

# Shenandoah Valley GARDENING

Newsletter of NSVMGA, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association

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## NSVMGA Receives Award

The Virginia Cooperative Extension, Frederick County, presented the 2020 "Outstanding Supporting Organization" to the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association (NSVMGA). Established in 1993 to support the local consumer horticulture programs of VCE and its volunteers, NSVMGA and its members have been faithful volunteers and supporters of many VCE programs in Frederick County and the entire Northern Shenandoah Valley for nearly three decades. They have financially supported EMG programs and provided leadership to programs in the Northern Shenandoah Valley region.

## VCE - Frederick County 2020 Outstanding Volunteer

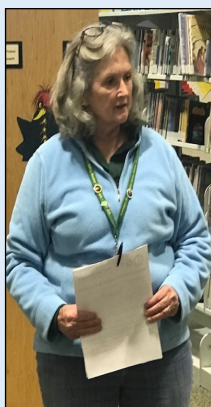


photo by  
Joyce Watson

It is my privilege to name **Mary Turner** as the Virginia Cooperative Extension - Frederick County 2020 Outstanding Volunteer.

Mary has volunteered for the VCE and the Master Gardener Program since 2016.

As an area businesswoman in the Winchester/Frederick County community, Mary was heavily involved with the Fremont

Street Nursery. This love and connection provided the ideal fit for youth horticulture programming with the young minds at Fremont. Because of Mary's leadership, this work has been very successful and a favorite program for many of our volunteers.

Mary has served as the Frederick County Coordinator for 70+ Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) residing in Winchester and Frederick County. Her kind and gentle spirit made her a natural in this role...encouraging, mentoring, and guiding fellow EMGs, always with such compassion and grace.

We are very thankful for all of Mary's support to VCE and the VCE-Frederick office. We will miss her dearly, as she has moved to pursue her new adventures in South Carolina.

Mark Sutphin

## A Message From President Elaine Specht

Happy Spring, Master Gardeners and Friends!

Just as we seem to be getting the hang of our “new normal,” it looks hopeful that we soon may be approaching something that resembles the “old normal.”

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to assist homeowners with their garden-related quandaries by monitoring our GreenHelpLines remotely and answering questions by phone and email. More recently, we pulled together and had our first ever *virtual* “Gardening in the Valley Symposium” in March, complete with a 50/50 cash raffle and silent auction. With the help of Zoom, we’re back to giving gardening talks to other organizations through our Speakers Bureau. Although our popular Seed Exchange at Blandy had to be cancelled, we’ve been able to redirect our seed sharing activities into creating Seed Lending Libraries. We are midway through a newly created free webinar series designed for beginning vegetable gardeners, and Junior Master Gardener activities are resuming by moving to an “outdoor classroom.”

While we’ve risen to the challenge to pivot all these activities to follow health guidelines, we are so happy to be planning our first in-person events in more than a year: GardenFest will be held in June at Belle Grove Plantation, and FallFest is set for September at Richard’s Farm Market. Check out all these and other activities on our website ([nsvmgga.org](http://nsvmgga.org)) and Facebook page ([nsvmgga](https://www.facebook.com/nsvmgga)), plus keep on reading this edition of our newsletter to learn more about all the educational programs the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association offers in support of Virginia Cooperative Extension’s mission.

*Elaine*

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.

#### ADA Statement:

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Mark Sutphin, Frederick County Extension, at (540) 665-5699/TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations five days prior to the event.

## GreenHelpLine County Contacts

**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**

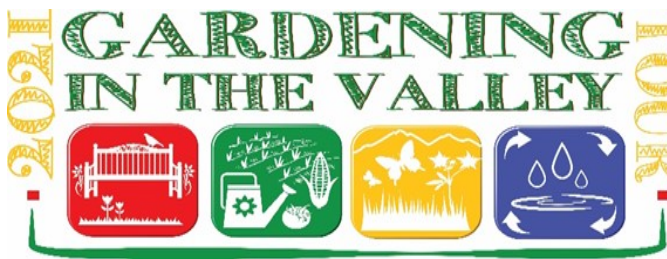
[GreenHelpLine.WarrenCo@gmail.com](mailto:GreenHelpLine.WarrenCo@gmail.com)

**Who are we?** Extension Master Gardeners are trained volunteer educators. They work within their local communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices. As an educational outreach component of Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Master Gardener program brings the resources of Virginia’s land-grant universities – Virginia Tech and Virginia State University – to the people of the commonwealth.



