

THE COLONIAL MASTER GARDENER



**Celebrating 42 Years of Helping our
Neighbors Grow!**

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

OCTOBER 2025

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Our Board of Directors usually meets on the third Friday of each month at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. If you'd like to join, here's the link: <https://zoom.us/j/98768495293?pwd=f6FfhFVSVVRFBax5QVKLnT3W7oCeAb.1>
Meeting ID: 987 6849 5293
Passcode: 23185

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The submission deadline for the upcoming November 2025 newsletter is October 22.

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

The newsletter layout is graciously donated by [Odd Moxie](#).



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 on the best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship in our communities, which include Williamsburg, James City, Charles City, Upper York, and New Kent counties.



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

Reflections on Fall and the Cycle of Life

DAVE KLEPPINGER '16

THE END OF THE GROWING SEASON

Fall has arrived, signaling a shift in the natural world. The plants that have enriched our lives throughout the year begin to lose the very qualities that made them such a welcoming presence. Gone are the days of enjoying fresh, homegrown corn and tomatoes. The flowers we planted, both for our own enjoyment and for their role in the ecological food chain, start to wither. Trees provide one final display of vibrant color before their leaves turn brown and tumble to the ground.

LASTING MEMORIES

We hold onto memories of how these plants have touched our lives—through delicious vegetables, beautiful blooms, and lush landscapes. These experiences continue to shape our identity as Master Gardeners, recognized throughout the neighborhood for our dedication and care.

NATURE'S PREPARATION FOR SURVIVAL

Yet, even as the visible parts of these plants fade, more happens beneath the surface. Many plants actively prepare for their own survival and the future of their species. Trees and shrubs gradually slow their growth, pulling nutrients from their leaves and storing energy in their roots. As leaves change color and fall, these plants conserve water and strengthen their resilience against the cold. Perennials retreat underground, letting their foliage die back while their roots, crowns, or bulbs rest quietly, awaiting the return of warmer days. Annuals, which complete their life cycle in a single season, leave behind seeds that stay dormant in the soil, ready to germinate when spring conditions return.

THE PROMISE OF RENEWAL

With the arrival of spring, rising temperatures and increasing daylight awaken these plants. Trees and shrubs bud, sending out new leaves and flowers. Perennials break dormancy, pushing up fresh shoots. Annual seeds sprout, ensuring the cycle of life begins anew.

LIFE'S SEASONS

Many of us find ourselves in the autumn of our lives, with winter drawing near. For some, there may be no spring ahead. It is a reminder to live life to the fullest, cherish the good times, and treasure the memories we hold dear.

An Evening with Doug Tallamy: Inspiring Change Through Native Gardening

Reflections from a Master Gardener

MICHELE JETT GARRARD '21

A NIGHT OF INSPIRATION AT JAMESTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

On the evening of September 12, 2025, over 700 community members gathered at Jamestown High School for a remarkable event featuring Dr. Doug Tallamy. As a Master Gardener, I had the honor of hosting a resource table alongside my fellow volunteers. While I have attended many lectures in the past, this event felt truly special. Dr. Tallamy's presentation was more than just a talk—it was a heartfelt call to action infused with hope, scientific insight, and a tangible connection to the soil beneath our feet.

THE MESSAGE: EMPOWERMENT BEGINS AT HOME

Dr. Tallamy delivered a clear and empowering message: the restoration of biodiversity does not require us to wait for large-scale policy changes. Instead, we can begin in our own backyards. He introduced the concept of the Homegrown National Park, a grassroots movement dedicated to rewilding our landscapes using native plants. This idea resonated deeply with everyone in the room. The atmosphere shifted as Dr. Tallamy explained how even small patches of native habitat can serve as critical lifelines for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

ENGAGED COMMUNITY AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Our resource table was positioned among displays featuring various pollinators, backyard bird supplies, and native plant guides. From this vantage point, I observed attendees leaning in to ask questions and enthusiastically sharing stories about their own gardening experiences. Many participants were surprised to learn that simple actions—such as replacing ornamental invasive plants with native species like goldenrod or oak saplings—could have a significant ecological impact. We distributed numerous brochures detailing how Master Gardener programs support homeowners in creating their own “Homegrown National Forests” and provided information on how to become a Master Gardener.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CONSERVATIONISTS

What stood out to me the most was the strong sense of community that permeated the event. Gardeners, homeowners, teachers, and students of all ages mingled, united by a shared purpose. Dr. Tallamy emphasized that conservation is not limited to national parks or distant wilderness areas—it can begin in our own front yards, school gardens, and neighborhood medians.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE

As the event concluded, many attendees lingered at the resource tables, eager to learn more and take the next steps. I left the evening with a full heart and an empty box of materials—clear evidence that seeds of change had been planted. Ultimately, I believe this is nature's greatest hope: all of us working together, one native plant at a time.



