



# The VMGA Report

A Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners  
vmga.net

Nov/Dec 2019

Volume 25, Number 2

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## VMGA Officers

President-  
Wanda Gerard, Suffolk

Vice President-  
Leslie Paulson,  
Prince William County

Secretary-  
Nelda Purcell,  
Franklin County

Treasurer-  
Georgianna Hall,  
Loudoun County

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Master Gardener Association is to foster communication, education and fellowship among Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteers.

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## From the President

Wanda Gerard, Suffolk, President

By the time you read this, we will be more than halfway through the month of November and pondering the busiest time of the year that is just ahead. I feel that I've lost a few weeks of time somewhere and we all know that isn't the case! I love this time of year because it tells us to slow down, rest and enjoy the serenity of winter – even in this busy season. A walk through my garden includes not only the fallen leaves but the wonderful sent of a patch of ginger lilies. Some mums that I transplanted in late summer are blooming so that in the unplanned scheme of things, something is still blooming (the ginger lilies are almost spent.) I recall the lush greenery of most plant varieties that thrived there just weeks ago, knowing they'll return again in the spring, stronger and more robust after a good winter's nap. It's a good time to consider updates, changes and begin the to-do list for spring. Have you ever considered that your garden is a mirror of your life (well – sort of!)? As I write this on Veterans Day, I think back to those younger years and all the energy and dreams I had for the future. Somewhere along the pathway I became a gardener and started practicing what I'd learned over the years and of course, in the Master Gardener training course. More recently though, the Virginia Master Gardener Association and other Master Gardener topics are my companions on these meanderings of mine. Some great ideas come from these moments, and well, some not so good ones too! A stone in my garden says it best "As the garden grows, so does the gardener." So as the busy holiday season approaches, take time to catch your breath, take a walk in the garden (or look out the window) and remind yourself that recharging is necessary for the next season.

Wanda

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## VMGA Meeting December 14, 2019

hosted by

The Northern Shenandoah Master Gardener Association

Northern Virginia 4H Center

600 4H Center Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630

9:15 Check-in and morning refreshments will be available The meeting

10:00 Call to order

The Spotted Lanternfly—presented by NSVMGA

A soup and potato bar lunch will be served at the 4-H Center Cost: \$10

**RSVP ASAP**

Payment due **by Dec 10** to Jessica Priest-Cahill at [jmpc5672@gmail.com](mailto:jmpc5672@gmail.com)  
or 540-683-0185

**Please make checks payable to NSVMGA** and send to:

Jessica Priest-Cahill

300 Rainbow Way, Front Royal, VA 22630.

President's Focus topic for discussion at this meeting:

Please share with us the list of programs that your MG groups does for the public (and private) schools in your areas. Anything else related to this topic is welcome.

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## VMGA BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

Save the Dates:

Dec 14 Northern Shenandoah Valley

Feb 8, 2020 Hanover

April 11, 2020 Louisa

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## In Review

VA Master Gardener College 2019 – Norfolk, VA

Sophia Fowler, Norfolk

2019 VMGA Diane Relf MG College Scholarship recipient

This was my first year since becoming a VCE Master Gardener for the City of Norfolk that I attended the Master Gardener College and I was not disappointed.

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The thing I found most interesting was being able to talk with other master gardeners from around the Commonwealth and people I have spoken with from Cooperative Extension in Blacksburg. I was able to finally meet one of the Extension employees I have only dealt with via phone and email. I also reconnected with an Extension employee I had not seen since we both worked at the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture.

The keynotes were excellent and informative. The breakouts I chose were topics I knew a little about however, after attending them, I felt better informed and wanted to dive into the topics. The World of Spiders – Spiders in Virginia, presented by Jim Revell, of Bedford, was the one I think I enjoyed the most. I knew a little about spiders but after the presentation I felt I knew a lot more and was eager to use the new knowledge in my day-to-day life. It has been nice to see and understand more about spiders and I plan to learn more as I go about my day because of this session.

I highly recommend attending Master Gardener College. You won't be disappointed.

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Lisa Lloyd, New River Valley  
2019 VMGA Diane Relf MG College Scholarship recipient

When I moved to Blacksburg a few years ago and became a Master Gardener, I informed my family and friends that I had found "my tribe". With the opportunity to attend MG College last month in Norfolk, in just a few days my tribe expanded several exponentially.

What an honor to receive a VMGA scholarship this year so that I had a chance to experience my first MG College. I was fortunate, too, that funds were provided from VMGA to offer more scholarships this year, than in the past. As I received my scholarship during the Annual Meeting at MG College, I realized how many Master Gardeners there are across our state that volunteer their time to support their communities relative to gardening, as well as other Master Gardeners. It reinforced how proud I am to be a part of the Master Gardener program and VMGA.

