



# The Colonial Master Gardener

December  
2017

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

“God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December.”

-- J. M. Barrie, *Courage* (1922)

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us so quickly. The rapidly falling colored leaves, the crisp mornings, the frost on the pumpkin are all telling us the season is changing. As we put our gardens and landscapes to bed for the winter we reflect upon our successes and less-than-successes of the past year and begin our enthusiastic planning for spring and the next year—which promises to be bigger and better than the last. As I shift my leaves from my lawn and beds to the compost pile and cut back the perennials, my thoughts are on dividing/transplanting the things in my garden for our plant sale.



The Graphics Fairy

### Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 7

Program:  
Farm to Table Farming

Speakers:  
Randy and Michelle Gulden

With the election of officers at our November association general meeting, we are finally “almost” back on track matching officers and terms of office. You selected Cathy Hill as the next president-elect, filling the vacancy. She will be replaced as vice president for administration by Dee Arbogast. Jennifer Campbell will take over as secretary from Cathy Johnson. This year Janet Smith, vice president for projects, and Liz Favre, treasurer, both were filling out the terms of departing board members. They have both been elected for their full two-year tour of duty. Marilyn Riddle will again be our representative at the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Hazel Braxton and I will remain in our current positions. After the tumultuous last couple of years, these adjustments will get us back to the terms of office as defined in our bylaws. The new board will assume their responsibilities at the January 4, 2018, association meeting. Congratulations and welcome!

At the December 7 association meeting we will again have the opportunity to execute the 2018 re-enrollment form and standards of behavior requirement. Blank forms are available on [our website](#) under the tab MGA Members / Dues, Training, Forms. Take the signed forms to the meeting or get them to Kate Robbins at the extension office by the end of January or before. Cathy Hill will also be available at the December meeting with blank forms to complete on-site. Thanks to all of you who have already completed these annual requirements.

*The president's message is continued on the next page*

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- CONTINUED

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

Also at the meeting, Liz Favre will be collecting your 2018 association dues (\$15 by cash or check). To remain an active-status Extension Master Gardener, a background screening update is required every three years. It is now due for the majority of us. The fee will be paid by the association for association members; the Classes of 2015, 2016, and 2017 fall within their initial three-year coverage. No action is required for association members. Non-members will need to see Kate for payment.

The 2018 association budget will be presented for your approval at the December meeting—look for it as an attachment to the meeting agenda. Be sure to get your end-of-year expenditures to Liz soonest so she can close out the financial statements for audit.

Please note and “pencil in” educational trips planned for next year. Hazel Braxton has made arrangements for us to visit the Brock Environmental Center (discussed at the Chesapeake Bay presentation at our November meeting), complete with bus transportation. She is planning a Hillwood Estate tour (with docent) for April 25. This opportunity is limited to the first fifty-five association members, at a cost of \$45, including round-trip bus transportation. See Liz for your paid seat, along with your check.

Our December meeting will host Randy and Michelle Gulden from KelRae Farm in Toano, who will speak about “Farm to Table” farming. And the much anticipated, **annual Christmas get-together/reception** will be provided by your executive board members after the business meeting. Hope all of you are able to stay for a bit of holiday cheer, awesome camaraderie, and much-needed holiday calories.

It has been my pleasure to work with all of you for the last year or so to make this association the professional group that it is today, and I am sure that together we can make it even better in the future.

Take time to relish all that this season has to offer. Natural beauty is all around us--much of it improved by the talents of the Extension Master Gardeners of the James City County/Williamsburg unit. Enjoy friends and family. Rekindle that child-like excitement of Christmases past. And remember why we celebrate this holy season. I sincerely hope that this is the merriest of Christmases.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

**“I love flowers, trees, animals, and all the works of Nature as they pass before us in time and space. What a joy life is when you have made a close working partnership with Nature.”**

**-- Luther Burbank, in a speech given to the First Congregational Church of San Francisco in 1926**



The Graphics Fairy

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.

## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

Michelle Gulden and her husband Randy are our speakers for December. They have owned and operated KelRae Farm as a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) in James City County since 2001.

Randy inherited the property from his uncle "Buck" Hazelwood, who sold produce in and around Williamsburg for many years. Originally begun as a part-time adventure, KelRae Farm has become a successful full-time business with ties to many institutions in our community.



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## A WORD FROM CATHY HILL

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATION

First of all, I want to apologize to everyone who attended last month's association meeting. We didn't anticipate the great turnout, and we will have more printed forms in both December and January. Also, both of these forms are available on [our website](#) under the MGA Members tab. You can print them out and take the filled-out forms to the meeting.

I know some people have seen the standards of behavior form as unnecessary. However, this requirement comes directly from the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech. It applies not only to 4-H but to volunteer contact with any age group. Signing this form gives us liability protection from Virginia Tech.

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Thanksgiving. I wish you a wonderful holiday season, and I'm looking forward to serving as your president-elect next year. Please give Dee Arbegast, the new vice president for administration, your help in the coming year.

## ...AND ANOTHER FROM JANET SMITH VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROJECTS

I am looking for people to take on two roles. Water Wise Low Maintenance Garden is looking for a new co-chair. Stacy DeMeo is withdrawing from that position, which she shares with Susan Neidlinger. If you'd like to take Stacy's place, please contact either [Stacy](#) or [Susan](#).

Also, Chris Dahlstrom has resigned as chair for Carole's Garden in New Kent. There is no co-chair. If you are interested, please contact either [Chris](#) or me, [Janet Smith](#).



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## UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION



Photo courtesy of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

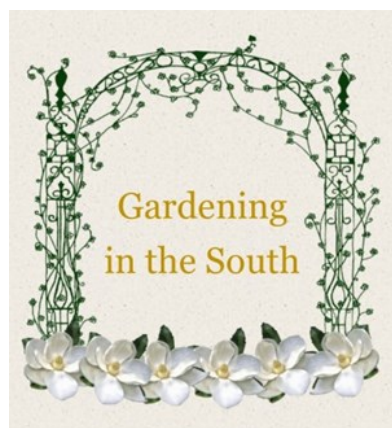
**November 24-January 8, 2018** (Closed Dec. 24 and 25). (Ginter Park, Richmond). 5:00-10:00pm. [Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights](#). The theme this year is Naturally Ever After: Stories in Lights. A holiday tradition featuring more than a half million lights, botanical decorations, etc. Various ticket prices.

**January 31-February 1.** (Institute of Advanced Learning, Danville). 8:00am--. **2018 Cut-Flower Growers Conference.** Plans are underway for this special conference to serve growers who are interested in beginning or improving cut-flower businesses. Our tentative agenda highlights the programs and speakers who will be on hand to provide valuable education, demonstrations and helpful advice for industry practices.



**January 9.** (King of Glory Lutheran Church, Williamsburg). 1:00-1:30pm social hour. Program 1:30-2:30. **Mint to Be.** An open meeting of the Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit, Herb Society of America. This session will focus on mint.

**January 15, 2018.** (Founders Inn, Virginia Beach). **Home Gardener Day 2018.** Hosted by the Virginia Horticultural Foundation, the day offers six forty-five -minute garden lectures, a catered lunch, garden book store, and a winter plant sale. It concludes with hands-on learning opportunities in three ninety-minute afternoon workshops. Registration is \$85.00 through December 1, \$100.00 through January 8, and \$125.00 January 9-16. Register [here](#).



As always, don't forget to take a look at John Freeborn's latest biweekly update from the state EMG office. Click on <https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/current-master-gardeners/sample-page/bi-weekly-update/>. If that doesn't work, click on <http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/>. Then click on "I am currently a Master Gardener/News/Bi-Weekly Update."

