

# Shenandoah Valley GARDENING

Newsletter of NSVMGA, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association



Enjoy the summer! *photo by Joyce Watson*

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## New EMG Interns

Stacey Morgan Smith

I want to share some great news: **we have 27 new EMG Interns** ready to serve their communities! Many are pictured here at our last in-person lab at Birdsong Pleasure Garden before COVID-19 restrictions. Help them get to work! If you have gardening questions, contact our [county help desks](#). There's a good chance an EMG Intern will help research a solution to your problem!

We also have a new **Extension Master Gardener: Haley Coloso**, a member of the class of 2019. Haley has recently met certification requirements, which we would normally celebrate at an Association meeting. We'll recognize Haley in person later this year.

For the rest of our volunteers, while your minimum volunteer service hours requirement is lifted for 2020, you'll still need to meet your minimum continuing education hours requirement. Please get in touch if you need any help!



*photo by Stacey Morgan Smith*



For over 25 years, NSVMGA volunteers have helped citizens with plant and gardening questions.

Homeowners are encouraged to contact their county volunteers by phone or email to get help identifying plants and diagnosing plant diseases and/or pests.

Volunteers in each of our five counties are available to answer gardening-related questions. The local county help lines and emails are listed below.

**Clarke County**                      **540-955-5164**

[NSVMGA.info@gmail.com](mailto:NSVMGA.info@gmail.com)

(include "Clarke County Gardening Question" in the subject line)

**Frederick County**                      **540-665-5699**

[GreenHelpLine.FrederickCo@gmail.com](mailto:GreenHelpLine.FrederickCo@gmail.com)

**Page County**                              **540-778-5794**

[NSVMGA.info@gmail.com](mailto:NSVMGA.info@gmail.com)

(include "Page County Gardening Question" in the subject line)

**Shenandoah County**                      **540-459-6140**

[greenhelpline@gmail.com](mailto:greenhelpline@gmail.com)

**Warren County**                              **540-635-4549**

[GreenHelpLine.WarrenCo@gmail.com](mailto:GreenHelpLine.WarrenCo@gmail.com)

## **From the President** Bob Gail

The restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic continue to negatively affect our Master Gardener projects and Association meetings. When we will be able to get back to normal is the big question. I don't envision this happening until a vaccine is developed. In the meantime, I miss working on my favorite projects and I miss interacting with other Master Gardeners. However, the health and safety of our members and the public we work with is priority number one for all of us.

I am happy to report that not everything came to a halt. The 2020 Master Gardener Trainee class was able to complete their online training program and I want to congratulate our 27 new interns. And, I want to express a big thank you to our 2020 class coordinators, Elaine Specht and Stacey Smith, for their hard work and creativity to ensure the successful completion of the required training modules and labs. A job well done!

Also, thanks to Kris Behrends for developing and publishing "QuaranGardening by/for MG's" and thank you to all the Master Gardeners who are contributing to this wonderful publication. I look forward to getting it every week. The pictures have been spectacular and very interesting.

There was also a special effort led by Lynn Hoffmann to coordinate the collection of all types of potted plants donated by Master Gardeners and the delivery of them to the hardworking healthcare personnel at our local hospitals. Much gratitude to all who helped Lynn make this possible.

Be safe and be well.

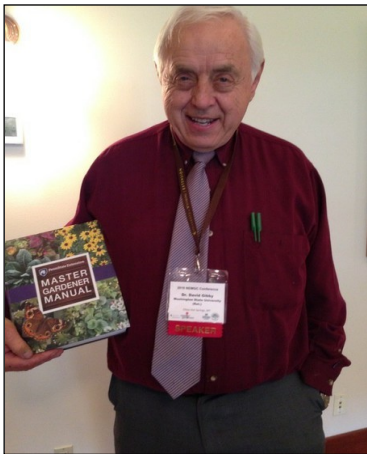
*Bob*



## How Did the Extension Master Gardener Program Begin?

Debbie Talley, Intern

In 1971 David Gibby, Ph.D. and Bill Scheer were Washington State University Extension agents in King and Pierce Counties. At that time, they delivered research-based gardening information to the public via television and radio gardening shows. The result of these shows made the public aware that the Extension office was **THE** place to get accurate information. The inquiries that came in from the public for reliable horticulture information were so overwhelming, Gibby and Scheer found it impossible to keep up with the calls coming into the Extension office.



Dr. David Gibby,  
founder of the  
Master Gardener  
Program

photo credit: <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener/about/history>

One of the suggestions considered to rectify this situation was the concept of recruiting and training volunteers to serve the urban audience. This seemed to be the most feasible option as it would allow Gibby and Scheer to be proactive in fulfilling educational needs, rather than being tied to phones. Enlisting volunteers would entail a special selection and training process.

