

# THE COLONIAL GARDENER

JULY 2023

Celebrating 40 Years of Helping our  
Neighbors Grow!



*A publication of the  
James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association*

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Our Board Meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m., in Room B at the Williamsburg Regional Library, on Scotland Street. All members are welcome to attend.

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## NEWSLETTER

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**The deadline for the upcoming August 2023 newsletter is Monday, July 17.**

Send your submissions to Elizabeth Myers  
[vp-projects@jccwmg.org](mailto:vp-projects@jccwmg.org) or  
Marion Guthrie  
[vp-communications@jccwmg.org](mailto:vp-communications@jccwmg.org).



The James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association is a volunteer-driven non-profit that supports the outreach mission of the Virginia Cooperative Extension by utilizing research-based information to educate the public in our communities (James City, Williamsburg, and New Kent counties) on the best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship.



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# President's Message

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**DEBORAH BUSSERT '16**

Greetings Master Gardeners!

Summer is upon us and with it our famous hot and humid weather. Did you get all your spring gardening done? As usual I have a few plants in pots that didn't make it into the ground, but not as many as usual. That's progress, I guess.

I'm delighted to report that Emily Coyner has responded to our Help Wanted appeal and has accepted the position of Vice President of Administration through 2023. Welcome to the Board Emily and thank you for volunteering.

Remember chasing fireflies as a child? I certainly do, but we don't see them nearly as much these days. A recent blog post by Humane Gardener Nancy Lawson explains why. Like most creatures, fireflies have specific habitat needs and won't thrive unless those needs are met. Lawson lists several easy ways to support fireflies, such as leaving fallen trees and leaves where possible, learning to love snails and slugs (food for firefly larvae), planting native evergreens for shelter, reducing light pollution, and perhaps most importantly ditching the lawn. By using chemical insecticides and constantly mowing to maintain these "artificially green and lifeless landscapes," as Lawson puts it, we are killing many beneficial insects, including fireflies, and destroying the habitat they need. Light pollution disrupts firefly communication and is, along with habitat loss and climate change, among the top threats to fireflies. Let's each do our part to support these fascinating and delightful insects.

Our August educational program will focus on moss gardening, a topic I don't know much about, and I'm guessing many of you don't either. The shelter

and moisture that mosses provide are important habitat components for many insects and small animals. Cultivating mossy areas, especially where lawn grasses simply won't grow, is one more way we can care for the environment and the many wonderful creatures that inhabit our yards and gardens.

Please remember that there will be no Association meeting in July. Our next general meeting will be held on August 3. Debe Sineath will send out the Zoom link and speaker information in late July. Meanwhile, plans for the July 23 picnic and 40th Anniversary celebration are taking shape. Invitations will be coming out soon and I hope to see everyone there.

Finally, a reminder that the election for the 2024 Association officers will take place in September. Emily Coyner, Vice President for Administration, along with your Board will be overseeing this process and we are currently forming a Nominating Committee. Please get in touch with Emily Coyner or me 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 23.

Deb



## Anniversary Picnic

JOIN US FOR HOTDOGS, HAMBURGERS, AND GOOD GARDEN STORIES

A vegan option will be available. Bring a dish to share, but leave your kids and fur-kids at home. More information and to RSVP visit [eventbrite.com/e/2023-jccw-master-gardener-anniversary-picnic-tickets-666986333077?aff=oddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-jccw-master-gardener-anniversary-picnic-tickets-666986333077?aff=oddtcreator)

**7/23/2023 AT 5:00 p.m.**

**The Pavilion at the Williamsburg 4-H Educational Center**

**RSVP so we save you a hotdog to [eventbrite.com/e/2023-jccw-master-gardener-anniversary-picnic-tickets-666986333077?aff=oddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-jccw-master-gardener-anniversary-picnic-tickets-666986333077?aff=oddtcreator)**

Rumor has it, that Delegate Mike Mullin and Senator Monty Mason might stop by!



