



# The Colonial Master Gardener

June  
2022

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEBORAH BUSSERT

What a month we have had! Temperatures have ranged from the high 90s to the low 60s. We have had windstorms, thunderstorms, and lots and lots of rain. The weather has certainly been challenging. I still have a couple of dozen plants sitting in pots waiting for a decent day for planting. I hope all of you have been able to get your spring garden tasks completed and are getting ready for our usual hot humid summer.

You have probably heard by now that our April 30 Plant Sale was a huge success. Final numbers are still being reviewed, but I do know that we have a lot to be proud of! Aside from the money raised that will fund our projects, we had a very high percentage of our members participate in one way or another. I will let Donna Tierney and her team give a detailed report at the June meeting so be sure to attend either via Zoom or in person to hear about it and give the Plant Sale leaders a big round of applause with our thanks.

Unfortunately, Covid numbers continue to rise nationwide, although here in Southeastern Virginia we seem to be holding our own. As a result, the Board has decided that although we will continue to hold meetings in person as well as on Zoom, if you attend in person you *must* wear a mask. This is for everyone's protection. Bill Dichtel has already sent out the Zoom link, which is also posted on Better Impact. Our June education segment "Growing Gorgeous Peonies" by Ann Dunnington of Peony USA, Fredericksburg, VA should be interesting and informative. After all, who doesn't love peonies? Great plant, beautiful flowers, fragrance – the works!

Plans for our July picnic are proceeding and Marty Oakes will provide details at the June meeting. Save the date – July 17 – for our first social gathering in several years.

As always, I thank each and every one of you for your contributions to the community and to this association. You really make a difference and I am proud to be among you.



(Photos Courtesy of Odd Moxie)

**Next Meeting:**  
Thursday, June 2 at 9:00AM  
Williamsburg Library  
Zoom Link:  
<https://viriniatech.zoom.us/j/81047977653>

**Program:**  
Growing Gorgeous Peonies

**Speaker:**  
Ann Dunnington



## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

BY BILL DICHEL, VP INTERNAL EDUCATION

2022  
MGA Board

*President:*  
Deborah Bussert

*President Elect:*  
Donna Tierney

*VP Administration:*  
Vickie Rockwell

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Bill Dichtel

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*Secretary:*  
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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.

Our speaker at the June 2 meeting of the JCCW MG will be Ann Dunnington. Ann is the Chief Operations Officer of Peony USA, a company based in Fredericksburg, Virginia which imports, grows, and distributes peony roots throughout the country. Ann has a background in customer satisfaction and business development, having worked with high-end automobile dealerships in Atlanta and subsequently with improving patient satisfaction with a large orthopedic surgery practice in Northern Virginia. In recent years, she had the opportunity to turn her business expertise towards her agrarian interests and joined Dennis and Niels Molenaar in their peony root importing and distribution business which they have expanded with her operations experience.

Peony USA is now one of the larger peony suppliers in the country with fabulous variety and selection and great expertise to go with it. We are delighted to have them just up the road and are very pleased that Ann has accepted our invitation to speak this month.

As many of you are aware, there has been a recent spike in Covid infection numbers, reaching the moderate level in both James City and York counties. Because of that, those attending the presentation in person are required to wear masks until further notice. If you plan to attend by Zoom, here is the link: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/81047977653>

We will be recording the educational session, and it will be posted on our website ([jccwmg.org](http://jccwmg.org)), on the Education Tab for about a week. We will record the business meeting as well and that will be available to members about a week after the meeting on a link from the News page of Better Impact.

We look forward to seeing many of you there! Be sure to congratulate our newest Intern Group who completed their last class session on May 17 when you see them at the meeting!



Ann Dunnington

For information available to the public that includes gardening tips, and our activities, check out our Facebook page ([Facebook.com/VCEMasterGardeners](https://www.facebook.com/VCEMasterGardeners)) and our website ([jccwmg.org](http://jccwmg.org)). Contact Marion Guthrie ([marion.guthrie@gmail.com](mailto:marion.guthrie@gmail.com)) or Katherine Sokolowsky ([katherinesoko@gmail.com](mailto:katherinesoko@gmail.com)) to submit your own gardening article!

