

## NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

January, 2012

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the **month**, and we will meet at 4pm. 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 March 18, 4pm, Warren County Government Center**, Front Royal. The speaker will be Lynn Hoffman on grasses and ground covers for the Northern Shenandoah Valley.  
**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 Autozone. 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).
- **Sunday, April 15, 4pm, Clarke County, The Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm**
- **Sunday, May 20, 4pm, Frederick County, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.** Speaker, Mary Stickley on Roses
- **Sunday, June 24, 4pm, (Note CHANGE TO 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY), Warren County, Home of Lee Ruddle**
- **Sunday, July 15, 4pm, Shenandoah County Government Offices**
- **Sunday, August 19, 4pm, Clarke County, The Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm.** Carrie Whitacre on Herbs in the Garden
- **Sunday, September 16, 4pm, Frederick County**
- **Sunday, October 21, 4pm, Shenandoah County**
- **Sunday, November 18, 4pm, Warren County Government Center, Front Royal.** Elections
- **December.** No meeting .

### OTHER EVENTS

- **Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 10am, Pruning Workshop, Natural Art Garden Center in Toms Brook.** If you would like to attend bring pruners and gloves . There may be a donation. For further information contact MG Larry Haun at 540-436-3130.
- **Sunday, March 11, 1pm, Second Sunday Walk, Shenandoah County.** Look for first signs of spring on Bear Wallow Trail in George Washington National Forest, west of Front Royal. The hike is moderate, on gravel road and trail. For more details contact Sally Anderson at 540-722-3072 or [rccsca@comcast.net](mailto:rccsca@comcast.net), and Kristin Zimet at 540-550-4044 or [kristinzimet@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinzimet@yahoo.com)
- **Sunday, March 25, 10am-1pm, Garlic Mustard Pull, Warren/Fauquier Counties.** Participants are asked to come for any time period they have available to help eradicate Garlic Mustard on

the Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail at the G.R. Thompson Wildlife Management Area. Meet at the Trillium Trail Parking Lot on VA 638 north of Linden. If you plan to spend the day, pack a lunch. Contact Richard Stromberg at 540-631-0212 or [risy@embarqmail.com](mailto:risy@embarqmail.com) for details.

- **Saturday, April 14, Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for Your Garden** Ferrari Center in the Student Union at Shenandoah University in Winchester, sponsored by the Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society and the Environmental Sciences Department at Shenandoah University. Experts will provide valuable advice on ways to increase birds and butterflies in our yards with plant choices suited to the Virginia/mid-Atlantic climate and soils. Speakers will be encouraging the reduction of area devoted to lawns and use of pesticides, increased use of native plants, and responsible stewardship of our shared space. Shenandoah University Environmental Sciences professor, **Dr. Woody Bousquet**, will moderate the conference. Speakers include
  - **Dr. Douglas Tallamy**, author of *Bringing Nature Home*
  - **Vincent Simeone**, shrub and tree expert and director of Planting Fields
  - **Dr. Kim Winter**, wildlife expert with the Potomac Environmental Council
  - **Jim McCormac**, birding and wildlife authority
  - **Janet Davis** owner of a native perennials nursery in Rappahanock County
  - **Stephen Orr**, author of *Tomorrow's Garden* & garden editor of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine
- **Sunday, April 15, 10am-Noon, 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Calmes Neck Wildflower Walk, Clarke County.** Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist, Division of Natural Heritage, VA DCR, will lead this VNPS Registry Site walk in rich mesic forest and ravines along the Shenandoah River in Clarke County. Walk is moderate; expect to climb over downed trees. RSVP to Blanca Vandervoort at 540-837-1637 or [cvanderv@nelsoncable.com](mailto:cvanderv@nelsoncable.com)
- **Sunday, April 29, 1pm-3pm, Casey Trees Nursery Walking Tour, Clarke County.** Learn about trees grown for Washington, DC, led by nursery manager Brian Mayell. Learn new tree production methods including Missouri gravel bed bare-root growth. Springsbury Farm, 2498 Briggs Rd, Berryville. More info at [www.Caseytrees.org](http://www.Caseytrees.org). Contact: Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or [horseblanketcb@yahoo.com](mailto:horseblanketcb@yahoo.com).
- **Tuesday, May 1, 10am-noon, Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail Walk, Warren/Fauquier Counties.** Retired Professor of Biology Marion Lobstein will lead a walk at the VNPS Registry Site in the Thompson WMA to see the Trilliums and other wildflowers. Meet at the Trillium Parking Lot on VA Route 638 north of Linden. To RSVP and for more details, contact Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or [horseblanketcb@yahoo.com](mailto:horseblanketcb@yahoo.com).
- **Saturday & Sunday, May 5 & 6, Wildflower Weekend at Shenandoah National Park.** Appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park, a haven for native woodland wildflowers. Choose from among 18 activities at [http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012\\_WildflowerWeekend\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012_WildflowerWeekend_Schedule.pdf).

