



# The Colonial Master Gardener

February  
2018

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

**“Five minutes with someone who knows how to prune will teach you more than can ever be learned from a book.”**

**-- Mrs. Philip Martineau, *The Secrets of Many Gardens* (1924)**



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Who's ready for spring? After a rather chilly start to the new year, along with two hefty snowfalls, we have been lulled into the false hope of bright, sunny spring days, filled with our love of gardening. As I write this we are back into a more seasonal weather cycle, having us wish for better days, but allowing us time to do the critical winter tasks that we have before us. Seems like we are scraping ice one day and raking the left-over autumn leaves the next. I leave mine in place providing a nice winter mulch. Winter damage/burn will be a “hot” issue this spring especially with camellia, gardenia, loropetalum, and other tender shrubs and perennials. Check [VT publication 426-500](#) to get smart about the issue. Pull out your pruning calendar from the [JCC/Williamsburg/New Kent County Pruning Handbook](#) (or find on [our website](#) under Useful Items), and you will find that February is the best time to do most pruning, while plants are dormant and structure is visible. I usually wait until the Super Bowl is over!

Several of our projects have begun or are in “ready to go” status. Therapeutic Gardening participants have begun visits, and the Pruning Clinic is in the midst of its on-site educational lessons to homeowners, after a successful community-wide demonstration as part of the monthly lecture series at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. School garden projects and youth

### Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 1

Program:  
Birds

Speaker:  
Nature Photographer  
Bob Schamerhorn

programming will start with after-school programs in mid-February. If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to teach the future Master Gardeners of Williamsburg, please get in touch with [Kate Robbins](#), our ANR program assistant at the extension office.

By now we should all be in compliance with our annual paperwork requirement. If not, you will need to complete the [re-enrollment form](#) and [standards of behavior form](#) and get them to Kate or Dee Arbegast, our vice president for administration, soonest. You will not be able to participate in any Master Gardener activity without completing this simple task. Also, if you have not completely entered your 2017 volunteer and continuing-education hours into VMS, please do so today. To maintain status as an active Extension Master Gardener you need to volunteer twenty hours and attend eight hours of continuing/refresher training each calendar year. I went over our statistics and several have not yet entered their hours. *Don't become ineligible to volunteer because you didn't add your hours.* If you have any questions or problems please don't hesitate to contact [me](#) or [Dee](#). We need you!

At last count we have 129 who have paid the \$15 annual dues to join/continue membership in the JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association (emeriti members are free). Last year we had 218. For the procrastinators Liz Favre, our treasurer, will be available at the general meeting on February 1 even though the deadline without penalty is January 31. Benefits for joining abound—invitation to the “Spring Fling” and annual picnic, security screening fee

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- CONTINUED

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

provided, special plant sale from Strange's nursery, and Master Gardener aprons all come to mind quickly; but it is our fund raising that provides the money to run the projects and the monthly educational lectures. Please consider your continued support.

The [schedule for the 2018 Extension Master Gardener Training Class](#) is now on the [website](#) under the Members link. Attending a refresher class on Tuesdays or Thursdays for a few hours is an easy way to get your eight-hour annual continuing-education requirement. The snow days have made last-minute changes necessary, so check with [Liz Favre](#) if there is a particular class you want to attend. Another excellent opportunity is the lecture series at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden on the third Saturday of each month. Schedule is on [their website](#).

We still have available slots for the trip to [Hillwood Estate](#) on April 25. Even though this may seem far into the future we need some firm commitments (\$45 to Liz) to make arrangements. Payment includes round-trip transportation and docent-led tours. This will be a fun and educational trip at the perfect time of year to enjoy the magnificent gardens of Marjorie Merriweather Post. I can just imagine what a party bus this will be. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the proposed trip to the Brock Environmental Center due to lack of interest—a lost opportunity.

Set aside the evening of March 9 for our "Spring Fling" to meet the new trainees (soon to be interns) of the Class of 2018, share fellowship with our new Extension Master Gardeners of the Class of 2017 (if you missed the reception on January 11), and renew and strengthen the bonds with your old Master Gardener soulmates. Catering by Carrabba's and special entertainment will ensure a festive night for all.

Hope to see you all at the next general association meeting on Thursday, February 1. We have the privilege of hosting Bob Schamerhorn, a noted and award-winning photographer, who will get us all excited about "birds." Gardening for wildlife and the use of native plants have become environmental trends we can all embrace.

Happy gardening planning and dreaming!

**"Books teach much, and also do lectures, but only when supplemented by practical experience will they make a competent gardener."**

**--Frances Wolseley, *Gardening for Women* (1908)**

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

A native of Lynchburg, Bob Schamerhorn has always been fascinated with nature. He graduated from Virginia Tech in the early 1980s with a degree in art and design, after which he held several creative positions, including engraver, canvas-painting artist, draftsman, and graphic designer. In 1996 Bob started a business, Infinity Graphics, which specializes in web design and business branding. In addition, he has helped publish a few bird books and has illustrated children's books.