## Forrest Hobbs, VCE Agent Extraordinaire, is Retiring

DEBORAH BUSSERT '16

Forrest Hobbs, our VCE Agent for the past two years, has announced his retirement. Forrest will be working with VSU-VCE as a Small Farm Outreach Regional Program Assistant. Even as a semi-retiree, Forrest has indicated that he hopes to stay engaged with us. On behalf of the Board and the entire membership, we send a heartfelt thank you to Forrest for his hard work, professionalism, good humor, and ready smile. It has been a pleasure working with Forrest and we will miss him.

Forrest Hobbs rejoined Virginia Cooperative Extension in June 2021, as the Associate Extension Agent covering Agriculture and Natural Resources for New Kent and James City Counties. In this role, he provided leadership to educational programs which solve social, economic, and environmental problems in agriculture and natural resources.

He started his career with VCE in 1989 in Mecklenburg County and has covered a wide range of program responsibilities ranging from row crop production, forages, livestock, commercial and home horticulture, fruit production, small farm outreach and Master Gardeners.



# Notes from Master Gardener College 2023

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**GARY STREB '11**

Master Gardener College is an annual educational experience, routinely held at the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, organized by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (VCEMG) State Coordinator's Office and a working committee of the Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA). This year the conference was held from Wednesday, June 8 through Sunday, June 11, although steward classes were available for two added days enabling qualifying Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) to complete the classroom requirement to become a Tree Steward. But it is so much more than increasing your educational EMG portfolio! It is a unique opportunity to live, learn and make contacts and friends with fellow EMGs from all over the Commonwealth.

*It's like going back to the Mothership. Even after attending eight or nine of these conferences it never gets old!*

The first day is optional with local tours and experiences. This year we had several from which to choose starting with an all-day tour of Floyd, Virginia, an artistic enclave of local arts and crafts, heightened by a country music venue, to a tour of the VT nematode lab, to a winery tour. Other options included tours of private gardens in the New River local area, a campus tour of Stadium Woods next to the huge VT football stadium, walking tours of VT trees, or the creation of a miniature take-home moss garden. I chose a walking tour of tree pests on campus and a hiking tour of a Nature Conservancy property, the private Falls Ridge Preserve is a native Virginia plant preserve with an amazing 80-foot waterfall.





Classes were held directly across the street from the dorm, which was also about a 5-minute walk to the dining hall. If mobility is a problem VCE runs a shuttle service with their brand-new minivans. Living in the New Hall dorm can bring you back to your college days—both the good and bad. Beds have mattresses like a baby crib and the toilets are designed for pre-school kids. But there are lounges on each floor enabling get-togethers of new-found friends. The Virginia Beach unit adopted me, and I had quite a refresher lesson in college partying! Complete with fireworks from the Alumni Weekend coinciding with our MGC.

The curriculum included keynote and plenary sessions spread over the 4-days in the auditorium of Litton-Reeves Hall with attendance of all EMGs attending. Topics included: “Why Native Trees Matter,” “Trees: Not Another Pretty Face,” “Perennials with WOW,” “Can Insects and Mites be Managed Organically” and my favorite, “Eating Iguana and Tangling with Typhoons---Tales and Travails of a Plant Explorer.”

Concurrent sessions were held both Friday and Saturday mornings and afternoons. With each of the six sessions we had five classes from which to choose. And the topics were all over the horticultural map, from turf, to yoga, to cover crops, to structural pruning, to climate change, school gardens, to wicked-wonderful-wasps. I chose “Recognizing your Allies: Arthropod Natural Enemies,” “Climate Change and Invasive species Pests and Diseases,” “Landscaping with Native Plants,” “History of American Chestnut Restoration,” “Beyond the Soil Test: Promoting soil Health,” and “Rethinking the Invasive Conundrum.” I also aided with the

program creation and management sessions of the Tree Steward curriculum with a short presentation about our Tree Steward project in 2015 (and still going strong!)

