

Shenandoah Valley GARDENING

Newsletter of NSVMGA, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association

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GardenFest & Plant Sale June 2nd at Belle Grove Plantation

NSVMGA Extension Master Gardeners are hard at work planning their annual gardening celebration. Mark your calendar now for GardenFest: June 2nd, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Belle Grove Plantation.

Speakers & Children's Activities.

This year's speakers and children's activities support the "Gardening and Wildlife" theme. These talks and interactive activities educate and entertain attendees of all ages.

Master Gardener Plant Sale. The plant sale committee began its work last fall to ensure attendees find affordable, healthy plants for their gardens. In addition to a focus on native and pollinator plants, Extension Master Gardeners will have hundreds of unique varieties of perennials, annuals, trees, and shrubs. Start your shopping list now and check out our [Facebook](#) page in May for information about plants we plan to sell. Get to the event early for the best selection. (Photos by Stacey Smith.)

Vendors. The vendor coordinator has another great lineup of nonprofit booths to help you learn about many of the organizations in the Valley. Visit native and specialty plant sellers to fill in holes in the garden, and purchase unique gifts for family and friends with other vendors. Lunch is again sold by [Frederick County 4-H Eggs n' Ears](#), and you can also pick up ice cream and coffee treats.

Yard Sale. Association members are raiding their sheds for gently used gardening tools, pots, and books. Pick up unique items for your garden at a great price at the Secondhand Rose Yard Sale.

The event is free, and Master Gardener Plant Sale proceeds help fund, in part, educational programs in Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties. Watch our [Facebook](#) page for event updates.



See page 13 for a calendar of gardening events.

From the President Cy Haley



Spring has sprung!

For Extension Master Gardeners, that means projects get going as volunteers head out into their communities to help homeowners. That takes a lot of organization, and in our Association, we turn to our leaders to ensure a good experience for everyone involved.

Any association is made up of a lot of components, and each needs a leader. In NSVMGA, that may mean serving on the board of directors, serving as a county coordinator, taking the lead for an event or project, or heading up a committee.

When the time comes and we have an opening for a leader, a lot of volunteers are apprehensive about taking on the role of leadership, and I'm included in that

group. The word "leader" sounds so intimidating, almost military in its tone, but we shouldn't view it that way. The thought of being in charge or responsible as the lead shouldn't be off-putting; it should be viewed as an opportunity to help the Association and its members.

What leadership means to us is just "a willingness to try." By stepping up and taking on a role as leader, you are putting the organization before your own fears and apprehension.

We attempt a lot of different ways to reach the public, whether projects or events, and not all work out. When projects are deemed unsuccessful, leads may take it personally, but each project is a learning experience. Leads should view each effort with a sense of pride for trying something new, learning from the experience, and moving forward.

Whether serving on the board, in a coordinator's position, or as the lead on a committee, each position is important to the Association, and each position benefits both the leader and the members. The key components a leader needs are a little organization and a "can do" attitude. We all have that, and we all can put those attributes to good use by stepping up to take on leadership roles with the Association.

When an opportunity to lead a project, event, or position arises, take a risk, and you, too, can fill the role of leader.

(Photo by Stacey Smith.)

Donate your plants to GardenFest, and Extension Master Gardeners will help divide your perennials!

NSVMGA still has a few openings for plant digging parties in April 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. A group of volunteers will show up with shovels, soil, and pots and will dig up your plants. 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.

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

The below companies donate a portion of your purchase price to us.

At each website, choose Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association.

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Thank you!

MG Educational Adventures Suzanne Boag



Education committee members Tricia Boyd, Laurie Cocina, Rose Fairman, Lynn Hoffmann, Shan Kilby, and Chair Suzanne Boag are committed to coming up with interesting and fun educational activities for our Extension Master Gardeners.

In 2018, the committee takes its cues from the success of Frederick County's 2017 Day Trippin' program, and events will include both continuing education and fun, interesting activities. This presents a way for Extension Master Gardeners to get together as friends, old and new.

As such, the committee's program schedule for 2018 is renamed "MG Educational Adventures." Member Elena Lycas even created a beautiful logo to help members recognize education committee events.

2018's first adventure was a short drive to the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. Several carloads of Extension Master Gardeners visited Saturday, February 24th, to listen to an interesting murder mystery on a cold wintry day. Medical artist Jeffrey Day, MD, of the National Library of Medicine, talked about some of the poisonous plants found in Agatha Christie novels and their biochemical

mechanisms. Attendees also explored a beautiful bonsai display and walked the grounds of the Arboretum. Lynn Hoffmann organized this adventure.

Upcoming Educational Adventures include:

April 25th – Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, Maryland. \$36 registration includes guided garden tour, lunch, and guided tour of the historical house. Rose Fairman is organizing this adventure.

April 26th – Spotted Lanternfly Educational Talk, Warren County Government Center. Eric Day, Extension entomologist and manager of the Insect ID Lab at Virginia Tech, will talk about this awful pest and will also instruct interested attendees on how to participate in the banding detection project. Space is limited, so those Extension Master Gardeners interested in attending should email adventure organizer Suzanne Boag as soon as possible. They should also let her know if they would like to help with the banding detection project. (See page 11 for more information on the spotted lanternfly.)

