



The Colonial Master Gardener

March
2017

PUBLICATION OF JCC/W MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

“For the love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies, but always grows and grows to an enduring and ever-increasing source of happiness.”

— Gertrude Jekyll, *Wood and Garden* (1889)

Next Meeting:
Thursday, March 2
Program:
Williamsburg Landscapes
Speaker:
William Fidler
City of Williamsburg
Landscape Superintendent

Spring—the season of rebirth, renewal and regeneration. Our Williamsburg landscape is rapidly showing its exuberant colors, and flourishing new growth is everywhere you look. And our James City County Williamsburg Extension Master Gardener unit is doing the same thing. Project leaders are beginning to plan for the new year—all of the established projects have been approved and ready to go. Our “workforce” is also ready to go after completing the yearly recommitment requirements. If you haven’t yet signed that final paper, now is the time. Thank you for your dedication and willingness to volunteer for our community. A lot of you are probably like me, as my volunteer activity has become a vital part of my overall happiness and created a thrill of gardening in ways I never thought possible.

We will shortly unveil our JCCWMG.ORG website—the bare bones are now on the webpage, and Kate and I plan to give an initial overview during the next general association meeting on Thursday, March 2. Our dedicated webmaster, Dave Banks, took on a weighty task with little clear guidance and has given us a product for which we can be proud. Great job, Dave! We will appreciate all of your input to improve the information, both for our members and for the general Williamsburg population. The roster is current as of February 2017. Please check your information for accuracy. If you have a problem let [Cathy Hill](#) know as soon as possible. If your name is missing-- it’s because either you have not paid dues or your certification as an Extension Master Gardener is incomplete. [Liz Favre](#), our treasurer, will handle questions about overdue annual dues and the penalty charge to stay active in the association. Background screening, recertification, standards of behavior and civil rights questions/concerns should be addressed to [Kate](#).



Photos: Hope Yelich

Been out in your awakening garden yet? Cleanup tasks abound, and while you are tackling them is a good time to think of what you will contribute to our annual fundraising plant sale. This is our primary source of income for the projects that we provide for the community. When you are dividing your perennials, pot up a few to sell. Still plenty of time to plant seeds to get plants to the proper size for the April 29 sale. Pot up plants now rather than the morning before the sale so they will be at their visual best for our anxious and dedicated customers.

(The president’s message is continued on the next page)

2017
MGA Board

President:
Gary Streb

President Elect:
Vacant

VP Administration:
Cathy Hill

VP Projects:
Janet Smith

VP Internal Ed:
Hazel Braxton

Secretary:
Cathy Johnson

Treasurer:
Liz Favre

VMGA Rep:
Marilyn Riddle

Past President:
Vacant

*VCE ANR Program
Assistant:*
Kate Robbins
(757) 564-2170

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—CONTINUED

At our last association board meeting we addressed the status of our current youth programming and the challenges we have in order to improve it. Schools are again asking for our help and assistance. We have potential for new projects that could be started, but we need the spark of enthusiastic leadership. If you are interested in sowing that seed of the love of gardening in our youth please let [me](#) or [Kate](#) know of your interest and commitment.

By our next newsletter we should have an application for the four Master Gardener College scholarships that we are awarding to association members. The criteria will be merit-based, so get your Extension Master Gardener resume dusted off. If you haven't yet attended Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech please consider it. No tests and the company is fantastic!

Our monthly board meetings will now be on the third Thursday of each month, rather than the third Friday. (Next meeting is March 16th at 9:30am.) The Williamsburg Library, Room B, remains the usual location. Plan to attend if you have some issue or concern that you would like to address. We are here for you.

Again, if you have purchased Master Gardener clothing with Williamsburg Graphics and never received the merchandise, please let me know. The company has gone out of business, and the board will be addressing your concerns directly.

Get out and enjoy your gardening!

“Little by little, even with other cares, the slowly but surely working poison of the garden-mania begins to stir in my long-sluggish veins.”

