

THE COLONIAL MASTER GARDENER

Celebrating 40 Years of Helping our
Neighbors Grow!

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

NOVEMBER 2023

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PLEASE NOTE:

The November Board Meeting will be held in Conference Room B at the Williamsburg Regional Library from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 16.

NEWSLETTER

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The submission deadline for the upcoming December 2023 newsletter is Friday, November 20.

Send your submissions to Elizabeth Myers
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Marion Guthrie
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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; Williamsburg, James City, Charles City, Upper York and New Kent counties, on the best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship.



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President's Message



DEBORAH BUSSERT '16

Greetings Master Gardeners!

As we are busy putting our gardens to bed for the winter, don't forget that birds and beneficial insects need the seed heads and fading foliage for winter food and shelter. If you can, leave at least some of your garden standing until late winter when nighttime temperatures stay in the 50s. Our feathered and creepy-crawly friends will thank us. Of course, you all know it's important to "Leave the Leaves." Fallen leaves are an important resource, again for overwintering insects, shelter for birds and small animals and, of course, to nourish the soil. What a wonderful gift they are!

Congratulations to the Williamsburg Botanical Garden Volunteers, including many Master Gardeners and others, who received a Community Service Award from the Ann Wager Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. This award is the culmination of a lengthy application process, supported by letters from several local community members, and was approved first by the local Chapter, then by the State organization and finally the National Community Service Chair. Many of you have worked hard in the WBG, visitors tell us time and again that it looks better than it ever has. Well done!

Many thanks to all the project leaders who completed their project renewal forms on time and who thoughtfully prepared their budget requests. The Board, and in particular Treasurer Linda Neilson, has spent a great deal of time preparing and reviewing the budget, which will be presented for your approval at the November Association meeting. The proposed budget will be circulated in advance, so please take a look and bring any questions you may have to the meeting.

Thank you all for your hard work and your great attitudes. It is a pleasure to work with you.

Deb

Brickyard Landing Project Update

JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS '15

The riparian buffer project at Brickyard Landing is moving along, but not as quickly as Co-lead, Donna Benson, and I had hoped. We have been waiting for two things to happen: a barrier to prevent vehicles from driving where the gardens will be planted and a formal planting plan. Both of these things should be completed in October, and we should be able to do some planting in early November.

The riparian buffer is important to help reduce erosion and increase habitat. This demonstration garden will include grasses, perennials, shrubs, and trees, and the plantings will also include a meadow of grasses and perennials. The vast majority of plants will be native to James City County.

In November, we hope that we will be able to place some shrubs and trees in the park. Most of the grasses and perennials will be planted in the spring of 2024. The meadow is scheduled to be seeded in the fall and early winter of 2024.

We planted a few seedlings late in the spring as well as a few larger trees that were donated. There were also a few workdays where we removed invasive honeysuckle, stiltgrass, and some poison ivy from some high traffic areas. This park is a blank slate that has great potential.

Watch for announcements for planting days. We will need lots of help. If you get a chance, drive out and take a look at the park. It is a beautiful place on the Chickahominy River located at 990 Brickyard Road, Toano.

If you have not yet signed up for this project, let Donna (mid520@me.com) or Judy (kinshawellis@gmail.com) know. We would love to have you join our team.



Some plantings for the riparian buffer are scheduled for November but most of the grasses and perennials will be planted in the spring. Riparian buffers are strips of vegetation (trees, shrubs, or grass) planted next to streams or other water bodies. Planting vegetation along streams creates space between the water and upland land uses, which helps protect the water quality and stream habitat.



Landscape Love

BARBARA FLOYD '10
SHERRY WALKER '16, &
SUSAN ZICKEL '13

Home visits by the numbers!

With the change of seasons, our organizational projects are changing and Landscape Love is no exception. We finished the last Landscape Love Home Visits program for this year on October 20th. These numbers 31, 96, 5, 103, 3, are all a part of the results of our efforts during the 2023 season.

Barb, Sherry and Susan want everyone to know we appreciate the efforts of 31 Master Gardener volunteers and interns who advised and educated 96 homeowners. Of those 31 among us, five from the Class of 2023 participated in visits and offered fresh information from their classroom work.