Now, a little about MG College from a first timer point of view! Both the keynote and workshop speakers shared a wealth of information. Climate change was the overriding theme of the keynotes, and rightly so. The high fall temperatures and drought conditions we've experienced in the New River Valley (and most likely across the state) have reinforced the data presented in Norfolk. At times I felt it was like the speakers were talking to the choir, and I wonder how those who still don't believe in climate change can be reached.

In addition to the formal knowledge I brought home from MG College, I also appreciate learning from other attendees what their chapters do to support their communities. While some of the activities are location

specific, this sharing is invaluable for taking ideas of what works for one unit and adapting it for use in another. While I was the only Master Gardener from the NRV unit to attend, it's amazing how the common passion for gardening can create an instant bond with a stranger. It's certainly a comforting feeling.

Overall, I had a wonderful experience at this year's MG College. The Main was a great venue and the logistics seemed to run smoothly. As I've organized some small events in my former corporate life, many kudos to the group who organized the event. I can imagine how much time and energy was involved in pulling it together in a new location and venue.

If you haven't attended MG College in the past, I'd encourage you to go next year at Virginia Tech and consider the International Master Gardener College in 2021. Also, if you aren't a member of VMGA, sign up today to expand your current Master Gardener experience. You won't be disappointed!

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The **MG College Advisory Team** is still taking your responses to the survey posted last month. We'd love to hear what you thought of the tours, speakers, venue, and more!

Go to: **Master Gardener College Survey**  
[https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0cgeRnkDTdbqwMR](https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0cgeRnkDTdbqwMR)

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## ESVMG OUTREACH AT MUSEUM OF CHINCOTEAGUE

Jane McKinley, Eastern Shore

It began with a neighborly chat and ended with the ESVMG guiding Road Scholar® service project volunteers to build a rain garden at the Museum of Chincoteague.

When the directors learned that Bob Shendock was an Extension Master Gardener and interested in supporting community outreach at the museum, they made a proposal to get our unit involved in supporting their goal to create a learning lab for environmental barrier island education. And it fit beautifully with Extension Master Gardener's goal to encourage and promote environmentally-sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management.

Our first project was held in the spring with an educational program on native plants for the Road Scholar volunteers and community and a native plant sale open to the community. The sale was a big hit and sold out in the first hour! Volunteers were also involved in replanting the museum grounds with native plants along with labeling those plants.

The fall project included a "Rain Garden: Design, Construction and

## In the news:

Has your unit or the members of your unit been featured in your local newspaper? Let us know!

Send links to:  
[peggyfox@hotmail.com](mailto:peggyfox@hotmail.com)

Got an upcoming event to publicize?

**Submit your unit announcements to the State MG Coordinator for inclusion in the Bi-Weekly EMG Update**

Submissions via email should include:

- The title of your event
- The date of your event
- An (optional) sentence describing your event
- The location of your event
- A link or attachment providing additional information

Maintenance” presentation along with actual construction of a rain garden at the museum. The presentation began with the explanation that a rain garden is “a functional landscape element to manage storm water collection, filtration, infiltration and/or discharge.” The elements of a rain garden, including inflow, ponding area, mulch, soil and plant layers and an overflow feature, were discussed. General location considerations, such as a recommendation of 10’ or more distance from a building foundation, were presented. And adaptations required to accommodate the location at the museum were discussed. Since water gushing off the roof had to be captured close to the foundation, consideration had to be given to effectively moving the water away from the building and protecting the sides from backsplash. Rain garden construction tasks including excavation, framing installation, soil amendments and construction of an outflow system were listed. These tasks were used as a plan for the work to be performed at the museum throughout the week. The overall goal of this Road Scholar service-learning project was to work at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the Museum of Chincoteague Island to help conserve the islands’ wildlife, habitats, history and culture. Volunteers assisted with a variety of projects ranging from cleaning out barbed wire from Assateague Island, to preserving the Chincoteague lighthouse and, of course, to work at the Museum on the rain garden project. Volunteers rotated throughout the various projects daily, each having an opportunity to participate in a variety of service work as well as experience the beauty of the Virginia barrier islands and its wildlife. With this overall goal in mind, Road Scholar volunteers selected this program for a variety of personal reasons.

