



The Colonial Master Gardener

March
2019

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

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY CATHY HILL

Rain, it finally stopped at least for a few days. The sun is out as I write this. I was curious as to how many days of rain we have had since the first of the year, and how much rain we had in February. With a little Googling I found some interesting statistics.

From January 1 to February 25 we had twenty-one days of rain. In the month of February up until the 25th we had 3.47 inches of rain in James City County. Normally the wettest month is July with 2.41 inches of rain.

So one thing to be glad for — it was rain and not snow. We would have been buried in snow. Every inch of rain is equivalent to ten inches of snow. If it had been cold enough we could have had almost three feet of snow.

I think we have had the April showers already. Don't you? Can we skip March and go to May?

Happy March anyway!



Both from pixabay

Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 7

Program:

Expanding Your Garden's Color and Seasons through using Bulbs, Corms, Tubers, Rhizomes, and Tuberous Roots

Speaker:

Mitzi Balma

0



Two quotes about rain:

“After rain comes fair weather” — Aesop

“Rain is good for vegetables and for the animals who eat vegetables and for the animals who eat those animals”
— Samuel Johnson

2019 PROJECTS UPDATE

BY JANET SMITH, VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROJECTS

2018
MGA Board

President:
Cathy Hill

President Elect:
Patsy McGrady

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:
Gary Streb

*VCE ANR Program
Assistant:*
VACANT

As most of you know, the board spent a great deal of time last year going over each Master Gardener/VCE project. In an effort to manage projects more efficiently, the board has approved the following changes, which took effect January 1.

You can no longer add any project hours to VMS for work completed before January 1, 2019. Those “books” have been closed out. In the future, as any project comes to an end during the year, there will be approximately thirty days (barring any special situation) in which to add your hours for that project; after that it will be too late. So *please* enter your time into the VMS on a timely basis. This helps you *and* the organization.

As you entered your hours recently, you might have noticed “2019” following each project in the drop-down menu (for instance, Therapeutic Gardening — 2019). The board added the year after each project was approved and will continue to do so with each new year. This will enable us to view the hours for that year without having to run reports. There are now nineteen Master Gardener/VCE 2019 projects in the VMS.

Two timely reminders:

- ⇒ In order to participate in these projects, you must have filled out all the required VCE compliance forms and have completed twenty MG hours and eight continuing-education hours the previous year.
- ⇒ Only hours completed on MG/VCE-approved projects can be entered into the VMS.

We on the board appreciate your willingness to accept these changes, which will help make us an even more productive, dynamic organization.

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

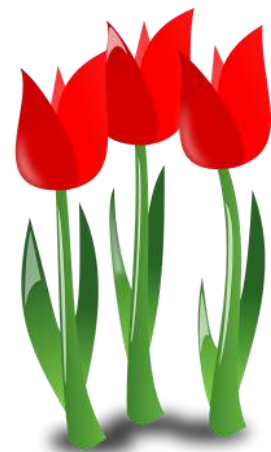
BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

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.

Master Gardener Mitzi Balma is the speaker for March. Mitzi has taught elementary school and worked as an engineer at AT&T Bell Laboratories. An extraordinary Master Gardener, her garden was featured on two of Ford's Colony's garden tours and on a special tour of her spring bulbs.

Mitzi usually plants two thousand to three thousand bulbs each year with the goal of having color and change throughout the year in her garden. Her program will feature ways of expanding your garden's color and seasons through the use of bulbs, corms, tubers, rhizomes, and tuberous roots; ways of encouraging people to try some bulbs that are new to them; and explaining her methods to control deer, rabbits, and voles so that she can enjoy tulips and lilies.

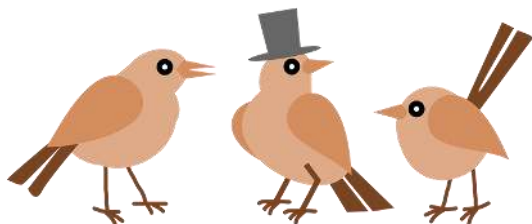


pixabay

UPCOMING SEMINARS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

leqexrd



March 7 (Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 1800 Lakeside Avenue, Richmond 23228). 7:00-9:00pm. Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society will offer [a slide show of rare and hard-to-find plants.](#)

March 9 (Shenandoah University, 1460 University Drive, Winchester 22601). 8:00am-4:00pm. [Gardening in the Valley Symposium.](#) Scheduled topics include greenhouses & planning, designing resilient gardens, foraging in your yard, GMOs in the garden. Sponsored by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association. The cost is \$65 through PayPal [through this link](#) or \$70 at the door and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. All proceeds benefit the NSVMGA memorial scholarship fund.

