



# The Colonial Master Gardener

June  
2017

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

“To me, hiring an interior decorator or landscape gardener is a little like learning fine sentences out of a book and using them when you talk. They may be much more elegant than any you could have thought up, but they are not you. Planning a garden is like planning a way of life; arrange it to please yourself, copying neither convention, nor tradition, nor any individual; enjoy it and hope that a few other people besides you will be pleased with it.”

—Ruth Stout, *How to Have a Green Thumb Without an Aching Back* (1955)

With Memorial Day behind us we now have a glorious Tidewater Virginia summer awaiting. And what better way to celebrate summer than with a respite from the heat and toil by joining your fellow Extension Master Gardeners at our annual picnic. Our social committee is planning another stellar event at Freedom Park on Thursday, July 20. For details, see the flyers at the end of this newsletter.

We hope to see you all there to enjoy one another's company in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. We will not have a monthly meeting in July. Put the picnic on your calendar now!

Congratulations are in order for our Master Gardener College scholarship recipients—Patsy McGrady and Donna Xander! They both come with impressive credentials and will be wonderful representatives of our association.



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**Next Meeting:**

**Thursday, June 1**

**Program:  
Ferns and Mosses**

**Speaker:  
Helen Hamilton**

Master Gardener College is quickly approaching. If you haven't yet to [register online](#) please do so soon to get the breakaway elective classes that you want. The focus of this year's session will be Land Steward training. We currently have only one certified Land Steward in our JCC/Williamsburg unit—Sue Liddell. With Sue now enjoying emerita status, we need more Extension Master Gardeners with this certification and knowledge. Besides the enriching learning experience at this annual event, our attendees have always had a great bonding experience and simply a great time. If you haven't yet been to Master Gardener College give it a try—you will be hooked!

The final tally is in for the plant sale, with over \$4,800 cleared. Sincere thanks to all those who put so much time and effort into this successful event. The year's planning and flawless execution have proved again that the teamwork, dedication, and plain hard work of the JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association is impossible to beat. This event has become a Williamsburg community tradition of which we can all be proud.

The Interns of the Class of 2017 are an impressive group! Reports from the project leaders and their highly visible presence at the plant sale have set them up for tremendous contributions now and in the future. Keep up the good work!

“Who, that has been confined to the business of the day, toiling and laboring in the ‘sweat of his brow,’ does not feel invigorated and refreshed, as he takes his walk in the cool of the evening... and marks the progress of his fruits and flowers?”

—Joseph Breck, *The Flower-Garden; or, Brecks's Book of Flowers* (1851)

2017  
MGA Board

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## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

Helen Hamilton, a retired local high school biology teacher, is the speaker for June and will talk about ferns and mosses. As a teacher, Helen has a great facility for teaching biology so that it is both very informative and entertaining. Previously, Helen also worked as a plant technician for the National Park Service.



Photo: Hope Yelich

She often speaks locally and teaches courses for the Christopher Wren Association. Helen was a board member of both the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. She is currently president of the local chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

In her spare time, Helen has created plant guides for local parks, written articles about native plants, lead plant walks, and given talks about wildlife. She co-authored *Wildflowers & Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain* and recently published *Ferns & Mosses of Virginia's Coastal Plain*, an eighty-page spiral-bound field guide. Both books are available for sale.

Helen completed the W/JCC Master Gardener training program in 2004. She has served the local Master Gardener chapter well and is now continuing to serve as an emerita member.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS BY CATHY HILL, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

First of all I want to congratulate the winners of our scholarships to the Master Gardener College. Patsy McGrady and Donna Xander are the first recipients of this scholarship. They have both put in many hours on different projects and are well deserving of this opportunity.

I am also looking for volunteers to be on the nominating committee. Election is in November, and it is never too early to look for candidates for officers on our association board. There are five positions open for this election: president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and vice president for projects. Please consider being on the nominating committee. And most important— consider being a member of our governing board.

And last but not least, if you weren't at the June meeting, please see the information about our picnic in July on page 5 and at the end of the newsletter.

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.

## UPCOMING SALES, SEMINARS, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

**June 10.** (Langley Air Force Base). 9:00-11:00am. **Plants of a Salt Marsh.** Join Alicia Garcia for a walk into a salt marsh on Langley Air Force Base to see spartina, asters, and rushes, with the possibility of a peek at Bald Eagles nesting nearby. Email Alicia at [alicia.m.garcia81@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.m.garcia81@gmail.com) by June 5 to register for this walk.

Sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.