Several of Bob's photos have won recognition and appeared in publications such as *Virginia Wildlife* and through institutions such as the Virginia Living Museum. For years he has maintained a weekly photo blog, which has hundreds of followers. In 2013 he began showing his photography at various festivals and events.

Bob lives in Richmond with his wife, Lori.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2017!

BY THE TRAINING TEAM OF MARTY OAKES, JENNIFER CAMPBELL, SUSAN SHOULET, LINDA SLYFIELD, JANET SMITH, MARY WOOL, HOPE YELICH, AND KATE ROBBINS



Front row: Doris Lewis, Paulette Atkinson, Kimberly Silver-Perry, and Susan Miller  
Middle row: Beth Deer, Stephanie Lamb, Wendy Hamrick, Pam Mageland, Judith Alberts, and Pat Cowan  
Back row: Jon Tustin, Ryan Andrews, Jerry Woodson, Rick Brown, Carole Black, Elizabeth Grainer, and Jean Geiger  
Not pictured: Linda Berryman, Sharon Marcial, Marcella McDevitt, Deeno O'Connell, and Robin Reichelt.

Twenty-two members of the Class of 2017 graduated to the rank of Extension Master Gardener with all proper pomp and circumstance at the association monthly meeting on January 11 (postponed from January 4, a snow day). The group completed 1,770 hours of volunteer activity, which is an average of 80.45 hours per student--many more than the required fifty hours. After receiving their "diplomas" and names badges and hearing about the value of volunteering from Trish Barner, who serves as the volunteer project coordinator for Colonial Williamsburg, the new graduates were celebrated at a reception at the Stryker Center Lobby.

Welcome, new EMGs!



Left: Doris Lewis, Rick Brown, and Wendy Hamrick



Above: Hazel Braxton and Kate Robbins.



Left: Ryan Andrews accepts his certificate from Kate Robbins while Gary Streb looks on.

## UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION



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**February 3** (Manassas Park Community Center 99 Adams St. Manassas Park, Va., 20111). 1:00pm. **Community Gardening: Using Native Plant Communities To Create Ecologically Valuable Gardens.** Matt Bright, Conservation Manager for the Earth Sangha, will discuss native plants, their role in local ecosystems, and how to best use them in a functional landscape. Using examples from his work in native plant propagation, conservation and restoration, he will explain how planting native plants together in plant communities maximizes the ecological value of a garden...and that gardening in this way is EASIER than you may think. Join us for this free lecture, but please register (703) 792-7747 or [master\\_gardener@pwcgov.org](mailto:master_gardener@pwcgov.org) in the event of cancellation, and to assure sufficient seating. Questions and answers will follow during refreshments!

**February 3** (Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, 150 Slayton Ave., Danville, Va. 24540). 8:00am-3:00pm. **Spring to Green: Gardening for Southside.** Two well-known speakers, books for sale, vendors, experts in bee keeping, bonsai, fruit trees, water conservation, wildlife, and more. Master Gardeners will be available to answer questions.

**February 11** (Manassas Park Community Center 99 Adams St. Manassas Park, Va., 20111). 2:00pm. **Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can Be a Source of Environmental Change by Larry Weaner, Landscape Architect and Author.** This lecture is based on the book of the same name, with special attention given to the final chapter, which explores his work, experiments, and lessons from

Mr. Weaner's own residence. Co-sponsored by Prince William Wildflower Society, Prince William Conservation Alliance, and Master Gardeners of Prince William. [Register here.](#)

**February 14-16** (Massey Conference Center, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond). 8:30am-4:00pm. **Winter Symposium and 49th CVNLA Short Course: Gardening with Purpose and Passion.** Continuing education hours are offered for each day, along with book sales and signings and opportunities to network with industry colleagues. Net proceeds from the three-day event help build CVNLA's scholarship fund for students pursuing horticultural careers. \$70 per day: February 14 or 15

\$125: Two-day combo ticket February 14 + 15, \$55: February 16, \$180: 3-day ticket February 14, 15, 16. Fee includes continental breakfast, lunch, and all sessions. [Register here.](#)

**February 17.** (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00am. **Native Orchids in the United States with an Emphasis on Hampton Roads.** Lise Schioler will talk about some of the orchids native to Hampton Roads as well as interesting species from other parts of the U.S. Lise is a Master Gardener and Native Plant Society member who participates in native plant rescues with the Williamsburg Native Plant Rescue Team. 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 to help the garden grow is appreciated. For more information, contact Lise at [GreenThumb4@cox.net](mailto:GreenThumb4@cox.net).