March 9 (Piedmont Virginia Community College V. Earl Dickinson Building Theatre 501, College Drive Charlottesville 22902). 9:00am—3:15pm. [Our Changing Forests: Forest Health, Management, and Restoration.](#) Annual workshop sponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society. \$50 for members, \$60 for non members. Please register by March 7.

March 12 (King of Glory Lutheran Church, 4897 Longhill Road, Williamsburg 23188). 1:00pm refreshments, 1:30-3:00pm program. [Tea Immersion.](#) The program will feature Mistie Roundtree from CaryTown Teas in Richmond, who will talk about teas from around the world and different immersions for health and taste. Sponsored by The Colonial Triangle of Virginia Unit (CTVU) of the Herb Society of America.

For more information, contact Donna Pratt at (757) 608-8929.

March 12 (Virginia Farm Bureau, 12580 West Creek Parkway, Richmond 23238) 9:00am-4:30pm. [Innovation in Greenhouse and Vertical Farming.](#) Join academic and industry experts for this one-day event focused on the latest advances in hydroponic production, greenhouse/vertical farm energy use, economics, sensor technology, lighting, computer vision, automation, and vertical farming. \$125.00

March 23 (Wahrani Nature Trail, New Kent). 10:00am—1:00pm. [Early Spring in the Forest.](#) Join Helen Hamilton and Gus Hall searching the ravines, slopes and streams for everything green in the different habitats in this park. Dress for the weather and expect uneven trails and some muddy areas along the trail. Sponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society.

Please register so that, in case the walk has to be re-scheduled because of inclement weather, we will be able to let you know. To register, contact Helen Hamilton at (757) 564 4494 or helen48@cox.net.

For more information, directions, GPS coordinates and a map, visit www.hikingupward.com/ovh/wahrani.

March 30 (Freeman Center, Christopher Newport University, 1 University Place, Newport News 23606). 7:00am—2:00pm. [CNU's Annual Gardening Symposium: Garden Spirit: Gardening with Purpose and Function.](#) Plant sales and a variety of informative workshops presented by authors, farmers, expert gardeners, and designers.

April 6-7 (Kaplan Arena, W&M Hall). 10:00am-5:00pm Saturday, 10:00am—4:00pm Sunday. [Williamsburg Home Show.](#) Vendors include home improvement to lawn and garden. JCC/W EMGs will have a table featuring pictures and programs from our unit. \$10 at the door, \$7 online (with coupon).

April 26-27 (Chesapeake Municipal Center, 212 Holt Drive, Chesapeake 23322). 8:00am-6:00pm Friday, 8:00-noon, Saturday. [2019 Annual Plant Sale.](#) Perennials, annuals, trees, shrubs, herbs, vegetables, tropicals, pond plants, etc. Sponsored by the Chesapeake Master Gardener Volunteers.

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.it.vt.edu/mastergardener/current-master-gardeners/sample-page/bi-weekly-update/>. If that doesn't work, click on <http://blogs.it.vt.edu/mastergardener/>. Then click on "I am currently a Master Gardener/News/Bi-Weekly Update."

JAMES CITY COUNTY TREE STEWARD SPRING KICKOFF MEETING

BY PATSY MCGRADY, JCC TREE STEWARD COORDINATOR



The spring kickoff meeting for the JCC Tree Stewards will be held at 1:30pm, Monday, March 11, at the Freedom Park Interpretative Center.

There are currently three ongoing Tree Steward projects in JCC: Tree Call; CW Arboretum and Educational Tree Walk; and the Freedom Park Everyday Use of Trees at Hot Water Tract Settlement.

We will have an overview of each project, and members will have an opportunity to sign up for the projects in which they would like to participate. We will also discuss the possibility of a new project to develop arboretum status for the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Hopefully two of you might be interested in possibly co-chairing such a new project, and others may want to participate.

I hope to see many of you at the meeting. We have a strong group of Tree Stewards here in James City County, and these projects offer opportunities to contribute both to the community and to increase our personal knowledge and skills.