All volunteers are trained and have at least 50 hours of horticultural classes and return at least 50 hours of volunteer community service through their local Extension office.





After a year of quarantine and Zoom, get ready to be inspired! The inaugural "Gardening in the Valley Tour" is coming! The Tour will be held on **Saturday, June 26, 2021, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., rain or shine.** You will be outdoors in beautiful Shenandoah County touring five unique, inspirational, and diverse gardens and properties.

*article by Deb Alverson and graphic by Elena Lycas*

At the **Edinburg Mill Biofiltration Garden** at the historic Edinburg Mill, you will learn how we all can impact and assist the environment by retaining rainwater, reducing runoff into streams and rivers, and planting a beautiful garden to help our environment.

**The Country Farm** will demonstrate chemical and pesticide-free vegetable gardening. The historic property, located five miles west of Edinburg, is set in a picturesque valley on a creek. It will inspire organic gardeners.

**Monarchs on Meadow** is a Monarch Way Station garden, as well as a Wildlife Habitat. The garden is just west of the I-81 exit in Woodstock. Tour berry gardens, vegetable gardens, and pollinator gardens; there is something for every gardener to see, enjoy, and become inspired.

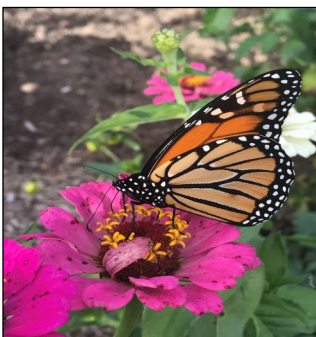
**The In-Town Yard** in downtown Woodstock will show tour participants how an in-town property can be a showplace! Great inspiration for how gardeners can have beautiful gardens, whatever your space.

**Veatch's Gleann Arboretum**, west of the I-81 exit in Strasburg, is a showplace of many different garden environments: wet gardens with springs, dry gardens, conifer gardens, and vegetable gardens. Cedar Creek runs on the property and there are acres to roam. This historic property predates the Civil War.

Please come, and wear your walking shoes. We will be outdoors, masked and socially distanced. The tickets are only \$10 and can be purchased online in late April at [nsvmgga.org/events/garden-tour/](https://nsvmgga.org/events/garden-tour/). Same day tickets (\$12) will be available the day of at Pot Town Organics in Strasburg and The Edinburg Mill in Edinburg. Participants can start at any garden, driving between locations, then walking through gardens. Each location will have Extension Master Gardener volunteers to assist guests with questions and directions. Car pooling is recommended and no pets are permitted. Please note that some of the properties are sloped and uneven.

Join us for an inspiring and garden-filled experience on June 26! You will come away with ideas to take home and inspiration to recreate them in your own garden.

All proceeds from the Garden Tour will go to the construction of the Peace Pavilion at Corhaven Graveyard. <https://inthecoracle.org/2021/01/a-peace-pavilion-hush-harbor-chapel-for-corhaven-graveyard/>



*left to right: photos by Elaine Specht, Veatch's Arboretum, The Country Farm and Dottie Farley  
graphic by Elena Lycas*

## 2021 GardenFest at Belle Grove Plantation

Kris Behrends

We are excited to report that GardenFest of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners will be held in person on Saturday, **June 5**, from **8 a.m. – 3 p.m.** at **Belle Grove Plantation** at 336 Belle Grove Road, Middletown, VA! Extension Master Gardeners will be donating plants from their gardens, there will be a wide variety for purchase, and all plants and shrubs will be the



same price of \$5/pot. The Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) can take cash or credit cards. You can see what plants have been donated in the past on our website, <http://nsvmgga.org/info/plant-descriptions/>.

GardenFest is our fundraiser of the year so we can support all our events and projects in our five-county area. This allows us to have free children's programs, classes, and presentations throughout the year.

We will have a children's area where kids can come and learn about the garden

and get a free prize of fun to grow plant seeds. This is a great way to introduce your children to starting seeds and what they will look like. Get there early before we run out.

