



The Colonial Master Gardener

July
2018

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

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY GARY STREB

“In his own garden every man may be his own artist without apology or explanation.”

—Louise Beebe Wilder, *Colour in My Garden* (1918)

Hot enough for you? It seems that summer gets sooner each year, cutting our glorious springs much too short. But, living in Tidewater Virginia, we should not be surprised--the hot, humid summers are part of the charm that attracted us to the area. Just think of those original colonists four hundred years ago, with all those heavy woolen clothes, no air-conditioning, going to work every day in their gardens simply to survive. The power of a positive attitude!

This is a busy time for most of us, with several modern day Colonial Master Gardeners on vacation or visiting with family and friends. Our monthly educational lecture/association business meeting is on hiatus this month to allow all of our members the opportunity to engage in other real world/non-volunteer activities. Most of our projects are also on a reduced schedule. But there will always be something to keep us fully occupied. By checking a few publications for the July “to-do” garden list I’m surprised by all that should be done---don’t our gardens realize that this is the time for rest,

**There is no monthly meeting in July,
but don’t miss our annual picnic on
July 20th!**

relaxation, and quiet time to reflect upon the beauties of nature or the artificial nature that we have created?

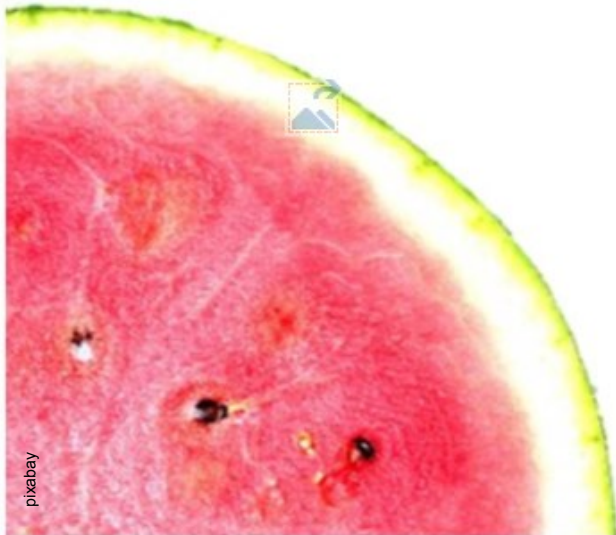
Time to pull out the soaker hose if you haven’t yet installed drip irrigation. Or better yet, fill up the watering cans from your rain barrels to provide moisture to your water-conscious native plant gardens. Remember that we are providing water to the roots and not the leaves---I see a shocking number of neighbors running with the hose, splashing water on the foliage and nary a drop touching the naked ground. And don’t use our precious water to nourish weeds. Pull them. Mulch. And compost, compost, compost. Take care of the wildlife living or visiting in your yard with birdbaths frequently cleaned to avoid mosquito breeding. Also, it’s time to deadhead several of your flowers to extend their blooming cycle. Pinch back your mums for fuller growth and curtail flowering until the fall. Stake or cage flopping flowers and vegetables as well as check for insect damage. Organic first.

Remember that

“Pure soft water is the most potent of all insecticides.”

— James Shirley Hibbard, *The Amateur’s Flower Garden* (1884)

Above all, find the time to sit back with a nice cool one and enjoy the fruits of your labor.



(The president’s message is continued on the next page, page 2)

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE -- CONTINUED

2018
MGA Board

President:
Gary Streb

President Elect:
Cathy Hill

VP Administration:
Dee Arbogast

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

Our James City County/Williamsburg unit had eight members attend the 31st Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech June 20-24. The focus was on Tree Steward training, and Patsy McGrady, our Tree Call project leader and Peninsula Tree Steward coordinator, assisted with the teaching. Mandy Miller-Doggett, one of our scholarship recipients, completed the on-site training. And there were several other sessions and classes for every interest: ask Rick Brown about purple broccoli or Liz Favre about worm towers to see the full range of knowledge the attendees absorbed. Getting to know your fellow Master Gardeners better and meeting other volunteers from throughout the Commonwealth are benefits that cannot be quantified. Next year Master Gardener College will be in Norfolk in late September, so it will be much more convenient for us here in Williamsburg to attend. Pencil it in your 2019 calendar.

