



# The Colonial Master Gardener

January  
2018

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

**“Make a New Year’s resolution to plan better and so to work less in your garden. If you attempted too much last year, cut down. Gardens are not meant to be an endurance test but a joy.”**

**-- Helen Van Pelt Wilson, *The New Perennials Preferred* (1992)**

**Next Meeting:**

**Thursday, January 4**

**Program:**

**The Graduation of the Extension Master Gardener Training Class of 2017, followed by a reception**

Happy New Year! The hustle and bustle of the holiday season is now over, and we now begin to look to the new year with faith, hope, and optimism. If you are like so many, this is the time for resolutions—resolutions to improve yourself or resolutions to change the world. No matter what your intentions, all must start with a defined goal and a realistic plan of action. Hopefully one of your resolutions is continued activity with the many projects of our Master Gardener unit and to improve our effort to educate the Williamsburg/James City County community on horticultural best-management practices. My primary resolution is to get all my EMG volunteer hours into the VMS sooner than the last week of the year!

Winter, and it has indeed arrived, is the time gardeners generally devote to planning and dreaming. And we, as Master Gardeners, are no exception. Project leads are preparing their annual proposal for established projects, and others may be thinking of new projects that we are not currently supplying to the community. Each of us is deciding what projects we want to continue or investigating new projects to explore. In the garden—both edible and landscape—now is the time to draw a plan, both a schematic and a list of items “to do.” Think about which preventative measures against pests you should take to protect your time and financial investment. Think about sustainable gardening and enhancing your water-conservation efforts. Feed the birds.

Challenge yourself with a creative project in the garden, learn a new gardening skill, or participate more fully in the leadership of your Master Gardener passion. Most importantly—enjoy the fruits of your labor. Realize the

benefits that you are providing your community and yourself and take ownership and pride in that. Take the time to sit back and really look at what you have done.

The new Extension Master Gardener class, the Class of 2018, starts January 9, and we will welcome twenty-one new trainees to our unit. Please take advantage of these classes as great opportunities for refresher training or for getting a newer perspective on your gardening knowledge. In addition to the monthly educational lectures that the JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association provides, attending these



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

2018  
MGA Board

*President:*  
Gary Streb

*President Elect:*  
Cathy Hill

*VP Administration:*  
Dee Arbegast

*VP Projects:*  
Janet Smith

*VP Internal Ed:*  
Hazel Braxton

*Secretary:*  
Jennifer Campbell

*Treasurer:*  
Liz Favre

*VMGA Rep:*  
Marilyn Riddle

*Past President:*  
Vacant

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- CONTINUED

classes on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays enables you to get the required annual eight hours of continuing education easily.

Our next MGA general meeting on Thursday, January 4, will be the graduation of the Extension Master Gardener Training Class of 2017. We will follow the ceremony by a reception in the lobby of the Stryker Center, across the parking lot from the Williamsburg Library. This is a new venue for us. No need to move your car! Families and friends are encouraged to attend and participate in the culmination of a year's hard work and dedication. Becoming and continuing to be an active Master Gardener is a family commitment and cause for all the family to celebrate. Please plan to attend and welcome the new Master Gardeners to our ranks. Special thanks to Kate Robbins, our extension agricultural natural resources program assistant and the training team of Martin Oakes, Janet Smith, Hope Yelich, Susan Shoulet, Liz Favre, Jennifer Campbell, and Linda Slyfield for making it all happen—with the invaluable help of many weekly classroom managers, presenters, mentors, and others. And a "thank you in advance" to the social committee for putting the reception together. Their hard work, planning, and flawless attention to detail make all of our get-togethers a pure pleasure to attend.

As we look to the new year with renewed optimism I'd like to reflect a bit on last year. Together we got a lot done, both as a Master Gardener unit and each of us personally. A cooperative spirit has again permeated what we are doing and what we are all about; I'd like to thank all of you for that. A special thanks to our departing board members: Cathy Johnson, who has set the bar high as our association secretary, and Cathy Hill, our vice president for administration, who has made tremendous improvements. And "welcome aboard" to Dee Arbegast, our new vice president for administration, and Jennifer Campbell, our new secretary. "Welcome back" to Cathy Hill, our new president-elect. We all look forward to a rewarding and fulfilling new agenda for 2018.