They decided that an appropriate and distinguished title would also be necessary. Both Gibby and Scheer had worked in Germany and learned that titles for hard-earned proficiency levels in various crafts were bestowed. In horticulture, the top-level proficiency was denoted by "Gartenmeister," which they interpreted to "Master Gardener." They decided this title would be appropriate for volunteers who had received extensive training.

To test the viability to recruit and train volunteers to meet the high demand for urban

horticulture and gardening advice, a trial clinic was held at the Tacoma Mall in 1972. The clinic was a hit, and so successful that Gibby, along with others, decided to create a Master Gardener Program to offer individuals first-rate training in return for donated time helping others.

In 1972 a Master Gardener Program (also known as Extension Master Gardener Program) was officially established; a curriculum was created, and the first training began in the counties of King and Pierce, Washington, in 1973. Approximately 200 residents were trained to respond to gardeners' questions. The subject matter was to include the culture of ornamentals, plants, lawns, vegetables and fruits; control of plant diseases; insects and weeds, and safe use of insecticides. This marked the birth of the Extension's Master Gardener program. It instantly became a success and was adapted across the country.

Today, all 50 states, nine Canadian provinces and South Korea have Master Gardener programs. According to the 2009 Extension Master Gardener Survey, there were nearly 95,000 active Extension MGs, who provided approximately 5,000,000 volunteer service hours per year to their communities.

In the U.S., Master Gardening groups are affiliated with a land-grant university and one of its cooperative extension service offices. (For Northern Shenandoah Valley EMGs those are Virginia Tech, Virginia State University and the Virginia Cooperative Extension).

The National Mission of Extension Master Gardener programs is to educate people, engaging them in learning to use unbiased, research-based horticulture and gardening practices through a network of trained volunteers directed and supported by land-grant university faculty and staff.

### References

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/>

[MasterGardenerProgramHistoryrev2009.8.pdf](#)

<https://www.mastergardenerswc.com/master-gardeners-program>

<https://mastergardener.net/dr-gibbys-bio/> - Dr. David Gibby's bio

<http://nsvmg.org/join/> join the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners

<https://mastergardener.extension.org/> - Extension Master Gardener

## Off the Beaten Path: Seven Bends State Park Elaine Specht

Although we're still social distancing, at least we can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. Near Woodstock in Shenandoah County there is a fantastic place to get outside for a nature walk. Seven Bends State Park officially opened last fall and currently has eight miles of hiking trails. With easy flat trails along two bends of the Shenandoah River and more difficult winding trails for great views of the valley, there is something for everyone. Along the way, you might see a colorful blanket of Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), fields with milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), towering sycamore (*Plantus occidentalis*), and patches of paw paw



photo by Elaine Specht



A close-up of the leaves of paw paw trees along the Gokotta Trail.

photo by Elaine Specht

(*Asimina triloba*) along with many other native flora. As the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation works to remove them, you also can practice identifying invasive species like autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).

One oddly named trail, Gokotta, is from a Swedish word that refers to rising early to listen to morning birdsong, a fitting concept for this walk that follows the border between the tree-lined river and open fields.

The park comprises two donated land parcels. A third parcel was purchased from the Massanutten Military Academy, which had used the land for its Camp Lupton summer retreat. Along the Eagle Trail, you can see nature reclaiming an area that was once tennis courts.

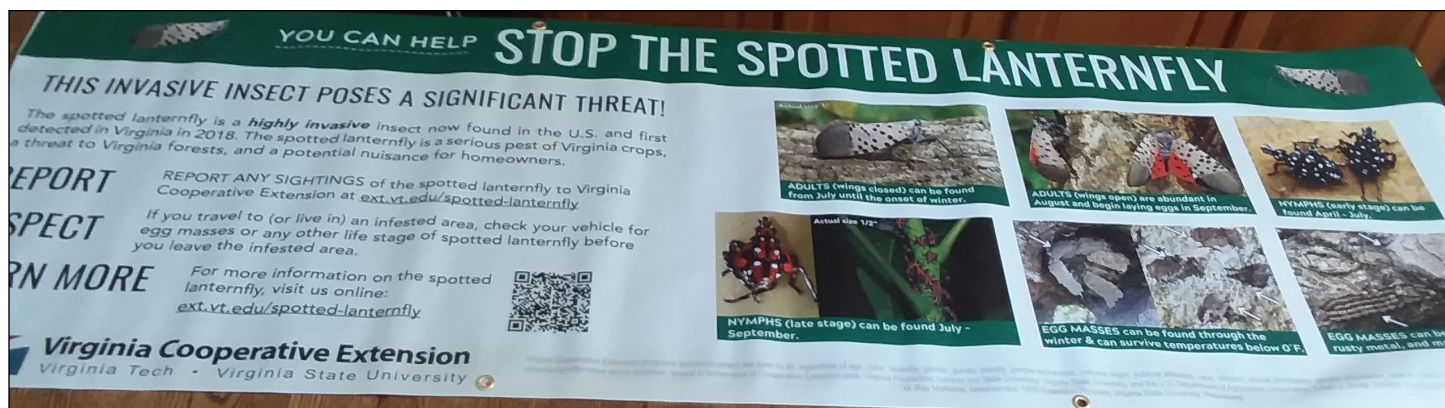
When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the NSVMGA was talking with the Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River about establishing a children's