This year in addition to the plant sale there will be tours of the Belle Grove garden and the Manor house will be open for tours during the day. Secondhand Rose will be back with lots of donated and used items. The variety is always a surprise. This year we will have an EMG information booth with handouts, and volunteers who can answer any questions you might have about your garden. There will be a 50/50 cash raffle and some great items that have been donated.

We are looking forward to having our garden and craft vendors back with us. There are over 20 vendors or non-profit organizations that will be on site.

The EMGs are eager to be outside; as are a lot of you! What better way to spend a Saturday in June than at beautiful Belle Grove Plantation looking at great perennials, vegetable plants and lots of shrubs! If you have a wagon or cart, feel free to bring them along to fill them with plants for your garden. A limited number of wagons will be available for your use. There will be a plant pick-up area, and EMGs will help load your plants into your car.

Admission and parking are free to the public! The gates open promptly at 8 a.m., and plants are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Not sure if a plant will do well in a certain location in your garden? All plants are labeled with care instructions.

Health guidelines and precautions provided by the Governor of Virginia will be in place for your safety, which includes wearing masks and social distancing requirements. We hope to see you at the 2021 GardenFest!

*photo by David Look*

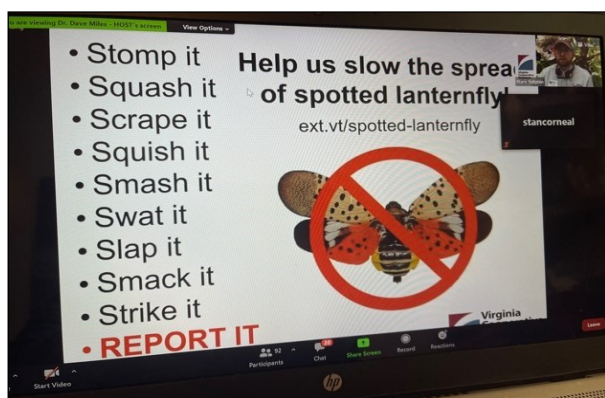


## 2021 Gardening in the Valley Symposium Recap

Lynn Hoffmann

Our 9th annual "Gardening in the Valley Symposium" was our first online! One hundred and twenty attendees learned from the four featured speakers. A potpourri of lunch time presentations included a session on the spotted lanternfly and rounded out the day.

Dr. Dave Miles moderated the symposium and all seamlessly watched the speakers.



This effort provided six hours of continuing education to our EMGs and quality education to the public. It raised money for our high school scholarship fund.

Thank you to our hard-working committee! **Helen Lake** and **Lynn Hoffmann** were co-chairs, and **Bob Gail** was there every step of the way.

**Tammi Loving** and **Debbie Talley** sought

donations from local businesses and nursery professionals to sponsor our event and help fund the high school scholarships. We thank all of our sponsors for their donations.



For nine years the team of **Ginny Smith**, **Laurie Cocina** and **Helen Lake** have provided unique and quirky items for the raffles. They make some of the items and others they refurbish from purchased antiques. The raffle items were fantastic and brought in almost the cost of one scholarship! We appreciate their creativity, generosity, and work.

Our door prizes were also a great part of the event. Although we were not able to do this in-person, we were still able to give away almost 20 items.

I am hoping that next year we can return to an in-person symposium with vendors and lunch at Shenandoah University's cafeteria.



Thank you to all who attended. We hope that you had a great time.

We're already planning for 2022. If you want to help and be on the committee, please let me know now.

*online images by Joyce Watson*

## Volunteer Coordinator Message

Stacey Morgan Smith



Spring has sprung! This is the busiest time of the year for our volunteers. Joining us are some of our newly certified Extension Master Gardeners from the class of 2020:

**Julie Edmonds** in Page County, **Debbie Alverson**, **Alan Rogers**, and **Bernie Courtney** in Frederick County, **Kathy Holcomb** in Clarke County, and **Kerry Higdon** in Shenandoah County. While we didn't hold training this winter, we look forward to welcoming a new batch of trainees next year. We'll share more information on that class this fall.

To our volunteers, if you haven't yet, please watch the [training video](#) and login to [Better Impact](#) -- we are no longer using VMS. Your login information was emailed from Stephanie Collins at VT on March 4th. Once you're in and change your password, take just a few minutes to update your contact and additional information and complete your qualifications. Then sign up for volunteer opportunities on the list or calendar and try entering some of your hours. As you explore, let me know if you have any questions or if anything is confusing. I'm happy to help, and it helps us with training. If you lead an upcoming project that is not listed in Better Impact, please complete our project application form with the help of your county coordinators. Once approved, you can then log time for that project.

