

THE COLONIAL MASTER GARDENER

Celebrating 41 Years of Helping our
Neighbors Grow!

2024 JCCW MGA BOARD

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PLEASE NOTE: Our Board typically 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.

Secretary
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NEWSLETTER

Layout & Design:
Odd Moxie

The submission deadline for the upcoming March 2024 newsletter is Monday, March 18.

Webmaster:
Dave Banks
dfbanks2@gmail.com

Send your submissions to our editor, Marion Guthrie at vp-communications@jccwmg.org, and our new vice president of projects, Gary Griffith, at vp-projects@jccwmg.org

COMMUNICATIONS LEADERS

Newsletter Editor: 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.



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.



President's Message

VICKIE ROCKWELL '19

Driving to our general meeting on January 4, the announcer on the radio, said that the party was over. I was a bit taken aback. Here I am, excited and eager on my way to my first meeting and the start of my new job as your President. I certainly wasn't thinking about things being over but rather just beginning with a new, as yet unscheduled calendar, new possibilities, new approaches to existing projects, renewed energies after winter's rest, not over but beginning.

So, I say, let the party begin! Let's kick off 2024 with new energy and enthusiasm. Use February to position ourselves for the coming year. Re-commit to our favorite projects and volunteer for new experiences. Confirm that our credentials are up to date, that our hours for 2023 are entered into Better Impact, and that we've met the minimum 8 hours of continuing education and 20 hours of volunteer activity requirements. Remember, the Project Leads will be validating these credentials for all Project team members to work on projects.

As JCCWMG members in 2024, I challenge you to make new friends and strengthen acquaintances. Cherish and nurture existing colleagues. Most importantly, have fun. Feel good about what you are doing. Remember why you became a Master Gardener. It takes each of us to make our Association the best that it can be.

We build on accomplishments that were made before, and we leave a legacy to those who come after, so I want to thank Deb Bussert, our new Past President, for two outstanding years of leadership as President. You set a high standard that I can only hope to meet. We will miss Elizabeth Myers on the Board, but she is continuing to work on various projects, as is Joanne Sheffield, who was our representative to the Virginia Master Gardeners Association (VMGA).

We welcome MaryIn Riddle as the representative to VMGA to the Board, Dave Kleppinger as the new President-elect, and Gary Griffith as Vice President of Projects. Continuing on the Board are Marion Guthrie, VP of Communications; Debe Sineath, VP of Education; Emily Coyner, VP of Administration; Dot Finnegan, Secretary; and Linda Neilson, Treasurer. I am very delighted to be a member of this group.

As I walk by my garden beds, I see that the Leucojum are starting to bloom, the daffodils are pushing out of the dirt, my dwarf early blooming irises are just peeking out of the mulch, and my unwavering, never-give-up reblooming irises have produced new bloom stalks in January. I am inspired that these are good omens for the year to come. With all of you, members of JCCWMGA and the Board of 2024, let's make this the best year ever! Thank you for all you do.

Vickie



Our 2024 Leadership Team

ELIZABETH MCCOY '18

Our new Board of Directors took office in January, with a combined 73 years of Master Gardening experience to guide them in leading our organization this year. Most have been gardening since childhood and bring tremendous knowledge and practical experience to their work as Master Gardeners.

Please enjoy these brief interviews as you get to know these outstanding individuals and perhaps also learn a few new things about old friends and colleagues. Many hands make light work, and our leadership team will need every member's support and assistance to make 2024 an outstanding year of service to our greater community.

For information about our Board, [click here](#).

VICKIE ROCKWELL



President, A Master Gardener since 2019

I have loved gardening since childhood. My grandparents always had a space in their gardens for me to plant lettuce, carrots, and radishes.

I became a Master Gardener to be part of the community and share my love of gardening. I want to be up-to-date and knowledgeable regarding the latest information and trends for the garden. My favorite projects: I really have enjoyed all the projects that I have worked on: Waterwise, The Colonial Williamsburg gardens, WBG, ARC, and Jamestown. The camaraderie of working with our Master Gardeners makes the work fun and the results beautify the environment.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To continue to build on the successful programs; celebrate the accomplishments of long-standing programs; introduce sustainability to our programs and add tours of local gardens into our portfolio of activities. I hope to achieve a Land Steward certification in the future.