And personally, I would like to thank you for your continued support in allowing me again be your president for the upcoming year. It is an honor and privilege that I don't take lightly. *Together* we can do great things!

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.

**"My garden is an honest place. Every tree and every vine are incapable of concealment, and tell after two or three months exactly what sort of treatment they have had."**

**-- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals* (1909-13)**



## THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY IS REQUESTED

BY HOPE YELICH, TRAINING TEAM MEMBER

Wahoo! We are so proud of our 2017 VCE MG training class! They have spent the year digging through facts, planting ideas, and even dealing with some compost. Now it's time to harvest the rewards. (Yep, I really said that; I can't believe it either.)

All Extension Master Gardeners are invited to the Class of 2017 graduation ceremony at the JCCW Master Gardener Association monthly meeting Thursday, January 4. We are pleased that Trish Barner, volunteer program coordinator for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, has accepted our invitation to speak about the importance of volunteers in our area. Please join us as we welcome our new group of EMGs and their guests with a ceremony and reception.



## DO JOIN US

BY HOPE YELICH, TRAINING TEAM MEMBER

In Gary's presidential message, he invited Master Gardeners to attend any of the training classes in which you have an interest. Speaking for the training team, I can say that the trainees enjoy having MGs in the classes and interacting with them (that is to say—with you). We ask, though, that you take a seat at the back of the room so the students can fill the front rows.

There isn't a need to let us know when you plan to attend a class. The schedule is almost finalized, and when it is, we'll send it out. The big change this year is that classes will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but still 9:00-12:00 at the rec center. We're looking forward to another exciting year!

For the team (Marty, Janet, Susan, Liz, Jennifer, and Linda)—all best wishes. —Hope



## A WORD FROM CATHY HILL PRESIDENT-ELECT

I want to congratulate the new class of Master Gardeners on the completion of their internship. I look forward to getting to know and work with you.

I hope all of our members had a Merry Christmas. Looking forward to lots of good things in 2018.

Happy New Year!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY BY JOANNE SHEFFIELD

I am stepping down as program chair of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Please consider volunteering for this important and rewarding position. I'd be happy to assist my replacement for a few months. If this opportunity has your name on it, please get in touch with me at (301) 983-1785 or [josheffie@yahoo.com](mailto:josheffie@yahoo.com).



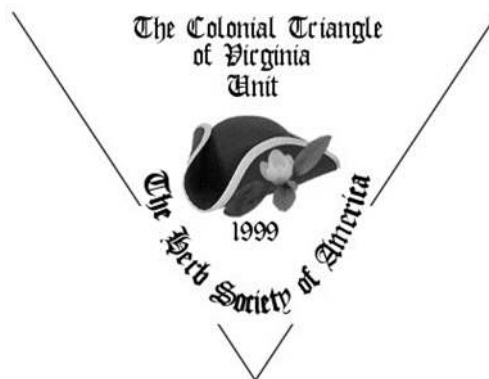
## UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

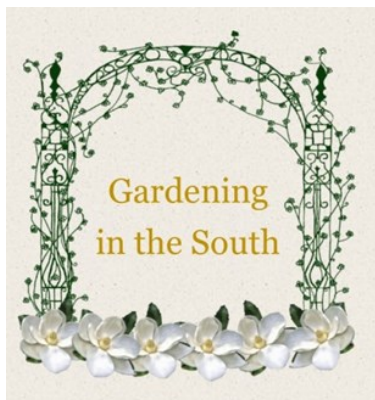


Photo courtesy of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

**January 9.** (King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Rd., Williamsburg). 1:00-2:30. The Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit (CTVU) of the Herb Society of America will hold an open meeting, free of charge. Open meetings provide non-members a chance to learn about the Herb Society's mission, programs, and local volunteer opportunities. The program for this meeting, "**Saving Myself To Save Others**," will feature Keisha Harris, a stage-four cervical cancer survivor from Richmond. Ms. Harris will discuss the healing benefits of using herbs, foods, extracts, and minerals to mitigate illness and disease. The CTVU's next open meeting will be in March. For more information, contact Donna Pratt at (757) 608-8929.



