



The Colonial Master Gardener

March
2021

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

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY MARTIN OAKES

The month of March – and the early days of Spring. The adage states that the weather of March enters like a lion but leaves like a lamb. We will see my fellow gardeners. I am still hoping for the three-inch snow! And do not get too anxious to plant – remember the last frost date is mid-April. However, my daffodils are starting to emerge. And I heard that the Gloucester Daffodil Festival will occur on a limited basis. Our organization has made tremendous progress on the new Better Impact system. A large amount of data has been downloaded (a huge thank you to Dave Banks). Work continues on the downloading. Rick Brown provided an excellent tutorial for the Better Impact administrators in late February. I even have a fairly good grasp of the system. Trust me, if I can do it, anyone can do it.

It appears that the schedule still holds and member training will occur during early March. VCE (Kathleen Reed) will be forwarding a Better Impact link and a password to the general membership during the first week of March. The Board will schedule in house training. Please be patient and have an open mind. The Board is evaluating the integration between Better Impact and the Website.

The application process for the new Agriculture and Natural Resources agent is closed. I expect to receive notification from Janet Spencer in the near future. As with any governmental position, it just takes time. Vickie Rockwell and Patsy McGrady have put many hours into revising the Emeritus procedure. The Board is working to provide the earned recognition to this group of members. Please contact Vickie or Patsy with any questions or concerns.

I realize everyone is tired of the winter weather and tired of the Coronavirus restrictions. Hang tough and think positive. Remember the immortal words of Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1971: "I want to know ... have you ever seen the rain comin' down on a sunny day?"

Have a good day, have a sunny day. Hope to see you face to face this summer.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, March 4
9:00am
VIA ZOOM

Program:
Growing Heirloom Tomatoes

Speaker:
Harriet Parsons

Photo from unsplash



Both images unsplash

EDITOR CHANGE

BY HOPE YELICH, NEWSLETTER EDITOR

2021
MGA Board

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Martin Oakes

President Elect:
Deborah Bussert

VP Administration:
Vickie Rockwell

VP Projects:
Rick Brown

VP Internal Ed:
Bill Dichtel

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VMGA Rep:
Marilyn Riddle
Alternate:
Joanne Sheffield

Past President:
Patsy McGrady

*VCE ANR Program
Assistant:*
VACANT

"I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." — Jerome K. Jerome

Every month it has been a privilege to compile the newsletter for our members, and many months it has been a lot of fun. I'm very grateful to the various association presidents (Sue Liddell, Debbie Griesinger, Gary Streb, Cathy Hill, Patsy McGrady, and Marty Oakes) who trusted me to get the newsletter out more or less on time with a minimum of errors. Since I took over as editor from the terrific Cathy Lohwater in March 2015, I've been touched by the compliments I've received and the realization that *The Colonial Master Gardener* plays a vital role in our organization. Many thanks to you all.

As I move on to other projects, I'm thrilled that Katherine Sokolowsky (a fellow classmate from the Class of 2014) has agreed to be our new editor. Since 2006, Katherine has been a professor of Finance at William & Mary. In her spare time, she loves working with kids in Matthey's Garden and learning from her fellow Master Gardeners on Landscape Love visits. Fun Facts: she has four children – all of whom have graduated from Matthew Whaley; and her mom, Linda Guthrie, is a fellow WJCC Master Gardener (class of 2020).

From now on, please send any contributions to the newsletter to Katherine at katherinesoko@gmail.com. Welcome, Katherine!



Photos from unsplash

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY BILL DICHEL, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

Newsletter Editor:
Katherine Sokolowsky
katherinesoko@gmail.com

Be on the lookout for your Zoom meeting invitation for the March 4 James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners' Meeting. Our educational meeting will feature our own member Harriet Parsons. Harriet has been one of the leaders of the Historic Triangle Learning Garden and the Incredible Edibles Project for over a decade and has been one of our principal teachers in the vegetable garden. She will present on "Growing Heirloom Tomatoes." The presentation will qualify for one hour continuing education credit toward our annual VCE requirement. The monthly business meeting will follow Harriet's presentation.