June 20th - White Oak Lavender Farm in Harrisonburg, VA. Includes a guided tour of the lavender farm, followed by a wand-making class. Shan Kilby and Tricia Boyd are organizing this adventure.

MG Educational Adventures are open to all Association members. All adventures are planned to include continuing education time. Contact the adventure organizer for more information.

**NSVMGA members...
want to help plan
your Association?
Come to a board meeting!**

Tuesdays 6:00 p.m.
April 10, May 15, & June 5
at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit
125 Prosperity Drive
Winchester, VA 22602

Monthly Association Meetings Suzanne Boag

Extension Master Gardeners exist to help the public. NSVMGA supports its Extension Master Gardeners by providing them additional resources to excel in that work. 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!

April 15, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Blandy Library at the State Arboretum of Virginia – Dr. Steve Carroll discusses tree identification, followed by a tree walk (weather permitting).

May 20, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Lynn Hoffmann's Home – Extension Master Gardeners gather to celebrate the class of 2018's graduation.

June 10, 2018, 4:00 p.m., at Cheryl McDonald's Home – Extension Master Gardener Charlie Newton talks about Page County's Chinquapin Oak, featured in *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*.

Meetings are open to all Association members and earn Extension Master Gardeners a project hour and an education hour. Trainees and interns earn two project hours.

Gardening Meets Compassion

Sarah Kohrs

Since 2015, Extension Master Gardeners have spearheaded preservation efforts at Corhaven Graveyard, historically known as Sam Moore's Slave Cemetery. In 2016 the graveyard became available for public access from dawn to dusk each day of the week.

The presence of Extension Master Gardeners began upon identification of native perennials used as burial markers. *(Photo by Sarah Kohrs.)* This project is more than a site for hands-on workshops and incorporating a riparian buffer, monarch waystation, and native perennial gardening practices; it's also a place where gardening meets compassion.



Local groups and individuals are encouraged to connect with a difficult part of American history by volunteering at Corhaven Graveyard. Workdays are times when Extension Master Gardeners are on-site to work with interested community members. It's a great way to learn from volunteers trained in best gardening practices, as well as to make a connection with local history. All you need are gardening gloves, sturdy shoes, clothing you don't mind getting dirty, and a willing heart.

Anyone can participate in a workday at Corhaven Graveyard. In 2017, a Girl Scouts group added a monarch garden. Homeschoolers regularly gather to help transplant native perennials and remove invasives. This year, volunteers are expanding the monarch garden, incorporating more perennials, and further developing the shaded area of the graveyard. If your community group or you — as a citizen committed to the preservation of public spaces in Shenandoah County — are interested in participating in a workday at Corhaven, please contact project leader Sarah Kohrs at senkohrs@gmail.com or (434) 922-2029. Also contact her if you are involved in a

non-profit or business that would like to contribute plants, mulch, or similar gardening items.

It takes many hands to create a community founded on compassion. For more information, visit corhavengraveyard.org. *(Photo by Sharon Rodriguez.)*



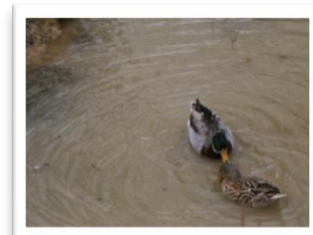
Shenandoah's Hidden Gardens

Elaine Specht

A learning opportunity awaits at 764 South Water Street in Woodstock. The Indian Spring Wetland is a publicly accessible area that demonstrates a wetland at work. A sturdy, raised walkway enables visitors to get above the action. Interpretive markers along the way explain how the wetland filters sediments and pollution as runoff, groundwater, and spring water flow through. Indian Spring Wetland is a seasonal wetland that is typically wet during winter and spring and dry during summer and fall.

Constructed on land donated to the Town of Woodstock, many organizations, including the Woodstock Tree Board, VA Department of Forestry, US Forest Service, Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, James Madison University, and Central High School, partnered to preserve and enhance the area. Volunteers removed invasive species, such as tree of heaven, Japanese honeysuckle, Siberian elm, and multiflora rose, making way for native plants, including ironweed, rice cut grass,

bushy pondweed, cinnamon willow-herb, and bottlebrush sedge. A variety of animals, birds, and insects also make their home in the wetland. On a cold day in March, several ducks fed in the stream, and chickadees chirped overhead.



The Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River has developed a study guide geared toward science education for kindergarten through fifth grade. Learn more about Indian Spring Wetland and access the educational guide through the [Town of Woodstock's website](http://www.townofwoodstockva.org). *(Photos by Elaine Specht.)*



Seasonal Gardening Tips Elaine Specht

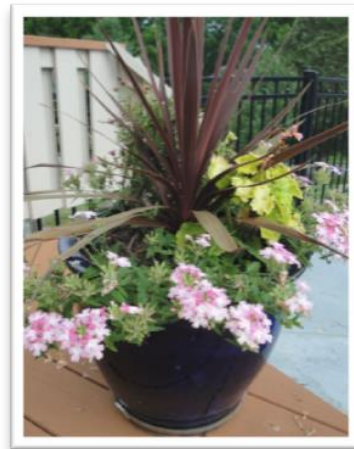
Gardening and yard work take time, but for many it is a labor of love. Still, there are ways to make the best use of time. Mulching, mowing properly, and correctly timing planting are three ways to work smarter rather than harder.

