



# The VMGA Report

A Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners

vmga.net

January/February 2019

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## In This Issue

- Message from the President
- In the news...
- VCE Liaison Report
- VMGA Education Day
- On Glyphosate
- The Grainethumb
- Calendar

## VMGA Officers

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County

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Loudoun County

## Happy New Year!

Wow, a new year already, how can that be? In between packing up those treasured holiday decorations and munching on yummy cookies and confections, are you squeezing in some time to read the seed catalogs that are arriving in your mailbox (or via email)? I faithfully patronize a few companies every year or every few years, but I am also eager to try out some of the newer seed catalogs that I learn about too. I will admit I share a lot of what I buy with fellow master gardeners or family members so that my collection of seeds does not continue to grow (no pun intended!)

Winter months provide for us the time to plan and dream of what lies ahead in our gardens, our Master Gardener programming and our personal lives. What worked exceptionally well last year and what should not be included again? Did they meet your expectations or do they need some tweaking? A little research can provide you with things you should include or change.

Many of us travel to Blacksburg each June for Master Gardener College, but this year the destination will be Norfolk. This will give those located in the Tidewater area or eastern part of the state the chance to journey closer to home.

In the garden, perhaps you will try yet one more time to grow a certain plant that your garden "needs". Maybe you'll want to try growing vegetables in bales of straw or another newer tactic instead of the same ole routine. This is the time to read up on these things while the temperatures beg us to stay inside.

Maybe you are like many people who use this time to just recharge their well-being. Sleep a little longer, work on some inside projects that you save for this time of year, or even travel to a warmer part of the world to escape our temperatures for a bit. I do hope that you continue to support your local and state Master Gardener programs with the many volunteer projects your unit offers to the public. Together we do a lot for Virginia's citizens and I'd like to think that we enjoy the fulfillment of supporting our many programs across the state. During this coller

## Planting a Seed–

Wanda Gerard, Suffolk

When planting a garden we select what we want to grow, unless Mother Nature has helped the process out a bit. I suggest we plant some different seeds in 2019. As a member of the Virginia Master Gardener Association, could you try to encourage fellow Master Gardeners join VMGA this year? We help and support give to master gardener units across the state, provide awesome educational events, offer scholarships to Master Gardener College and much more. These are just a few ways the annual dues promote the Extension Master Gardener program in Virginia. If each of us did our best to recruit one new member, we'd double our membership. Are you up to the challenge to help grow VMGA?

## VMGA

Membership has its advantages:

- Unit Support
- Scholarships
- Newsletter
- Advanced Training
- Discount event fees
- Membership Directory
- Statewide Networking
- Unit Support

temperature season, I hope you will enjoy some favorite pastimes (jigsaw puzzles?), try something new (gourmet cooking?), research something that has been on your bucket list for a while or just recharge those inner batteries for the year ahead during this cooler temperature season. Remember to stay safe in all that you do!

Wanda Gerard, Suffolk, President

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## Bi-monthly VMGA Meeting

**Saturday, February 9, 2019 10:00am**

Hosted by JCC/Williamsburg MGs at  
JCC Rec Center at 5301 Longhill Road in Williamsburg [Get directions](#)

Future meeting dates:

April 13	Franklin County
June 8	Goochland
August 10	Greenspring
September 19-22	Master Gardener College
December 14	Hosting unit needed

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## In the news:

Has your unit or have members of your unit been featured in your local newspaper? Let us know! Send links to: [peggyfox@hotmail.com](mailto:peggyfox@hotmail.com)

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## News and Notes from VCE Liaison

Dave Close

Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener Specialist  
State Program Leader for Agriculture  
School of Plant and Environmental Sciences

If you attended the recent Leadership Development Training 2018, all of the presentations are available online:

<http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/master-gardener-coordinators/leadership-training/>

New EMG Website coming soon—[Devon Johnson](#) has been working for the past several months on a new public facing website. This will be housed within the Extension set of websites, so we will have a new **ext.vt.edu** address and will have branding consistent with Extension. This will give us more exposure and also more room for storage of materials that we have developed. We will also be keeping the current site with the password-protected areas, allowing us to populate that portion with Coordinator resources. Devon wants to share the site with a review team and have it launched by the beginning of 2019.