Once in the system, you'll see a lot of volunteer opportunities available, and we are adding new activities weekly. With two big events on the horizon -- GardenFest and Gardening in the Valley Tour -- as well as farmers markets, help desks, fairs, and many others, there are a variety of roles to fill. Some are in-person, and we'll continue to follow Commonwealth of Virginia and VCE COVID safety guidelines; however, please only do what you feel comfortable doing. There are many opportunities to volunteer from home this year, and I'm happy to help you find one that works for you. I'm looking for a few people to help with our MailChimp emails, Wufoo and Google forms and sheets, Google photo archive, or PDF editing for our Habitat program. If you have experience with any of those tools, please get in touch.

Finally, the pandemic has led to an explosive growth in online continuing education opportunities. Check the list on the Better Impact homepage or explore EMG units across the state by visiting their websites or Facebook pages. You can also find training from arboretums, botanical gardens, horticulture professionals, and more. All VCE EMG horticultural webinars are considered approved. If you have questions about other educational opportunities, just send me a note to get it approved, and I can also share it with our other volunteers.

Spring has indeed arrived! As anxious as we all are to get outside on the warm days and plant annuals and vegetables, you should keep in mind that Mother's Day is considered to be the standard in this region for planting frost sensitive plants. Please check Virginia Tech's recommendations for your particular zone.

[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)

## Strasburg Community Garden — 2021 Children's Workshops Kathy Doyle

Strasburg Community Garden is planning 13 FREE workshops for children of all ages starting April 10 and running through October 9. Each session will be held on **Saturdays**, from **10 – 11 a.m.** Registration is required and each workshop will be limited to ten children.

**April 10** – Make a Birdhouse from a Birdhouse Gourd  
**April 24** – Starting Plants from Seeds  
**May 8** – Seeds and Soil  
**May 22** – Planting in the Garden  
**June 12** – Worms in the Garden  
**June 26** – Composting  
**July 10** – Pollinators  
**July 24** – Wind Chimes in the Garden  
**August 14** – Attracting Butterflies to the Garden  
**August 28** – Insect Safari  
**September 11** – Nature Weaving with Grasses, Flowers and Leaves  
**September 25** – Leaf and Flower Prints  
**October 9** – Making a Bird Feeder  
**October 23** – Put Your Garden to Bed

To pre-register email  
Kathy Doyle at:  
[kathrynd51@gmail.com](mailto:kathrynd51@gmail.com)

Please note that masks  
must be worn and social  
distancing maintained.

## Educational Adventures Misa Mulroney

Educational Adventures kicked off in 2021 with a terrific workshop on grafting. We traveled to Crimora, Virginia, to visit [Countryside Farm & Nurseries, Inc.](#) Owners Mary and Raul Godinez were our hosts and instructors for this event. They grow fruit trees for the wholesale trade.

After an explanation of the different forms of grafting, Mary and Raul demonstrated proper technique. Extension Master Gardeners got a chance to try what we learned by grafting our own apple trees. Many of us found it harder than it looked! With some practice we got the hang of it.

After wrapping and sealing the new grafts we stopped for a lunch break, and then headed out to the orchard to learn about the high-density approach to growing apples.



photo captions, left to right: Our hosts Mary and Raul...thank you for a wonderful day!  
Mary in the high density orchard; practice, and the completed graft.

*photos by David Look*

## The "Big Three" Invasive Trees Will Daniels

I suppose that on some level, our most troublesome invasive trees are owed some respect for their sheer, dogged ability to survive and reproduce almost anywhere, under most conditions. But enough with the backhanded compliments, we don't like how Bradford pear, tree of heaven, and autumn olive spread over the landscape, outcompeting native species for space. The trees multiply into dense groves that have become major headaches for land managers. Within our own properties, we must contend with them, too, if we're unlucky to have them. Removal is hard work if we do it ourselves, and expensive if we hire it out. But it's worthwhile in preventing spread to other areas, which we know will certainly happen.

I have some experience struggling against each of these trees, which I'll share, along with recommendations from authorities on the best ways to send them packing for good. (See the resource on the next page for identifying these and other common invasives.)

### Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford')

In the most recent battle, my friend Jon and I felled three Bradford pear trees in the backyard of my house in Luray. Bradford pears and similar cultivars were sold by the millions beginning around 1960 and marketed as a near-perfect tree for yards and streets. Mine were about 25' tall and 9-10" in diameter at chest height. I had kept them well pruned since we moved in three years ago, so they had spread out only a little, making clean-up easier once they were on the ground. The cutting-up yielded a couple dozen very long (10-15 feet) poles and many shorter length sticks that will be useful around the garden, so that was a benefit. I had an ambitious plan to dig out the stumps, and got to work right away. How dismaying it was to see that below ground level, the modest-sized trunks doubled in diameter. I figured that digging down around the stumps, and chopping the large branching roots as I went, would eventually loosen the hold of the entire stump. I cut out roots down to about 20" but produced not a wiggle in the stump. I concluded that this tree has a taproot anchoring it deep into the earth, and admitted defeat.

Now the question for this spring is whether by severing the spreading roots in each of the stumps, I will prevent a legion of root suckers poking up all over. The Bradford can spread both by suckering and by dispersal of fruit. (Actually, this variety is self-sterile, but its pollen hybridizes with other types of Callery pears and produces viable seeds.)

Experts have different recommendations for eradicating invasives, depending on the species



and the size of the plant. For Bradfords like mine, the best options are cutting down the tree and either calling in a commercial stump-grinder, or painting the cambium layer immediately with a chemical such as glyphosate or triclopyr. If you wait to paint, first make a fresh cut across the top of the stump. Roots sprouts (i.e., suckers) would also be chemically treated. For small trees (2" maximum diameter), something to try is a heavy, lever-actuated tool that can go by several commercial names. The tool grabs the base of the tree and uproots it, saving much labor in digging it out.

By the way, the seasoned wood is said to be excellent firewood. Some woodworkers also might be interested in this hard, dense wood for projects.

## Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)

It must be the word *altissima* that gives this tree its heavenly common name. Most people would send it in the opposite direction. When I had to take out several medium-size (12" diameter) ailanthus in my old yard, I worried because everyone said this was a particularly tough one to deal with. The suckering from the roots after the tree is cut down is the main



Removing ailanthus without treating the cuts results vigorous resprouting.  
*photo by Will Daniels*

problem. I didn't treat the stumps after felling, just sprayed the leafing suckers once or twice with glyphosate (in stronger solution than Roundup) and that was that. The wood was soft and easy to saw through with a hand saw, so overall I was relieved to find this job easier than I'd feared. While ailanthus makes pretty poor firewood, some woodworkers value it for its workability and interesting appearance.

## Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

More accurately a large shrub, this Asian plant brought here for its abilities of erosion control, wildlife cover, and nitrogen-fixing, forms dense colonies quickly. It grows from berries dropped in the fall or spread by birds, which love them. I had just a few of

these to remove, and I did that simply by cutting all the stems and digging out the roots. The shrubs did not regenerate. That approach is impractical for infestations of autumn olive, though. A puller can be used for small bushes, or they can be mowed repeatedly, but cutting and painting is the best way to attack these prolific invasives. After cutting, keep an eye out for new sprouts from seeds exposed to light. There probably are few uses for the wood other than as stakes or poles.

The thick of it: inside a homeowner's half-acre autumn olive stand.  
*photo by Will Daniels*



## References:

<https://www.invasive.org/illinois/speciesofconcern.html>

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/invasive-tree-control>

<https://tinyurl.com/4mon236d>

[https://resources.ext.vt.edu/contentdetail?contentid=2408&contentname=Invasive%20Plant%20Species:%20Ailanthus%20\(Ailanthus%20altissima\)](https://resources.ext.vt.edu/contentdetail?contentid=2408&contentname=Invasive%20Plant%20Species:%20Ailanthus%20(Ailanthus%20altissima))

## Beginning Vegetable Gardeners Webinar Series: Four Sessions Remain

Elaine Specht



*photo by Elaine Specht*

For many of us, the desire to garden and especially to grow our own food has increased during the era of Covid-19. With that in mind, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners created the "Beginning Vegetable Gardeners" Webinar series to help

new gardeners in our area learn the basics of vegetable growing.

