



# The Colonial Master Gardener

December  
2020

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY PATSY MCGRADY

It's December! Do you have your Christmas tree up? Are your wreaths on your doors? Or have you decided to go easier on yourself this year. There really is no one with a checklist of what you should do and when you should do it. I live in a neighborhood where it seems like everyone is given a memo that specifies that the weekend after Thanksgiving is the appropriate and expected time to do your Christmas decorating. Come that next Monday, one can drive through the neighborhood and see all the decorations. Colonial Williamsburg has nothing on my neighborhood in terms of meeting a specific schedule for Christmas decorating. Sigh.

**Next Meeting:**  
Thursday, December 3  
9:00am  
VIA ZOOM

**Program:**  
Not Tonight, Deer

**Speaker:**  
Peggy Krapf

The Graphics Fairy



But maybe you are like me and every year you find that you do a bit less. And that's all right. The insistence on using a "real" tree has now given way to a "perfectly fine" artificial tree. And after all, those artificial trees look so much better than they used to. But I did come across photos of the outside and inside of my house fifteen years ago, and I was so impressed. Darn, it looked good. However, I have reconciled myself to doing what I can comfortably do, what I enjoy seeing, and what I do not absolutely hate putting up.

significantly fewer guests this year, don't forget yourself. Put out those decorations that make you happy every time you look at them. There is really no one to impress but yourself.

Given the pandemic, I expect many of us are having decreased expectations of the holidays this year. Please, please prioritize your health and safety. This is but one holiday season. Holiday decorations lift our spirits during the darkest time of the year with the shortest days. Even if you are having no guests this year or

There is light at the end of the tunnel with multiple potential vaccines being assessed. Most of us fall into the second priority group for receiving vaccinations. Looking into my crystal ball (I don't really have one), I predict that we will start having in-person meetings next August. Zoom has been a lifesaver. I expect we will take a hard look at continuing to provide the meeting via Zoom for those who haven't been able to get their vaccinations yet or are not physically able to attend the meeting for whatever reason. This will also allow those who may have a conflict at the time of the physical meeting to view the recorded meeting at their convenience.



My dogs enjoyed Thanksgiving.  
Photo by Dogsburg Grooming

*(Continued on the next page, page 2)*

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — CONTINUED

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

My personal plant of the month is my “miracle” camellia. This plant was installed in 2002 during the initial landscaping for the house. It has always looked healthy as a plant. However, it was infected by a virus that caused the blooms to turn brown quickly and fall from the shrub. I never removed the plant because the leaves and structure were healthy (and I was also too lazy.) But, this year, the blooms came out unblemished! For me, this was pretty close to a miracle that, after eighteen years, the camellia was successful in overcoming the virus.



Photo by Patsy McGrady

**Bylaws:** After Thanksgiving and before our December meeting, all members will be emailed the proposed final bylaws with a markup copy showing changes based on member comments since the first draft. We will vote on accepting the bylaws formally at the December meeting.

**Operating Procedures:** Also after Thanksgiving and before our December meeting, all members will be emailed the first draft of the proposed operating procedures with a markup copy showing changes from our original document. The operating procedures have been modified to reflect changes made to the bylaws and have also been expanded to cover more material and, hopefully, increase the usefulness of the document to all members. Please take a look at this document before our December meeting. We will discuss the document and take any questions you may have at this meeting. We will also be pleased to accept any comments you have on the document by December 15. We will issue a proposed final version before the January meeting, with a vote taken at that meeting.

**2021 Budget:** The board agreed to a proposed 2021 budget at the November board meeting. Members will be provided a copy of that proposed budget before the December meeting. We will discuss the budget and take your questions at that meeting and will also vote to accept the budget.

**2021 Training:** We do not expect to have a new training class in 2021 for practical reasons, although we will complete the training requirements for our 2020 class. Hopefully, we will be able to have an in-person graduation celebration that will mark our first social gathering since the pandemic. It would be wonderful to have a significant turnout for this occasion, not only to celebrate our new members but also to celebrate all of us and how we have weathered the crisis and come out the other end.