We also had the annual meeting of the Virginia Master Gardener Association, with the year’s business matters discussed and agreed upon. The rebranding of the Master Gardener Program was detailed by the State Office. The silent auction was revived with all funds going towards the Endowment Fund for the VCE Master Gardener State Office. Hundreds of unique items and plants galore all donated by fellow EMGs. A pop-up bookstore and VMGA clothing booth were available for the essential “souvenir.” I did not go home empty-handed.

Highlighted in a stand-alone session was the presentation of the Milestone Award for the year 2022. Commonwealth-wide 718 volunteers earned milestone recognition with their certificate, and pins awarded by the new Extension Director Mike Gutter. Our unit had the most at 56. Unfortunately, only two JCC/Williamsburg/New Kent EMGs were present to receive their public appreciation from their Commonwealth contemporaries. Congratulations to Angela Cingale for her 7,000 hours of volunteer commitment, and to Gary Streb for his 5,000 hours!

Bottom line: MGC is fun! And educational! Highly recommended! Five Stars!

Let us all seriously consider a trip to Blacksburg next summer to attend MGC 2024 and see what’s new in our volunteer gardening world!







# Ecology Corner

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JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS '15

## *Where Can You Find Native Plants?*

People are becoming more and more aware of the benefits of growing native plants; they provide food for our native insects and pollinators, need less water, and improve soil quality. Like other plants, native plants grow in all kinds of conditions. Sun or shade, wet or dry, there is a suitable native plant.

The big question for most of us is where can we buy native plants? This is a dilemma as area nurseries also learn about the value of planting native and learn what plants will sell. Finding plants beyond black-eyed Susan, milkweed, and tickseed is a challenge without going out of town.

In addition to shopping at nurseries, native plants and plugs are available through mail order. Local native plant and butterfly groups also have sales that focus on native plants. If you do shop at nurseries, many of the native nurseries are getting started and have limited hours or sell only at farmer's markets. The Native Plant Society of Virginia maintains a native plant nursery list, but you will still need to do some investigating about when they are open. One of the best ways to get native plants is to get them from friends or trade with people. Facebook pages exist to trade native plants. Finding natives can be a bit of a treasure hunt, but they can be found.

When you head out to shop, to help yourself you will want to list the botanical names of the plants you want. We have dozens of Goldenrod species, and the growing habits of these plants vary widely. It is critical that you have the scientific name in order to find the right plant. You will also want to search for straight species. Cultivars or nativars that are labeled at nurseries have an additional name within single quotation marks. For example, *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Autumn Forest' is a cultivar. If the tag simply says *Rudbeckia hirta*, it is the straight species.

When you go to your favorite area nurseries, be sure to ask for native plants. Let our local growers know what you want to buy. The more people who ask, the more likely that our nurseries will add native plants. They will not stock what they cannot sell.

Enjoy shopping for native plants. Prepare yourself with a list of botanical names before you go and have fun adding natives to your landscape.



*Salvia lyrata* (Lyreleaf Sage) top photo,  
*Lonicera sempervirens* (Coral Honeysuckle)  
bottom photo, photos by Judy Kinshaw-Ellis



# The Jamestown Settlement Café Garden

**ANGELA CINGALE '00**

The Café Garden showcases some beautiful plants. Chief among them is the evening primrose, a North American native. As the name suggests, the yellow evening primrose flowers in the evening and the blooms stay open into early morning. Our primrose reaches over 5 feet drawing high praise from visitors. We've added French tarragon and betony to the culinary herb section of our garden and planted two tomato plants. Betony is a member of the Lamiaceae family, and cousin to mint and sage. It's a perennial ground cover that produces beautiful, tubular purple flowers. Visit us and enjoy some lunch while you admire our garden.





# Master Gardeners in the Schools

*An update on three of our school programs.*



## *Blayton School Garden - Planting, Eating, Sharing*

**KEN CARO '11**

Spring at Blayton was wonderful and productive because our Garden Club, which was scheduled for eight weeks, ran for twelve. A feat made possible by Jillian Zingale, our volunteer teacher sponsor, as well as help from other Blayton classes. One class dug over ten pounds of garlic.

