

Shenandoah Valley GARDENING

Newsletter of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association - NSVMGA

In This Issue...

Gardening Symposium	1
From the President	2
Free Plant Dividing	2
Planning, Propagating, & Pruning	3
Monthly Association Meetings	3
Strasburg Community Garden	4
All About Stink Bugs	4
Seed Exchange at Blandy	5
Get Gardening Help	5
Become a Master Gardener	5
Memorial Scholarship Awards	5
Master Gardeners in the Community	6
Vendors that Support NSVMGA	7
Auditing Trainee Classes	7
Patio Gardening	8
Gardening with Wildlife	8
Potted Plants with Kids	9
Junior Master Gardeners	9
Children's Nature Series	9
Flora of Virginia App	10
Plant Giveaway & Clinic	10
The Editor's Pollinator Garden	10
Calendar of Events	11
About the Association	12

A Day of Gardening Talks Offered in Winchester

NSVMGA's Extension Master Gardeners are working hard to bring a day of education to the Association's members, the public, and other Master Gardeners from Virginia and surrounding states.

This year's **Gardening in the Valley Symposium** returns to Shenandoah University on Saturday, March 3, 2018, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The day includes a continental breakfast and lunch, the opportunity to mingle with speakers, and the chance to win door prizes. Speaker books and other gardening books and supplies are also available for sale.

Topics include:

- **Seed Saving Hints** with Ira Wallace of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange;
- **Growing and Cooking with Chinese Vegetables** with Wendy Kiang-Spray, author of *Chinese Kitchen Gardens*;
- **Solitary Pollinators** with Tim McCoy, Extension Associate from Virginia Tech;
- **Farm to Table** with Sandy Lerner, businesswoman, co-founder of Cisco, and leader in the Shenandoah Valley Farm to Table Initiative; and
- **Design and Plant Ideas from World Garden Tours** with Robert McDuffie, Landscape Architect-ASLA and Virginia Tech Emeritus Associate Professor.

Registration is \$65 per person when paying by credit card or PayPal at NSVMGA.org. NSVMGA members can also pay Treasurer Bob Gail by cash or check. Shenandoah University is located at 1460 University Drive, Winchester, VA 22601. Contact Lynn Hoffmann at nsvmga.info@gmail.com with any questions. This educational event is hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and sponsored by NSVMGA.



See page 11 for a calendar of our other events.

From the President Cy Haley



Happy New Year, Everyone!

The weather outside may be gloomy, but our spirits are high, and we're looking forward to the many, many happenings in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. *(Photo by Stacey Smith.)*

First off is the new look of our NSVMGA Newsletter. Isn't it fantastic? We can thank Stacey Smith and her newsletter committee for the changes you see. We now also welcome the public to enjoy our newsletter. If any NSVMGA members want to contribute to upcoming issues, please send your news, events, and/or articles to Stacey. We've also moved to quarterly newsletters for 2018.

If you're a public visitor viewing this for the first time, please be sure to check out [our Facebook page](#), too. We have loads of current information and scheduled events listed, and there are daily updates. Both through the newsletter and our Facebook page we strive to give you information on topical issues you may be experiencing in your garden, as well as advice on the latest trends in gardening. All advice is research based as part of Virginia Cooperative Extension, so you know it will pertain to local issues. Don't be afraid to ask a question about any gardening problem you may have. We'll research the issue and get back to you fast.

For you wonderful Extension Master Gardeners, let me start off saying the projects entered for 2018 offer valuable gardening-related educational opportunities for the public. You all amaze me with your never-ending energy and creativity. Take a look at the VMS calendar

and see where you want to volunteer. Winter months are a perfect time to schedule your hours. If you know of a need for public education and don't see a project covering that need, please let your county coordinator know. She can help you decide if there's a project that should be developed.

While you are dreaming of spring during these long, cold days, you can also start planning what you want to contribute to our annual GardenFest. It may seem like a long way off, but the first weekend in June quickly creeps up on us. If you get a chance to get outside, take a walk around your garden and see if you have too many of a certain plant or one you no longer really love that you can dig up or divide when the weather warms. You are the reason we have such a great GardenFest, and the public loves buying our plants to add to their gardens.

So...Happy New Year, everyone, and let the dreams of spring warm you over the winter months!

Need Plants Divided or Removed? Donate your plants to GardenFest, and Extension Master Gardeners will help divide your perennials!

