



The Colonial Master Gardener

February
2022

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

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEBORAH BUSSERT

Greetings fellow Master Gardeners. As I write this, we have experienced several bouts of cold, snow and the dreaded "wintry mix." Although we humans may dread this wintry weather, it actually benefits many plants, allowing them to rest in dormancy and helping many seeds germinate. So when you are shivering in the cold or sliding on the ice, remember that your plants are resting and gathering their strength for the coming growing season. Already we can see the early daffodils sprouting and in some cases even blooming. Spring is definitely coming!

Do I really need to remind you to complete your recertification forms, log your 2021 hours and pay your dues before January 31? Please, if you haven't already done so, complete these tasks now so that you can maintain your status as a Master Gardener and a member of the Association.

I'm not a big fan of traditional New Year's resolutions. Too often they are unrealistic and quickly abandoned. I would like to propose some goals for 2022, however, including: plant for pollinators and other wildlife; reduce the use of chemicals; conserve water; and improve the soil. These are all doable – only requiring us to be more mindful of our gardening practices.



Dicentra spectabilis 'Valentine'
(Photo Courtesy of Deborah Bussert)

In particular, why not work towards the goal of having 70% native plants in our gardens to build diversity and sustainability? Check out the newer cultivars of your favorite natives. As long as the leaf color and flower form is the same as the species, using cultivars generally does not negatively impact wildlife that depend on the plant. Or, consider replacing that tired and invasive *Nandina* with the native *Cornus sericea* – red twig dogwood – which offers bright red stems in late winter, white flowers in the Spring followed by white berries and orange/red/purple fall foliage, and supports bees, butterflies and birds. There are many resources available to help you increase the numbers of native plants in your gardens.

What will your gardening goals be for 2022?

February, of course, brings us Valentine's Day. While perusing the many seed and plant catalogs that have been filling my mailbox, I have been struck by the wonderful names of some old-fashioned favorite flowers that seem particularly apt for this month – Love Lies Bleeding (*Amaranthus caudatus*), Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*), Kiss Me Over the Garden Gate (*Polygonum orientale*) and Love in a Mist (*Nigella damascena*). I'm sure you can think of others. Using botanical names is important of course to avoid confusion, but I really enjoy some of these fanciful common names.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, February 3
9:00am
ZOOM meeting
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83145908379>

Program:
Keeping the Gardener Fit
and in the Garden

Speaker:
Jessi Voltin and Courtney McTheny

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE —CONTINUED...

2022
MGA Board

President:
Deborah Bussert

President Elect:
Donna Tierney

VP Administration:
Vickie Rockwell

VP Projects:
Ruth Huber

VP Internal Ed:
Bill Dichtel

Secretary:
Dot Finnegan

Treasurer:
Linda Neilson

VMGA Rep:
Joanne Sheffield

Alternate:
Marilyn Riddle

Past President:
Marty Oakes

Associate Extension Agent:
Forrest Hobbs

Newsletter Editor:
Katherine Sokolowsky
katherinesoko@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.

Note: Feb 17 Board meeting will be Zoom only.

Good news! We now have access to Zoom through VCE, with a limit of 500 participants, so in the future no one should be closed out of participating in our Zoom meetings. Many thanks to our VCE Agent Forrest Hobbs who pursued this option for us, and to Bill Dichtel, Dave Banks and Jen Campbell who got trained on the system on very short notice. And again our very sincere thanks to Mitzi Balma for stepping in at the literal last minute to give an excellent presentation at the January Association meeting. If you weren't able to attend the meeting and haven't viewed the recording – check it out!

By the end of this month, we should notice that the days are becoming longer and not as cold. No matter what else is going on in the world, it is comforting to know that the seasons will progress and the ancient rhythms of gardening will continue. May you all stay warm and safe and look forward with happy anticipation to Spring.

State of the Association...

My fellow Master Gardeners, I wish you a Happy New Year and a wonderful/healthy 2022. Last year, our Past President (Pasty McGrady) started a tradition of reviewing the accomplishments of the previous year. I continue with this summary of the 2021 calendar year. And what a year it was – what a year!

The SARS Coronavirus epidemic continued to dominate the international scene. The JCC/W Master Gardener Association was not exempt. We did, however, accomplish many feats. A total of 16,469 volunteer hours were recorded by 160 active members. What a tremendous accomplishment. I personally thank each and every worker/volunteer. Well done my colleagues. Our current census has 168 Active members with 41 Emeritus master gardeners. One note is that 6 members did not log onto Better Impact (BI). Remember, help with BI is only an email or telephone call away.