If any of you have not yet gotten a copy of the Tree Steward Training Manual, developed by the Peninsula Tree Stewards, please bring a memory stick and we can download it from my laptop.

If you have any questions, I can be contacted at patsymcgrady@cox.net or (757) 561-6503.

2019 VMGA MEMBERS FROM JAMES CITY COUNTY/WILLIAMSBURG

BY MARILYN RIDDLE, VMGA REPRESENTATIVE

As of February 9, the following are members of our state organization (many thanks for supporting it). The asterisk denotes life membership.

Judith Alberts	Charlie Clapper *	Ann Hobson *	Karen Pfeifer
Dee Arbegast	Carol Conner *	Frances Knight *	Marilyn Riddle *
Jerry Babski	Ginny Cranford	Alice Kopinitz *	Mary Liz Sadler
David Banks	Ann DeForest *	Genrose Lashinger *	Joanne Sheffield
Ailene Bartlett *	Liz Favre	Linda Lucas	Sally Sissel *
Hazel Braxton	Carol Fryer	Patsy McGrady	Janet Smith
Rick Brown	Barbara Gustafson *	Jeanne Millen	Gary Streb *
Susan Carlile *	Margene Hartsough	Ruth Murphy *	
Angela Cingale *	Cathy Hill	Anne Neilsen	

SPRING FLING 2019

JCCW Master Gardener Association

“Spring Fling” Reservation

Date: Friday, April 5, 2019th

Time: 5p.m. to 8p.m.

Where: James City County Recreation Center,
Longhill Rd., Williamsburg, VA

We hope you will join us along with your spouse, family member or guest for food, fun, and relaxing evening out with all of our Master Gardener friends.

As you walk around the venue , discover the silent auction, which will be in progress during the evening and bring home a new treasure. Plus lots of surprises too! Don't miss this event!

Please complete this form and return by March 30, to secure your reservation. Checks should be made payable to: JCCW Master Gardener Association. The cost for each attendee is \$12.00 per person and includes, Appetizer, Entrée, Salad, Veggie and Dessert.

Name of attendees:: _____

MG Name(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Entrée: Chicken Marsala _____ Salmon Tomato Basil _____

I am including my check for \$ _____ .

No late arrivals due to advance entrée order to caterer.

Angela Cingale, Chair of Social Committee

THE HELP DESK AT THE FARMERS MARKET

BY GARY STREB

The core of our James City County/Williamsburg/New Kent Extension Master Gardener mission is to learn, to educate, to communicate. We do this by offering information to the public through sustainable landscaping management educational programs. The heart and soul of this endeavor is the horticultural help desk and its offshoot, The Williamsburg Farmers Market. These two projects comprise the essence of what we do as Extension Master Gardeners.

On March 2, the Williamsburg Farmers Market began its eighteenth season, and the JCC/Williamsburg Extension Master Gardeners have been a faithful part of our city's tradition for the last seventeen years under Sally Sissel's determined leadership. We would like to extend an invitation to you all to continue the tradition or start a new one of your own by joining us on the Farmers Market at Merchants Square project.

Our first market day will be April 6, and our weekly participation will extend through September 28, almost every Saturday, open from 8:00am until noon, rain or shine. Our treasured location is familiar and consists of one canopy tent and a couple of tables. Each team is comprised of a team leader, three-four Extension Master Gardeners and one intern. (With only fifteen interns this year several of the market days will have one more EMG than the rest.)

To best answer the public's questions, we need the help desk mentality — and to help us we are now aided by a new dedicated iPad and our own hot spot. This is also the perfect venue to get the word out about all the programs that we EMGs offer the greater Williamsburg community. Ideally, we would have one Lawn Ranger and/or Water or Tree Steward on each team to field some of the specialty questions. But all EMGs are welcomed!

We will have a training/organizational meeting of all the EMGs to get us all on the same track. Tentatively it will be with the help desk training on **Monday, March 11 at 10:00am in the JCC rec center**. More details to follow after we have a tentative list of all the EMGs who would like to share their knowledge with the Williamsburg/world community. You never know whom you may meet on the Duke of Gloucester Street on a busy Saturday morning while you are actively engaging with the crowd.

If you are interested--- let both Justin Diaz, JustinLuisDiaz@gmail.com and me gstreb11@gmail.com know so we can continue the planning for another successful year at your local Farmers Market at Merchants Square.