Robin Baranowski, NPS, Wikimedia Commons



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**June 15.** (Stryker Center, 412 N. Boundary St., Williamsburg 23185). 7:00-8:00pm. **Savoring Regional Foodways: Picking, Cooking, Preserving Produce.** Two culinary experts will share ideas and tips for selecting and preparing food from our regional farmers markets.

Cathy Barrow is a food columnist for the *Washington Post* and author of *Mrs. Wheelbarrow's Practical Pantry*. Travis Milton is the former chef of the Comfort and Family Meal in Richmond and owner-chef at Shovel and Pick, a Bristol restaurant specializing in Appalachian ingredients and foodways.

This event is free and open to the public. Organized by the Williamsburg Farmer's Market.

**June 17.** (Freedom Park). 10:00-11:30am. **How and Why of Rain Gardens.** Master Gardener Carol Fryer, who has designed rain gardens for homeowners and developments, will provide information about their construction in home gardens. With PowerPoint slides and demonstrations, she will suggest suitable plants and locations in typical environments. 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 Carol by email at [cfryer@cox.net](mailto:cfryer@cox.net) After the program, Master Gardeners will be in the Garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom. Open to the public.



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Virginia Cooperative Extension

**June 22-25.** (Virginia Tech, Blacksburg). **The 30th Annual Master Gardener College.**

## UPCOMING SALES, SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES—CONTINUED

**July 7.** (Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre). 5:30-6:30pm. **A Conversation with Jerome Grant.** As part of its Stakes in the Ground: The Future of Our Food series, the Williamsburg Farmers Market is hosting Chef Jerome Grant from the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Jerome will discuss African American foodways and the design for the menus for the Mitsitam Native Foods Café in the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Sweet Home Café in the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Plan to attend the market the next day to catch Jerome at the chef's tent!



Photo: Stephanie Klose / Wikimedia Commons



Photo: Courtesy of the College of William & Mary

**July 15.** (Freedom Park). 10:00-11:30am. **Old and New Garden Favorites—If I Knew Then What I Know Now.** Free and open to the public, although a \$5.00 donation to help the garden grow is appreciated. John McFarlane, assistant director of gardens and grounds at The College of William and Mary, will talk about his favorite plants and local garden treasures from the Williamsburg area and William and Mary campus. He will share gardening insights from more than thirty-five years as a Virginia horticulturist and his experience at William and Mary. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

For more information, contact John at [jdmcfa@wm.edu](mailto:jdmcfa@wm.edu) After the program, Master Gardeners will be in the garden to answer questions and talk about what is in bloom.

**July 22.** (Woodland Farms, Toano). 10:00am-12:00. **Backyard Natives.** Join us for a walk around Jim and Joan Etchberger's property at 100 Woodland Road in Woodland Farms, 23188, to see native plants and mosses. Contact Joan at (757) 784-6870 for more information.

Sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society.



Photo: Pixabay

## NEWS FROM THE HISTORIC TRIANGLE COMMUNITY GARDEN

BY BARBARA GUSTAFSON



Photo: Wendy Hamrick

Barbara Gustafson and Richard Stratton, resting after a morning's work in the garden.

The Historic Triangle Community Garden has been getting a face lift! It all began when our EMG plant sale committee decided to hold the 2017 sale next to us on the front lawn of the Historic Triangle Community Services Center building.

To entice visitors to come see our garden we created a flower bed along our front. Many of our volunteers donated perennials from their gardens. Then we were offered a shepherd's hook and trellis that Bess Hopewell and Liz Favre said were "left over" from the plant sale. Of course this inspired us to put the shepherd's hook plus a pot of flowers into the flower bed. After some discussion with all our HTC gardeners, we decided to put the trellis in a front corner and begin to create a much-needed shaded resting area for our hard-working gardeners.

Richard Stratton and Marty Oakes donated their carpentry and organizational skills by cleaning out a corner of our garden and installing the trellis. Wendy Hamrick not only donated two sturdy wicker chairs; she also brought spray paint to make them look new! Marty has a "sturdy umbrella stand," so maybe we'll be real lucky and find another Master Gardener with an old outdoor umbrella. Then---after Richard continues his magic and installs the trim for another flower bed, we shall add clematis for our new trellis and finally have a place to rest our weary bones after another hard day in the garden. Now we are hoping that a nice Master Gardener might have a small table to donate.

If any of you happen to be a Master Gardener with an unwanted outdoor table or umbrella, I will be happy to pick it up. Our sturdy team of HTC gardeners will be deeply grateful. Just email me at [Barbara-sg@cox.net](mailto:Barbara-sg@cox.net).