**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 \$100.00 through January 8, and \$125.00 January 9-16. Register [here](#).



**January 16.** (VIMS, Catlett-Burruss Research and Education Lab, 7577 Spencer Rd., Gloucester Point, Va. 23062). **Discovery Lab: Marine Technology.** 6:00-8:00pm. This lab will include displays of different kinds of technologies used by scientists at VIMS and around the world, along with hands-on experience using some of these tools. VIMS Ph.D. student Lydia Bienlien will share how VIMS students and faculty are using drone technology in their studies of harmful algal blooms and other events in the Chesapeake Bay. [Register here](#).



Photo courtesy of VIMS

## UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES -- CONTINUED

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

**January 20.** (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00-11:30am. **Pruning--Winter Tree Care.** James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners will demonstrate the proper use of pruning tools and will discuss the basics of pruning trees and shrubs. Weather permitting, after the program there will be an outdoor demonstration in the Garden. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. The program is free and open to the public, although a \$5.00 donation is appreciated. For more information, contact [JCCPruners@gmail.com](mailto:JCCPruners@gmail.com).



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**January 27.** (Central Rappahannock Regional Library, 1201 Caroline St., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401). 10:00am-3:00pm. **Seed Swap.** Sponsored by the Central Rappahannock Extension Master Gardeners. Free and open to the public. Bring seeds, plants, cuttings, tools, books, magazines, flower pots, etc., that you no longer need and TAKE what you do need (or think you need). There will be refreshments, raffle items and door prizes.

**January 31-February 1.** (Institute of Advanced Learning, Danville). 8:00am 1/31--4:00pm 2/1. **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. [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."

## UPCOMING JCC/WMG - SPONSORED TRIPS

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

The association is sponsoring two field trips in the months ahead, one to the Brock Environmental Center in Virginia Beach on Wednesday, February 28, and one to the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, D.C., on April 25. Plan to join us!

### The Chesapeake Bay Brock Environmental Center. (3663 Marlin Bay Drive, Virginia Beach).

The Brock Environmental Center will be the beachhead for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) lower bay programs, bringing the community together to solve complex environmental issues and empower the next generation of citizens through environmental education programs in the Chesapeake Bay. This building serves as the hub for CBF's Hampton Road office. It supports the foundation's education, outreach, advocacy, and restoration initiatives. In addition to offices for CBF and partner groups, the center provides interpretative exhibits spaces, meeting rooms, and an eighty-seat conference room. For more information on the center, click [here](#). The cost for transportation is \$10.00; there is no cost for the scheduled tour. If you are interested in going, contact treasurer Liz Favre at [liz.favre@cox.net](mailto:liz.favre@cox.net).



Photo courtesy of the American Institute of Architects

### Hillwood Estate, Museum, & Gardens

(4155 Linnean Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., 20008.)

Marjorie Merriweather Post bought Hillwood in 1955 and soon decided her home would be a museum that would inspire and educate the public. Her northwest Washington, D.C., estate endowed the country with the most comprehensive collection of Russian imperial art outside of Russia, a distinguished eighteenth-century French decorative art collection, and twenty-five acres of serene landscaped gardens and natural woodlands for all to enjoy. Opened as a public institution in 1977, today Hillwood's allure stems from the equally fascinating parts that make up the whole. From the captivating life of Marjorie Post to the exquisitely maintained mansion and gardens, the experience of Hillwood outshines even the Fabergé Eggs. The cost for transportation is \$30.00, and \$15.00 for two tours, for a total of \$45.00. If you are interested in going, contact treasurer Liz Favre at [liz.favre@cox.net](mailto:liz.favre@cox.net).



Wikimedia Commons

## MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE 2018

BY BESS HOPEWELL AND MARY MILLS, CHAIRS

Happy Holidays to all of our fellow Master Gardeners. Hopefully, all of you have had the opportunity to enjoy this time of year with family and friends, and it has not been too hectic. Unbelievable to think that another year has gone by.

The MG Plant Sale Committee will have its first meeting on January 11. With all of the experienced and hardworking people who have volunteered already, I'm sure we're on our way to another successful plant sale.

