

# Virginia Master Gardener Association

# REPORT



Vol. 15, No. 1

<http://www.vmga.net>

January/February 2008

## VMGA Executive Board

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## NEXT BOARD MEETING

10 AM - 2 PM, February 9  
Strange's Garden Center, 12111  
West Broad Street, Richmond, VA.



## Welcome to 2008!

Cheri Haggerty, VMGA President

### Happy New Year to all.

As I often mention, I receive a number of newsletters from MG units around the state and in the latest issues I noticed two common themes:

- out with the old and in with the new or
- many thanks to all who volunteered

The phrase "out with the old and in with new" makes me think there was something wrong with the "old" and "new" is the way to go. In VMGA reality, we depend on our "old" to guide us and keep us in check. Many Unit representatives serve their units for many years. It just seems so familiar to have them in attendance. When they are replaced with "new", it seems like we have lost our best friends. In 2007 we have had 15 "new" Unit Representatives come into the association and even though we miss the former reps, we embrace the "newbies". This turnover is good for the association as we entertain new ideas and revisit old ones with a different insight. I don't know all of you by sight yet but I hope to because I have learned that everyone has something to contribute.

Trying to thank all of those who have volunteered in the VMGA over the year is a pretty daunting task. First of all there are the Unit Representatives. Next would be the Board members and those who serve on our Standing Committees; Education, Newsletter, Membership, Unit Support, Communications and Finance. I also thank members of the Special Committees; P. Diane Relf Education Endowment (MG Scholarships), State Fair, MG Coordinators Endowment and Fundraising. And let's not forget our Extension Liaison. Lastly I thank all VMGA members whether you are active in the association or support the VMGA with your membership. The association says, "Thank You!" Without any of you there would be no "Voice of Virginia Master Gardeners".

While I have your attention, I have a few reminders, housekeeping tasks if you will:

- Please send 2007 MG College photos to Frank Reilly so the promotional CDs can be ready earlier...in the next two weeks if possible. I know there are some good candid shots out there but if you are like me, you lugged your camera all around College but were so busy, you forgot to use it! (Continued on page 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS

15-17 February, Mid-Atlantic Home & Flower Show, Virginia Beach Convention Center, Virginia Beach, VA.

<http://www.vafgs.org>

21-24 February, Maymont Flower & Garden Show, Greater Richmond Convention Center, Richmond, VA.

<http://www.maymont.org>

23 February, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual EcoSavvy Gardening Symposium, Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/ecosymposium.htm>

29 Feb - 2 March, 32nd Annual Richmond Home & Garden Show, Richmond Raceway Complex, Richmond, VA.

<http://www.richmondhomeandgardenshow.com>

2-9 March, Philadelphia Flower Show, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA.

<http://www.theflowershow.com>

8 March, Sixth Annual "Good Gardening" Symposium, Prince George High School, Prince George, VA.

<http://www.vmga.net/calendar.htm>

13-16 March, Washington Home & Garden Show, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.

<http://www.washingtonhomeandgardenshow.com>

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Kathryn Debnar, [k2garden@cox.net](mailto:k2garden@cox.net).



## Welcome to 2008! (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

- Have you purchased a license plate frame, a decal, tee shirt or flag? We have pictures at [vmga.net](http://vmga.net) if you haven't taken the time yet to check them out.
- Have you taken advantage of the *Fine Gardening* magazine offer? The MG Coordinator Endowment Fund is the recipient of \$10.00 for every new subscription.
- Plenty of opportunities for your unit to host a VMGA meeting in 2010.
- Still waiting on a volunteer to join the Newsletter team as Content Editor for the *VMGA Report*. This Editor will collect and edit submissions and send to the Layout Editor. As a part of the newsletter team build up, I am also looking for someone or some Unit to take on the responsibility of having the 100 or so paper copies printed and mailed. Currently our new team consists of Tom Bolt (Norfolk), Electronic Distribution Coordinator; Dawn Meyerriecks (Loudoun), Layout Editor; and Mary Ann Kincaid (Virginia Beach), Membership chair; who supplies the mailing labels and e-mail addresses.

Contact information is at [VMGA.net](http://VMGA.net) and also is listed on the front page of this newsletter. Once again, I wish you a Happy New Year!

## Closing the Campaign

By David D. Close

When you reflect on the fact that we still need to raise nearly \$775,000 to reach our intended endowment goal, it can feel overwhelming. But when you step back and pick it apart the task appears more reasonable and within reach. If you view the whole (\$775K) as the sum of many smaller parts, it is not nearly as intimidating.

