

## NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

### UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING

- **Sunday, January 16, 2pm Fort Valley Nursery**, 1175 Hisey Ave, Woodstock. Terry Fogle, part owner of FVN will be our speaker. Please bring a potluck dish or finger foods to share.

**Directions:** From I-81, take exit #283 Woodstock. Go west on Rt. 42 and take left on Hisey Ave. (just past Tractor Supply Company). Fort Valley Nursery will be located on your left 1/4 mile.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Monday, January 9, 7–8pm, Fort Valley Series—For the Love of Gardening**, Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave Woodstock VA
- **Monday, January 23, 7–8pm, Fort Valley Series—Gardening with Gourmet**, Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave Woodstock VA
- **Saturday, January 28, 10am–2pm Seed Exchange at Blandy** (see details below)
- **Monday, February 6, 7–8pm, Fort Valley Series—Virginia’s Wild Bees**, Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave Woodstock VA
- **Sunday, February 12, 1-3pm, Notes from Nature—Plants of Virginia Workshop, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Front Royal.** George Mason professor of botany Andrea Weeks will train people how to enter label data for the herbaria images that have been digitized. This is part of community outreach for National Science Foundation-funded research. The goals of the workshop include an introduction the rationale for digitization of natural history specimens and the goals of herbarium digitization in the southeastern US, which is the focus of the NSF-funded research. Before the program Kyle Richards and Erika Gonzales will lead a walk to the demonstration gardens on Racetrack Hill, starting time and location TBA. Limit 24 participants. Register with Catherine Mayes, [MayesCD@aol.com](mailto:MayesCD@aol.com).
- **Monday, February 20, 7–8pm, Fort Valley Series—Enhancing Yards for Birds**, Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave Woodstock VA
- **Monday, March 6, 7–8pm, Fort Valley Series—Plants for Problem Areas**, Fort Valley Nursery, 1175 Hisey Ave Woodstock VA
- **Saturday, April 1, Gardening in the Valley Symposium 2017, Lord Fairfax Community College**

### FROM THE PRESIDENT by Cy Haley

Happy New Year Master Gardeners! I hope everyone had a pleasant holiday and an opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

This is the time of year when some make resolutions and try to keep them throughout the year. If you are in this group I hope you keep Master Gardeners and NSVMGA on your list of resolutions. I thought I'd share a couple of mine with you. I resolve to

- get Richard my articles for the newsletter prior to the deadline (already broke this one as it's the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January and I just remembered that I need to get him an article for the January newsletter).
- have everything ready for Garden Fest by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. I've already made several things for the sales table so I think I have a good change of keeping this one.

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- make as many events as I can work into my schedule. I already have several on the calendar and have put in for time off at work for them.
- help the members make their hours required and enjoy the time doing so.
- keep up to date on my hours instead of waiting until the last minute to enter my time in VMS.
- have as much fun as possible with fellow MGs. This one is going to be easy as you all are a fun bunch to work with.
- try something new as a NSVMGA volunteer whether it is a new event or a new learning experience.

Well, there are a few of mine. I hope you enjoy the New Year and are excited about what we can accomplish as MGs. The public is waiting for us so, once again, Happy New Year!