— Henry James, *Letter to Alice James* (1898)



THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR
INTERNAL EDUCATION

Our March program speaker will be Mr. William Fidler. Will is a product of Virginia Tech University, where in 2006 he received a bachelor's degree in horticulture and where he is currently pursuing a master's degree in public administration. Will worked with a commercial landscaping company on Maryland's Eastern Shore two years prior to his coming Williamsburg.

He currently serves as Williamsburg's landscape superintendent. In this position he is responsible for the landscape department's operations, which include the maintenance of public grounds, parks, trees along city roads and city right-of way seasonal plantings, Christmas decorations on city properties, and many other duties.

Originally from the Northern Neck area of Virginia, Will lives in Toano with his wife, Dr. Ashley Fidler, a veterinarian, and their offspring Peyton.

The MGA board meets on the third Thursday of each month at 9:30am at the Williamsburg Regional Library, Room B, on Scotland Street, Williamsburg.

The board meetings are open to all Extension Master Gardeners, and all are encouraged to attend.

THE FAIREST OF THE THEM ALL

BY CATHY HILL, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

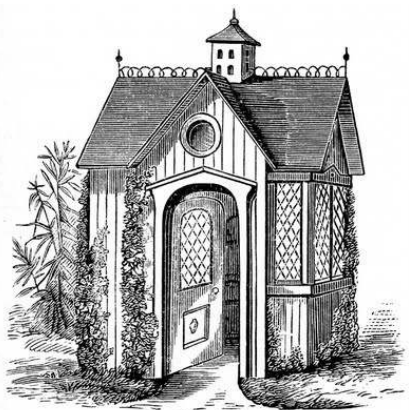
There should be a roster of the active Master Gardener Association members on our website. All information should be current. If there are any corrections please email me at: needles51@icloud.com

I am planning on having a partial photo roster up by April. If you haven't had your photo taken yet, we just want to let you know there is no obligation to have your photo taken. The photos help us all to put a face with a name. If you are not happy with the photo that was taken, we will have a redo/ makeup day in the fall.

And last but not least, don't forget to log your hours.



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The Graphics Fairy

HAVEN'T YOU ALWAYS WANTED ONE?

BY AILENE BARTLETT

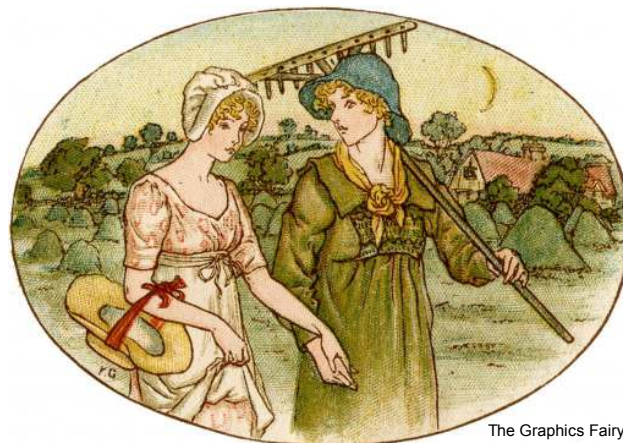
The young couple who bought my house on Brookwood Drive now find that they must dispose of my little greenhouse since the owner of the "Wayback" and other property in back is taking over the area. Therefore, if anyone is interested in a small greenhouse (which will need some repair), please call Ashley Rule at 1-850-458-8626 (cell phone) to negotiate a price. We hope we can find a good home for it!

2017 PROJECT LEADERSHIP INFORMATION

BY JANET SMITH, VP FOR PROJECTS

Now is the time to start thinking about what Extension Master Gardener projects you want to check out in 2017. Try something new, work with new people, and get involved. There are over twenty active projects with lots of fun events covering virtually all aspects of garden education.

On the next page you'll find a list of the chairs and co-chairs of the active projects, with contact information included. Please feel free to email either the chair or co-chair to get more information on projects as well as when and where they meet. If you have any questions, please feel to contact me (Janet Smith) at smithpmp@aol.com



The Graphics Fairy

For the list of projects and their leaders, see the next page, page 4.