We have gained two new neighbors in our garden with Jillian's two beehives and during the summer break, she is building a "Monarch Station" which should be ready for the next migration. One of our garden goals is to attract pollinators and this will certainly help to keep them coming!

We planted and harvested broccoli, snow peas, sugar snap peas, kale, rainbow Swiss chard, carrots, leeks, lettuce, and asparagus. Last year's artichoke plants have produced 14 so far this spring. In addition, our Blayton gardeners made and sampled potato leek soup, and taste-tested freshly picked asparagus from our garden. For graduation, we celebrated with the best homemade strawberry pie, and we donated all our excess produce to FISH.







# *Jamestown High Schoolers Perform a Garden Makeover*

**GARY GRIFFITH '15 & GAIL WEAVER '13**

This spring, five Jamestown high school students were looking for a class project to fulfill their AP requirement and found one at Clara Byrd Baker (CBB) Elementary School. The CBB Master Gardener Project team, led by Gary Griffith and Gail Weaver worked with these students to create our first 4H Special Interest (SPIN) youth partnership.

The AP curriculum requires students to volunteer on a project of their choice that serves the community. The CBB Garden had been idle for a few years, because of Covid and resources.

The five students chose to focus on improving the CBB Garden and its outdoor classroom. To host these high schoolers and provide oversight, two of our Master Gardeners registered as adult volunteers in the 4-H program.

Then beginning in March this year, these Jamestown high schoolers got into the CBB Garden. They cleared out the overgrowth, washed the shed,

repainted the stage and benches, and laid down many loads of donated wood chips on garden pathways and under picnic tables. The result was an amazing beautification and enhancement of the garden's facilities including an outdoor classroom for meetings and a venue for teachers and Master Gardeners.

The collaboration on this project has given a significant boost to the CBB School Garden encouraging outdoor classroom instruction at Clara Byrd Baker while fulfilling an academic requirement for the high school students. The five Jamestown High Schoolers together completed 57 volunteer hours and formed a partnership that benefited both the Clara Byrd project and the students, enabling them to meet their academic requirements. This successful project is a model for partnering with 4H SPIN projects in the future.





## Mattey's Potatoes

TIFFENI GOESEL '18



*“It’s just like it used to be in the early days of the garden!”*



Using a scale donated by Susan Carlisle, Tiffeni Goesel and her father harvested and washed 24 pounds of potatoes from Mattey's Garden. Then they took them to Ms. Vega Brown in the school cafeteria and she was thrilled, saying "It's just like it used to be in the early days of the garden!" Tiffeni and her father agreed. There's something about growing and eating your own vegetables that just feels good.



# Effective Partnering at the Water Wise Project

**ELVIN & KAY CLAPP '18**

Over the past year and a half, the Water Wise crew has actively involved the executive teams at the JCC Human Services Center on Olde Town Road. It's an interesting dynamic working with two sets of contacts. Our direct contact is Barbara Watson, Assistant Director of Social Services for JCC. We have frequent meetings with Barbara to share planning and maintenance ideas. JCC provides our annual supply of mulch in November to cap off the garden for the winter. All other garden needs are funded from our budget with the JCCW Master Gardener Association.

Our other contact is Aaron Thompson, Executive Director, Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center and his public information team. The Center leases

their space in the building from JCC. They account for about 12,000 patient visitors (30% Spanish speaking) who walk through the garden to access the building. Aaron and his team are very supportive of the garden and are instrumental in our developing and distributing educational materials to reach low income and minority populations.

The Water Wise team work sessions are the first and third Tuesday from 9-11 am in the spring and fall, and 8-10 am in the summer. For more information or for a tour of the garden, contact Elvin or Kay Clapp, [elvkay@gmail.com](mailto:elvkay@gmail.com) or 602-647-9988.