garden at the park. Those plans are currently on hold, but we look forward to the time when work can begin.

The park has two entrances, both off winding narrow roads that cross one-lane bridges. Restrooms and picnic areas are newly constructed at each entrance. The park is open daily from 6 a.m. to dusk, and usage fees apply. For more information and directions to both entrances, go to the [Seven Bends State Park](#) web page and download the [Trail Guide](#).



## Spotted Lanternfly Project Dottie Farley



The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) Project kickoff was postponed, as were many other projects, due to the pandemic. The primary goal of the project was to provide resources to Extension Master Gardeners to educate the public regarding SLF.

There is a NSVMGA toolkit for each county that the project team intends to distribute for use when MG activities start up. There are printed handouts for each county.



Shirts are available for \$20 in sizes: medium, large and extra large.

### Contents of toolkit:

- alcohol – used to kill egg masses
- mirror on an extendable stick to look under cars, and other items for egg masses/live insects
- paint scraper – to scrape off egg masses
- SLF Banner - (pictured at top)
- table top information banner (at left)
- other small items

The project team would like to have one representative from each county. **Please contact Dottie Farley** at [dottie.farley@gmail.com](mailto:dottie.farley@gmail.com) to set up a date and time to pick up the SLF Toolkits.

*photos by Dottie Farley*

## **Shorter Days, Longer Harvest** Will Daniels

In late winter, feeling the anticipation of the gardening season to come, we search seed catalogues, order seeds, and maybe start indoor seedling gardens. We're raring to get out there. By August, though, after bringing in most of the crops we tended, we may want to wrap things up, wipe our brows and head for shade to sip cool drinks. Many of us don't give up vegetable gardening just yet, though, because we know there's a payoff waiting if we can just manage a little more planning and planting.

With gardening, you can always choose your level of involvement, and fall gardening is no exception. You can harvest some leafy greens well into the fall and even resume harvest in the spring, without so much as throwing a cover over them. Or you can try more demanding crops such as broccoli (not to mention finicky cauliflower) and employ a variety of season-extenders like tunnels and cold-frames. A handy and concise source of information is our own *Virginia Master Gardener Handbook*, Chapter 13, 2015 edition. Here, I'll touch on some information and tips that gardeners have cited as most crucial or helpful.

### **Prepare Your Ground**

Extension Master Gardener Sandy Ward recommends setting aside a space for fall planting so that it's ready to go without having to wait for summer crops to clear out, and so that soil amendments can have time to be converted to plant-available nutrients. If you don't have space to reserve, dig in the tender plant wastes and work a good layer of compost into the first few inches of soil.

### **Beat the Heat**

We look forward to working in the garden in the cool of fall, but we need to plant when it's still likely to be quite hot. Plants need enough time to mature, because while fall vegetables will survive frost, few continue to grow after the air dips below freezing. At planting, the soil will be very warm and prone to drying out quickly. The good news here is that most cool-season seeds will germinate even in hot soil (95 degrees), though the rate will decline. The seed needs constant moisture, so plant about twice as deep as in spring. Place boards over the row, held off the soil by bricks. Also mulch between rows, putting newspaper down before the mulch. When plants emerge, watering may be needed daily if rain is scarce. If you still have any tall plants left in the garden, use them to shade the new seedlings.

\* Suggested workarounds: pre-sprout seeds indoors, buy transplants, or start transplants indoors.

\* For the shopping list: a soil thermometer (\$10-\$20).

### **Patrol for Bugs**

Many experienced gardeners consider fall to be the best time to succeed with brassicas such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussel sprouts, as temperatures rise too quickly in the spring. In fall, the pest population can be expected to decline as well, but some pests, like the white cabbage butterfly, can still be problems for brassicas. I have not found a good, no-chemical solution besides covering the plants to prevent the butterflies from landing.