The Colonial Master Gardener March 2017

2017 PROJECTS AND THEIR LEADERS

(FOR INFORMATION, SEE PREVIOUS PAGE)

BY JANET SMITH, VP FOR PROJECTS

EMG PROJECT	CHAIR	CO-CHAIR
Annual Plant Sale	Bess Hopewell bessmhopewell@gmail.com	Liz Favre Liz.favre@cox.net
Blayton School Garden	Ken Caro ken@kencaro.com	Lisa Stefanick Lvstefanick@gmail.com
Carol's Demonstration Garden at New Kent	Chris Dahlstrom dale_dahlstrom@msn.com	
Colonial Williamsburg Learning Gardens	Pat Abraham tspmeritage@cox.net	Barbara Floyd bmfloyd@cox.net
Diagnostic Clinic	Donna Xander dxander2@verizon.net	
Farmers' Market	Sally Sissel sissel@aol.com	John Giffin giffinj@cox.net
Horticultural Help Desk	Avril Purvis avril_purvis@yahoo.com	Barry Holland fholland@cox.net
Incredible Edibles	Barbara Gustafson barbara-sg@cox.net	Yvonne Forbes istclas@msn.com
JCC Seeds of Learning	Donna Thibeault wrt45@cox.net	
JCC/W TS Tree Call	Patsy McGrady patsymcgrady@cox.net	Kendra Swann Kendrar179@aol.com
Landscape Love	Gary Streb gstreb11@gmail.com	Sherry Walker eco.sherry@gmail.com
Master Gardener Training Program	Marty Oakes oakesfour@aol.com	Janet Smith smithpmp@aol.com
Mattey's Garden	Genrose Lashinger glashinger@cox.net	Louann Martin Lkmartin2011@hotmail.com
Merrimac Detention Center	Pam Woodson pamnerry@yahoo.com	Mike Whitfield mikewhitf@aol.com
MG JCC/W Tree Stewards	Patsy McGrady patsymcgrady@cox.net	
MG Peninsula Water Stewards	Jean Millin scotfarquhar@cox.net	
New Kent Seeds of Learning	Gigi Burrows Legare04@gmail.com	Eric Bramfitt vamackem@hotmail.com
Pruning Clinics	Jeanne Millin scotfarquhar@cox.net	Patricia Paquette patricia.paquette@gmail.com
Speakers Bureau	Mary Wool mdwood@gmail.com	Dennis Wool wool@cox.net
Sustainable Gardening at Williamsburg Botanical Garden	Jordan Westenhaver jordancw9@cox.net	Joanne Sheffield josheffie@yahoo.com
Therapeutic Gardening	Pat Crowe pk.crowe@cox.net	Linda Lucas esllal@cox.net
Turf Love	Kate Robbins kateor@vt.edu	
Water-Wise Low Maintenance Gardening	Iris Grant rgrant4916@aol.com Susan Neidlinger sstrausba@yahoo.com	Stacy DeMeo sdemeo@hotmail.com

UPCOMING SEMINARS, OPEN HOUSES, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

March 4 (Reynolds Homestead Learning Center, Critz). 9:00am-2:00pm. [Patrick County 10th Annual Spring Gardening Symposium.](#)

Presented by Patrick County Master Gardeners. Topics are daylilies, edible landscaping, and rose culture. Cost is \$35.

March 14. (Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Rd., Norge). 1:00-2:30pm. **Echoes of an English Cottage Garden**, a presentation by Sandra Helsel at an open meeting of the Colonial Triangle Unit of the Herb Society. Free.

Ms. Helsel, a self-taught gardener and member of the Herb Society, has been interested in gardening in general and herbs in particular for nearly twenty-five years. She fell in love with English-style design after several tours of gardens in England and Ireland. She and her husband laid out their version of an English garden in the yard of their Williamsburg home. Articles on her garden have appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Virginia Living*, *Southern Living*, and in the July 29, 2016, special collector's edition of *Southern Living's Porches and Gardens*. The garden was open for Virginia Garden Week in 2009 and in the same year for the Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium. She will share the path she took in creating her garden and the ever-challenging use of herbs in the design.

For more information, contact Kathy Tabor at (757) 345-6354.