A major accomplishment of the organization was the successful transition from the old VMS system to the new and efficient BI. I will never be able to give enough praise to Rick Brown for his efforts on this venture. Classes were provided by VCE and by Rick. Volunteer hours, newsletters, meeting minutes, and so on were transferred to BI. A monumental task made possible by Rick, Vickie Rockwell, and Dave Banks. Again, well done. BI is a strong tool for recording volunteer hours and transmitting information to members.

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(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

OAKES SUMMARY 2021

BY MARTY OAKES, PAST PRESIDENT

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 and Judy Kinshaw Ellis are 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/>

MARTY OAKES SUMMARY —CONTINUED....

The majority of our monthly meetings and Board of Directors meetings were held on ZOOM. Our ZOOM masters Rick Brown and Dave Banks managed the sessions with skill and expertise. The month of August brought our first in – person meeting in well over a year. I found the face-to-face meetings to be simply fantastic. Social interaction is a necessity for our species – even if it is behind a face mask. A live Zoom option is available for the monthly MG meeting – thanks to Rick, Bill Dichtel, and the library staff. The Master Gardener Association piloted this program. The Board asks for your flexibility as safety is our main concern. Depending on the COVID situation, virtual meetings may become necessary. Our 2021 continuing education program was exceptional – just exceptional. Thank you, Bill Dichtel.

The summer of 2021 brought a welcomed addition to the JCC/W Master Gardener Association: the arrival of Forrest Hobbs. Forrest is the new ANR/VCE agent for James City County and New Kent County. He is knowledgeable, responsive and a pleasure to work with. I was fortunate to be asked to serve on the selection committee (by Janet Spencer) for the position – I did well with a positive vote for Mr. Hobbs. It should be noted that I usually cause a mess. Welcome to JCC Forrest Hobbs. It is an honor to call him a colleague and a friend.

COVID did not prevent our projects from running. Yes, there were restrictions and limitations but we did work in the gardens. The school projects are still under quarantine, but will hopefully resume in the near future, The association has 19 active projects. A new and approved project was started at the Jamestown Settlement. A Water Steward training class will occur in 2022 – the first in many years.

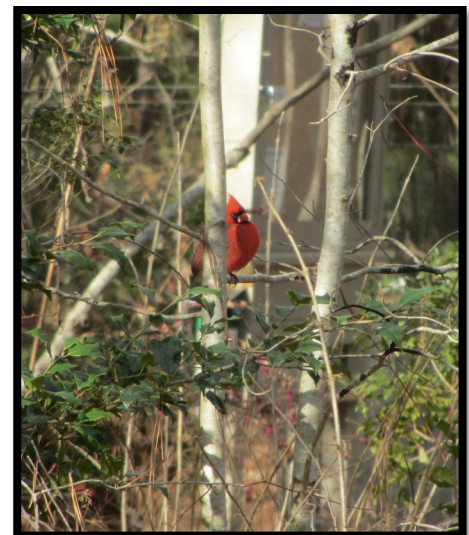
The Board of Directors updated and presented a number of policies and guidelines. Patsy McGrady spearheaded the updates on the Operating Procedures and the Bylaws. New policies for Continuing Education Reading, Conflict of Interest, Expense Reimbursement, Project Leadership, Donations Acknowledgement were completed. Our dedicated Treasurer, Linda Neilsen, initiated PayPal and a new recertification form. Linda also volunteered to go thru three tubs of old re-imbusement requests and receipts – some from the late 1990's era. What a task. We shredded bags of outdated material. Financially, the association is in excellent health. The BoD also formalized a communications committee to help with marketing and internal communications. Marion Guthrie chairs this organization. Dave Banks is instrumental in the day-to-day operations. Thank you, communications team! The monthly newsletter has a new editor and a new format. Well done Katherine – well done. The association presents a new and exciting website – open to the public and easy to read. An Ad Hoc committee on Branding developed new guidelines and a fantastic new logo. Thank you, Vickie Rockwell and your members. Again, well done.

Members of our Master Gardener organization were quite busy with a VCE level project. The 2021 Tree Steward Manual, by Virginia Cooperative Publishing, received input from a number of JCC/W Master Gardeners. Patsy McGrady, Carol Fryer, Sue Liddell, Jeanne Millin, and Anne Neilsen all contributed to this document. Carol King of the Peninsula Tree Stewards was also heavily involved.

The final topic will be the annual Plant Sale. As we all know, the plant sale is the main fund-raising event for the MG Association. It involves many people and much time. Due to the Coronavirus, the 2021 plant sale was an internal (members only) affair. And what a success - the association made a profit of approximately \$4400. I salute the plant sale committee and look forward to the 2022 event – which will be open to the public (hopefully).