NSVMGA still has a few openings for plant digging parties for homeowners in Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties. To reserve a date for a dig in your garden, email a few days that work for your schedule to GardenFestPlants@gmail.com. Before the end of April, a group of volunteers will show up with shovels, soil, and pots and will dig up your plants. We'll remove everything or replant one division and remove the rest. We pot up the plants we take and grow them for our GardenFest plant sale.

Thank you for considering donating your plants! Proceeds from GardenFest help fund, in part, VCE educational events sponsored by NSVMGA.

Planning, Propagating, and Pruning Elaine Specht



Even the most passionate gardeners enjoy taking a break during the winter months, but we're soon itching to get back out in the dirt. Now through March, when the gardening urge hits, keep these "P's" in mind: Planning, Propagating, and Pruning.

Planning. Long winter nights are the perfect time to take a step back to review what went well in your garden last year and what didn't go as expected. As seed and plant catalogs start arriving in the mail and your excitement builds in anticipation of spring, start planning for the coming growing season.

Propagating. Perennials are plants that can live for many growing seasons. Coneflowers (*Echinacea*) and black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia*), pictured here, are examples. (Photo by Elaine Specht.) Many perennial seeds must go through a cold-moist period, or a process called stratification, before they will germinate. To mimic nature inside, put perennial seeds in damp sand or vermiculite in a clay pot or between moistened paper towels. Put this inside a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for a few weeks to several months. Recommended stratification times vary, so check seed packets for how long to keep seeds cold. For a simpler method, pick a time during the winter when the ground is not frozen to place the seed in the ground and let Mother Nature do the next work for you.

Pruning. Many trees and shrubs benefit from pruning, which is selectively removing branches and

buds to maintain a smaller size or rejuvenate old plants. In very early spring, just before plants begin vigorous growth, cut back plants to improve their appearance.

Learn more about these topics and more with resources from Virginia Cooperative Extension. Here are a few to get you started:

[Planning the Vegetable Garden](#)

[Planning the Flower Border](#)

[Plant Propagation from Seed](#)

[Pruning Basics and Tools](#)

Extension Master Gardeners!
Be sure to enter your 2017
volunteer hours, education hours,
and contacts into VMS by
January 5, 2018!

Monthly Association Meetings Suzanne Boag

Extension Master Gardeners do what they do because they enjoy working with the public through gardening education. NSVMGA supports its Extension Master Gardeners by providing them additional resources to excel in their mission. One way it does this is with monthly Association meetings.

In addition to educational horticulture speakers, monthly meetings keep members informed on volunteer opportunities and provide those members with the connections and support of fellow Extension Master Gardeners. Meetings are a chance to relax and get to know each other and are followed by a potluck meal. NSVMGA Extension Master Gardeners are more than co-volunteers...they're fellow gardeners, friends, and really good cooks!

January 21, 2018, 2:00 p.m., at Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave, Woodstock, VA 22664 – Owner Terry Fogle talks about unusual, strange, and downright weird gardening questions he's received over the years.

February 11, 2018, 2:00 p.m., at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 125 Prosperity Drive, Winchester, VA 22602 – VCE Master Gardener Stacey Smith gets you ready for GardenFest with a plant division & potting talk and demo.

March 18, 2018, 4:00 p.m., location and topic to be announced soon.

Meetings are open to all Association members and earn members a project hour for attending the business meeting and an education hour for the educational program.

Strasburg Community Garden

Roz McIntosh

On December 2, 2017, NSVMGA Extension Master Gardeners joined other partners at the Strasburg Community Garden workday and groundbreaking within the Strasburg Park. Community partners widened the garden entrance and opened up the walking paths close to the entrance for easier accessibility. Inside the planned garden, visitors will enjoy accessible garden plots, community partner demonstration gardens, pollinator gardens, and a whimsical children's garden. (Photo by Suzanne Boag)



Demonstration gardens are designated for the education and enjoyment of the public. Each community partner will individually design and propagate their gardens. In an effort to give back, community partners have generously agreed to donate vegetables and fruit to local charities for distribution.

NSVMGA's children's garden will feature sensory plants, a fairy garden, visually stimulating garden accessories, and a learning area where children can gather together. Local schools and groups are invited to explore the gardens. If you're interested in volunteering with the Extension Master Gardeners in their plot, please contact NSVMGAnewsletter@gmail.com.