Beyond gardening: Special interests include working with my professional society, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, to foster STEM education and reading. My professional background is board and organizational governance, and I worked for the City of Houston Tax Incremental Reinvestment Zone 1.

DAVE KLEPPINGER



President-Elect, A Master Gardener since 2016 and Tree Steward since 2023.

I have loved gardening since I gardened and landscaped as a kid growing up in the Garden State.

I became a Master Gardener because I've enjoyed landscaping and landscape design my entire adult life.

My favorite projects: I particularly enjoy public service, so assisting and informing the public is most gratifying. I enjoyed the speaker bureau presentations, leading the team which created the ArbNet accredited Ford's Colony Arboretum, volunteering at Colonial Williamsburg, and particularly giving Arboretum Tours to the public. I also enjoy helping homeowners during Pruning Clinic, Landscape Love, and Turf Love home visits.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To continue my work as a Tree Steward and Turf Ranger. As President-Elect, I intend to become more knowledgeable about all MG projects with a focus on identifying resource gaps and enhancement opportunities.

Beyond gardening, I enjoy: Golf, genealogy research, world travel, and all Philly sports! Professionally, I once did a fair amount of environmental planning. I am most fortunate to enjoy living in retirement in this wonderful community and being able to volunteer my time helping others.



DOT FINNEGAN



Secretary, A Master Gardener since 2020



Also, a member of: The World Wildlife Foundation and Doctors without Borders

I have loved gardening since I began digging weeds at home when I was 7 years old.

I became a Master Gardener to gain more of an understanding of gardening, especially the plants in my garden as well as what other plants might also flourish there. I also wanted to gain knowledge that might assist neighbors through my volunteering with various projects.

My favorite project is the plant sale. I have enjoyed helping with organizing, sharing plants, and assisting with the sale. It brings our endeavors and joy to so many folks in our area, not to mention financially supporting our other projects. One of the things that I appreciate about our unit is that members may contribute in a variety of ways according to their own interests and abilities, without judgment.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To continue to engage in the pruning clinic and the plant sale, to document our meetings as well as participate in the stewardship of the organization, to continue to send cards to members who are sick or who have lost loved ones, and to communicate our endeavors to the public through local media.

Beyond gardening: I taught the history of higher education and have knowledge of the land-grant movement out of which came the Extension Service. I am interested in continuing my academic research. I enjoy The Cornell Ornithology Lab and its annual Feeder Watch, reading, and playing pool with friends.

LINDA NEILSON



Treasurer, A Master Gardener since 2018

Also, a member of: The Virginia Master Gardener Association and The Williamsburg Botanical Garden

I have loved gardening since enjoying my mother's beautiful gardens, and I am inspired by those memories.

I became a Master Gardener to gain knowledge and work with people who enjoy gardening.

My favorite project is the current -Water Wise Demonstration Garden.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To expand the plant database at the Waterwise Gardens and increase my knowledge of plants in the garden. I have IT experience to assist with plant database expansion. I also hope to become a Tree Steward in the future.

Beyond gardening, I enjoy reading, Osher classes, puzzles, and word games.



MARION GUTHRIE



Vice President for Communications,
A Master Gardener since 2019 and
Tree Steward since 2020.



Also, a member of: The United Plant Savers and The American Elm Society

I have loved gardening since childhood. My father raised roses, and my love of gardening was passed down from my parents.

I became a Master Gardener because I wanted to become a better, more knowledgeable gardener, and to connect and make new friends with other people in the area.

My favorite projects: I really enjoy creating the communications program for our extension and working with other VCE extension gardeners.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To improve the delivery of gardening information to the greater Williamsburg gardening public and to educate them on the best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship.

Beyond gardening, I have a master's in communications from Illinois State University and undergraduate classes in social psychology from University of Pennsylvania. I started my career and have professional work experience with Westinghouse Broadcasting KDKA Radio/TV. I have 40 years of experience providing strategic direction, directing teams, launching lead generation programs, balancing budgets, running satellite offices, writing and managing sales content, buying media, managing million-dollar budgets, and making decisions based on financial analysis. I also enjoy birdwatching; reading about plants, nature, and climate change; calligraphy and art.

