



The Colonial Master Gardener

September
2020

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

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY PATSY MCGRADY

September has always seemed like a second beginning for the year. I don't think any of us ever quite get over the association of September with back-to-school, new notebooks, new clothes, new people or reconnecting with people we haven't seen over the summer. For me anyway, that does not hold for this year. September and the rest of the year lying in front of us just feels like more of the same. I have become reconciled that we're in a stay-at-home situation most likely until a vaccine is available – which surely will last through 2020 and likely through the winter.

However, humans are a resilient and innovative species. We've adapted to interactions by video – thank goodness for Zoom, FaceTime, Amazon Echo Show, and those other video conferencing software sets for which I do not know the name.



Covid 19 Test: Because I was joining my son and his family for a few days, we all decided to get tested. I looked on the internet for places in Williamsburg and decided to go to Velocity Urgent Care in New Town since I'd been there multiple times over the years. I was able to go on their website make an appointment for the next day and preregister. The waiting room was set up with generous spaces between the seats and there were only a few people in the waiting room. When my turn came, the nurse took my temperature, blood pressure, and whatever that clip on your finger does. She put a long swab further up my nostril that I could imagine it would go. It was uncomfortable but not painful. Then she used the same swab on the other nostril. Done. No charge. They say they will call in five-to-seven days with results but encourage you to go to the lab website where you can access your results as soon as they are completed. I did not try the website until four days later and my

Next Meeting:

Thursday, September 3
9:00am
VIA ZOOM

Program:

Streaming Piles of Black
Gold: How to Succeed in Making
Compost

Speaker:

Justin Diaz

I've been grateful for all the rain we have received. Those weeks of continuous over - 90-degree days are terribly hard on people and plants.

My garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*) are blooming. They are lovely and so easy to grow. Their green stalks, called scapes, grow in clusters just like regular chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*). However, the scapes are taller (twelve-to-twenty-four inches), thicker, flatter than standard chives and form larger clumps. Flowers are about three inches across and are a composite of small white flowers - quite different and much showier than the blue/lavender pom-poms that occur on chives. They are a lovely ornamental plant but can also be used as an herb just like regular chives. As their name implies, they do have a distinctly garlic taste. Each of the individual small flowers produces a seed. To avoid an excess of volunteers the next spring, it is best to cut off the flowers once they fade and before the seeds mature. However, they are nowhere near as problematic reseeding as cleome.

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

2020
MGA Board

President:
Patsy McGrady

President Elect:
Marty Oakes

VP Administration:
Dee Arbegast

VP Projects:
Rick Brown

VP Internal Ed:
Hazel Braxton

Secretary:
Paulette Atkinson

Treasurer:
Linda Neilson

VMGA Rep:
Marilyn Riddle

Past President:
Cathy Hill

*VCE ANR Program
Assistant:*
VACANT

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — CONTINUED

results were available (negative). It was all much easier and smoother than I expected given the horror stories you hear on the news.

Association Meeting: Our first association meeting since March was August 6 via Zoom. We exceeded the maximum ZOOM capacity of one hundred, which was great but maybe not so great for those who did not make the cut. Our in-person attendance generally runs eighty-five to ninety-five (very rough count). Those who couldn't get in were able to view the recorded presentation and meeting that afternoon. Many thanks to Rick Brown who has been Zoom master for our MG board meetings and now for our association meetings. We will likely be having Zoom meetings for the foreseeable future.

VCE Guidance on Home Visits: The past month I contacted our state coordinators Kathleen Reed and Dave Close to ask if we can support our home

visit projects using appropriate COVID 19 safe practices. I made this inquiry because the formal state VCE policy only addressed work in gardens. We received a next-day response approving safely conducted home visits. Tree Call and Turf Love are now operational in a Covid 19 safe manner. Landscape Love has decided to forego a fall session and will look to reopening for a spring session. Again, as we are able to open projects in a modified way, no one has any obligation to work in a situation in which they do not feel comfortable. There is no requirement for any service hours for 2020.



Photo of garlic chives by Patsy McGrady

TWO THINGS

BY DEE ARBEGAST, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

Newsletter Editor:
Hope Yelich
hopeyelich@gmail.com

New Mailing Address: If you need to mail anything association related, please use this address:

JCCWMG Association
P O Box 1951
Williamsburg VA 23185

Upcoming Training: We will schedule a day in September to do civil rights training. Hopefully we will announce the date by our meeting next week.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: During the pandemic and while the library remains closed, the board meets through video conferencing.