### **Do the Math**

Starting with the date of the expected last killing frost (28 degrees), consult a chart giving the range of dates to plant a particular crop. [https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/426/426-331/SPES-170.pdf](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/426/426-331/SPES-170.pdf). These are approximations, of course, so there may be a few days wiggle room. Transplants can go in the garden two to three weeks later than the last seeding date. For broccoli and other heading crops, choose the fastest-maturing varieties, which tend to be the hybrids. But don't despair if your greens don't have time to grow up before frost sets in. Small plants have a good chance of surviving the winter. They then can start to grow and fill your salad bowl much earlier than spring-planted greens.

*continued on the next page*





### Cover It Up

The simplest fall garden of all is one planted in a cover crop such as Crimson Clover. This is a great way to replenish soil nitrogen, to break up harder soils, and to protect soil over the winter. If you want to start gardening as soon as possible in the spring, start the cover crop in summer and turn it under in the fall so it has time to decompose. If you wait until spring to do this, it will be a few weeks before the soil is ready for planting. Try planting cover crops between your rows and have the best of both worlds.

Crimson Clover, *photo by Stacey Morgan Smith*

### Try Permaculture

Plant just once and watch your perennial vegetables sail through winter and return year after year. EMG Joan Newman likes asparagus (see the photo of her bed below), as do many other gardeners. Other good candidates are rhubarb, artichoke, Jerusalem artichoke (spreads fast!), lovage, chive, and Egyptian onions. The leaves of herbs such as sage, thyme, and parsley may be used year-round. Kale is a biennial that if left in the garden will regrow in spring. The kale I kept from last year is now almost five feet tall and blooming. The leaves are still tasty, as are the buds and flowers. The seeds of that very useful plant can be collected before long. This year, I'm trying a true perennial sea kale called *Crambe maritima*.

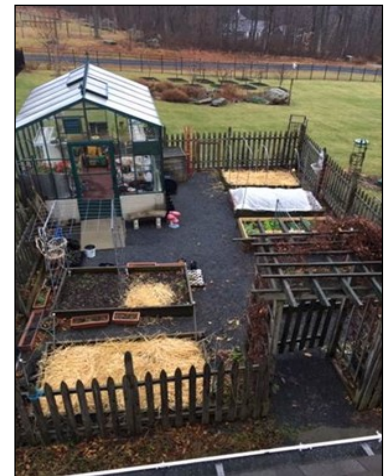
### Plant These Fall Garden Champs

Yes, kale has a reputation for hardiness. Just as hardy are radish, leeks, collards, parsnips, chard, turnips, carrots, lettuce, corn salad (mache), spinach, and garlic. It's a good idea not to take too much off the leafy greens, so that the plants will regenerate well in the spring, before finally going to seed.

**Year-round gardening is the way to go!**

The garden is ready for fall and still growing. An asparagus bed is shown in the left foreground.

*photo by Joan Newman*



### References

Glen, C. Plant a fall garden. North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Chatham County Center, Aug. 20, 2015. [chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/2015/08/plant-a-fall-garden/](http://chatham.ces.ncsu.edu/2015/08/plant-a-fall-garden/)

The Virginia Master Gardener Handbook, 2015 edition, chapter 13, 377-384. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University.

## **Plan Now for Fall Harvest** Elaine Specht

Lately, many of our favorite activities have been canceled, down-sized, or reconfigured providing constant reminders of what we can't do. Fortunately, vegetable gardening is something we CAN get out and do. Plus, there is the added benefit of growing your own food rather than face the frustrations of having regular grocery items difficult to find or available at much higher costs.

In Virginia, we have a long enough season that we can plant again in summer for a fall harvest. Some vegetables suited for fall harvest include beets, collards, kale, lettuce, radishes, spinach, and turnips. Plant in early August for harvest in October and November. With row covers and cold frames, we also can extend the season by as much as another month. With special care, some gardeners harvest greens and other cool-weather crops throughout the winter.

Virginia Cooperative Extension offers a wealth of information for home vegetable gardeners. Check out the ones listed below.

[Home Vegetable Gardening](#): Is a webpage with links to resources to help home gardeners from planning through harvesting fruits and vegetables.

[Virginia's Home Garden Vegetable Planting Guide](#): Provides recommended planting dates by plant hardiness zones across the state.

[Season Extenders](#): Explains how to construct a cold frame or hot bed plus how to use cloches, tunnels, and row covers to shelter plants from the cold.

If you planted your vegetable garden in the spring and now you're overrun with fresh produce, take a look at these resources from Virginia Cooperative Extension on how to preserve your bounty:

[Freezing Fruits and Vegetables](#): Includes specific details for string and lima beans, broccoli, carrots, corn, greens, and summer squash, among others.