GARY GRIFFITH



Vice President for Projects, A Master Gardener since 2014. A member of the JCCW MGA since 2022.

I have loved gardening since working in my father's nursery and growing vegetables when I was a kid.

I became a Master Gardener in Manhattan, Kansas, to enjoy gardening and share it with others.

My favorite project: I really enjoy the Clara Byrd Baker School Garden because of the enthusiasm of the children.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: To facilitate and enable the success of the various projects in the Association.

Beyond gardening, I enjoy small wood projects, household repairs, and playing the guitar. I have laboratory and soil testing experience.



DEBE SINEATH



Vice President for Internal Education,
A Master Gardener since 2022 and
a Tree Steward since 2023



Also, a member of: The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Virginia Native Plant Society, and the NoVA Audubon Society. I also follow Home Grown National Park.

I have loved gardening since working with my mom, who was a Master Gardener and shared her enthusiasm with me.

I became a Master Gardener to learn about gardening in Virginia after living in California for 27 years. I wanted to learn what plants grow here and how to make them thrive in this environment, to find a way to volunteer within the community in an area of interest, and to expand my knowledge base. I also want to honor my mom, who was also a Master Gardener.

My favorite projects: All projects I've assisted with have been enjoyable and interesting. The Colonial Williamsburg Arboretum and the Freedom Park Hot Water Settlement afforded me the opportunity to learn more about woody plants, native vs non-native plants, and invasive plants, which is where my interest primarily lies.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: I would like to assist in projects that I haven't participated in yet, including the Historic Triangle Learning Garden to grow food to donate to FISH and House of Mercy, and to help in their fragrance garden. I am interested in earning Water Steward and Land Steward certifications in the future.

Beyond gardening, I have experience in operations and project management from years of work in the private sector. I was also an active board member of the Embroiderers Guild of America for 24 years, holding the positions of President, VP for Programs and Education, Secretary, Newsletter and Community Outreach. I enjoy needlepoint embroidery, reading, hiking, and agility and rally activities with my German wirehaired pointer. I also enjoy travel within and outside the US.

EMILY COYNER

Vice President for Administration,
A Master Gardener since 2022



Also, a member of The Virginia Native Plant Society as well as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. I am a board member of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

I have loved gardening since I spent time in the garden with my mom as a child. I planted everything, including Barbies, leftover lunch, rocks, and some flowers when my mom allowed me.

I became a Master Gardener because becoming a Master Gardener was a bucket list item for me. My mom and I have been gardening since I was born. It was important for me to carry on our legacy and share the passion with my own children, neighbors, and our community.

My favorite projects: I love working in The Williamsburg Botanical Garden with the group of MGs that I work with. This garden is beautiful and small enough to thoroughly enjoy on one visit, but it keeps you wanting to come back for more. I also work in the Pollinator Garden at Veterans Park. This garden is not only beautiful, but it also serves a purpose in handling rainwater and runoff.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: I plan to attend Master Gardener College this year. The online platform allows for convenience that would have otherwise made it impossible for me to attend. I have learned much already about our volunteers and the many gardens we serve. My goal this year is to visit all the gardens we serve, at least once.

Beyond gardening, I am a yoga teacher and raise poultry and other animals on our small working farm. I grow food and flowers year-round. I market my products online and through my mobile boutique.

MARILYN RIDDLE



VMGA representative, A Master Gardener since 2001

I have loved gardening since watching my mother and paternal grandfather garden, and eating those delicious veggies that they grew!

I became a Master Gardener because I wanted to expand on the knowledge that I acquired watching and helping my mother work in our family vegetable garden of my youth.

My favorite projects: I enjoyed the initial project at The Williamsburg Landing, under the guidance of Dr. Diane Relf, the first MG coordinator for VA, while she was a professor there. Barbara Gustafson ably assisted her. We won a national award as a result.