**Goodbye:** This is my last president's column, as I complete my time as your president at the end of this month. It has been my honor to serve you during this terrible, terrible time. Thank you all for hanging in there for this year, for working projects to the extent they could be worked, for not working projects that could not be worked, for not working projects when you did not feel it was appropriate for you, for attending Zoom association meetings, and, most of all, for keeping us a viable organization during this difficult time. My deepest appreciation and kudos to each of you. Welcome to Martin Oakes, your president for 2021. I'm sure he will lead you in a wonderful MG year.

Newsletter Editor:  
Hope Yelich  
hopeyelich@gmail.com

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/>

## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY HAZEL BRAXTON, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

Peggy Krapf has been a landscape designer in the Williamsburg area since 1993. She holds a landscape specialist certificate from George Washington University, is a certified and active member of the [Virginia Society of Landscape Designers](#) (VSLD), and is a Virginia Master Gardener.

An award-winning designer, Peggy's landscapes have been on tour during [Historic Garden Week in Virginia](#), Ford's Colony's "Hidden Treasures" garden tour, and the Peninsula's Parade of Homes. They have also been featured in the *Daily Press*, the *Virginia Gazette*, and *Southern Living* magazine. She is a frequent speaker for local garden clubs, horticultural events, and Virginia Master Gardener training.

Peggy is the owner of [Heart's Ease Landscape & Garden Design](#). The topic of her presentation at this month's meeting is "Not Tonight, Deer."



The Graphics Fairy

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## 2021 PRUNING CLINIC

BY HARRY FAHL

Happy December everyone. By now most of the leaves have vacated their special locations on the majority of our deciduous trees and shrubs. To many, these leafless bodies look sad or forlorn. BUT...not to a tree and shrub pruner. Be you an experienced pruner or someone looking to make your first cuts in a specimen that requires attention, December is the month to begin to assess your pruning projects.

Past participants in the pruning-clinic outreach project have given their time, shared their expertise, and often braved late January and February weather to visit the citizens of this region to teach, guide, give suggestions, and other assistance regarding the homeowners' pruning questions and queries. This outreach has always generated positive response from our community, and many thanks for the Master Gardeners' efforts.

2021 however, presents an entirely different approach because of the ongoing battle with the COVID-19 pandemic. The pruning clinic team will not be going out to homes. They will not be able to teach about the cuts, tools, and other factors used in successful pruning tasks; but the outreach must continue.

A small team and I have taken on the task of producing three videos on pruning. Why do we prune, how to prune, and a primer on tools. We will use new videos and existing slide shots or our current pruning presentation to create an educational tool for all to utilize. We will also place them in a variety of virtual media outlets with outreach to the citizens we serve. This is our first time creating videos, so we have quite a learning curve, but we hope they will be acceptable to our fellow Master Gardeners and our local population.

I want to thank Master Gardeners Patricia Paquette, Yvonne Forbes, Kim Owens, and Bill Dichtel for their tireless involvement in the project. Plus our talented videographer Arden Shostak, who has committed his time and talents at a price that was within our budget.

We hope to have the videos released in December.



## BETTER IMPACT — GETTING READY FOR A NEW VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

BY DEE ARBEGAST, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

Yes, that's really what it's called — Better Impact. According to VCE we will replace the current volunteer management system (VMS) with this one in January 2021. In order to make the transition easier, you should go into the current VMS system and verify your information.

Here are the steps:

- Log into your VMS session by following this path from the JCC/W MG Association homepage: MGA Members / Dues, Training, Forms / Log into the VMS to Record Your Hours. If it's not already in there, put in your email address and password and login.
- Select Edit Your Profile (upper left corner)



- Make sure your information is correct and change if necessary. Be sure your email address is correct! You don't have to fill out all the requested information. If you do not wish to share your information with other Master Gardeners, please select Private.



Continued on the next page, page 5

## BETTER IMPACT — GETTING READY FOR A NEW VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM — CONTINUED

- Last but not least, you need to put in the word Updated followed by the date. Click Save Information. This lets me know you have checked and updated any of your information.