I thank the membership and the Board of Directors for your support and your patience. As I have previously said, I get by with a little help from my friends. To paraphrase the words of General Douglas McArthur in his 1951 speech to Congress (he is only one of eight Generals of the Army – a five-star position):

“Old Master Gardener Presidents do not die; they just compost away.” See you in the dirt.



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY BILL DICHTEL, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

The February Master Gardener meeting will be 100% virtual. We will not meet at the Library but will meet at the regular time, February 3, 2022 at 9:00 AM but only on Zoom. The link to the meeting is included at the end of this article. The good news is that we now have access to the Virginia Tech Zoom Accounts and up to 500 people can sign in to our meetings. The meeting will also be recorded. At this time, we anticipate we will be back to live meetings at the Library supplemented by Zoom access and recordings by March.

Our speakers for the February Master Gardener Meeting are Jessi Voltin, PT, DPT, Cert DPT and Courtney McTheny, Pt, DPT of Pivot Physical Therapy in Williamsburg. Their topic is **"Keeping the Gardener Fit and in the Garden."** They have received a number of wonderfully positive testimonials from some of our members and will relay some techniques and stretches to help keep us going in the garden. It will be a very useful and practical presentation that you will definitely want to see.

As usual, the business meeting will follow the education portion of the meeting after a brief intermission. Those who attend the educational session can claim educational hours and those who attend the business meeting can claim appropriate volunteer hours in Better Impact.

Links to the February Master Gardener Zoom Meeting: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83145908379>

MASTER GARDENER ZOOM

BY BILL DICHTEL, VP FOR INTERNAL EDUCATION

With help from our great agent, Forrest Hobbs, we have been able to get access to the Virginia Tech Zoom. Rick Brown had been kind enough to donate his personal Zoom Account for our use during the Pandemic up to this time which has been a Godsend. The shortcomings of personal zoom accounts lie with limited numbers allowed to attend. The Virginia Tech Zoom also carries a deeper level of security and crash resistance. It also has greater recording storage and capabilities there. Our unit has three accounts and Bill Dichtel, Dave Banks and Jen Campbell are the custodians of those three access points; Jen will be using hers for the New Members Course. If other groups within our unit need access and need a meeting set up for a Master Gardener Project, please contact Bill or Dave and we will try to accommodate your Master Gardener Zoom needs. Going forward, our major meetings will be Zoomed and Recorded, even if they are live. As a general rule, Virginia Tech will keep the recordings available for one month after the date of the meeting. To view the meetings from recordings, you will have to type in a passcode and we will generally send those out within a day of the meeting. In addition, with permission of our speakers, Dave converts many of the recordings to YouTube format and he and Marion Guthrie post them on our Master Gardener web page.

Regarding links to upcoming meetings, we hope to make the meeting links available to you in three ways...

- By inclusion in the Newsletter before the meeting,
- By a blanket email within a week before the meeting, and
- By a link on the front page of Better Impact where the news is listed.

Hopefully, you can always access the meeting by one of these three links. Don't forget: We love seeing **you in person too!**



Hoping for these results after our session!
(Photo Courtesy of Unsplash)

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATION

BY JEN CAMPBELL, PROJECT CHAIR



Special thanks to Photographers, Kay and Elvin Clapp
and Reception Coordinator, Angela Cingale

2020 Extension Master Gardener Graduates

Jim Akridge	Sue Barton	Carol Beers
Dennis Branden	Jill Burruss	Bob Burruss
Fran Cope	Dot Finnegan	Camille Fisher
Dolores Goode	Linda Guthrie	Diana Hardy
Herman Hatchett	Kay Hines	Suzanne Humphries
Carol Mayfield	Jeff Mellinger	Drew Morgan
Kim Owens	Bill Pearson	Fred Rojek
Dean Shostak	Nan Snyder	Edwin Velez-Rivera

Congratulations to the 24 graduating members of the Master Gardener Class of 2020 who received their certificates at the December 2, 2021 Master Gardener Association meeting. Providing the keynote address, Forrest Hobbs, James City/New Kent County Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent drew on his own experiences and spoke on maximizing volunteerism through a variety of management techniques. Our newest Extension Master Gardeners then proceeded to the stage and were awarded their long-awaited diplomas.

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CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATION —CONTINUED...



New Graduate Dolores Goode displays her well-earned certificate



Seasoned Master Gardeners Harry Fahl and Scott Wolz welcome new graduates, Fred Rojek, Jeff Mellinger and Bill Pearson



VCE Agent Forest Hobbs awards Nan Snyder her certificate



Newly minted Master Gardener, Jim Akridge enjoys the reception with wife, Susan and fellow MG Kay Clapp.