Photo: Susan Shoulet

March 18 (Freedom Park). 10:00-11:00am. [Attracting Birds with Water.](#) Award-winning nature photographer Bob Schamerhorn will show us how to bring numerous species of birds to our yards by adding a water feature. The program is free, although a \$5.00 donation to help the garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact Bob by email at bob@iPhotoBirds.com After the program, Master Gardeners will be in the garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom.

March 24. (Waynesboro). 8:00am-4:00pm. [Shenandoah Valley Plant Symposium: A Gardener's Palette.](#) Doug Tallamy, Will Hooker, Ellen Ecker Ogden, and Vincent Simeone are the speakers. \$80 early registration before Jan. 3, \$90 regular registration, \$100 registration after March 1. Lunch included. This is a great way to get you're your educational hours.

March 25. (JCC Recreation Center, 5301 Longhill Rd., Wmsburg, Rooms A, B, C). 8:30am-12:30pm. [Grow It and Eat It Seminar.](#) JCC/W Master Gardeners. PowerPoint presentations, interactive demonstrations, and displays on many aspects of growing one's own herbs and vegetables including planning a vegetable garden, designing your garden for the physically challenged, recognizing good and bad bugs, growing plants from seeds and seedlings, growing crops in pots, composting, gardening organically and more.

March 25. (White Stone). 8:00am-3:00pm. [Gardening in the Northern Neck Seminar.](#) Rick Darke and Dr. Doug Tallamy, co-authors of *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden*, will speak.

March 25-26. (William & Mary Hall). 10:00am-5:00pm Sat., 10:00am-4:00pm Sun. [Williamsburg Home Show.](#) The show is sponsored by seven local companies. Cost is \$10. \$5 coupon available by clicking [here](#).

Continued on the next page, page 6

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

March 28. (Battlefield Farms, Rapidan). **Bulbs and Corms and Tubers, Oh My!** The focus of the day will be bulbs, as Battlefield is one of the largest producers of potted bulbs in the United States. Cole Burrell and others will discuss bulb production, the history of bulbs, and what they do at Battlefield Farms. Cole's keynote address, titled: "Bulbs and Corms and Tubers, Oh My!" will cover environmental stresses and how dormancy allows plants all they need to survive below ground until the good times return. He will also offer an exciting smaller breakout session on Native American bulbs. more Registration (opening in February) will be limited to 100 people with a registration fee of \$25, lunch provided. This event is supported by the State EMG coordinator's office, Battlefield Farms, and the VMGA.



Photo: Susan Shoulet

April 1-December 2 (Shenandoah County Library System,). Various times and different topics. **Adventures in Gardening.** All presenters are Northern Shenandoah Valley MGs. Plant and seed giveaways. Free.

April 15. (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00-11:30am. **The Best Perennials for Tidewater.** Les Parks, curator of herbaceous plants at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, will share information on growing the best perennials for our area. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. The program is free, although a \$5.00 donation to help the Garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact Les by email at les.parks@nbgs.org After the program, Extension Master Gardeners will be in the garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom.

April 22. (Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Freedom Park). 8:00am-2:00pm. **Spring Plant Sale.** Sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

April 22. (Freedom Center, Christopher Newport University, Newport News). 7:00am-3:30pm. The Colonial Triangle Unit of the **Herb Society** will sponsor its **annual herb sale.** The sale will be held in the vendor area adjacent to the Freeman Center on the Christopher Newport University campus in conjunction with the annual garden symposium. Many varieties of herbs; everything from basil to thyme, from lemon verbena to scented geraniums will be for sale. Herb society members will be available to answer herb-growing questions. Proceeds will fund scholarships in horticulture which the herb society offers! For more information contact Veronica Balzer at (757) 463-1753.

May 6. (Carrollton Library, 14362 New Towne Haven Lane, Carrollton). 10:00am-2:00pm. **Western Tidewater Master Gardeners First Annual Plant Sale.** Educational displays and presentations by Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Bee Keepers, and Portsmouth Hen Keepers. Rain date is May 7.

PLANT SALE UPDATE

BY LIZ FAVRE



Photo: Hope Yelich

The plant sale committee is in full swing planning new and different ideas for our April 29 plant sale. We have extended the hours 9:00am to 3:00pm and will be at a new location, the Historic Triangle Community Services Center on Waller Mill Road. We will have a presale on Friday, April 28, and our poster will be sent out on March 15 by way of the website, newsletter, email blast, etc.