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/>

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

2021 EMG INTERN AND VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS BY VICKIE ROCKWELL, VP FOR ADMINISTRATION

Please be a patient for just a little bit more. Our new system, Better Impact, is moving along. Keep track of your continuing education and volunteer hours. As soon as we get a “go” and can set up some training for you, we will let you loose on the new system. Just think of it as planting your bulbs in the fall and having to wait until spring to see them.

Speaking of bulbs, my anemones are trying very hard to stay alive despite the rabbits. The rabbits have mowed them down twice now but there is still green in the mulch. I am going to put a screen over them. Maybe that will help.

To make you aware – Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) is reinstating the **20 hour volunteer requirement** for Master Gardeners. That said, if you are uncomfortable or unwilling to volunteer due to the pandemic, please contact your local extension agent or coordinator, (or one of the Board to help). The locality may offer to waive or reduce the volunteer requirement on a case by case basis.

Remember, VCE has safety rules about us working together – six feet distance, masks, and no sharing tools are just some of them. Get your vaccinations as soon as you can. Stay safe and healthy.

The **8 hour continuing education requirement** will remain in place. The easy way to make that happen is to attend the monthly meetings throughout the year or watch the Zoom recording. The first hour of the meeting is continuing education every month.

For the **Class of 2020**, stay in contact with Jennifer Campbell for any requirements you may need and the timeline.

The official notice by Kathleen Reed of the reinstatement of hours is at the end of the newsletter.

MORE ON CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS BY PATSY MCGRADY, PAST PRESIDENT

More CE opportunities are available here: <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/ce/>



photo from unsplash

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

OUR NEW BETTER IMPACT SYSTEM BY RICK BROWN, VP FOR PROJECTS

Out with the Old ...

As I write this, there is, and has been lately, some really yucky weather. Most of my outdoor time has been spent lately becoming familiar with the new Better Impact [BI] system that replaces the old, out-of-date VMS we have used since 2012. This is a commercial product purchased for use by all the volunteer groups that fall under the Virginia Cooperative Extension [VCE] umbrella. Marty Oakes, our President, has the unenviable task of leading a team of administrators to create our new site, designed especially for our Unit. Throughout the months of January and February, this group has received training from Kathleen Reed at VCE, the owners of the system. There is a great deal of data that needs to be sorted and loaded before you will all be able to log on in early March to enter your time. Marty has broken the work down into different small task groups to lessen the responsibilities and focus the effort. As he says, "It's like the old adage of eating an elephant one bite at a time."

There will be training sessions provided for everyone once BI has been loaded, tested, and is up and running. A lot of work is going on behind the curtain to streamline our list of projects and continuing education opportunities. I think everyone will like the ease of being able to check out events and log hours in this system. There is the ability to send e-mails and notices throughout the Unit. There is a file library where you will be able to access important documents and even look for archived newsletters. The goal is to create an area where everyone can go for one-stop MG shopping.

This is a new system, and change means that we all will need to adjust. There will be mistakes made and head-scratching with where to find things, and revisions and corrections will be necessary as we grow into the system together. But patience and assistance from volunteers who have been trained and are experiencing those frustrations, right now, will help everyone acclimate quickly to become experts. If I can learn these new tricks, then anyone can.

Recording hours is so important to the success of our organization. First, it indicates the value of our collective efforts performing a variety of volunteer services that make a difference in this state. Secondly, recording time justifies to those who make budget decisions where to allocate the funds that keep our program running. We are partnered with governmental agencies that actually react to information that we provide them. We want to come out with a "user-friendly" system that everyone will be able to navigate.

So it is very important that those who are working on creating this new system get it right and make it an easy and inviting tool for all of us to use as we "do our thing". Marty will be updating everyone as the launch date approaches. Until then just remember that people are busy working for your Unit, and technology is our friend, really.

Stay well, warm, and dry. Better days are coming, by and by.



