

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS MAY, 2016

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING

- Sunday, May 15 4-6pm, Warren County Government Center. Anne Dewey -Balzhiser will share information on “Creating Snappy Presentations” and Kris Behrends and Elaine Specht will talk about “Setting up a Successful Booth”.

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).

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday & Sunday, May 7 & 8, 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 many activities at the Park website.
- Saturday & Sunday, May 7 & 8, 9am-4:30pm, State Arboretum Garden Fair. Select vendors with perennials, small trees and fine items for garden and home. **Also: children’s activities, gardening information, food and much, much more.** Directions at www.virginia.edu/Blandy.

- Sunday, May 15, 1pm, Dickey Ridge Sunday Walk. See a large population of **Yellow Lady's Slippers and other spring flowers in Shenandoah National Park.** For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com.
- *Saturday, May 21, 9am Iris Hills Farm field trip at the invitation of Sheryl and Colin Campbell. More information and directions will be provided soon. Space for this activity is limited.*
- Sunday, May 22, 2-4pm, [The Barn Series at Belle Grove Plantation](#): inspirational class on designing a memorial niche or garden. Helen Lake, **Ginny Smith, Laurie Cocina, and Carol Pittillo will present "Special Gardens for Small Spaces"**.
- Saturday, June 4, 7am-5pm, Garden Fest. Northern Shenandoah Valley **Master Gardeners' annual festival at Belle Grove Plantation on US rt. 11 north of Middletown.** Educational sessions and plants and other items for sale.

GARDEN FEST PRESS RELEASE BY SHARON BRADSHAW

[This [flyer](#) is on our [website](#) and on [Facebook](#). Remember to "like" us on Facebook.]

Garden Fest, the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association's annual celebration of plants and gardening will be held from 8 AM to 3 PM on June 4, 2016 at Belle Grove Plantation in Middletown, Virginia. The free event is open to the public.

A large selection of plants, grown by the Master Gardeners, will be for sale with wagons on hand to transport purchased plants to vehicles. Master Gardeners will be available to answer any plant questions. Throughout the day, visitors may visit garden related demonstrations and displays, look over the wares of garden and specialty vendors and enjoy the petting farm and sheepdog herding demonstration. A free garden tool sharpening service will be offered and Second Hand Rose will again offer great bargain purchases.

Activities include hands-on workshops (\$) to create concrete leaf bird baths, gourd birdhouses (preregistration required: cyhaley@comcast.net) and stepping stones plus several special garden presentations. Check out the raffle prizes, enjoy the food and live music. Belle Grove Manor House tours will be \$5.00 and the Museum Shop will be open during the event.

The [Children's Trail](#) offers a series of free garden related activities, beginning at 9 AM and again at 10:30 AM, with preregistration re-

quired: GardenFestChildren2016@gmail.com Deadline for preregistration: May 15.
For more information: www.nsvmga.org, info@bellegrove.org, 540.869.2028

LABELING PLANTS FOR GARDEN FEST BY STACEY SMITH

It's May, so it's almost time to start labeling our plants. It's best to wait until the week before Garden Fest to label, only because not every plant will live, and the sun and rain can fade the tags. Now is a good time to plan your tags, though.

We have tags available for you to use, both plastic and wood.

The label should have:

- common name
- latin name
- height / sun
- flower color / bloom time

If there are other important details, please add! **Don't put anything that doesn't apply.** For perennials, the white tags give you enough room to write those details. For the herbs or smaller plants, the wooden craft sticks are perfect. Use an ultra-fine point Sharpie or other permanent/waterproof marker.

Almost as important as what you write on the front is what you write on the back –nothing! We use a bold Sharpie to write the prices on the backs of the tags, so please leave the back blank.

We need your pictures! See that laminated daylily picture? If you are bringing a **plant that isn't in bloom during our sale, please send me a picture of the blooms or let me know what you are bringing.** We hope having simple color signs with the plants will help the shoppers.