Mulching. Spreading mulch, such as the most common shredded bark mulch, can be a time-consuming springtime job, but it pays dividends throughout the rest of the year. It suppresses weed growth, helps retain moisture, and can improve soil nutrients, all of which make garden and landscape maintenance easier.

Mowing. Along the Valley, lawns typically need their first mowing in early April. Mowing at the correct height and allowing the clippings to stay on the lawn promote a healthy lawn. Even better, it's a huge time-saver. A general rule of thumb is to clip lawns in the 2-3 inch range, while also not cutting more than 1/3rd of the blade in one mowing.

Planting. As the mercury rises, don't be fooled into planting too early, or you may be replanting after a frost.

In the Shenandoah Valley, the average last killing frost is around Mother's Day, but in some cold pockets it can be as late as Memorial Day. That means tender plants, like most vegetable plants or annual flowers, are in danger of being killed by a frost if they are put outside before then. (Photo by Elaine Specht.)



Learn more with resources from Virginia Cooperative Extension:

- [Springtime Mulching](#)
- [Mow like a Pro](#)
- [Vegetable Planting Guide & Dates](#)
- [Annuals: Culture and Maintenance](#)

PROGRAMMING BROUGHT TO YOU BY POT TOWN ORGANICS, LORD FAIRFAX SWCD, MASTER GARDENERS & VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

STRASBURG COMMUNITY GARDEN UPCOMING EVENTS

IN THE GARDEN SERIES

March 24th at 10 AM
Living Soil Series: Soil Basics

May 6th at 10 AM
Rain Garden Design and
Installation

Check out our  page
@StrasburgCommunityGarden

GARDEN WORK DAYS

April 21st at 10 AM
OPEN HOUSE &
Volunteer Day

May 19th at 10 AM
Planting Day

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS

April TBD at 7 PM
Symphony of the Soil
Woodstock Movie Theater

June TBD at 7 PM
Composting 101
Pot Town Organics

Volunteers and additional support provided by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association and other Strasburg Community Garden partners.

FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER FOR THE WORKSHOPS,
PLEASE CALL ALI at (540) 325-5180 OR EMAIL NICK at nick.livesay@lfswwcd.org

Extension Master Gardeners in the Community

Clarke County Ginny Smith

After the March planning meeting, Clarke County Extension Master Gardeners are gearing up for a busy season! Helpline activity picks up as the growing season gets going, and the public is encouraged to call with any questions. In addition, the farmers market begins in May, where Extension Master Gardeners man an info booth the fourth Saturday of each month from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. (See page 7 for more information.)

County members will soon schedule weeding, mulching, and planting sessions at the Xeriscape Garden at Hobert Park. They'll also add plant markers this year. If you see an Extension Master Gardener working in the garden, feel free to ask any questions!

The county also welcomes their two new trainees. (See page 7 for more information.) If you're a Clarke County Extension Master Gardener and are interested in being county coordinator, see Ginny Smith for more information.

Frederick County Helen Lake

Frederick County Extension Master Gardeners are working hard helping to lead the new trainee class, which takes place in the county.

They are also holding their planning meeting soon to get their projects squared away for the season. This is a great opportunity for longtime Extension Master Gardeners to meet the new county trainees. While there, the county members will explore new options for helping the public with their gardening questions. Expected to continue are the Old Town Winchester Farmers Market and office help desk hours. If you have questions now, you can get help on the Helpline email, which is monitored year round. (See page 7 for more information.)



The Children's Garden at Fremont Street Nursery also continues this year. (Photo by Mary Turner.)

Page County Lesley Mack

Beginning in May, Page County Extension Master Gardeners, who very much enjoy talking with and helping beginning and seasoned gardeners, are available at an informational booth at the Luray Farmers Market on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month through October. All gardening questions are welcome, as everyone is a student to the ideas and methods of gardening responsibly.

The second largest Chinquapin Oak in Virginia resides in the downtown area of Luray. This prized and beautiful oak germinated in the mid-1700s. The oak has its own small park area, a new pink marble bench, and signage describing Annie Grayson Lauck's wish that the oak be preserved forever. Stop by and see it when you can to learn more!

Extension Master Gardeners ensure the oak is free of underbrush and ivy and that it is kept mulched. Hopefully with the new signage, folks will stop by to appreciate this glorious tree that has lived through the ages.

You'll also find Page County Extension Master Gardeners at GardenFair at Blandy.

Shenandoah County Sharon Rodriguez

Shenandoah County Extension Master Gardeners recently held their project planning and staffing meeting, where they created committees for 2018 projects. Additional volunteers are still needed, and those interested should contact project leads.

A newer project is assisting with the community garden on the grounds of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Toms Brook. The project began a few years ago with a Community Grant and volunteers constructing frames for six raised beds. Extension Master Gardeners will provide guidance to this year's garden participants in planting and maintaining their individual garden plots.