MASTER GARDENER SPEAKERS BUREAU BY ELIZABETH MCCOY AND JUDITH ALBERTS, CO-CHAIRS

If you enjoy sharing your passion for gardening and your expertise on a particular topic, the Speakers Bureau wants you! Many garden clubs are looking for speakers who are willing to present via Zoom. As a Speaker, you get to claim volunteer hours for the time you spend creating your program in addition to the presentation time. If you are a whiz at PowerPoint but don't want to actually be the speaker, we can pair you up with someone who has a program concept but needs a little help crafting the presentation. Contact Elizabeth McCoy and Judith Alberts at mgspeakersjccw@gmail.com.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

VMGA UPDATES

BY MARILYN RIDDLE, VMGA REP & JOANNE SHEFFIELD, ALTERNATE

The bimonthly VMGA meeting was hosted virtually February 13 by our Unit. President Marty Oakes gave an overview of the past year while Rick Brown gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Tree Steward project he and the other team members began in conjunction with Colonial Williamsburg. This has been an ongoing project since 2018 and has allowed Colonial Williamsburg to become a Level II Arboretum. The Tree Steward team is now working on the Level III requirements—identifying a minimum of 500 species, varieties, or cultivars of trees or woody plants. Those attending the meeting were rightly impressed.

Leslie Paulson, VMGA President, pointed out that a member who wants to earn a lot of hours can do that by serving on the Board or a Committee.

The Education Committee reported on two upcoming events—Horticultural Therapy/Therapeutic Horticulture on March 15. This will include our own Linda Lucas as a panelist. This should be an outstanding event put together by the Education Committee. Dr. Diane Relf, the first state master gardener coordinator and VT professor, is coming out of retirement to help. The other event is Gardening for Your Lifestyle on April 10 sponsored by the EMGs of the Central Rappahannock Area. There is a charge of \$20.00, but if you are a VMGA member, the cost is \$15.00. Watch Kathleen's bi-weekly for further details.

A Special Committee for a change in the definition of Lifetime Membership has come up with an alternative — Continuing Membership. Voting will occur later.

Attendees were reminded that the last talk in the Virginia Tech IDs and Diagnoses Series would be held February 16. The programs are available for anyone to watch. The topics have been Soils, Basic Entomology, Weeds and Plant Diseases. The videos can be accessed at <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/webinar-archive/>

Cookbook recipes are being collected by Wanda Gerard, yagardengurl@aol.com. These should highlight Virginia agricultural products or have some historical/cultural significance to the Commonwealth. The recipes will be available for the International Master Gardener College.

The focus topics for April are to identify who is using SQUARE for online sales and how are plant sales being handles during the pandemic.

A copy of the membership application and renewal form appears at the end of the newsletter.

photo from unsplash



MASTER GARDENER PROJECT UPDATES

2021 INTERNAL PLANT SALE UPDATE BY DONNA TIERNEY, PLANT SALE CHAIR

SPRING IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING!

Get Your Grow On!

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROPAGATE PLANTS!

- When:** Saturday May 1, 2021 (set up for sale will be on Friday April 30th)
- Where:** Historic Triangle Community Service Center, 312 Waller Mill Rd.
- Time:** 9AM-12PM
- Wear:** Your Master Gardener Badge, Masks & Gloves and maintain social distance of 6 feet when shopping, waiting in line, or socializing
- Payment:** Checks Only
- Audience:** Master Gardeners Only (Note MGs can buy plants for friends or relatives, but ONLY MGs can attend the sale to prevent any potential COVID 19 liabilities from public attendance)



Photo from unsplash

There will be no Trash and Treasures offered at this sale.

Need help with digging or potting Plants?? Contact Kim Owens 757 592 8181

Need Pots or Labels?? Come to the Ironbound Mini Storage, 4010 Ironbound Rd. on March 5 between 10am-12pm. It's near the water tower opposite Walmart on Monticello. Our unit is H 51 way in the back. Bring your own bags or boxes for transporting. This will be the last pot give away the team will offer, but you can still get pots at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

Happy St Patrick's Day and thanks for your support!

Your Plant Sale Team –

Donna Tierney, Linda Berryman, Stacy DeMeo, Jean Johnston, Kim Owens
Jim Pressly, Gary Streb, and Gail Weaver

LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY BARBARA FLOYD, CO-CHAIR, LANDSCAPE LOVE



Photo from unsplash

The Landscape Love project is under new management, but alive and well. We were hoping to return to home visits and more “normal” operations for the spring season, but it doesn't seem like that's going to be possible under the current conditions. So, we are now planning to relaunch Landscape Love home visits in the fall.

