



Welcome to 2016! Because it is a Leap Year, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association has one more day than usual (366 days to be exact!) open for new experiences, new ideas, new plans. Isn't it exciting to think of the possibilities?

I wanted to remind you of the names of the 2016 NSVMGA officers, coordinators, and committee chairs who are ready and willing to help all our Association members in their work in the various communities we serve. Please do not hesitate to call upon the officers, coordinators, and committee chairs for any assistance we can give you.

President – Susan Garrett (Clarke, 2010)

Past President—Bob Carlton (Shenandoah, 2002)

Vice President—Karen Brill (Frederick, 2007)

Secretary— Stacey Morgan Smith (Shenandoah, 2014)

Treasurer—Lee Demko (Frederick, 2013)

Volunteer Coordinator—Mary Flagg (Clarke, 2005)

Clarke County Coordinator—Ginny Smith (2013)

Frederick County Coordinator—John Kummer (2014)

Page County Coordinators—Lesley and Tom Mack (1996)

Shenandoah County Coordinator—Sharon Bradshaw (2012)

Warren County Coordinator—Katherine Rindt (2003)

Communications and Publicity – TBA

Education—Karen Brill (Frederick, 2007)/Sandy Ward (Shenandoah, 2014)

Membership—Mary Craig (Clarke, 2005)

Newsletter—Richard Stromberg (Warren, 1999)

Timekeeper—Kris Behrends (Shenandoah, 2013)

Webmaster—Donna Funk-Smith (Frederick, 2011)

Historian—Mary Craig (Clarke, 2005)

Scholarship Chair—Lynn Hoffmann (Frederick, 2001)

Coordinators of 2016 Intern Class—Mark Sutphin, Susan Garrett, John Kummer, Janet Keithley

Jr. Master Gardener Coordinator - Lynn Hoffmann (Frederick, 2001)

Parliamentarian – Anne Dewey-Balhizer (Frederick, 2013)

Please note we need a Publicity Chair for 2016 (there are already three committee members), and we will need a chairperson and 4 members for the Bylaws Review Committee, so if either area sounds interesting to you, please contact me at SusanSGarrettMG@gmail.com.

COORDINATORS REPORT by Mary Flagg

As we are starting a new year, I thought some program suggestions might inspire you to get involved in the coming year. Master Gardeners have enriched many community programs

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and gardens making a difference individually and a huge impact as a group. So let's all resolve to make a difference locally with our talents.

All counties have community gardens that would love an experienced gardener's help with planning and organizing their spring plans. It would be a great way to engage residents in gardening activities. Our local schools would benefit from help with teaching projects to enhance the learning experience for all children. The local libraries are great places to start memorial gardens for members to get involved where all ages could benefit. Several historic plantations would love a Master Gardener to help transform an area for the public to enjoy. These are projects that could take a fair amount of time throughout the year allowing you to earn the required Master Gardener hours. There is always a need for a gardener, so keep your eyes and ears open for any opportunity to get involved. Let's make some changes and have fun doing it!

PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Lesley Mack

With regard to the New Year and its opportunities...here are a few ideas I have found that might be of interest to you. Several ideas found in the latest issue of 'Organic Life'.

1. Feed the Bees. Cultivate a pollinator-friendly garden filling it with a succession of blooms. Planning guide from the Pollinator Partnership, <http://pollinator.org/>, is a great site.
1. Plant-based diet, <http://nutritionfacts.org/> is a nonprofit, science-based public service providing free daily videos and articles on the latest in nutrition research.
2. Bee's Wrap. Quit plastic wrap use organic cotton sheet coated in beeswax, <http://www.beeswrap.com/> describes product. I still wonder if it is good for the bees?
3. Learn your birds. Cornell's Merlin' bird ID home page <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/>, or bird ID for your smartphone with an app <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>. Lots of great pictures.
4. Alpaca-wool dryer balls, non-chemical dryer balls fluff and soften clothes, reduce static, reduce drying time at <http://victoryranch.com/>. Also available at Whole Foods.
5. Compost with 'The Compostess'. Rebecca Louie, a certified, master composter, suggests about 34 million tons of food is sent to landfills each year, contributing to global warming through methane emissions. Rebecca's site suggests ways *everyone* can compost, <http://thecompostess.com/> and other ideas on 'being green'.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Sharon Bradshaw

Most of our Shenandoah County projects are in the dormant stage now, showing no outward appearance of growth, but, with much thought and planning happening under the surface, ready to be active again come spring. With spring in mind, I predict that next growing season will provide many problem situations presented to our plant clinics based on the current weather patterns.

At this time of year we're reminded to think about new beginnings and new goals for our lives, all expressed as lofty New Year's Resolutions. These never worked for me and it's been many years since I made any. However I recently found a link to the National Garden Bureau's web site on our NSVMGA Facebook page. I wandered around and came across a list of resolutions created specifically for gardeners. These are worthwhile for all of us to consider. After you've finished reading our own newsletter, you might wish to visit this site: http://ngb.org/todays_garden/index.cfm?TGID=72.