Their journey was not easy or predictable. Much like the rest of life, COVID 19 restrictions created challenges that temporarily shut down gardening projects and limited volunteer participation. Consequently, Virginia Cooperative Extension extended the time period for Interns to acquire their requisite 50 volunteer hours. Undeterred, Master Gardener Interns met those challenges and prevailed - oftentimes participating in new and different ways. As a class, they documented over 2,700 hours, averaging over 100 hours per volunteer. The high achiever was Jeff Mellinger who logged over 300 hours. Unable to volunteer for the help desk due to COVID restrictions, several Interns wrote help-desk related articles for our Facebook page and Newsletter. Kim Owens caught the acting bug and assisted in the production of the Association's, "Pruning Best Practices and Self-help" videos. Some Interns chose to participate in Master Gardener Association Board meetings to get an inside look at how the Association functions. Taking it a step further, Dot Finnegan served as a representative on the Branding committee, the Nominating committee and will serve as Association Secretary starting in Jan 2022. Herman Hatchett worked the Master Gardener booth at the State Fair while Dean Shostak earned volunteer hours speaking as part of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden's "Learn and Grow" series. Last but certainly not least, Jill Burruss found her niche serving as an Intern representative to the Master Gardener Training team.

Following the Graduation Ceremony, the James City County/ Williamsburg Master Gardener Association officially welcomed the new class along with friends and family members by hosting a delicious and festive reception at the Stryker building.

TALES FROM THE HELP DESK

BY PATSY MCGRADY

Q. I usually apply a pre-emergent herbicide in spring to kill chickweed. Is it OK if I go ahead and apply the pre-emergent now?

A. No. The use of a pre-emergent in winter would be ineffective because the weather is too cold for seeds to germinate. We tend to associate pre-emergents with spring because that is when we apply them to take care of crabgrass and other summer broadleaf weeds. I know for my lawn, applying pre-emergent is a spring ritual. However, chickweed is a winter annual that dies in the hot weather of summer. Per the VT/VCE Weed Identification website (weedid.cals.vt.edu), chickweed seeds germinate in the fall. Therefore, application of a pre-emergent in spring is ineffective. A pre-emergent should be applied in the fall. The North Carolina State Extension article "Post Emergent Control of Chickweed" recommends applying a pre-emergent herbicide in September. The VCE Pest Management Guide (PMG): Home Grounds & Animals 2021 recommends the use of post-emergent herbicides

when the chickweed is actively growing in the fall or spring. The PMG recommends using herbicides containing 2,4-D, alone or combined with other chemicals as defined in Tables 5.5 and 5.9.

The most environmentally friendly way to control chickweed is to pull the plants by hand or using a hoe. They have shallow roots and pull or hoe easily. After pulling, remove plants from the yard to avoid accidental seed distribution. Chickweed tends to like moist conditions and its presence can indicate compacted soil. Aerating the soil could help reduce the tendency for the weed to be present. Avoid cutting grass too short; leaving the grass 3" to 4" high in the fall can help reduce the occurrence of chickweed.



(Photo Courtesy of Patsy McGrady)

SPEAKERS BUREAU

BY JUDITH ALBERTS AND RICK BROWN, CO-CHAIRS

The SB had its Kickoff meeting via Zoom in early January with a presentation by Distinguished Toastmaster Marty Bussert that included helpful tips that anyone can use. If you missed it, you can watch the recording at <https://youtu.be/2tc9K-VIJRI?t=391>.

We were delighted to welcome new volunteers to the project as well as our returning speakers. Since the kickoff meeting, several EMGs have been inspired to tweak their presentations for Zoom compatibility and to start developing new programs. Three speakers have already given presentations in January, and garden clubs are not our only audience. Many of the topics [listed in the Public Education menu](#) are appropriate for Homeowners Associations, HOA Boards, and other civic groups. The website includes an easy-to-use online request form, so please share this info with your friends outside of the MGA.

We are pleased to report that the Speakers Bureau generated \$650 as income from honoraria donated to the MGA as thanks for this community service. 2021 was the first year that SB donations were specifically tracked, so there is no comparative date for prior years.

If you have any questions, please email us at: Speakers@jccwmq.org

PLANT SALE 2022

BY DONNA TIERNEY

The 2022 Plant Sale will be held on **April 30 at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden from 9 AM-3 PM**. The spring Plant Sale is our primary fundraising event that enables us to provide public outreach projects. This sale location was chosen for many positive reasons, including use of the Garden, its equipment, Freedom Park facilities and staff support, all at no charge to the MGA. Additionally, the WBG has negotiated with the JCC Parks Department to waive its regular vendor fees for our event. Freedom Park closes its gates at dusk and the Garden is enclosed by a fence, eliminating the need to have a night watch to protect the plants against theft and damage from deer.