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VCEMasterGardeners/>. Lots of great articles, educational videos, beautiful photographs, upcoming events, and more! Marion Guthrie is doing a great job keeping us up to date, especially during this time when things are changing so frequently.

To get to our VCE James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener homepage quickly, click on <http://jccwmg.org/wordpress/>

WHAT THE PUBLIC WILL READ ABOUT US

BY MARION GUTHRIE, PUBLICITY

Our publicity guru, Marion Guthrie, has compiled the following press release that will be distributed to several outlets in the Williamsburg area.

Williamsburg Master Gardeners Serve the Community Despite Covid-19

Instead of convening as they used to do in the Williamsburg library on Scotland Street, the James City County/Williamsburg (JCC/W) Master Gardeners met recently, using the Zoom video conferencing platform, for their first formal members' meeting since the COVID-19 quarantine was imposed in March. The platform enabled them to comply with the Virginia Cooperative Extension guidelines and solved the problem of where a group this size with over 150 active members, could safely meet. The answer? Online. This is just one example of several workarounds these resourceful gardeners have implemented in recent months.

At the start of the quarantine, the Master Gardener Help Desk, a free service, was closed when their Toano office that serves Williamsburg, shut down. But Master Gardeners revamped the process, so the gardening public can email their questions to jccwmg1@gmail.com (along with their name, address, phone number and pictures of their problem). The Help Desk, now manned remotely, has been successfully answering questions via email.

Since the quarantine, the JCC/W Master Gardeners have also revised several of their on-site gardening programs to fit within the COVID-19 Guidelines. These projects include tending the George Reid and Shields Tavern gardens in Colonial Williamsburg; maintaining Matthey's Garden at the Matthew Whaley Elementary School and the Blayton Elementary School's Garden without involving the young students; supporting the work in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and the Historic Triangle Learning Garden, as well as managing Waterwise, the garden located at the Human Resource Center on Olde Town Rd.

Earlier this month, Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Coordinators gave their okay to open those programs that provide assessments directly to homeowners, if the appropriate COVID safeguards are employed. As a result, two programs, Tree Call and Turf Love, have been reinstated. Directions for requesting these services are on the JCC/WM website, jccwmg.org/wordpress/home-visit-programs.

Not all the programs have been reopened. For example, the public Arboretum and Meet the Gardener guided tours in Colonial Williamsburg remain closed during the pandemic. But, while the public-facing component, the touring, has stopped, the JCC/W Master Gardener Tree Stewards continue to assist Colonial Williamsburg in monitoring the health and pruning of the trees in the arboretum and garden volunteers continue to tend the vegetables, flowers and herbs in the two colonial gardens, adopting COVID safeguards.

Patsy McGrady, president of James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners Association, said, "While we need to wear masks, distance ourselves physically, disinfect and avoid sharing tools, we stay focused on our mission which is to help and educate the public in Williamsburg area."

The James City County/Williamsburg Extension Master Gardeners are trained through a statewide program with the Virginia Cooperative Extension. This extension also serves New Kent and Charles City counties. These Master Gardener certified volunteers bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to their communities by offering a range of outreach and educational programs. Many of which are on hiatus due to the pandemic.

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, VA 24061, United States; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA, United States. For more information visit <http://jccwmg.org/>.

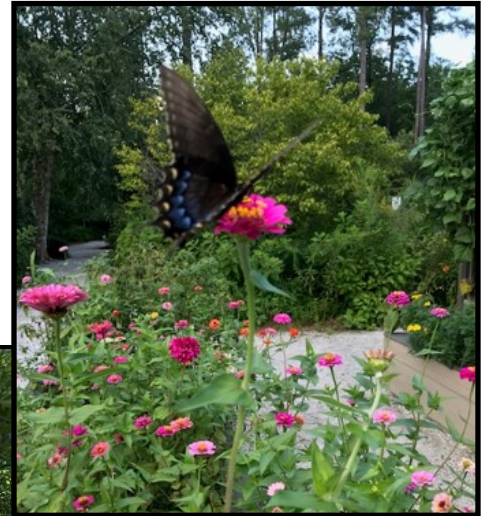
CATCHING UP WITH THERAPEUTIC GARDENING

BY KAREN BROOKS, THERAPEUTIC GARDENING CO-CHAIR

I don't know what the future holds for TG . . . It will probably be six months to a year before facilities would even want volunteers back. Even when there is a vaccine, facilities will certainly have new guidelines to implement. We may have to have a totally different approach on how we hold our programs. Something to think about as we wait to move forward. I have enjoyed my ten years with TG and hope to continue in some way in the future, and hope many of you will want to continue too.