Consider this a reminder about the annual picnic and celebration of our unit's 35th anniversary----If you haven't yet sent your reservations and check to Angela Cingale please get in touch with her soonest. The deadline for catering numbers is rapidly approaching. The **June Colonial Master Gardener** included details, as did a previous email that I sent out. Hope to see you all at the JCC Rec Center, Rooms A and B, on Friday, July 20, at 5:00pm. The new venue will be much more comfortable for all of us to chat with some of the "pioneers" of our unit and to bond with our newer members. Questions? Angela is at www.arcingale@cox.net or contact me at www.gstreb11@gmail.com.

The board vetting of the VCE projects 2018 is still continuing with some super-long meetings/discussions under our belt. Some of the recommended changes are already proving beneficial to our unit and to our community clients. A few of the projects are still plagued by the lack of dedicated leadership, needing both a chair and co-chair. For day-to-day operations and continuity reasons this is untenable. Someone has to organize and structure each of the projects. Why can't that "someone" be you? Talk with your project leader/chair and find out what has to be done. We need your help.

We also ask you to help locate the two new six-foot tablecloths that the association purchased last year. They are brand new, burgundy with the new VCE logo in white and are currently missing in action. They could have easily been folded up and stuck in a bag or box and forgotten about. Please let Stacy DeMeo (sdmeo@hotmail.com), our unit's property manager, know when they show up.

If you haven't yet seen the July/August edition of **Virginia Gardener Magazine** you are missing an opportunity to read about our own native plant activist, the green-haired Helen Hamilton. It features a nice resume of her activities and includes a list of her favorite native plants. Quite an inspiration. A great summer read! Currently on local newsstands.... Happy gardening and stay cool!

"Shrubs are, unfortunately, something you are supposed to have—marching across the front of your house like Snow White's dwarves, clipped into the usual classic shapes: The Muffin, the Golf Ball, the Chicken Croquette.... That's a pity, because shrubs are too versatile, and too beautiful, to be taken for granted."

— Barbara Damrosch, The Gardening Primer (1988)



Boxballs at Amboise, by Stuart Nunn, flickr

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.

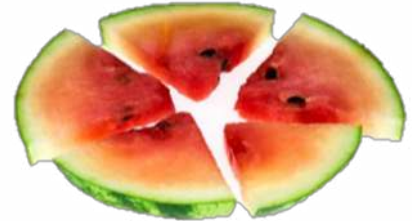
UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION



July 9 (online). **Plant Identification: Annuals, Perennials, and Vines**. A six-week online educational *noncredit* course from NC State. \$98 for Extension Master Gardeners, \$195 for the general public. Register [here](#).

July 14 (Freedom Park). 9:00am. **Ferns, Mosses, and Forest Plants**. Join Helen Hamilton to look for summer forest plants, ferns, and mosses, on a short trail in Freedom Park. The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists was involved in developing a path that leads to a deep ravine heavily covered with low herbaceous plants. Bring a magnifier to look at tiny plants, and a camera to photograph the larger ones. Park by the playground near the Go Ape facility. Contact Helen at (757) 564-4494 or helen48@cox.net for information.



July 14 (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00-11:00am. **The Magic Metamorphosis of Butterflies – Children's Program**. Learn how butterflies start as tiny eggs and the stages they go through before becoming beautiful flying creatures. Judith Alberts, a Virginia Master Gardener and butterfly enthusiast, will explain the life cycle and metamorphosis of butterflies through pictures and living examples from her own butterfly nursery. Children aged 4 and up are invited to this free program, but a \$5.00 donation to the WBG is appreciated. Register [here](#).

July 21 (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00-11:30am. **Understanding Snakes: Fear Not!** Tim Christensen is a biological scientist who works at the Conservation Branch at Joint Base Langley-Eustis at Fort Eustis. Tim will explain snake biology, their significance, and will explore ways to alleviate fear of snakes. This event is part of the Learn and Grow Educational Series sponsored by the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. [Register](#) to guarantee a spot. Free and open to the public, although a \$5.00 donation is appreciated.