With the change in project chairs, there will be some changes to the administration of the project, but we're looking forward to having all the volunteers back and providing the same services to homeowners. Stay tuned for more information as we get into the summer, our plans become more firm, and we're able to communicate with everyone to get Landscape Love back underway. We're all excited about getting started again!

MASTER GARDENER PROJECT UPDATES — CONTINUED

BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNING PROJECT BY HARRY FAHL, CO-CHAIR, PRUNING CLINIC

RAIN, SLEET, SATURATED SOIL, AND SUN



The Botanical Garden looks FANTASTIC!!

The pruning volunteers who faced cold, rain, a bit of ice, muddy shoes, beautiful warm sun, and blue skies are my heroes. We averaged about 11 to 13 people on all days but one. We had those who knew exactly what to do no matter the assigned task and others who were new to the game. I knew I could leave the experienced and go to work with those who wanted to learn. And learn they did! They were so enthused about what to do with each bush or tree. These good folks were like sponges and didn't shy from any task. Working with them and those who've been around awhile has been a true joy for me. One I will hold dear for quite some time. Those of us MG's who've been in the garden over the

years will notice a difference immediately. The same kind of dramatic improvement that those stalwart pruning volunteers of 2019 accomplished. I thank them for laying a good foundation for this year's efforts.

We touched most areas of the garden that held woody shrubs, and trees. Cleared the fence line outside of it, over it and inside of it. A monumental task that took three teams of several people each several days to complete. We did Hollies, Chaste trees, Grasses, Goldenrod clearing, Wisteria trimming and so much more, too many areas to mention. It just looks so good! I wish I could acknowledge and thank each person individually, although I don't feel comfortable doing so and won't. However I would like to thank Dr. Donna Ware for her invaluable advice, her willingness to be involved each and every day with me and each of the pruners. She is certainly one of a kind, a valuable asset to the garden, its volunteers and a cherished friend. But the question must be asked, are we done? Not quite.

The wetlands and swamp were simply doing what they do best, being a wetland and a swamp. Hence it was too soggy to get in there. Didn't want to compress the soil, not to mention fill my boots with cold water. We'll get those areas shortly. Of course the clearing of new growth into the pedestrian paths, the removal of dead or broken branches overhead and other potential hazards to our visitors goes on throughout the year. So it's nearly time to close the books on this year's Botanical Pruning and Trimming efforts. Again, I thank each of you who became part of the team I was so privileged to lead.



My Best Wishes to All in your 2021 Gardening Efforts!

MASTER GARDENER PROJECT UPDATES — CONTINUED
A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR BOTANICAL GARDEN PRUNERS



MASTER GARDENER PROJECT UPDATES — CONTINUED

MATTEY'S GARDEN

BY LOUANN MARTIN, CO-CHAIR MATTEY'S GARDEN

As with most other WJCC Master Gardener projects, Mattey's Garden has experienced an unprecedented quiet. While there is some in-class learning, we are not allowed any direct contact with the children. Sadly, this is the one thing which they could use – interaction, learning, and being outside. We are optimistic that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

A group of dedicated MG volunteers have worked to keep the garden in order. We applied the mulch, pruned the plants, cleaned and refilled the pond, and put a fresh coat of paint on the tops of the raised beds.



We have harvested and supplied produce to the “Grab and Go” lunch program at the school. We are ready for the new season! The Master Gardeners have planted vegetables and herbs which would have been planted during a regular year by the children. We are hoping to do some virtual sessions.

Mattey's Garden was awarded two grants in 2020 which have been put to good use. One grant through the Youth Grant Program (Kid's Gardening) provided products to be used in the garden (seeds, children's gloves, 'trub tub', growing sack) in addition to funds to be used for the garden. The second grant from the Junior Women's Club of Williamsburg paid for critter control (keeping the bunnies out of the raised beds) as well as a 3-season tent which has been installed over one of the raised beds. We are experimenting with growing lettuce and spinach for an extended crop.