## SHARPEN AND SHARE YOUR SKILLS ON OUR PRUNING TEAMS

BY PATRICIA PAQUETTE

Winter is the best time to prune many plants in our area -- and the time when Extension Master Gardeners go out to the yards and gardens of people in our communities to help them learn best pruning practices.

We visit homeowners in teams of two or three and give them hands-on training in maintaining healthy shrubs and small trees, answer their questions, and offer advice. The rewards go both ways, as team members have the opportunity to experience a variety of landscapes and interesting people, and to learn from one another.

The on-site visits are held in February and March. We'll be scheduling orientation and review sessions in January with a pruning overview for new volunteers and for those who would like a refresher.

If you have any questions or would like to join us this year, please contact Jeanne Millin at [scotfarquhar@cox.net](mailto:scotfarquhar@cox.net) or Patricia Paquette at [Patricia.Paquette@gmail.com](mailto:Patricia.Paquette@gmail.com).



The Graphics Fairy



The Graphics Fairy

## LANDSCAPE LOVE COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL FALL PROGRAM

BY SHERRY WALKER

Thank you to all sixty-one Extension Master Gardener volunteers who participated in the fall Landscape Love program for continuing to make Landscape Love a successful program. Master Gardener teams received many written thank yous this fall from homeowners, expressing their appreciation for the help and knowledge transferred during the visits. Sixty-four homeowners registered for visits in the fall, some of whom postponed their spring visits to a calmer time in the fall. Yet many homeowners found they were just as busy in the fall and postponed again. The teams of EMGs completed forty-five visits and provided those homeowners with reports.

We are finding many people moving into the area and wondering how to care for the plants in the landscape which came with the house. Many also want to change those landscapes and are not sure how to do it. Top questions among new and existing homeowners concern what to plant that deer will not eat, how to prune overgrown shrubs, and how to deal with erosion.

On home visits, we sometimes hear from homeowners that they feed the deer or a neighbor feeds the deer. As Master Gardeners, we can make homeowners aware that it is illegal to feed the deer in the state of Virginia from September - January. Per the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, feeding deer during this time is a misdemeanor offense, and a homeowner can incur repeated fines for repeated offenses. The fall Landscape Love program is particularly timely for this issue as well as for planting plants. Many homeowners do not realize the best time to plant is the fall. Through programs like Landscape Love where we have individual discussions within the homeowner's landscape, we can make these types of recommendations and educate, educate, educate.

To the Extension Master Gardeners who participated this fall and this past spring, thank you for making this a successful program to educate homeowners.

## MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE APRIL 21, 2018

BY BESS HOPEWELL, CHAIR, MG 2018 PLANT SALE

I would like to share some good news with all my fellow Extension Master Gardeners. Pat Rathke, Pat Abraham, and Barb Floyd have all signed on for "another tour of duty" for our 2018 MG plant sale. Their years of experience and dedication to our organization are truly appreciated. New to our team this year is Mary Mills, who will take on the weighty responsibility of co-chair. Mary lives in New Kent, where she and her husband, David, tend to their beautiful cottage gardens. Mary has been a Master Gardener for thirteen years.

I have also spoken to most of the MGs who were the coordinators for our various teams of volunteers, and they have said that, at this time, they also would be able to serve in the same capacities as they did last year. The coordinators and all team members contributed to an extremely positive, fun, and profitable 2017 MG plant sale. Thanks again to all of you.

One of our interns, Rick Brown, has volunteered to be the coordinator for our "Garden Trash and Treasure" addition. We have not had this component of our plant sale for a few years, and we thought it would be fun to see what we might have in our yards, garages, homes, etc., that we might not want anymore, but that someone else would think is a "treasure." Start thinking about what you might have to contribute to this part of our sale. Rick needs one person to help him. The duties for Rick and his helper would be to arrange and price the sale items the morning of set up (Friday, April 20, 2018). Email pictures of the items you'd like to donate directly to Rick at [ricklin46@cox.net](mailto:ricklin46@cox.net) so he can have an idea what might be coming his way. You'll need to take your items to the sale site the morning of set up.