Photo: Hope Yelich

UPDATE ON THE SPEAKERS BUREAU

BY KATHY BUSH, PROJECT CHAIR

This logo sums up visually our mission as Extension Master Gardeners. We learn so that we can educate and communicate best gardening practices to residents of James City County and Williamsburg. The speakers bureau fulfills an important role in educating our community by presenting enlightening programs using information that we have gleaned from our work with Virginia Tech and the Virginia Cooperative Extension.



We speak to garden clubs, churches, schools, scouts, retirement homes, parks, and to groups at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Beginning this summer, we will partner with the Williamsburg Regional Library to provide a garden talk on the second Saturday of each month.



The speakers bureau presenters at the January 30 training at the rec center

On January 30, the MGA sponsored special training for our speakers bureau presenters for the upcoming year at the JCC recreation center. Twelve of our Master Gardeners attended a two-hour training session with Patricia Duggan from the Duggan Difference LLC. We learned how to organize our MG talks to make them more interesting and memorable for our audiences. Pat gave us many tips and tricks to capture and keep the attention of those who request our presentations. In the near future, Angela Cingale will give our presenters a class on how to prepare a PowerPoint program.

If you would like to learn how to put together a PP or brush up on your technique, please let me know of your interest. Space is limited. Email me at kathykbush@verizon.net. Also, if you hear of any community groups that are looking for a garden program, please contact me.

LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY GARY STREB

Daffodils are up----must be time for Landscape Love!

Winter may not yet be over, but planning for the spring 2019 session of the Landscape Love project is well underway. For those of us who have been participating with the onsite consultations of the pruning clinics, we have found that several of the homeowners' concerns and questions are well beyond the educational instruction of the what, when, where, and how of proper pruning. A spring Landscape Love visit is the logical follow-on Extension Master Gardener project to further educate the homeowners on the creation and maintenance of their sustainable landscape.

We welcome all returning volunteers who have joined us previously, both recently and in the distant past. Also, if you have not been involved with the project before and have always been interested, now is the time see how you can extend your gardening and landscaping knowledge to the eager homeowners of the city and county. And you will find that it is a continuing personal education as well.

Homeowner registration is from March 15 through April 15, and registration is done online at the [JCC/W homepage](#). Consultation visits start in late April and go through early June. We will be divided into five geographically based teams, and the number of total visits will be capped at seventy-five.

The Landscape Love volunteer organizational, training/refresher meetings will be held in the JCC recreation center, Room A. **Monday, April 22, at 9:00am** and **Thursday, April 25, at 9:00am**. You only need to attend one of these sessions.

If you are interested in being a part of Landscape Love please let me know at gstreb11@gmail.com. And pencil in one of the training dates. Leadership opportunities abound.

Happy spring gardening!

The Graphics Fairy



GARDEN ADVICE FROM THE COLONIAL MASTER GARDENER

As excerpted from *Williamsburg's Joseph Prentis: His Monthly Kalendar & Garden Book*

The Monthly Kalendar March 1775

About the 12 or 15 of March I think the best time for sowing Carrots and Parsneps.

Sow all kinds of Peas and Beans, and all sorts of Seeds. Plant Broad and French Beans, set out Cabbages, and Colworts, the slips of Raspberries and Currants, and Gooseberries, Artichokes, Thyme, Sage Baum, Winter Savory Hyssop, Featherfew Rue, Wormwood, Pot Marjoram, Mint, Tansey, Lavender, Burnett Scellendine, and Rosemary

After a Rain plant out Cucumber Seed.

Set out asparagus as follow.

Dig a trench as wide as you intend your Beds to be, and two feet deep, lay a layer of Oyster Shells, six Inches, then lay on six Inches of Horse Dung, and as much Mould, continue to do, till the Bed is done. Take your Roots raised from Seed, and set them out in Rows, a foot Wide let there be a space of about a foot between each Row.

Carrots

Some time in March, about the 12th sow your Carrots, they grow best in light Soil, and in an open Exposure, the Ground ought to be spaded very deep, and the clods well broken, this Seed ought to be thinly sown and on a dry, calm Day.

The seed may also be sown in March, or April, and will answer very well, In May your Carrots should be properly encouraged by keeping them clear from weeds and thinning them that they may grow at Top, and swell at Bottom, and in the thinning, they must be left at least Six Inches every way. If the Plants are used at the Table, they may now be thinned only about four Inches every way.