The Orr Garden, when it was the Reid Garden, at Colonial Williamsburg, both as a worker and as the coordinator. I prepared and conducted a tour there for USDA officials who were conferencing at the Williamsburg Inn, with one day's notice.

Their questions, during the tour or through emails afterward, were lessons I used going forward with that project.

Serving as the VMGA rep has also been such an educational experience, as well as a social one. I have learned how other units work, how we should continue as we have in most arenas, or possibly introduce some modifications in a few.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include attending all the VMGA meetings this year. My office will be the site for February, and possibly others, because that one is on Zoom only.

Beyond gardening, I am a retired high school math teacher. I am the proud mother of two sons, both Virginia Tech graduates, and one daughter, a UVA graduate. As a member of P.E.O., I chair a committee that seeks doctoral candidates for our national scholarships. We have been successful twice in the last three years and await results again in this competition. I am also a state officer in NARFE (federal active and retired). We are the only advocate organization for this group. I am past state president in DKG, a women teachers' honorary, and continue in an advisory role.

DEB BUSSERT



Past President, A Master Gardener since 2016

I have loved gardening all my life.

I became a Master Gardener to learn and meet people.

My favorite projects are the Williamsburg Botanical Garden and the plant sale.

My goals for 2024 and beyond include: Taking it easy after two years as President.

Beyond gardening, I studied ornamental plants at the Chicago Botanical Garden. As a lawyer for thirty years, I had a lot of training and experience in speaking and writing. I enjoy genealogy and family history, travel, and history.



Master Gardener Member Meeting Programs

DEBE SINEATH '22

The Amazing Honeybee

Join us on February 1, 2024, at 9:00 am in the Williamsburg Regional Library or via Zoom when Nate Brauner will be returning in his beekeeping role to discuss honeybees. Honeybees have been in the news over the past few years, but how much do you know about them beyond that they are a source of honey? Learn about the fascinating world of honeybees, their role in our ecosystem, how they are at risk, and what you can do to help.

Nate gave us an excellent talk on tools last year. He is the Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 123, a Master Gardener, and heads up Internal Education for the York County/Poquoson MG Assoc. He is a Virginia Master Naturalist and an active member of the Colonial Beekeepers Association. He also spends time finding ways to introduce others to the wonders of nature and helping them to understand the natural world around them. In his spare time, he enjoys home brewing.

Working With Children

Hannah Bishop, 4-H Extension Agent from Dinwiddie County, will be presenting Working With Children. In order to remain certified, Master Gardeners are required to take this training session every 3 years, and our new 2024 interns need to complete the training in order to graduate.

This session is best seen in person so members and interns can sign in to confirm they have attended, and our VP of Administration, Emily Coyner, can update Better Impact appropriately. Please join us to meet and greet our new interns and get a refresher in this must-have training session.

Our regular business meeting follows his presentation. For more information, contact Debera Sineath, VP of Education, at vp-internal-ed@jccwmg.org.

February 1, 2024, at 9:00 am
Zoom Meeting ID is 889 8534 0423

Log into Zoom, click on Join a Meeting, Enter your Meeting ID, and click Join. This meeting ID will be used for all of the 2024 programs.

Open to the public, so bring your bee-loving friends!



March 7, 2024, at 9:00 am in the Williamsburg Regional Library

Zoom Meeting ID is 889 8534 0423, but Zoom is not recommended for this learning session. For more information, contact Debera Sineath, VP of Education, at vp-internal-ed@jccwmg.org.

Ecology Corner

Slowing Erosion

JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS '15



Our January meeting presentation on soils by Dave Kleppinger got us all thinking about erosion just before the rains and winds came through the region in January. In addition to being unsightly, erosion can undermine the stability of a slope or stream bank and can contribute sediment to our streams and other waterways.

The erosion that occurs in our yards is often in shady areas where it is more challenging to get grass and other plants to grow. The adage “right plant, right place” is critical when we attempt to reduce erosion on our property. Choosing a shade-tolerant plant with an extensive root system is the way to go to hold soils on shady slopes.