In total, we had 103 applications, of which three were deferred to other Master Gardener Home Visit programs, such as Turf Love and Tree call. On almost all visits, the teams also referred homeowners to our Pruning Clinic, which is coming soon in the fourth quarter of 2023.

There were many, many positive comments and notes of appreciation from homeowners for the assistance and knowledge we imparted to them. To that, Barb, Sherry and Susan want to reiterate that this project is only successful because of the Master Gardener volunteers who give their time and share their knowledge.



Virginia Master Gardener Association Update

JOANNE SHEFFIELD '11
VMGA Representative

For the October bimonthly meeting we had four of our members in Zoom attendance out of a total of 24 or so. The Communications Chair, Frank Reilly, made his usual comments. An addition was that they had been working on the VGMA website recently. You can see some improvements (not the Calendar). Registration for the November 11th Education Program has all the needed information. Make sure you use this link: vmga.net/wordpress/vmga-education-events or you can get wound up in the old website which isn't up to date. You will see that the program looks very interesting, so if you have nothing planned for Saturday, November 11th, you could take a pleasant drive to Lovingston, VA! It's less than a 2 1/2-hour drive from the Lightfoot area of Williamsburg.

Our Board is considering a Committee called "Members Helping Members." Members would assist other members who need help in various situations such as taking care of someone's yard when the owner is recovering from surgery or a long illness or helping a person who is downsizing find a home for gardening books and tools. We asked this be the VMGA President's Focus question for the October meeting and whether or not other units have done something similar. The topic was well received. People thought it was a great idea. No one has a formal group, although Gloucester has a member-at-large position who reaches out to help others in the unit. Someone thought that volunteer hours could be earned, but it depends on the Extension Agent's approval.

Master Gardener College will be mostly virtual June 5th - 9th, 2024. The hope is to keep the cost to \$50.00 or less. One day will be touring garden facilities in various areas of the state. If you would like to join one of the planning committees, check out the Biweekly Update. Here's the link for the one that came out October 16th, masterygardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-update

Our team of volunteers for the State Fair appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* recently, thanks to Dot Finnegan. If you missed it, you can see most of us in the photo I took. From the left are Pam Van Cott, Dot Finnegan, Stacy DeMeo, Carolyn Stringer and Ruth Huber. Michele Garrard was missing because she was busy riding a camel as seen in this photo by Carolyn Stringer!



Fourth Grade Explorers

RICK BROWN, '17

On October 10, 2023, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists teamed up to provide tours throughout the day for 18 fourth graders from the Providence Classical School to Colonial Williamsburg. The youngsters started with a tour of the Colonial Williamsburg Arboretum led by JCCW Master Gardener Rick Brown. Bill Dichtel, also a JCCW Master Gardener, met these explorers in the Catherine Orr Garden to tell them about colonial heirloom flowers, vegetables and herbs.

Then Judy Jones of the HRC Master Naturalists took them on a nature walk on the Bassett Trace Nature Trail. The class was accompanied by their teacher, Ann Marie Charbono, and eight parent chaperones. It was a perfect fall day, a great learning experience for the class, and a terrific teaching opportunity for Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists.



Ecology Corner

Reducing Your Lawn

JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS '15

Many of us happily live in neighborhoods that have HOAs that include rules on what we can plant. Many of us would like to reduce the time we spend mowing while inviting more native pollinators and birds into our yards. So how do we strike a balance between adding plantings to reduce mowing and adding beds that meet HOA guidelines? Two things you can do to get started with reducing your lawn are to replace grass with native ground covers and create beds with shrubs.

Before you do anything, you will need to kill the grass. The easiest way to do that is to smother it by covering it with cardboard topped with mulch or compost. This process can be completed over the winter to be ready for spring planting or in the summer to plant in the fall.

If you have an area that is sunny to part shade, beautiful native ground covers include Narrowleaf Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*) and Northern Wild Pinks (*Silene caroliniana*). Some Penstemon species also do well as a ground cover. They have a tall spring blooming flower that can be left to go to seed, or you can trim the flowers and enjoy the foliage. A plant that is good for a shady, moist area is Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*), which also self-seeds.

If you have a very shady yard, you probably struggle to get grass to grow. We have a number of native ferns, which provide year around interest and are deer resistant. If you have mossy areas in your yard, keep them mossy.

