



# The Colonial Master Gardener

July  
2022

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEBORAH BUSSERT

Greetings Master Gardeners and welcome to Summer! Although we have had some scorching hot days already, we have also been blessed with a relatively cool and dry stretch. I was able to get a few more plants in the ground, but I still have some in pots that will have to wait until fall. Someday I am going to get organized enough to have everything planted on time – or maybe I just need to buy fewer plants! I suspect this is a common problem among us.

Please remember that there will be no Association meeting in July. Our next general meeting will be held on August 11. We will send out the Zoom link and speaker information in late July. Meanwhile, plans for the July 17 picnic are taking shape. You should all have recently received Linda Becker's clever "Save the Date" message via e-mail. Invitations will be going out soon and I hope to see everyone there.

If you don't already do so, I encourage you to follow Margaret Roach's podcast "A Way To Garden." She lives and gardens in upstate New York, so some of her advice doesn't apply in our much warmer and more humid environment, but she has interesting and thought-provoking guests, book reviews, recommended vendors and products, and much more.

Roach also writes a column for the New York Times, and her most recent essay really caught my attention. Titled "Yes, You Can Do Better Than the Great American Lawn", the piece highlights the many available options for reducing or eliminating that ecological disaster, the "massive monoculture of European turfgrass species" that wastes time, energy and water, creates polluting runoff from the tons of chemicals that are applied, and provides little or nothing for wildlife. Among the alternatives discussed are grass lookalikes such as Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) and other native sedges; native annuals like partridge pea *Chamaecrista fasciculata*; and natives often considered to be weeds, like white clover (*Trifolium repens*), sky-colored bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*), American self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris* subsp. *lanceolata*) and violets (*Viola* species). And if converting an entire lawn is not feasible, reduce its area by enlarging garden beds with simple, low-maintenance shrubs and perennials. Even a ten percent reduction in lawn area, combined with the use of fewer chemicals and less water on the rest will be a big improvement. Isn't it time we got over our obsession with lawns?

Finally, a reminder that the election for the 2023 Association officers will take place in September. Vickie Rockwell, our Vice President for Administration, is overseeing this process and is currently forming a Nominating Committee. Please get in touch with Vickie if you can participate, whether as part of the Committee or by running for office. We won't have an Association if we don't have volunteers so please, carefully consider how you can help.

Thanks for all you do. I am looking forward to seeing you on July 17.

**Next Meeting:**  
Thursday, August 11 at 9:00AM  
Williamsburg Library

**Program:**  
Nature's Calendar

**Speaker:**  
Dr. Colin Rees



(Photos Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

2022  
MGA Board

*President:*  
Deborah Bussert

*President Elect:*  
Donna Tierney

*VP Administration:*  
Vickie Rockwell

*VP Projects:*  
Ruth Huber

*VP Internal Ed:*  
Bill Dichtel

*VP Communications:*  
Marion Guthrie

*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.

# JCCW MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION'S SUMMER PICNIC!

## JOIN US FOR FREE FOOD AND FUN!

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Beans, & a vegan option with  
Cold Drinks but NO ALCOHOL

Leave the kids at home

Bring your +1 and...

If your master gardener graduation year is an even number bring a salad or appetizer but if your graduation year is an odd number bring a dessert!

**WHEN:**

SUNDAY, JULY 17

5PM-7PM

**WHERE:**

The Pavilion  
Jamestown 4-H Educational Center  
3751 4-H Club Rd.  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

**RSVP:**

Email Angela Cingale, [arcingale@cox.net](mailto:arcingale@cox.net)  
by Tuesday, July 12



Food sponsored by:  
**Steve Ewell**, Realtor,  
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C-757-603-2807  
O-757-229-9595  
[Steve@cbwilliamsburg.com](mailto:Steve@cbwilliamsburg.com)  
[www.SteveEwell.com](http://www.SteveEwell.com)

Alcohol is prohibited at this event.



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/>

## TALES FROM THE HELP DESK

BY PATSY MCGRADY

Q. Something is growing on the bark of my tree. Is that a problem?

A. It depends. If it is flat and looks rather lacy, it's lichen and does not harm the tree. If the growth on your tree bark is shaped like a shelf and looks like a mushroom, it is a conk. Conks indicate that the tree has internal decay.