Strasburg Community Garden will promote water conservation, erosion control, composting, pollination, and more. Community partners will responsibly manage water with the use of rain barrels, and composting bins will be available on site. Pollinator gardens will provide a habitat for endangered pollinators, and, in return, pollinators will help plants with seed and fruit production.

Community garden plots will consist of raised beds for ease of gardening. Each community participant is responsible for planting and maintaining their garden bed. Community garden plots are available to the public. To register for a garden, contact Alison Sloop at 540-465-2424 at the Lord Fairfax Soil & Water Conservation District, Strasburg Office.

All About Stink Bugs

Linda Melton

This time of year, you may have hidden invaders in your home and garden... stink bugs! Virginia is home to many different species of stink bugs. Most range in color from green to brown, though the Harlequin bug, *Murgantia histrionica* (Hahn), shown here, is orange and black with a few white spots. (Photo by Linda Melton)



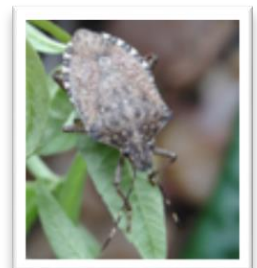
Adult stink bugs overwinter in garden debris such as leaves, as well as under pots and in cracks and crevices of homes. One of your best defenses against them is to clean up around your garden each fall.

These true bugs all have similar life cycles and enjoy a wide variety of plants. Come early spring, the adults come out of hiding and hit the fields to feed on available plants.

By late spring to early summer, they're setting up home in your garden and laying eggs on the underside of plant leaves. The color of the eggs is dependent on the species, but all are small, barrel-shaped, and tightly packed in a cluster. They range in number from 20-70 in the cluster. Inspect your plants periodically to locate the eggs and remove them.

Eggs that escape early detection will develop into nymphs, which, like the adults, feed by sucking plant juices. Nymphs mature into adults within two months, meaning it's possible to have several generations of stink bugs in a season.

VCE has resources to help you with your stink bugs. Learn general info about [stink bugs](#), use the [Field Guide to Stink Bugs](#) to identify your particular pest, and read how you can [make your own stink bug trap](#) with just a few ingredients. Contact your county's VCE Master Gardener office (see page 5) for help controlling these nuisance insects. (Photo by Stacey Smith)



10 Reasons to Attend the Seed Exchange at Blandy Elaine Specht

The first official NSVMGA event of 2018, the Seed Exchange at Blandy, is just around the corner. Here are ten good reasons to go!

1. If you bring 5 packets of seeds, including store-bought seeds you've realized you'll never use, you can exchange them for as many seed packets as you like.
2. Even if you don't bring seeds, you can still take 5 packets of seeds.
3. You can exchange one gently used gardening book or magazine for every book or magazine that you bring.
4. Vendors are there to tempt you with live herbs for growing and great gifts for your gardening friends.
5. Extension Master Gardeners are onhand to answer gardening questions.

6. You'll find more than 100 different seed varieties, including annuals, perennials, native plants, vines, trees, shrubs, herbs, and vegetables...and that doesn't include what patrons bring that day!
7. You can get more than just seeds. Pick up cuttings and bulbs, too.
8. You'll see all your best gardening buddies from around the region there. *(Photo by Elaine Specht.)*
9. Get motivation and a jumpstart on planning for spring planting.
10. It's free!

The Seed Exchange at Blandy is January 27, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., at the Library of Blandy Experimental Farm, located at 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce, VA, 22620 (just off Route 50, 10 miles

east of Winchester). For more information check us out on [Facebook](#) or visit [our website](#). Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there! This event is hosted by VCE and the Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia and is sponsored by NSVMGA.



Need Gardening Help?

You can reach a Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener when you need help! During the growing season, you'll find them at fairs, farmers markets, or VCE offices. During the winter, reach them by phone or email.

- **Clarke County:** 540-955-5164
- **Frederick County:** 540-665-5699
GreenHelpLine.FrederickCo@gmail.com
- **Page County:** 540-778-5794
- **Shenandoah County:** 540-459-6140
GreenHelpLine@gmail.com; Office Hours: Fridays
January 5, February 2, & March 2 9:00 a.m. – noon
600 North Main Street, Woodstock, VA 22664
- **Warren County:** 540-635-4549

Want to Help Other Gardeners?

Love gardening? Nature? Helping others?

Become an Extension Master Gardener!