Adding shrubs is also an easy way to reduce your lawn. This time of year, you may have noticed shrubs with vibrant purple berries. These shrubs are Beautyberry (*Calliopsis americana*) and thrive at the edge of the woods. Another good pollinator shrub that will grow in sun to partial shade is

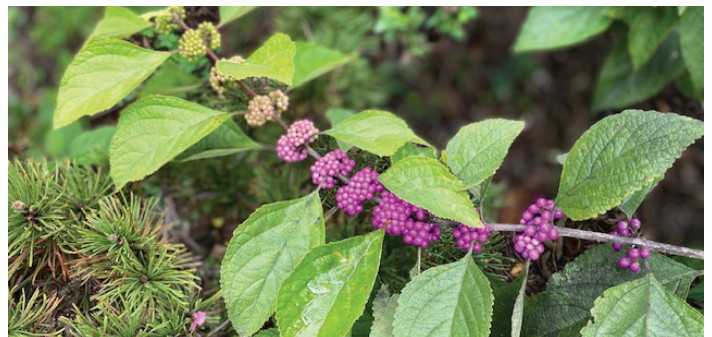
Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*).

Plant more native plants and reduce the area of your lawn. It will reduce your mowing time and increase your habitat for native birds and insects.

Next month we will discuss creating mini meadows on your property.



Blue-eyed Grass - *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*



American Beautyberry - *Callicarpa americana*



Foxglove Beardtongue - *Floxglove beardtongue*

In the Garden

Find more articles on our blog on our website, jccwmg.org

[Arthur A. Shurcliff's Gift to the Future](#)

RICK BROWN '17, *Arboretum Volunteer, Peninsula Tree Steward*



An old photo that recently appeared on Facebook triggered a search through the Colonial Williamsburg Archives that led to the discovery of what may be the oldest living tree in this historic city. The photo, shown above, shows a group of workers standing in a very deep hole with the caption “Moving Cedar Tree 1933.” A comparison with that photo and an Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) standing behind Bassett Hall at the Northern entrance to the Rockefeller Vista, led to the discovery that it is in fact the same.

[Christmas Ferns: A Small Step Towards Climate Solutions](#)

ELIZABETH MCCOY '18



This article is published in the Fall 2023 edition of the Hardy Fern Foundation Quarterly magazine!

[Climbing Vines in Coastal Virginia](#)

ELIZABETH MCCOY '18



Many native vines serve as host plants for specific species of Lepidoptera, whose larvae eat their leaves. Some vine leaves, like grape leaves and certain species of Smilax, common greenbrier, are edible and medicinal.

[Foraging for Autumn Harvests](#)

ELIZABETH MCCOY '18



We are surrounded by delicious food here in Virginia, even in the fall and winter. Whether we choose to feast on it or not, it is good to know what is edible, when and how to use it.

Classifieds

CORRECTION

Apologies. In October's President's Message on page 4 of the newsletter, citing returning board members, mistakenly misspelled the last name of our 2024 VMGA Representative, Marilyn Riddle.

2024 PLANT SALE!

Mark your calendars with May 10th for the Set-Up Day and May 11th for our annual Plant Sale held at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Mary Sipe, who has volunteered to be the Plant Sale leader, is currently putting together a leadership team. If you are interested contact her at mcsipe2@gmail.com and join us in making the sale a continued success so that we may fund our many projects into the future.

DECEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, December 7, 9-11 a.m. in the theatre at the Williamsburg Regional Library. Our business meeting will be followed by a Graduation Ceremony for the Class of 2023, then we'll adjourn to the Stryker Center for a reception.

SUPPORT YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS

If you know of a Master Gardener who is experiencing difficult times or deserves recognition, please contact Dot Finnegan, at secretary@jccwmg.org.

WATER WISE

Water Wise is adding team members. Join us on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday 9-11 a.m. at the JCC Human Services Center, 5249 Olde Towne Rd, Williamsburg. This is a great opportunity to work in a unique garden, provide educational activities to the public, and have fun. For more information, visit this link otmdc.org/garden, or contact Elvin or Kay, elvkay@gmail.com.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FALL LEAVES?