[Boiling Water Bath Canning](#): Focuses on high-acid foods, such as apples, cherries, peaches, and tomatoes (which are borderline between high-and low-acid). Also covers jams, jellies, and pickles.

[Pressure Canning](#): Explains how to safely preserve low-acid foods not suitable for boiling water bath canning, such as beans, corn, and meat. Since the acid level of tomatoes is on the borderline between high-and low, they are also included in this fact sheet.

[Using Dehydration to Preserve Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats](#): Provides all the basics for one of the oldest and easiest methods of food preservation.



A row of beets flanked by rows of carrots. With row covers, home gardeners should be able to enjoy these and other vegetables well into the late fall.

*photo by Elaine Specht*



## **A Very Different CCAP Garden Planting** Lynn Hoffmann

This year, gardeners have had to stay home and work on their own gardens. There was no Garden-Fest, no potting parties and no garden projects for the Extension Master Gardeners! But, last month about 15 EMGs and 4-H Technician, Frederick, Tammy Epperson continued a long tradition of planting the Congregational Community Action Project (CCAP) garden. We have done this for the past 10 years, usually with 15 to 20 happy Jr. MGs and families helping to plant the vegetables for CCAP clients.

This year, sadly, there were no children. There was only one class and we were unable to teach in person. The JR MG instructors and volunteers planted the garden. Tammy rototilled the garden and prepared it for us to plant rows of tomatoes, squash, lettuce, beans, beets and more. It went pretty quickly this year without the little hands to help.

We practiced social distancing, and face masks were visible on some. The work is more difficult in a face mask! This year we also added a few more 'hog panels' to the area. The metal fence panels make great supports for tomatoes, cucumbers and pole beans. They are easy to use, will not rust and can be reused year after year. The tomatoes are tied up with the cotton strips that were given out in the goody bags from the Symposium. They degrade over the winter, tear off and go into the compost heap.

These fence panels are flexible enough to use in a raised bed. Here we planted cucumber seeds under our solitary bee tube. This year we added another row of 6'x6' wood in the raised bed to try to get more moisture retention. Another improvement we made was to place landscaping material between the rows. One large roll did not cover everything, so the remaining rows received a layer of hay to help fight the weeds.

The CCAP garden has been a great learning experience for all of us. It's one thing to know what is supposed to be done, but it's another thing to work it in real life and see what Mother Nature has in store for the season. We have battled squirrels, wood chucks and bugs. The wood chucks have

been deterred over the last several years with traps. The squirrels are an issue, but we are hoping the feral cats will discourage them.

Master Gardeners came through and donated many plants they had started from seed. CCAP will have more heritage tomatoes and special types of plants than any grocery store could ever provide!

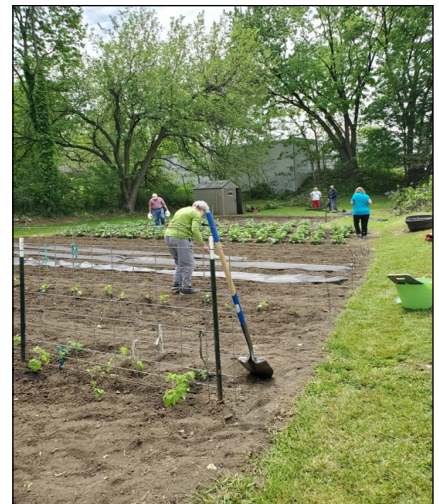
Tammy manages the upkeep of the garden and she and two homeschool families will maintain it and harvest the produce for CCAP.

If you have extra veggies from your own garden, please let me or Tammy know. Your zucchini, cucumbers and tomatoes are welcome.

The garden is located behind CCAP at Sharpe and Kent St in Winchester.

<http://ccapwinc.org/>

*photos  
by  
Helen  
Lake*



We try to teach young people that 4-H and NSVMGA help the community and encourage them to be good citizens. Remember, 2021 will be another year, and there is always a need for instructors and helpers!



## Donating Surplus Plants to Bright Futures Helen Lake

In mid-March I realized once again, I had overplanted seeds for my spring and summer vegetable garden. Many of us, I know first-hand, have the same issues. To my delight (and chagrin), most of the seeds germinated and were prospering in my heated walk-out basement, and eventually out to my heated small greenhouse. So, what to do with the abundance of riches? I turned to a good friend and Agtech teacher at James Wood H.S. to see if we could come up with a project with our Future Farmers of America kids. Well, as you know, IT happened. Lockdowns, school closings and social distancing put all those plans into the 'outbox'. But good ideas don't die and Ginger Andersen (Agtech teacher) called to suggest I reach out to Bright Futures and donate any excess for the 1,400 registered families who come every two weeks for the Food Pack Program.

