

July, 2011 Newsletter

OTHER EVENTS

- **Sunday, July 11, 1pm, Dark Hollow Falls in Shenandoah National Park.** Join Kristin Zimet of the Virginia Native Plant Society as she explores the scenic Dark Hollow Falls trail (3429 ft elevation) at the 50.7 mile post of Skyline Drive near Big Meadows. The walk is moderate. To RSVP and for directions, please contact Kristin.
- **Thursday, July 15, 12:30pm at Belle Grove Gardenfest 2010 wrap-up meeting**

JUNE MEETING MINUTES by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

See [Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

OTHER NSVMGA TREASURY ITEMS

1. DUES - as of 06/30/2010, 10 NSVMGA members have not paid the \$10 per member dues.
2. DUES ARE PAID BY 93% OF NSVMGA MEMBERS.
3. DONATIONS APPROVED, BUT NOT DISBURSED"
 - a. Woodstock Rescue Squad - \$100, 'Susie's Garden, waiting for sign & invoice
 - b. New Market Garden - \$150, waiting for sign & invoices"
 - c. Belle Grove Scholarship - \$250

PRESIDENTS REPORT by Bob Carlton

It may not be the Dog Days of August, but it is certainly doggone hot! June has demonstrated why our region is the driest in the Commonwealth. There is hope we may get some rain by the end of the month. Our gardens could use it.

Our mission of providing information to homeowners about home horticulture is going great guns:

- The counties have their helplines answering questions of immediate concern to gardeners
- MGs like Frank Baxter and others are giving lectures
- Several of the farmers' markets have MG booths
- Rain gardens with their signs help people understand about the importance of ways to improve water quality and diminish the effects of storm runoff
- There will be MG booths at several of the county fairs later in the summer
- MGs are giving programs at 4-H camps and to other youth group
- We had 2 seminars for training and for the public
- There was an MG Class for new Master Gardeners (Carolyn and I are very proud and pleased to see the way the members of the Class of 2010 are rapidly becoming integrated into the group – some have already completed their Internships)
- Let us not forget the tremendously successful 2010 GardenFest that provided educational opportunities for both adults and youth – kudos to all who participated to make it a success.
- And I probably left off many other efforts that should have been included

However, we must not rest on our laurels. Helen Lake and those assisting her are already putting together the MG Class for 2011. Are you helping recruit potential students for it?

The Association has had seminars for training and for the public this year, but we need to start planning for those we can offer during the rest of this year and the beginning of next year. Do you have ideas for topics we should consider for such seminars?

If you do, send them to Lynn Hoffmann, Chairman of the Education Committee, with a carbon copy to me and to Ernie. As you think of topics, also think of people who could be asked to make presentations. Any other thoughts you have on educational programs will be most welcome.

GARDENFEST by Martha Mitchell, Gardenfest Chair

GardenFest 2010 is now behind us, and I continue to hear very nice comments from volunteers and visitors alike. I want to thank everyone who worked in many ways to make this year's event so great. GardenFest is only one window into the world of Master Gardeners, and we all demonstrated to our community what NSVMGA is all about.

I have scheduled a wrap-up meeting for Thursday, July 15, 12:30 at Belle Grove. We will discuss what went right and things we need to work on to improve and grow the event next year. Please feel free to email your comments to me (mitch6571@aol.com) if you can't make the meeting, and I will include them in our discussion.

Enjoy your summer, and pray for the return of the weather we were fortunate to have on the day of GardenFest!

SHENANDOAH REPORT by Johan Guss

Several of us are working with the 4H Campers this summer. Our program this year is about trees. We begin with a standup activity - which involves every camper - they are all a part of the tree. Some are the bark, some are phloem, some are roots, some are leaves etc. We then we read them the story "The Giving Tree".

We join Melissa somebody singing "And the green grass grew all around, all around" (the tree). Would you believe that I found it on You Tube - held my tape recorder to the speakers on my computer and played it over and over until it was on the tape four times.

Then I played the YouTube version over and over while I copied the words. Whew!! Ron got tired of it and went outside. Anyway, It is a good one to sing with the kids. We then go through the life cycle of a tree and emphasize the rotting log. There is a lot of critters and a lot of activity in a decomposing log!! I bought wooden medallions (thin slices from a branch, dried and sanded) on which they trace a leaf and color it with colored pencils.