Even though we are not holding any of our programs, the therapy beds at WBG have been kept up (thanks to Linda Lucas). She planted early spring veggies and flowers and later, summer veggies and flowers. Several of our Arc of Abilities friends have visited the garden with their families over the past months. There have been spinach, radishes, eggplants, beans, zinnias, bee balms, and marigolds. Our fairy garden there has continued to thrive, even though we have had items removed. Linda and I added a few new items, and we trust they will stay put for a while! Linda did find a bee's nest in the small church in the fairy garden, and got stung several times. We took care of it quickly so no one else would get stung. Our watering team has done an outstanding job keeping the garden tended during the hottest days of July and August. Hope everyone saw the picture and article in the *Virginia Gazette* several weeks ago on the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

Mary DiSalvo had started plants in early spring for the New Zion garden, so she decide to go ahead and plant them in their garden in hopes someone there would be able to enjoy them. She planted sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, tomatoes, and zucchini. Mary lives nearby and has checked on the garden often.



Above: Some of the therapy beds at the WBG. The Arc group originally created the fairy garden with us assisting them. Photos by Linda Lucas

At left: Pictures from the New Zion Baptist Church garden. Photos by Mary DiSalvo

HOT WATER TRACT AT FREEDOM PARK

BY JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS

With a great deal of help from Tree Stewards, Master Gardeners, and Freedom Park volunteers, the last stand of loblolly pine trees surrounding the Settlement were cut down just before all activities were closed in March.

In August, Peter Schaub and Judy Kinshaw-Ellis assessed the Hot Water Tract project and did some cleanup. Of the six fruit trees that had been planted last year, three apple trees survived. The three Indian blood peach trees did not. Volunteers removed deer fencing from all of the trees, weeded and added compost to the area, and installed new fencing. The small elderberry patch was also weeded. Of the eight elderberries that were planted during the last year, three survive. Deer and saturated ground continue to be challenges for all planting for this project.



A bit of good news is that the James City County Parks & Recreation will be offering some field trips and science-based activities to help parents who are home with their children this first quarter of the year. The Settlement is part of a lesson on tree identification, and the tree tags installed as part of this project will be useful as part of these activities.

Online Classes

Take advantage of all that time at home by signing on for some gardening-related classes. Here's a sampling:

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden: <https://www.lewisginter.org/learn/adult-classes/online-classes/>

Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia: <https://mgnv.org/reading-room/master-gardener-virtual-classroom/>

Waynesboro Tree Webinars: <https://treesvirginia.org/events>. Every Wednesday in September

University of Vermont Master Composter Course: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener/vermont-master-composter-course>

Photo: Judith Alberts



WBG Learn and Grow Series

The WBG's Learn and Grow Series returns to its regular schedule of 10:00 am on the third Saturday of the month. September 19 brings us VCE Master Gardener Judith Alberts to share her enthusiasm for butterflies with "Butterfly Trek – The Amazing Monarch Migration". Details and register at www.bit.ly/growsep2020. (L&G programs will be online events through the rest of 2020.)

WHAT'S NEW AT THE WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN

BY ELIZABETH MCCOY



The bog-iron specimens in the succulent garden. Photos above and below by Elizabeth McCoy

Ralph Will, a longtime Williamsburg Botanical Garden volunteer, has donated three bog iron specimens for the rock and succulent garden. Mr. Will collected these pieces of bog iron from the banks of the Little Wicomico River in Lancaster County, Virginia.

Bog iron develops in swamps or bogs when the groundwater feeding them contains iron. This impure form of iron is the result of various chemical reactions with the minerals dissolved in the water and oxygen. The iron precipitates out of solution and forms nodules along with other minerals. It was an important resource for early American colonists who were able to smelt useable iron using furnaces of their own construction.

Bog iron is found in James City County, the Northern Neck of Virginia, along the Eastern Shore, and in other several other locations in Virginia, including Chesterfield County. This is an indigenous stone and is now on display in the rock and succulent garden. Two of the pieces that Mr. Will donated still carry the oyster shells and barnacles that were growing on them in the Wicomico River.