Barry, from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, was curious to learn more about the design of a rain garden since his background is in engineering. Jim & Mellanie were following their commitment to be involved in nature which, at their home in St. Louis, includes volunteering in a Monarch butterfly collection and tagging project. Cynthia, from West Chester, PA, wanted to learn more about the Eastern Shore of Virginia and about the rain garden project since she has had some exposure to the principles of storm water management as a volunteer at Longwood Gardens. Linda, from The Villages in Florida, wanted to see the ponies. Madeleine from Minnesota wanted to be involved in service-learning and wanted to experience a new area of the country. Don from Richmond, VA came along with friends to try something new. And Gene & Dale from Chesterfield, VA, impressed with all the offerings in the Road Scholar catalog picked this one due to its relatively close proximity. But, whatever their personal reasons were for signing up, they all left the week with a lot of in-depth knowledge about how to build a rain garden. And there were probably some sore muscles, to boot!

Thanks to Bob Shendock for his many hours spent planning, coordinating and leading the project; to Jocelyn Grover for her leadership at the site and to Claude Taylor, Joyce Almond, Marianne Francavilla, and Victor Klein, who provided guidance to the Road Scholars.

Editor’s note: (this is not an endorsement)  
From the website: <https://www.roadsscholar.org/>

## VMGA

Membership has its advantages:

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

**Deadline for submitting articles for the Jan/Feb issue: Dec 28, 2019**

**Please send to:**

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

## Resources

Find out more here

[Extension Master Gardener website](#)

[VMGA.NET](#)

[VCE MG YouTube State Office Blog](#)

[VCE—Facebook](#)

[Volunteer Management System](#)

[Online Learning Opportunities](#)

[VA EMG Bi-weekly Update](#)

[Marketing and](#)

"Road Scholar was founded in 1975 as Elderhostel. A not-for-profit education organization, we have guided generations of knowledge seekers on transformative learning adventures from Greenland to Cuba and nearly every locale in between. Elderhostel was rebranded Road Scholar in 2010 to reflect the growth and evolution of the organization and of the legions of loyal lifelong learners who rely on us for an in-depth study of the world."

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## VMGA Website

Leslie Paulson, Prince William

Please submit additions, corrections or report broken links to:

Leslie Paulson at: [ljp6651@comcast.net](mailto:ljp6651@comcast.net) or [webmaster@vmga.net](mailto:webmaster@vmga.net)

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## In the news

Gleaned from FACEBOOK

Patrick County MGs

Our fellow Patrick County Master Gardeners Association donated \$1,000 to PARC Workshop in Stuart. The money came from proceeds from the group's annual plant sale.

PARC Workshop is a day support facility that encourages independence and fosters social skills for mentally and physically disabled residents of Patrick and Henry counties. Weekday transportation is provided. PARC is currently serving 18 clients.

One of Patrick County Master Gardener's major goals is: "to improve the quality of life through horticulture for special populations such as low income, elderly, or physically challenged," By continuing to implement, follow, and reach towards that goal, the PCMG chose PARC's as this year's plant sale beneficiary.

To read more details about the PCMG or the PARC Workshop, check out this article: <http://ow.ly/FOvQ50wRJaN>

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## THE GRAINETHUMB

TREES: BEYOND RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE AND RIGHT PURPOSE  
George Graine, Fairfax

"Trees display the effects of breeding quite as much as horses, dogs, or men."

---William Howitt in "Visits to Remarkable Places" (1842)

For many years the gardener's mantra has been right plant and right place. By adding right purpose, this becomes another dimension that will help you plant anything in your landscape or garden. Let's settle in on trees. If you love trees, then you will not regret seeking out a new book called **"The Tree Book: Superior Selections for Landscapes,**

## Branding Resources



Links to places of interest around the state:

**Virginia Is For Lovers**

**Blandy Experimental Farm**

**Hahn Hort Garden**

**Norfolk Botanical Garden**

**Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**

**Maymont**

**Williamsburg Botanical Garden**

**Meadowlark Botanical Gardens**

**Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU**

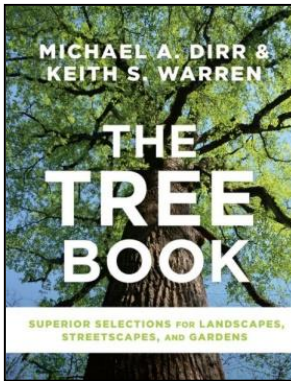
**I Love Gardens.com**

**Virginia Gardening Greenspring Gardens**

**Southern Virginia Botanical Gardens, South Boston, VA**

**US National Arboretum**

**Streetscapes, and Gardens”** by Michael A. Dirr and Keith S. Warren (Timber Press, 2019). Here you have two of the most influential plantsmen of our time who teamed up to write a definitive “manual” on trees. The authors conclude “Our tree palette is richer, more diverse; the breeders are endowed with unique genetics; and time tested, superior, sustainable trees are invaluable to all.” Nina Bassuk, author of “Trees in the Urban Landscape” sums up the Dirr-Warren book as “A boon to all those who plant, care for and love trees.”