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNING PROJECT

BY HARRY FAHL, MG CLASS OF 2018



Once upon a time in a garden, not so far away,
The beauty of nature certainly held its sway.
The meadows and wetlands, swamps and the woods,
Were waiting for spring to release their bounteous goods
The times were cold with snow coming soon
We asked what could be done to help this garden bloom
Volunteers stood and quietly spoke up
Let's look to the woods for a nice sprucing up.
The pruning and trimming are now complete
So all the trees and the shrubs no longer compete.
This poem is ended. Thank Goodness.
Now let's see what's been accomplished.



In December the board approved a pruning project for the Master Gardeners in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden woods. I'll refer to the woods as two separate entities. The "Small" woods which is to the right of the gardens entrance and the "Big" woods which is to the left and across the back of the garden. I asked for volunteers at the first monthly MG meeting and a number of experienced and some not so experienced pruning MGs stepped up to help. This alone convinced me of the dedication of each individual to this task. Hey, let's face it, it's January, as in Cold! Really Cold....

My goal for this project was several fold. First, to make certain that all the walking paths were clear of any growth or obstruction for the safety of all who work or visit. Next, to remove the extensive damage caused by the heavy snowfall. Following this was to properly prune and thin woody shrubs and trees for all the obvious reasons. Training is always high on my list, and this gave the volunteers the opportunity to learn proper pruning techniques; use and care of tools; and more on what should be done in any given pruning situation.

Our first gathering mustered nine Master Gardener volunteers plus one botanical garden volunteer. We started with a brief discussion on safety, moving on to tools, and then took a group walk with Dr. Donna Ware discussing what our goals were for this important project and how to achieve them. We didn't cut a single branch that day, but it was a vitally important discussion, and much was decided.

Over the next days -- sometimes with as few as three or as many as ten volunteers -- work continued in the small woods. Dr. Donna was guiding us as to what was desirable and what not. The ground growth (those shrubs that are not trees) was so overgrown, and many of which were in such poor shape that extensive thinning was required. As a group we discussed what to do with each area before the pruners began their tasks. When questions arose, we often gathered to look at what the situation was, took everyone's input, and made joint decisions as to the result. IT WORKED! Team work always does, to the benefit of all. This continued with the trees, some of which had to be removed entirely. Roots and all! That's where a huge bumper-type house jack and an ax came in. (The perfect pruning tools.) We removed the stump and roots of several other trees so they wouldn't regrow in their undesirable location. During the small wood's renovation, I was able to train on proper pruning techniques, the hows and whys of what we do and what to expect as new

Continued on the next page, page 10

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNING PROJECT—CONTINUED

growth emerges. The small woods were a perfect opportunity to show previous pruning mistakes and the negative result of improper pruning/thinning. I often referred to this area and the wax myrtle in front of the gazebo as trees suffering from the “Death of a Thousand Cuts.”

The damage from the heavy snowfall was devastating. We had to top several trees, remove others, and radically thin several more. The wax myrtles and holly in front of the gazebo are excellent examples. Two of the myrtles toppled over, pulling their roots from the ground. They were removed. The largest is still standing but has been radically cut back. Probably 70% has been removed due to damage. There is plenty of canopy remaining so I believe it will be able to absorb enough sunlight and the root structure is intact for adequate feeding. I trust it will survive. However, because we removed so much, we must be aware of disease and/or insect infestation. Let’s watch this tree carefully. The removal of so much vegetation occasionally can offer advantages. Al, the resident bulb expert, can plant more bulbs with better results in the adjacent bulb garden.

The big woods was a different ballgame. Whereas the small woods was a thinning project and much vegetation was removed, most of which will return as healthier specimens this spring, the big woods were to be mostly left intact. Again Dr. Donna was there with yellow ribbons tagging what she wanted left intact. Remember Tony Orlando and Dawn, the recording artists? They sang, “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Old Oak Tree?” Well, Dr. Donna tied yellow ribbons by the tens around many plant species and perhaps even an oak! We removed material that could cause safety issues for our visitors. We pruned crossing, dead, diseased, and unnecessary branches and growth. Those trees or shrubs that were shading more valuable plants were thinned or removed. Of course, proper pruning and thinning of shrubs and trees that required specific types of care was accomplished. But most was left untouched and intact. I believe that anyone who is familiar with the big woods could stroll through and not see much difference. But the change is huge and all for the health of all that thrives there.