The EMG Handbook has been revised. There was no content change made

## FROM THE EDITOR

Deadline for Mar/Apr  
issue:  
February 23, 2019

We'd love to feature your unit's announcements, events or articles in the next issue. Articles can be about a favorite plant, tree, project, book review. This will encourage involvement around the state, getting more involved.

Please send to:

Peggy Fox,  
VMGA Newsletter Editor  
Newport News unit  
[peggyfox@hotmail.com](mailto:peggyfox@hotmail.com)

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your donation by mail.

with only minor editorial changes such as punctuation and grammar primarily; online modules have also been updated; a place on the web will be found to house these revisions.

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## Education

Erica Jones, New River Valley MG, VMGA Education Chair

We are planning to have the 2019 Education Day Saturday, May 4th in Roanoke at [Virginia Western Community College \(VWCC\)](#). So far there are three speakers lined up:

1. **Stephanie Huckestein**, Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Hahn Horticulture Garden;
2. **Lee Hipp**, who served as Director of the VWCC Horticulture Department from 1978 to 2010 and also as director of the arboretum which celebrates it's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year;
3. **Robert McDuffie**, Assoc. Professor Emeritus of Horticulture, VT, who was also the designer of the arboretum at VWCC. He promises he will talk about how the arboretum came to pass.

My cohort in crime, Tonya Harper, promises met she can lasso a fleet of local MGs to give us tours of the arboretum in the afternoon. The arboretum is close to a busy highway so the tour groups will be small but plentiful.

I still have a couple of slots open for speakers. If you are interested in speakers from the western part of the state, here is your chance to tell me about them. This is also your chance to get the inside scoop on how a small arboretum can get started.

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## Glyphosate: Health Controversy, Benefits and Continuing Debate

Ralph Morini, Piedmont EMG, has written an article on the pros and cons of glyphosate use.

[https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs\\_ext\\_vt\\_edu/spes/spes-63/SPES-63.pdf](https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/spes/spes-63/SPES-63.pdf)

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## THE GRAINETHUMB

NO FEAR GARDENING

George Graine, Fairfax Master Gardener

"The very statement that there is but one way of making a garden is its own refutation."

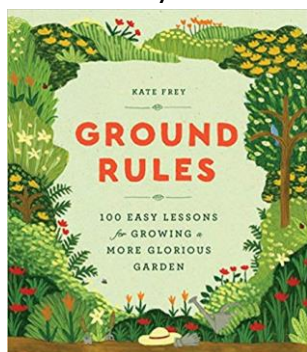
**ABOUT VIRGINIA  
MASTER GARDENERS  
AND VIRGINIA  
COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION (VCE)**

Virginia Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who work within their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management education and training. As an educational program of VCE, Virginia Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the Commonwealth. Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. VCE programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

---William Robinson in "The Garden Beautiful" (1907)

If you have seen gorgeous gardens you may have wondered how this was achieved because it looks so intimidating. To get over this concern, perhaps a first step is to visit the indoor section of a full service garden center. You may find this is beyond a Craftsman© tool paradise, so keep calm and do not panic. Why so many shovels, other digging tools, cutting things and more? Across the aisle you may see bags and bags of whatever and to further complicate your mind, an apothecary filled with lots and lots of chemicals for the garden. Good grief – where does one start and how deep is my pocket? Why does gardening have to be so complicated? Not true because help is on the way including an inspirational nudge that notes two gardening books discussed below. Take a deep breath because gardening does not have to be an all of the time consuming hobby and the cost will not ruin your credit rating. You will be able to discriminate between need-to-have and nice-to-have garden what-ers. And back to the garden center, help is readily available for both the novice and experienced gardener. Furthermore, your neighbors experience will often prove to be invaluable.