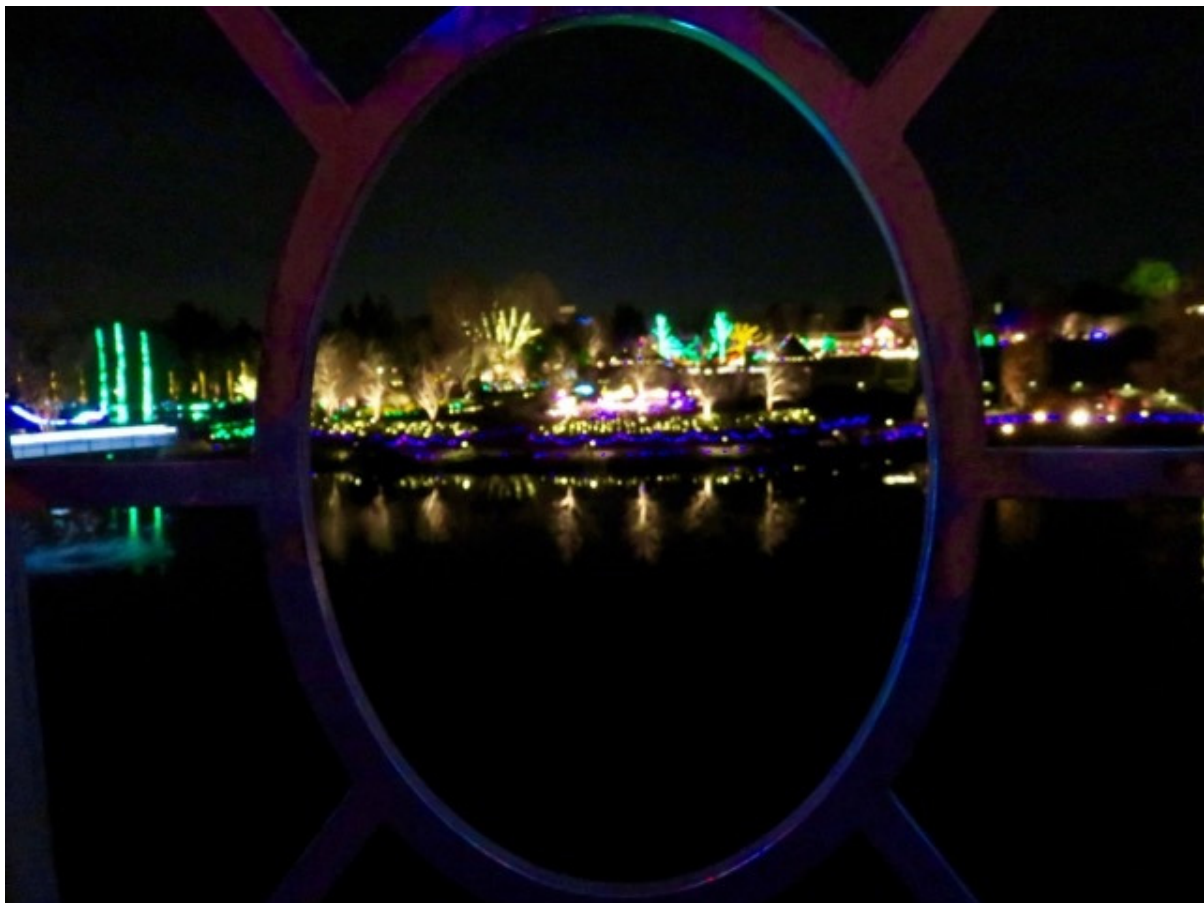
### CLARKE COUNTY REPORT by Ginny Smith

We got together in December to have fellowship, a cookie exchange, and make a table centerpiece for the holidays. It was great to have guests from other counties attend, a time to unwind before we start another year of projects.



Also we attended the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond for their light show—quite a display especially the conservatory with the tree and plants. Thanks to Laurie Cocina for the photos. We will be having a meeting in March to review 2017 projects.







**SMILE AMAZON FOR THE MASTER GARDENERS** by Lynn Hoffman

The Smile Amazon website is the same thing as Amazon and connects you to all those things you buy on the internet. The nice thing is that Amazon has a system to give non-profits a percentage of a purchase price without any additional cost to the buyer.



NSMVGA is now set up on Smile Amazon as a non-profit to get money for NSMVGA when you purchase anything via Amazon.

So please to go to Smile Amazon (<https://smile.amazon.com/>) and sign up for the NSMVGA, and log on to Smile Amazon every time you buy something on Amazon so NSMVGA will get something from your purchase.

**BRENT'S AND BECKY'S BULBS** by Lynn Hoffman



Please check out our web page and read about Brent's and Becky's Bulbs. This is another opportunity to share part of a purchase with the NSVMGA. We already have \$11 in our account for members who have bought bulbs or plants. It's easy to do and they have great plants.

I want to buy some Shamrock and bulbs. St. Patrick's Day is coming and so is Spring, so check out their site and start thinking about spring planting!



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### FOSA/NSVMGA SEED EXCHANGE by Elaine Specht

From *Ageratum* to *Zinnia*, we have seeds for you at the Seed Exchange at Blandy:

When: Saturday, January 28, 2017, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Blandy Experimental Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia, Library

Throughout the fall, your NSVMGA friends were busy gathering, cleaning, and packaging seeds for the exchange. Seeds from more than 60 different types of plants are already represented by what we prepared, and that doesn't count all that will come in on the day of the exchange. If you haven't yet attended an exchange, here is what you can expect.



- **Plant material:** In addition to seeds, there will be bulbs and cuttings. If you bring seeds to share, you are welcome to take as many seed packets as you'd like. Even if you don't bring seeds, you're welcome to take up to 5 packets
- **Garden Book and Magazine Exchange:** The book exchange "rate" is on a one-for-one basis
- **Speaker:** At 11 a.m., a member of the Virginia State Beekeepers Association will give a presentation about bees and plants good for these important pollinators
- **Garden-Themed Door Prizes:** You must be present to win
- **Vendors:** Herbs, teas, and lavender items will be featured by the vendors

### LICHENS by Lesley Mack

Hope you are enjoying this new, cold part of the year... getting out to walk among the architectural structures of the evergreens and trees. I love the simple hues of grays, browns and greens. I also love the mosses and lichens that seem to prosper at this time of year.

I recently learned that lichens are a "complex life form". They are actually a partnership of two separate organisms, a fungus and photosynthesizer, most often an alga. The fungus is the dominate partner which gives the lichen its shapes and fruiting bodies. The algae give lichen the green, blue-green, bronze colors.

