



VMGA Executive Board

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NEXT BOARD MEETING

10 AM - 2 PM, December 13, 2008
 Lamplighter Restaurant
 201 Virginia Avenue, Clarksville, VA

President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

Fall is here and I'm busy trying to get all the plants I bought into the ground before it freezes. I'm one of those who buys a plant I like and then tries to find a place for it.

Since our last newsletter, we have received two more requests for Virginia Master Gardener writers, from *Virginia Gardener Magazine* and *Horticulture* magazine. If you are interested in writing articles for either magazine, contact your unit rep or me for more information and the contacts. We have some talented writers out there and this is your chance to share your plant knowledge and writing skills.

If your MG association is exempt from filing a tax return under 501c3 status and your gross receipts are normally \$25,000 or less, you will be required to file a short form starting with 2008 tax returns. The Internal Revenue Service intends to release draft instructions to the Form 990-EZ, Short Form Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, before the end of the year. See Cheri Haggerty's article.

Master Gardeners have been propagating plants for years for their own use and for MG Plant Sales. Can MGs propagate patented or trademarked plants and then offer them for sale? The answer is no. Read Cheri's article on her research concerning this question. As a result of the question and Cheri's research, VT is in the process of writing a VCE publication or fact sheet on the subject.

Support for Master Gardener activities is at risk of being reduced as a result of the Governor's proposed budget cut of \$1.8M for VCE. We need to let our legislators know how vital Cooperative Extension is to the health of the Virginia economy and the productivity and wellbeing of its residents. Check the VMGA website for legislative contact information.

Frank Reilly's Unit Support group is putting together an educational event for February to discuss how MG units can get through the bad times, budget cuts, loss of extension agents, etc. Some units have gone through this state budget crisis before. Sharing how they did it would be good for those who have never been through a tight budget. You will hear more at the December meeting.

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me at bettyv@cox.net or by phone, 757-481-6398. See you at the December 13 meeting in Clarksville.

I hope everyone has a healthy, happy holiday season.

UPCOMING EVENTS

13 November, "Creating a Classical Colonial Decoration", Williamsburg Regional Library, 7:30 PM

www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org

15 November, "Botanical Ornaments Workshop", Green Spring Gardens, 9:30 AM

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp

19 November, "Experience the Beauty of a Tall Grass Prairie", Blandy Farm Library, 6:30 PM

www.virginia.edu/blandy/

20 November, "Preserving Land with Conservation Easements", Blandy Farm, 7 PM

www.virginia.edu/blandy/

27 November - 31 December, 14th Annual Garden of Lights, Norfolk Botanical Garden, 5:30 - 10 PM

www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/

28 November - 12 January, GardenFest of Lights, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 5 - 10 PM

www.lewisginter.org/

4 - 13 December (various days), Wreath Workshops, Monticello

www.monticello.org

4 - 16 December (various days & times), Holiday Wreath & Centerpiece Workshops, Hillwood Gardens

www.hillwoodmuseum.org

25-29 January, Mid-Atlantic Hort Course 2009, Va Beach

www.mahsc.org

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Kathryn Debnar, k2garden@cox.net.