No doubt you have read garden tips in horticultural magazines such as



"Horticulture" or "Garden Gate." Even popular home-type magazines like "Southern Living" and "Better Homes and Gardens" offer timely tips for gardeners. Now take these tips to a different level beyond the Farmer's Almanac daily calendar and these other sources. Already noted, gardening does not have to be complicated especially if you check out a new book **"Ground Rules: 100 Easy Lessons for Growing a More Glorious Garden"**

by Kate Frey (Timber Press, 2018). Here you will read bite size chunks of sensible advice on many important lessons for gardening including inspiring color photos that illustrate the point being made. This will help you to yield a healthy, gorgeous and thriving garden. Her book covers what you need to know in an orderly manner as noted below. It is written in easy to follow tips that she calls "lessons" including seven sections that start with how to become your own designer and ends with the joy of what you created. This is accomplished with single page explanations that provide sensible advice. The parenthesis next to each section indicates the number of lessons.

- Design – Planning Your Paradise (12)
- Planting Advice – The Joy of Plants (17)
- Soil – The Real Dirt (14)
- Water – Be Wise With Water (9)

## Resources

Find out more here:

**VMGA.NET**

**VCE MG Program--  
Facebook**

**VCE MG Program--  
YouTube**

**VCE MG Program--  
Blog**

**VA Cooperative  
Extension—Facebook**

**Volunteer  
Management System**

**Online Learning  
Opportunities**

**VA EMG Bi-weekly  
Update**

Links to other events  
around the state:

**Virginia Is For  
Lovers**

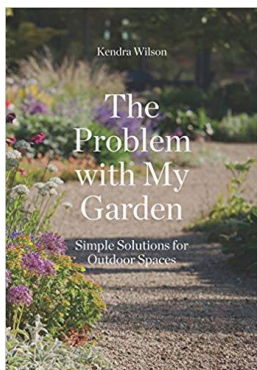
**Blandy Experimental  
Farm**

**Hahn Hort Garden**

- Garden Parent – How to Be a Good Parent (22)
- Attract Wildlife – Birds, Bees and Butterflies (15)
- Emotion and Plant Community – A Garden of Earthly Delights (11)

The book index is helpful for finding a subject regardless of the section noted above.

### A second garden tips book, **“The Problem with My Garden: Simple Solutions for Outdoor Spaces”** by Kendra Wilson (Laurence King



Publishing, 2017) likewise takes the fear out of gardening. She notes 66 problems that start with “I don’t know where to begin.” This text does not have a table of contents and it appears to be written in a random manner. Nevertheless, this book’s index is especially helpful in order to find answers for many garden problems. Similar to the Frey book, the color photos enhance the written word for each problem using single page “chapters.” Each solution to a specific problem offers easy to understand definitive, sensible and at times inspirational advice to a myriad of primarily uncomplicated garden problems. It is an interesting read and at the same time an excellent learning experience that can be applied to your own property. In other words, Wilson provides you with a thoughtful and no-fear approach to gardening without a lot of intimidating and off putting technical jargon. Her book is written in a non-technical way that simplifies time consuming or complicated ways to garden by providing succinct solutions. That said, simple ideas can solve what appear to be complex dilemmas.

In summary, both of these books are a welcome resource because they provide savvy solutions, insightful advice and for good measure, inspiration. Many gardens are different but surprisingly the solution for these garden problems are usually the same. This goes back to the fact that gardening does not have to be difficult or complicated and therefore, do not fear gardening.