Many of our MGA members are devoted to the MG Project at the Garden, but if you're not familiar with the WBG, the following link provides a map and information: (<https://williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org/visit-the-botanical-garden/>). Holding the Plant Sale at the Garden will increase community awareness for both the MGA and the WBG.

The Plant Sale leadership team has been assembled and is meeting monthly to plan and execute the sale. But.... WE NEED YOUR HELP with the following:

- **PLANT PROPAGATION**
- **Public Education/Demonstration Booths**
- **Digging/Potting Assistance**
- **Financial Donations** earmarked for the plant sale can be made using following link <https://jccwmg.org/wordpress/donations/>
- **Book Donations** (no magazines). Contact Pat Cowan, (757) 291 6020
- **Green Elephants** (used garden tools, pots, bric/brac, statuary, etc.). Contact Yvonne Forbes at (516) 220-7349 (istclas@msn.com) or Su Carlile at (703) 434-2098 (gcarlile73@aol.com)

If you are propagating or digging and potting plants:

1. Use STANDARD SIZE POTS: 4 inch (small), 6-8 inches (medium), 10-12 inches (large). This will make handling and pricing much easier
2. Ensure that all pots are new or cleaned well (disinfected). Do not leave old leaves, dirt, paper, etc., in the bottom of pots!
3. Use clean soil—no diseased or anerobic soil. If you want to make your own soil see VCE reference: [VCE_MH_95.pdf \(1.157Mb\)](#) for additional guidance.
4. Use clean tools for taking cuttings and potting
5. Do NOT propagate any invasive plants. This is the link to the invasive list <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspdflist>
6. Additional guidance for propagation can be found in these VCE references: Propagation from Seeds [VCE_publication_76.pdf](#); Propagation by Cuttings: [426-001.pdf](#)

If you are donating “green elephants”:

1. Ensure that all donations are in good condition and clean. Team will not accept broken or dirty items.
2. Individually photograph and inventory all items that you want to donate. (Note: if you have multiple similar items—like three identical pots, rakes, or hoes—you can group them in one photo.)
3. Email or mail inventory information and photos to either Yvonne Forbes (istclas@msn.com), PO Box 6408 Williamsburg, VA 23185 or Su Carlile (gcarlile73@aol.com) 3724 Mesa River Williamsburg, VA 23188
4. **RETAIN items until April 1.** We have very limited storage unit space and volunteers don't want to give up garage space over multiple months.)
5. **Donation Drop Off April 1-27** to Sue Carlile 703 434 2098 (gcarlile73@aol.com) at 3724 Mesa River Williamsburg, VA 23188
6. Additional Drop Location **April 23-27 only:** Katherine Sokolowsky 757-208-0409 (katherinsoko@gmail.com) at 100 Archers Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Be sure to coordinate drop offs with Sue or Katherine to ensure they are home when you arrive.
7. The **last day to drop off items is April 27.** Please don't wait until the last minute to deliver items.

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PLANT SALE 2022 —CONTINUED...

Automated Labeling System: We are working on creating an automated plant labeling and inventory system. We will keep you posted with instructions on how to use the system as soon as it's up and running. THANK YOU to David Banks for working very hard to stand up this system which will benefit all of us and provide more accurate plant information to our customers!

Volunteer Opportunities: In early April, a volunteer opportunities list for the Plant Intake/Pricing (**April 28**); Sale Set Up (**April 29**), and Sale Day (**April 30**) will be created. Additional information on volunteering will be provided in the March Newsletter. Our immediate volunteer needs include more public education demonstrations and MGs who can dig and pot plants for others. If you are interested in either or both of these activities, please contact Donna Tierney (dkтва@cox.net).

More Information Forthcoming: A map of the Plant Sale Layout, plant delivery instructions, labeling instructions, and other details will be provided in the March Newsletter or in email blasts.

Thanks in advance to all of you who are helping already or will help to make this event a great success!



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

EXTENSION MGs AT THE WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN

BY ELIZABETH MCCOY, PROJECT LEAD

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden offers a unique opportunity for volunteers to learn about a wide variety of native woody and herbaceous plants and to refine a variety of gardening skills and practices. A dedicated team of Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Tree Stewards, members of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and other community volunteers currently collaborate to maintain the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and its plantings.