As a Master Gardener, surely you are aware that Michael Dirr is a prodigious plantsman, garden writer and lecturer. Indeed, he is acknowledged as one of the leading experts - a university horticultural researcher and plant breeder. Co-author Keith Warren has been in commercial nursery production and tree breeding for many years. He introduced and promoted numerous tree cultivars that are now readily available in the nursery trade. One could say that these men cross-pollinated their ideas and then bonded with trees in producing a 7.4 pound, 900+ page book chock full of insights regarding selection, evaluation of trees, cultural eco-system, explanation of cultivars and more.

“The Tree Book” is an invaluable resource and comprehensive reference for more than 2400 tree species and cultivars. Featured trees (with superb color photos) include those widely available in the nursery trade including new and promising cultivars as well as a selection of overlooked options that deserve renewed interest. Most of the tree types start with an opening paragraph that sum up noteworthy characteristics including height and spread, form, growth rate, texture and ornamental features. Subsequent to this information, each tree profile includes the common and botanical (Latin) name along with a plant description. The highlights of each tree include details on foliage, flowers, seeds, fruits and cones as appropriate. After that information they include native range, adaptability and popular uses in the landscape.

The relatively short introductory chapter is a true expression of why we need trees, uses for trees and long term consideration of their importance to our well-being. The text strives to make us better educated and to help us make wiser choices for planting trees. In essence, the book is both “...comprehensive in its scope and specific in its detail” by providing “...the details that matter, the ones that are important in making planting decisions.” To borrow a phrase from the carpenters rule – measure twice and cut once. The homeowner who plants a tree needs to choose wisely and plant carefully recognizing climate and soil (pH) conditions, sun, shade, wind, etc. in order to avoid potential problems that may crop up in the future. (*\*Editor’s note: Don’t forget to give serious consideration to the mature size of that tree and how close you plant it next to a building.*) Of course, some trees have been genetically adapted to thrive in heat, drought, heavy rain, snow and other climatic conditions. A good rule of thumb is to plant improved cultivars native to the area where you reside. This will help to insure your continued enjoyment of the tree you

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planted for years to come.

Horticultural diversity is also an important consideration. Aside from environmental conditions it is often critical to understand that the eventual height and spread of a tree is based on reality. In this regard, do not be guided by a plant catalog or plant tag description. Frequently this information is limited to a ten-year plant size. Do you really believe this will be the ultimate height and spread? Plants do not read! You need to carefully read what Dirr and Warren write about size. The moral of this is to do your own research so that over time you will not be disappointed or discouraged. Again, look for trees that are improved cultivars and hopefully they will be more resistant to pests and diseases.

The authors write that "...mature tree will vary significantly according to climate and soil condition." Perhaps an excellent and extreme example of this phenomenon is the giant 300' California redwood tree. If you have seen these gigantic trees, they are a wonder to behold. Now if you see this type tree in the East, it is more likely to be at 50' and maybe even less. Surely this example answers the question of why is environment and soil condition so very important.

In summary, "The Tree Book" is comprehensive, informative, up-to-date and definitely practical. You will enjoy the beauty and functionality of trees perhaps from a different perspective.

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## Calendar 2019

### March 2020

- 21 [Annual Gardening Symposium, Loudoun County](#)
- 21 [CNU Gardening Symposium, Newport News](#)

### April 2020

- 17-19 [Williamsburg Garden Symposium](#)
- 18-25 [Historic Garden Week](#)

### FROM THE EDITOR

We'd love to feature your unit's announcements, events or articles in the next issue.

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## Butternut Squash & Apple Soup Wanda Gerard, Suffolk

- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed, chopped



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|  | <p>1 rib of celery, chopped<br/>1 tart green apple, peeled, cored, chopped<br/>2 tablespoons butter<br/>3 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth<br/>1 cup water<br/>Pinches of nutmeg, cinnamon, cayenne, salt and pepper</p> <p>In a large saucepan over medium-high heat and heat the butter for 1-2 minutes. Do not let it turn brown. Add the onion, celery and carrot and sauté for 5 minutes, taking care to turn the heat down if the vegetables begin to brown. Add squash, apple, broth and water. Bring to boil. Cover, turn the heat down to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes or until squash and carrots soften. Puree carefully in a food processor or with an immersion blender and return to a clean pot. Add salt and spices to taste.</p> <p>I add a can of evaporated milk, half and half or cream to the soup to make it creamy.</p> <p>Mmmmmm.....Enjoy!</p> |
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