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

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

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### **FREDERICK COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT** by Teri Merrill

We have a lot of great projects coming up and had a good discussion at our county meeting last month. We also had an opportunity to meet with our new Frederick County Extension Agent, Mark Sutphin, who is very accessible and excited to work with members of our county.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension, per Bobby Clarke, wants to put additional emphasis on our answering questions and interacting with the public. Along that line, here are the new/updated projects that we are working toward this year:

- 1) Real Greenline: We are trying to get more visible in the public and also have opportunities to work together as Master Gardeners in this county. As part of that, we plan on having a booth for a few Saturdays in June that would serve as a "real" Greenline. We had a good discussion on this topic and decided to contact Lowes on Pleasant Valley in Winchester to see about having a table there. I would like to get a committee of people to organize this table. I envision doing this the four Saturdays in June (June 9, 16, 23 and 30), from about 10 am until noon--not too overwhelming--and available to those of you who work during the week. If you want to help with this effort and weren't at the meeting, let me know.
- 2) Virtual Greenline mentors: We will continue the virtual Greenline in May, July, August and September--just not in June when we have our table. If you enjoy the virtual Greenline and have done it in the past, I'll be asking for your help as the gardening season gets closer. One thing I'd like veterans to consider is acting as mentors to those who are new to the Greenline. I've heard from several folks that they don't feel comfortable with the Greenline, because they don't have gardening confidence yet. I envision having a list of mentors who could serve to guide new volunteers on the Greenline and act as a backup, should they run into problems, and before they give up and send any questions back to the Extension office to answer. If serving as a mentor interests you, please send me your name so that I can have a list of volunteers.
- 3) We will have a table at the Frederick County Fair (July 29-Aug. 4), and the Fair Association said it would be outside and accessible to the public. We still need to work out details, because it might not be every night of the Fair. We will need volunteers to plan this, so if you are interested in this effort and weren't at the meeting, please let me know.
- 4) We have gotten several requests for speakers from our blurb in the Winchester Star. I will run that blurb occasionally to increase our visibility. As part of this effort, I sent updates to the Speaker's list on our webpage, so take a look at that when you have a chance and let me or Eleanor Ames, our webpage director, know about additional updates and changes. If you would like to give a speech on a topic and it's not listed, please let me and Eleanor know so that it can be added to that list.
- 5) Junior Master Gardeners will begin March 6 at the Wesleyan United Methodist Church on Van Fossen Street in Winchester. The schedule is available from Lynn Hoffmann. If you are interested in helping with this program, contact Lynn at [gwendydog@gmail.com](mailto:gwendydog@gmail.com)

### **CLARKE COUNTY REPORT** by Mary Craig

We are having our Clarke meeting on Monday, February 27th at 9:00am. So by the time this newsletter comes out we will have finished our planning for the year. I know we will continue with the usual projects: the Farmers' Market in Berryville, Blandy Garden Fair and Arborfest, the Greenline and the Clarke County Fair. We are already in the process of scheduling a cleanup session

for our xeriscape demonstration garden at Chet Hobert Park. If you would like to help let Suzanne Boag know.