In order to complete the endowment we need:

- 1 corporation/foundation/person to donate \$250K
- 2 people/businesses to donate \$100K each (we already have one of these!)
- 4 people/businesses to donate \$50K each (our initial donation was \$50,000 cash!)
- 10 people/businesses to donate \$10K each (VMGA has raised more than \$16,000 already!)
- 100 people to donate the \$50 for 5 or \$250 each (more than 100 VCE MG volunteers have already done this. What if each of you recruits one other person to pledge \$50 for 5 years? We will quickly reach this portion of our goal!)

That's only 117 more people or businesses! Already more than 200 people, businesses, and VCE MG units and associations have given. We currently have more than 4,000 active VCE MG volunteers. There are numerous businesses and foundations that have missions and goals similar to the VCE MG program. Together we can complete this endowment!

## December News From Across the State

The full report of the units can be found at <http://www.vmga.net>.

## Central

### **Amherst, Campbell and Lynchburg (Hill City)** <http://www.hcmga.com>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg's City's Schools have ended for the fall. The programs that were conducted with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders included Bees and their Benefits, Composting, and The Life Cycle of Bulbs. The children were instructed on the equipment and procedure for Bee Keeping and were able to taste different flavors of honey. They built compost bins at their respective schools and learned about compost's benefits to the garden and the environment. They also planted tulips and pansies in their school gardens for enjoyment throughout the winter and spring.

### **Bedford**

Peter Lorenz of the BMG's is working closely with Bedford County (Moneta) Boy Scouts', Lion's and Ruritan's clubs to create the Moneta Recreation Park (MRP). Land has been cleared and as soon as weather permits a few Redbuds and Dogwoods in the nearby woods will be dug up and transplanted to the MRP. To help the Scouts work on their Woodsman Badge, Peter will work closely with the Scouts, teaching them how to plant and care for the trees. Money was donated by BMGs and a concerned citizen to purchase seed trees (crab apple, etc.) to provide plants that birds will feed on.

### **Halifax (Southside)**

Our Association won a blue ribbon at the Halifax County Fair in October. The theme, "Water Quality in Halifax County", was well received. A new member, Joan Layman, designed an electronic quiz board with questions, answers concerning water quality and other environmental questions.



## Northeast

### **Chesterfield** <http://www.chesterfield.gov/extension>

Several opportunities for advanced training have been offered for the MGs: Bartlett Urban Tree Care symposium and pesticide safety. The Advanced Training Committee met and set up the calendar for next year. A new program will be offered by the MGs after all training has been completed: Urban Tree Specialist program.

### **Gloucester** <http://www.gloucesterva.info/ext/mastergardener/home.htm>

Gloucester has grown from about 40 members to 70 in the last year. We have been able to begin Horticultural Therapy for a second convalescent home. Our county has obtained a new park area and our unit will have space for a demonstration garden. We are continuing to maintain the planters on the Coleman Bridge; they have small Christmas trees for the season at present.

### **Goochland/Powhatan** <http://www.qpmga.org>

Our annual Transition Meeting was held Nov. 15. This is the occasion of transferring responsibility to the new officers and the approval of next year's projects. Discussion of problem areas and possible solutions for each approved project highlights this meeting. It gives us an early start for the New Year.

### **Hanover**

Hanover has been preparing for another Spring Home Gardeners Series. Homeowners from the Richmond area will come to classes taught by Hanover MGs on Saturday mornings Jan - Mar. We have modified our series to include more workshops and have extended the question and answer time per class. This was requested by most of last year's attendees.

## December News From Across the State

## Northeast

### James City County/Williamsburg

<http://www.jccwmg.org>

Our new project, Mobile MG, was displayed at the 12/8 VMGA meeting. It supports our ability to participate in any community venue. Also, we implemented an automated help desk to get unit feedback. Landscape Love filmed an episode, with a follow up visit on Cable Channel 48. If successful, a series will follow.

### Northumberland, Lancaster, Richmond, Westmoreland and Essex (Northern Neck)

<http://www.nnmg.org>

The Northern Neck Master Gardeners will have the long-awaited handbook for sale early in the New Year. The title is "Gardening in the Northern Neck: A Handbook for Responsible Gardeners." The book is a compilation of tips and hints for gardening success in our sandy/clay soils and moderate temperatures along the Bay. It was written, illustrated, and edited by our Northern Neck Master Gardeners volunteers.

### York

On October 6 we put on our annual Fall Landscape Extravaganza. WE continue our Learning Garden work – fall clean up, division of plants for the spring plant sale – involvement with the Junior Master Gardeners, Hort therapy and lawn maintenance seminars.