Lichen is a symbiotic relation between certain types of fungi and algae. They have a very shallow attachment to the tree. The fungi provide moisture to the algae. The algae provide food to the fungi. Lichen tends to be flat and look somewhat like a doily.

Neither fungi nor algae are plants. Fungi cannot make their own food but decompose and absorb organic material from other living things. Algae contain chlorophyll but they do not have stems, roots, leaves, or vascular tissue. Lichen may look a bit like moss but are not mosses. Mosses are primitive non-vascular plants.

While lichen do not harm trees, they may be found on trees in poor health. The A&M Auburn University Extension article "Lichen on Woody Trees and Shrubs" states, "Heavy infestations of lichens are most common on shrubs and trees in declining or poor health due to other factors."



(From Wikipedia, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](#) license).

If you do not want lichen on your tree because you just do not like the look of it, it can be removed with a soapy solution and gentle brush. Care should be taken to not damage the bark.

Conks are shelf-like structures that appear singly or in rows and columns. Conks are caused by certain types of fungi and present in different color patterns and shapes. They may also appear as mushrooms growing from the tree root flare or surface roots. Conks are the fruiting body of the fungi. Internally, these fungi feed on the wood of the tree and produce enzymes that cause the tree to rot. Once you see conks on a tree, there is already serious damage to the tree. Removing the conks does not remove the damaging fungi inside the tree.

Some conks are edible, but others are not and can be toxic if ingested. Some can be dried and used for tea. Some can be used for medicinal purposes. As one would do with wild mushrooms, if in doubt, throw it out.



(Photo from Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet FS1205)

## WATER STEWARDS UPDATE

BY GARY STREB, MG AND PENINSULA WATER STEWARD LEADER

### Do you want to be a VCE Master Gardener Water Steward?

The plan for the long-anticipated local Hampton Roads Regional VCEMG Water Steward Training Program is in the final stages and progressing on schedule. We had attempted to start the class this spring but several factors precluded it going forward at that time. This first regional Hampton Roads class will be composed of VCE MGs from units both on the Peninsula and Southside, but will be limited to a maximum of 30 students, allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

The revised class schedule consists of 30 hours of classroom training and 20 hours working on the required original project/program. Six class sessions will be from 9AM -3PM on each Friday, from October 7 thru November 11.

Location is now much closer for our James City and Williamsburg trainees---classes will be held at the Northampton Community Center in Hampton. On-line registration will begin in early August. Those of you that have previously applied have been registered in the class---no need to re-apply; however, if you are now not able to participate because of the dates changes please let me or Hampton Agent Gaylynn Callahan know (757.727.8311). But, in the meantime....

The Shoreline Evaluation Project (SEP) went live on July 1! This new Water Steward project will assist coastal homeowners in their shoreline protection efforts to mitigate the effects from erosion on their shoreline frontage, addressing both upland and waterfront sources. The project is a partnership with the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) office and our Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Water Stewards, similar to the relationship that we have had with the Turf Love project.

Our model for the project is the current well-established shoreline evaluation project of the Northern Neck unit. We have been training for the last year, both with a nine-lecture series (and field trips) on Living Shorelines by William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and practice evaluations of Northern Neck, James City and Gloucester properties. Each homeowner will receive a detail report, soil samples, nutrient management plan for the turf areas and an extensive Homeowner's Guide with all pertinent information and contacts to prepare for implementation of possible remediation actions/projects.



Water Stewards and CSWCD staff attentively listen to VIMS instructor. (Photo Courtesy of Gary Streb)



Water Stewards conduct mock shoreline evaluation at Matthews property. (Photo Courtesy of Gary Streb)

Our Northern Neck counterparts have been extremely helpful by sharing their documentation and developing an on-site experience for our preparation to open the CSWCD/VCEMG joint project to the public. Several Zoom sessions provided a valuable dialogue from concept to implementation.

If you are interested in more information about the Shoreline Evaluation Project, please visit our website at [www.colonialswcd.org](http://www.colonialswcd.org). From the home page go to Services, Residential and Community Conservation, and then Shoreline Evaluation Program. The SEP page includes the application that can be downloaded, completed and mailed to the CSWCD office with payment enclosed. Please address any questions to me [www.gstreb11@gmail.com](mailto:www.gstreb11@gmail.com) or Ginny Cranford at [gcranford42@gmail.com](mailto:gcranford42@gmail.com)

Interested in becoming a Water Steward and joining us on the Shoreline Evaluation Project? Or would you rather like to create your own (or team) original project? Please let us know.