Already a Master Gardener? Tell your friends!

Extension Master Gardeners help their communities through volunteering at educational events and programs.

If you're interested in becoming certified as an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, [download an application](#) or contact the Virginia Cooperative Extension Frederick office at 540-665-5699 or mark.sutphin@vt.edu.

Hurry! The 2018 class sessions begin February 13th, and the completed application is due at the required information session on January 18th at 1:00 p.m., at 125 Prosperity Drive, Winchester, VA, 22602.

NSVMGA Memorial Scholarship Awards

High school seniors graduating from an accredited high school or home school program in Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, or Warren Counties and who are pursuing a career in horticulture or agriculture are invited to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship available for each county. Applications are due by March 1, 2018, and are available, along with more information, at <http://nsvmga.org/nsvmga-scholarships/>.

Extension Master Gardeners in the Community

Winter is planning time for VCE Master Gardeners as they ramp up for the growing season in Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties.

Clarke County Ginny Smith

Clarke County Master Gardeners are holding a planning meeting in March to decide what projects to implement in 2018. If you're interested in leading a project, this is your chance! Ongoing now is the county's year-round helpline. Residents of Clarke County are encouraged to get in touch with any questions. See page 5 for contact information.

Being an Extension Master Gardener is a lot of work...but it's also a lot of fun! Ten Extension Master Gardeners got together to celebrate county projects completed in 2017. In addition to Clarke members, a member from Warren, two from Frederick, and one from Shenandoah joined in the fun. This project review and social time was held at the county coordinator's home, with a cookie exchange and a Mason-jar candle-light craft project.

Frederick County Helen Lake

Frederick County Extension Master Gardeners have several projects kicking off this winter. See the articles elsewhere in this newsletter for the new Children's Series and Plant Clinic, as well as the new trainee class taking place in the county.

They are also getting things in place for projects that pick up in early spring, including the help desk at the Old Town Winchester Farmers Market and office help desk hours.

Greenline is monitored year round. See page 5 for contact information.

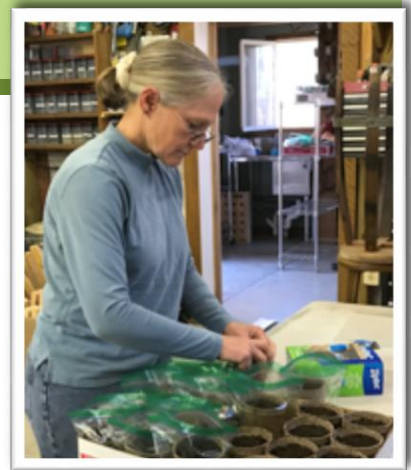
The Fremont Street Nursery Program at Timbrook Community Garden continues building on its successes from 2017 to grow and harvest vegetables with the program's children, using the beautiful garden beds built by the dedicated cadre of Extension Master Gardeners this past year. All plans are based on lessons learned from their challenges, including dealing with groundhogs that destroyed and consumed multiple plantings of vegetables. See our next newsletter for more information on this project.

Page County Robbin Jo Holland

Page County Extension Master Gardeners are gearing up to help again with the Shenandoah Elementary School Farm to Table Day, originated in 2016. Their participation helped to make the first event a huge success!

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association will purchase materials to prepare approximately 500 soil-filled peat pots. Page County Extension Master Gardeners will fill and seed each pot with two seeds of a hardy, easy-to-grow vegetable, such as bush cucumbers or black zucchinis. Each pot's packaging will include a card describing the seed, days to germination, how to plant and water, plant characteristics, flavor, and best time to harvest. *(Photo by Lesley Mack.)*

Boxes of seeded pots will go to Shenandoah Elementary School for collection and dispersal by teachers as their students participate in Farm to Table Day. Students will share in



the experience of watching and discussing the vegetables.

Once the growing season begins, county members will participate in the local Farmer's Market on Hawksbill Greenway. For any questions now, contact them using the information on page 5.

Shenandoah County Sharon Rodriguez

Shenandoah County Extension Master Gardeners are holding winter help desk hours. Samples of plants or insects are welcome; though please seal them in a zip-topped baggie! See page 5 for contact information. The county will hold training for its Green Help Line volunteers and leaders March 16, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. – noon in the VCE classroom.