August 4 (Wellspring United Methodist Church, 4871 Longhill Rd, Williamsburg, 23188) 9:00am. **Clothed Trees**. Join Stewart Ware for a fun and informative walk all about trees. The woods around Wellspring United Methodist Church have most of our common upland trees, and Dr. Ware will show how to identify them, as well as some rarer trees. Meet in the parking lot at Wellspring Church on Longhill Road, just east of the junction with Old Towne Road. Contact Stewart at (757-565-0657) or saware@wm.edu for more information.

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UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

August 18 (Freedom Park Interpretive Center). 10:00-11:30am. **Tips on Garden Photography**. John Whistler, local gardener, photographer, and owner of Whistler Works Studio, will give those gardeners who want to capture photos of the flora and fauna in their gardens or elsewhere basic and advanced suggestions to improve their images. Examples of his photography can be viewed at JohnWhistlerPhotos.com. Free and open to the public, but register in advance to guarantee a spot. To register, click [here](#)



September 15 (Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center, 1444 Diamond Springs Road, Virginia Beach 23455). 10:00am-3:00pm. **Fall Gardening Festival**. A project of the Virginia Beach Master Gardeners, this annual event includes speakers and demonstrations. There is no cost to attend, parking is plentiful and free, and it is a family and dog-friendly event.

September 29 (Holiday Lake Educational Center, 1267 4-H Camp Road, Appomattox 24522). 9:00am-4:00pm. **Bats, Birds and Bugs: Gardening on the Wilder Side**. A Virginia Master Gardener Association educational event. Speakers on entomology, bats, wildflowers, water resources, and what's happening in your backyard that you might not be aware of! Limited to 150 attendees, registration due by September 11. For further information, call (540) 544-7359. If there is enough local interest, consider carpooling to Appomattox.



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."



OUR PICNIC IS FAST APPROACHING! BY ANGELA CINGALE

In June's newsletter, there was an information sheet and reservation form for our annual picnic. **We've extended the deadline to Wednesday, July 11.** However, this is firm.

This is a reminder that you need to send in your reservation form for the "35th Anniversary Party for the James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association Picnic," which will take place Friday, July 20, 5:00 - 8:00pm, at the James City County Rec Center, 5301 Longhill Road, Rooms A and B.

We'll gather for a barbecue supper, where there will be tables and chairs inside and on the patio. Rocco's Smokehouse Grill will cater the food, with cake and ice-cream to top off our delicious meal. You can look forward to flavorful food, surprises, lively music, and the opportunity to get to know your fellow Master Gardeners. There will be refreshments available throughout the evening.

I'm wearing my name tag and would appreciate it if you wore yours so we can greet one another by first name. If you haven't already filled out the reservation form, kindly do so and include the check for \$10 per person for you and your guest(s), for the July 7th deadline.

Please mail it to Angela Cingale, 4077 Coronation, Williamsburg, VA 23188, or call 565-4712, with any questions.

MYSTERY? MYSTERY? MISSING PROPERTY!

BY STACY DEMEO

What? Two (2) six (6)- foot maroon or green tablecloths with the new Va Tech logo
When? Sometime after January 2017
Where? That is what we need to know!

If anyone has any information as to the whereabouts of these two cloths, it would be great if you would contact...

Stacy DeMeo
sdemeo@hotmail.com or (305) 799-8245

No questions asked....All information will be confidential!
Reward for information leading to the recovery of the cloths—one (1) hour of free volunteer time from me.



The Graphics Fairy

COFFEE AND SNACKS

BY AVRIL PURVIS

For those working the help desk....I'd like to remind you that you will find fresh coffee and snacks in the kitchen across from the help-desk office. The code to get into the kitchen is in the help-desk notebook. Enjoy!

BEETLES OR BUTTERFLIES?

BY HELEN HAMILTON

REPRINTED FROM THE JULY-AUGUST 2018 ISSUE OF CLAYTONIA: NEWSLETTER OF THE JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle *Labidomera clivicollis* is a voracious feeder of milkweed leaves and somehow the milkweeds in my small yard has been chosen as their favorite habitat. I started early this year, trying to control their population, but it seems the battle is only beginning. Here's my story.