## Northern

### Fairfax

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.com>

FCMGA won a District award entitled "Senior Baby Boomers Garden with the Masters" for our new 2007 Gardening Classes at Senior Centers. The program was piloted at four of 13 Senior Centers and will be expanded in 2008, with 5 additional centers added to the program. This expansion ups the training sessions from 16 to 54. Some of these sessions will take place during the day and some in the evening. If you desire additional information, contact Susan Renna, [susan.renna@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:susan.renna@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### Fairfax – Green Spring

<http://www.fairfax.county.gov/parks/gsgp>

Among our projects is a new volunteer opportunity called "Adopt a Library" where MGs will adopt a local library branch and arrange to display seasonal gardening demo boards as the library schedule permits. These MGs will make contact with the library manager for these displays and will be responsible for maintaining any brochures or handouts throughout the display period.

### Loudoun

<http://www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org>

We are busy planning for next year. We are planning a series of 4-6 classes in the evenings on topics such as Beginning Gardening and will be offering them to the public beginning in February.

## Northwest

### Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig and City of Roanoke

Congratulations to our neighbors, the Master Gardeners in Franklin County! They have just published a new gardening book, and it is a very good read. We ended the year with our annual Holiday House Fund Raiser, which was very successful. We followed that with the closing event of the calendar year, our holiday dinner.

## December News From Across the State

## Northwest

### Rockbridge, Bath (Rockbridge Area)

Preparations are proceeding well for our next training class, which will begin in January. Even though we had our largest class ever last year with 23 students, we are very pleased to have 12 applicants for this class.

## Southeast

### Chesapeake

<http://www.cmgv.org>

Our annual Heritage Arts Festival, held this year on November 2, 3 and 4, was its usual success. On November 2 we conducted Farm Days, where we hosted 400 first graders making pinecone bird feeders. November 3 and 4 were open to the public, where we featured composting for the homeowner, vermiculture, hydroponics, and ways to feed the birds using a four-foot Christmas tree strung with popcorn and cranberry garlands, dried apple and orange slices, and dog and cat fur and sheep wool for lining nests.

### Norfolk

<http://www.nmgv.org>

Norfolk tree stewards have wrapped up the street tree inventory for the year. This involved 900 work hours and 17,000 trees. The barnyard garden at the zoo and the vegetable garden at the Heutte Center have been planted for the winter.

### Virginia Beach

<http://www.vbmg.org>

Harvest Fair and Farm Days are traditional Events at the Farmers Market where VB MGs have routinely assisted with the Children's activities. This year, over 9,000 folks interested in agriculture, natural resources, and a variety of fun events attended Harvest Fair. The Virginia Dare Soil and Water District conducted Farm Days with approximately 800 first grade students from eight Virginia Beach Schools participating. This event provided the opportunity for the students to participate in several educational stops to learn about agriculture, farm animals, and natural resources.

## Southwest

### Carroll, Grayson, and city of Galax (MGs of the Blue Ridge)

Winter weather has halted most project activity on the Blue Ridge. New officer elections were scheduled in conjunction with the annual holiday dinner meeting. There are tentative plans for a rain barrel workshop in the spring. Details will be announced later.



## The Graine Thumb

# "Advanced" Garden Design 401

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

*"I fear I am a little impatient of the school of gardening that encourages the selection of plants merely as artistic furniture, chosen for colour only, like ribbons or embroidery silk. I feel sorry for plants that are obliged to make a struggle in uncongenial situations because their owner wishes all things of those shades of pink, blue or orange to fit in next to the grey or crimson planting."*

Edward Augustus Bowles

*My Garden in Spring* (1914)



As plant clinicians we sometimes forget that our responsibility lies beyond diagnosis and cures for disease and insect problems, save the bay, and water-wise gardening. The lesson for today is to become aware of other landscape design approaches in addition to the *Essential Garden Design Workbook* noted in the Jul-Aug 2007 newsletter. Consider the essentials book as a 101 level training manual. Perhaps the title of this article is a tad hyperbole; however, you will see why it was chosen as you continue reading.

*The Self-Sustaining Garden: The Guide to Matrix Planting* by Peter Thompson and *A Pattern Garden: The Essential Elements of Garden Making* by Valerie Easton (both books published by Timber Press, 2007) will provide you with additional knowledge and approaches to garden design. If one had to write a précis (a concise abridgment) about each book, Thompson's book discusses how to create strategies where plants are able to take care of themselves once they become established in the landscape (matrix planting). Easton's book provides the means to make a garden feel satisfying by introducing design elements called patterns.