New this year will be a series of public lectures about different aspects of gardening. If you would like to join other EMGs and offer a talk on a topic of interest to you, please contact [Kathy Bush](#), who is coordinating this effort.

We have members who have agreed to help dig perennials this year; so if you have plants that you would like to donate and are unable to dig, please email either [Bess Hopewell](#) (or call 804-932-4121) or [Liz Favre](#) (phone 757-258-0301), and we'll see if we can help.



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LANDSCAPE LOVE BY GARY STREB AND SHERRY WALKER

Spring is here! I saw my first forsythia today. My early daffodils are in full bloom and the English blue bells and leucojum are about six inches out of the ground. All of these are obvious indicators that it is time to think about your spring EMG volunteer activity, and especially about Landscape Love. To all seasoned Landscape Love volunteers--we would be honored, and extremely pleased, if you were to join us again. For those of you who feel that you are missing out of the fun and excitement of Landscape Love --we would like to invite you to join us for the first time.

The spring signup for Landscape Love is just around the corner. Registration will start on March 15 and run through April 15 unless we fill our available resources

and have to end registration early. Homeowner registrations will be filled on a first come first served basis. The revamped registration will be posted on the jccwmg.org website on March 15. If you know any homeowners who might be interested in getting advice on their landscape issues, please make sure they know about the upcoming registration dates. Like all of our Extension Master Gardener programs, it is a service to the residents of James City County and Williamsburg

If the community interest tracks with the last few years, we should expect between seventy and eighty registrants. We divide the homeowner requests among five teams, and then each team will have several customized sub-teams to do the homeowner visits. You can do as many or as few as you like from late April through the end of May.

We have scheduled two organization/training/refresher meetings. The first is **Monday, April 17, 9:00am at the JCC rec center**, and the second is **Thursday April 20, 9:00am, also at the JCC rec center**. You will need to attend one of the meetings, so please pencil it in your calendar now. The meeting will be about an hour. Around April 1 we will email each of the previous Landscape Love volunteers to ask for your recommitment plans and which meeting you would like to attend. If you would like to rejoin us or participate for the first time let me know at gstreb11@gmail.com. or Sherry Walker at eco.sherry@gmail.com

VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION REPORT BY MARILYN RIDDLE



The VMGA February meeting took place on Saturday, February 11, at the Louisa County Building, Louisa. Following is Marilyn's report.

- * Large crowd, many new faces but many missing from past meetings.
- * Dr. Ed Jones, VCE Head, will be distributing surveys to agents and coordinators about some of the same items that we discussed at length for a year or so. We should be proud that we were willing to bring many issues to the forefront.
- * Watch for the announcement of the March 28 meeting at the bulb farm in Rapidan/Orange. The price is \$25, which includes lunch. There is only room for 100 attendees. I would expect it to fill very quickly.
- * NCEMGs will have their conference at NCSU, June 8-11. Virginia Beach EMGs always have members in attendance and highly recommend.
- * Three more modules have been completed—fruits, herbaceous plants, and entomology.
- * President Joe Kelly welcomes more submittals of a questions for each VMGA meeting to spur discussion about common issues.
- * MG College prices for registration are expected to rise \$10/\$20.
- * John and Dave are looking for pictures of MG Colleges in the past for display this time.
- * "Floyd on Friday" may return for M G College. Floyd County is a very popular tourist spot less than an hour from Blacksburg.
- * VMGA will have an educational event at the state arboretum on August 27. Watch for more details at the next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The material has been turned in to John Freeborn for the advertisement of the VMGA Scholarships. After a lapse of some ten days, it should be in the hands of all agents and m g coordinators. Kate must fill out the application but you should let her know of your interest in attending M G College. As in the past, except for the twenty-fifth anniversary year, those recipients have money to pay for part of M G College, but not all. For questions, contact me at mriddle@cox.net. I am chairing the committee again this year. —Marilyn



SEEDS OF LEARNING NEEDS YOUR HELP!