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

## PLANT SALE 2022 BY DONNA TIERNEY, PROJECT LEAD

Plant Sale 2022: A Great Success!

Sincere thanks to everyone who supported our plant sale this year! Your support created a very successful event as documented below:

Plants Donated: 1434  
Green Elephants Donated: 408  
Books Donated: 253  
\$ Donations: \$473.50  
**Gross Total Revenue: \$8346.25**



Our annual public Plant Sale is the main fundraiser and public outreach event! The Williamsburg Botanical Garden (WBG) provided a wonderful location to highlight our beautiful plants and eclectic Green Elephants. We were sold out by noon because of all the wonderful customers who visited and purchased merchandise.

Our very aggressive communication campaign helped bring in the customers. We used social media, updated websites, and posters to get information out about the sale. We partnered with VCE and the local garden clubs to put sale information in their calendars and newsletters. Developing relationships with local media organizations was a key strategy. The JC County Recreation organization also supported us with Park Rangers, parking, publicity, and equipment. WBG provided a gorgeous location, publicity, and technical support to the team. Local media company, Odd Moxie, donated over \$8K worth of photography and video products which we will use on our website and in future plant sale advertising.

We focused on improving customer service at this event by providing greeters at the entrance, plant experts to assist in selections, volunteers to help transport and load purchases, parking /safety monitors, and an “Ask a MG Booth” to assist clients with plant problems and educate them about our programs and services. We used a last minute public donation of “Spider” plants as give-aways to young children as they entered the sale. This made a lot of little folks and their parents very happy.

We prototyped two new technology tools to aid with plant inventory control, label generation, and volunteer management. The changes created a few hiccups, but over all these systems greatly improved efficiency and label quality. We will continue working to improve the systems prior to next year’s event.

Based on feedback for clients and our own members, these are some of the things we will implement next year: Reduce sale hours from 9AM to 12PM. Have a hard opening. No shoppers will be allowed to enter the sale until 9AM—and a soft close. When stock gets low near the end of the sale, we will consolidate it and allow customers to shop until there are none left inside the sale area. The call to close will be made by the sale chairperson and communicated to all sale workers at the same time. We will require all sales volunteers to come to a training session as part of the sale set up. All volunteers will be required to show up 30 minutes prior to their shift to ensure staffing overlap. If we can find a reasonable commercial source, we will consider purchasing some colorful annuals and adding them to our sale.



The Plant Sale Leadership Team is extremely grateful for all the efforts made by volunteers that contributed to the sale success!

*Continued on the next page, page 4*



## PLANT SALE —CONTINUED

JCCW MGA Plant Sale 2022  
THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED!

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\$ Donations: \$ 473.50  
**Gross Total Revenue: \$8346.25**



IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO CREATE  
SUCCESS-- OUR HEROES ARE LISTED  
BELOW!

Alexander Mulhy  
Barb Landa  
Alice Kopintz  
Becky Palmore  
Camile Fisher  
Bob Winters  
Carol Fryer  
Carol Mayfield  
Carolyn Stringer  
Catherine Wilkoff  
Cathy Johnson  
Cheryl Roettger  
Christine Mason  
Pat Rathke  
Su Carlile  
Virginia Crawford  
Vicky Rockwell  
Patsy McGrady  
Ann Neilson  
Mr. Neilson  
Becky Palmore  
Kendra Swan  
Harriet Parsons  
Janet Fender  
Pam Mageland  
Kim Silver Perry  
Kathy Lively

Conor Sokolowsky  
Deborah Bussert  
Debe Sineth  
Debra Brown  
Dennis Branden  
Donna Tierney  
Patrick Tierney  
Ryan Tierney  
Dot Finnegan  
Elizabeth Grainer  
Elizabeth Myers  
Elvin Clapp  
Kay Clapp  
Gary Streb  
Ginny Cranford  
Hope Yelich  
Helena Sokolowsky

James Pressly  
Nelda Pressly  
Jay Templin  
Jean Johnson  
Jerry Woodson  
Jim Word  
Joanna Sanford  
Joanne Sheffield  
Judith Alberts  
Judith Shuck  
Judy Kinshaw-Ellis  
Julia Smith  
Karen Brooks  
Bob Burrus  
Frank Caruso  
Scott Wolz  
Linda Berryman  
Barbara Landa  
Sherry Walker  
Shiela Nigro  
Sue Barton