An older project is the New Market Rain Garden, which will soon start up. In addition to weeding, Extension Master Gardeners will pot up extra plants for the GardenFest plant sale (see page 1 for more information).

Helpline, which operates year round, picks up steam in spring. Keep an eye out for public information tables at both the Strasburg Farmers Market and the Woodstock Lowe's Store. Check your local paper for reminders in the Community Events section. (See page 7 for more information.)

Warren County Jessica Priest-Cahill

Warren County Extension Master Gardeners are getting ready for the busy season. The Helpline Desk is open Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning April 2nd. Stop by with your gardening questions. (See page 7 for more information.)

County members are participating in Samuels Library's fundraiser, "[A Taste for Books](#)," Saturday, April 14th. The event theme is "Coming Home," and the Extension Master

In the Community, continued...

Gardener table's theme is "Victory Gardens of World War I and World War II." Join us and learn about this important period in our history!

Over the winter, county members held a winter seed starting class for students at John XXIII Montessori Children's Center. Students sowed flower and vegetable seeds in plastic jug mini-greenhouses for overwintering. Soon Extension Master Gardeners will help the students learn how to plant them into the garden.

Work on Samuels Public Library grounds, Belle Boyd Cottage gardens, Calvary Memorial Garden, and Happy Creek Arboretum butterfly gardens also begin this spring. Volunteers will clean up debris from last year's old growth, divide perennials, and plant annuals. While there, they can answer your gardening questions.

For more information, email
NSVMGAnews@gmail.com.

2018 Master Gardener Trainees

Welcome to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener unit's 2018 Trainee Class! (Photo by Cy Haley.)

This year's class members represent three of our five counties. Give them a welcome when you see them!

Clarke County: Andrea Brown and Colleen Liszewski.

Frederick County: Nita Bearer, Richard Bell, Sarah Bell, Robin Boggs, Jeff Burke, Brenda Carbaugh, Sonja Cline, Linda Cunningham, Julia Dural, Paula Gibbs, Karen Lennon, Gene Loranger, Lorna Loring, Chris Manley, Mart Makosky, Misa Mulrone, Stevan Resan, John Reynolds, Kate Schindler, and Gina Sullivan.

Page County: Kim Harper.

Want to become an Extension Master Gardener? [Sign up for our email list](#) and receive event information, as well as advance notice of the 2019 class.



Home Gardening Questions Answered

by VCE Master Gardeners



Clarke

540-955-5164



Frederick

540-665-5699

GreenHelpLine.FrederickCo@gmail.com



Page

540-778-5794



Shenandoah

540-459-6140

GreenHelpLine@gmail.com



Warren

540-635-4549



Need Help? Contact Us!

Extension Master Gardeners are available year round through phone and email.

During the growing season, you'll also find us at farmers markets, info booths, county fairs, and help desks.

Get a plant or insect ID, find out how to get rid of an invasive plant, and get the most current research-based information on any type of gardening and pest management.

We plan to be at the following events:

Clarke County

Clarke Farmers Market
Saturdays May 26 & June 23

Frederick County

Old Town Winchester Farmers Market
Saturdays May 12, 19, 26, & June 2, 16, 23, 30

Page County

Luray Farmers Market
Saturdays May 12, 26, & June 9, 23

Shenandoah County

County Help Desk (600 N Main St, Ste 100, Woodstock)
Fridays Apr 6, 20, May 4, 18, & June 1, 15
Lowe's Woodstock Help Desk
Saturdays April 28, May 26, & June 23

Warren County

County Help Desk (220 North Commerce, Ste 500, Front Royal)
Mondays April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14, 21, & June 4, 11, 18, 25

Patio Gardening

Jennifer Huffman

Choosing the right containers for a patio garden is vital. Last year I used my assortment of containers that had previously adorned my old home's porch, but I found I had too many cumbersome pots in such a small space. By the time all of the plants were in place, there was little room to sit. It was also a backbreaking chore to move those pots when the maintenance men needed to get to the patio utility closet.

There are issues with any type of pot, but there are enough downsides to my conventional pots that using them in my small space is not the best option, so I need something new. After much research, **I'm trying fabric pots.**

Here's why I like fabric pots:

- They are **lightweight and moveable**. I plan to put some of the larger pots on a rolling dolly, which takes care of the utility-door fiasco.
- They **won't crack or overheat**.
- They **can be washed and reused**. Some are made from a non-toxic polypropylene and some from recycled fabrics like denim.
- They **come in various sizes**. You can purchase small hanging pouches or big containers large enough for an aboveground garden. Some gardeners use these fabric vessels to grow their vegetable gardens, even when they have land available, so they can control the soil.
- They **have an air-root system**, which is my favorite feature of fabric pots. The material is breathable, which allows the water to drain properly, therefore enabling the roots to get their fill of much needed oxygen and nutrients.

There are several brands to choose from. If you buy fabric pots, consider where they are made and the material used to ensure it fits with your environmental plan. Look for fabric that is thick enough to hold soil without breaking but thin enough to allow air in and water out. (Photo by Pamela McGraw.)