The free series, which began in February, includes six one-hour sessions covering topics from planning this year's garden all the way through preparing for the next season. Sessions are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. and run through July.

If you missed any session, it's not a problem. Recordings of past sessions are posted on our website a week or so after each live session.

Remaining sessions include:

- April 15** – Maintaining the Garden
- May 20** – Planting and Harvesting Your Produce
- June 17** – Saving Seeds and Composting the Biomass
- July 15** – Preparing Your Garden for the Next Season

**Registration is required.** To register or view previous sessions, go to: <http://nsvmga.org/events/2021-webinars/>.

Note for members of NSVMGA: participation in the Beginning Vegetable Gardeners Webinar counts toward your education hours for 2021 (one hour per session).

## Pruning Class at Belle Grove

Lynn Hoffmann

Remember the coldest day of the year? The day when the wind was blowing and there was eight inches of snow on the ground? Well, that was the day 20 EMGs went to Belle Grove to prune the Hawes crabapple trees that surround the Teaching Garden.



The trees were planted about three years ago, and had never been pruned or headed. They were hanging over the fence and growing into the space next to them.

Dana Melby, from the Piedmont Environmental Council, was our expert instructor. She worked at the AREC for several years and oversaw their many acres of apple orchards. She demonstrated proper pruning technique, and we watched her prune the first tree. There were many great questions, and even better answers!

The EMGs broke up into groups of four, and each group took on a tree to prune and get under control. Dana supervised all the pruning and gave advice on making the cuts.

We ended up with a small truck load of limbs that went into the wooded compost pile on Belle Grove's "lower 40" at the edge of the woods.

Everyone had a great time learning and cutting,



and we swapped stories on the best pants and coats to keep warm when you are outside in February. We did not linger too long after the class and we were all happy to get into our cars and warm up.

Hopefully, these crabapples will produce some great fruit after our careful pruning. This variety of crabapples are known for their use in cider, and Monticello lists the tree as a favorite of Thomas Jefferson. Belle Grove is hoping to use these apples and make them into cider.

*photos by Lynn Hoffmann*

## Cicadas – How to Prepare for Brood X

Joan Newman

Beginning in April or May we will see adult cicadas from Brood X (known as The Great Eastern Brood), which covers 16 states in the eastern United States. Females will begin laying eggs about two weeks after they emerge and are active for approximately six weeks.

The female cicada lays eggs in slits she has cut in thin branches, typically pencil width, during a process called oviposition. The eggs hatch after six to 10 weeks. The nymphs leave the twigs and drop to the soil restarting the entire 17-year cycle.

The egg implantation causes the branch to split and wither, known as “flagging,” which causes the leaves to turn brown and die. On larger, mature trees and shrubs this process is unsightly, but usually not harmful to the tree. Since cicadas can emerge in overwhelming numbers, as many as 1.5 million an acre, young trees and small trees are vulnerable.

To avoid damage to a young tree you may want to delay planting until later in 2022. If you decide to plant there are several things that you can try on small ornamental trees, shrubs and fruit trees:

- Cover them with netting of ¼ inch mesh or less, or with very lightweight fabric row cover. This will only work for small plants since the netting/fabric will need to be secured around the trunk to keep the cicadas out. Inspect any netting regularly since birds and other creatures can get caught.
- Bands of duct tape with the sticky side out or sticky adhesive on burlap strips can be wrapped around the base of a tree trunk to trap emerging nymphs as they crawl up the tree and the nymphs can be removed each morning.
- On young fruit trees postpone winter pruning until summer and then prune and remove damaged limbs. If this is done after the eggs are laid, but before the nymphs drop to the ground, it will also help reduce the number of nymphs feeding on the tree roots.

- Damage in mature vineyards is usually limited to the ends of the vines and can be pruned off. Female cicadas will sometimes lay eggs in the trunks of young vines and for that reason young trunks should be protected using a physical covering such as aluminum foil.

If you have an ornamental pond, consider covering it with screening or mesh to avoid an accumulation of decomposing cicadas in the water.

There are no effective biological controls for cicadas. While birds, parasitic wasps, predatory mites, and various mammals will feed on the nymphs, eggs and adults, all of these together are insufficient to control the vast quantities of emerging cicadas.