Some county projects demonstrating horticultural best practices are always open to the public. Edinburg Mill Rain Garden and Storm Water Bioretention project is a collaborative effort of multiple civic partners with informative signage and is easily accessible from the parking area. The New Market Demonstration Rain Gardens are located next to the New Market Public Library. Garden informational literature, including plant maps, is available inside the library. [Corhaven Graveyard](#) in

Extension Master Gardeners in the Community, continued...

Quicksburg has an informative website, along with an on-site kiosk, and is also open to the public at no charge.

Eighteen Shenandoah County Extension Master Gardeners met to review 2017 projects and to enjoy appetizers and conversation. The consensus is that efforts are on the right track in outreach to the community. They'll get together again March 5th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in the VCE classroom to plan 2018 projects.

Warren County Katherine Rindt

While gardening questions have slowed for the winter, Extension Master Gardeners in Warren County are already planning ahead. The public is welcome to join in!

If you're concerned about the decline in pollinating insects or would like to learn about pollinators and plants that attract them, there are two excellent gardens in Front Royal looking for interested volunteers. Help with demonstration pollination gardens at either the Calvary Episcopal Church or the Happy Creek Arboretum.

Master Gardeners also help maintain demonstration gardens on the grounds of the Warren Heritage Society, which is an excellent place to learn about planting and care of perennials, annuals, and herbs, with hands-on experience in proper techniques throughout the growing season. Regular workdays will begin on Wednesday mornings in April.

For more information, email
NSVMGAnewsletter@gmail.com.

You can help support
NSVMGA while you shop...
at no added cost to you.

The below vendors donate a portion of your purchase price to us. At each website, choose Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Extension Master Gardeners Can Audit Trainee Classes

Extension Master Gardeners wishing to refresh their knowledge or make up a previous class may be able to attend trainee classes. To reserve one of the limited seats available, contact class coordinators Bob Gail, Susan Garrett, or Ann Levi through VMS. Classes are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit in Winchester and are open only to VCE Master Gardeners, Interns, and Trainees.

2/15/18 Botany I – Dr. Steve Carroll
2/20/18 Botany II – Dr. Steve Carroll
2/22/18 Entomology – Dr. Angelita Acebes-Doria & Nicole Quinn, PhD Student
2/27/18 Water Quality – Francis Reilly
3/1/18 Plant ID – Chris Schmidt
3/6/18 Turfs – Dr. Mike Goatley
3/13/18 Soils – VCE Agent Bobby Clark
3/15/18 Composting – VCE MG Sarah Pak; Public Speaking – VCE MG Anne Dewey-Balzhiser
3/20/18 Annuals/Houseplants – Carrie Whitacre
3/22/18 Herbaceous Perennials – Carrie Whitacre
3/27/18 Plant Pathology – Mike Likens
3/29/18 Tool Sharpening – VCE MG Rich Howell
4/3/18 Pruning – David Means

4/5/18..... Animal Damage Control – Fred Frenzel & VCE MG Bob Carlton
4/10/18..... Vegetables – VCE MG Paula Brownlee
4/12/18..... Propagation: Seeds – VCE MG Elaine Specht; Division – VCE MG Stacey Smith
4/14/18..... Division Workshop – VCE MG Stacey Smith
4/17/18..... Landscaping – Robert McDuffie
4/19/18..... Pest Management Guide & Pesticide Safety – VCE Agent Mark Sutphin
4/24/18..... Plant & Insect ID: Books – VCE MG Sharon Rodriguez; Apps – VCE MG Stacey Smith
4/26/18..... Green Helpline Practice & Lab – VCE MG Sharon Rodriguez, VCE MG Rich Howell, & VCE MG Stacey Smith
5/3/18..... Fruits and Berries – Bill Mackintosh

While individual classes are not open to the public, anyone interested in taking the 2018 VCE Master Gardener Training Course can [download an application](#) or contact VCE agent Mark Sutphin at mark.sutphin@vt.edu. See page 5 for more information.

Hit-or-Miss Patio Gardening

Jennifer Huffman

I have recently moved to an apartment with a patio that gets full sun. This is a new gardening experience for me!

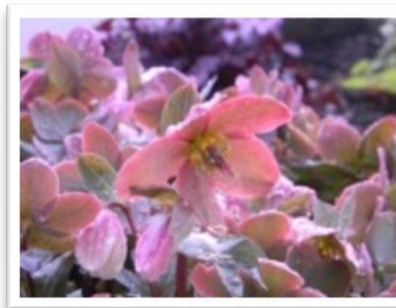
I planted my first flower garden a few years ago at our townhouse. The garden area was small and faced north. As a new gardener, I was literal and decided to put in only those plants I knew would grow facing north. I tore out the huge cotoneaster that had taken over the garden, and I planted astilbe, heuchera, foamflower, and Solomon's seal, along with other favorites.