Linda Neilson and Kay Clapp (Class of '18) with Barbara Watson, Assistant Director of Social Services, JCC Human Services Center.





The Water Wise Team Having a Laugh with Aaron Thompson, Executive Director, Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center





# Training Class Update

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**PAM MAGELAND '17**

The 2023 Master Gardener training class completed their course work on May 9. Their final class was a special treat as it consisted of a tree walk led by Rick Brown through the Bassett Trace Trail, a brief tour of the CW arboretum by Susan Miller, and a light luncheon hosted by the training team.

All 19 members of the Class of 2023 are now officially considered “Interns” and, as a group, they have logged over 800 hours. Four of them have completed more than the 50 required volunteer hours, and two of those have completed all requirements for EMG status. Please congratulate the members of this exceptional group when you see them in the gardens. They are proving to be an excellent addition to our projects.





# Association Members Receive Milestone Awards

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**JOANNE SHEFFIELD**, VMGA Representative

Another Annual Meeting has been held by the Virginia Master Gardener Association. The meeting is routinely held during Master Gardener College. This year it was at Virginia Tech on June 8th. Two members of our Association attended in person—Angela Cingale and Gary Streb. They each received a milestone service award: 7000 hours for Angela and 5000 hours for Gary. Very impressive! Since the meeting was also held via Zoom, James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association had five members attending out of a total of 17 Master Gardeners.

The VMGA Board has started the second year of the two-year term. This means that a nominating committee will be chosen and will be looking for candidates. If anyone is interested in applying for a statewide office, please let Marilyn Riddle or I know, and we will push for your candidacy!

I have asked the State Fair coordinator, Christy Brennan, if we could volunteer at the Fair on Tuesday, September 26th. I have not had a reply so far but keep that date in mind (or another possible date, if that date is unavailable during the Fair scheduled for 9/22-10/1/2023).

The next bimonthly board meeting will be held in Sterling, VA, sponsored by the Loudoun County Master Gardeners on August 12th. The Southside MGA will host a meeting in Halifax on the 14th of October.

Please support your Virginia Master Gardener Association by renewing or joining as soon as possible because the membership runs from June 1 through May 31. Follow this link to go to the online enrollment form, [vmga.net/wordpress/vmga-membership-application-renewal-form/](https://vmga.net/wordpress/vmga-membership-application-renewal-form/).





# In the Garden

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ELIZABETH MCCOY '18

***Making a Resilient Drought-Tolerant Garden  
Part I: Right Plant, Right Place.***

Have you noticed how during the hottest, driest times in summer some plants still look lush and healthy while others begin to look dull and shriveled? Many plants are equipped to survive dry spells, and to take full advantage of rain or irrigation when water is available. These are known as drought-tolerant plants. [Read more here.](#)

***Making a Resilient Drought-Tolerant Garden  
Part II: Techniques and Strategies***

We're learning how to adapt to volatile weather patterns fueled by greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere and warming oceans. We find stories of record heat, record cold, flooding, wildfires, and drought in the news each day. We can't change the weather, but we can improve our sustainable gardening practices and make our plants more resilient. [Read more here.](#)

Find more articles on our blog on our website, [jccwmg.org](http://jccwmg.org)



# Classifieds

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## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKING MEMBERS**

The Nominating Committee is seeking three Association members who would like to work as a team to develop a slate of officer nominations for the 2024-26 board term. We anticipate several open positions and would welcome your participation in the nominating process. The proposed slate is presented to the membership at the September business meeting. The work of the committee lasts about two months during July and August.

Please contact Vickie Rockwell ([varockwell@oputlook.com](mailto:varockwell@oputlook.com)) if you are interested in this very important committee!

## **AUGUST MASTER GARDENER MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

The Simple Art of Moss Gardening

On August 3, 2023, at our next monthly meeting, Mary Toth, Senior Horticulturist at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, will join us at the WRL to discuss bryophyte benefits, growth patterns and the simple art of moss gardening. Mary became interested in horticulture growing up on a farm and has spent the past six (6) years working at the botanical garden. She loves being able to share her plant knowledge with guests. Attend this program in the library's auditorium or via Zoom. A link will be provided later.