We also need help:

- Houseplant sitter/driver – Shelby is babysitting houseplants in Page County, **but she won't be able to bring them to Garden Fest.** Can someone pick them up at some point and babysit OR just pick them up that Friday and deliver them to Belle Grove?
- Plant groomers – the week before Garden Fest is grooming and labeling time. I need a few people who can help at my home in Mount Jackson to get plants groomed, remove incorrect greenhouse labels from pots, ensure each plant has a tag, and get the plants staged for loading Friday morning. **We'll work in the afternoons and/or evenings,** depending on what works best for those who can help.
- Plant transporters – We need help getting plants from my home in Mount Jack-



son to Belle Grove on Friday. If you have a covered truck, van, large SUV or wagon, or some other method of transport, please help us get plants delivered!

Finally, please keep watering and fertilizing the plants you've potted. If it doesn't rain, you may need to water daily as the roots fill the pot. Please fertilize every other week.

As we enter the home stretch of digging, potting, watering, fertilizing, and labeling, thank you to each and every one of you who helps to make this plant sale happen. **I've enjoyed the potting parties and getting to know so many of our longest-serving and newest-to-join members.** I look forward to celebrating with you all at the finish line!

COORDINATOR REPORT BY MARY FLAGG

April showers bring spring May flowers! The April rains have been glorious, we needed the rain. As a gardener, I welcome the rain because we live with a well and have to conserve water. The trees have leafed out, bulbs and shrubs have bloomed, and the river is babbling loudly. It is beautiful!

On the other hand, it means more work for a gardener. The weeds are monstrous and the mowing can be overwhelming. But if I garden daily, I can stay on top of it and not panic. The same goes for Master Gardening.

It's May and the VMS calendar is filled with county projects. It can be overwhelming--everyone needs our help. Please take a minute to review the calendar and click on the volunteer button. It only takes a second to see all the rewarding projects that are available.

Once you have worked, please enter your hours on VMS. It may be overwhelming but once you reach your 20 project and 8 education hourly requirement, relief will set in. So, enjoy the April showers that bring May flowers!



FROM THE PRESIDENT BY SUSAN GARRETT

The 2016 MG Class is over, and the new VCE-MG Interns have already joined in the work of the NSVMGA. They are no longer Trainees, having passed their final exam, all with flying colors.

As is traditional, their graduation will be at 2 pm on Saturday, June 4, during Gardenfest. This year the graduation will be in the Belle Grove Barn.

Tuesday, April 26, was their last class. The classes were held in the Farm Credit Classroom and started in early February. The end of the class was celebrated by a pizza party hosted by the class coordinators with three kinds of pizza and a celebratory chocolate chip cookie cake. A wonderful salad and home-made

Mark Sutphin, VCE Agent and Class Co-Coordinator, talks with three class members before the party-- Nina Hale, Carolyn Rutherford, and Mary Turner



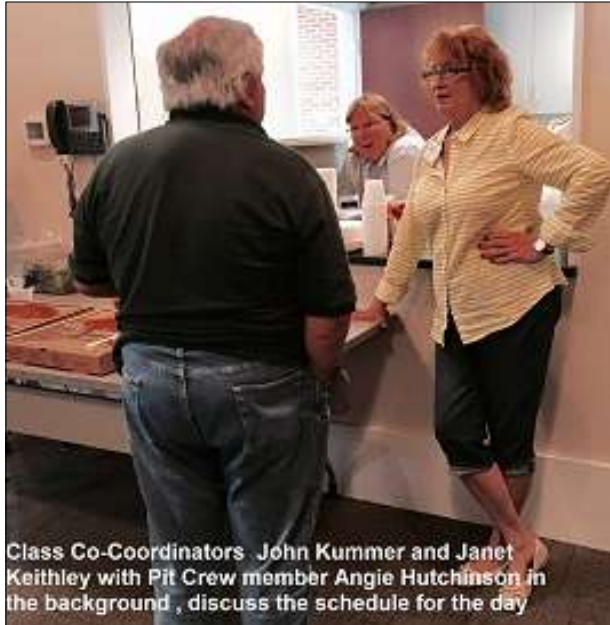
Class members Alice Findler, Patricia Crandall, Jeff Patton, and Martin Killingbeck fill out evaluations as Karen Brill, who graded the final exam, looks on

sweet potato chips were brought by a class member. The class, pit crew, coordinators and planning committee were all invited to the party.

The last class session was not all fun and games, though, because the class members also filled out evaluation forms and went over their final exams.