There was already a large clump of beautiful glossy green leaves planted in the center of this little plot, but I had no idea what they were. I decided to keep them for their beauty as well as the sheer volume.

Over winter, I was pleasantly surprised! What were these lovely plants? Hellebores (*Helleborus*)! I fell in love with these stunning Lenten Roses. I eagerly looked out the window in late January each year to find the buds ready to burst through the blanketing snow. I was as excited as a kid on Christmas morning as I checked their progress each day.

In my new apartment, I've started a perennial container garden, and this article will take you on my journey as I see what will survive and what will not in this full-sun potted garden.

Fortunately, the patio has one small corner that is shaded. My favorite hellebores will once again take residence in my garden. (Photo by Jennifer Huffman.) If you'd like hellebores in your garden, get to



GardenFest early this year! In the meantime, read about them from [University of Maryland Extension](#) and [Clemson Cooperative Extension](#).

Interested in growing your own patio garden? If you want to branch out a bit into veggies, VCE has a great resource. Read [Vegetable Gardening in Containers](#) now so you're ready to get started in the spring!

Gardening with Wildlife

Jessica Priest-Cahill

You plant a new hosta in your garden, only to find it eaten to the ground a few days later. You're angry and disheartened, but this doesn't have to happen. There are strategies to prevent or minimize the damage wildlife causes.

Remove wildlife bait.

Trash, compost, and bird feeders are a delicious treat for wildlife. Once animals find them, they'll find other tasty treats in your garden. Keep trash in closed receptacles.

Don't place kitchen

compost heaps near your garden. Remove or closely monitor bird feeders during the times of year when wildlife is especially active. (Photo by Stacey Smith.)



Choose resistant / deterrent plantings. Some plants in your garden are more delicious than others. While deer will feast on your tulips and hostas, they will probably avoid your daffodils and dusty miller. Deer also tend to avoid highly aromatic plants, so try planting lavender or rosemary near your azaleas. If you're dealing with deer now, read [Deer: A Garden Pest](#) for more tips.

Opt for physical barriers. If you have plants you know are attractive to wildlife, use barriers around them. You can use wood or wire fences or even plastic netting. Remember to take into account what animals you want to keep out. If bunnies are your nemesis, a split-rail or picket fence isn't the best option.

Enlist the help of man's best friend. A dog is often very effective at deterring many animals. You'll probably still need that fence, though, or Rover may roam!

You'll want to prevent wildlife from damaging your vegetable and flower gardens, but you don't have to expel animals completely from your yard. There's potential pleasure in living with wildlife. The humorous antics of squirrels, the cuteness of bunnies, and the tranquility of deer can be pleasantly rewarding. Make spaces for these "nuisance" animals in your gardens, too... but remember to shield your tulips!

Potted Plants with Kids Jessica Priest Cahill

Kids like plants, and kids like crafts. What's better than an activity that combines both?

It's easy to let your child create and plant his or her own houseplant pot with just a few supplies. You'll need:

- a 6" terra cotta pot
- paintbrushes
- acrylic craft paint
- potting soil
- wire screen or mesh
- drainage tray or old plate
- sterile bagged potting soil

Put down a few layers of newspapers, and let your child get creative. Help her paint the pot to look like an animal or other designs. Let the pot dry completely – at least 24 hours – before the child pots the plant.

Choose a plant with easy-care needs and sized appropriately for the child's pot. Place mesh over the hole in the bottom, and fill the pot halfway with potting soil.

Remove the plant from the store container and let your child gently separate the roots while you help place the plant in the pot.

Make sure the crown of the plant, or where the stem and roots meet, will sit just barely above the top of the soil when you fill the pot. If necessary, take out the plant and add or remove soil in the bottom to get it to the right level. Once you get the plant crown at the correct level, fill in the pot with soil, and gently tamp it down.

Put your pot on a drainage tray or an old plate, and water just until the water begins to flow through and reach the tray. Help your child to remember to water their plant every week or two, depending on the plant's care instructions.

Learn more about growing indoor plants in the VCE publication [Indoor Plant Culture](#).