## **JULY-AUGUST- SEPTEMBER LIBRARY LECTURE SERIES**

The July topic is "Planning and Planting a Fall Vegetable Garden." Fall is the best for planting cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli. Plus, you can plant another crop of peas, lettuce, and other leafy veggies. James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Bill Dichtel, Class of 2018, will share techniques such as cloches, high tunnels, and cold frames to extend the growing season for your home vegetable garden. Join us on Saturday, July 8, at the Stryker Center from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

The August topic is container gardening. Are your containers looking a bit sad? Are your plants dying, overgrown, or not producing new blooms or veggies? Angela Cingale, Master Gardener, Class of 2000, will discuss how to extend your container garden into the late summer and fall. Join us on Saturday, August 12, at the Stryker Center from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. for an informative and inspirational session.

In September, Dennis Hewston, James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener, Class of 2022, will talk about putting your garden to bed for the winter. More info to come next month in our August newsletter.





# Wild Writers Wanted

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Writing for the JCCW website blog, "[Gardening on the Wild Side](#)," is a terrific way to help educate others about important topics related to every aspect of garden making, ecology and horticulture. Our blog articles are in fact accessed worldwide, as even topics specific to our area can be of interest to the gardening public throughout the United States and abroad.

Our general theme this year is how to respond effectively to a changing climate, and this encompasses a broad range of specific topics. Master Gardeners who hold added certifications such as Tree Stewards, Water Stewards, and Land Stewards are especially qualified to share their experience, and to know where to find added resources. This is an excellent way to bring positive attention to specific projects and to the efforts of the Master Gardeners in our community.

Some of our projects include making gardens to support wildlife; adapting garden plantings to challenging weather by choosing more resilient species; responsible gardening practices in wetland areas; supporting endangered and declining plant and animal species; erosion control and soil conservation; making rain gardens; highlighting specific plant genera that perform well in our area and so much more. These practices offer rich experiences to draw on in writing articles for the blog.

As a writer for the blog, start with your own curiosity, then consult authoritative resources for more information. Then weave that information into an interesting, helpful article that entertains and educates your audience. You'll also want to document the variety of resources in your article so your readers can follow up to learn more.

If you are interested in writing for the website's blog, please contact either Marion Guthrie ([marion.guthrie@gmail.com](mailto:marion.guthrie@gmail.com)) or Elizabeth McCoy ([e.mccoy105@gmail.com](mailto:e.mccoy105@gmail.com)) to discuss potential topics. We'll collaborate with you to get your article published and to help you find illustrations if you don't have your own photos.

Writing for publication is an enjoyable way to fulfill the basic commitment of Master Gardeners, which is to educate and inspire others. Accomplished on your own schedule at home, developing and writing articles for publication allows you to learn while sharing your interest with the gardening public.