Here is [a link to a long list of shrubs and other plants](#) that you might consider, and keep in mind some low-growing perennials like ferns, such as Christmas or New York, are a good, low-maintenance choice. Our beautiful native violets will help prevent erosion, as will Woodland and Creeping Phlox, which have root systems that can help stabilize a slope.

Other perennials that provide a nice ground cover are Foam Flower, Golden Ragwort, and Blue Wood Sedge. If these plants are happy where you plant them, they will spread and create a cover that will slow down stormwater and reduce erosion. Take a walk around your yard now to get an idea of where you might need to add some soil-holding ground covers.



Plugs for the Plant Sale

MARY SIPE '14



The Plant Sale committee would like to try something new this year to supplement plant donations. We are hoping to find relatively low-cost starter plants or plugs that the Association would purchase, and we would ask our members to pot up into larger pots and grow them out for at least one month before the sale date of May 11th and possibly for two months. We are just beginning to research nurseries that would have the kinds of plants that we are looking for at a price at which we can still make a profit.

I did this last year with starters from a local nursery, and I know of a couple of other master gardeners who also did this. Although many of us know that these small plants don't look like much, if you can move them up to larger pots and grow them out for a month or two, you can have quite a respectable plant for sale. The primary reason that I did this versus digging plants from my garden is that I fairly recently moved to my house, and the previous owner really wasn't a big gardener, so I don't have a lot of mature plants for division. Some of you may be in the same situation, and this would give you a way to make plant donations.

The Association would purchase the plants, and we would ask that you obtain pots (100s at Matthey's Garden) and clean the pots. You would also need to obtain the potting soil to fill in these larger pots. We would ask those who sign up to take between 15 and 30 plugs/plants to grow out. What we need to know now is how many of you would be willing to do this and how many plants you would be willing to "foster" for the sale. This will give us an idea of how many plants to purchase, how much profit could be made, and if it is even worth trying.

We will have a signup sheet at the February 1st MG Meeting. You may email or call me if you can not attend at mcsipe2@gmail.com or call (704) 763-3533. Because we want to purchase these by early March so that you can grow them into saleable plants, we really need to know how many of you will be participating by mid-February. So please let me know or sign up at the February meeting.

Hardscape, Upgrades, and Renovations at the WBG

HARRY FAHL '18

As Master Gardeners, we all know the importance of planting, tending, harvesting, pruning, and putting our gardens to bed as the seasons dictate. But what about the hardscape, the physical renovations and upgrades our beautiful gardens require of us? Not just to contain our planting beds but to keep our visitors safe and the environment attractive.

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden and Freedom Park Arboretum is a great example. The last several years have seen many improvements to the physical environment of the garden, including a new plant stand that has withstood the ravages of the plant sales, a gravel drive connecting the two vehicle gates, a three-bin enclosure for mulch, waste trailer parking, and compost bins. Let's not forget the constant replacement of wooded pathway edging logs and a new, larger fenced nursery, vehicle gate repairs, post and board fencing around the shed area, and ongoing paint and repair projects. All this and so much more when December brought a long-needed upgrade.

The many pathways that thread through the beautiful, planted areas of Botanical have been resurfaced! The material was spread several inches thick, machine-tamped, and then watered during the first rains. This gives a durable, smooth, safe, slightly granular pleasing to the eye surface that is permeable.

It's solid enough that visitors who may require walking aids to transit these footpaths should be able to do so safely. We have added three crosswalks connecting the planted areas of the garden across the gravel drive to the wooded regions. Lastly, we have graveled the areas around the shed and material storage areas.

I cannot begin to thank everyone who worked so diligently to enhance the physical aspects of this wonderful slice of James City County. The advice and assistance we've received from garden volunteers, master naturalists, master gardeners, tree stewards, the Freedom Park staff, and the WBG board of directors have all been invaluable.

2024 has new projects on the schedule and a great surprise that will be revealed in time. I hope to see you either volunteering or visiting the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. Don't forget to tell your friends about this gem. For information or questions, contact Harry Fahl (hhfahl@gmail.com).



Congratulations, Class of 2023!