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."

## JCC/W MASTER GARDENERS' 2018 MONTHLY PROGRAM SCHEDULE BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

All meetings take place at the Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre  
The first Thursday of each month at 9:00am  
except where noted



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<b>January 4:</b>	Intern Graduation (was rescheduled to January 11)
<b>February 1:</b>	Bob Schamerhorn, an award-winning nature photographer, will speak on birds.
<b>March 1:</b>	Angela Cingale will present a program on butterflies.
<b>April 5:</b>	Jeanne Millin will demonstrate the art of pruning. This session is by the request of Master Gardeners who feel they need a refresher course on the subject.
<b>May 3:</b>	Carol Fryer and Barb Landa will showcase great international gardens.
<b>June 7:</b>	Gordon Chappell, Williamsburg landscape architect, will discuss boxwoods.
<b>July</b>	No monthly meeting
<b>August 2:</b>	Dr. Shawn Dash, entomology professor at Hampton University, will present a program on insects.
<b>September 6:</b>	David Everett, owner and chef at the Blue Talon Restaurant, will talk about food--from farm to table.
<b>October 4:</b>	Daniel Arbegast will provide one of his informative lectures on bugs or bees.
<b>November 1:</b>	Carol Heiser or a representative from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will talk about the regulation of fish and wildlife in Virginia.
<b>December 6:</b>	To be determined



## UPCOMING JCC/WMG - SPONSORED TRIP BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

There is still room on the bus for the trip to the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens in Washington, D.C., on April 25. Plan to join us!

Please note that the trip to the BROCK ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER has been CANCELLED.



Wikimedia Commons

**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).

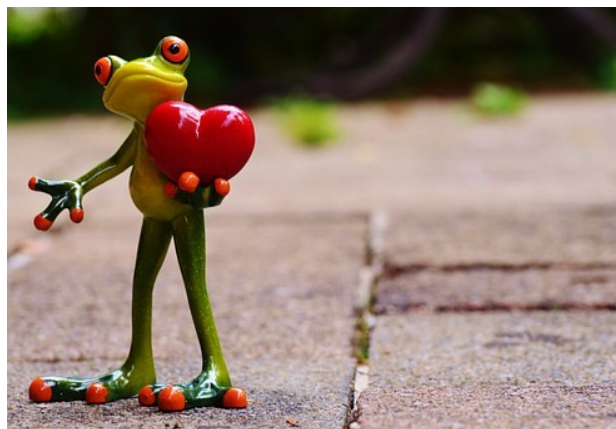
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## LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD GARDENERS...OR, VACANCIES R US BY JANET SMITH, VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROJECTS

With the start of 2018, we find that some popular projects have vacancies for chair and co-chair positions. It is important that two people share the responsibility to ensure project continuity and project knowledge. Projects that need a chair or co-chair are:

- Water Wise Low Maintenance Garden
- Landscape Love
- Speakers Bureau
- Therapeutic Gardening
- Carole's Garden in New Kent

This is a great opportunity to get involved! Please contact either [Kate Robbins](#) or myself, [Janet Smith](#), if you are interested.



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## MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE 2018

BY BESS HOPEWELL AND MARY MILLS, CO-CHAIRS

The Plant Sale Committee recently met to begin planning the 2018 plant sale, which is the major fundraising event for the Master Gardener Association. This year's sale will be at the Historic Triangle Community Services Building on Waller Mill Road (the same location as last year) on

**Saturday, April 21, 2018 from 9:00am-3:00pm.**

**Setup and Intake: Friday, April 20**

**Setup 7:00am - 2:00pm**

**Intake: 8:00am -- 2:00pm**

All Master Gardeners: please make sure plants are potted up in a suitable manner and ready to sell. It is important that these plants are potted up at least a month in advance so they have a viable root system established. Please no invasive plants.

**Master Gardener Pre-Sale: Friday, April 20 from 3:00-5:00pm**

### **Pots:**

Beginning February 1, Pat Rathke and Pat Abraham will have 6" pots filled with compost and perlite available at our monthly meetings. If you have larger plants, you may take advantage of the compost and perlite mix by going to Pat Abraham's house at 123 Quarter Meeting House Road (please contact Pat first).

### **Jobs:**

Sign-up sheets will be available at February's MG meeting in the front of the room. We need everyone's help to make the sale a success, so please sign up in the category in which you'd like to participate.

### **Project Chair Information:**

*Donated* MG plant material will be available for your projects at the close of the plant sale on Saturday at 3:00.

We are asking each Master Gardener to provide at least six 6" pots of plant material. If you don't have any plants of your own, you can purchase a six-pack from a garden center and transplant them into six 6" pots a month before the plant sale. You may also donate garden items that are easily transported to the new "Garden Trash & Treasure" component of the plant sale. Examples include garden tools, planters, shepherd's hooks, statuary, garden apparel, etc., that are in good functional condition and appearance -- items that you wouldn't mind having or passing on to a friend.