On a final note, we are looking for a volunteer to do some art work for the garden. The corner sections of the raised beds are in desperate need of replacement. New PVC corner pieces have been purchased to replace the rotted wooden pieces. We are looking for someone to paint these new pieces to depict what is seen in the garden (list of items, samples and paint will be provided). If you can help out, we would really appreciate it! Please contact Louann Martin (lk martin2011@gmail.com) with any interest and questions.

Here's to 2021 – happy gardening!



Su Carlile and Jeff Mellinger installing 3-season tent



Bob and Jill Burruss installing critter fencing

THIS AND THAT

Next Door Neighbors

Keep your eyes open for our own Harry Fahl in your March issue of *Next Door Neighbors*! Harry talks about his experiences as a JCC/MG master gardener volunteer working with Williamsburg area homeowners and in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, teaching the gardening public and master gardeners the right way to prune.

He also mentions the three videos that he and his team produced in place of the annual in-person pruning clinics which were canceled because of the pandemic. If you haven't seen these fabulous videos, there's a link to them as well as the *Pruning Handbook* on the first page of our website (jccwmg.org) or just type JCC Williamsburg Master Gardeners into your search!

—Marion Guthrie



Turf Love Event

We're hosting a webinar on Saturday, March 20 at 10am with Adam Nichols from the Hampton Roads AREC. Adam will provide a lecture about the benefits of using compost on your lawn to improve soil and turf health. Participants can register here: <https://www.colonialswcd.net/let-s-talk-turf>

—Marty Oakes

Valuable Resource on Poisonous Plants

Here is an excellent publication that the public needs to be made aware of: <https://med.virginia.edu/brpc/the-learning-center/the-socrates-project/>

—Rick Brown

Master Gardener Help Desk

With Spring comes the opening of the Williamsburg/James City County Master Gardener Help Desk. Last year was a very rough year so in many ways we are starting from scratch. We will only have one Master Gardener at the Help Desk for each session. If you are interested in working the Help Desk and honing your gardening knowledge please let Bob Howell know.

You can contact him at rhowell0727@gmail.com or (757) 566-3278. I will be sending the sign-up application after our March meeting to those of you who are interested.

—Bob Howell

Correction

Pam Mageland will become co-chair of the training program with Jennifer Campbell (not Julie Denny as previously reported).

—Jennifer Campbell

THIS AND THAT — CONTINUED

News from the Williamsburg Botanical Garden

Learn & Grow, March 20 at 10 am: Our own EMG Justin Luis Diaz will present his program "Compost is Garden Gold" for the March 20 WBG Learn & Grow via Zoom. Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/99653175330>.

WBG Volunteers Past: If you volunteered at the WBG anytime after July 1, 2020, please report your hours via the new volunteer hours form at <https://bit.ly/wbgvolhours>. Here's a 4-minute tutorial on how to use the form: <https://youtu.be/s9N90p9Irog>. WBG asks that volunteers report hours at least monthly moving forward so it can report hours to Freedom Park in a timely manner. As of this writing, WBG volunteers have reported almost 2,500 hours! We ask forgiveness for the double work of recording your hours to both VCE and WBG.

WBG Volunteers Present and Future: The officially approved project at the WBG for 2021 expands eligible hours to include all activities in the garden in coordination with the WBG project leaders.

HUGE THANKS to the **EMG Pruning Team** as it continues much-needed tree and shrub work in the WBG during these damp and chilly months. What a hardy crew!

—Judith Alberts, WBG Board Chair



Spring and Fall Landscaping with Natives Webinar Series

The Plant Hampton Roads Natives campaign is pleased to be collaborating with other campaigns across the state to offer a series of 12 webinars - 6 this spring and 6 this fall. The webinars will guide you through the why and how to turn your home garden into a beautiful retreat for your family and a native habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The series kick-off is on Friday, March 5 at 6:30 pm with an engaging presentation by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, renowned author of *Bringing Nature Home* and of *Nature's Best Hope*. Dr. Tallamy's photography and message of hope is not to be missed!

Sign-up for all 12 webinars for just \$10! More details on the series and registration is available at www.PlantVirginiaNatives.org

—Marty Oakes



PLANT OF THE MONTH OF MARCH: SPRING EPHEMERALS

BY HELEN HAMILTON

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

They come early, but do not stay long, only a few weeks. Most grow in woodlands, using the sunshine of early spring to grow, flower, get pollinated, and produce seeds, all before leaves appear on the trees. How do they do it? Who/what are the pollinators?