The screenshot shows a web form with several sections:

- Mobile Phone:** 757-272-9390 (with a "Preferred Number" checkbox).
- Change Password:** A text input field with a note: "Passwords must be at least 7 characters in length with no spaces and contain a number or special character."
- E-Mail Address:** deearbegast@gmail.com
- Photo:** A photo of three people. Below it is a checkbox: "Check this to delete picture, or use the upload file field below to replace it."
- Upload Photo:** A "Choose File" button and the text "No file chosen (image will be resized for web use)".
- Edit Interests:** A button.
- Other Interests:** Updated 10/15/20. A large white arrow points to this field.

Administration will fill out any additional information.

You must enter your hours for 2020. You will also need to complete the risk management training, civil rights training, and complete the standards of behavior and re-enrollment forms. We ask that you do this no later than December 15 so the data can be captured for VCE. You cannot do this the last week of the year. Since we had limited outreach this year, it should be a doable task.

Thanks everyone for your cooperation. As soon as we hear from VCE we will start training on our new system. If you have any questions, you may email or call me. Please leave a voice mail and I will get back to you.

Dee Arbegast  
(757) 272-9390  
deearbegast@gmail.com



The Graphics Fairy

# The Colonial Master Gardener December 2020

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PIN RECIPIENTS FOR THIS YEAR!

BY DEE ARBEGAST, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

1

Name		Hours Milestone
Patricia	Abraham	2000
Judith	Alberts	250
Paulette	Atkinson	250
Carole	Black	500
Hazel	Braxton	1000
Deborah	<u>Bussert</u>	500
Jennifer	Campbell	500
Ginny	Cranford	1000
Helen	Cronk	250
Patricia	Crowe	4000
William	<u>Dichtel</u>	500
Harry	Fahl	250
Yvonne M.	Forbes	2000
Jayce	Griffin	250
Wendy	Hamrick	250
Cathy	Hill	1000
Ann	Hobson	500
Barry	Holland	250 & 500
Bob	Howell	250
Mary Ann	<u>Kimminau</u>	2000
Bruce	Klein	1000
David	<u>Kleppinger</u>	250



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Sandy	<u>Liebler</u>	250
Pamela (Pam)	<u>Mageland</u>	250
Sharon	<u>Marcial</u>	250
Louann	Martin	1000
Frederick	<u>Matthies</u>	250
Judith	McCormack	250 & 500
Susan	Miller	250
Carla	Moses	250
Jeanne	Muller	500
Anne	<u>Odle</u>	1000
Becky	Palmore	250 & 500
Pat	<u>Rathke</u>	3000
Patricia	Ridgway	500
Janice	Rockoff	500
Cheryl	Roettger	500 & 1000
Kathy	<u>Skube</u>	250
Kimberly	Silver-Perry	250
Janet	Smith	2000
Katherine	<u>Sokolowsky</u>	250
Gary	<u>Streb</u>	4000
Sherry	Walker	500



## OVER NINETY POUNDS OF INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

BY CAROL MAYFIELD, MASTER GARDENER INTERN, CLASS OF 2020

These gardeners are part of the Incredible Edibles (IE), a team of JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardeners who provide organic gardening education and fresh produce to Williamsburg. This past year, despite the challenges of gardening during the pandemic, they grew and harvested ninety-four pounds of vegetables from the IE's Historic Triangle Learning Garden. They donated that produce to food banks which included the [Williamsburg House of Mercy](#), [FISH](#), and the [W&M Campus Food Pantry](#).

In addition to cultivating vegetables for Williamsburg area food banks and teaching the community about organic gardening, this Master Gardener team maintains a monarch butterfly waystation. Certified in 2018, the waystation is a flower bed that surrounds the Historic Triangle Learning Garden. It contains varieties of milkweed and other plants the monarchs need to create successive generations and sustain their migration from the United States and Canada to the mountains in central Mexico.

To be ready for the monarchs' return in the spring, these Master Gardeners take time now to winterize the waystation garden. The IE's Historic Triangle Learning Garden is located at the Historic Triangle Community Services Center at 312 Waller Mill Road.



