



The Colonial Master Gardener

February
2015

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SUE LIDDELL

Thank you for the vote of confidence given to the Board as you approved the revised By-Laws last month, extending our time in office through 2015. In November we will elect President, President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer, the remaining officers completing their two year terms in 2016. It is a balancing act, between the excitement of change and the familiarity of continuity. Next month there will be a change in the newsletter as Cathy Lohwater ends six years as Editor and Hope Yelich takes over. We thank Cathy for keeping us so well informed of MG activities and welcome Hope by keeping those articles coming.

Change has been the norm for the new MG and TS classes. Both had weather related changes in January. TSs met at the JCC Community Center, Williamsburg Botanical Garden and Sandy Bottom Nature Park, all places with urban forest to explore. Active TSs have been attending the classes, both as auditors and as presenters. Patsy McGrady, Larry Gaskins and John Giffin explained their respective projects to the students.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 5

Program:

Marie Butler, Landscape Design,
Norfolk Zoo

All MGs can audit the MG classes, review what they've learned and get acquainted with the students. February classes will cover pruning, vegetables/fruit, water, and lawn. Contact Class Coordinators Barb Floyd or Patti Lupton if you wish to attend a session.

February is the month for pruning and for planning. Congratulations to Barb Landa's pruning crew for the nice article in the Gazette. Thanks to all Project Chairs for the planning I know is going on.



More Tree
Steward class
pictures on page 4

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR!

BY CATHY LOHWATER

I am pleased to announce that we have a new Newsletter Editor, Hope Yelich. Hope is one of our newest MGs and she was kind enough to volunteer to take on this position. She will start as editor with the March newsletter, so all future submissions to the newsletter will go to her. Hope's e-mail address is: hopeyelich@gmail.com. Please give a warm welcome to Hope.

I appreciate all the wonderful articles that have been submitted to me over the years and all the kind encouragement I have received. Thanks to you all! I couldn't have done it without you!

2015
MG Board

President:
Sue Liddell

President Elect:
Debbie Griesinger

*VP
Administration:*
Diane Hare

VP Projects:
Wilma Sharp

VP Internal Ed:
Kathy Bush

Secretary:
Patsy McGrady

Treasurer:
Bob Winther

VMGA Reps:
Marilyn Riddle and
Jeanne Millin

Past President:
Margene
Hartsough

Co-op Ext Rep:
Doris Heath
564-2170

*Program Asst.,
ANR:*
Kate Robbins

INTERNAL EDUCATION

BY KATHY BUSH

I recently read an article by Shyamantha Asokan about gardening in the “urban jungle” of cities around the globe. From rooftops of overcrowded apartment blocks in China, to World War II bomb shelters in London, and even in the burgeoning city of Mumbai, India, innovative ways growing food for the table are making the news. Check out this link to learn more: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/08/agriculture-urban-idUSL6N0UN1J820150108>

And here is an inspiring video of urban gardens around the world. If you “came of age” in the 60’s or 70’s you may appreciate the music that accompanies it. (If not, just mute it.) We can learn a lot about gardening in small places from watching this: <http://vimeo.com/98843218>

From global urban jungles to safaris in Virginia, this month our speaker will be Marie Butler, the landscape coordinator from the Virginia Zoo in Norfolk. She will take us on a horticultural tour of the many themed gardens that you will find there in her talk entitled “A Horticultural Safari of the VA Zoo”. Did you know they have an African Village Garden, an Ornamental Grass Garden, and a Tropical Garden to name a few? Come and see her pictures and hear her talk and then on June 17th plan on going on a field trip to the zoo to see it in person. Marie will give us a guided tour. Save the date. More details to follow.

On **March 2nd**, we will have a field trip to **Norfolk Botanical Gardens** for a guided tour of the extensive Camellia garden. Sign up and get more details at the February meeting. Kate Wilhide is POC.



Tropical Garden at the Virginia Zoo in Norfolk

The MG Board meets on the third Friday of each month, at 9:30 am, at the James City County Health and Human Services Building, on Olde Towne Road.

The Board meetings are open to all Master Gardeners, and all are encouraged to attend.

Remember, Master Gardeners need 8 hours of continuing education each year (January-December) to be recertified. Monthly educational meetings qualify for one hour and other educational events and field trips (minus travel time) count toward this requirement. If you have questions whether something qualifies you may contact Kate Robbins or Kathy Bush.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY KATHY BUSH

Birds, Bugs, and Plants: Observing the Natural World in the 18th Century; Feb 21, 2015 through 2016, at Dewitt Wallace Museum in Colonial Williamsburg.