DOT FINNEGAN '20

The James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association celebrated the graduation of the 2023 class of Master Gardeners on December 7 in the Williamsburg Regional Library's Auditorium. In attendance was Dr. Mike Gutter, Associate Dean and Director for Virginia Cooperation Extension (VCE), who delivered the graduation address. Also presenting certificates was our acting VCE ANR agent, Janet Spencer, Southeast District Director Tidewater AREC. Graduates were presented with their certificates, and then enjoyed a reception with graduates, members, and friends at the Stryker Center.

While working on their Master Gardener Certification, these graduates volunteered over 1,600 hours in various horticultural projects in the Hampton Roads, including three elementary schools and six demonstration gardens.

Photo credit Elvin Clapp



Pictured here: back row L-R are Anne Nordin, 'T' Davis, Anne Hunt, Mike Carron, Amanda Kiritz, Donna Benson, and Sis Obidowski. Front row L-R are Kim Turbeville, Jody Stephens, Cheryl Hannah, Paul Fameli, Bruce Howard, Shelagh Young, Diane Perry, and Elisabeth Doyle. Additional graduates include Nancy Lia, Jose Ribeiro, Crystal Skeeter-Davis, and Angela Wheeler.

Join Frank Caruso's Pruning Team

Perhaps it was their dislike of Crepe Myrtle Murders or maybe their love of good coffee and homemade pizzelle cookies that lured these Master Gardeners to Freedom Park's Interpretive Center on January 10 to sign up for the 2024 Pruning Team project headed by Frank Caruso. No matter, over 30 Master Gardeners have volunteered, and there's room for more! Want to join? Contact Frank (feedpanthers@yahoo.com). Those online pruning applications (jccwmg.org) are flowing in.



Business Notes

JOIN THE CW GARDENS AND TOURS

It will be spring before you know it, and the Colonial Williamsburg Demonstration Gardens and Public Tours project will be back in the Catherine Orr Garden, the Shields Tavern Garden, and the Governor's Palace Herb Garden. We have vacancies on the roster to add volunteers, and we're always interested in having new people join us. If you would like to be included for the next gardening year, contact Barbara Floyd (bmfloyd57@gmail.com) or Pat Abraham (pabraham219@gmail.com) for information on the procedures.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

2024 membership dues were due at year-end 2023. If you haven't paid them yet, here's what to do. Your dues are \$25.00, and payment options are by check and by credit card online. If paying by check, make it out to JCCWMGA, and note "2024 Dues" on the check. Then mail it to JCCWMGA, PO Box 1951, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1951. Pay easily online at jccwmg.org/word-press/mg-dues-payment-2024/.

Questions? Contact Linda Neilson, our Treasurer, at lezelln@cox.net.

GET YOUR NEW MASTER GARDENER HANDBOOK!

The 2023 edition of this handbook can be downloaded by visiting hdl.handle.net/10919/112743. The digital textbook version can be found here: pressbooks.lib.vt.edu/emgtraining/. The print version is available to purchase from Amazon here: amazon.com/dp/1957213426.

LANDSCAPE LOVE RETURNS SOON!

Preparations for a new season of Landscape Love are underway. We will begin accepting homeowner applications on March 18 and start visits in April. Last year's volunteers will hear from us soon about their intent to return for another season and the upcoming training session. If you are interested in being a new volunteer, contact Barbara Floyd at bmfloyd57@gmail.com. We'd really like to have you join us!

PLANT SALE HELP WANTED

Plant Acquisition team leader needed for acquiring and buying plants for sale through purchase. Purchase annuals from wholesale nurseries and arrange delivery to WBG on set-up day. Also purchase plugs for MG's to grow and coordinate pick up. For more information, contact Mary Sipe (mcsipe2@gmail.com).

SUPPORT YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS

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

LAWN RANGERS NEEDED

Turf Love is looking for more Lawn Rangers! If you're interested in turfgrass and have a passion for helping homeowners to grow healthy lawns, please reach out to Dave Kleppinger (presidentelect@jccwmg.org) or Robyn Woolsey (robyn.woolsey@colonialswcd.org) for more information.

WHAT'S HAPPENING STATE-WIDE?