Above: Harriet Parsons, Pat Crowe, and Helen Cronk  
Below: Bill Dichtel and Harriet Parsons



Above: Bev Baker and Harriet Parsons  
Below: Bill Dichtel and Judy McCormack



## MASTER GARDENER INTERN OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2021

BY JENNIFER CAMPBELL

The Master Gardener training class for 2021 has been canceled due to challenges associated with COVID-19. Instead, the Master Gardener training committee will continue to focus on our interns from the class of 2020.

Although the 2020 class was able to complete training requirements, several of the elective sessions at the end of the course had to be canceled. Due to COVID restrictions, interns had limited ability to work projects and get to know other Master Gardeners like classes have in past years. Fortunately, Virginia Cooperative Extension did extend



Interns Sue Barton, Jeff Mellinger, Fred Rojek, Kim Owens, Louann Martin (project lead) and Jill Burress social distancing while working at Matthey's Garden.

their time to attain the requisite fifty volunteer hours to December 2021.

In an effort to make up for the shortened class and to better integrate them into our Master Gardener community, we plan to host monthly sessions for our interns at some of the many gardening-related venues in our area. The elective sessions will start in March and run through October and feature opportunities to rekindle their relationships with classmates along with continued learning at places such as [Brent and Becky's Bulbs](#); [Forest Lane Botanicals](#), and [Agriberry Farm](#). We would also like to host some walks (for instance, trees, native plants, herbs) or other types of hands-on sessions with some of our knowledgeable Extension Master Gardeners.

We plan to kick off these sessions with a project fair for those projects that are available to be worked. With any luck, 2021 will provide interns a greater opportunity to safely work projects and get to know our Master Gardeners. It is our goal and hope to have all our interns complete their fifty hours, after which we'll host a fall graduation ceremony where we can all toast their accomplishments during this tremendously trying time.

Photo courtesy of the WBG



## WBG ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

BY JUDITH ALBERTS, WBG BOARD CHAIR

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden held its 2020 annual meeting on November 22. If you were not able to attend, the recording is available at <https://youtu.be/sF9EZQ5FPe0>. (Note: this recording is Unlisted, which means it can be accessed only with the link.)

There are two corrections to the proceedings: 1) I extend sincere apologies to Cheryl Roettger and her team for failing to mention the

pollinator garden in the recognitions. 2) The image of the monarch butterfly ovipositing was made by Shirley Devan, not Donna Ware.

THANK YOU to all Master Gardeners who made the garden so beautiful despite the challenging circumstances.

As we go into the holiday shopping frenzy, be sure to make your Amazon orders do some good by starting at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). You can designate any nonprofit you want, but we hope you'll support the garden at <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/03-0473937>. It's a painless way to help the garden, and every little bit counts.

Learn and Grow programming will remain virtual until further notice. Please watch your inbox for announcements. If you're not receiving the WBG's eNews, you may add yourself to the distribution list at [www.bit.ly/wbgnews](http://www.bit.ly/wbgnews). Regarding programming, we are always open to suggestions for topics and speakers.

With Warm Wishes for Happy Holidays.—Judith



## THIS AND THAT

### Get Your Grow On!

The spring plant sale will be an **internal one** only for Master Gardeners because of the continued COVID 19 uncertainties.

**SALE DATE** May 1, 2021

**Location:** Historic Triangle Community Center  
9:00am-12:00pm

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** This sale will be the primary fundraiser for 2021. To be successful, we need everyone's help to propagate plants for sale. We are also looking for a few volunteers to assist with organizing this event. The primary tasks will be to manage inventory for plants being propagated, set up of sale, sales, clean up, and disposal of unsold plants. We will be providing additional guidance on propagation and preparing plants for sale soon.

Happy Holidays to all!

Please contact plant sale project chair Donna Tierney [dkiva@cox.net](mailto:dkiva@cox.net) if you'd like to assist in planning this event.



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### Keep the Flora Alive!