BY DONNA THIBEAULT

Seeds of learning is getting ready for our Williamsburg-James City County school visitations. We will visit forty first-grade classrooms in all nine schools during the months of April and May: beginning on April 10 and finishing on May 3 and 4. Our project introduces the students to gardening by using the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) for Science 1.4, Life Processes, as a guide. We reinforce the students' knowledge about the basic parts of plants and how plants can be classified based on different characteristics and use. We do this by using fun, hands-on activities. The students and teachers always look forward to our visits.



Photo: Donna Thibeault

To make our project successful we need at least four Extension Master Gardeners for each school. We welcome the interns to help with our success. We will have a sign-up sheet at the March meeting, and look for us at the Project Fair.

Please contact Marty Oakes (OakesFour@aol.com) or Donna Thibeault (wrt1945@gmail.com) if you are interested in having a fun time with first graders and earning lots of volunteer hours in a short period of time.

CONGRATULATIONS, CATHY!

BY JORDAN WESTERHAVER



Cathy receiving the plaque from Karen Jamison. Photo: Joanne Sheffield

Karen Jamison, chairman of the board of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, presented the 2016 Volunteer of the Year award to Cathy Hill at a recent meeting.

Cathy Hill has been active with the EMGs at WBG since the project first began as educational tours of the ellipse garden in 2012, and she often takes the lead during a tour and makes sure that it stays on topic and on time. Her special area of expertise is the butterfly garden, and she has a real knack for bringing butterflies alive for the tour participants even when it's not butterfly season and there is not a bloom or a butterfly to be seen!

Last year when the project expanded to include sustainable gardening at Williamsburg Botanical Garden and the EMGs began to work on redoing the perennial-of-the-year garden, Cathy took on the job of compiling the right information about all the plants selected for the list since 1990 and has put it all together in a handy flyer that will be available for visitors to take with them.

This year, Cathy added yet another form of community outreach to her repertoire. She developed a virtual tour of WBG for a group that wasn't physically able to tour the garden but wanted to know all about what it is like in the spring. Over the course of the year she has continued to take photographs to add to the PowerPoint presentation to make it a year-round view of WBG that will be available to community groups upon request.

GROW IT & EAT IT SEMINAR 2017

BY LINDA WEVER



Photo: Art Vandelay/Flickr

Master Gardeners' Incredible Edibles are presenting their sixth annual gardening symposium, *Grow It & Eat It*, on Saturday, March 25, 8:40am-12:30pm, at the James City County Recreation Center on Longhill Road, rooms A, B, and C.

This is an opportunity for new and experienced gardeners to learn how to produce home-grown vegetables and herbs successfully. Come, bring a friend, enjoy free refreshments, and begin planning your garden early! You'll hear EMG speakers, experience hands-on demonstrations, get your questions answered, and see interesting displays. Pre-register for this FREE symposium at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grow-it-eat-it-seminar-2017-registration-32317128401>.

Speakers include: Jerry Babski: "Creating a Vegetable Garden"; Deb Bussert and Lee Fuerst: "Organic Vegetable Gardening" Dan Abargast: Good Bugs and Bad Bugs; and Barbara Floyd, "Growing Veggies When Physically Challenged." Several EMGs will participate in a questions-and-answers session.

Hands-on demonstrations and displays include: Starting Vegetables from Seed; Gardening with Herbs; Crops in Pots; Recipes—Harvest to Table; Composting; Know Your Bugs; Straw Bale Gardening; and Vermiculture.

In addition, the Harvest to Table session will offer yummy samples suggesting ways to use your produce along with recipes, great garden books to peruse, catalogs, and handouts to help every gardener be successful!

This symposium had its beginning with the development of the Master Gardener Historic Triangle Community Garden at the Historic Triangle Services Community Center on Waller Mill Road. The development of the garden has continued over the last few years and offers members of the community four-foot-by-six-foot garden plots ready to plant along with guidance from members of the Incredible Edibles team throughout the growing season. Extra produce from the garden is donated to the FISH food bank located in the same building. Symposium participants will have an opportunity to join the garden for 2018. Extension Master Gardeners can also earn 2.5 continuing-education credits.