Twenty-three garden areas are identified within the garden, each with its own purpose and criteria for plant choice. EMGs and Tree Stewards from our JCC/W unit work throughout the garden, consult with other garden stewards, and use the garden as a resource for educating the community on a range of horticultural and conservation topics. We have five dedicated project areas that we also maintain. We are looking for volunteers to join teams working in each of these areas.

Our project will schedule regular work sessions beginning in late February. Many of us continue to volunteer at the WBG through the winter months, so anyone who is interested can begin immediately. MG volunteers are working in the garden most every day of the week. Many hands make light work, and we always appreciate new volunteers joining our project team.

Please take a moment to [complete this short survey](#), indicating your readiness to join our team this year. We look forward to welcoming new and returning gardeners to the project.

See you in the Garden!



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

LANDSCAPE LOVE 2022

BY BARB FLOYD, SHERRY WALKER, SUSAN ZICKEL, CO-CHAIRS

Are you itching to get out and garden? The calendar may still say winter, but we are already planning for Landscape Love and getting Extension Master Gardener Volunteers into the community to help solve landscape problems and offer ideas to homeowners.

This year, we plan to kick off Landscape Love visits in April with a Spring Fling, when gardeners and homeowners are ready to get into the yard to plant or update their landscapes. By April, the garden centers will be enticing everyone with beautiful plants, vibrant blooms and leafy new shrubs. Who can resist that?

After April visits this year, we plan to transition the Landscape Love program into a three-season project based on the Tree Call model (handled by the Tree Stewards). We always have some homeowners who want a Master Gardener visit but cannot make the spring schedule work. So, following the Tree Call Team's example, we will handle homeowner requests as they come into the help desk through October.

If you have not participated in Landscape Love, here is a simple synopsis of how it works...

Homeowners can apply in the spring to have a team of 2-3 Master Gardeners visit their home and offer advice on plants, identify plants, advise on native plants, mulching, composting or a host of other topics the homeowner identifies. Based on the availability you provide, the Landscape Love project leaders put together a team to visit the homeowner. After the visit, the team writes an electronic summary of the provided advice which is then sent to the homeowners for reference. Visits typically last an hour and are scheduled in advance, so you know when you are going, and you know the homeowner's questions before you visit.

For those who would like to participate in the Landscape Love Spring Fling in April, watch for our **CALL for CALENDARS**. Here is a quick timeline of what to expect:

Late March – CALL for CALENDARS -We will request calendars from Master Gardeners wanting to participate in Spring Fling Landscape Love visits. We will then put together a master calendar of volunteer availability for April. We will also have a training meeting for all those who volunteer.

April Spring Fling– Open homeowner sign ups on April 1. Visits will be scheduled by the project team starting April 11. Similar to **last fall, we will start visits a week after we open the sign up to homeowners**. We will also request more calendar availability as the need arises, based on the number of homeowner applications we receive.

May – October - In May, we will finish any homeowner visits from the Spring Fling sign up. Then, like Tree Call, from May through October the project team will arrange team visits to homeowners when requests come into the Help Desk, and as volunteers are available.

After the Spring Fling, the project team will again ask for volunteers that want to be involved in visits May through October. You can sign up to participate in the Landscape Love Spring Fling in April only, or to participate throughout the year when the need arises.

We look forward to a great Landscape Love project, and to working with, as well as learning from, all of you!



(Photo Courtesy of Unsplash)

PLANTS I LOVE ... AND DEER IGNORE

BY ELIZABETH MCCOY, MG AND TREE STEWARD

Gardening should be fun and bring joy to our lives. That is why I am always happy to share a plant that thrives in our climate, grows beautifully without a lot of fuss, and that won't attract the attention of hungry deer looking for the salad bar. Allow me to share another of my favorites....

Lush, evergreen mounds of Oregon grape holly grew for decades along the grand staircase linking the Italian Gardens to the Japanese Garden at Maymont Park in Richmond. I was always tempted to pick and taste their plump purple drupes in early summer, when I visited as a child. But of course, I wasn't allowed to touch them. The mahonia made such an impression on me, even at a young age, that I always want a clump or two of this beautiful shrub in my garden.



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

Oregon Grape Holly, formerly known as *Mahonia aquifolium*, and now named *Berberis aquifolium*, is native to the western coast of North America, from Alaska south to California. Evergreen and hardy to Zone 5, it is the state flower of Oregon.

Native cultures along our west coast used every part of the mahonia shrub. Its drupes or fruits are edible, although very tart. They can be converted to juice, jelly, or eaten out of hand. They also make a beautiful purple dye. The inner bark can be rendered to a yellow dye. Parts of the plant are medicinal.