Once you realize the benefits of matrix planting you might wonder why this approach did not occur to you before digging your first hole. A key point that is made abundantly clear is that the harder we work in the garden, the more problems seem to grow and multiply. The traditional way of gardening is to not let plants do much of the hard work for us. Matrix gardening is all about natural gardening and skipping most of the drudgery. This may appear to be an unorthodox way to garden, so before you make up your mind, let me cite a personal analogy. When I went away to school my mother was in charge of my several tanks of tropical fish and plants. She discovered that with less care (read interference), the fish and plants were better off. Does this mean that my mother practiced a form of matrix water gardening or was she lazy? I genuinely believe the former and she had the results to show for it.

Think of the natural behavior of plants as partners in self-sustaining communities wherein they share a space that balances soil resources, opportunities to reproduce and opportunities to eliminate intruders (weeds). In other words, allow plants to grow naturally and maintenance will be reduced in the space provided. Another analogy: wildflowers grow all over with hardly any help from gardeners! This is like an extension of the paradigm right plant-right place (read habitat). Additionally, and you are going to like this, if your garden is planted as a self-governing community, you can forgo a lot of effort that heretofore went into spading and raking and hoeing and digging and forking and on and on. If you follow the matrix approach you will have another timesaving bonus in that you can cut down on fertilizing before and after planting. Also, you will drastically reduce the use of pesticides to control diseases and pests that you know are often harmful activities.

Does this sound like the kind of gardening that you are familiar with? Probably not, but Thompson makes many excellent points by providing examples (case studies) showing detailed applications to support his approach to gardening. Numerous color photos and 14 black and white illustrations contained in 192 pages will help you to follow the matrix approach to gardening.

(Continued on page 9)



Dawn Lerch, [dhlerch@vt.edu](mailto:dhlerch@vt.edu), (540)231-5546

TRADITION

TRUST

TRANSFORMATION

**State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment**

**Personal Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_

This is a joint gift with my spouse (named above)

**Gift Information**

*State MG Coordinator Goal: \$1,000,000*

I/We make a total pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/We give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year for \_\_\_\_ (max 5 years)

Pledge payments will begin (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send reminders:

Quarterly  Semi-Annually  Annually  No Reminders

**Giving Levels**

Eastern Redbud	Up to \$249
Flowering Dogwood	\$250 - \$499
Silverbell	\$500 - \$999
Bald Cypress	\$1,000 - \$4,999
Southern Magnolia	\$5,000 - \$9,999
White Oak	\$10,000 and above

**Pledge Payment Options** Please indicate your choice below (*Gifts may be spread over 5 years*)

**Cash or Check:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. Please make checks payable to: *Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc. Account #886119*

**Credit Card:** Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Charge scheduled payments of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in the following months:

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):** Please send me the proper forms to authorize the *Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc.* to electronically conduct approved transactions directly with my financial institution(s). Forms may be requested by calling 1-800-533-1144, or email: [give.to.vt.edu](mailto:give.to.vt.edu).

**Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds, or Other Property:** Approximate value: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please have a University Development Officer contact me.

**Matching Gift:** In addition to my own personal commitment, \_\_\_\_\_ will match my gift.  
I have enclosed the completed form. For more information, please visit [www.givingto.vt.edu/matchinggifts](http://www.givingto.vt.edu/matchinggifts).

**Deferred Gift:** Please fill out the reverse side of this form.

**TOTAL of this side and reverse side:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Signature (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: CALS Development Office, 216 Hutcheson (0402), Blacksburg, VA 24061**

## Future Support

### Personal Information

Same as front side of form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

This is a joint gift with my spouse (named above)

### Gift Information

#### Gift Type

Will Bequest

Revocable Living Trust

Retirement Account

Life Insurance

Charitable Remainder Trust

Other

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Does your gift benefit someone else (i.e., a spouse) before Virginia Tech?  Yes  No

If so, does that person have a similar gift provision?

Yes  No

Date of Birth of Survivor Beneficiary \_\_\_\_\_

While all deferred gifts are important, those contingent on life of spouse or other beneficiary are counted in the campaign only if the other person has made the same deferred gift commitment.