Bright Futures is a non-profit organization that helps schools connect with student needs, which for this article is all about food and preventing hunger. The Coordinator in Frederick County and the City of Winchester is Nancy Mango (at right). She was very supportive from the beginning and already familiar with Master Gardeners and our mission in the community. Several years ago Nancy, in her role as a Girl Scout troop leader, participated in GardenFest at Belle Grove; what a small world it is!



So, a concept became actionable. To say our donations were a hit with the families is an understatement! Nancy was happy to pass on compliments and interest in the three distribution events where we donated over 500 plants for her clients. Many came seeking out the plant area, which was closely monitored so everyone would have a chance to take a plant home to grow and enjoy its harvest. One young woman, who confessed she has a black thumb but whose green thumb brother has volunteered to assist her, has begun a small garden with the plants she found at Bright Futures. She is looking forward to using the tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, basil and peppers for many of her family's meals.



*all photos by Helen Lake*

Bright Futures presented us with a certificate of appreciation.

Special mention goes out to Susan Peterman, Mary Romanowski, Lorna Loring, Jennifer Adams, Suzette Niess, Lynn Hoffmann, Julie Edmonds and Terry Hana-han. Thank you for your generosity and true spirit of sharing our bounties from the garden!

For more information:

<https://sites.google.com/a/fcpsk12.net/>





## Plant-a-Thank-you Program

Lynn Hoffmann

Master Gardeners love to gift plants as a thank you for all occasions. In mid-June, Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association members came together to organize a donation of more than 300 plants to the staff at three local Emergency Rooms as a way of saying thank you for all the hard work and stress associated with the pandemic. The ER staff at Winchester Medical Center, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital and Page Memorial Hospital were the recipients of the NSVMGA's "Plant-a-Thank-you" Program!

Thank you notes to accompany the plants were written by Extension Master Gardeners who met at Belle Grove's barn. Plants suitable for indoors and outdoors, herbs, and flowers in bloom, were all potted and put in fancy baskets decorated with pretty papers and lots of bows and ribbons. It was hoped that these plants would bring a smile to the dedicated and hardworking frontline staff.

Jenny Grooms, the Interim Director at Winchester Medical Center, helped to organize the delivery of plants, and to make sure her staff knew how much the Master Gardeners appreciated the dedication of the hospital workers.

Kris Behrends contacted ER Clinical Nurse Manager Kim Shrum, and Ebony Sloan, RN, at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital. More than 50 plants were donated there. Even through the face masks it was clear that there were smiles on their faces. When Kris got home she said "Kim called me and told me it was like kids at Christmas when the staff received our plants!"

In Page County, under the direction of Lesley Mack, the Master Gardener team got together and delivered the plants to Page Memorial Hospital.

The dedication of healthcare workers is very deserving of appreciation. The MGs wanted to donate as many plants as we could to as many of these



Winchester ER staff with Lynn Hoffman,  
photo by Jenny Grooms

(cont. on next column)

wonderful people as possible. We hope every time they look at their plant they know that people appreciate all the work and caring they provide to people in the community.

## Haun Dedication Bench

Lynn Hoffmann

In June Belle Grove re-opened its MG Teaching Garden and grounds to the public. The first order of business was to set the memorial bench dedicated to the memory of Larry Haun, who passed away in 2017, back into the teaching garden.

Larry Haun was a familiar face at the MG events and Teaching Garden. He loved plants and wanted to display as many as possible in that dedicated area. He conducted tours for adults and children and explained the plants and what they were used for in the 1800s on the manor house grounds.

Along with his love of plants, he was an avid musician, and often played at Belle Grove. The photo below shows him on the steps of the manor house.

The Master Gardeners are cautiously working in the Belle Grove gardens. We tackled the rain garden at the end of June to get it under control and spread mulch to keep the weeds at bay.

If you are interested in the MG Teaching Garden please contact the program lead, Claire DeMasi. Also, Director Kristin Laise of Belle Grove would love to have some MGs available for garden tours. If you think you might be interested in that please let me know, and I will set up times for training with the Belle Grove staff. If you are interested in more information about Belle Grove the website is [https://bellegrove.org/calendar/opening\\_2020](https://bellegrove.org/calendar/opening_2020)



bench photo by Kristen Laise; Haun photo from MG archives



## **Annaliese Jenkins Frederick County Summer Intern**

Hello everyone! My name is Annaliese Jenkins, and I am the Frederick County Extension Intern for the summer of 2020. I am a third generation Frederick County native, and I have always enjoyed the area and the people. I began to really enjoy my agriculture classes and became active in the Sherando FFA chapter my freshman year of high school. Once I graduated from Sherando High School, I attended Lord Fairfax Community College and graduated with an associate degree in May 2019. I transferred to Virginia Tech in the fall of 2019, where my major is Agricultural Sciences with a minor in Leadership and Social Change. I plan to graduate in the spring of 2021 and my career goal is to become a middle school agriculture educator. I was able to take a course at Virginia Tech that really showed me the history and extensive areas VCE covers. I am looking forward to working with the Frederick County community and growing my knowledge of VCE this summer.