We will have volunteer sign-up sheets at our monthly meeting on January 4. We need as many people as possible to make this event run smoothly, as well as being a fun event for all involved. If you are not able to attend the January meeting, please email Mary Mills [millsmd1@cox.net](mailto:millsmd1@cox.net) and tell her in what capacity you would be able to help, when you are available, or if you would like us to let you know where we could use your help. The following are the volunteer groups:

### **Before and After Plant Sale Volunteers:**

Plant Intake: Friday, April 20

Transportation/Plant Loaders from Atlantic Growers to Plant Sale: Friday, April 20 at 9:00 am

Set-up & Breakdown: Friday, April 20 and Saturday, April 21

Vendor Inventory Accountability: Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21

Critter Night Control: Friday, April 20, 6:00pm--Saturday April 21 7:00 am - (3) 4 hr. shifts of two people

### **Day of Plant Sale Volunteers (Saturday, April 21)**

Cashiers/Talliers (Master Gardener Pre-Sale, Friday, April 20, from 3:00-5:00 pm)

Greeters

Plant Table Experts

We need everyone's participation, whether directly involved in set-up, sale day, plant contributions, or a monetary contribution. This is "everyone's organization." To date, this is our only fundraiser, supplying the money to run our organization. We need **ALL** of you, in some capacity, to make this event a success!

Think about the plants you will contribute. We want the plants that our Master Gardeners contribute, for sale to our community, to be of a quality that we can be proud of, and will keep our customers coming back year after year. Quality does make a difference. We are competing with other groups for hard-earned dollars. We need to let our customers know that they are getting a good product for a fair price. Keep this in mind when you are considering what plants you will be donating. Next month, Pat Rathke and Pat Abraham will have soil-filled pots available for those who need them.

Lastly, don't forget about our Garden Trash & Treasure. Rick Brown is the coordinator, and you can email him directly at [ricklin46@cox.net](mailto:ricklin46@cox.net). Please send him a description and a picture, if possible, Jon Tustin will assist Rick in this portion of our plant sale.

Also, during our plant sale meetings last year, we discussed the possibility of having a **pre-order sale** of **annual/perennial** plants that will not be available at our plant sale on April 21. We will have a list of these pre-order plants, with pricing, made available to all members **before April 21**. You would need to pre-pay for the plants, or we can't order them. We will have a sign-up sheet at the front of the room at the January monthly meeting for those who would be interested in participating--we need to get an idea how many of you are interested in a pre-order sale-- and will be happy to answer any questions at that meeting.

Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

## VIRGINIA MASTER GARDEN ASSOCIATION REPORT

BY MARILYN RIDDLE, UNIT REPRESENTATIVE

The meeting took place Saturday, December 9, in the Northern Neck region (Kilmarnock). I was pleased to have Anne Nielsen accompany me this time. Her horticultural expertise and social skills really make her an ideal person with whom to travel. She also knows so many EMGs because she has been to MG College so many times.

The host unit spent quite an extended time reporting on their various projects. This was in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. The rather dicey weather worked well to have a longer portion from the host unit, because very few committee chairs or even unit reps were in attendance. I can name only one person who came from west of I-95. Even John and Dave already knew that due to their schedules that neither one would be there because of other obligations.

The next educational event will likely be at the 4-H Center near Appomattox on August 29, 2018.

The voting for officers this spring will be done electronically as has been the case in recent years.



The Graphics Fairy

Items from the Coordinator's Office included the following:

- ◆ Leadership Training was attended by more than sixty. These presentations will be posted on the state EMG website in the future.
- ◆ Devon Johnson is the new communications coordinator. She has been on the job for six weeks.
- ◆ The coordinator's manual is complete and may be picked up at the agent's winter conference in February to save the cost of mailing. I assume that this is also the case with the new EMG manual.
- ◆ An internal forum (on Google) will be launched statewide in the future.
- ◆ Joe Murray, Alex Niemiera, and John Seiler are presenters for MG College 2018. The advanced topic is Tree Stewardship. Mark Jones will be presenting on mushroom production, and Jay Stipes will cover Dutch Elm disease. Is anyone interested in caving at Dixie Caverns during MG College?
- ◆ Same news about the change in schedule for MG College for the next few years with the 2019 event to be held in Norfolk in September.
- ◆ Another position will be filled in December/January.
- ◆ A series of webinars on the second Thursday of every month continues on December 14, 2017. The subject of this one will be internal communications. There is the opportunity of units' sharing ideas and asking questions in the future.



## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH JANUARY 2018

BY HELEN HAMILTON

PAST PRESIDENT, JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Photo: Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*) taken by Helen Hamilton

### BLACK WALNUT

*Juglans nigra*

This is one of our most valuable and beautiful native trees. Before extensive colonization black walnut was a dominant canopy species, reaching 150 feet or more in height. But clearing for agriculture, harvesting for export to Britain, and making railroad ties, log cabins, and cabinets greatly reduced the species.

This tree is native to thirty-two states, more common in lower elevations and concentrated in eastern U.S. In nature black walnut grows in hardwood forests on moist, well-drained soils. These trees are often found around old home sites where they were planted for their tall, stately growth and broad canopy for shade. The leaves are dark green, turning yellow in autumn, and when crushed, have a spicy scent. Small greenish catkins are the flowers that appear in April, as the leaves are beginning to unfurl.

The compound leaves have nine-to-twenty-one long, pointed leaflets, with finely toothed margins. They look somewhat similar to the leaflets of the introduced Tree of Heaven *Ailanthus altissima* but those leaves are coarsely toothed with a small lip near the insertion. Black walnut can be distinguished from hickories by its distinctive leaf scar that is notched with a U-shaped bundle scars in the middle, often described as a “monkey face.”

The wood is exceptionally beautiful with a darkly patterned grain and is highly prized for furniture, veneers, and interior finishing. Other parts of the tree have a variety of uses, especially the delicious nuts which are, unfortunately, covered with an extremely hard shell that is covered by another impossibly thick husk. The hulls will soften over time, and the nutmeats can be harvested by hand, with a chisel and hammer, or with commercial products. Black walnuts have higher concentrations of beneficial fatty acids and protein than the English walnut that is more commonly sold in stores.

All parts of black walnut produce the chemical juglone that inhibits metabolic activity in many plants. The chemical is produced in roots and dissolves out of the leaves during rains, washing down to the ground below. While some plants cannot tolerate exposure to juglone, many trees, shrubs, and perennials can be grown nearby with no ill effects. According to Doug Tallamy in *Bringing Nature Home*, the most sensitive plants are alien ornamentals, with no evolutionary experience with juglone. For a list of juglone-resistant plants, see [“Landscaping and Gardening Around Walnuts and Other Juglone Producing Plants,”](#) a publication of PennStateExtension.

The bark and leaves have been used medicinally and have been especially useful treating skin diseases. The bark has been chewed to help with the pain of a toothache, and a bark infusion was taken as a laxative, among other uses. The chemical is highly toxic to many insect herbivores and can be a natural pesticide. Native Americans used the green hulls of the nuts as a fish poison.

Black walnut, along with hickories, are excellent wildlife trees – their leaves host over 100 species of caterpillars and moths, important food source for birds. The nuts feed mice, voles, and squirrels over the winter, and these animals are food for larger ones, passing energy up the food pyramid. And since squirrels don't always remember where they buried their nuts, sprouts of black walnut will appear in new habitats.

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 Saving Myself (King of Glory Church)
- 1/15 Home Gardener Day (Virginia Beach)
- 1/16 Marine Technology (VIMS)
- 1/20 Pruning--Tree Care (Freedom Park)
- 1/27 Seed Swap (Fredericksburg)
- 1/31-2/1 Cut-Flower Growers Conference (Danville)
- 2/28 Field Trip to the Brock Environmental Center
- 4/21/18 Annual plant sale
- 4/25 Field Trip to the Hillwood Estate



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## **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**The deadline for submissions to the February 2018 newsletter will be Wednesday, January 24.**

**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:

Patsy McGrady  
Harriet Parsons

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, Jennifer Campbell, at (757) 968-9499, or [jenkcampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:jenkcampbell@yahoo.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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