Learn more about choosing a container for your patio garden in Colorado State University's [Container Gardens](#) publication.



Gardening with Wildlife

Jessica Priest-Cahill

The much anticipated signs of spring after months of dreary winter: The robins returning, the peepers peeping, and the bees buzzing around the early blooming flowers. To help encourage even more activity, you can create a **backyard wildlife habitat** for pollinators, such as butterflies, birds, bats, and bees, or for other wildlife.

Basic Elements. A wildlife habitat has four basic elements: water, food, shelter, and a place to raise young. Providing water can be done with a garden pond or a simple birdbath.

Provide food through the trees, shrubs, and flowers you plant in your garden. Include ground cover and low-growing foliage to provide shelter and a place to raise young for many species of small animals. Plan for the animals you most want to visit your garden.



Monarch butterflies require nectar for food and milkweed to lay their eggs. (Photo by Stacey Smith.) Read VCE's publication [Creating Backyard Habitats](#) for more information.

Incorporate vertical structure. In most natural habitats in the eastern United States there are distinct layers: herbaceous (wildflowers and groundcovers), understory (small trees and shrubs), and canopy (tall trees). Recreate that in your garden by adding trellises, tripods, and other upright garden features above shorter plants.

Grow Natives. Remove or control invasives already in your gardens and add native plants, which increase wildlife diversity and support native pollinators. Choosing native plants will provide appropriate food, shelter, and nesting sites for native wildlife. The "[Habitat at Home](#)" booklet produced by Virginia Habitat Partners contains a list of native plants for your Virginia wildlife habitat.

The National Wildlife Federation offers a wildlife habitat certification for gardens. Find it and more resources on wildlife habitat gardens at the [NWF website](#). With proper planning, the results in your wildlife garden will be aesthetically pleasing and better for the environment.

If you need plants to add to your garden, be sure to attend NSVMGA's GardenFest on June 2 at Belle Grove Plantation. This year's theme is "Gardening and Wildlife," and the Extension Master Gardener plant sale will highlight pollinator and native plants. (See page 1 for more information.)

Planting a Natural Dust Barrier

Robin Jo Holland

Living on a gravel road means dusty cars, grass, and plantings. You can help keep the road dust to a minimum in your garden by planting a windbreak. This type of planting helps diffuse and redirect wind flow.

The best windbreak planting consists of mature evergreen species with needle-like leaves. Though broadleaf evergreens and deciduous trees help with stopping the wind, they are not as effective because their leaves have less surface area. Evergreen foliage excels at filtering particles as the wind passes through, with the dust particles accumulating on the needle surfaces. The amount of removal depends on the season, density of planting, dust material, and height of greenery. An ideal density is 60% conifer plantings, which helps reduce or redirect the energy of the wind and modifies the environmental conditions in your yard on the protected side of the barrier.

An ideal windbreak dust barrier is 20 feet or more wide, with full leaf and branch coverage from ground to canopy, the full length of the barrier. This is best achieved by two staggered rows of evergreens, planted to accommodate the size of plants at maturity.

Residential properties may face height issues with an evergreen barrier if the residence is in close proximity to a road or power lines or if the barrier obstructs views. In these instances, popular windbreak trees such as Eastern White and Virginia Pines or Red Cedars may be too tall. Greater flexibility in height and circumference is achieved with cultivars of *Arborvitae*.

Additional dust barrier benefits can be achieved by planting native trees and shrubs on each side of the evergreen barrier, beginning with the windward side. Plant in a stair-step design, with taller 4-6 foot plants in the first tier near the evergreens, and 2-3 foot plants at the edge. Include fast growing coniferous shrubs on the windward side.

The protected leeward side provides you the opportunity to be creative. Against an evergreen backdrop, native plantings with spring flowers, fall color, and berries provide an open door to designing a wildlife habitat. (See page 8 for more information on wildlife habitats.)

If you want help planning your windbreak dust barrier, talk with your local Extension Master Gardeners. (See page 7 for more information). You can also learn more from Penn State's [Privacy and Wind Screening](#) publication, University of Nebraska's [How Windscreens Work](#), and VCE's [Screening](#) publication.

Symposium...Thank You!

Helen Lake

This year's "Gardening in the Valley Symposium" was a terrific success! This is due to the hard work of ten committee members who put this event together in only six months. It appealed to homeowners, industry professionals, and Extension Master Gardeners, and by many it was deemed "the best yet!" Proceeds all go toward the NSVMGA Memorial Scholarship Program to help five county high school students as they head off to college. Thank you to everyone who attended!

Don't Guess... Soil Test!

Getting the garden ready to plant? There's still time to get your soil tested before you buy fertilizer you may not need. The \$10 you spend now could save you hundreds of dollars...and help protect our waterways.

VCE provides boxes and information on taking a representative soil sample from your garden or yard (multiple samples combined and mixed in a plastic bucket or clean pot). Send that off to the Virginia Tech Soil Testing Lab, and in a few weeks (or sooner), you'll receive customized information about what, if anything, you should add to improve your soil.