In the meantime, another good resolution is to go to the next step in being a Master Gardener. Instead of working on a project for a few hours occasionally, become the project

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leader. Individual county planning meetings will review in-county projects and many will need new leads for the New Year—your opportunity to shine!

After speaking of our NVSMGA Facebook page, you may wish to add a regular visit there to your list of resolutions. Kelly Kunkel, who maintains our excellent Facebook presence, has created a multi-faceted site with feeds from several gardening related groups, along with our own news and member input, <https://www.facebook.com/Northern-Shenandoah-Valley-Master-Gardeners-Association-135980113125332/>.

PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD

by permission from Joe Cascio (cascio associates – site planning – landscape architecture)

Good news for all who love native plants. Help has finally arrived for those of us who love the native plants we grew up with, or have fallen in love with recently, and want them at our homes. This help is in the form of a book entitled Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing plant communities that evoke nature for resilient landscapes by Claudia West, who grew up in the entirely cultured landscape of central Europe, and Thomas Rainer, who grew up in the North American wilderness. [Claudia West is a speaker at the February 17, 8am-5pm, Piedmont Landscape Association Annual Seminar as noted in the Calendar above.]

What are the essential elements that define a plant community? These are the elements required to create more resilient planting. A designed plant community is a translation of a wild plant community into an urban and suburban landscape. These may reflect the wild by incorporating a narrower selection of the most adaptive species, or may include species from different habitats to supplement a native palette, especially when the natives are not commercially available.

In addition, to increase the pleasures and meaning of the planting, add increasing numbers of flowering species to make the community more colorful. This can also be done by simplifying the palette of plants or exaggerating the natural patterns to make the plantings more ordered and legible.

A grassland-inspired design may place accent perennials tighter together to make drifts even more noticeable. A single species of an understory tree might be repeated in woodland planting to create a more dramatic effect in spring. Amplifying the signature patterns of a plant community helps make them more readable and enjoyable.

This is not ecological restoration and we are not attempting to create a true ecosystem. We need both optimism and humility. It took millions of years of natural selection and succession to create the wild community ecosystem, so we are more into horticulture than ecology. The plants can be an international mix or all-native species, as long as they all fall into the same specific ecological niche.

What we want to avoid is plants that possess the potential to spread beyond the site and displace or disrupt local native plant communities.

Relationship of plant to place, suggest we start with a native plant community as a place of reference and design accordingly.

For this designed planting to become a plant community, there are two thresholds of accommodation. Obviously, the plants selected need to thrive under similar environmental conditions – compatibility to similar climatic stresses. Secondly, they must be compatible in terms of their competitive strategies, which will allow the plantings to perpetuate as planned and encourage their development of a spirit of place.

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As designers, we are seeking practical solutions. Combining adapted exotics and regional natives will expand our options to create many different likenesses of natural plant communities, both aesthetic and emotional.

This simplified, practical methodology follows five key principles that define the essence of a designed plant community, regardless of style. Any kind of design - naturalistic, formal or modern - can benefit from combining plants more as they exist in nature. They should be allowed to respond to the site and shape their destiny, even if not maintained after becoming established. Principles: Use related populations, not isolated individuals. Use stress as an asset. Cover the ground densely by vertically layering plants. Make it attractive and legible. Use management, not maintenance.

The solution lies in understanding plantings as communities of compatible species that cover the ground in interlocking layers.

These thoughts and advice are mostly quoted from the early text. I am only into the second chapter, but I had to get the word out to all you folks who will appreciate this insight.

In this same vein of discovery, Oehme & van Sweden, where Mr. Rainer worked in the past, has a remarkable exhibit of their work at the National Building Museum in DC until May 2016.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

With Japanese Quince blooming everywhere and Snowdrops budding in my yard among parsley and oregano, maybe winter is really about to start. The Quince flowers will freeze, but I'll bet the Snowdrops come through whatever cold and snow covers them to open up when it warms up.



Back in November, one of the ladies I was hiking with asked me if a bush was Beauty-berry (*Callicarpa americana*). I told her it was Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*). The two are similar: deciduous shrubs with opposite leaves and flowers and berries bunched in the leaf axils. The flowers are insignificant, but the masses of unusual-colored berries make a bright display in the fall. Berries of both are purple, but Beauty-berry is much bluer while Coralberry is more red. Beauty-berry is native to the coastal plain but grows perfectly well in our area. The "Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora" (<http://www.vaplantatlas.org/>) says,

The native range of *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* in Virginia and other parts of the east remains uncertain and controversial. Often treated as "native" to the Atlantic-slope states, but the heart of its range is west of the Appalachians, and this shrub is now so ubiquitous and weedy across Virginia that its original extent cannot be determined. There is little doubt that this species greatly benefited from several

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centuries of land clearing and other human disturbances; its invasive tendencies suggest that it has been introduced in many, if not most, parts of the state.

I can vouch for its weedyess, having had to struggle through tangles of it while doing plant surveys for the Virginia Working Landscapes project.



ANOTHER REASON NOT TO CUT DOWN TREES from Kristin Zimet