In its native Pacific Northwest, mahonia grows as an understory shrub beneath towering Douglas fir and pine trees. They prefer partial shade and rich, acidic soil. Drought tolerant, they thrive in a range of growing conditions from full sun to deep shade. Their versatility has fueled their popularity in the nursery trade, and they are widely available. This is a tough shrub, forming wide multi-stemmed clumps, but staying neatly 5'-7' high at maturity. Never shear this shrub to shape it. Cut back entire stems or branches to control its size.

Mahonia shrubs command attention throughout the year. Their tough, shiny leaves provide texture and mass. They sparkle in the pale winter sunlight and make a beautiful vignette with evergreen ferns, ground covers or moss, and early bulbs. Panicles of bright yellow flowers emerge in late December and bloom through February, when little else is in bloom and most of the landscape lies dormant. Their leaves may turn orange or scarlet in response to the cold in mid-winter.



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

Mahonia flowers are an important nectar source for bees and other nectar loving insects who come out on warm winter days in search of food. Clusters of large purple drupes appear by early summer, followed by colorful new leaves and branches.

Birds love *Mahonia* fruits and spread seeds, so this shrub can naturalize in favorable conditions. Where you have a small group of *Mahonia* growing in moist, receptive soil, you're likely to find a nursery of seedlings sprouting around them. These are deeply rooted, so transplant them within the first 12-18 months for greatest success.

Use mahonia as an accent plant, a backdrop for beds and borders, or in hedgerows. It is dense, once established, and makes a beautiful, if shaggy, hedge. Individual leaves have multiple sharp prickles, much like a holly leaf. Established plants send up multiple stems.

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PLANTS I LOVE ... AND DEER IGNORE —CONTINUED...

While deer may graze on holly, they don't graze on *Berberis aquifolium* leaves. We have lost flowers to grazing deer, from time to time. Mahonia won't attract hungry deer, and it can serve as a sharp barrier to help fence them out.

Young mahonia shrubs may be grown in large containers on porch or patio and work well underplanted with winter blooming Violas or ferns. This is a highly ornamental, problem-free North American native shrub useful in many different situations. Several cultivars are available, but the species is also desirable. Related species and hybrids available in nurseries, such as *Berberis eurybracteata* 'Soft Caress,' may be more attractive to deer.

There is always a new, interesting shrub on the market begging for our attention. Oregon grape holly, the West Coast native, still outshines most of them in my garden. For toughness, beauty, wildlife value and ease of maintenance, it remains a personal favorite, growing a bit better and more dramatic each year.

For more information:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/berberis-aquifolium/>
[https://calscape.org/Berberis-aquifolium-\(Oregon-Grape\)](https://calscape.org/Berberis-aquifolium-(Oregon-Grape))
<https://pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Berberis+aquifolium>

PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR

BY DEBORAH BUSSERT, PRESIDENT

Here is the next installment of my ongoing series of articles about the Perennial Plants of the Year and our experiences with them at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

2022: *Schizachyrium scoparium* (sky-ZAK-ree-um sko-PAIR-ee-um)

The Perennial Plant Association for the first time has selected a species as its Perennial Plant of the Year, and highlighted a number of different cultivars that are appropriate for different situations. This year's honoree is the native grass *Schizachyrium scoparium* – little bluestem.

Little bluestem is a handsome, compact tall grass native to North America. Its dense and upright foliage tends to show tints of blue in the spring and summer and turn red/orange in the fall. It has fluffy, white persistent seed heads that lend winter interest and provide food and shelter for birds. It is hardy in Zones 3-9.

Little bluestem is a warm season grass that will be slow to start growing in the Spring, but will thrive in the heat of summer. It prefers to be grown in full sun and well-drained soil and may have a tendency to flop if grown in too much shade or overly rich soil. It is drought tolerant once established and like all grasses is critter resistant. Although it may self-sow, it is one of the least aggressive of the ornamental grasses.

Among the cultivars recommended for our area are 'Standing Ovation', 'The Blues', and 'Jazz'.



2022: *Schizachyrium scoparium* 'Standing Ovation'
(Photo courtesy of Deb Bussert)

MILESTONE RECOGNITIONS 2020

4000 Hour Milestone
Anne Nielson

3000 Hour Milestone
David Banks
Chéré Harper
James Pressly
Nelda Pressly

1000 Hour Milestone
Dee Arbegast
Jennifer Campbell
William Dichtel
Mary Lib Puller
Donna Thibeault
Kathleen Wilhide

500 Hour Milestone
Judith Alberts
Marion Guthrie
Elizabeth McCoy
Susan Miller
Karen Pfeifer

250 Hour Milestone
Frank Caruso
Elvin Clapp
Kay Clapp
Marion Guthrie
Stephanie Lamb
Cheryl Lynch
Vickie Rockwell
Diana Tiller-Dichtel

THIS AND THAT

Hello from the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and Freedom Park Arboretum!