Typically, the damage caused by these insects does not warrant chemical control by homeowners. Sprays will often cause worse problems by affecting other beneficial insects. If you decide that chemical treatment is necessary, consult the current Virginia Pest Management Guide or the Spray Bulletin for Commercial Tree Fruit Growers referenced below for current chemical(s) recommended for control. If you choose to use a chemical, ensure you read and follow the label.

Once you have taken the precautions you need, sit back and try to enjoy (or ignore) the chorus that will serenade you from about 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. every day, with an occasional prelude or nocturn for about six weeks. Remember, you won't see the offspring of Brood X until 2038!

References:

[https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/456/456-018/ENTO-336.pdf](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/456/456-018/ENTO-336.pdf)  
[https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/456/456-419/ENTO-341w.pdf](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/456/456-419/ENTO-341w.pdf)  
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[https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/05/CALS-periodical\\_cicada\\_2020.html](https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/05/CALS-periodical_cicada_2020.html)  
<https://extension.psu.edu/tree-fruit-insect-pest-periodical-cicada>  
<https://extension2.missouri.edu/g7259>

## Spring Tips: Dividing Perennials Elaine Specht

Dividing existing clumps of perennials is an easy way to get more plants simply for the price of a little elbow grease. Now, when the plants are emerging from dormancy, is a great time to do it. First, a little vocabulary:

**Crown:** Area where plant roots and stems join. Stems grow up from the crown, and roots grow down.

**Perennials:** Non-woody (herbaceous) plants that grow and flower during spring and summer, die back in fall, go dormant over the winter, and return the following spring. (Unlike **annuals**, which live their full life cycle in a single growing season.)

**Asexual propagation:** A method for growing new plants by using vegetative parts of the parent plant (stem, root, or leaves). The new plants are genetically identical to the original parent plant. (Unlike **sexual propagation** when pollen joins with an egg to produce a seed. The resulting plant grown from the seed is genetically different from the two parent plants).

### Why divide plants?

- Promote the health of your existing plants: Perennials left in the same place for more than three years can become overgrown, overcrowded, and have dead or unsightly centers.
- Save money on buying new plants.
- Keep plants with a tendency to aggressively spread in check.
- Share with your friends.
- If you're a member of the NSVMGA: Donate plants for the plant sale at GardenFest!

### Here's how it works:

- 1) Work a spade, garden fork, or a sharp shovel into the soil completely around the plant.
- 2) Gently lift the plant, including its roots, out of the ground. Shake or brush away loose soil.
- 3) Separate the plant into divisions by gently pulling apart the crown with your hands, or cutting with a hori hori knife or a sharp spade. Soaking roots in a tub of water can some times make this easier. Ensure that each section of the plant crown includes three to five healthy shoots and a vigorous supply of connected roots.
- 4) Place each new plant division into prepared holes in the ground, and water thoroughly. Keep the soil appropriately watered until the plant is established.
- 5) Another option is to place divided perennials into a pot of soil. Keep the pot evenly moist and in a shaded area. Transplant the divisions into the garden four to six weeks later, after new roots have begun to grow.

The photo shows a clump of daylilies (*Hemerocallis spp.*) in the foreground that was divided to create another six clumps.

Learn more about perennial division and asexual propagation of other plants from this Virginia Cooperative Extension fact sheet:

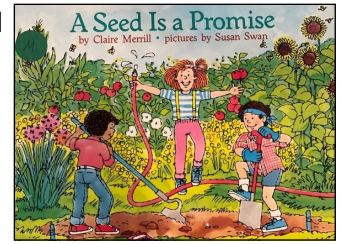
<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-002/426-002.html>



photo by Elaine Specht

## EMGs in Page County: "A Seed Is a Promise" Project Lesley Mack

"A Seed Is a Promise" is a children's book written by Susan Swan and illustrated by Claire Merrill. It is the story of where seeds come from, how they grow, and most importantly, that inside every seed is the 'promise' of a new plant. This promise is so important for every living thing on this planet.



Using this idea, the EMGs in Page County thanked ALL of the 551 Page County Public School System employees for their 'promise' to the Page County Public School students during Covid-19. The thank-you project included office staff, teachers, and school employees of the bus, transportation, cafeteria, and technology work sites.