Other pieces of local interest in the garden include fossilized scallop shells, *Chesapecten Jeffersonius*, also collected locally. Fossilized scallop shells were the first fossils collected in Virginia in the 1680s and are approximately three million years old.

The new plantings include several native plants including *Yucca filamentosa*, *Eryngium yuccifolium*, two species of *Opuntia*, and hybrid *Phemeranthus*. The *Phemeranthus* and *Opuntia* were donated by Stewart and Donna Ware, also longtime Williamsburg Botanical Garden supporters and volunteers.

Several sedum varieties allow visitors to enjoy some of the plants used on the green roofs of the pavilions at close range. A seedling longleaf pine, a Virginia native tree, also grows in the succulent and rock garden. It is one of three seedling long leaf pines recently planted at the garden.

The renovation of the rock and succulent garden, which is a part of the Extension Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens project, began in January. Donna Ware has consulted on the project and has been instrumental in helping to feature native plants and native minerals in the garden.



THIS AND THAT; OR, SEEN AROUND THE PROJECTS

Ken Caro reports that the Blayton school garden volunteers recently sent six pounds of carrots to the [Williamsburg House of Mercy](#) food program.



Indomitable - Pat Rathke (at left), teaching in the Reid learning garden in CW. Photo by Marion Guthrie

Masked at Matthey's



Could that be Su Carlile at Matthey's?



Photos by Nan Snyder

Online Continuing Education Opportunities

From the state EMG office, Kathleen Reed lists *several* online CE resources MGs can utilize while away from projects. Click on: <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-update/>

WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 2020

BY HELEN HAMILTON
JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

JOE-PYE WEED

Eutrochium dubium

These tall, majestic plants are real butterfly magnets. Blooming in late summer until frost, they range from three-to-ten- feet tall with dense heads of fluffy pinkish flowers that are usually covered with butterflies, bees, beetles and wasps, all feeding and pollinating. When in flower, Joe-pye weeds can be the star of the garden, but it is a little rough for a formal garden. Long blooming (from July-October) and deer resistant, these plants can grow very large and are great in a wild garden or placed to the rear or where a strong accent is needed.

Joe-pye weeds are meadow plants; most require full sun, acid, rich soil, and moist drainage, although some can tolerate shade, less moisture, coastal conditions, and clay soil. Clump-forming, they will not form extensive drifts. Before blooming, these plants are easy to recognize by their leaves which are generally in whorls of three-to-six leaflets that are lance-shaped to oval and with teeth on the edges. At the top of each stem, clusters of tiny flowers appear in rounded groups, terminating in a large dome of blossoms, as much as eighteen inches across. Members of the Aster Family, Joe-pye weeds have no rays (petals), only disk flowers, and they are tiny, allowing small insects easy access to nectar. Also visiting these tightly packed flowers and many butterflies, including tiger swallowtails, monarchs, and viceroys.

Three species of Joe-pye weed are native to the Coastal Plain, the shortest being Coastal Joe-pye



Photo: Joe-pye-weed (*Eutrochium dubium*) taken by Helen Hamilton

weed, growing five feet tall. The leaves of this plant have three conspicuous veins extending from the petiole, whereas the leaves of other species have only one main vein. A popular cultivar 'Little Joe' is only three-feet tall and compact and is an excellent choice for a small butterfly garden. The flowers are mauve purple in a rounded terminal group. Also a good choice for a rain garden, Coastal Joe-pye weed grows naturally in bogs, swamps and wet clearings, usually in acidic, poor soils.

Purple Joe-pye-weed (*E. purpureum*) grows to seven feet tall and hollow-stem Joe-pye weed (*E. fistulosum*) can be over eleven feet tall. The flowers of both species are pale pink to purplish, in rounded domes or loose clusters at the tops of stems.

“Joe-pye weed” comes from a tale about a North American Indian called Joe Pye, who walked the streets of Boston, selling a cure for typhus, using an elixir of this plant to induce profuse sweating, thus breaking the fever (although this story is in some doubt among authors). This plant is also called gravel root because it has the ability to remove and to a certain degree dissolve kidney stones or gravel.

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

Important Dates



pixabay

THINKING OF OUR MEMBERS

The organization sends cards to members with difficult medical issues or who have experienced a death in the immediate family.

We also acknowledge achievements/ milestones and donations made to the association.

If you know any member who should receive a card, please contact our new secretary, Paulette Atkinson, at (757) 813-7234 or papinehurst@gmail.com

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the October 2020 newsletter will be Monday, September 21.

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