IT'S FARMERS MARKET TIME AGAIN BY SALLY SISSEL

As most of you know, the EMG's Farmers Market project has two spaces in Merchants Square in front of the CW Craft House every other Saturday from 7:30 until 11:30am from April through September, during which time Extension Master Gardeners fulfill our mission of educating and communicating environmentally sound horticultural practices to the public.

Dates for the first half of the market will be: April 8, April 22, May 6, May 20, June 3, and June 17. I will begin scheduling volunteers for the first half of the market dates very soon, and for the second half of the market in mid June. I schedule only for the Q&A table—the theme chairs schedule their own volunteers.

I am counting on "veteran" market volunteers to return, and I will contact you if I don't hear from you first! Those of you who have not been able to volunteer in previous years and, particularly, those who were interns last year, would be most welcome to join us. Please let me know of all the dates for which you would be available. Then I will sort them out and send you the final schedule.

Special note to interns: You will all be hearing about all the projects soon and will be able to sign up for the projects of your choice at your project fair. I hope you will consider volunteering for the market: it's a lot of fun, you get to meet many fellow EMGs, and you earn four hours at one time!

I look forward to meeting and working with many of you during the summer.

Any questions—email me at sissel@aol.com or call 757-9638



THE CLASS OF 2017 DIGS IN BY HOPE YELICH

It's hard to believe that two-thirds of the training program is over for the twenty-five hardly souls in the Class of 2017. Despite a weather-related rocky start, in which the first two classes had to be rescheduled, things have gone smoothly since then.

Our newest crop of EMGs-to-be have already completed modules in most of the core curriculum subjects, such as botany, entomology, plant pathology, and pest management. Upcoming classes include landscape design, composting, native plants, and habitat gardens.



By the time they transition to interns the end of March, they also will have taken field trips to identify trees around the rec center, tried their hand at pruning at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, seen how the staff at the Colonial Williamsburg nursery propagate plants, toured research facilities at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center, and visited a commercial nursery.

The Training Team (Marty Oakes, Janet Smith, Susan Shoulet, Mary Wool, Hope Yelich, and Kate Robbins) thought you'd enjoy some photos of recent classes.



WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH MARCH 2017

BY HELEN HAMILTON
PAST PRESIDENT, JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Beechdrops *Epifagus virginiana*



Photo: Phillip Merritt

For more information about native plants visit www.vnps.org

Through most of winter and into spring slender brown stalks can be seen around beech trees. This is the remains of a flowering plant that is parasitic on beech trees, sending tiny strands into the roots of the tree to absorb water and nutrients. No harm is done to the beech tree, since beechdrops is an annual, dying at the end of the growing season.

The new plants start to grow from seed in late summer, becoming mature and blooming from August through November. There is no chlorophyll in the leaves that appear on the stems as dry, brown scales. In late August tiny white tubular flowers, delicately marked with brown-purple stripes, appear near the top of the stems. These flowers produce nectar that attracts some insects, but pollination probably does not occur. Lower on the stems are tiny, bud-like flowers that self-fertilize and produce abundant seeds inside small brown capsules. By the end of the year the plant is dead, but dried stalks persist into spring.

These interesting little plants grow in dry woods in every county of Virginia and throughout the eastern U.S. The plant is well named: *Epifagus* derived from the Greek *epi*, meaning "upon," and *phagos*, "the beech."

A tea made from the fresh plant was once used for diarrhea, dysentery, mouth sores, and cold sores. Also known as "cancer root," the plant was used in folk medicine as a cancer remedy, but recent tests for antitumor activity proved negative.

SPRING PLANT WALKS BY HELEN HAMILTON

Ravine Exploratory. Saturday, March 18, 1:30-4:30pm. In York River State Park, 9801 York River Park Road, Williamsburg. Donna Ware will be looking for early woodland plants, expecting to see hepatica and bloodroot and possibly leatherwood, rare in the Coastal Plain but here in a few places. Meet in the parking lot at the visitor's center where Donna will identify early spring weeds. The walk will be uneven, somewhat hilly and muddy in places. To register contact Donna at dmeware@verizon.net or (757) 565-0657.