When you apply only what is needed and when recommended, you help minimize runoff into your ground water, as well as into the many creeks and streams around the Valley that feed into the Shenandoah River. You'll help save the river while saving money.

When you're ready, contact your local Extension Master Gardeners (see page 7 for more information) to pick up your sample box. In the meantime, you can read [Soil Sampling for the Home Gardener](#) to learn how to take the best sample. You can also fill out the [Soil Sample Information Sheet](#) so you're ready when you get your sample box. (Photo by Stacey Smith.)

Contact Extension Master Gardeners if you need any help at any point of the way. They can also review your results with you. (See page 7 for contact information.)

Gardening with Kids Jessica Priest Cahill

Do you want to encourage your child to eat more fruits and vegetables? According to a study by food researchers at Cornell University, **children are five times more likely to eat vegetables that they grow themselves.** Even if you don't have space for a large vegetable garden, you can easily grow fruits and vegetables in container gardens in small spaces.

Pick a Veggie. Growing sugar snap peas in a container garden is easy and engaging for a child. The peapods are a crisp, sweet, and fresh snack that also grows quickly compared to other vegetables. Peas come in a vine or bush variety. A bush variety is best for container gardening.

Choose a Pot. Choose a container that is two gallons or larger in size. You are not limited to traditional pots, but if your container doesn't have drainage holes, add three to five holes in the bottom. Let your child fill the container with potting soil to about one inch from the top of the container. Read VCE's [Vegetable Gardening in Containers](#) for more information on container gardening.

Sow Seeds. Help your child sow the seeds two to three inches apart and about one inch deep. Water thoroughly. Keep the container in a lightly shaded area until germination, which takes one to two weeks. Once the seeds have sprouted, move the pot to an area with full sun and keep an eye on the soil. When it looks dry, stick your finger about one inch down into the soil. If it feels dry, it's time to water. Have your child water until the soil is again moist.

Fertilize if needed. Once peas have sprouted, an adult may fertilize the plants using a low-nitrogen fertilizer or nitrogen-fixing inoculant. If you choose to fertilize, be sure to carefully follow the label directions.

Harvest. About 60-70 days after germination, your child will have tasty sugar snap peas to eat right off the bush or share with the family for a tasty dinner treat.

Other vegetables and fruits that children might enjoy growing in containers include tomatoes, peppers, and strawberries. VCE provides publications on [growing many types of vegetables](#), and North Carolina has more information on [growing peas](#).

Northern Shenandoah Valley Survey

Have a few minutes? VCE needs your help! The 2018 VCE Northern Shenandoah Valley Survey is now open.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about community issues and to identify needs in the counties of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren.

Please take a couple of minutes to share your opinions and observations. The results of this survey will help in shaping Virginia Cooperative Extension programs in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

[Take the Survey](#)

Have any questions? Reach your area Virginia Cooperative Extension offices below.

- o [Clarke County](#)
- o [Frederick County](#)
- o [Page County](#)
- o [Shenandoah County](#)
- o [Warren County](#)

Nature's Surprises Children's Series Lynn Hoffmann

Extension Master Gardeners offer **free monthly workshops for children** at Bowman Library.

Each event is the third Wednesday of the month from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and includes a talk and hands-on workshop.

Scheduled talks are:

April 18, 2018 "What's Blooming?" Learn about the plants blooming outside and take home a plant to grow at home.

May 16, 2018 "Let's Grow in the House." Learn how to start seeds inside and take home a mini greenhouse to start your own seeds.

June 20, 2018 "Pollinators All Around You." Learn about pollinators and the garden and environment and take home a pollinator plant for your garden.

Check the summer issue of our newsletter for future topics, including amphibians, water protection, and fairies! Bowman Library is located at 871 Tasker Rd, Stephens City, VA 22655. (Photo by Lynn Hoffmann.)



Insect Invasive Alert – Spotted Lanternfly Linda Melton

A new invasive species was recently spotted in our area. The spotted lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*, can damage numerous crops, and homeowners are requested to report any observances.

Invasion. Native to Asia, the spotted lanternfly was first found in the U.S. in 2014 in Pennsylvania. By 2017, 13 counties in southeastern Pennsylvania were affected. In January of this year, it was reported in Frederick County, Virginia.

Because this planthopper is awkward in flight, it may spread through accidental transportation in or on other objects. The insect has been found inside packages shipped from contaminated areas, and eggs have been found on a variety of materials, such as plants, vehicles, and trains. A nymph or adult can even hide on clothing.

Diet. The spotted lanternfly has few natural enemies here and can feed on more than 70 different plants, including apples, grapes, peaches, hops, ornamental trees, and wood. Left unchecked, this insect could cause significant damage to plant nurseries, wineries, fruit growers, and the timber industry, among others, which could affect the economy and food availability.

The insect has a preference for tree of heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, as a host plant. This is another alien invasive and has spread throughout much of the U.S.

Lifecycle. What is known about the timing of the spotted lanternfly's lifecycle is based on observation in Pennsylvania. Virginia's climate, which is generally warmer, could shift the lifecycle from two weeks to a month earlier for each stage.