1. Add them to your compost pile. Don't have one? [Here's how to make one.](#)
2. Leave them as suggested by the [National Wildlife Federation](#).
3. Or take the advice of the National Gardening Association in their article on [Ten Things to Do with Fall Leaves](#). Some are pretty funny. Just think twice before blowing them away.

TREE STEWARD MINI-GRANT APPLICATIONS

Trees Virginia is currently accepting Tree Steward Mini-Grant applications. All applications are due by Monday, November 27, 2023, and can be submitted online through the Trees Virginia website. You can find full information regarding this round of mini-grants on the bottom of the Tree Steward page via the Trees Virginia website: treesvirginia.org/services/tree-stewards.

A direct link to the online application can be found via website or by clicking the following link: treesvirginia.org/mini-grant-application. If there are any questions, please feel free to reach out to Martha Orton, martha.orton@gmail.com or Becky Woodson with Trees Virginia, treesvirginia1@gmail.com.

NATIVE PLANTS ONLINE

If you are looking to broaden your knowledge of native plants, our VP of Internal Education, Debe Sineath, suggests the VA Native Plant Society which has an extensive library on Vimeo of recorded video presentations and discussions from state and local chapter programs and meetings. Go to vimeo.com/vnps

20 Years of Water Wise

KAY CLAPP '18 & ELVIN CLAPP '18

The Water Wise Demonstration Garden is celebrating its 20th anniversary on Tuesday November 14, from 2-3:30 p.m. and you're invited! Located at James City County Human Services Center, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg, VA, this garden is staffed and maintained by a dedicated team from the James City County Williamsburg Master Gardeners Association.

This garden, founded in 2003, hosts an estimated 10,000 visitors annually. It is a peaceful space for those who come to the Center, as well as a demonstration garden highlighting drought-tolerant gardening practices. If you are a current or previous gardener who would like to attend the afternoon celebration and you haven't received a "save the date" email, contact Elvin and Kay Clapp, elvkay@gmail.com.





Editor's Message

MARION GUTHRIE '19

It's hard to pick a favorite season; they all have their merits. I do love the year-round hours I get outside since moving to Virginia. Fall here offers a unique and rewarding gardening experience that I still haven't gotten used to. There's never a time you must put down your gardening gloves. We're so lucky here in Williamsburg.

I feel lucky about quite a few things these days like my HOA has a community compost pile where I can dump my garden debris and find good garden soil.

I also feel lucky to have the support of such a great organization and the wonderful chance to reach out to all our members and share the great work we all do. Williamsburg is a well-gardened town, and that's thanks in great part to this association. So thank you, JCCW Master Gardeners, and please...

Keep growing!
Marion Guthrie, Editor
vp-communications@jccwmg.org



Master Gardener Merch!

LINDA BECKER '22

Great Gift for the Holidays

Holiday gifts! Does this thought thrust anxiety upon you? I know you lie awake hoping for divine inspiration for the perfect gift for your Master Gardener. Relieve your angst by visiting the [Logo Gear](#) tab on the Master Gardener webpage (jccwmg.org).

Have you seen the lovely red jacket that will keep your gardener toasty during pruning season? A Master Gardener in your life can certainly use a fresh T-shirt. An insulated flask etched with the gardener's name will be the BEST stocking stuffer. Relax this holiday season and shop the JCCWMG's [Logo Gear](#).



November 2nd Membership Meeting *Japanese Gardening*

Explore the captivating art of Japanese gardening, and delve into its rich history at our next Membership Program. You'll discover design principles, plant selection, rock arrangements, water features, and space utilization, all while tracing the evolution of Japanese gardening through time. Gain insights into the philosophy and symbolism that have shaped this ancient practice and learn how to create your own serene oasis, inspired by centuries of Japanese horticultural tradition.

Our presenter, Daniel Fulford, from the Norfolk Botanical Garden, is a certified arborist, horticulturist, and Japanese garden enthusiast with a passion for sustainable practices. With expertise in tree care and plant cultivation he is dedicated to promoting environmental stewardship and creating healthy thriving landscapes.

Join the meeting on Thursday, November 2, at 9 a.m. in the Williamsburg Regional Library Auditorium or via Zoom

11/2/2023 @ 9:00 a.m.

**in the Williamsburg Regional Library Auditorium and via Zoom at
us02web.zoom.us/j/2324806347**



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