Thank you in advance for participating.

**JOIN US FOR A SPRING FLING!**

BY BARBARA GUSTAFSON



The Graphics Fairy

Join us for a Master Gardener appreciation celebration! And to welcome spring!

Our association is sponsoring a dinner party for our members and our spouses Friday, March 9, at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church on Richmond Road. Carrabba's is preparing appetizers, salad, and a dinner of chicken marsala and a pasta side. A "specialty" dessert is being made by some of our own.

The cost is only \$10.00 each for all association members and their guests. This will be a perfect time to meet the current trainees of the Class of 2018, establish new friendships with the Class of 2017, and strengthen bonds with all other association members. There will be time to talk with our friends before dinner and enjoy entertainment after.

So please put March 9 on your calendar and send the reservation below.

***JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association Appreciation Event***

**"Spring Fling" Reservation**

**Date:** Friday, March 9, 2018

**Time:** 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

**Where:** Williamsburg Presbyterian Church

Richmond Road, across from the College of William and Mary

**Cost:** \$10.00 per person

Please complete this form and return to Liz Favre by **March 1, 2018**, to secure your reservation. Checks should be made payable to: JCC/W Master Gardener Association. The cost for each attendee is \$10.00.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Mail to: Liz Favre at 4419 Chickasaw Road, Williamsburg 23188



## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2018

BY HELEN HAMILTON

PAST PRESIDENT, JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### WAX MYRTLE, SOUTHERN BAYBERRY

*Morella cerifera*

Wax myrtle is an undemanding small tree with a long list of positive attributes. This native evergreen has soft, olive-green foliage with a spicy odor which repels insects, and deer usually avoid leaves with strong fragrances.

Leaves are lance-shaped and soft, a nice contrast with other leathery, spiky and spiny winter shrubs. Wax myrtle grows quickly and can form good screening and hedges. It will quickly become a small tree, but growth can be controlled with pruning to encourage dense foliage and a rounded shape.



Photo: Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) taken by Helen Hamilton

Any kind of habitat will do, sun or shade, but the plant prefers good drainage and slightly acidic soils. Wax myrtle grows wild in southeastern states in pine woods, swamps, and bogs, and in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont of Virginia. Tolerant of drought, sand, sun, and salt spray, this shrub can be planted near brackish water and on beaches. Cultivars are available in the nursery trade, selected for shorter or more upright growth habit and larger fruits.

In April tiny flowers appear on both male and female trees before the new leaves, but the female trees produce the fruits, from August through October. These pale blue, waxy fruits are eaten by a wide variety of birds, many of which require the fat as fuel for migrations. In winter, the seeds are important foods for Carolina wrens and tree sparrows. Birds help disperse these plants, since their digestive systems remove the wax, allowing the seeds to germinate. Early settlers boiled the berries, allowed the liquid to cool, and collected the floating wax to make into bayberry candles.

Like those of legumes, the roots of wax myrtle carry nodules of bacteria which change atmospheric nitrogen to mineral form. Wax myrtle will grow in poor soil, and in several years the soils become much more fertile.

This is not the bay that flavors soups and stews. The bay leaf sold in containers as a spice comes from the Mediterranean area or from California, but the leaves of wax myrtle were used by early settlers and some herbalists in cooking and baking.

Native American and later folk medicine used the leaves and bark of wax myrtle for diarrhea, fevers, toothaches, and a variety of other ailments. Chemical analysis has found many aromatic compounds in the leaves, bitter and astringent compounds, and antibacterial and anti-tumor agents.

Birds are attracted to these plants, which they use for food and shelter. Myrtle (yellow-rumped) warblers are so named because they are often seen in these shrubs. They are winter residents in our area, able to survive on the fruits of juniper, poison ivy, and these bayberries. This has given them a large long-term advantage over most of our other warblers and many other birds that make increasingly perilous journeys to winter in the tropics, where there is massive habitat destruction.

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

## Important Dates

- 2/3 Community Gardening (Manassas)
- 2/3 Spring to Green (Danville)
- 2/11 Garden Revolution (Manassas)
- 2/14-16 Winter Symposium (Lewis Ginter, Richmond)
- 2/17 Native Orchids (Freedom Park)
- 3/9 MGA Spring Fling
- 4/21 Annual plant sale
- 4/25 Field Trip to the Hillwood Estate



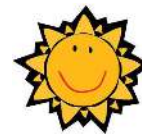
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## **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**The deadline for submissions to the March 2018 newsletter will be Wednesday, February 21.**

**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 a card to:

Beth Fugate

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.

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.