Bees are the major pollinators of flowering plants -- no other insect has a body covered with hairs that attract pollen. As they gather pollen and mold it into a cavity on their hind leg, pollen grains stick to their body hairs to be transferred to receptive stigma on the next flower they visit.

Most bees are generalists – they take pollen from any available plant, all of it for their brood cells since pollen grains will germinate only on matching stigma. Others are specialists and will feed from a few or only one plant species, and all the pollen is available for reproduction.

Three of our native spring ephemerals host specialist pollinators, a group known as mining bees. These are ground nesting bees that include bumblebees, sweat bees, leafcutter and mason bees. They are solitary, are not aggressive, do not sting, and live only a few weeks, long enough to mate, construct a nest and deposit an egg and provisions.

These bees prefer nest sites in dry soil, often sand, or bare patches in the lawn or garden, usually under shrubs for protection from heat and frost. Nests are often in groups, usually recognized by a small mound of soil, or small holes. Mining bees are well named, since the females often dig holes and tunnels with legs and mandibles. After depositing a single egg, she rolls a ball of nectar and pollen to feed the emerging young, seals the brood patch and constructs others. The new bee emerges just as the flower opens with nectar and pollen for food.

Spring Beauty *Claytonia virginica* is pollinated specifically by a mining bee *Andrena erigenia*. Other bees and flies may visit and take nectar, but the pollen they carry is wasted on flowers other than Spring Beauty. This little early bloomer is well named with loose clusters of star-like white flowers, the petals striped with pink veins. A small plant with thin stems 4-6 tall, Spring Beauty is spectacular in large patches, like a sea of pink foam. Dark green grass-like leaves continue to grow as the flowers finish blooming and may eventually reach 9-12 inches tall before disappearing in late spring.

The specialist pollinator for Cut-leaf Toothwort *Cardamine concatenata* is another mining bee *Andrena arabis*. This little woodland flower has a cluster of white to pink flowers at the top of each stem. Below is a pair of dark green leaves, cut deeply into 3 lobes. The name “toothwort” could refer to these sharply lobed leaves, but the but the name comes from tooth-like projections on the underground stems.



Andrena erythronii, another mining bee, collects pollen from Trout Lily *Erythronium americanum* that gets its name from its mottled green leaves that apparently resemble brook trout. This bright yellow flower droops toward the ground (Mary Hyde Berg always told us: “it’s eyes look downwards”). The flowers don’t last long, but the leaves remain as ground cover throughout the growing season. The seeds are distributed by ants, who are attracted to small bodies of dead cells and lipids (elaiosomes). After eating these, the seeds are deposited in the ants’ feces, not too far away from the sources where they sprout to form colonies.

Continued on the next page, page 13

SPRING EPHEMERALS—CONTINUED

Bees and their flowers have evolved simultaneously to ensure a food supply and pollination. When the adults emerge from overwintering, nectar and pollen is available from flowers.

The habitats for ground nesting bees are threatened, so it's a good idea to leave a little bare spot in a home garden for these bees. They are solely dependent on flowers for food, and their pollination services are irreplaceable.

Spring ephemerals are gone by early summer -- their tops have faded, and their roots are storing energy for next early spring. Here are a few more spring ephemerals that are native to Virginia's Coastal Plain. Some, but not all, will do well in shaded woodland gardens.



One of the first to appear in our area is Pennywort *Obolaria virginica* – only 6 inches tall, the white-purplish flowers clustered at the top of the stem are easily overlooked in winter's leaf litter. Pennywort blooms in late February, just before the other spring ephemerals, in rich moist woods and thickets.

Round-lobed Hepatica *Hepatica americana* is one of the earliest spring wildflowers. Light blue flowers emerge in leaf litter from a tattered clump of leathery, burgundy-brown tinted leaves from the previous year. New leaves appear only after the flowers bloom and are seen frequently throughout the growing season.