State MG Liaison Report for October

By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- 2008 International Master Gardener Coordinator Conference was an overall success. There were 51 registered attendees from 25 states with good country-wide representation.
- MGCAT met in September. We have developed a full list of conference topics and proposed speakers. As Michael Dirr will not be available, we will be looking to get Alan Armitage. Encore Azaleas can provide goody bags and flower samples. Scotts Miracle Grow will offer free samples.
- Still working on handbook revision. May need to delay the release to ensure it is done correctly.
- Working another possible solution for receiving and answering questions via email. Have delayed testing it until after the National MGC conference.
- Horticulture Department had retreat 3-4 weeks ago; we redefined and focused priorities and built morale.
- National review of MG program is proceeding. We will be collecting first round of data by January/February 2009.
- Still talking with potential corporate sponsor. It didn't work out to announce them at the state fair. With the recent economic downturn, this activity will slow. Met with CALS Development Director, Dawn Lerch, and the VT Foundation Corporate Relations Director to develop next steps.
- Scotts can provide advanced training for MGs on a variety of topics; this has been ongoing in GA for some time.
- Met in mid-September with USFS to discuss MG involvement with detection and monitoring communities for EAB. Proposed to develop and offer training for MGs to work with HOAs to raise awareness and teach homeowners how to be on the lookout for this pest in their own yards.
- We will present at the 2009 Backyards and Beyond Conference in November. Photo op with NPS, VA DOF, Hanover and Louisa MGs to bring attention to LCS and the fall fire season which begins on October 15. Regional firewise training will be offered on December 8, in Charlottesville. Louisa will be offering county-level training in November.
- Governor Kaine announced budget reductions for FY 09. University has been cut \$11.2 million: 8.9 million from University Division and 2.3 million from VCE. Will translate into the "permanent elimination of selected programs." Will be working with university VPs and Deans to determine strategy. They had been charged to devise contingency plans for 5%, 10%, and 15% reductions. Salary adjustments will be deferred until July 2009 (typically announced in November) as a possible strategy to meet reductions. Dean Quisenberry has asked stakeholders to continue communicating with elected officials about the relevance of Extension and Extension programs.
- Ideas taken away from the MGC Conference on delivering MG training by distance ed. and online methods. Recent budget constraints may make this necessary in rural units.

October News From Across the State

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



Central



Amherst, Campbell and Lynchburg (Hill City), Deborah Straw

<http://www.hcmga.com>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg's City's Schools have started back up for the fall. The program that will be conducted with the 4th graders in these schools is titled The Life Cycle of Bulbs. The students will plant daffodils and pansies in their school gardens for enjoyment throughout the winter and spring.

Northeast



Chesterfield, Lynn Foote

<http://www.chesterfield.gov/extension>

Planning has begun for conducting our third Horticultural Horizons event, "Virginia Going Green", which will take place on April 21, 2009, at Lewis Ginter.

There will be a winter series offered with 5 seminars. This year, for the first time, there will be 3 offerings for parents and their children at Rockwood Park.

Northeast



Gloucester, Bonnie Bernard

August thru October saw our GMG's busy providing a booth at the Guinea and Gloucester County Fairs. Also, some folks assisted with the MG Booth at the State Fair in Richmond.

The Hort Help Line continues to provide wonderful weekly activities to the patients at the Walter Reed Convalescence Center and our annual Plant Extravaganza in September netted the most money to date.

Hanover, Christy Brennan

<http://www.hanovermastergardeners.org>

Planning for the 2009 MG training is underway. The goal is to have 20 trainees for each session (afternoon and evening).

Virginia Green Industry Council Garden Festival: HMGA members volunteered at the Virginia Green Industry Council Garden Festival and reported over 200 contacts.

State Fair, Hanover MG's hosted units from over 25 counties to staff the eleven-day event. The State Fair was most appreciative.

(continued on page 4)

Help Wanted – THANK YOU!!

MG College Goody Bags, Bob and Patty Gomache, Bedford

MG College is eight months away and goody bag prep starts now! Bob and I have volunteered to put the bags together but we **need your help** in two areas. First, if you attend a function and receive a free item ask yourself "Is this something we can use for MG College"? Collect contact information; give the business a call (or let us know and we'll contact them); ask if they can provide 300 pieces of an item for our bags. This is a great advertising opportunity for retailers. We will store items at our home until June. The second area we need your help is getting all those free items and bags to College. Usually there are 30+ boxes to transport and space is limited in our truck. If you can help, please call (540)587-0524 or write us at rgama37@aol.com.

Mid Atlantic Horticulture Short Course 2009, Mike Andruczyk, Chesapeake

Moderators are needed for 25 – 29 January in VA Beach. Contact Mike at mikeand@vt.edu.

VMGA Silent Auction, Leslie Paulson and Sharon Corbin, Manassas

For the past few years, Leslie and Sharon have run the auction with the help of Master Gardeners from Prince William County. This year we would like to encourage other counties to come work and learn with us. Besides getting to know the contributors and seeing the donated items first, you also help raise money for the Endowment. It's a lot of fun! If you have any questions or want to help, email Sharon at Sharonandtrish@comcast.net or Leslie at ljp6651@comcast.net.