Explore the growth of interest in natural history during the 18th century. With the settlement of the New World, many Englishman and colonists became fascinated by the plants and animals that were native to the region. These gentlemen on both sides of the Atlantic exchanged specimens and ideas and sponsored the avid collecting and documenting of birds, bugs and plants. Gardens, carefully planned and laid out, furthered the studies and enjoyment both privately and publicly. Beautiful watercolors, hand-colored prints and period books illustrate this story.

February 10, 2015, 1 PM, Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Norge, VA. The Colonial Triangle Unit of the Herb Society of America is having Jim Orband speak and his topic is "**Ferns!**" Jim was the senior extension agent in York County and retired after 34 years of service. Refreshments begin at 1 PM with the program starting at 1:30. The meeting is open to the public.

March 20, 2015, Waynesboro, VA. The **Perennial Plant Diva** at the Shenandoah Valley Plant Symposium. 8 AM to 4 PM. Cost is \$80 (lunch included) if registered before Feb 8th. Information and Registration at <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ea35rzxk409da5ed&llr=nzdak9dab>

March 21, 2015, Freedom Park Interpretive Center, 10 AM. **Geology of Plants**, by retired Geology professor Dr. Jerre Johnson. A review of geologic history of the area and processes that shaped its landscape and soils.

March 28, 2015, 8-3 PM, Northern Neck Master Gardeners and VCE 22nd Annual "Gardening in the Northern Neck" Seminar "**What's New and What's Tried and True**". Speakers, vendors, book signings. Check website www.nnmg.org after Feb 1st for registration form. \$25

April 10, 2015, Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium. **Layers of the Living Landscape**, Hennage Auditorium, 2:30-5, open to the public. How many living layers are in your garden? During Colonial Williamsburg's 69th Garden Symposium, Rick Darke and Doug Tallamy, authors of "The Living Landscape," share their expertise on using plants to create and maintain a layered landscape. Planting in layers allows gardeners to take full advantage of their space and include a diversity of plants that provide beauty and benefit wildlife. The authors and other experts will suggest design strategies for effectively transitioning from one layer to the next and recommend plant selections that range from

tall shade trees to mid-size shrubs to low-growing perennials and groundcovers. Maintenance tips for all plants will be shared in hopes that you will be encouraged to create a home landscape that is satisfying on many levels. Advance Registration Required, 1-800-603-0948

April 11, 2015, The 18th Annual Gardening Symposium at CNU. Save the date: The theme will be "**Great Gardens-Great Ideas**". Guest speakers will be: Sharon Loving, Director of Horticulture at Longwood Gardens, Chris Strand, Director Garden & Estate of Winterthur Museum, Patricia Brodowski, Director of Vegetable Gardens of Monticello. Registration will be online soon. <http://cnu.edu/gardening/> Also, our Colonial Triangle Chapter of the Herb Society of America will be selling herbs. There will be other vendors.

Winter/Spring Class Schedule from Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. To register by phone, call the Registrar's Office at 804-262-9887, x320 or [download a printable registration form](#). <http://www.lewisginter.org/adult-education/adult-educationhappeningnow.php>

Please see their website for more details about the following classes:

Plants for Late Winter - February 7

Winter Symposium and CVNLA Short Course - February 11, 12, 13

Spring Pruning for Shrubs and Small Ornamental Trees - February 14

Digging In: Tips, Tools and Time Savers - February 19, 26, March 5

Vegetable Gardening the Organic Way – February 21

What's Your Garden Style? – February 28, March 7

Patio Vegetable Gardens – March 14

All Things Orchid – March 14

Rose Basics Workshop – March 21

Gardening with Deer - March 26

Building Good Garden Soil – March 28

The Beginner's Perennial Garden – April 23

The Colonial Master Gardener February 2015



Peninsula Tree Steward Class JCC, NN



Carol Fryer and Lisa Sanderson, ANR Extension Agent Henrico County



Front Row: Kendra Swan, Gail Weaver, PJ Vasquez, Jean Johnston, Chere' Harper
Back Row: Pam Woodson, Gary Streb, Ginny Cranford, Deborah Griesinger, Joanne Sheffield



INTERESTING PHOTOS

Do you have a unique photo of interesting insects, trees, gardens, or hardscapes from your travels or in your neighborhood that you would like to share with our MG group? Send them with your name and a caption to Hope Yelich at hopeyulich@gmail.com.

Master Gardeners in O'ahu Hawaii work the Farmers Market in January! Photo submitted by Kathy Bush.



PLANT SALE NEWS

BY CHERE' HARPER



Our Planning Committee meetings have begun, and all interested in coming can find the details on the website under Plant Sale Committee -- you are always welcome. Our next meeting is February 2nd, 1 PM in room A at the JCC Rec Center on Longhill Road.