In addition to these projects we will be exploring the possibility of starting a couple of new projects, hopefully some new demonstration gardens in the Berryville area. If anyone in the other counties wants to help in Clarke anytime, let me know; mcorneliac@centurylink.net.

### **Rain Barrels**

Jennifer Willoughby, from the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB), has rain barrel workshops scheduled n Feb. 25th and March 11th. She needed some more rain barrels built to ensure she had enough. On Monday, Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, five of us met at Chet Hobert Park to work on rain barrels. Jennifer, Alison Teetor from Clarke County Parks & Rec. and Suzanne Boag, Marianne Pagington, Janet Keithley, Randy Embrey and Mary Craig were there to help put the barrels together. We bundled up on this cold morning and worked out in the sun. We got 20 rain barrels drilled and fittings put in, taking us about two hours. Not a bad morning's work. All that was left was to wash them, but it was too cold to get wet washing them that day.



### **Garden Fair**

The registration forms for Garden Fair and Arborfest have been submitted. Hopefully we'll get a good spot this year. We'll be sending that signup sheet around before you know it, so save a little time the weekend of the Mothers Day, May 11th, 12th and 13th.

These are events that the whole group participates in, not just Clarke County. We encourage everyone to take a turn to see how we set up the booth and provide educational materials and information to the public.

We pair interns with veteran MGs so they will have someone with experience to help them. It's a good way to get your feet wet. It's not like speaking to a large group, you get to be one on one with the public --really is a lot of fun. *(Plan to come early to do some shopping. There is a wonderful variety of plants and garden related items for sale!)*



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

We are getting more questions on the greenline as gardeners start planning their gardens. We will hold our spring planning meeting on March 12th at the Shenandoah County Government Building in Woodstock at 7pm. I hope to see many Shenandoah MGs there as we discuss projects for the coming year. Members of our current Master Gardener class are welcome--a good chance for them to meet the veteran Shenandoah members they will be working with as they complete their required 50 hours of project work.

So many things are starting to pop up. Because of our mild winter, it looks like we will have an early spring. I can hardly wait to start digging in the dirt.

### **MEMBERSHIP REPORT** by Mary Craig

NSVMGA has 75 active and intern members as of now. It is not too late to turn in hours for 2011, please look over your calendars and see what you may have worked on last year.

Quite a few people on the list have not turned in hours or come to any meetings, lately. The County Coordinators are trying to contact some of these members to see if they would like to come back 'into the fold'. If you know someone who has not been around lately, please see if you can contact them and invite them to a meeting. We have great speakers and each meeting with a speaker counts as one hour of project time and one hour of continuing education. *(Tell them what wonderful potlucks we have, that might do the trick).*

### **HISTORIAN REPORT** by Mary Craig

The Class of 1995 consisted of 16 people. Frank Baxter was President and Corey Childs was the class trainer. The classes were held in Front Royal. No one from that class is still active, although some of them contributed greatly to the organization; most notably Janet Heishman, who was Vice President in 1999 and 2000 and President in 2001 and 2002. Some of you know how much she continued to contribute after her time as an officer. She owns Gabalot Gardens in Strasburg and has been most generous in offering to grow and store plants in her greenhouse for our plant sales over the years. Check out her website at <http://www.gabalotgardens.com/index.html> or visit in person.

If any of you have information to add about any of the past classes, feel free to send it on to me. I would especially like to have class pictures, if any of you happen to have a picture of your class send it along to me at [mcorneliac@centurylink.net](mailto:mcorneliac@centurylink.net).

### **GARDENFEST PLANT TIPS** by Carolyn Wilson

Carolyn Wilson will bring empty pots to each of the next 3 meetings.