Some of you might have received a recent email from the Virginia Native Plant Society asking for a donation to support the continuation of the *Flora of Virginia*. For those who didn't but might want to help, please click on [Virginia Native Plant Society \(z2systems.com\)](http://VirginiaNativePlantSociety(z2systems.com))



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*This and That is continued on the next page, page 10*

## THIS AND THAT — CONTINUED

### The Last Harvest at the Blayton School Garden



Ken Caro reports that the final crops from the Blayton garden were donated to FISH.

### Status of 2021 Training Class

Extension Master Gardener Training for James City County/Williamsburg slated for 2021 has been cancelled due to COVID-19. We anticipate the next Master Gardener class to be held March – May 2022.

If you know someone who is interested in becoming a Master Gardener and would like to receive notifications and updates on the next class, please have them contact us at [jccmgardener@yahoo.com](mailto:jccmgardener@yahoo.com)

—Jen Campbell

**“This morning I took out a comma and this afternoon I put it back again.” — Oscar Wilde**

Do you like to take perfectly good prose and bend it to your will? Do you like total control over commas, spaces, and capital letters? Then I have the job for one or two of you! Your humble editor, after six years, is looking to move on to other projects.

And, more importantly, our monthly newsletter needs some new blood; or, to put it more elegantly, a refresh. If this chance to wallow in creativity appeals to you, please get in touch with me ([hopeyulich@gmail.com](mailto:hopeyulich@gmail.com)). I'd love to talk to you about it. Truly, taking what our members send and putting them in a readable package isn't hard! And most of the time it's really fun.

I know you're out there.....  
—Hope

The Graphics Fairy



### 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 DECEMBER 2020

BY HELEN HAMILTON  
JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### AMERICAN BITTERSWEET *Celastrus scandens*

Bittersweet is popular for home decorations around the holiday season. It blooms in the spring with small green flowers that produce yellow fruit. In the fall hanging clusters of yellow-orange fruit split open to show bright red-orange seed coats. The broad oval leaves turn clear yellow in the fall, and then drop, allowing the berries to show to best advantage.

This twining, woody vine will grow to twenty feet or more, vertically or sprawling horizontally over bushes and fences, but it can be pruned to a desirable shape. It prefers rich, evenly moist soil in full sun or light shade and will grow in many habitats including fencerows, forest edges and roadsides. The plant will tolerate abuse, including heat, drought, and even salt. It is native to the Virginia peninsula and mountains and ranges south to Florida and Texas.

Plants are male or female, and both sexes are needed for fruit set. Pollination is by insects, especially bees, and also by wind. There is a cultivar "Autumn Revolution" that is self-pollinating; only one plant is needed to produce large and abundant fruits.

Unfortunately, the native American bittersweet is declining, while the nonnative Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is spreading and increasing in abundance. Oriental bittersweet is commonly sold for home decorations in the holiday season because the small fruits occur in clusters all along the stem. (The native American bittersweet grows large fruits in profusion only at the tips of the stems.)

Oriental bittersweet is a highly invasive species in Virginia. It is native to Japan, Korea, and China and was brought to this country in the mid 1800s as an ornamental. Now naturalized in states from Maine to Georgia and west to Iowa, this robust vine covers natural vegetation, forming thick pure stands. It can girdle trees, strangle shrubs, and the weight of the vine weakens the crown and eventually kills the tree. It takes over the landscape, like kudzu. Control is difficult – a few vines can be pulled by hand but any roots remaining will resprout.

Be careful when buying bittersweet at garden centers and farmer's markets – if the fruits occur along the stem at leaf axils, it is Oriental bittersweet. When used as home decorations, the seeds are released to the landscape after the stems are discarded. Don't buy Oriental bittersweet!



**Photos:**

Above: American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) taken by Larry Reis

Below: Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) taken by Seig Kopinitz



For more information about native plants,  
visit [www.vnps.org](http://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](mailto:papinehurst@gmail.com)

## NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the January 2021 newsletter will be Wednesday, December 23.

Please send any submissions to Hope Yelich, newsletter editor, at [hopeyelich@gmail.com](mailto: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.