## Editor's Message

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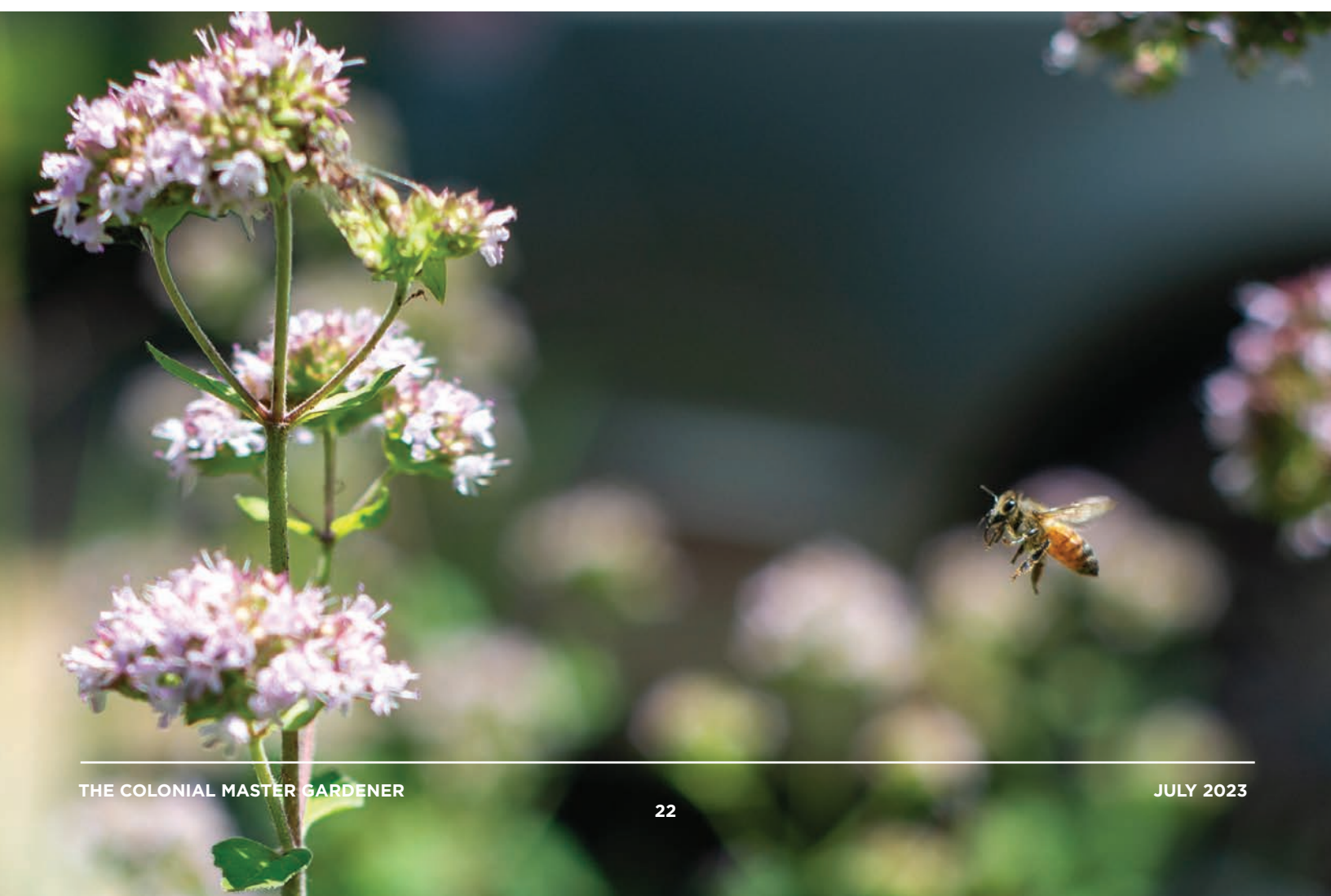
**MARION GUTHRIE '19**

I must admit, I'm very excited for our 40th Anniversary picnic. I can't wait to spend time with other members I rarely see. I will also admit I might get Publix to make my covered dish to share. Unfortunately, my adventurous gardening spirit has not inspired a love of cooking, but the grandkids don't seem to mind Nana's store-bought treats.

It's been a hot and stormy June. As a northern transplant, I can't help but admire all of you tenacious gardeners who are clearing storm debris and weeds in the afternoon. How do you do it? Can you share your secrets? I'd love to have a blog post about keeping your cool when it gets hot on our website. If you feel inspired, pop me a line.

Finally, I want to thank Elizabeth Myers for gathering all the content. Elizabeth, this newsletter is better because of you. I want to thank Dave Banks for all his help keeping our digital spaces up and running. And thanks to Odd Moxie for helping us get our Anniversary Picnic invites out and for another beautiful job laying out this edition.

See you on the 23rd!  
Marion Guthrie, Editor  
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