1. Popular plants last year included shade plants (especially variegated hostas), any plants in bud or bloom, drought tolerant plants and the good old tried and true favorites like Shasta daisies, perennial black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*) and purple cone flowers (*Echinacea*). However some of our more experienced clients are looking for unusual plants.
2. Divide the plants when they are ready (not because it's 2 weeks until Gardenfest). This may mean that you may have to care for some of the plants for several months, but they will be easier to divide and recover quickly, if they are dug when small.
3. The pots will be lighter (and easier to handle) and new feeder roots will develop more quickly if you gently shake off some of the soil ball and pot the plants up in a half and half mixture of commercial potting mix and garden soil.
4. Remember to water the pots regularly. This may mean daily as the plants grow larger and the days get warmer. Also occasional feeding will encourage good growth.
5. Even sun loving plants should spend the first few days in the shade until they can grow new feeder roots.
6. We will make more money if you divide a large clump into 3 or 4 plants instead of trying to sell it as one plant. 3-5 growing buds in a 6 inch pot is a good size.
7. Please groom your plants carefully before you bring them to the sale. They should look like something that you would like to buy.
8. As we have in past years, we will be ordering plant labels, and Carolyn Wilson will bring them to the meetings. The label should have the plant name, common and scientific if known, sun or shade, size (height) and bloom color and time. If you prefer to use your own labels make sure that they are water proof because we will water all the plants the evening before the event so that they look nice for the sale.
9. Because some of the plants will not be in bloom at sale time please bring a picture of the mature plant (and a few growing comments if you wish) for our display board. Due to limited space these should not be larger than 4x6.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Carolyn at [cmwilson22842@gmail.com](mailto:cmwilson22842@gmail.com) or talk to her at the meetings. Thank you to everyone for making this a great event by donating plants for our fundraiser.

#### **RICHMOND AREA VEGETABLE GROWERS MEETING** by Lesley and Tom Mack

This conference was held at the Henrico County Government Center on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Here are our notes on the sessions we attended.

#### **Managing Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs on Vegetables & More From the Frontiers of Entomology** by Tom Kuhar, Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Entomology, VaTech.

*Halyomorpha halys*, native to east Asia, was introduced into the US in the 1990's. It was first found in Virginia in 2004, and now is all over VA. In 2010,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all stink bugs found were this invader. The nymph causes just as much damage as the adult. They seem to winter-over and lay eggs on trees, the two favorites being Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and Princess Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) [editor's note: both of these tree species are Asian natives and have become invasive aliens here]. At first they were tree pests, but now they are also doing great damage to vegetable crops. Sweet corn is a preferred plant. They are able to put the proboscis through the husks which ruins the whole ear. Sunflowers are preferred by the bug, too, so they could be a trap crop. On okra, he said the stink bug damage just makes the fruit look damaged, but it is still edible. The bugs seem to injure hot peppers as well as regular peppers, not put off by the heat. Depending on when

they hit your tomatoes, they may just make them look unsightly, or they may destroy the fruit altogether. When you spray a lot of pyrethroid insecticide you will kill bugs that are hurt by that, but the population of other bugs that are not harmed could then explode. Permethrin seemed to have the best pest control. These bugs will be a challenge for organic growers, and that's being polite. He mentioned that pyrethrins have no lasting effect. The sun breaks it down within a day. As of now, the insecticides that work the best are the ones you'd want to use least as far as IPM guidelines go. Is it a major pest in its native areas? Not really. It has natural enemies and controls. One thought is that they may eventually catch up with the bugs. Talking about caterpillar controls, the parasitic wasps are an excellent control. BT and other natural controls still work well.

The "Kudzu bug" is a problem in GA, and is now in VA. The main crop it likes so far is Kudzu and soybeans.