### **Spotted Lanternfly - Area Monitoring and Research** Annaliese Jenkins

Monitoring is one of the main research points for Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) efforts in the Shenandoah Valley. The monitoring is done in a few separate ways. The first way is to check banded trees to watch for spread of the SLF. The bands are set up in various locations along popular travel routes in order to catch any insects that are trying to relocate. The bands must be checked every one to two weeks and replaced. Banding is a great way to slow the spread of SLF.



*photo by Annaliese Jenkins*

The second monitoring is weekly counts of SLF at various plots with diverse plant species. The distinct plots include over 20 plant species that are found in Virginia. This monitoring and counting are started when the first nymphs hatch from egg masses. The results from this weekly counting could help to identify which plant species are preferred in different SLF life stages.

In Winchester, Dr. Tom Kuhar, Virginia Tech Vegetable Entomologist, is monitoring SLF at a populated area to look for any possible impacts to vegetable plants.

The Leskey Lab, with USDA Appalachian Fruit Research Station, is also doing some different forms of research. A modified circle trap that USDA has implemented in our area helps understand population pressure and biology. This modified circle trap is attached to trees and acts like a funnel that leads SLF to a dead-end container (see similar: <https://extension.psu.edu/how-to-build-a-new-style-spotted-lanternfly-circle-trap>). The trap can be used on any infested tree to catch the SLF. The USDA is also doing research on attractants for SLF and rearing SLF in labs to better understand their diet. The key to stopping the spread of the SLF is learning more about them.

**Remember, if you find a SLF, please report:** <https://ask.extension.org/groups/1981/ask>



## I Love the History of Plants Lesley Mack

**Dahlias** are a family of dicotyledonous plants; they are related to the sunflower, daisy, chrysanthemum, and zinnia.<sup>1</sup> Dahlias originated in Mexico, where early Spanish conquistadors tried to eat their tubers, as they thought they were potatoes. Actually, those species of dahlias were used for water.

The flowers of those species were open-centered, single blooms with pendant (weeping) stems. The hollow stems of those plants, some growing to over 20 feet, were often used for hauling water or as an actual source of water to traveling hunters. In fact, the Aztec name for those "tree dahlias" was *acocotli* or water-cane.<sup>2</sup>

After importing dahlias to Europe, they were very popular from 1810 to 1840, but after a time, they fell out of fashion as the varieties and colors were plain compared to other popular flowers; dahlias have no fragrance and the September to November growing season was short.

In 1872, a box of dahlia roots was sent from Mexico to Holland. The impact of this long journey was devastating; only one tuber survived the crossing. This singular root, however, proved quite astonishing in that it produced a brilliant red bloom with petals that were rolled back and pointed!

Dahlias regained their place with plant breeders, who began to successfully combine this new variety (*D. juarezii*) with parents of early varieties (*D. pinnata* and *D. coccinea*) and their progenies have served as the parents of today's hybrids.<sup>3</sup>

The American Dahlia Society (ADS) categorizes today's dahlias into various groups based on nine sizes, 18 forms and 15 colors or color combinations.<sup>4</sup> They also recognize about 1,700 garden show-class varieties. The International Register of Dahlias lists more than 20,000 cultivars.<sup>5</sup>

When summer arrives, we can grow dahlias like their native Mexico, but their tuberous roots cannot survive the cold winters. So, once the foliage has been blackened by frost, cut the stems back to six inches and carefully lift clumps of tubers with a spading fork. Shake off the dirt, air-dry separately in a shady shed, label the tubers for identification, then store in a box or bucket with plenty of air circulation that stays at a temperature above

freezing throughout the winter months. Next spring, in your dahlia bed, add plenty of composted manure a couple of weeks before planting.

Dahlias prefer rich, well-drained soil, full sun and regular moisture. Once the tubers are in the ground, feed them a fertilizer mix high in phosphorus and potassium such as 5-10-10 or 10-20-20.

Four-tier tomato cages, placed around the tubers, make great dahlia supports. If you are really into dahlias, you could create a dahlia bed with rows of dahlias tied up between sturdy metal poles and heavy twine, as in this video from the ADS.