Kat Reynolds  
Kathy Briggs  
Kim Owens  
Laura Hill  
Linda Becker  
Linda Neilson  
Linda Guthrie  
Linda Slyfield  
Liz Favre  
Louann Martin  
Margene Hartsough  
Marion Guthrie  
Martin Oakes  
Noel Oakes  
Mary DiSalvo  
Maryanne Teed  
Maureen Parent  
Ann Hobson  
Mary Sipe  
Merial Currer  
Michele Garrard  
Nancy Clifton  
Noah Fields  
Pamela Vancott  
Pat Cowan  
Pat Crowe

Patricia Paquette  
Paulette Atkinson  
Peggy Krapf  
Ricklin Brown  
Ruth Huber  
Shadow Harmon  
Sharon Marcial  
Stacy DeMeo  
Steve Ewell  
Susan Neidlinger  
Susan Miller  
Susan Barton  
Terri Mayberry  
Terry McGlennon  
Tiffeni Goesel  
Todd Brown  
Trey Clifton  
Victoria Veldez  
William Pearson  
Wilma Sharp  
Katherine Sokolosky  
Yvonne Forbes  
Mr. Forbes  
Gail Weaver

Special  
Thanks  
Class of 2022!



(All Plant Sale photos courtesy of Odd Moxie)



## TALES FROM THE HELP DESK

BY PATSY MCGRADY

Q. My Zephirine Drouhin climbing rose looks odd. There are “frilly” growths, and the buds are very small. Should I be worried ?

A. The Heirloom Roses website description of Rosa “Zephirine Drouhin” states that it “may be the most consistently blooming, large, flowered climbing rose, with the added benefit that it is thorn-less.” The variety is thought to have originated in France in 1868.

Your rose appears to be infected with rose rosette virus (RRV). This is a virus spread by a very small mite. Both the disease and the type of mite are specific to roses and do not affect other types of plants. There is no cure for a diseased rose plant. The plant, including the roots, should be removed and destroyed, bagged and put into the trash. Any tools and gardening gloves used should be sterilized (Lysol spray/wipes or bleach solution.)

While the distortions may occur in only one part of the plant, the virus moves throughout the plant so the whole plant is infected. If you have other rose plants nearby, it would be worthwhile to treat them for mites by spraying with horticulture oil (such as Neem Oil) or an insecticidal soap. The Missouri Botanical Gardens website recommends weekly applications of these organic pesticides in June and July.



Rose Rosette Disease  
(Photo Courtesy of Patsy McGrady)

## THE CLASS OF 2022 REACHES A MAJOR MILESTONE

BY SUSAN BARTON, MASTER GARDENER, 2020 - TRAINING TEAM  
AND STEVE EWELL, MASTER GARDENER INTERN, 2022



(Photo Courtesy of Elvin and Kay Clapp)

Congratulations to our JCCW Master Gardener Class of 2022! This enthusiastic and talented group of individuals completed all of their classroom instruction on May 17 and celebrated with a picnic at the Freedom Park Interpretive Center. Five of the graduates have already completed more than 50 volunteer hours on Master Gardener Projects and many more are over halfway to becoming full-fledged Master Gardeners!

## BLAYTON SCHOOL GARDEN

BY PAM ARNOLD, PROJECT LEAD

At Blayton School Garden, we believe in celebrating and having a good time! We had a grand time at Blayton on May 2 celebrating Master Gardener Ken Caro and his 11 years of being a co-chair of Blayton School Garden. The garden is in its 11th year!

The garden itself consists of 37 (!!!) raised vegetable beds, another raised bed of berries, a large bulb bed (including jonquils, daffodils and several varieties of iris), a bed with plants that support pollinators, a large shelter with 4 picnic tables, and a multi-barreled water collection system! It can be found in the back of J. B. Blayton Elementary School which is located off Jolly Pond Road. Luckily, we have a strong team (and can always use more!) of Master Gardeners and helpers that work to maintain the garden.

The mission of the garden is to educate students in growing, harvesting, eating, using and enjoying what our earth can produce. The garden is a "club" that is sponsored by SHIP who, among other help, provides buses for students whose parents work and cannot come for them after the club time concludes. The clubs meet when school is over for the day. This support from SHIP allows students who normally would not be able to participate in a school club to have that experience.