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## DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT MAKES PLANTS HAPPY?

BY HOPE YELICH

Wonder no more. Intern Rick Brown passed on the following article from the *New York Times* (April 30, 2017):

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/30/style/understanding-what-makes-plants-happy.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/30/style/understanding-what-makes-plants-happy.html?_r=0)

It turns out plants are social creatures that like to live in a community—just like us! (Well, not quite just like us.....)



Tree-Spirit/flickr

## NON-CREDIT PLANT IDENTIFICATION COURSES BY CAROL FRYER

From the [Horticultural Courses Online](#) website at NC State: "Learn to identify and appreciate commonly used plants on your own schedule. North Carolina State University is partnering with Longwood Gardens to provide a unique fully-online survey of plants. These courses will expose you to plants that can be grown throughout the nation. The use and key identifying characteristics of these plants is conveyed through photo stories, presentations, online fact pages, and beautiful images. These courses will include some favorites and also a few introductions from the research and breeding programs at Longwood Gardens and North Carolina State University."

Take a look at this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLMXnOHh9Wc&feature=youtu.be>

Courses offered:

Annuals, Perennials, and Vines: Identification and Use. Starts July 10, 2017

Trees, Shrubs, and Conifers: Identification and Use. Starts September 11, 2017

Both courses are \$98 each for Master Gardener volunteers. Each lasts for six weeks and is fully online. For more information and to register, please use this link: <http://go.ncsu.edu/hort-noncredit>.

Also, if you would like more information, please feel free to contact the coordinator, Dr. Elizabeth Riley, at [edbridge@ncsu.edu](mailto:edbridge@ncsu.edu).

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## LITTLE GARDENERS AT BLAYTON ELEMENTARY BY KEN CARO

It looks like another abundant year in the Blayton garden as students picked over eleven pounds of carrots, with another bed still to be picked.



Photo: Ken Caro

## SEEKING A CO-CHAIR FOR NEXT YEAR'S PLANT SALE

BY JANET SMITH, VP FOR PROJECTS

Here's a great opportunity for someone who wants to be an active participant in a very exciting and important project, the 2018 plant sale.

Liz Favre is stepping down from this post, and we are looking for a co-chair to work with Bess Hopewell. As you can see from the list below, we need someone who is organized, has strong follow-up skills, works well with individuals and groups, and will do what is necessary to get the job done.

It requires hours of effort, and to minimize that would be a mistake. However, it is also FUN and SATISFYING.

I asked Liz to outline what she did to get ready for the sale. The list appears below.

Please contact me if you are interested at [smithpmp@aol.com](mailto:smithpmp@aol.com) or (804) 557-3081.

### DUTIES OF CO-CHAIR of the Extension Master Gardener PLANT SALE

- \* Met with Ed Rose, manager of the Historic Triangle Community Center, to set the date of the plant sale. Also, made a few follow-up visits prior to the sale.
- \* Set up the schedule of the committee's monthly meetings at the recreation center.
- \* Made the monthly agenda for each meeting and emailed it to each member of committee.
- \* Ran the monthly meetings with project chair.
- \* Project chair gave out sign-up sheets at monthly MG meetings. Co-Chair then took these sheets, typed them up, and maintained them.
- \* Planned photo ops for *Virginia Gazette*, etc. and followed up to determine when photos would be printed.
- \* Helped to design the plant sale poster.



Photos: Hope Yelich

- \* Displayed a large-size poster at the rec center three weeks prior to sale.
- \* Displayed large-size poster at two Farmers Market days and handed out seventy-five flyers at the Farmers Market one week before the sale.
- \* Made a large diagram of the plant sale layout.
- \* Gave the sign-up sheets for intake, cashiers, and set up to those in charge of those duties.
- \* Divided the rest of the responsibilities into Friday jobs and Saturday jobs, emailed everyone about one week prior to sale to remind the MGs of the jobs they had volunteered to work and the time slots, and received responses from those who could not work.
- \* Helped coordinate picking up tents, etc., for sale.
- \* Went with project chair to pick out plants at Atlantic Growers and at Forest Lane Botanicals.
- \* Coordinated the plant pick up at both growers and ensured that the arrival of plants was spread out so as not to overwhelm the intake table. Coordinated the return of any plants not sold.
- \* Day of sale made sure we received the plants that we had selected
- \* Provided bottled water for workers on Friday and Saturday.
- \* Filled out the MG status report monthly and also the VCE Master Gardener project proposal and authorization form.

## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH JUNE 2017

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

### Virginia Sweetspire *Itea virginica*

This small shrub is attractive throughout the growing season, with white flowers in the spring and spectacular leaf color in the fall. From May through June four-inch white spears of flowers cover the plant, attracting many species of early butterflies. Because the flowers are small and close together, small insects can easily gather nectar. In late summer and fall, the flowers are replaced by clusters of tiny dry fruits that persist over the winter.



Photo: Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) taken by Helen Hamilton

Elliptical green leaves have tiny teeth along the margins. As fall approaches, the leaves turn vivid

colors, from yellow and orange to crimson and maroon. Sweetspire can be six-feet tall, with a somewhat sprawling growth habit. Cultivars are available in the nursery trade with a more compact growth habit, and larger and columns of flowers.

Growing in part shade or full sun, sweetspire is often seen in local swamp forests and along stream banks. It is not picky about soil quality, and is a good choice by a deck, on the edge of a lawn, or on the fringe of a wooded area. An extremely useful landscape plant, it will grow under eaves where there is no air circulation and no drainage. By a creek, sweetspire provides invaluable erosion control and, responding to additional water for its roots, will produce even better fall color. It grows in nature chiefly on the Coastal Plain in swamps and wet woods, from southern New Jersey to Florida and west to east Texas.

Without flowers sweetspire resembles sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) with teeth primarily in the upper half of the leaf, usually coarse and only in the upper half of the leaf. The leaf of sweetspire is very finely serrate along most of the margin. Both are shrubs a few feet tall, and common in the Coastal Plain.

For more information about native plants, visit [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org)



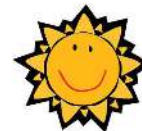
Sincere apologies to Pat Crowe, who took this wonderful photo of the wren at Matthey's Garden. A short article and this picture appeared in last month's issue, but your editor forgot to credit Pat for this almost-once-in-a-lifetime shot. Thanks, Pat!



## Important Dates

- 6/3 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 6/10 Plants of a Salt Marsh (Langley AFB)
- 6/15 Regional Foodways (Stryker Center)
- 6/17 Rain Gardens (Freedom Park)
- 6/17 Farmers Market (Merchants Square)
- 6/22-25 Master Gardener College (VA Tech)
- 7/7 African-American Foodways (WRL Theatre)
- 7/15 Garden Favorites (Freedom Park)
- 7/20 Extension Master Gardener annual picnic
- 7/22 Backyard Natives (Woodland Farms, Toano)

## SUNSHINE NOTES



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 [cathypji@gmail.com](mailto:cathypji@gmail.com)

## NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the July 2017 newsletter will be Monday, June 19.

Please send any submissions to Hope Yelich, newsletter editor, at [hopeyelich@gmail.com](mailto:hopeyelich@gmail.com)

pixabay



Any resemblance to our president, Gary Streb, is purely coincidental.

### *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.

*Summertime...*

*And the Living is easy*



*You are invited to a "Easy Living Picnic": Thursday, July 20, 2017  
Freedom Park  
3:00 - 7:00 PM*

*Sponsored by WBG/JCC Master Gardener Association Board*

*We will gather late afternoon at the Freedom Park Interpretive Center for a Barbeque Supper. You will find picnic tables on the patio and tables inside for allergy-prone, bug-prone, heat-prone, and/or rain-prone members. Food will be warmed, cooled and serviced from the kitchen. Ample parking, ADA access and rest rooms available onsite will ensure every convenience for attendees.*

*Barbequed pork and chicken sandwiches, potato salad, cole slaw and drinks will be provided for a nominal fee of \$8.00 per person. Master Gardeners who attend are asked to bring either an appetizer or dessert to complete our menu. From A - Q - please bring appetizer and R - Z , a dessert.*

*We hope you will join us along with your spouse, family member or guest for food, fun and relaxation.*

*Thanking you in advance for your participation.*

## JCCW Master Gardener Association Picnic Reservation

Please complete this form and *return to Angela Cingale by Thursday, June 30* to secure your reservation for the picnic. Checks should be made payable to: JCCW MGA. The cost for each attendee is \$8.00 per person.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am including my check for \_\_\_\_\_, and understand that this will become a non-refundable contribution if my plans should necessarily change.

Number of attendees \_\_\_\_\_

A - Q, please plan to bring an appetizer  
R - Z, please plan bring a dessert

Please circle. I plan to bring:      Appetizer      Dessert

*I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the JCC MGA Picnic!*