Check out what's happening in the biweekly update, a state-wide listing of upcoming Extension Master Gardener (EMG) events, training opportunities, and announcements.

[Click here for a sample issue.](#)

Williamsburg Botanical Garden Pruning Project

HARRY FAHL '18

Harry Fahl, Master Gardener, and Tree Steward invites you to join the upcoming Bi-Annual Williamsburg Botanical Garden Pruning and Thinning Project. It starts on Tuesday, February 6th, and continues each consecutive Tuesday from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm.

How many weeks in total? That depends on how many volunteers will give their time, how the weather gods treat us, and overall, how much gets done each day. This project counts toward your Master Gardener hours. This isn't just a pruning project but also training and instruction on different pruning practices and techniques, proper use of tools, what to look for, and why to prune.

Bring your pruning tools, and if you are shy of tools, don't worry, as there will be a full complement of equipment available. Harry will also be able

to inspect your tools and give you pointers on maintaining and sharpening as time permits.

Please send Harry an email at hhfahl@gmail.com, including your telephone number, if you plan on attending any or all of the sessions. This will enable him to plan the day and to reach out to you if circumstances dictate a change or cancellation of that day's efforts. See you on February 6. For questions, contact Harry at hhfahl@gmail.com



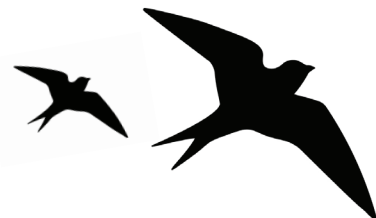
The Great Backyard Bird Count!

Join the world in connecting to birds, February 16-19, 2024

The next Great Backyard Bird Count is February 16-19, 2024, and takes place in thousands of communities, including ours. Join bird watchers of all ages from across the globe and count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are.

You can count birds in your own backyard and record your findings online (birdcount.org) or join a local group like the one at [Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden](#), where they'll be counting birds on Saturday, Feb 17th, from 9 a.m. to noon. Bundle up and bring the family!

Community Science events like the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) are important sources of information as we look at global warming and its effect on nature. [Watch the video](#) to learn more about the count. Check out [eBird](#) to explore birds and hotspots near you, all based on the latest sightings from around the world.



In the Garden



[The Bassett Trace Nature Trail](#)

Rick Brown '17

Colonial Williamsburg welcomes visitors to the natural beauty of one of the wilder, quieter portions of the historic area, the Bassett Trace Nature Trail. The Rockefellers enjoyed and preserved the beauty of the native flora and fauna of the Bassett Hall property. One of the original paths they created, the [Bassett Trace Nature Trail](#), has been redeveloped and is now accessible to the public.



[The Compton Oak](#)

Rick Brown '17

Rick Brown, Master Gardener, Tree Steward, and Colonial Williamsburg Arboretum volunteer, tells the story of the Compton Oak, one of the largest and most noticeable trees in Williamsburg's Arboretum.



[How Freed Slaves Survived in Freedom Park](#)

Judy Kinshaw-Ellis '15

In 1803, William Ludwell Lee died and, in his will, freed his slaves. Some left the area while others stayed and made the Hot Water Tract their home.

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No Roses on Valentine's Day

DAVE BANKS '03

Valentine's Day is Wednesday, February 14, and this year, you'll find red roses are harder to get and more expensive. More bad news, you may not even be able to find them as we get closer to Valentine's Day. What's the problem? Insects? Borer? Fungi? No--economics. The cost of raising and shipping flowers has gone up steeply this past year for a variety of reasons.

For starters, the price of fertilizer and pesticides is up, so it's not just red roses that cost more; all flowers are more expensive. It's just much more visible with red roses due to the peak in demand near Valentine's Day, when growers may sell 75% of their annual crop for this holiday alone!

What does this mean for you--the one who wants to give red roses to your Valentine? You should probably consider another color of roses or another type of red flower. Also, shop early and expect to pay more. There are many internet articles on this subject. Here's one that suggests [some no-flower alternatives](#),





Comprised of over 200 master gardeners, the James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association serves the gardening public in Williamsburg, New Kent, Charles City, Upper York, and James City Counties.

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