

## NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

February, 2014

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the **month**, and we will meet at 4pm, except winter months will be at 2. All will be pot luck. Each county coordinator will be responsible for providing the eating utensils, plates, coffee/drinks. (Check with hosts of private homes if you have any questions.)

- **Sunday, February 16, 2pm (not 4pm), Natures Common Scents by Sondra Johnson 2** at the Warren County Government Center located in Front Royal.
- **Directions** From the north end of Front Royal (I-66 exit 6 or Virginia Route 55 from Strasburg), take US Route 522 south. After you cross the second bridge (South Fork of The Shenandoah River), turn left at the stop light. Follow until you come to the next stop light and turn left onto Commerce Avenue. Proceed through the 6th Street light and come three more blocks (Post Office sign will be at the corner of 3rd & Commerce Avenue). Turn right onto 3rd Street, and the County Government Building is on the left. From the south end of Front Royal, take US 340 north through town. Turn right onto 2nd Street at Auto Zone. Go 2 blocks and turn left after you pass Warren Avenue into the Government Center parking lot (just before you get to the stop sign at Commerce Street

### OTHER EVENTS

- **Tuesday, February 18, 11am Jr MG home school's 2014 season planning meeting** at the Extension Office in Winchester. We need instructors for the classes and would like anyone who is interested to please email Lynn Hoffman ([gwendydog@gmail.com](mailto:gwendydog@gmail.com)) and a topic they would like to teach. Classes will be held on Tuesday at the Methodist Church on DeVry St. in Winchester on Tuesday mornings. The first class will be March 11.
- **Saturday, February 22, 2-3:30pm, Workshop on public speaking and PowerPoint presentations.** Anne Dewey-Balzhiser at the Museum of the Shenandoah's Learning Center located in Winchester. Anne will cover the process of public speaking/PowerPoint presentations step-by-step and will include tips for success. Attendance at this workshop can be counted as 1.5 education hours. Please call Anne to reserve a spot: 540-869-1317.
- **Sunday, February 23, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Winter Speaker Series at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall.** James Barnes, Sustainable Habitat Program Manager for PEC. For more information contact [piedmontvnps@gmail.com](mailto:piedmontvnps@gmail.com).
- **Saturday 15 March 2014 "Garden in the Valley Symposium"**, 7:30am-4pm, sponsored by NSVMGA at Hester Auditorium ,Shenandoah University. Our annual educational forum for Master Gardeners and the public offers a full day of presentations and discussion by professionals in the field of horticulture, nutrition, health and environmental sustainability. MGs attending the symposium will get seven education hours. Check the symposium flyerand registration link on the Home page of our web site for additional details.
- **Sunday, March 23, 2 pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Winter Speaker Series at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall.** Charles Smith, Prince William Wildflower Society and Fairfax County Park Authority Natural Resources Protection Manager. For more information contact [piedmontvnps@gmail.com](mailto:piedmontvnps@gmail.com).

**March 15 to May 21, Master Naturalist Training Course**, Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 and on Saturdays from 9 AM to 2 PM.

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

The Shenandoah Chapter, serving the northern Shenandoah Valley, is offering a 2014 training course. Cost of the program is \$150. A limited number of full and partial scholarships are available. The evening classes will be held at Blandly Experimental Farm and State Arboretum of Virginia located on Route 50 just East of Route 340.

Saturday field work classes will be held at Blandy and other locations. Classes include nature interpretation, research skills, wildflowers, trees, insects, fish, mammals, birds, geology, soil science, weather and climate, general ecology, land use, aquatic habitats, reptiles, and amphibians. The training is for adults or high school students accompanied by a parent or adult who also participates. For more information about the course contact Alex Newhart at [vmnshenandoah@gmail.com](mailto:vmnshenandoah@gmail.com) or call 540-837-1626.



**PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW** from Angie Hutchinson

The picture is a reminder of last year’s Philadelphia Flower Show. It is the first week of March.

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR’S REPORT** by Susan Garrett

Great news! The list of this year’s Milestone Hours has been compiled by Sarah Kohrs, our Timekeeper (by the way, congratulations to Sarah and her husband and their two boys as they welcomed new baby Gratian), and we are celebrating a first in the history of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association.