Jr Master Gardeners Lynn Hoffmann

The Junior Master Gardener program for Home School students starts up this March. The classes will meet every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 527 Van Fossen Street, Winchester, VA 22601.

Instructors are needed! Volunteers will meet at 10:30 a.m. on January 9, 2018, to work on the class schedule. Join them in the meeting room at Shenandoah Valley Westminster-Canterbury, located at 300 Westminster Canterbury Dr, Winchester, VA 22603.

Those Extension Master Gardeners interested in meeting that day, or who want to help but can't make the meeting, can contact Lynn Hoffmann through VMS.

Jr Master Gardener Enrollment for Home School Students

If you'd like more information on enrolling your child in the Junior Master Gardener program for Home School students, contact Lynn Hoffmann at NSVMGA.info@gmail.com.

Nature Surprises Children's Series Lynn Hoffmann

VCE Master Gardeners offer monthly workshops for children at Bowman Library. Scheduled talks are:

January 17, 2018 "Birds That Come, and Birds That Go in Your Garden." Students will learn about migration and the importance of birds in the garden, and they'll make winter-feeding stations for birds they see at home.

February 21, 2018 "Bird Feeding in the Winter." Students will learn how birds feed in the winter landscape and how to help birds over winter, and they'll build and take home a small bird feeder.

March 21, 2018 "Nests and Dens." Students will learn how birds build their nests and what natural materials they use, and they'll build their own nests with the same materials used by birds.

Each event is from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and includes a talk and hands-on workshop. Check the spring issue of our newsletter for future topics, including seed starting, pollinators, amphibians, and more. Bowman Library is located at 871 Tasker Rd, Stephens City, VA 22655.

Flora of Virginia App

Richard Stromberg

The [Flora of Virginia app](#) is now available for purchase. The book version of the Flora describes all vascular plant species that are known to persist and reproduce in Virginia without cultivation. The app puts in the palm of your hand all 1,554 pages of the Flora plus a multichotomous key and the maps and photos from the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora.

I used the app when visiting Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in October. Sugar Run was lined with these low-lying, variegated leaves. In the app, I chose *dicot* for its networked veins, rather than a monocot's parallel veins.



After entering five additional keys to describe the leaves - *basal, simple, undivided, wide, and entire* - the app narrowed the search to 19 possibilities, and Virginia Heartleaf, *Hexastylis virginica*, fit. (Photo by Richard Stromberg.)

Editor's Note... Richard Stromberg is retiring after 18 years. During his time with NSVMGA, he served as president, vice president, and editor. He promises to remain available for plant ID, native plants, and invasive alien plant removal.

Plant Giveaway & Clinic

Lynn Hoffmann

Extension Master Gardeners are ready to help with indoor plant problems. The public is invited to a plant giveaway and clinic at Bowman Library, 871 Tasker Rd, Stephens City, VA 22655 on Saturday, February 3, 2018, between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Come learn how to take care of indoor plants over winter. The clinic will include:

- A diagnostic table about how to identify and solve problems,
- A plant division area and a repotting demo/station with free divisions for attendees to take home,
- Information on making homemade potting mix, and
- Tips on overwintering tender perennials and how to keep them growing until it's time to move them back outside.

The Editor's Pollinator Garden Stacey Morgan Smith

Thank you for reading the first newsletter of 2018! I'm happy to be your new editor, and I welcome your suggestions on this issue and how we can improve our reach into our communities and with each other.

I thought I'd share a bit about my pollinator garden, which is pretty quiet right now. The finches have plucked apart most of the seed heads, though the tufts of asters are still dispersing. The winter sowing experiment in milk jugs is hopefully giving seed the cold treatment needed.

While Mother Nature works on the seed outside, those inside have a different journey. Some are in bags of moist soil in the fridge, and others are newly seeded into trays of potting mix. Other trays hold tiny seedlings growing under artificial lights. I start early to grow them for our plant sale.

One plant I don't get to start from seed is *Ageratina altissima* 'Chocolate' (synonymous with *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate'), sometimes called chocolate boneset or white snakeroot. This native Virginia plant has beautiful chocolate brown leaves in summer and bursts into tiny shaggy tufts of white in mid Autumn, when the leaves turn green. Painted Lady butterflies love it. (Photo by Stacey Smith.) It grows in full sun to part shade and prefers moist to wet soil. In my garden, it's tolerant of drought conditions in partial shade. Extension Master Gardener Carolyn Wilson gave me one small plant two years ago, and I now have a patch of three or four plants. This Joe-Pye Weed relative spreads by both rhizome and self-seeding, though the seedlings tend to revert to green. Because of this, I'm not starting seed, but I do hope to dig a division or two for GardenFest. Keep it in control in your garden by removing spent flowers and pulling any unwanted seedlings.