Due to two large commitments already booked, the Herb Society will not be able to join us for Plants Huzzah! this year. This means that we need to provide all the herbs we want to offer the public. Whatever you want to grow or buy and pot up are requested and appreciated. Lavender, rosemary, garlic, chives, anything we like is possible and welcome. Herbs should be in 4-inch pots, which are available at Ailene Bartlett's Way Back- remember to check at Ashley's front door before walking in, as Hunter and Harley are very friendly! A Pizza Garden, Salad Garden or similar group of plants are always popular with our customers, and a lot of fun to prepare, too.

Pat Rathke has offered a generous donation of potting mix, which we plan to provide to the membership in 6 inch pots, bagged in units of 6 pots each. A mixing party will be needed the week before our meeting, so please consider helping us when the call goes out. The time and date are pending, so this will likely come as an email blast rather than wait for the Newsletter.

NEW KENT PRUNING CLINIC

BY SUE DONNELLY



On Saturday, February 21, 2015, the New Kent Master Gardeners will be conducting a Pruning Clinic from 10:00am to 12:00pm. Master Gardeners will teach you proper pruning techniques. Hands-on pruning demonstrations will cover landscape trees and shrubs, plus tools, sharpening, safety, and educational publications. Participants are asked to bring their own pruning tools.

Location is the New Kent Extension Office, 11809 New Kent Highway, Suite 1, New Kent, VA.

To reserve your spot please register by February 18th by contacting New Kent Virginia Cooperative Extension (804) 966-9645 / email marci4@vt.edu

LEFTOVER GARDEN BOOKS?

Garden Book donations will be accepted for the plant sale at the February, March and April meetings. Questions? Contact: Kendra Swann at kendrar179@aol.com

PLANT SALE POTS

Our goal is to start having pots available for pick up at our February meeting. As in the past 6" pots will be our standard for most uses. Seedlings and vegetables should go in 3"-4" pots. We will try to have some large pots available also for trees and shrubs.

THIS IS AMAZING

SUBMITTED BY RUTH ANN PENBERTHY

Once every three years, there is an international competition in horticultural sculpture, called "Mosaiculture," in a major city in the world. This year it is Montreal. This is not topiary but rather creating sculptures out of living plants. The greatest horticulturalists in the world, from 20 different countries, submitted plans a year in advance. Steel armatures were then created to support the works (some 40 feet high); they were then wrapped in steel mesh and filled with dirt and moss and watering hoses. Then they ordered 3 million plants of different shades of green and brown and tan, and these were grown in greenhouses all over Quebec. In late May, these horticulturalists came to Montreal and planted all of their plants in the forms at the Montreal Botanic Gardens, and they have been standing for three months now. There were 50 major sculptures along a path two miles long. They were incredible.

Check out this website for many more images:
<http://myvirtualgarden2.blogspot.com/2013/09/mosaiculture-exhibition.html>



Mother Earth



Line of Lemurs

MG'S AT LUNCH

BY KEN CARO

Some of the MG's that participated in the Blayton School Garden program met for their Annual Christmas Lunch. Charlie Morse, the lead teacher is on the right in the foreground.



WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH – FEBRUARY 2015

BY HELEN HAMILTON

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT
SOCIETY

River Birch *Betula nigra*

There is a lot to like about River Birch, especially in the winter when its cream to peach-colored inner shredding bark is so visible without the summer leaves. This medium-sized tree tolerates compacted clay (within reason), summer heat and drought, but grows best in average to humus-rich acidic soil in full sun or partial shade. The trunk can be single or multi-stemmed, with finely textured branches and toothed, triangular light green leaves becoming yellow in the fall. River birch is a highly prized ornamental for its graceful silhouette and attractive bark. With a tolerance for acid soils, it is also planted for erosion control.

Each tree houses both male and female flowers, formed as brown catkins from March through April. The male pollen-bearing catkins are elongate and the female, fruit-bearing catkins are cylindrical. Flowers appear March through April and fruits from May through June. The fine seeds are eaten by small birds including chickadee, goldfinch, purple finch, titmouse and nuthatch. River Birch is resistant to many pests and diseases that plague other birches.

Found naturally along stream and river edges from Massachusetts and southeastern Minnesota, south to northern Florida and east Texas, River Birch is native in nearly every county in Virginia. The tree is fast-growing when young and slows with age, living not more than 70 years. While of lesser quality than Black Birch (*B. lenta*) or Yellow Birch (*B. alleghaniensis*), the wood is strong and light, ideal for children's toys and artificial limbs and inexpensive furniture.