We grow "normal" vegetables like bush beans, broccoli, squash, pumpkins, and tomatoes. We also grow new and unusual varieties, some not for eating. We grow peanuts and Jerusalem artichokes. We also grow cotton and flax. We have a spinner who comes every year to work with the cotton we have grown, and the children get to spin thread. One of our team members, Master Gardener Peter Schaub has made a hand "flax machine" that pounds the flax, and the children can make the fibers from which linen is produced.

Although during the past two years, because of COVID, we have not had students, we are assured by the principal of Blayton that we will have students and clubs in the fall. Meanwhile, our Blayton team has worked very hard to maintain the garden so that it will be ready for the children when that time comes, for we knew it would. When we harvested during the time of COVID, we donated to FISH (when it was open) and a church food bank.

So we had a lot to celebrate! Ken Caro has been with the garden as a co-lead from its inception. He took that role immediately after finishing his Master Gardener class. For about 7 years, his co-lead was Lisa Stepanik, but she moved to Texas with her family. Pam Arnold is presently the co-lead with Ken.

At the celebration, not only did we have our garden team, but we also had other guests. The principal of Blayton came and gave a speech in honor of Ken, and two people from SHIP came and spoke about Ken's accomplishments. And - we had music: 75 second graders sang a song in honor of Ken. Marlene Armstrong, another original member of the Blayton team, read a tribute to Ken's accomplishments. Charlie Morse, who has also been with the garden from its beginnings, presented Ken with a gift, a plaque that names the shelter Ken Caro's Classroom. Charlie said that Ken has spent lots of time teaching the students in the shelter, so the naming of it is appropriate. If you look closely, we think we can see Ken smiling.

With all celebrations, there must be food! Marlene furnished fruit snacks for the students who received them as they left. In addition, she provided two carrot cakes for the adults (none was left!). We also recognized Charlie and Marlene who have also been with Blayton Garden since its inception and have been wonderful contributors to its success.

After all of that, we actually did some work with weeding and planting! We do really work--a lot. But we have lots of fun too.



Ken Caro and his recognition  
(Photo Courtesy of Pam Arnold)



## WATERWISE GARDEN BY ELVIN AND KAY CLAPP

The Water Wise Project team is exploring new ways to connect with the walk-in public to the JCC Human Services Center. The first step was printing a sign inviting the public to ask questions as we work in the garden. On our last workday, we provided VCE handouts in English and Spanish on the basics of fertilizing trees and shrubs. The team also used a whiteboard easel to display the current blooms in the garden. This gives us the flexibility to modify the display as the blooms change. Next, we'll add the common Spanish name to this display. (All photos courtesy of Kay and Elvin Clapp)



Whiteboard Display with Current Blooms



Removable Sign at Entrance of Garden



Display Table with English and Spanish Handouts

## THE WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN'S FERN COLLECTION BY ELIZABETH MCCOY

You can learn more about ferns that thrive in our climate by visiting the [Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Fern Collection](#). Ferns grow throughout the wooded sections of the garden, in the wetlands, in the Perennial Gardens and behind the Succulent/Gravel Garden. Native, non-native and hybrid ferns are featured players in several of the containers and garden plantings.

Twenty-four species and cultivars are described on the Garden's [Plants Map Fern Collection](#) website. Thirteen species are labeled with QR tags, which will take you directly to detailed information about the fern when you scan the tag with your phone. Other ferns in the collection have labels created by Master Gardener Bill Dichtel, who has been crafting plant labels and stands for the Garden's woody plant collection since 2020.

*Continued on the next page, page 8*

## FERN COLLECTION —CONTINUED ...

Ferns form an important ground cover layer in wildlife friendly gardens because they provide habitat for many small animals. Birds sometimes nest in ferns. Birds and other animals may use parts from some types of fronds, which have fuzzy scales on their stipes, in building nests elsewhere. Ferns protect and hold the soil, sequester carbon as they cleanse the air, and help manage wet soil.