#### **Vegetable Research Update** by Josh Freeman, Assistant Professor, Eastern Shore AREC

Josh talked via an internet connection about grafting baby tomato plants. Probably not something the average home-grower is going to do, but very interesting. The graft is made just below the cotyledons scars at the 2-leaf stage. It will add a week to your grow-out time. The plants need to be kept in a warm, moist environment for a week to recover from the stress of the grafting. Then you start the hardening-off period. We may start seeing grafted tomato starts when we go to the nurseries in the not-to-distant future. You can expect the price for these to be higher because of the extra work involved. Will the price/yield ratio be worth it for the home gardener? That will be for you to decide. Google "mighty mater" and you might find a company that is working on making these plants available to the big box stores.

There is a new plastic mulch that is "totally impermeable" called "Vapor Safe". He thought that this will not be available to the home grower so soon because of the high cost.

#### **Food Safety Modernization Act** by Tony Banks, Farm Bureau

The act, passed Dec. 21, 2010, hopes to move the emphasis from what to do after a problem occurs to how to prevent the problems in the first place. Beginning in October, 2012, food facilities will have to register every 2 years. This includes roadside stands and farmers markets. The FDA is supposed to issue guidelines for smaller facilities with multiple potential exemptions/relaxed requirements for "small" farms and businesses. Imports are supposed to have the same requirements. Look at website FDA.gov under "food safety" for more information.

#### **GAP/Food Safety Update** by Wythe Morris, VA Cooperative Extension

If you sell produce to people in any setting you may need to do become GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified. Right now this is voluntary and industry driven. The participant has to know GAP, what problems might be within your operation, and how to deal with those problems. Farmers markets, roadside stands, pick-your-own will need to be GAP compliant, but not GAP certified. These categories are considered retail food establishments and would be regulated by state guidelines, not federal. Direct marketers (selling right from the farm to the public) have certain guidelines according to the size of your operation as to whether you need to be certified and audited. The FDA has not yet set a date for certification to begin. Once they do, growers under 25 acres will have 3 years to get certified. Growers over 25 acres will have 1 year to get certified. Notes for direct marketers: participate in training; develop your farm plan; keep documentation and stay tuned. For more information try [www.morrisw@vt.edu](mailto:www.morrisw@vt.edu) and [www.onfarmfoodsafety.org](http://www.onfarmfoodsafety.org).

#### **Safe Pesticide Storage** by John Allison, Extension Agent, New Kent County and Charles City County

There are no specific VA or federal regulations to build or buy a storage unit. However, there are some general guidelines. The label is the law! Follow it. There could be temperature and humidity requirements. Know what to do for first aid or spill-handling: control, contain, cleanup. Separate pesticides, fungicides, and insecticides. Keep them away from possible water contamination into the environment. Do you have a mixing, loading, and equipment cleaning area? Keep the items in their original container with a legible label. Follow proper disposal/recycling of empty containers. For more information see National Pesticide Applicator Core Manual, Washington State University Extension; Pat Hipkins, VT Pesticide Program [www.pesticidepics.org/main.php](http://www.pesticidepics.org/main.php).

**Weed Management in Vegetable Production** by Henry Wilson, Professor, Weed Science, Eastern Shore AREC

He talked about using “Reflex” for weed control on potatoes. Do not harvest within 70 days of application. Mix with “Dual” for grass control. Palmer Amaranth is an extremely hard-to-control weed. It's spreading though Virginia.

#### **EDITORS CORNER** by Richard Stromberg

Signs of spring: flowers (trees, spring bulbs and weeds); Spring Peepers peeping; the long list of events at the top of this newsletter.

My Snowdrops are about finished, but crocus and daffodils are out. Have you ever tried sticking some crocus corms in the lawn? Neat to see them open up there. Adding to the Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) I showed you last month, Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) and Birdseye Speedwell (*Veronica persica*) have joined my flowering weeds. Interesting that some species of *Lamium* and *Veronica* are weeds, even invasive aliens, while others are garden flowers.

Elms and Maples in my yard are flowering too, a pleasing contrast to the bare branches of winter.