MG Ginny Smith was photographed with class members Bob Gail and Margie Miller. Ginny encouraged both to be a part of the 2016 Class, having worked with Bob at Rubbermaid and with Margie as a fellow member of the Herb Society. (Another MG who has been mentioned by several class members as encouraging them





to sign up for the class is Barb Hallar.)

Thank you, Ginny and Barb!

Be sure to make our new NSVMGA members from the Class of 2016 feel welcome!

They bring with them amazing talents and life skills, and great garden and horticulture experiences. They are also funny, smart, caring and great all-around people.

WARREN COUNTY REPORT BY KATHERINE RINDT

The Warren County Master Gardeners set up a wonderful table for the Taste for Mystery event at the Samuels Public Library on April 16.

This year's event was based around the game Clue. We chose Susan Wittig Albert's Darling Dahlias mystery series of books for our table's theme.

Many thanks go to Pat Casey for getting us organized and Bill Creager for helping with the set up.

Pat Casey, Nancy Creager, Emily Huttar, Margie Miller, Joey Waters, and Katherine Rindt provided finger foods and Terry Hanahan, delicious lemonade to lure people to the table. Joey, Nancy, Terry and Margie manned the table in shifts.

Master Gardeners are now in the Extension Office in the Warren County Government Center on Monday's from 9 until noon. Shifts have been filled through June. The schedule is on the VMS calen-





dar. A schedule for July to October will be distributed later. We have space for one person in addition to the Master Gardener on duty.

Students/interns are welcome to come in to work with a Master Gardener. Just sign **up for the shift you'd like to work on VMS.**

The growing season has started early this year so weekly workdays have already begun at the Warren Heritage Society/Belle Boyd Demonstration Gardens.

Workdays are Wednesdays from 9 to about noon until the weather gets hot. Then we will start at 8:00 and stop earlier. Join us any Wednesday to help show the public best practices in planting and maintaining perennials, herbs, and annuals.

Beth Cypser has taken the lead for the Samuels Public Library project and is doing a wonderful job working with the library staff getting some needed changes made **to the Children's Garden and the beds around the parking area.** Stop by when you have a chance to take a look. **If you'd like to help, let Beth know so she can notify you when she needs assistance with a special task or schedules a workday.**

Margie Miller will be assisting Frank Baxter in organizing help with the Calvary Memorial Garden this year. She would like to set up some teams to cover the summer months. The garden consists of 5 individual rooms open to the public and used for teaching that highlight landscape, hardscape and plantings including water features. **If you'd like to help, please contact Margie.**

PAGE COUNTY REPORT BY LESLEY MACK

Page County MGs Susan Finlay, Robbin Holland, Cheryl McDonald, Charlie Newton, Tom and Lesley Mack prepared **450 peat pots for the "Farm to Table Day"** held at Shenandoah Elementary School on April 22. The peat pots contained two seeds each of either bush cucumbers or zucchini. Cheryl made lovely tags for each of the pots explaining about the plant, fruiting, and care. All the K-5 students and teachers received a pot to take home. Another pot was given to monitor in the classroom. On the day of the event, it finally rained. No problem, everything was moved inside, except for the tractor. Here is the thank-you note from the school:

Our first Farm Day event was a huge success! Students dressed in their

best farm attire and rotated through interactive stations to learn about farm life and enjoy a garden snack. We are very thankful to Mrs. Smoot for planning and organizing the event and our many volunteers who helped to make Farm Day so much fun! A special thanks to the Page County Master Gardeners for providing every student with a vegetable plant of their very own to take home and to the 4H Cooperative Extension for the goodie bags!

Farm Day Photos



FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT BY JOHN KUMMER

Spring has finally arrived and the Master Gardeners have been busy in and around Winchester. Let's hope for some sunny and warm times into mid-May with some rainy days in between to encourage the new bloomers and young plantings.

On April 16 a group of 12 students from Handley High's Interact Club completed

maintenance work on the rain garden at the Douglas Community Learning Center. Three MG trainees, Bob Luce, Bob Gail, and Mary Turner helped supervise.



The garden now is ready for the summer.

The Green-line has been up and running for almost a month now. It's a fine way to earn service hours while helping local residents



with their horticultural questions. Just use the VMS to sign up Friday mornings from 9am to noon. An experienced MG will always be present.