<https://vimeo.com/409978488>

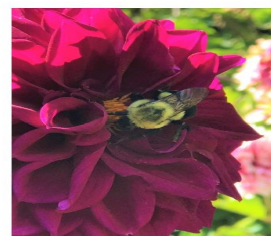
Of course, more than us humans find dahlias enticing...cutworms, slugs, snails, spider mites, Japanese beetles and aphids often find dahlias appetizing. Powdery mildew and virus can also be problems as well.



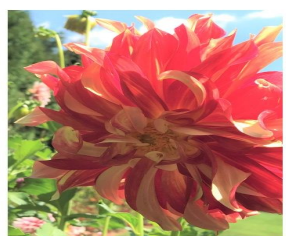
D. Rebecca's World



D. Cartouche



D. Cartouche



D. Bodacious

More information from the ADS is available at <https://www.dahlia.org>. So the next time you smile at your beautiful dahlias, be sure to thank their great-great-great-great grandparents and the luck of the hybridizers for making such lovely varieties of beauty we can enjoy until frost.

photos by Lesley Mack

### Footnotes and references

<sup>1</sup> <https://southcoastbotanicgarden.org/portfolio-items/dahlia/>

<sup>2,3,4</sup> <https://www.dahlia.org/docsinfo/articles/dahlia-nomenclature-and-brief-history/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/pdfs/plant-register-supplements/dahlias/24th-dahlia-supplement.pdf>

## Hit or Miss Pet Friendly Gardening Jennifer Mathias

In the last newsletter my column focused on pet friendly gardening tips for creating a peaceful union between plants and pets. This time we'll look at creative ways to keep pets away from house plants. **Please remember that it is always necessary to train your dog (or cat) in basic obedience.** Find the training method that works for you and your pet. If your pet knows the basic commands of sit, stay, and come, you will have a head start in achieving that peaceful union of flora and fauna.

- Utilize High Spaces - If your cat is a climber, this may not work. However, if you have high ledges or mantles, such as shown in the photo at right, that your feline cannot access, use them as a space for your plants. Trailing vines look especially nice in these lofty locales. Put up decorative wall mounts. There are many articles on vertical gardening that you can find on the web. You can use a shelf or create something out of wooden wall racks or panels of wire fencing.
- Use Boho Inspired Vessels - Macramé will give you the Boho look. Woven vessels come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.
- Be Practical with Barriers - Short screens provide large plants with some protection. A fireplace or decorative litterbox screen can work nicely. Even a shorter dog gate would act as a deterrent between your greenery and your pet.
- Try Chicken Wire - Place the wire flat on top of the soil with your plant in the center. Unless you have a really determined dog or cat, this should deter them from digging as animals do not like the feel of the wire. *Always use your best judgement. If your pet tries to eat the wire, then this is not a good option.*
- Add a Soil Topper - River rock is recommended due to its size, which is usually more difficult for an animal to swallow. Also, river rock is smooth; do not use small gravel or rocks that have sharp edges.



photo by Jennifer Mathias

**Any plant can cause GI upset in your pets and many are toxic.** See the link below from the University of California.

### Reference

[https://ucanr.edu/sites/poisonous\\_safe\\_plants/Plant\\_Toxicity\\_Levels\\_523/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/poisonous_safe_plants/Plant_Toxicity_Levels_523/)

**Call Poison Control  
IMMEDIATELY when you  
suspect or know that your pet  
has eaten something that is  
toxic or  
potentially toxic.**

ASPCA Poison Control -  
**888-426-4435** or call your local  
area poison control center.



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## **From the Editor: Container Gardening on My Deck**

Last year we moved to Lake Frederick from a 12-acre property in Albemarle County. Over the 14 years that we lived there I was an avid gardener and developed many themed gardens including a Zen-inspired Japanese garden, a perennial garden, an all-white garden and another area planted to natives. I have already planted the sunny-side of our small yard with some of my favorite sun-loving perennials transplanted from Charlottesville.

A mostly covered back deck runs the full length of our new home. I decided to try container gardening this year since we were unable to travel. A container garden does require consistent care, but it is a versatile way to add color and privacy to a porch or deck area. I now have 18 pots on the deck along with a bird bath with bamboo waterfall, statuary, a seating area and brightly colored blue outdoor rug for a pop of color!



You can create your own deck oasis by following these tips:

- Vary the height, color and texture of plants.
- Evaluate the plants recommended light exposure.
- Water frequently.
- Incorporate evergreen plants and

perennials that can overwinter outside.

- Use pots with drainage holes.
- Fertilize throughout the season.
- Select plants with foliage interest.
- Feature one or two "wow" plants.
- Remove faded blooms and replace plants as needed.
- Use commercial potting soil.
- Plant edibles.
- Add statuary or a whimsical piece.



<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/container-gardening>