Some native ferns, such as the royal fern, *Osmunda regalis*, can grow in full sun, so long as the ground remains moist. Many ferns will grow well in deep shade, where flowering plants can struggle. Ferns are highly adaptable to a variety of conditions and thrive in hot, wet, humid weather like we experience during Williamsburg summers. They require minimal care to look their best over a long season.

Ferns offer beautiful solutions to many garden challenges. If you need to brush up on your knowledge of good fern choices to plant, and to recommend to clients, plan a visit to the WBG to enjoy our newly labeled collection of ferns. **Learn More:** [Fabulous Ferns for Every Garden](#) on the JCCW website blog. (All photos courtesy of Elizabeth



## ATHYRIUM, THE LADY FERNS

BY ELIZABETH MCCOY, MG AND TREE STEWARD

I've never met a lady fern that I didn't like. When you plant one, you'll find that you've invited a loyal, sturdy, persistent fern into your garden. Choose native southern lady fern 'Redneck Girl,' the native northern 'Lady in Red,' or even one of the colorful and highly textured Japanese painted ferns. There are many excellent *Athyrium* choices available.

The most well-known Japanese painted fern, *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum,' has burgundy stipes and silver markings on its sometimes gray, sometimes burgundy fronds. Related cultivars offer intense color and unusual textures.

Lady ferns begin to unfurl their fiddleheads in early spring, along with the daffodils. As each lacy, bipinnate, tripinnate or even quadripinnate frond unfurls, you'll want to check back often to monitor its progress and marvel at its effortless beauty. Lady ferns are grown for their fancy, often intricate fronds. Some are forked or crested on the ends, and some varieties sport burgundy or purple stipes.

Most lady ferns grow to 18" to 36" tall. Some may grow as tall as 6' in favorable conditions, while *Athyrium filix-femina* 'Minutissimum' grows to only 6" to 10" tall.

*Athyriums* grow in slowly expanding clumps. Some cultivars also expand year to year with underground rhizomes, slowly creeping away from the established plant, sending up new clumps of fronds nearby. New clumps can be dug up and potted or moved. Plants of this genus are never invasive.

*Continued on the next page, page 9*



## ATHYRIUM —CONTINUED ...

*Athyriums* propagate readily from spores, hybridizing easily with other lady ferns. You may discover new hybrid sporelings from your own plants. Hybrids between native *A. filix-femina*, and the Asian *A. niponicum* come to market as some of the most colorful and beautiful named selections available. Silver, white and gray coloration on the fronds indicates *A. niponicum* parentage.

*Athyrium* species grow throughout the northern hemisphere. With around 200 species, only a few are native to tropical areas. *Athyrium filix-femina* is considered native on several continents, including North America.

Related North American natives include *A. angustum* (Zones 4-8), the northern lady fern, and *A. asplenoides*, the southern lady fern (Zones 5-9). This clumping beauty, native to James City County, grows to 3' tall and wide and will grow on any local soil, including sand or clay.

Grow most *Athyrium* species and cultivars in shade to full sun. If growing your fern in a sunny location, place it where the ground remains moist and mulch around it. Frond color may vary depending on the amount of light the fern receives, especially with the Japanese painted fern hybrids.

Lady ferns prefer moist, neutral to acidic soil enriched with organic material. Most varieties continue to unfurl new fronds throughout the season. Deer and rabbits leave them alone and there are few, if any, disease or pest problems to concern you.

Expect to enjoy your lady ferns until frost, when their fronds will wither. *Athyrium* species are deciduous. Just mark where the plants grow to reserve their place for the following year.

Any curious gardener can fill a garden with an *Athyrium* collection. There are beautiful selections more than 100 years in cultivation, and new selections regularly come on the market. Elegant and easygoing, *Athyriums* prove themselves as versatile and long-lived ferns for most any garden. (All photos courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)



***Athyrium otophorum*, the Eared Lady Fern**  
is another popular Asian species



***Athyrium filix-femina* 'Victoriae'**  
has been in cultivation for more than a century



***Athyrium* 'Thrill Seeker'**



What gardening book will you read this summer?  
(Photo Courtesy of Odd Moxy)

### NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the July 2022 newsletter will be Wednesday, June 29.

Please send any submissions to Katherine Sokolowsky, newsletter editor, at [katherinesoko@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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 Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its 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, military status, or any other basis protected by law.