Several years ago we were traveling during the season when milkweed plants were thinking about blooming. Returning how weeks later, the blooms were finished and so were most of the leaves, the stems covered with shiny black and orange beetles happily chewing away. All 3 milkweed species, each with maybe a dozen plants, were down to bare stems.



Photos by Seig Kopintz



Next year, same thing ... we were traveling in the spring but returned to see the start of the milkweed leaf beetle invasion. I tried picking them by hand, but there were too many and lots of larvae on the underside of the leaves. Soap spray, horticultural oil spray, only stopped them for a day or so and back they came. Another disastrous year.

Sent an email to Dr. Doug Tallamy, asking how I could control these beasts. He questioned my identification, so I sent him photos, he agreed, and told me I was fortunate to have a native beetle in my yard, since he does not see that species in Delaware. Not to worry, he said, the milkweeds are perennials and will return next year. This was not the response I was seeking from Dr. Tallamy, but realizing he is an entomologist, I gave up and tried very hard to save the few remaining stems, with not much success.

This year we were home in early spring, and a lot of milkweeds, mostly *Asclepias syriaca* appeared all over the front garden, into the pathways and out into the asphalt roadway. As they grew, I went on patrol, and when the flowers appeared, along with bees, wasps and flies, I inspected each plant at least once and often three times daily. The first sighting was of a pair of beetles eating and mating – very bad news, they lay a lot of eggs, that grow into ugly brown larvae on the underside of leaves. The pair was not very well attached and fell off before I could kill them.

So, the beetles appeared, one by one, allowing me to pick them off by hand, squishing them underfoot, and the larvae as well. In the past I have dropped them into jars of oil or soapy water and watched them die, but a quick death is better for them and easier for me. Any fresh cuts on the leaves meant there were adults or larvae on the underside – a telltale sign of their activity.

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BEETLES OR BUTTERFLIES? — CONTINUED

But there were only a few each day, and sometimes none, so all the plants grew vigorously with multiple blooms. Now the blooms are fading, and here come the beetle larvae. Out on patrol this morning (June 16) I found dozens of larvae in different stages. I found only one small adult, possibly the second generation just emerging.

These beetles have 4 stages in their life cycle. They overwinter as adults emerging in the spring to lay orange tubular eggs on the underside of milkweed leaves (I have not yet found these). As the eggs hatch the larvae go through 3 stages, chewing milkweed leaves down to the stems. The last instar drops to leaf litter to pupate. They range over eastern North America to New Mexico, making only one generation each season, but usually two generations in the south.

The only control is hand-picking as any chemical applied will affect other insects, and many are predators of this beetle. The battle is far from over, but each leaf that I save will be food for monarchs.

MILESTONE AWARDS JAMES CITY COUNTY/ WILLIAMSBURG JULY 2018

BY GARY STREB, PRESIDENT

In 2017, a total of 779 Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners reached milestones for their achievements. The Commonwealth total was 766,000 volunteer hours, valued at \$20,651,360 (based on an hourly rate for Virginia of \$26.96 from independent sector).

The following members of our James City County /Williamsburg (including New Kent) Extension Master Gardeners unit were acknowledged with milestone awards at 31st Annual Master Gardener College:

250 Hours:

Dee Arbegast, Ricklin Brown, Deborah Bussert, Susan Carlile, Brenda Chandler, Chris Dahlstrom, Fred Matthies, Susan Neidlinger, Donna Thibeault, Victoria Velez, Sherry Walker, Gail Weaver

500 Hours:

Chris Dahlstrom, Deb Griesinger, Diane Hare, Louann Martin, Terri Mayberry, Jean Muller, Susan Neidlinger, Becky Palmore, Susan Shoulet, Carolyn Stringer, Donna Thibeault, Mike Whitfield

1,000 Hours:

Carol Conner, Sheila Nigro, Martin Oakes, Janet Smith

4,000 Hours:

Helen Hamilton, Linda Lucas

6,000 Hours:

Angela Cingale

7,000 Hours:

Barbara Gustafson



Congratulations and a sincere thank you to everyone who contributes time and passion to the Extension Master Gardener program. And don't forget to enter your hours in the Volunteer Management System to receive recognition for a significant personal and volunteer achievement!