## HISTORIC TRIANGLE LEARNING GARDEN PROJECT WITH CHICKAHOMINY INDIAN TRIBE

BY BILL DICHTEL

The Historic Triangle Learning Garden was invited by the Chickahominy Indian Tribe to participate in teaching as they initiated their learning garden in Providence Forge this year. We became aware of this opportunity through our VCE Extension Agent Forrest Hobbs. The Tribe has received a grant to develop a learning garden and have gotten under way with several aspects of that project. They have reached out to the HTLG to supply instructors on various topics such as composting, soil, growing tomatoes, growing other prime crops, dealing with weeds, etc. and we hope to meet their needs leading didactic sessions as the year goes on.

In addition, with some of their grant money, they purchased an 8 foot by 16 foot greenhouse kit. In June, members of the HTLG, a couple of members of the Tribe, Forrest Hobbs, and a couple of drafted spouses of Master Gardeners, helped with the construction efforts. For gardeners, we did an amazingly good job thanks to the great organizational skills of the teachers in the group and some construction experience of those among us. We had a fantastic effort from the 2022 Class Members in particular! We got all of the walls up, doors assembled and ridge line assembly constructed. It then only took a second work day for us to finish the construction!

Thanks to everyone for a great job! For more information contact Bill Dichtel ([bill.dichtel@gmail.com](mailto:bill.dichtel@gmail.com)).



Greenhouse Construction Crew  
(Photo Courtesy of Bill Dichtel)



Completed Greenhouse  
(Photo Courtesy of Bill Dichtel)

## HELP WANTED BY RUTH HUBER, VP PROJECTS

### Help Wanted for the Toano Community Farmer's Market Help Desk

Would you love an opportunity to talk with your neighbors, impart your knowledge and earn Master Gardener hours? The opportunity exists in the form of a Community Farmer's Market in Toano. Bob Howell has the knowledge and the information to assist you in getting started. Two persons are needed for a two-hour shift in the morning and two for a second shift to finish the day. This opportunity is for both experienced and new Master Gardeners. Please email Bob Howell ([rhowell0727@gmail.com](mailto:rhowell0727@gmail.com)) or Ruth Huber ([huberra@earthlink.net](mailto:huberra@earthlink.net)) for more information.

### Help Wanted for the Clara Byrd Baker School

Have you thought about gardening with children? Where is the ideal place to garden? Love to experiment with unusual vegetables, beautiful flowers, or herbs or to develop your own program? The former project leader/volunteers at the Clara Byrd Baker School on Ironbound Road are eager to assist you in working with the very enthusiastic teachers and children in this program. Would you be ready to help children in developing a love of gardening? This program takes place at the school during the school year. The program was formerly coordinated by Cathy Hill. A coordinator and assistants are needed. Please email Cathy ([needles51@icloud.com](mailto:needles51@icloud.com)) or Ruth Huber ([huberra@earthlink.net](mailto:huberra@earthlink.net)) for more information.



### 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)



(Photo Courtesy of Elizabeth McCoy)

### 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.*

### NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the August 2022 newsletter will be Wednesday, July 27.

Please send any submissions to Katherine Sokolowsky, newsletter editor, at [katherinesoko@gmail.com](mailto:katherinesoko@gmail.com)



### 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.

# WANT TO BE A WATER STEWARD?!

Join us for our inaugural training class this fall!  
Registration opens in August! Contact Extension Agent,  
Gaylynn Callahan, gaylynnj@vt.edu or 757-727-1401, for  
more information

October 7 - November 11, 2022  
Fridays, 9 am - 3 pm

Northampton Community Center, 1435 Todds Ln., Bldg. A,  
Hampton, VA 23666



Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Water Stewards are specially trained volunteers uniquely equipped to provide education and support on water-related issues in their communities, such as stormwater management or erosion.

## EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS



Rain Barrel Workshops



Shoreline Evaluation



Rain Garden Design