Not only are more people than any year in my memory receiving Milestone Awards, but this year we are recognizing that Carolyn Wilson, with her amazing dedication, humor, resolve and just plain hard work, has given an historic **5000 hours** to the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program. Now that’s a lot of hours! Thank you, Carolyn!

We also want to recognize Bob Carlton, our President, who will be receiving his **3,000 hour** pin (only one other person in our history has received this pin, and that was Lynn Hoffmann). Bob is a great leader and we could not have gotten to where we are today without him—and of course, we want to thank Bob’s wife

Mary, an NSVMGA Honorary Member.

Also, Cy Haley, our past president, will be receiving her **1,000 hour** pin—and we know how hard she has worked for the NSVMGA in these past few years. Six of our members will be receiving **500 hour** pins, and nine members, their **250 hour** pins:

- |                        |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Carolyn Wilson - 5,000 | Susan Garrett - 500    | Sharon Bradshaw - 250  |
| Bob Carlton - 3,000    | Richard Howell - 500   | Donna Downing - 250    |
| Cynthia Haley - 1,000  | Janet Keithley - 500   | Theresa Krause - 250   |
|                        | Malinda Gordy - 500    | Teri Merrill - 250     |
|                        | Angie Hutchinson - 500 | Loretta Allison - 250  |
|                        | Belinda Palmer – 500   | Patricia Burslem - 250 |
|                        |                        | Sarah Kohrs - 250      |
|                        |                        | Ellen Markel - 250     |
|                        |                        | Anna Mea Ortgies - 250 |

The pins and certificates will be given out at MG College (June 25-29, 2014), or, for those who cannot attend MG College, at the July NSVMGA meeting. (Please note that anyone who achieves 500 volunteer hours or more can get a discount at MG College. The amount of the discount depends on hours earned.

The discounts are available in the year or the year after one earns a particular Milestone—only one discount per year.



Pin designs are

- 250 hours - *white on silver* pin
- 500 hours - *yellow on silver* pin
- 1000 hours - *green on silver* pin
- 2000 hours - *silver on silver* pin
- 3000 hours - *brown on gold* pin
- 4000 hours - *blue on gold* pin
- 5000 hours - *gold on gold* pin

I'm looking forward to admiring Carolyn's "gold on gold" pin, Bob's "brown on gold" pin, Cy's "green on silver" pin—and all the other shiny new pins to be awarded this year. They represent dedicated hours of service to our communities, and I look forward to seeing many more in the years to come!

#### **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT** by Ginny Smith

At this month's meeting we will be learning about how herbs and plants affect our lives. Our speaker, Sondra Johnson, lives just outside Front Royal and owns "Natures Common Scents". She started with trying to help her son with a psoriasis issue and has been researching other problems since then. Here is an excerpt from one of her book.

"When it comes to herbs and herbalism we can't claim to know more than our forefathers did. It is clear that from the time of ancient man many of the same herbs have been in continual use for healing many of the same medical problems we are familiar with today. Unfortunately, though, we seem to have lost the innate ability to listen to our bodies and choose a healing herb. Using herbs is easier than that. God provided a garden; He didn't provide capsules. He gave us plants that, used properly, keep us healthy and heal a wide variety of problems."

#### **JANUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES** by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

See [Board Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

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#### **EDUCATION CHAIR REPORT** by Helen Lake

Frosty January is behind us! I have overheard fellow MGs saying that with all the cold our lilacs will bloom better, and we will have fewer stinkbugs in the gardens. We sure are an optimistic group, aren't we!

For anyone who is interested in picking up some public speaking points, don't forget to sign up for the workshop on 22 February from 2-3:30 pm. It will be held at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in their Learning Center next to the café. Fellow Master Gardener Anne Dewey-Balzhiser will be the presenter. Anne has provided public speaking training in the corporate sector for many years. This workshop will give you 1.5 Education hours. This workshop is exclusively for NSVMGA Master Gardeners.