THE GIANT HOGWEED: DON'T TOUCH IT

BY HOPE YELICH,

FROM INFORMATION SENT BY LINDA SLYFIELD, DAVID KLEPPINGER, AND MARILYN RIDDLE

Giant hogweed is moving south. Long a problem in New York state and other points north, the giant hogweed resembles Queen Anne's lace but grows from eight-to-fourteen-feet tall and two-to-five-feet across. The problem is that if someone touches its sap, that person can get second or even third-degree burns or even become blind. It's now been found as far south as Florida, and recently Virginia Tech experts found thirty plants in Clarke County, near Winchester. According to the *WY Daily*, giant hogweed could be on its way to Hampton Roads.

Whether this noxious weed will become a problem in our area is still up in the air, but the recent surfeit of articles on the subject indicates that giant hogweed is certainly on people's minds.

To find out more, click on the following articles:

WY Daily, June 21, 2018: ["Lookout: Giant Hogweed Could be Headed Our Way"](#)

Richmond Times-Dispatch, July 4, 2018: ["Marsha Mercer Column: Beware the Giant Hogweed and other Summer Hazards"](#)

CBS News, June 18, 2018: ["Giant Hogweed, Plant that Causes Blindness and Third-Degree Burns, Discovered in Virginia"](#)

From the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: ["Giant Hogweed Control Methods Guide"](#)

Giant hogweed plants
with DEC staff person
in Putnam County,
New York/flickr



WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH JULY 2018

BY HELEN HAMILTON
JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

BLUE MISTFLOWER

Conoclinium coelestinum
(*Eupatorium coelestinum*)

This native perennial is topped with masses of soft, fluffy violet-blue flowers. It's a member of the Aster family, but there are no rays on the flowers. Each flowerhead has as many as fifty little florets, each with five tiny lobes and a long style that gives the flowers a fuzzy appearance. Other asters like black-eyed Susans, dandelions, and sunflowers have both ray and disk flowers.

Mistflower grows three-to-four-feet tall and spreads by creeping roots. It can take over an entire border, but the roots are shallow and easy to pull out. The plant grows best in full sun to light shade, in moist conditions – it does not handle drought well but requires little attention. With a long blooming season – July through October, this perennial feeds insects well into fall. The leaves and stems die back during winter but emerge again in early summer.

Blue mistflower grows wild in woods edges, stream banks, ditches, meadows, and fields, in nearly every county in Virginia. It is also known as wild ageratum because the flowers resemble those of the shorter (six-to-twelve inch) annual dwarf ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*,) sold in garden centers as bedding plants.

Blue mistflower is usually covered with butterflies and skippers sipping nectar and bees collecting pollen. The leaves grow opposite on the stems with soft toothed edges, three x two inches. Deer usually don't bother this plant because the leaves have a bitter taste.

Other species with similar characteristics – flat-topped clusters of disk flowerheads – are closely related and include Joe Pye weeds, flat-topped goldenrods, and bonesets.

All are butterfly magnets.



Photo: Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) taken by Helen Hamilton in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, July 2006

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

Important Dates

- 7/9 Plant Identification online course
- 7/14 Ferns, Mosses, Forest Plants (Freedom Park)
- 7/14 Butterflies (Freedom Park)
- 7/20 Annual Picnic
- 7/21 Understanding Snakes (Freedom Park)
- 8/4 Clothes Trees (Wellspring Church)
- 8/18 Garden Photography (Freedom Park)
- 9/15 Fall Gardening Festival (AREC)
- 9/29 Bats, Birds, and Bugs (Appomattox)



pixabay

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the August 2018 newsletter will be Wednesday, July 25.

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

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.

This month we sent cards to:
Pat Janot
Family of Frank Messina
Family of Don Demmert

Please provide names to the EMG secretary, Jennifer Campbell, at (757) 968-9499, or 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.