**Exact Language of Provision**  
(Write in the space below or attach a copy.)

### Value of Provision

*(For percentages and remainders of an estate, provide a good faith estimate of the dollar value as of the date this form is signed.)*

Area of the University to be supported  
(if any)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Signature (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*We recognize that values of deferred gifts as well as provisions themselves may change over time. Your signature verifies only that the above information is accurate as of this date and does not represent a binding commitment to the university. Should you ever update your gift plans, we suggest directing your gift to the "Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc," to insure it is administered in the best manner possible.*

## The Graine Thumb (continued)

(Continued from page 6)

Turning to *A Pattern Garden*, it is very inspiring and hits an emotional high. Before you are even partway through this book some might wish winter away so that you can yardabout in your townhouse garden, play with containers, think up new ways to treat the woodland, and anything else that makes up your property. It should be noted that Christopher Alexander heavily influenced this book in terms of scale, space, and design. He wrote the ground breaking 1100+-page book called *A Pattern Language* 30 years ago. Alexander advocated the idea "that people should design for themselves their houses, gardens, streets, and communities." Easton, the "new pattern" author, has reinterpreted Alexander's ideas as she focuses on the design aspects of gardening. She does this in 216 pages that are chock full of magnificent color photos. More specifically she discusses 14 essential garden patterns in ten well-organized chapters. Each chapter contains a variety of factors that make design theory easy to comprehend. Below are the essential garden patterns.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Scale        | 8. Patios         |
| 2. Garden Rooms | 9. Sheds          |
| 3. Pathways     | 10. Focal Points  |
| 4. Bridges      | 11. Water         |
| 5. Gates        | 12. Ornamentation |
| 6. Shelters     | 13. Containers    |
| 7. Borders      | 14. Materials     |

There is nothing really new about these garden patterns but this book will provide you with the ideas to enhance your being and your senses in order to sate your garden experience. In other words, you will be able to connect with your garden and its various uses such as relaxing, feeling secure, dining alfresco under a pergola, and whatever other use appeals to you. The takeaway message is that your garden should be a nurturing experience and one that will be full of memorable events both seasonal and personal.

## Education Endowment Fund (EEF)

By George Graine, Chairman, EEF Scholarship Committee



*Scholarship: A specific gift of money to help a student continue his studies.*

--Variant from Webster's New World Dictionary

VMGA is please to announce that an EEF Scholarship Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) has been carefully chosen. They are a diverse group and represent five VCE Districts. Nomination criteria have been established and an application form has been developed. All VCE Master Gardeners planning to attend MG College-2008 can be considered for these scholarships; however, preference will be given to Master Gardeners who are members of VMGA.

Every Unit may nominate no more than two candidates. The method of selection is up to each Unit. The Committee requires no explanation of that process. The local VCE Extension Agent or Unit Coordinator must submit all application forms. A minimum of six scholarships will be awarded. Each scholarship carries a stipend of \$100.00.

The notion that an individual with the greatest number of service hours automatically wins the prize, i.e., the scholarship, is NOT true. In fact, the Committee will be seeking those individuals who show initiative, have taken a leadership role within the Unit, and can demonstrate the potential to continue in a leadership position. More succinctly, is the nominee a role model for the Unit?

The Committee recognizes that significant differences exist in our Units relative to size and programmatic considerations. Usually this is due to the needs of the area being served. Rest assured that the Committee has decided that this will not be a delimiting factor as they review the application forms.

Good luck to all of you who want to compete for the recognition that a VMGA scholarship brings not only to an individual but to the Unit as well. For additional information, check with your Extension Agent or Unit Coordinator or <http://www.vmga.net>.

**VMGA Report**

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association.

Submissions should be received by the 1st of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Send inquiries and submissions to:

Dawn Meyerriecks,  
[dmyrix@hotmail.com](mailto:dmyrix@hotmail.com)

**General Announcements**

Get your VMGA **REPORT** via e-mail. Receiving your newsletter via e-mail is faster and cheaper for us to deliver it! If you have e-mail and a broadband connection and are still getting this newsletter via US Mail, please consider e-mail distribution instead. Send a note to [maryann.kincaid@verizon.net](mailto:maryann.kincaid@verizon.net) and we'll take care of it for you!

**Please help us keep your listing current.** When you have changes to your e-mail address, street address, zip code, phone number or name, please forward these changes to the Membership Chair, Mary Ann Kincaid. She can be reached at [maryann.kincaid@verizon.net](mailto:maryann.kincaid@verizon.net) OR 1549 Beechwood Cove, Virginia Beach, VA 23464.

**About the Virginia Master Gardener Association....**

The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. is a statewide association of Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) employees whose mission is to foster communication, education and fellowship among Master Gardeners, and to give support and input to the state leaders of our VCE effort. We are a non-profit educational organization as described by section 501(3)(c) of the US tax code.

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