Meetings of the plant sale committee will begin in January. Mary and I have already started our meetings to organize lists of volunteers from last year, speak to vendors, and get information from other groups that hold large plant sales that would help us in our efforts.

Happy and Healthy Holidays to you all!

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## CW LANDSCAPE VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

BY PAT ABRAHAM



The Colonial Williamsburg Landscape Department will be accepting applications for volunteer positions at the Reid and Shields gardens. The purpose of our volunteer program is to maintain the two gardens as "demonstration gardens" while growing flowers and vegetables of the colonial period. Through our labors, we provide support for Colonial Williamsburg and create an enviable attraction for passing visitors and touring guests. While accomplishing these goals, our volunteers maintain a mutually beneficial partnership between the Virginia Cooperative Extension, James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association, and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Each Master Gardener who wants to volunteer in the Reid/Shields gardens must commit to volunteering a minimum of thirty annual hours: twenty hours of garden work, plus four hours of training, plus six hours of miscellaneous gardening in CW. These hours can be spread among all the projects in the Reid/Shields gardens...perennials, herbs, roses, veggies, and orchard. The six hours of miscellaneous gardening can be administrative work (team leaders), the Colonial Williamsburg Volunteer Enrichment series, or additional work in the gardens.

To facilitate the entry process, applications will be available from Barb Floyd and Pat Abraham at the December Master Gardener meeting. Completed applications are due Friday, January 5, 2018. They can be mailed to the address on the application or dropped off at the Franklin Street office, attention Trish Barner, volunteer coordinator. If you are unable to attend the December meeting, contact Barb at [bmfloyd@cox.net](mailto:bmfloyd@cox.net) or Pat at [tspmeritage@cox.net](mailto:tspmeritage@cox.net) to make arrangements to obtain an application.



## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH DECEMBER 2017

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



Photo: Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) taken by Helen Hamilton

### **SOURWOOD** *Oxydendrum arboreum*

Sourwood is a rewarding tree in all seasons; in spring the tree is covered with lacy white fronds of flowers, suggesting its other name, “lily of the valley tree.” Fall turns the leaves deep red, and the fingers of white flowers become clusters of creamy fruits.

Many members of the heath family have small, white, bell-like flowers that are clustered mostly at ends of twigs. Sourwood is the only full-size

tree in the heath family with flowers and fruits of the heath type. The sour-tasting leaves are narrow to egg-shaped, with a line of hairs on the midvein on the underside.

Hardy to zones 5 to 9, sourwood prefers full to part sun in slightly acidic, moist, well-drained soils, but does well in dry soil. However, the root system is shallow, and it does not transplant well. Sourwood tree trunks do not stand straight and tall, they always lean away from the vertical. When the leaves are gone, these leaning trunks are good identification for sourwood.

This mid-sized tree (twenty-thirty- feet tall) ranges from New Jersey south to Florida and Louisiana, growing in rich woods. It is found in all counties across Virginia except for those in northern Virginia.

With no major pests or diseases, this native tree is worth considering as a landscape element. The flowers attract bees and butterflies, and produce seeds for birds. Sourwood honey can often be found in local food outlets.

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

## Important Dates

- 11/24-1/8 GardenFest of Lights (Ginter Park, Richmond)
- 1/9 Mint to Be (King of Glory Church)
- 1/15 Home Gardener Day (Virginia Beach)
- 1/31-2/1 Cut-Flower Growers Conference (Danville)
- 4/21/18 Annual plant sale



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## **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**The deadline for submissions to the January 2018 newsletter will be Wednesday, December 27.**

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

## **SUNSHINE NOTES**



In the past month, we sent cards to:

Jennifer Campbell  
Carol Fryer  
Dee Arbegast  
Jan Marry  
Sue Liddell  
Dave Banks  
Bev Baker

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 [cathypj@gmail.com](mailto:cathypj@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.

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