From September through November, a female adult lays eggs on a variety of trees, as well as other materials left outside, such as firewood, posts, or even rusty metal. The eggs are laid in clusters of 4 - 7 columns that are each about an inch in length by ½ - ¾ inch wide.

Each cluster of eggs, or oothecae, has approximately 30 - 50 eggs in it. The eggs are covered with a grayish, waxy substance, which later dries to a brown color and cracks, helping the clusters blend in with the bark of trees. The adult then dies as winter sets in.

Identification. The spotted lanternfly's eggs hatch in May and go through four nymph stages, or instars. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd instars are black with white spots. The 4th instar looks similar in structure but is bright red with white spots. Nymphs go through their final changes to become adults in July.

The adults are approximately 1" long and have speckled wings, which are folded up like a tent when resting. They are more active in the evening, when you'll see them climbing tree trunks with their tan upper wings visible. They are harder to see during the day, when they may huddle in groups at the base of a plant or tree.

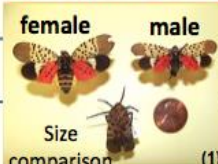





When the spotted lanternfly spreads its wings for flight, you can see the bright orange-red coloration of its lower wings. This is a warning coloration, which helps deter potential predators such as birds. The female spotted lanternfly can be further identified by an orange-red dot on the tip of her abdomen.

Behavior. The adult spotted lanternfly doesn't fly far on its own wing power. It primarily hops and climbs; however, it will take advantage of the wind by climbing to the tops of trees and jumping off to catch the air current, floating 40 - 60 feet. (*continues next page*)

Spotted Lanternfly *Lycorma delicatula* ("SLF")

What we know about the SLF is based on those found in Pennsylvania.

Virginia's warmer climate may cause them to appear 2 - 4 weeks earlier.

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
|  <p>female male Size comparison (1)</p> |  <p>Adult (2)</p> | July |
| | | August |
| | | September |
|  <p>Egg Case Adults (2)</p> | Adults lay eggs from September to November and then die. | October |
| | | November |
| | | December |
|  <p>(1)</p> | Young egg cases have gray waxy coverings that turn brown and crack as they mature. They may be found on tree trunks or on objects left sitting outside. Small slit-like openings are where nymphs have hatched. Scrape off egg cases and double bag before disposing or placing in rubbing alcohol. | January |
| | | February |
| | | March |
|  <p>(3)</p> |  <p>(4)</p> <p>4th instars are red with white spots and are found between May and July</p> | April |
| 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd instars hatch in April and are black with white spots | | May |
| | | June |

Since strategies to deal with the Spotted Lanternfly vary with life cycle stage, please contact your local Extension Office or Master Gardeners for advice.

Photo Credits: 1) VA Cooperative Extension, 2) PA Department of Agriculture, 3) Emelie Swackhamer, 4) Eric Day

Spotted lanternfly continued...

Damage. Both the nymph form and adult form use piercing mouthparts to feed on plant juices and soft phloem tissue. Older nymphs and adults tend to feed in groups, and this concentrated area of feeding causes a tree to ooze sap from its wounds, weakening the tree due to lack of stored food.

In addition to weakening a tree or plant through feeding, the spotted lanternfly further damages the plant and even surrounding plants through its waste. As it feeds, it excretes massive amounts of honeydew, a sugary substance. The honeydew builds up at the base of the tree and provides the perfect medium for sooty mold growth, which further weakens and often kills the plant.

Detection. Sooty mold and a related odor are telltale signs of the presence of spotted lanternfly. You may see blackened soil that looks burned and yellowish-white mold patches. In addition, you may smell a vinegar-like odor. This odor and the honeydew often attract insects such as bees, ants, hornets, and flies.

What To Do. Become familiar now with the different stages of the lifecycle of the spotted lanternfly. Also learn how to identify its preferred host, tree of heaven. Keep an eye out in late spring and early summer for nymphs, followed by adults in summer and into fall.

How to Report. If you see the insects at any stage of development, please contact your [local extension office](#) or [submit a photo electronically](#). See the [VCE spotted lanternfly pest alert](#) for more information on how to identify, report, and submit a sample.

How to Treat. Treatment options vary based on quantity, lifecycle, and surrounding environment. Contact Extension Master Gardeners (see page 7) for the latest research-based information on dealing with this evolving threat. Read more from VCE about the [spotted lanternfly](#) and see close-up pictures of each life stage at the [USDA's pest alert](#).

Plant Invasive Alert – Tree of Heaven Linda Melton

Often confused with the native sumac or black walnut, the invasive tree of heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, has spread across the U.S. since its introduction over 200 years ago. It is often found growing in clusters because it has an aggressive root system that can grow into trees over 50 feet away. It is tolerant of drought, salt, pollution, poor soil, and temperature extremes. Contact Extension Master Gardeners for information on removal. (See page 7 for contact information.)

Do You Have Tree of Heaven or a Native Tree?

Tree-of-Heaven



Leaf length: 1 to 3 feet long
Number of Leaflets: 11 to 41
Notes: leaflet margin is smooth except for 2-3 pair of glandular teeth near the base; crushed foliage has a foul odor,

Black Walnut



Leaf Length: 12" to 24" long
Number of Leaflets: 10 to 24
Notes: missing terminal leaflet, leaflets are finely serrated (toothed), and, rachis (leaf stem) is somewhat fuzzy.