A Walk in the Habitat. Sunday, April 2, 2:00-3:00pm. Look for signs of spring in the native plant garden at Stonehouse Elementary School, 3651 Rochambeau Drive (Route 30) in Toano. Habitat caretaker Sue Voigt will search for early blooms on the small trees, shrubs, and wildflowers and a few early butterflies feeding on nectar. Park in the school bus parking lot near the far end of the school building, and contact Sue for more information (svoigt1@cox.net; (804) 966-8487, or cell (804) 815-6085)

Sinkhole Ponds and Orchids. Saturday, April 22 at 10:00am at the Grafton Ponds area. Join environmental consultant Meegan Wallace to visit Grafton Ponds, which are Virginia's best remaining example of a coastal plain pond complex (about a two-mile round trip to ponds). We will also see showy orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) in bloom as well as many other spring wildflowers and ferns. From I64, travel east on Fort Eustis Blvd (Va-105), pass Richneck Road on the right, look for a small parking area on the left, marked with VNPS signs. Contact Meegan at clm003@verizon.net to register and for more information.



Sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society.
All walks are free and open to the public



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Important Dates

- 3/4 Master Your Garden (Critz, Va.)
- 3/14 Echoes of an English Cottage Garden (Our Saviour's Lutheran Church)
- 3/18 Ravine Exploratory (York River State Park)
- 3/18 Attracting Birds with Water (WBG)
- 3/24 Shenandoah Plant Symposium (Waynesboro)
- 3/25 Grow It & Eat It! (JCC rec center)
- 3/25 Gardening in the Northern Neck (White Stone)
- 3/25-26 Williamsburg Home Show (WM Hall)
- 3/28 Bulbs (Battlefield Farms, Rapidan)
- 4/1 Adventures in Gardening begins (Shenandoah Co. Library System)
- 4/2 A Walk in the Habitat (Stonehouse Elem.Sch.)
- 4/8 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 4/15 Best Perennials for Tidewater (Freedom Park)
- 4/22 Botanical Garden Plant Sale (Freedom Park)
- 4/22 Herb Society Plant Sale (CNU)
- 4/22 Sinkhole Ponds and Orchids (Grafton Ponds)
- 4/22 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 4/29 JCC/W Master Gardener Plant Sale (Historic Triangle Community Services Center)
- 5/6 Western Tidewater MG Plant Sale (Carrollton)
- 5/6 Spring Flowers (Newport News Park)
- 5/6 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 5/20 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 6/3 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 6/17 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)



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SUNSHINE NOTES



In the past month we sent cards to:

Marilyn Riddle (surgery)

Gary Streb (back pain)

The organization would like to send cards to members with difficult medical issues or who have experienced a death in the immediate family. Please provide names to the EMG secretary, Cathy Johnson, at (757) 208-0065, or cathypi@gmail.com

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the April 2017 newsletter will be Monday, March 20.

Please send any submissions to Hope Yelich, newsletter editor, at hopeyelich@gmail.com

JCC/W Master Gardener Mission Statement

The purpose of the James City County/ Williamsburg Master Gardener is to learn, educate, and communicate environmentally sound horticultural practices to the community. Trained by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Gardener volunteers are committed to offering information to the public through sustainable landscape management educational programs.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENERS AND VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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 Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Interim Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.



**A Seminar on Home Vegetable Gardening
Presented by JCC/W Master Gardeners**

Saturday, March 25, 2017 8:40-12:30

Talks

**Creating a Vegetable Garden
Organic Vegetable Gardening
Good Bugs & Bad Bugs
Growing Veggies When Physically Challenged**

Hands-on Demonstrations

**Starting Vegetables from Seed
Gardening with Herbs
Recipes-Harvest to Table
Crops in Pots
Effective Composting
Know Your Bugs
Straw Bale Gardening**

**James City County Recreation Center
5301 Longhill Road-Rooms A, B & C**

Free/PRE-REGISTRATION starts 2/26: "Eventbrite.com/ Grow It & Eat It"

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation, please notify Sandra Kee, James City County Unit at 757/564/2170/TDD*) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.



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