Eric Benson, the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction with Page County Public Schools, assisted by providing all of the employee names and their work locations. The list of names was divided among the volunteer group, along with thank-you cards, reclosable plastic bags and the thousands of bush bean seeds that were generously donated by the Page Co-Op Farm Bureau, Inc., of Luray.

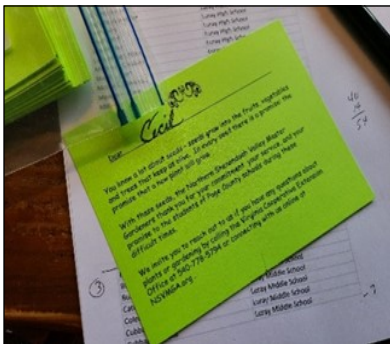
Each of the employees' names were handwritten, to add a personal touch, with 'thank-you' on one side and instructions for how to plant and take care of the bag of bush beans seeds on the other side.

According to Lynn Hoffmann, EMGs were able to thank almost 800 people across our entire service area. In addition to the 551 in Page County, employees at Indian Hollow School in Frederick County, and North Fork Middle School in Quicksburg received thank-you plants.

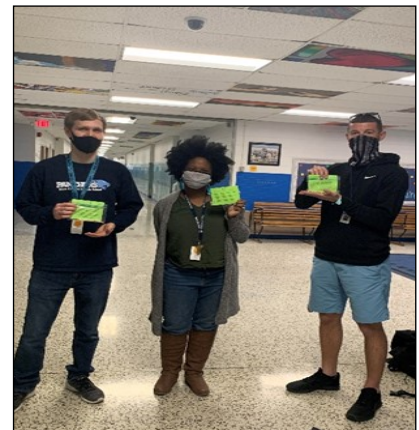
A BIG THANKS to the Page Co-Op, Eric Benson and all the EMGs that participated in this project!

left to right: the 'thank-you' card, volunteers organizing bags, and boxes decorated and ready to go.

*photos by Lesley Mack*



We love the photos below of some of the Page County Public School employees receiving their 'thank-you'. (*photos by Tricia Runyan*) We are very appreciative of the dedication and 'promise' these wonderful folks have to the students of this county. Happy planting!



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## **From the Editor: Gardening for Life**

The gardening season is upon us! Gardening is a pastime that nurtures the body, mind and spirit. The beloved hobby combines art and science and bestows great joy and satisfaction to those who incorporate it into their lives. I am a lifelong gardener and over the decades have planted herbs, vegetables, bulbs, annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, conifers, roses, ferns, cactus, grasses, succulents, tropicals and natives. I have picked countless weeds, received all sorts of insect bites and stings, contracted poison ivy and strained my back. However, the benefits far outweigh the negatives. The fresh air, closeness to nature, scent of the garden, beauty of flowers and the physicality of gardening are all aspects that I enjoy. As we age we often need to change the way that we garden. Adaptability is an important facet of lifelong gardening.

Downsizing, just as we do with homes, is the biggest step that one can take to reduce the work. In addition to a much smaller garden area, I now limit most of what I plant in the ground to perennials and shrubs. Containers are perfect for planting annuals for pops of color, and the soft potting soil makes for easy work. I no longer plant copious amounts of cannas because of the difficult work involved in lifting them from the ground in the fall. Low maintenance plants such as grasses, herbs and ground covers reduce garden chores. Raised beds can address mobility issues and minimize weeds.

Using proper form is essential. Stretching is extremely important. Be sure to stretch your arms, wrists, hands, shoulders and lower back prior to and after gardening. Proper lifting technique is to bend both knees, keep the back straight, and squat down by the object to be lifted. Use the large leg muscles to help lift, not the back muscles. Hiring help for the heavy work can prevent muscle strain and back aches.

A sit upon rolling cart or scooter can help to prevent aches and pains. A knee pad really makes gardening much more comfortable. Use carts and wheelbarrows to move objects whenever possible. Long reach tools, ergonomic tools, and a sun hat and gloves help keep gardeners of all ages safe and protected.

One thing that I have done to satisfy my need to create with plants and flowers all year long is taken up floral arranging. I design an arrangement almost every week. My collection of inexpensive vessels purchased from thrift shops guarantees that there are options for the arrangements I make for myself and to gift for the holiday season and birthdays.

I can't imagine life without flowers and plants. I will always find a way to incorporate them into my life. Are you a lifelong gardener too?

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