Helen Lake is leading the Lowe's Help Desk team with available Saturday morning dates on May 14 and 28 and June 11. As always, use VMS to volunteer.

The MG plot at the Timbrook community garden near downtown Winchester will be maintained by a group from the Fremont Street Nursery, led by Mary Turner. Harvested vegetables are to be donated to the Highland Presbyterian Church Food Bank.

Several other short-term projects are in the works for the next month or two. Monitor your e-mail regularly to keep informed regarding service opportunities as they arise. Keep up all the good work.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT BY SHARON BRADSHAW

April was a busy month as we started Green Help Line office hours and both our **farmers' markets this month:** one in Strasburg and one in Woodstock. The rain that was promised on Friday waited until Saturday morning to make canopy setup more interesting.

On the same day, our information display during the Artisan Trail started inside Natural Art Garden Center, but as the sky cleared, was moved outside by late morning. We stayed busy handing out Garden Fest flyers and answering questions. I had **never heard of mulching with "salt hay" and had to email that answer later, after having time for a little research.** It is marsh grass native to New England, covers well, does not mat, and any seeds in the bundle will not germinate unless they are in saline water.

Corhaven Graveyard has been a busy place with Master Gardener volunteers guiding several different community groups in landscape design, planting native plants and mulching. The days leading up to the dedication on April 30 were busy. There is more work to be accomplished, but at a more leisurely pace.

Shenandoah County is hosting Blandy's Garden Fair this year and volunteer commitment has been excellent. One more person is needed for each of the first two shifts on Sunday and for four more on Sunday from 1:45 to 5:00 (the additional 15 minutes is for tear-down). To volunteer contact [Sharon Bradshaw](#).

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY COMMITTEE REPORT BY KRIS BEHREND

Want to earn two hours of continuing education for Master Gardeners and have fun doing it? Check out the [Barn Series](#) at Belle Grove Plantation, Middletown.

The first of seven workshops was held on April 24: Springtime in the Garden. This was presented by Lynn Hoffmann and Rodney Dowty, and they did a great

job providing information on how to draw birds to your garden with plants and bird-houses. They were supported by Suzanne Boag, Carol Pittillo, and Ginny Smith.

Little tidbits throughout the workshop really added up to a wonderful afternoon! For example, Rodney had cut slits on the inside of the bluebird houses so that the babies could climb up to the entrance of the birdhouse!

It was good to meet fellow Master Gardeners at this event: two from the Berkeley County, WV, chapter and two from the Central Shenandoah Valley chapter.

We had fun decorating our very own birdhouse and then enjoying what the other participants created.

The next workshop will be on May 22. The topic will be Special Gardens for Small Spaces presented by Helen Lake, Ginny Smith, Laurie Cocina, and Carol Pittillo.

Please remember that Garden Fair is next weekend at the Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm. The Master Gardener booth will be hosted by Shenandoah County.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS BY LYNN HOFFMANN

The 2016 NSVMGA Memorial Scholarship recipients have been chosen. Ms. Ashley Yanego of Strasburg (Shenandoah County) and Jeremy Linaburg of Winchester (Frederick County) will each receive the award of \$200. The money will be sent to their colleges to offset their upcoming educational costs. These two young people had excellent resumés and a keen interest in pursuing a career in the hort/agricultural fields.

The College Scholarship had no applicants for 2016.

I want to thank the committee for their hard work and insight in choosing the best candidates.

[THE BARN SERIES](#): MGS HARD AT WORK BY LYNN HOFFMANN

Thanks to Claire DeMasi and her husband, my husband, and Rodney Dowty for making 25 bird houses. The attendees had a great time decorating and preparing the houses for their bluebirds. It took many hours to make the houses, so again thanks.

And thanks to the committee members who helped with the planning, set up and take-down of the class. These classes can only be a success with lots of hands, so thanks to Ginny Smith, Suzanne Boag and Carol Pitillo.

We had a few extra bird houses so they will be on sale at Gardenfest. Remember all the proceeds from this series will be given to the Scholarship account.

Next month will be an inspirational class on designing a memorial niche or garden. Helen Lake and her committee will be presenting Special Gardens for Small

Spaces. This is a first of its kind for the NSVMGA so spread the word, or better yet, come and enjoy.