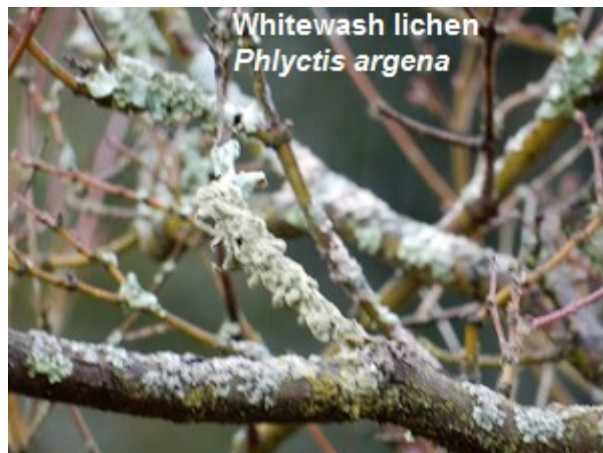


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Fungi are in their own kingdom. They do not contain chlorophyll, so fungi rely on other organisms for nutrition. Mostly, fungi are found decomposing other organic matter...or sometimes they go to parties dancing...trying to be a “fun guy”. Sorry, had to.

Lichens do not have any roots, stems or leaves, but the fungus absorbs water from the air and nutrients from the substrate while the algae photosynthesizes and provide food for the fungus as it grows and spreads. This time of year is great for lichen and their growth cycle, with the cooler temperatures and moisture that does not evaporate in the day's heat.

The pictured lichens are all commonly found in Virginia. The pictures were taken in the Macks' garden.



When wet, the algae in Common Greenshield and other chlorolichens “bloom”, which means it turns a deeper shade of green. Lichens are not only beautiful and come in various shapes, sizes and colors, but they also provide a home for algae where it might not normally survive. The fungus protects the algae in the dry, sunny climates as long as there are occasional rain showers. Lichens live all over the world and the photosynthesis process converts carbon dioxide into oxygen.

Some other points about Lichens:

- Lichens absorb pollutants from the atmosphere, and provide information about those pollutants.
- Lichens provide food and building materials for mammals, birds, and insects.
- Lichens are used by humans for dyes, clothing, and decoration.
- Collecting lichens on National Forest Lands requires a permit
- Certain types of lichen can be eaten
- <https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/beauty/lichens/glossary.shtml> is a lichens glossary
- The American Bryological and Lichenological Society (ABLS) was founded in 1898 (<http://www.abls.org/>) (Bryology is the study of mosses and liverworts.)



So, next time you are asked, “Why did the fungus and alga get married?”, you can say because they had a lichen for each other...ha.

EDITORS CORNER—RED OAKS by Richard Stromberg

Red Oak leaves have pointed lobes with a bristle tip.

**Northern Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*—red) is common and widespread in the uplands of our area. It is distinguished by the shallow acorn cup that has tight scales. The acorns are about one inch long. Bark on mature trunks has long, smooth ridges and shallow fissures. Leaves have 3-5 pairs of lobes. They are smooth underneath except often having small tufts of branching hairs in vein axils.



**Black Oak** (*Q. velutina*) has dark grayish bark broken into irregular blocks. It gets darker with age, hence the name “black”. An orange fuzz on the underside of the leaf yields the species name *velutina*, which means velvety. The fuzz also appears on the midrib on the top of the leaf. The ¾-inch acorns have shaggy-fringed caps which cover more than half of the nut. Oak leaves at the bottom of a tree are often different than the “sun-leaves” at the top of a tree, particularly Black Oak. The sun-leaves are usually smaller and more deeply lobed.

**Shumard Oak** (*Q. shumardii*—named after nineteenth century geologist B. F. Shumard) tends to grow in damp areas. The leaves tend to have more lobes and bristles than other species. They are smooth underneath except for conspicuous tufts of branching hairs in vein axils. The one-inch acorns have shallow caps.

**Scarlet Oak** (*Q. coccinea*—scarlet) is called scarlet because its fall color can be brighter red than most oaks. It tolerates poor, dry soil. The ¾-inch acorns have turban-shaped caps with tight scales. The cap covers more than half of the nut. The apex of the acorn often has one to three concentric rings. Deeply lobed, six inch leaves have tufts of hair along the mid-vein on the underside.

We are at the northern limits of the **Southern Red Oak** (*Q. falcata*). It is distinguished by the shape of the leaf base, called “U-shaped”, “bell-shaped”, or “sickle-shaped”. *Falcata* means “sickle-shaped”. The underside of the leaf is densely hairy. It has small (5/8 inch) acorns with tightly-scaled caps covering 1/3 to 1/2 of the nut.

**Blackjack Oak** (*Q. marilandica*) is included in this group even though it often does not show bristles on the lobe tips. The leathery leaf is triangular with the broad end at the apex, though the apex may have shallow lobes. Often a leaf is shaped like a hammer, sometimes with small lobes on the hammer shaft. The ¾ inch acorns are 1/2 to 3/4 covered by a goblet-shaped cap. On mature trees the bark is dark, in squarish blocks with deep fissures. It grows in poor, dry soil, so I see it mostly on low-elevation, rocky ridges. It can grow to 50 foot, but on the ridges it is usually a short shrub so the leaves



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are at eye level. When I see a hammer-shaped leaf, I know what it is.