The pruning crew also removed limbs that were overhanging the roadway outside the fence. All vegetation that was growing against and into the fence in the garden woods was pruned back or removed. We left six trees or shrubs of various types for the class of 2019 interns to practice pruning on during their field trip to the garden. We will complete the pruning of those shortly.

As we enter the 2019 growing season the garden volunteers must be aware of new, undesirable growth on the pruned plants, especially water shoots and suckers which can destroy the appearance of a tree and sap its much-needed energy. I encourage the volunteers to contact me if they see this occurring. This then becomes another learning opportunity about how to prune those shoots properly and how to train some of them to the advantage of the specimen.

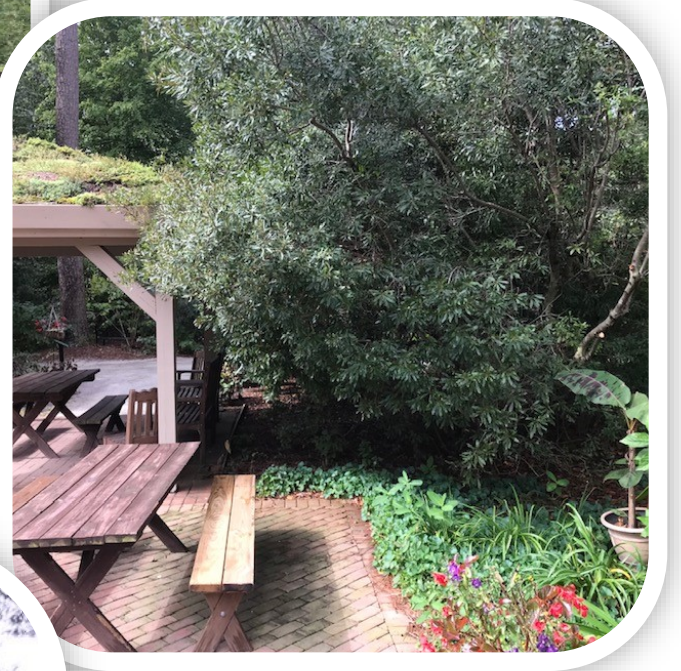
So ultimately what did we do???? We worked as a team, we learned from one another, we discussed and came to joint conclusions. Some purchased new tools for their own use based on their pruning experiences during this project. Others may be apt to join other pruning projects now that they have new confidence and more knowledge. We certainly made the botanical garden a safer, healthier, more beautiful place. More than anything, “WE HAD FUN!”

I am deeply grateful for the participation of Pat, Dave, Sherry, Bill, Lael, Mike, Robin, Stephanie, Cheryl, Elizabeth, Ann, John, Donna, Elvin, Kay, Denise, Gary, Kath, and Mitzi. Plus, a special thanks to those who approached and worked with the board members who ultimately approved this vital, necessary project and allowed it to move forward.

To see the before-and-after photos of the work Harry and his team did in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, see the next page, page 11.

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNING PROJECT—CONTINUED

BEFORE



WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNING PROJECT—CONTINUED

AFTER



The man himself. Photo: Hope Yelich

THIS AND THAT

Seeds of Learning Needs Volunteers

Volunteers with the Seeds of Learning project visit each James City County elementary school. We concentrate on the first grade classes, and this year the visits will take place April 8 to May 1.

MG volunteers are greatly needed for each school. Remember, for the project to be successful, volunteers are required. We need you! I will have sign-up sheets at the monthly MG meeting on Thursday, March 7.

You may also contact Donna Thibeault (wrt1945@gamil.com) or Marty Oakes (OakesFour@aol.com). Thank you for your support. We will appreciate any hours you can give to the project.

—Marty Oakes

Thanks!

The support you provided to me as we hosted the Virginia Master Gardener Association meeting on February 9 was truly overwhelming.

I would like to acknowledge the bakers—Liz Favre, Judith Alberts, Jeanne Millen, Anne Nielsen, Dee Arbegast, Pat Crowe, Su Carlile, and Mary Liz Sadler. Your refreshments started off the event in fine fashion. Angela Cingale coordinated the efforts from the kitchen as well as bringing food.