And we need to have another thank you for Donna Funk-Smith for the hours in developing the Barn Series flyer. The time and effort that is needed to get a brochure organized and complete is long and tiring.

Please check out the [website](#) and [Facebook](#) for all the info on the series and send it to your friends.

SERVICEBERRY BY LESLEY MACK

(This article should have been in last month's issue but was missed by the editor.)

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* genus) is also known as Juneberry, Shadbush, Service-Tree, Sarvisberry and Sarvis-Tree. Each of these names has a story. Five *Amelanchier* species are native to our area. Differentiating them is very detailed. The most common is Downy Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*). Michael Dirr calls Serviceberry **“One of the finest native North American species for naturalizing at the edge of woodlands.”**



As Tom and I travel our usual Virginia highways at this time of year, we are peering into the woods to find the Serviceberry trees that we have been watching for years--so glad to know that the trees are still there and growing bigger each year. We enjoy them so much we have planted several in our own yard.

In the wild *Amelanchier arborea* can be found on rocky slopes or along streams. It is adaptable to acid and alkaline soils and to moist or semi dry situations.

If planted as an understory tree, it can be multi-stemmed, but if planted in full sun, it can be a stunning tree.

It usually grows 15-25 feet tall, and can be over 30 feet, with wide spreading, arched branches.

The white flowers appear before the leaves, so the 'Shadbush' name came to being because shad ascend the rivers to spawn in early spring about the same



time *Amelanchier* blooms. The name 'Serviceberry/Service-Tree' derives from it be used to flower the coffin when folks were buried in early spring. Often corpses had to be held over the winter until the roads opened to allow a preacher to come. The name Sarvisberry/Sarvis-Tree is dialect.

Downy Serviceberry young leaves are covered with soft, woolly hairs (downy) that disappear as the leaf matures, but the leaves do not appear until after flowering.

The beautiful bark is gray and smooth and streaked with longitudinal fissures, often with a reddish cast. Old bark is scaly.



The flowers turn into reddish-purple, edible berries, thus the name Juneberry. Birds enjoy them. (Some say the berries are delicious used for pies, we have not gotten any.)

The leaves turn a lovely wine-red color in the fall.

We planted *Amelanchier canadensis*. There are many cultivars such as *A. xgrandiflora*.

EDITORS CORNER BY RICHARD STROMBERG

I have enjoyed the progression of flowers in my lawn this spring. I guess you can call it a lawn. I mow it, and there is some grass in it. **But I don't aerate it, thatch it, seed it, or treat it.** And what I called flowers, most would call weeds.

First to show up are *Lamiums*: Purple Dead Nettle (*L. purpureum*) and Henbit (*L. amplexicaule*), the former with short flowers barely protruding from pointed leaves than often



are purple towards the top of the plant and the latter with longer flowers protruding from the round, scalloped leaves.

Then come the Speedwells (*Veronica*):

- **Birds'-eye Speedwell** (*V. persica*) with its bright blue, quarter-inch flowers;
- Ivy-leaf Speedwell (*V. hererifolia*) with blue flowers only half an inch wide and leaves lobed like English Ivy; and
- Corn Speedwell (*V. arvensis*) with flowers so small and fleeting you almost miss them though the plant grows more upright.

A couple Mustards (*Brassicaceae*) with tiny, white flowers joined in: Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) and Field Peppergrass (*Lepidium campestre*).

All of the above are annuals, so they pull



out easily.

Gill-over-the-ground aka Ground-ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) runs along the ground, rooting at nodes. It produces a profusion of blue-violet flowers with typical mint-family shape: short upper lip with a notch, and longer, three-lobed lower

lip. Like many mints, it has a strong odor when crushed, but this one is not very pleasant.

Now I have one corner of the lawn yellow with Buttercups. Unfortunately they are the non-native Bulbous Buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*).

This species is easy to identify because it is the only *Ranunculus* that has short, pointed sepals pointed down below the corolla.

Other lawn sections show a white haze, the flower heads of European Corn Salad (*Valerianella locusta*). Several flower heads are held above the plants, each flower about a millimeter. I like this plant, even though it is not native, because you can eat it. It makes a wonderful salad. However, the plants are small and difficult to clean.