When everyone is finished an adult puts down newspaper and sprays all of them with polyurethane. There is a hole in each and yarn to make it a necklace. They are turning out very well!! We adults are pleased! I hope the kids are.

COORDINATORS REPORT by Ernie Polanskas

Timesheets are now due for the first half of the year. If you submitted your first quarter timesheet then please just send the second quarter. If you did not send a timesheet for January through March then please include that time also. Please send your completed timesheet to Carolyn Stonesifer Remember we need EVERY HOUR! Send in your timesheet no matter how many hours.

Even though GardenFest 2010 is now behind us there are still plenty of opportunities to earn Volunteer Project Hours. If you need help finding a project contact your county coordinator or me.

As I come to the completion of my term as Volunteer Coordinator I cannot help but look back at where we have been and where we are heading. When I accepted this position it was with the determination that I would reach out to all the inactive and semi-active members and try to encourage them to become more visible in our organization. I do have to say I am disappointed that my efforts did not produce more results. Any organization measures its success by the success of each individual member. We have many MG's that have devoted a large part of their lives to the NSVMGA. Whenever there is a need in our community they are ready and willing to serve. There are others who do the minimal requirements to remain in the Association, we see them at an occasional meeting or not at all. They may be involved in their pet project only and not always visible to the rest of us. I felt they were short changing the rest of us by their sporadic appearances. Now I think I understand some of the reasons this is done, and I realize that this is okay.

All of us have our strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, will do's and won't do's. And that is a good thing. It still is a commitment to the Master Gardener goal of reaching out to others to share our passion for gardening. Maybe the next Volunteer Coordinator will find a way to activate more members. For me I am thankful for the ones I have grown to know and work alongside. I am awed at the commitment of all our members.

MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE REPORT by Johan Guss

Fran Gregory and I went together. Fran drove, two-and-one-half-hours to Virginia Tech, and we left the car in a lot for the duration. They have 12 seater vans that to shuttle folks around. We stayed in a recently built, shiny clean dorm. We used a card similar to a credit card to get in doors and to make the elevator do what you tell it, and it is swiped when you go into the dining hall for meals. We had a room with two twin beds and our own bathroom. (Other dorms we have been in had a large bathroom that many shared). Also there was a thermostat so we could adjust the temperature to suit our comfort.

The dining hall is set up like a food court in a shopping mall. You search for something that looks good and hold out your plate. This time I ate most of my meals from the vegetarian bar - not because I'm vegetarian - but because they had the most appealing items. I had baked sweet potatoes, steamed carrots, broccoli, mixed sautéed vegetables and a little thing that looked like a donut hole that was made of garbanzo beans and onions and probably deep fried. It was very good. I only needed one, however. And I always got fruit and a cookie. That was one meal - the others were similar - but, remember I could have had other things. There was Asian food, Mexican, beef and chicken, a salad bar and a dessert bar, plus sandwiches.

The speakers were exceptional. Pearl Fryar of Bishopville, S.C., famous for his topiary gardens. spoke to us. You may have seen him on TV. I bought a movie that was done about him and his garden, so, if we need a program, we have one ready made.

Michael Raupp, author and speaker from the University of Maryland and a regular on TV, also spoke. He reminded us about Silent Spring, written by Rachel Carson. He said chemicals should not be your solution to a bug problem. We have lost our bio-diversity. We now have concrete jungles. He was informative and very entertaining.

Bryce Lane was probably the best speaker. He is an instructor in the Horticultural Science Department at N.C. State University. He hosts a 30 minute TV show *In The Garden*. The secret to gardening is the water wise approach. Prep the site, break up sub soil, add organic amendments. Match plants to the site. Put heavy drinkers near the water source. Drought tolerant does not mean cacti. He covered turf and trees and their needs. He was very entertaining!

Rita Randolph has a greenhouse operation in Jackson, TN. Her topic was Containers for all Seasons. She had a PowerPoint presentation and told us all the secrets known to potting, presenting, and maintaining gorgeous containers. I am a note taker, and my notes are extensive.