A flyer for the NSVMGA sponsored 'Garden in the Valley' Symposium has been posted on our home web page. A registration form is attached to it. The symposium will be held on Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, at Shenandoah University's Hester Auditorium. Registration will begin at 7:30 am and speaker presentations will begin 8:45am and conclude at 4pm. MGs attending will earn 8 Education hours.

In a recent VMS note from Lynn Hoffman, a member of the symposium committee in charge of registration stated the cost for ACTIVE Master Gardeners of NSVMGA would be \$35.00 vice the full \$45.00 fee for attending the educational forum, which also includes a continental breakfast and lunch. To clarify, the terms of Active status in accordance to NSVMGA bylaws: a member who has paid 2014 dues and turned in twenty project and eight education hours last year(2013).

This year's roster of speakers are excited to present to our Master Gardeners on their topic of 'passion' and spend some time amongst us during lunch and breaks. All speakers will have large name badges so that you may easily recognize and engage with them during breaks, or if they are sitting next to you.

#### **PAGE COUNTY REPORT** by Leslie Mack

We are very glad Charlie Newton has joined back in and is going to meetings, contributing ideas, etc. Elke Thomas' husband John is recovering from a serious surgery, so any prayers or helpful energies sent their way would be good.

#### **SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT** by Carolyn Wilson

Although there are very few gardening questions in the dead of winter, we monitor the green help line all year. I always work in December because most of the questions are about the up-coming Master Gardener classes or house plant questions. However, I got a really strange question this year. A plumbing company in Spokane, Washington, wanted to know if we would like to link with them. I had to wonder what possible search led them to our web site?

***NOTE from Webmaster: Someone out just to look for links...won't do them any good . 😊 We do not give links to non garden related sites.***

As everyone knows by now, Shenandoah County is hosting the Master Gardener classes this year. There will be more information about this elsewhere in the newsletter. After talking with most of the students on registration night, I think that we will have some great new Master Gardener interns in a few months. Please be sure to welcome any of the new trainees if you see them at one of our meetings.

I am excited to let you know about a new project that the Shenandoah Master Gardeners are starting with the Signal Knob FFA. This past summer we did a 3 day camp with them. Their leader was so pleased with our efforts that she asked if we would be willing to help the students to prepare for their spring and summer contests in the plant science division. We were so impressed with the students in the summer program, that we were happy to help them. Larry Haun has put together a great team and they are hard at work preparing materials to help the students study. Now if only the weather will cooperate so that they can meet with the students. (The first study date was canceled due to this extreme winter weather.) I feel that this is really a very worthy Master Gardener project that will help prepare our future generation to care for our planet in a responsible way. I will keep you posted as the program develops.

I recommend a cup of cocoa, a blazing fire (in the fire place would be best) and lots of gardening catalogs to make it through the rest of the winter.

#### **FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT** by Angie Hutchinson

I hope everyone in Frederick County received my first group e-mail about "Housekeeping".

Emily Wickham will continue the Green Line for Mark. Emily did a fantastic job last year in keeping the Green Line scheduled and filling last minute gaps. The Green Line operates out of the Extension Office on Kent Street. It will still be on Fridays from 10-12 until the questions require more time. There is a great library to draw from as well as Mark when he is available.

There are several ongoing projects in the County. Lynn Hoffman has an Education Unit project beginning for the Home Schooled JrMGs.

Frederick County has openings for a Garden Club community talk in April on herbs in the garden, both a garden element and an insect magnet or preventative. Southern States and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley want two speakers for April 19, as an Earth Day event. FYI, this is also Easter weekend. They requested one be about rain barrels. If you're interested please contact me.

Another project is identification tags for the Frederick Douglass Rain Garden.

February is a great month to prune and start pulling the bitter cress.

## JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS PROGRAM AT GREENWOOD MILL by Helen Lake, Project Leader

The 2014 Spring Session at Greenwood Mill Elementary School began on 16 January with a roomful of very excited and enthusiastic students.