A sure sign of spring are the flowers and leaves of Bloodroot *Sanguinaria canadensis*. Sometime in March brown tips will emerge from forest soil, each with a leaf inside wrapped around the stalk. Delicate white flowers appear above the still-folded leaf. After the flower is done, the petals drop and the leaf with 5-7 wavy lobes slowly opens. Once expanded, the bright green heavily veined leaf shades the developing fruit. The appearance and actions of the leaf are as interesting as the satiny white flower petals. This is another plant that ants visit to feed on the small appendages on seeds, later leaving them behind in feces to germinate in rich organic material.

Another early bloomer is Rue-anemone *Thalictrum thalictroides*. Its flowers are small, in whorls of white petal-like sepals above blue-green leaves that are divided into three round lobes. This is a nice plant for a woodland garden -- Rue-anemone prefers part shade but will tolerate deep shade and drought.

Rue-anemone is very attractive with Common Blue Violet *Viola sororia*, a host plant for the larva of fritillary butterflies, other butterflies, some moths and several specialist *Andrena* bees including the mining bee *Andrena violae* that only visits violets.

Common throughout Virginia is Field Pansy *Viola bicolor*, that covers lawns and fields in early spring with small white-blue flowers.

Tiny Bluets *Houstonia pusilla* are everywhere in March – along roadsides, in lawns and fields, usually in dry, disturbed areas, creating large swaths of deep purple. These little flowers are only ¼ inch across, on stalks only an inch long with ½ inch leaves.

The leaves of Virginia Bluebell *Mertensia virginica* appear early in spring, first a deep purple, then turning green. They are large, 2-8 inches long and somewhat fragile as the stems are nearly hollow. Funnel-shaped flowers are first pink and turn blue as they open -- truly a beautiful pendant cluster. Early on, this lovely flower made the trip to Europe, where it quickly became a regular in English gardens, as the handsome Virginia cowslip.

Virginia Bluebell is a plant of Virginia's mountain and piedmont areas, rather than coastal regions, so it must be given a moist, shady environment.

Continued on the next page, page 14

SPRING EPHEMERALS—CONTINUED

A few mosses are ephemerals also. Urn moss *Physcomitrium pyriforme* produces copious numbers of goblet-shaped capsules (the sporophyte generation) from each rosette of leaves. Quickly they open, disperse spores, and by early summer the leaves are brown and shriveled.

Yellow stalk moss *Ditrichum pallidum* makes a “forest” of tall thin yellow stalks, topped with capsules. Nothing else looks like this plant in early March in the forest litter and lawns.

RECOGNITION OF OUR MASTER GARDENERS EMERITI

PATRICIA CROWE

Patricia Crowe, from the EMG Class of 2005, was recognized as an Emerita in 2019 with a total of 4046 Volunteer Service hours. Many of you may remember Patricia as the Board Secretary or member of the Education Committee. She worked in the CW learning Gardens, Waterwise, WBG and was especially active with Therapeutic Gardening – Projects co-chair from 2011 to 2018. These projects included Springhouse, Spring Arbor, Williamsburg Landing, Chambrel, WindsorMeade, New Zion/Our Savior and special programs for Adult Day Care to name a few.

She created Matthey's Cookbook and led the Strawberry Festival at Matthey's Garden. She contributed to many other projects and activities. Among them are Landscape Love, the MG Training program, Speakers' Bureau and Plant Sales.

Best wishes to Patricia for being an outstanding volunteer and contributor to our Master Gardeners Association

JAMES AND NELDA PRESSLY

Two of our newly recognized Emeriti Status members are James Pressly and Nelda Pressly. James graduated in the EMG class of 1987 and Nelda in the EMG class of 1988. This is a combined total of 67 years of Master Gardener volunteerism.

James Pressly has a total of 2,877 hours to date. He was Outreach Chair in the 1990's, was on plant sale committees, a plant sale participant and the Speaker's Bureau.

Nelda Pressly has 2884.6 volunteer hours to date. She was in the group that formally established this association and served on the Board of Directors. As a member of the Speaker's Bureau, she set up talks for the general public. Nelda also chaired early plant sales (two and four) and worked in many subsequent plant sale projects. She also worked in the Colonial Williamsburg Reid Garden.

Thank you to two of our 'founders' for your many years of service and your foresight in helping to establish the JCC/W Master Gardener Association. You are valued contributors. So, please continue to join us when you can at a meeting or in the gardens.