Like our own home gardens, the WBG may appear barren, but we know roots are doing their invisible work by the promising appearance of early daffodils and blooming Witch Hazel. There's a lot of behind-the-scenes work by the WBG Board in cooperation with Stewards and Volunteers to prepare for the year.

The WBG is pleased to announce that it now is a Level I Arboretum, comprising areas within the Garden itself and the Free Black Settlement in Freedom Park. Many thanks to Elizabeth McCoy, Bill Dichtel, and the Tree Steward Class of 2020, who took on the task of identifying and labeling WBG specimens with the help of WBG board member Dr. Donna M.E. Ware, and to Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, who has been stewarding the Free Black Settlement area for several years. The WBG-FPA is listed on [ArbNet](#), a worldwide project by the Morton Arboretum.

This newsletter includes more details about the 2022 MG Project at the WBG and we look forward to seeing our MG friends in the Garden soon. Thank you for all that you do for the WBG.

Upcoming Events at WBG-FPA

April 23 – Honor Box Plant Sale opens and runs through May 31

April 23 – Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration at 10:30 am

April 30 – Master Gardeners Plant Sale in the WBG

May 14 – Virginia Native Plant Society Plant Sale in the WBG

– Judith Alberts, Board Chair, Williamsburg Botanical Garden



L-R: Bill Dichtel, Judith Alberts, Deborah Bussert, Dr. Donna M.E. Ware, Alister Perkinson (James City County Parks Administrator)
(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)



Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*
(Photo Courtesy of Judith Alberts)

Good Educational Resources

Scott Wolz sent in a [link to a good article](#) from the NC State Web Site for protecting landscape plants from cold weather. (We never have winter weather in Williamsburg, do we?).

– Bill Dichtel, VP for Internal Education

Just in case you missed it...

Article on Carbon Gardens: <https://jccwmg.org/wordpress/building-a-carbon-garden/>

As one MG commented, “Wonderful article with a clear explanation of the science that anyone can understand.”

– Katherine Sokolowsky, Editor

THIS AND THAT

Home Gardener Day

Home Gardener Day is at the Norfolk Botanical Garden on Sunday, June 26, from 9AM – 4PM. The event includes 4 inspiring lectures, 3 incredible speakers, educational booths, door prizes, and your attendance will count for Master Gardener continuing education hours for 2022. There is a charge for the symposium of \$85 which includes lunch.

For more information and to register go to <https://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/home-gardener-day/register@nbgs.org>.

– Bill Dichtel, VP for Internal Education



Congratulations and thank you to the recipients of the 2020 Milestone recognitions. Their dedication and hard work inspire all of us members of the JCC/W Master Gardeners!

Book Review: Napoleon: A Life Told in Gardens and Shadows by Ruth Scurr

Biographies of Napoleon number in the hundreds if not thousands. Many of these are written by men and focus on the life of a Corsican boy who rises above his rank through cleverness, insight, and determination to become Emperor in the midst of the French Revolution and its aftermath. This well-researched and documented book does the same, adding one more biography of Napoleon but with a very different perspective. First, it is one of the few biographies written by a woman (and notes the influences, especially esthetically, of women); second, it looks at Napoleon's life of turbulence and conquest alongside his lifelong love of gardening and things of nature.

The author provides a helpful chronology at the beginning of the book and proceeds to tell the story of Napoleon Bonaparte who spent his early childhood in the gardens and orchards of his family until he won a scholarship to a military school in France. There each student was given a small plot to garden which most boys ignored. Not so for Bonaparte. Scurr ascribes to these early childhood experiences the foundation of Napoleon's real love of gardens.

As Scurr tells Napoleon's story, she is fastidious in including any and all gardens, great or small, that figured in the chronicle; French, Egyptian, Austrian, German, and Italian gardens are included often with very interesting anecdotes. However, she pays special attention to those gardens that Napoleon himself created; these tell about the man who was not an Emperor. These are the gardens of his exile.

This is such an interesting and well-written book. One most certainly does not need to be either an historian or a gardener to enjoy it. The book is available at the James City County branch of the library.

– Barb Landa, MG



Spring is coming!
(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the March 2022 newsletter will be Wednesday, February 23.

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

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 secretary, Dot Finnegan, at definn@widomaker.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.