Photo: River Birch (*Betula nigra*)
taken by Helen Hamilton

While Yellow Birch and Sweet Birch have the flavor of wintergreen when crushed, River Birch is not aromatic. Native Americans used the leaves of River Birch to treat dysentery and colds and they made preparations of bark for urinary problems and for stomach pain.

For more information about native plants visit
www.claytonvnps.org.

Looking ahead to the month of July, we do not have a scheduled Educational or Business meeting. We would like to reinstate a practice from years ago and have a Master Gardener and family picnic. The board is requesting if you have a large yard and would not mind adult beverages consumed there, would you like to host it? If interested please contact Debby Griesinger at dgriesinger@cox.net.

DEEPEST THANKS

I am so grateful for the outpouring of support of prayers, cards and kindness with my loss of Shirley. You were a comfort in such a sad time in my life. Thank you so much.

Richard Stratton

GROWING AND EVALUATING VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS

BY JOHN ALLISON, ANR EXTENSION AGENT, CHARLES CITY AND NEW KENT COUNTIES, AND PATTY TOWNSEND, HORTICULTURE TECHNICIAN, NEW KENT COUNTY

GROWING VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS

The goal of transplant production is healthy, hardy, rapidly growing plants. Transplants for sale should be handled differently than those for personal use. As a result they require more attention to detail. In choosing varieties to sell as transplants to the home gardener, consider local factors such as disease resistance, yield, maturity date, size, shape, color, and flavor. Here are the most common factors that affect transplant quality.

Growing Medium: Quality transplants start with a good growing medium. Generally, a commercially prepared soilless media is used for containerized transplant production. This media is free of insects, pathogens, nematodes and weed seeds. Choose a media specifically for starting transplants from seed. Generally, it will contain finer shredded peat particles than media used for bedding plants or potting soil. Also, select a media that drains well and provides good aeration but still has moderate water-holding capacity. Plant seeds to a depth about 3 times its diameter. Because of the growing popularity of organics with backyard gardeners, growing transplants according to organic standards may be a good marketing strategy. Use growing medium and fertilizers that are approved for organic use.

Air and Water: Seeds need oxygen and water during germination; hence, water management and air management are synonymous. Monitor seedlings regularly to maintain soil moisture without water-logging the growing medium. To prevent overwatering, irrigate when the top inch of media surface becomes dry. When irrigating from above, water until it drips from the bottom of the cells. This will ensure that the media in each cell is adequately wetted and will also help prevent the accumulation of fertilizer salts around the roots. Irrigate early in the day so foliage will dry before nightfall. If leaves are still wet at sundown, they will probably stay wet all night. Moisture on leaves tends to increase disease incidence and severity.

Temperature Requirements: Most transplants prefer daytime air temperatures between 60 to 80 degrees. Temperatures in the lower range will produce tougher transplants, but will take longer to grow. Temperatures above this range will produce spindly or stunted plants. Night temperatures should be 5 to 10 degrees cooler than the daytime temperature. Most plants prefer a soil temperature between 50 to 85 degrees.

Fertilizer Requirements: After seedling emergence and during early development, strong, rapid growth can be assured by watering the soil with a prepared solution of a soluble fertilizer which is specifically designed for seedlings. Prepare the fertilizer solution as directed on the label and apply with irrigation. Apply enough to allow some of the solution to come out the drain hole. Do not use formulations that are too strong for vegetable transplants. Select fertilizers formulated to be used over the top of young plants and control fertilizer rates to avoid fertilizer burn. It is also important that the fertilizers used for mixing with irrigation water be 100 percent water soluble. Otherwise, the strength of the concentration or the total amount of nutrients applied can not be assured.

Cell Size: Cell size is determined by crop, period of growth under controlled conditions, space available for transplant production, number of plants produced, and shelf life when the plants are ready for sale. Seedlings that do well in smaller cells for home use should be grown in larger cells for sale. This will increase the potential for the seedlings to be healthy, stocky, and actively growing when purchased.

Hardening Off Young Transplants: Hardening is a process to toughen up the tender leaf tissue of transplants to tolerate the outdoor environment. This usually takes about 2 weeks. Harden off seedlings when they are 4 to 6 inches high or have 4 to 6 leaves. Place them outside for gradually lengthening intervals over the 2 week period. Start with an hour in the afternoon and work up to a full 24 hour cycle.

EVALUATING VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS

To know when the seedlings are ready for sale, choose healthy, hardy, rapidly growing plants by the following criteria.