For this session we have built, using a baker's rack, metal shelving and commercial retail grow lights, a three tier rack of grow lights to provide the students a venue to grow and nurture plants grown from seed during the nine week class. With the able help of MG Stan Corneal whose enthusiasm for the JrMG Program is ever-strong, the rack was purchased and the services of a professional electrician obtained (by Stan, of course) *pro bono*.

Each metal shelf holds a tray of 24 pots of annual seeds that were planted and labeled with colorful Popsicle sticks by the students. The sticks have their names, type of seed and date it was sown and will be used to annotate in a growth and measurement chart in their Interactive Science Journals.

As with last fall, the class is in three teams of: Wiggly Worms, Bumbly Bees and Might Mantis.

As of yesterday's second class (we missed one class to a snow day, alas), many of the seeds had germinated in their trays and provided the perfect venue to discuss that day's topic, "Life Cycle of a Plant." Students provided their analysis and observation of the state of their individual pots and in what stage of the life cycle they were in.

A large Meyer lemon bush with multiple branches in full bloom and two very large lemons ready for harvest was brought in to display of the various facets of the life cycle and processes of a plant (i.e. chlorophyll, pollination, photosynthesis). Towards the last few minutes of class, one of the lemons was 'harvested' and cut up into small pieces for each student to sample. There were quite a few sour looking faces at first, and then a line formed for a second piece of that sweet lemon.

During the Spring Session of the JrMG program, our dedicated and enthusiastic cadre of MG instructors will be teaching soil (why is it important?); water conservation in gardening (spitting involved); Vermiculture; landscape architecture and use of energy. Any and all Master Gardeners are welcome to attend these classes as a visitor to the school. For details on the dates and times of the topics being taught contact me on [alyena@shentel.net](mailto:alyena@shentel.net).

### BEE AWARE from Leslie Mack

Planting flowers, shrubs, and trees—especially native ones—that provide food for butterflies, bees, wild pollinators, and other wildlife is a wonderful way to beautify your yard and benefit the world around you. But be careful where you shop. Environmental group Friends of the Earth purchased "bee-friendly" plants from three major big-box retailers around the country and had them analyzed at a laboratory. Seven of the 13 plants tested contained neonicotinoids, a type of synthetic insecticide that is poisonous to bees.

Neonicotinoids are especially dangerous to bees and other insects because they are absorbed into plant tissues and distributed to new growth, including pollen collected and eaten by bees. This class of insecticide is known for its persistence in plant tissues and the environment, remaining deadly for months or even years. An increasing amount of evidence links neonicotinoids to the decline of bee populations worldwide.

The best advice: Purchase plants from local growers who don't use synthetic chemicals—or start your own plants from untreated seeds. Learn more about the Friends of the Earth Bee Action campaign at [foe.org/beeaction](http://foe.org/beeaction). —Jean Nick

### TIPS FOR TIME REPORTING by Sarah Kohrs

Perhaps entering hours on the Volunteer Management System seems overwhelming or maybe you wish you knew some quick pointers to make it easier. Look here each month for a new tip to help you acclimate to VMS.

Tip #1: To help you keep track of 2014 hours, filter them by date. Log in to VMS (You can get to VMS by clicking it at the top right of the NSVMGA website). Click the "View Your Hours" tab in the "Your Information" box in the left hand corner navigation listing. Enter "1/1/2014" in the "Start Date" box and "12/31/2014" in the "End Date" box. Then, click "Submit." A list of each activity you entered hours for in 2014 will show up with a total of hours for the year at the bottom.

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VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER  
VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Hello, Sarah Kohrs! Northern Shenandoah Valley

**Your Information**

- [Edit Your Profile](#)
- [Add New Hours](#)
- [Viewing Your Hours](#)

**Volunteer Hour History For Sarah Kohrs**

Start Date:  End Date:

Date	Activity	Project Name	Miles Driven	CE Hours	Vol. Hours

If you have questions about VMS (<https://virginia.volunteersystem.org>), contact Time Keeper Sarah Kohrs at [kohrs@shentel.net](mailto:kohrs@shentel.net) or (540) 477-3257.

**EDITORS CORNER** by Richard Stromberg

Cold! I don't have any flower pictures so here's some ice, moss, and fungus.