Smooth Sumac



Leaf length : 12" to 18" long
Number of Leaflets: 11 to 31
Notes: Leaflets have a serrated margin, have fine hairs below.

Staghorn Sumac



Leaf Length: 16" to 24" long,
Number of Leaflets: 11 to 31
Notes: Leaflets have serrated margins, rachis is fuzzy.

Visit the [Virginia Tech Dendrology](#) site for more information on each tree, or check our [Facebook Page](#) for additional identification information.



Flower: Species is dioecious (sexes are on separate trees).
Color: Yellow-green
Appearance: Small, but in long 6" - 12" clusters.
Timing: Late spring to early summer.
Notes: Male flowers have a bad odor.



Flower: Species is monoecious (male and female are on same tree).
Color: Yellow-green.
Appearance: Male flowers are on 2 1/2" to 5 1/2" long catkins; female flowers are on short spikes near twig end.
Timing: Late spring.



Flower: Species is dioecious (sexes are on separate trees).
Color: Pale yellow petals.
Appearance: Small, dense upright cluster up to 8" long.
Timing: Mid to late summer.



Flower: Species is usually dioecious (separate male and female trees).
Color: Yellow-green petals.
Appearance: Small, upright terminal cluster up to 8" long.
Timing: Mid-summer.

Graphic Information
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 Photos and text by John Seller, Edward Jensen, Alex Niemiera, and John Peterson. Silvics reprinted from *Ag Handbook 654*.

SPEAKERS • PLANT SALE • VENDORS • FOOD • DEMOS & MORE!

SAVE THE DATE!**Saturday June 2, 2018 • 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.****GARDEN
FEST**

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April

- 3 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 10 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 10 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 14 Samuels Library Taste for Books, 4 p.m.
- 15 Association Meeting at Bland Library, 4 p.m.*
- 17 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 18 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.
- 21 Strasburg Community Garden Work Day, 10 a.m.
- 24 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 25 MG Educational Adventure Tour, 10 a.m.*

May

- 1 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 6 Strasburg Community Garden Series, 10 a.m.
- 8 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 12 GardenFair at Bland (12th – 13th plus Friday preview)
- 15 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 15 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 16 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.
- 19 Strasburg Community Garden Work Day, 10 a.m.
- 20 Association Meeting at Lynn Hoffmann's Home, 4 p.m.*
- 22 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 29 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.

June

- 2 GardenFest and Plant Sale at Belle Grove, 8 a.m.
- 5 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 5 Board Meeting at Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, 6 p.m.*
- 10 Association Meeting at Cheryl McDonald's Home, 4 p.m.*
- 12 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 19 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.
- 20 Children's Nature Series at Bowman Library, 5 p.m.
- 20 MG Educational Adventure Tour, 9 a.m.*
- 21 Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech (21st – 24th)*
- 26 Belle Grove Teaching Garden, 9 a.m.

Starred Events Open Only to Association Members & Guests

Get more information

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Master Gardener Program is on social media:
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The Editor's Pollinator Garden

Stacey Morgan Smith

My yard has slowly evolved into a butterfly buffet as I've added more pollinator plants. Here are just a few of my favorites, some of which will be in our "instant pollinator garden" packs at the Master Gardener Plant Sale.

Asclepias spp. - Monarch caterpillars devour their milkweed host plants here. I have a lot of common (*A. syriaca*), swamp (*A. incarnata*), and butterfly (*A. tuberosa*), as well one or two whorled (*A. verticillata*) and poke (*A. exaltata*). Each plant also serves as a nectar source when in bloom.

Baptisia - It's not the prettiest caterpillar, but a wild indigo duskywing enjoyed my yellow wild indigo (*B. tinctoria*) last year. Plants are available in several colors and have pea-like flowers in spring, beautiful foliage throughout summer, and striking seedpods in fall. Blue (*B. australis*) is my favorite and most common.

Echinacea - You'll find purple coneflower everywhere in season, and it's with good reason. In this photo alone, I see a common buckeye, great spangled fritillary, and pearl crescent, as well as a skipper and several honeybees. Swallowtails and monarchs also enjoy the nectar.



Aster & Symphyotrichum - Asters are amazing. When the growing season winds down in fall, the asters shine. I have several colors of purchased pinks and purples, as well as many wild whites. Last year a dark purple New England aster was the favorite of painted lady butterflies looking for lunch. I hope to add some blue varieties year.

Physostegia virginiana - The variegated obedient plant gifted to me by Carolyn Wilson is well behaved and stays put in my drought-tolerant garden. The tall plant sits next to a milkweed patch, and at least one monarch made good use of it last year to form its chrysalis.

At the Master Gardener Plant Sale at GardenFest we should have packs of plants geared toward pollinators in general, as well as toward specific types of pollinators. Check out the native and pollinator section of the sale to get started attracting butterflies to your own garden. (I'll see you there!)

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Summer Issue Deadline: June 10, 2018, noon
Email articles or events to NSVMGAnews@gmail.com.
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