Leaves: Leaves should be dark green and free of lesions. Chlorotic, purple, or yellow leaves may indicate a nutrient deficiency. Avoid the other extreme of very lush and soft over fertilized plants. Lesions on leaves would indicate a disease or insect problem. Also note how many leaves are present. Transplants with few leaves will be slower to establish or develop normally when planted. These characteristics will weaken the transplant, opening the door to low quality growth and yield. The number of true leaves on the plant indicates the age of the plant. Plants with very few leaves or unhealthy leaves seldom develop normally or develop slowly when planted in the garden.

CONTINUED — NEXT PAGE

The Colonial Master Gardener February 2015

EVALUATING VEGETABLE TRANSPLANTS **(continued from prior page)**

Stems: Note the thickness of the plant stems. Long and thin or spindly stems were grown with insufficient light or nutrients. These stems are susceptible to wind or impact damage. Thick stems are a desirable characteristic. Thick stems on transplants are an indication that they have not been grown too rapidly and that there is a good root to shoot structure balance. Lesions on the stem reveal disease or insect damage. These transplants will not develop normally or in a timely fashion.

Roots: Roots of healthy transplants should be white, extend throughout the cell without being root bound, and actively growing. If the plants have been over-watered, injured by excessive fertilizer salts, infected with disease, or stressed in other ways, root color may be tan or brown and not fill the volume of the cell. If plants are producing roots growing on the stem above the original primary root, suspect insects, disease, chemicals or mechanical damage. Roots that have been injured or stressed will take much longer to re-establish in the field and thus delay crop growth and harvest date. Transplant shock results from root breakage. When plants suffer transplant shock, they sit in the field for several weeks before they start to actively grow. This period of sitting extends the time to harvest and defeats the early advantage of using transplants.

Plant age: All vegetable transplants have an ideal age/size which enables them to continue active growth in the field after transplanting and be somewhat resistant to environmental stress. For example, the ideal age for tomato transplants is 6 to 8 weeks of age. Plants younger than 6 weeks are not as resistant to desiccation from wind, temperatures below 50°F, and soil moisture deficits. On the other hand, older plants have a relatively large vegetative mass that has initiated flowers and may be heading into the reproductive phase of growth; hence the plants will produce fruit, but only at fraction of their full potential.

1/27/15

NATURE WALKS

Sunday, February 8 at 1:30 pm. NAKED TREE WALK. Join Helen Hamilton and local botanists for a walk around Freedom Park and the Williamsburg Botanical Garden to identify trees in their winter condition. Learn how to distinguish woody plants by their growth habit, bark, buds, bud scales and leaf scars. Meet at the Freedom Park Interpretive Center parking lot. Charlie Dubai will be the local botanist on the walk. Contact Helen 564-4494 or helen48@cox.net for more information.

Saturday, March 14 at 1:30 pm. WHAT IS THAT WEED? Take a walk in the Freedom Park area to identify emerging spring weeds and wildflowers. Learn which weeds are welcome and why others should be eliminated, and expect to see the first flowers of spring! Meet at the Freedom Park Interpretive Center parking lot. Contact Helen 564-4494 or helen48@cox.net for more information.



Helen Hamilton identifying a weed

The Colonial Master Gardener February 2015

Important Dates

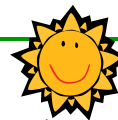
- 2/5 Monthly Meeting @ WRL
- 2/8 Naked Tree Walk, Freedom Park
- 2/23 Newsletter Submissions Due
- 2/21 New Kent Pruning Clinic
- 3/2 Field Trip to Norfolk Botanical Gardens
- 3/14 What Is That Weed? Walk, Freedom Park

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the **March** newsletter will be **Monday, February 23**.

Please send any submissions to Hope Yelich, Newsletter Editor, at hopeyelich@gmail.com.

SUNSHINE NOTES



In the past month the organization has sent sympathy cards to:

Rich Bunger – death of spouse Mary Hunter Devlin

Richard Stratton – death of spouse Shirley Stratton

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 MG Secretary, Patsy McGrady, 258-1181, patsymcgrady@cox.net.

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 race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or 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; Jewel E. Hairston, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg.



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Pruning Clinic



Saturday, February 21, 2015

10:00 am – Noon

FREE!!

Location:

New Kent Extension Office
11809 New Kent Highway, Suite 1
New Kent, VA

**Master Gardeners will teach you proper pruning techniques. Hands-on pruning demonstrations will cover landscape trees and shrubs...
plus ...tools, sharpening, safety, and educational publications.**

Bring your own pruning tools.

To reserve your spot please register by **February 18th** by contacting
New Kent Virginia Cooperative Extension (804) 966-9645 / email marci4@vt.edu

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Marci Siebert, New Kent - Virginia Cooperative Extension at (804-966-9645/TDD*) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.