Those were the four main speakers but there were 32 classes that we could sign up for. I heard a very passionate, young, Department of Forestry fellow from Wytheville present a class on using native plants to conserve water.

Laurie Fox, Staff member at AREC in Virginia beach taught a class on Water Gardens & Aquatic Plants. We have a water garden in our back yard and as I listened I was pleased that we had mostly done things right and all has gone well. She had great pictures of ponds. Ask me for a copy of my notes.

Rita Randolph was one of our main speakers, and she also taught a class, on Outdoor Rooms. She covered porches, walkways, gazebos, pergolas, lighting and hide-away rooms among the bushes and furniture for each site. She had slides. Rita is working on a book, My Friends and their Small Gardens.

Fran and I took Mary Stickley's class on what to do with hypertufa in the garden--how can you use it once you have made it. She had new ideas for how to make them and new ingredients to insure better success. She, too, had photos of lovely things in lovely gardens. Someone asked her about the Museum where she works and she gave a history of the place, the owners and what they are doing on those grounds now.

The silent auction, which members donated to, made \$3700 which will go into the Endowment Fund.

Virginia Master Gardeners volunteered 334,000 hours this past year with a dollar value of 7.17 million.

Next year MGC will be June 21-26 and the theme will be Land Care Stewards. See you there!!

BEYOND THE GARDEN GATE--MARSHA BURD, CLASS OF 2002

by Teri Merrill

Marsha Burd loves everything about the master gardening program: the diverse learning opportunities, the smart, energetic members, and the varied volunteer projects. What she doesn't understand is why people who take the class often fail to complete their internship year or drop out of the group after just a few years. In her own graduating class of 20, only two remain active in the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association, she says.

That's a shame for those who drop out, because there is so much to do, learn and teach, she says. And it's a shame for those who remain in the group, because they are so dedicated and faithful and want others to feel the same, she notes. Marsha worked for many years as a budget analyst for Fairfax County. When she retired and moved to Warren County, she was determined to give back to her new community, and the NSVMGA gave her the opportunity to do just that.

She is the master gardener volunteer coordinator for Warren County, volunteers weekly in the gardens at the State Arboretum of Virginia, and helped with the junior master gardening program launched this past winter in Frederick County. Elsewhere, she assists at the Bell Boyd Cottage Garden in Warren County, serves as a tree steward for the town of Front Royal, sits on three different boards for groups in Warren County, and is treasurer of the Brown Town Community Center Association. Of her busy volunteer schedule she laughs and says: "I've been able to do everything I've wanted to do."

Marsha can't pinpoint an exact date when she began gardening, but she does have fond memories of visiting a grandmother in Texas who had a breezeway lined with gardenias. That heavenly scent is something that she still recalls today. "I guess I have always enjoyed gardening and can't remember a time when I didn't have my hands in the dirt," she says.

In her spare time, Marsha focuses on propagating trees, shrubs and perennials from cuttings and seeds in her greenhouse on five acres in Warren County. Marsha enjoys giving back to her community, but it's gardening that gives back to her, she says. "When I'm in my garden, I forget about everything else. It's the most restful thing to do, and it's good for the soul."

EDITOR'S CORNER by Richard Stromberg

George Hadelar sent me pictures of Orchids from the *New York State Conservationist* magazine. Some of them are common around here: Pink and Yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule* and *C. parviflorum*), Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) and Nodding Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*). The others I have never seen because they are either bog/swamp plants or northern species (the magazine is from New York), except for one, Spotted Coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*). I checked my records (*i.e.* my photo files) and found that I saw Spotted Coralroot in 2002 in Ramsey's Draft Wilderness west of Staunton. I saw it again in June in Marin County north of San Francisco.



My wife and I were in San Francisco on an American Hiking Society "Volunteer Vacation". Volunteer Vacation is a euphemism for, "Give us some money, and we'll provide you room and board and let you work on trails." Work we did, but, of course, I was looking for flowers along the trail and two Coralroots caught my eye. I told a co-worker that they are orchids, and she said, "Doesn't look like the one we give my mother for Mother's Day."