I also appreciated all the garden items members donated for the attendees. I received them so fast at the meeting that I cannot name all of you, but you added to the day. Everyone left with something!

The attendance was larger than at any time I've attended in eight years. To end a perfect day, Cathy Hill and Gary Streb led a tour of the Williamsburg Botanical Gardens.

Thank you again. —Marilyn Riddle, VMGA representative

Culinary Herb Talk at Brandon Woods Garden Club

This month Linda Lucas, Pat Crowe, and Karen Brooks presented a talk on culinary herbs to the Brandon Woods Garden Club. They included tips on growing herbs in this area and information on harvesting, preserving, and cooking with culinary herbs.

They even made treats to share with the group in addition to serving blueberry and lavender lemonade! The group was very interested and asked many questions. Remarks like FABULOUS and A BIG HIT were heard from the group. Thank you, ladies, for sharing your time, interest, and cooking skills!

—Kathy Bush



Left to right: Karen Brooks, Pat Crowe, and Linda Lucas

Wanted

Therapeutic Gardening wants your old flower seed packs and seed catalogs (large pictures) for several projects we have coming up. You can bring to me at the next MG meeting. Thanks so much!

—Karen Brooks

MATTEY'S GARDEN IS CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS THIS SPRING!

BY LOUANN MARTIN, PROJECT CHAIR

Mattey's Garden is celebrating its twentieth birthday this year!

We are ordering Mattey's t-shirts for the celebration. It will feature the Mattey logo holding a garden hoe on the front and something about the annual strawberry festival on the back. (The t-shirts are done in conjunction with their strawberry festival.)

If you have already expressed interest, please let me know again. This would be a great gift for grandchildren!!

At this point, we figure that cost will be \$12 with \$2 going to the garden.

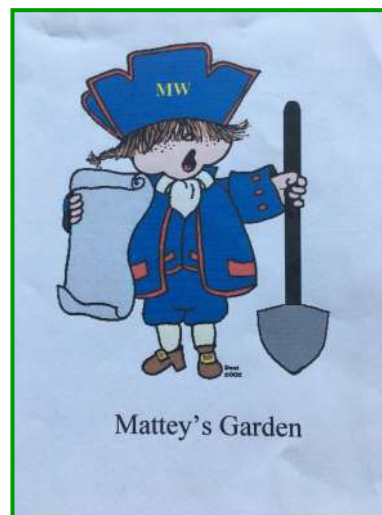
Sizes range:

Youth Small (6-8)
Youth Medium (10-12)
Youth Large (14-16)
Adult: S,M,L,XL
Adult XXL - add \$2

Please make checks payable to Matthew Whaley School with a memo of Mattey's Garden t-shirt. All orders must be received by March 18, 2019

I will be at the MG meeting of March 7th or please mail to:

Louann Martin
105 Seven Oaks
Williamsburg, VA 23188



EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE WILLIAMSBURG HOME SHOW

— BY KATHY BUSH



The Williamsburg Home Show will be at the Kaplan Arena, 751 Ukrop Way (William, and Mary Hall), on the weekend of April 6-7.

It is an interesting show featuring businesses ranging from home improvement to lawn and garden. We are planning to promote the VCE and Extension MGs at a table featuring pictures and programs from our unit. We would love to have representation from our group to staff the booth and answer questions about our mission. It is a fun opportunity to meet the public and tell them why you enjoy being a MG. Would you consider contributing two-four hours on Saturday or Sunday? The show runs from 10:00am -5:00pm on Saturday and 10:00am-4:00pm on Sunday. In previous years, we have received free admission for our helpers.

If you can help, please email me at kathykbush@verizon.net, call at (804) 966-5239, or see me at the March general meeting.

WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH MARCH 2019

BY HELEN HAMILTON

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

GREENBRIERS

Greenbrier, catbrier, sawbrier, bullbrier, carrion-flower – members of this genus have many common names, none of them conveying that of a friendly plant. Rather, the leaves of many species have strong prickles, and the stems have thorns to hook onto branches of other plants. New homeowners of old farms and less-than-new houses often find part of the property covered with dense impenetrable thickets of the vine, viewed by some as “razor wire.”