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## Calendar 2019

**Jan 15-17**

**Mid Atlantic Horticulture Short Course**  
Founders Inn, Virginia Beach

**Jan 26**

**National Seed Swap Day**

EMGs of the Central Rappahannock Area  
3rd Annual Seed Swap 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Rowser Building, 1739 Jefferson Davis Highway, Stafford, VA

**Feb 2**

**Spring to Green: Gardening for All Ages**  
Danville Master Gardeners

<b>Feb 9</b>	<b>VMGA Meeting JCC/Williamsburg</b> JCC Rec Center at 5301 Longhill Road in Williamsburg
<b>Feb 13-15</b>	<b>Winter Symposium and CVNLA Short Course</b> Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
<b>Feb 16</b>	<b>EcoSavvy Symposium</b> Balancing Form and Function in the Garden
<p>Not a purist in the garden? Continue to wonder how a garden can successfully mix sustainable natives with exotic plants from far outside our region? Plan on attending the upcoming 15th annual EcoSavvy Symposium on Saturday, February 16th at Green Spring Gardens for insights. Symposium speakers include Colston Burrell, native landscape designer, lecturer, and photographer, and Keith Tomlinson, Manager of NOVA's Meadowlark Botanical Garden in Vienna. "The Balanced Garden: How to Meld Beautiful and Sustainable Natives With Favorites From Around the World" will be a half-day program from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Burrell will present insights for balancing natives, cultivars and exotics in the home garden, and Tomlinson will demonstrate how this balance is achieved in a public garden. (taken from <b>GSMG Groundbreakers</b> Volume 14, No. 3, Fall, 2018)</p>	
<b>Mar 9</b>	<b>Grow the Good Life</b> Bedford Area MGs
<b>Mar 15</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Annual Shenandoah Valley Plant Symposium</b> Best Western Inn & Conference Center
<b>Mar 23</b>	<b>Let's Get Growing Garden Symposium</b> Loudoun County MGs
<b>April 26-28</b>	<b>Colonial Williamsburg 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Garden Symposium</b>
<b>April 27-May 4</b>	<b>Historic Garden Week</b>
<b>April 30</b>	<b>Horticultural Horizons-Chesterfield MGs</b> Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens
<b>May 4</b>	<b>VMGA Education Day</b> VWCC Roanoke
<b>June 17-21</b>	<b>IMGC 2019</b> Valley Forge, PA registration <a href="http://www.cvent.com/d/hgqxlp">http://www.cvent.com/d/hgqxlp</a>
<b>Sept 19-22</b>	<b>32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Virginia Master Gardener College</b> Norfolk, VA
<b>By George Graine, Member, Master Gardener College Advisory Team</b>	
<p>Master Gardener College, our annual State conference, will celebrate its 32nd Anniversary from Thursday, September 19 to Sunday, September 22, 2019 in Norfolk, Virginia. The venue will be held at Hilton Norfolk The Main. A lot has changed since the earliest days of the College, and you can be the beneficiary of exciting opportunities for continuing education, local tours, and networking. You will still have time for fun with other serious-minded Master Gardeners from across the state and you will make new friends. During breaks, meal times and in the evening you will have plenty of time to see how other Master Gardeners go about their</p>	

activities.

For an overview of MG College go to [vmga.net](http://vmga.net) > Education Events > MG College > [About MG College](#).

Later in 2019, information will become available concerning registration for classes and a separate registration for hotel accommodations. In simplest terms, Master Gardener College is a place to learn, meet other MGs and even have time for some fun. These three points on the positive experience of College are expanded below.

**Learn** (opportunity for self-development)

1. Listen to excellent presentations at keynote and concurrent sessions.
2. Find out about current horticultural research and trends.
3. Attend interesting and unusual workshops and tours.
4. Become aware of issues that are of importance to MGs.
5. Learn about unfamiliar topics.
6. Reinforce information about familiar topics.

**Meet People** (networking)

1. Hear about effectiveness of new MG programs and projects.
2. Interact with MGs from other parts of the state.
3. Renew old acquaintances and start new friendships.
4. Promote information exchange.
5. Help others who are new to the College experience.

**Have Fun** (the other side of academia)

1. Experience comfortable and safe surroundings. Several tours are in the planning stage. Perhaps the Norfolk Botanical Garden, Chrysler Museum of Art, and Gen. Douglas MacArthur memorial.
2. Participate in a silent auction where the proceeds go towards the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment.
3. Again, enjoy a lasting opportunity for fellowship and networking with other MGs.

**COME CELEBRATE  
THE 32nd ANNIVERSARY  
OF MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE**