October News From Across the State

Northeast



James City County, Jim and Nelda Pressly

<http://www.jccwmg.org>

The Merrimac Detention Center is located in James City County and house up to forty-eight youth, ages seven through seventeen under detention order from a juvenile court. The detention experience is geared toward constructive use of time to provide services that support their physical, emotional and social development. The center includes a greenhouse that is integrated into the nine week Horticulture Skills curriculum developed through the James City County Extension Office integrating basic horticulture skills with business management and workforce training. The instructors include volunteers from the Master Gardener program, private sector and county landscape professionals. Volunteers prepare and teach one-hour hands on classes on basic horticulture skills ranging from plant propagation to turf management. Ten to twelve youths ranging in age from 11 to 17 participate in the nine-week training course and receive a certificate from Virginia Cooperative Extension upon completion.

Newport News, Peggy Fox

<http://www.nnmastergardeners.org>

Our annual fall plant sale was held at the NN Fall Festival. An information booth was staffed at the Men's Health Fair hosted by Riverside Regional Medical Center. The fall session of the Boys and Girls Club Garden Club began in October. Also, the fall session of Horticulture Enrichment began at the NN Juvenile Detention Center. Our first "Go Green-Save Green" event held in cooperation with the VA Living Museum was a great success. Four volunteers assisted with the MG booth at the State Fair.

Northern Neck, Ted Munns

<http://www.nnmg.org>

The biannual training class for 2008 has begun with 20 students. Graduation before Thanksgiving is anticipated. We hosted the VMGA Board on October 11 and I have received many thanks for our hospitality from Master Gardeners from across the state.

Northern



Central Rappahannock Area, Linda Dunn

Our First Saturday programs continued in July at the Fredericksburg library with "Keeping your garden alive and thriving in the heat of summer and throughout the year." In August the program was held at Belmont with guided tours of the butterfly garden, grassy meadows and woodland paths given by the staff, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. Our August Master Gardener general meeting featured Shelly Arthur, a landscape designer from Richmond and a member of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, speaking on healing gardens. The new Master Gardener training class began September 16.

Fluvanna, JoAnne Henry

<http://www.fluvannamg.org>

The Fluvanna Master Gardeners provided consultative services to Community Gardeners and planted and cared for plots in the Community Garden that were assigned to the local food bank. In addition to the Community Garden, yields from the Master Gardeners other gardens at Haden House Demonstration Garden and the Holland-Page Place garden were also donated. During the season, over 600 pounds of fresh produce were donated to the food bank.

The Fluvanna County Old Farm Day was a great success. Master Gardeners were available throughout the day to answer questions and provide information about animals and birds in the garden. As always, information about deer-proof planting was very popular.

Fairfax, George Graine

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

We are working with the U.S. Forest Service citizen science project on emerald ash borer. We are also developing a program on Sudden Oak Death (SOD) caused by Phytophthora ramorum. Updated written training materials will be made available at our plant clinics and to homeowner and civic associations.

October News From Across the State

Northern

**Green Spring, Joan Richards**

<http://www.greenspring.org>

Master Gardeners at Green Spring have finished teaching the Fall Basic Gardening Series of classes for the Fairfax County Park Authority and have started lining up speakers for requests from garden clubs for spring 2009.

The last of the Master Gardener-led garden strolls culminated with tea at the historic house on October 23. A few more garden tours will be held in late October.

Two Master Gardeners assist with each of the classes for the new interns held each Tuesday and Thursday. Classes started in September and will conclude mid-November.

Loudoun County, Ingrid Forvargue

<http://www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org>

Lunch 'n Learn meetings in the Demo Garden featured a "Going Native" theme. Several children's classes were also offered.

Fundraising was achieved through our annual bulb sale at the Bluemont Fair.

The Fall Farm Tour event featured tours of local farms and our Demo Garden and a children's scarecrow construction event.

Produce from the garden was donated to Interfaith Relief.

Prince William, Janet Scott

<http://www.pwcgov.org/vce/enr>

The Master Gardeners of Prince William currently have 156 active members. We are very pleased to announce that our President, Leslie Paulson, has been chosen as the Volunteer of the Month for Prince William County. This September was our first time to participate in the Farm Field Day. We were very pleased to have 70 people attend and to earn over \$600 from our plant sale in this first effort. MGPW is looking forward to participating again.

We have a number of upcoming classes and events that are open to both Master Gardeners and the general public. Please check our website for information.