While clumps of these plants are daunting to gardeners, all this greenery is important food and shelter for wildlife. Black bear eat the berries and shoots, deer graze on new growths, and birds enjoy the berries, passing the seeds along to another site. Native Americans found many uses, culinary and medicinal, for species found here in the Coastal Plain.

Common greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) was described by Linnaeus from plants collected by colonial botanists and sent to Europe. Also known as sawtooth greenbrier, horsebrier, and round leaf greenbrier, this is not a plant loved by gardeners. This vine grows all over natural

wooded areas, draping stems from shrub to shrub – it’s easy to get caught in a group of bending and sprawling shoots, the thorns catching on smooth clothing and impossible to remove from woolen sweaters.

Easy to recognize, common greenbrier has rounded leaves that are bright green on both sides, and strong parallel veins. While these leaves often persist over the winter, most species are deciduous. Tiny yellowish-green flowers (male and female on different vines) bloom for two weeks in April or May, followed by clusters of blue-black berries from September through November. Among the many birds that feed on the berries are catbird, brown thrasher, eastern bluebird and white-throated sparrow.

Catbrier (*Smilax bona-nox*) is distinctive for the leathery, triangular leaves with a broad lobe on each side, presenting an “eared” appearance. This is a woody vine that climbs and winds with tendrils up trees, over shrubbery and along the ground, creating thick brambles. The smooth, green stems grow to twenty feet long and are covered with stout, sharp prickles that make passage very difficult. Leaves are green beneath, often mottled with white. The leaf edges are often bristly and when smooth, a raised, wire-like vein runs along the margin.

In late spring, small, inconspicuous flowers appear in clusters in the axils of the leaves, male and female on different plants. Following the flowering period, clusters of blue fruits are very attractive to wild turkeys, squirrels and many species of songbirds during the winter. White-tailed deer will browse the foliage, not bothered by the thorns on the lower parts of the plant. The seeds are dispersed by animals and can be carried long distances by birds.

Native Americans and colonists cooked the shoots of greenbriers and added young leaves and tendrils to salads well into summer. The roots form a large tuber similar to a sweet potato that served many needs. Dried, pounded to a powder, and mixed with water, the final paste was used to thicken soups, to make jelly, and to treat minor aches and pains. Francis Peyer Porcher, an American botanist, wrote that the American Indians as well as soldiers during the Civil War fermented the greenbrier tuber into a “home brew,” adding sassafras for flavor to enlighten their spirits. The leaves of the greenbrier can be used as a dressing for cuts and burns.

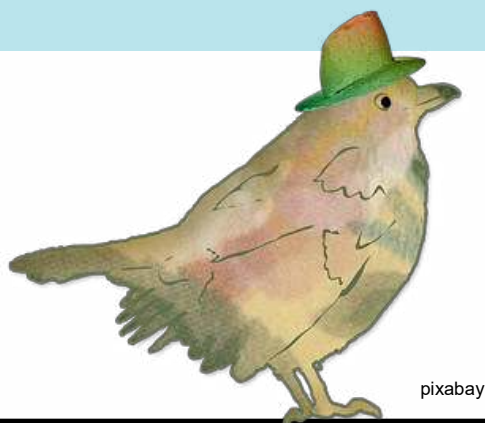


Photos: Common Greenbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*) taken by Helen Hamilton (top). Catbrier (*Smilax bona-nox*) taken by Seig Kopinitz (below)

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

Important Dates

- 3/7 Slide Show of Rare Plants (Richmond)
- 3/9 Gardening in the Valley Symposium (Winchester)
- 3/9 Changing Forests (Charlottesville)
- 3/12 Teas Around the World (King of Glory Church)
- 3/12 Greenhouse and Vertical Farming (Richmond)
- 3/16 Learn and Grow: Habitats (Freedom Park)
- 3/23 Early Spring in the Forest (New Kent)
- 3/30 CNU Gardening Symposium (Newport News)
- 4/6-7 Williamsburg Home Show (W&M)
- 4/26-27 Chesapeake MG Plant Sale ((Chesapeake)
- 6/17-21 International Master Gardener Conference (Valley Forge, Pa.)
- 9/19-22 Master Gardener College (Norfolk)

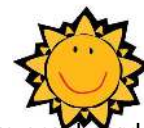


NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the April 2019 newsletter will be Monday, March 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:

Holly Hills Garden Club (thank you for the talk Carol Fryer gave)
Family of Richard Stratton
Suzanne Brown

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.