Important Dates



Photo from unsplash

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.

This month we sent cards to:
Fred Rojek — Sympathy

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 April 2021 newsletter will be Thursday, March 25

Please send any submissions to Katherine Sokolowsky, newsletter editor, at katherinesoko@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.



Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc.

Membership Application and Renewal Form

We encourage you to use the online form at www.vmga.net, "Join VMGA."

VMGA uses electronic means to disseminate the newsletter, directory and announcements. Please accept the responsibility to update the Membership Chair of any email address changes.

Name: (please print legibly) _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please check any committee(s) for which you can volunteer and any skills that you can contribute.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education Committee (event planning) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising (merchandise sales, Silent Auction or appeals) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Audit, finance, budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (writer, reporter, layout) |

Membership Class (Please check appropriate class)

Active (Trainees, Interns, Master Gardeners, Emeritus MGs or Extension Staff)

- New Active member (\$12 annual dues)
- Renewing Active member (\$12 annual dues)
- Lifetime Active member (\$120 one-time payment, valid as long as you remain an active VCE-MG)

Auxiliary or Sustaining (members cannot vote or hold office)

- New Auxiliary member (\$12 annual dues for those who were formerly active VCE-MGs and are no longer contributing hours, but wish to continue to support VMGA)
- Renewing Auxiliary member (\$12 annual dues)
- Sustaining Member (\$250 or more; for individuals or businesses interested in supporting the work of VMGA)

VCE Unit through which you submit volunteer hours (Extension staff, please note your unit):

_____ Year Completed Training _____

Signature _____

Renewing Your Membership? Information about VMGA Charitable Activities for Current Members

- To donate to VMGA's Master Gardener College scholarship fund, please note the amount here \$_____ and include the amount in your payment total.
- To donate to VMGA's State MG Coordinator Endowed Fund, make your check payable to "VT Foundation," note Account #886119 in the memo line and mail to CALS Development Office, 216 Hutcheson Hall (0402), Blacksburg VA 24061. A donation/pledge form can also be found at www.vmga.net.

Mail this form and your check made payable to "VMGA, Inc." to:

Deb Straw, VMGA Membership Chair
249 Snapps Mill Road
Spout Spring, VA 24593

Questions? Call Deb at 434-352-5024 or email her at debstraw@aol.com, or visit www.VMGA.net.



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

In light of the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions established by our Governor's Executive Orders and directives from VCE executive leadership, the State EMG Office has put the following policies into place for 2021:

- For 2021, we are reinstating the 20-hour volunteer requirement for Extension Master Gardeners.
 - For any volunteers who are uncomfortable or unwilling to volunteer at this time due to the ongoing pandemic, please contact your local extension agent or coordinator. The locality may offer to waive or reduce the volunteer hours requirement on a case by case basis. As always, the local office should factor in all extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.
- For 2021, we are extending the timeframe for Extension Master Gardener Interns to complete their required 50 volunteer hours.
 - For any Intern who does not complete their 50-hour requirement in 2021, they should be given up to an additional 12 months to complete their remaining hours.
 - The local VCE unit office should determine the length of the extension based on when their EMG training took place and the number of volunteer opportunities available in their unit during this time. The local office should also factor in other extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.
- For 2021, the 8-hour requirement for continuing education will remain in place.
 - There are a number of free online sources for continuing education EMG volunteers can make use of, including this list on the EMG website: <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/ce/>. This page also includes a reading list for volunteers who don't have easy access to the internet. If you are not sure if a specific event or opportunity has been approved locally, please contact your local extension agent or coordinator for verification in advance of the event. Please direct any questions you, as an EMG volunteer, may have about continuing education to your local agent or coordinator.
 - The 2021 International Master Gardener Conference will be held online this year and will be another good education opportunity for our volunteers. Registration will open in early April and IMGCC will run from September 13 - 17. All sessions will be recorded and available for later viewing by registrants.

March 2021

WILLIAMSBURG'S Next Door Neighbors®

VOL. 15, ISSUE 3

PRICELESS

Discovering the people who call Williamsburg home

Volunteers

Harry Fah

Lisa Martin Lee Photography

WilliamsburgNeighbors.com