Northwest

**Rockbridge Area, David Mims**

RAMGA volunteers participated in the Horticulture Show at the Rockbridge County Fair in July, with Barbara Thomas taking the prize for "Best Perennial" and Jo Ellen Bunton winning "Most Blue Ribbons". RAMGA web-page development has begun.

We staffed a booth and sold daffodil bulbs at this year's Rockbridge Festival in downtown Lexington.

Work continued at the 12-bed display garden at the Buena Vista Visitor Center. A strategy for increased public involvement at the Educational Gardens at the Historic Campbell House was developed.

The Local Educational Event involved three student-intern presentations at our September Meeting, and a presentation by Burt McDowell, Arborist, Bartlett Tree Company on Fall Tree Pruning at our October Meeting.

RAMGA's are expanding activities with the 2nd graders and working with teachers to get horticultural projects embedded in the SOL curriculum at the 3rd and 4th grade levels at Fairfield Elementary School.

Several RAMGA members participated in the 2nd annual Local Harvest Festival at Washington & Lee University on October 1.

Southeast

**Norfolk, Tom Bolt**

<http://www.nmgv.org>

NMGV Water Stewards and Virginia Zoo Horticultural Staff joined forces to build a rain garden as part of the Zoo's EcoGarden outdoor classroom project, supported by The Norfolk Foundation. This is only the first NMGV Water Stewards' rain garden for our area. We are exploring other locations in our community and are looking at a WAZOO-2 at the Zoo under the sponsorship of the Harborfront Garden Club.

October News From Across the State

Southeast

**Southside, Meredith Bowman**

The Southside Master Gardener's county fair committee started working on our booth in September. The theme was Drought Tolerant Landscapes. Native plants and a rain barrel were part of our display. We won another Blue Ribbon thanks to lots of our members. Several others won blue ribbons in various categories.

Our local Farmer's Market was staffed on most Saturdays.

Two members will teach classes at the Higher Education Center this fall. Classes will be "Medicinal Herbs" and "Soil and Drought Tolerant Landscapes".

A hypertufa class for the Pittsylvania Master Gardeners will be conducted this month. We will be planting new trees at the PIP plot and hope to put the beds to "sleep" by the first of November.

Virginia Beach, Fran Shelton

<http://www.vbmg.org>

The Virginia Beach MGs assisted at the All America's Horticulture Field Day at the Hampton Roads AREC on September 9 and 10.

We will have our Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on October 10, and our new intern class will be graduating on October 30th.

Southeast

**Virginia Beach (continued)**

The VBMG hosted their 9th Annual Community Gardening Festival on September 13th at the Hampton Roads AREC. Over 700 residents of Va. Beach and surrounding areas attended. The Festival included speakers, societies, exhibits, etc., and was free and open to the general public.

Southwest

**Blue Ridge, Charlie Whittle**

Training class in progress for 18 new volunteers. Unit members judged vegetables and flowers at the Carroll County Fair and had a PR booth. Matthews Historic Farm Museum Fall Festival-members assisted in Fall Harvest Festival. Beaver Dam T rail presentation-members developed a pp describing wildflowers, trees, birds and wildlife along trail for town of Hillsville, open to public Monday 10/13 @ Galax Public Library.

Patented and Trademarked Plants

By Cheri Haggerty, VMGA Past President

A number of MG units sponsor Plant Sales or Plants Swaps. As a result, the question of infringement with regard to propagating Patented or Trademarked plants and offering them for sale has arisen. The following is just some of the information I found while looking for an answer.

From **Plant Patent.com**:

The whole "plant patent" thing is a complicated issue. Basically, the plant patent prohibits the asexual propagation (cuttings, division, tissue culture, etc.) of a plant for resale purposes. It does not prohibit you from dividing your own plant or taking cuttings of your plant and making more for you to replant in your own garden or even to share with friends. You cannot, however, take cuttings of a patented plant and then turn around and sell them without paying the patent royalty to the owner of the patent--at least you're not supposed to.

These rules do not apply to seedlings of a patented plant. Patents apply to specific cultivars of a specific plant and the only way the patent applies is if the offspring are identical to the parent (cuttings, division, tissue culture, etc.). Seedlings are genetically variable, so the patent would not apply.