Read [Creating Inviting Habitats](#) for information on how to plan your own pollinator garden.





January

- 5 Shenandoah In-Office Help Desk, 9 a.m.*
- 16 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 17 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.
- 18 Master Gardener Class Registration, 1 p.m.
- 21 Association Meeting at Fort Valley Nursery, 2 p.m.*
- 27 Seed Exchange at Blandy Experimental Farm, 10 a.m.

February

- 2 Shenandoah In-Office Help Desk, 9 a.m.
- 3 Bowman Plant Clinic & Plant Giveaway, 11 a.m.
- 6 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 11 Association Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 2 p.m.*
- 21 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.

March

- 2 Shenandoah In-Office Help Desk, 9 a.m.
- 3 Gardening in the Valley Symposium, 8 a.m.
- 13 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 16 Shenandoah Help Line Orientation, 9 a.m.*
- 18 Association Meeting, 4 p.m.*
- 21 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.

April

- 10 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 15 Association Meeting, 4 p.m.*
- 18 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.

May

- 15 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 16 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.
- 20 Association Meeting, 4 p.m.*

June

- 2 GardenFest and Plant Sale at Belle Grove Plantation, 8 a.m.
- 5 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 10 Association Meeting, 4 p.m.*
- 20 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.

Extension Master Gardeners, save the date!

Master Gardener College is June 21 – June 24, 2018, at Virginia Tech.

Get more information at www.nsvmg.org or <https://www.facebook.com/NSVMGA>

Starred Events Open Only to Association Members

GardenFest is Saturday, June 2, 2018 – Save the Date!

8:00 a.m. – 3 p.m. Belle Grove Plantation, Middletown, Virginia.

Master Gardener Plant Sale – Workshops – Speakers

Children's Activities – Rummage Sale – Garden Tool Sharpening

Raffles – Specialty Vendors – Food. Free admission and parking!

More Information in our Spring Edition.



Enjoy our newsletter? [Click to subscribe!](#)

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association supports its members, Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners serving the counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren. Extension Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who work within their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management, education, and training. As an educational program of Virginia Cooperative Extension, Extension Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth.

**This newsletter is a publication of
the Northern Shenandoah Valley
Master Gardener Association**

Editor:

Stacey Morgan Smith

Proofreaders:

Mary Craig Sarah Kohrs
Belinda Palmer

Column Writers:

Suzanne Boag Cy Haley
Jennifer Huffman Helen Lake
Linda Melton Ginny Smith
Jessica Priest-Cahill Elaine Specht
Sharon Rodriguez

Contributing Writers:

Lynn Hoffmann Roz McIntosh
Robbin Jo Holland

Title Art:

Elena Lycas

For more information or to contact any
member, use VMS or email
NSVMGAnewsletter@gmail.com.

NSVMGA

Executive Board of Directors

President: Cy Haley

Vice President: Suzanne Boag

Secretary: Sandy Ward

Treasurer: Bob Gail

Past President: Susan Garrett

Standing Committee Chairs

Communications/Publicity: Lynn Hoffmann

Education: Suzanne Boag

Finance: Bob Gail

Membership: Mary Craig

Newsletter: Stacey Morgan Smith

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Clarke County Coordinator Ginny Smith

Frederick County Coordinator Helen Lake

Page County Coordinator Lesley Mack

Shenandoah County Coordinator Sharon Rodriguez

Warren County Co-Coordinator Jessica Priest-Cahill

Warren County Co-Coordinator Katherine Rindt

Volunteer Coordinator Bob Carlton

VCE Agent Mark Sutphin



Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/NSVMGA>
www.nsvmgga.org

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program is on social media:
[Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#) - [YouTube](#)

Copyright 2018. All rights reserved. Articles, in their entirety, may be used without permission for educational purposes; otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced without written consent of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association and the writers or photographers.

April's Spring Issue Deadline: March 10, 2018
Email articles or events to NSVMGAnewsletter@gmail.com.
Articles may be edited for content or to fit available space.