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The Graine Thumb

Beyond Conifers 101

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners



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

--- William Howitt, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, 1842

Sometimes you just want to know more about a group of plants than what is available in a typical encyclopedic plant format. If you want to find out more about conifers, then *A Natural History of Conifers* (Timber Press, 2008) by the internationally acclaimed expert, Aljos Farjon, will sate your curiosity, your thirst for knowledge and your enthusiasm for those exciting plants that make up this group. Note: In no way is this a slight on Richard L. Bitner's illustrated encyclopedia of conifers for the garden (see VMGA Report, Nov/Dec 2007).

If you desire to know more about conifers beyond Christmas trees and hedges, Farjon really delivers a broad Darwinian view of the 627 species that make up the conifer family of plants. Obviously, this goes way beyond what one will find in a retail commercial nursery. While the author's history of conifers is scholarly, it is at the same time easy to read and understand. Many of the color photos (157) are atypical and include unusual close-ups in order to get a specific point across. Additionally, the line drawings (39) help to fill out the story line as well.

If you let your imagination wander about conifers then you might conjure up what Jurassic Park looks like. Surely you've heard about the Metasequoia Dawn Redwood and the discovery of the Wollemia Pine that recently made headlines when it was found in Australia and thought to be extinct. Both of these tree examples are conifer fossils. One would have to go back 300 million years to see how conifers existed and evolved through evolutionary development. These are true survivors.

As you might imagine, conifers had to adapt in order to survive extremes of climate. In our east coast landscapes, consider the attendant problems associated with Colorado Blue Spruce and the popular Alberta Spruce. Could this be because of a recent shift in climate? Instead of the emphasis on spruce, consider the ideal growing conditions of both plants, namely, cold winters.

This book truly is a natural history. *Conifers of the Past* includes how one species gives rise to another. The Ecology of Conifers has a fascinating and useful section and another interesting chapter deals with Conifers and People, which discusses what is currently horticulturally "in fashion".

In summary, if you are curious about plant history, you will enjoy reading about conifers. This book is a fascinating and compelling account of a very extraordinary plant family. If you are convinced this is for you then you have all winter to think about starting your own conifer collection.

Patented and Trademarked Plants (continued)

From **Oregon State Extension**

To determine if a plant is patented, look for a patent number on the tag, or PPAF (plant patent applied for) or PVR (plant variety rights) after the name of the cultivar or "patent pending."

If a plant is patented, a license is required from the patent holder in order to make cuttings of that plant, even if it is planted in your own back yard.

From **HGTV.com**

The United States Patent and Trademark Office issues two symbols:

An "R" within a circle "®" means that a particular plant name has been officially registered and trademarked. A small "™" by the plant name means that the trademarked name has been claimed but not officially registered. Trademarks remain in effect for 10 years, but they can be renewed indefinitely in 10-year increments.

If you see a plant whose name includes either of those symbols, you can propagate it asexually by taking cuttings. You can even sell the propagated plants for profit, but you can't call those plants by the trademarked name or acquire your own trademark for those same plants. You can use the plant's cultivar name if it has one (e.g. single quotes)—so long as it isn't trademarked.

Patented plants are a different subject altogether. A plant's patent is good for 17 or 20 years, and it is not renewable.

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:

Peggy Fox, peggyfox@hotmail.com

Dawn Meyerriecks, dmyrix@hotmail.com

New 501(c)(3) Tax Rules

By Cheri Haggerty, VMGA Past President

If your association is exempt under 501c3 and your [gross receipts](#) are [normally \\$25,000 or less](#), you have not been required to file Form 990 or 990 EZ in previous years. However, starting with calendar year 2008, most small tax-exempt organizations in this category must file the e-Postcard. Please go to the IRS website (<http://www.irs.gov/charities/>) or contact a local office to confirm your status. If you do not file your e-Postcard on time, the IRS will send you a reminder notice but you will not be assessed a penalty for late filing the e-Postcard. However, an organization that fails to file required forms for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-exempt status. The revocation of the organization's tax-exempt status will not take place until the filing due date of the third year.

About the Virginia Master Gardener Association....

We are a non-profit, educational statewide association of Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) employees organized under 501(c)(3) of the US tax code. Our 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

VMGA Report
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