With Gratitude from the Garden Club

Thank you for your enthusiastic participation in the Doug Tallamy lecture, which drew an impressive audience of 700 community members! Your vibrant energy and creative display truly elevated the event, captivating the attention of attendees and sparking meaningful conversations. The community deeply appreciated the opportunity to connect with like-minded groups united by a shared mission to nurture our natural world. We are especially grateful for your partnership in helping bring nature back home. Your dedication made this event a resounding success, and we look forward to future collaborations.



Thank You to Our Volunteers

WAYNE KOENIG '23

Shout out to Michele, Janet, Linda, Elizabeth, Wanda, and Connie for setting up and managing our EMG display table at the recent Doug Tallamy event on September 11. Our new Roadshow Kit looked fantastic, attracting many visitors and questions. A special thanks to Betsy and all the members of the Williamsburg Garden Club for bringing Doug to our city. It was an outstanding and well-organized event.





Water Wise: a Remarkable Team

The Water-Wise Demonstration Project is located in front of the Human Services Center at 5249 Olde Towne Road. Over 15,000 people visit this garden each year. They are mostly families, often bilingual, seeking social and affordable health services. Our water-wise garden offers a peaceful space for them, featuring a variety of drought-tolerant perennial plants in a low-maintenance, water-efficient setting. You can find more information about the [Water Wise garden here](#) and consider volunteering. Project leaders are needed to replace Elvin and Kay Clapp, who are retiring. Contact Kay or Elvin Clapp at kaykclapp75@hotmail.com. Thank you to everyone who has supported the garden this year. You are truly a remarkable team.



Internal Education

You are invited to join James City County Williamsburg Master Gardeners at the Williamsburg Regional Library on Thursday, October 2, 2025 to learn from Jay Templin, Master Gardener (2019), project lead for the JCCWMA Speaker's Bureau and history educator.

Jay Templin, an experienced educator who has taught in museums since 1991, will share some of the historic uses of various medicinal plants and herbs. Many of these plants are still cultivated today, if not for their traditional purposes.

This information is presented for historic and educational purposes, and is not intended as medical advice."

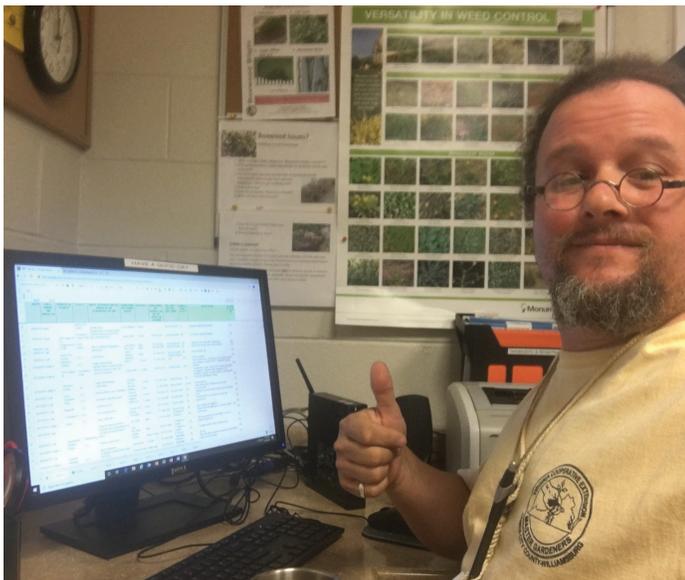
You can view additional presentations by clicking Educational Videos on jccwmg.org.

17th Century Medicinal Plants

Jay Templin
James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association
Thursday, October 2, 2025
9:00am - 10:00am



Williamsburg Regional Library
515 Scotland Street
Williamsburg, VA 23185



Speaker's Bureau Seeks Co-chair

Do you enjoy writing, researching, and collaborating with others? Well, Jay Templin is looking for a Project Co-Leader to assist with the Speaker's Bureau. This is an enjoyable opportunity that allows you to work with community requests for Master Gardener speakers and connect them with the individuals who made the requests. If you're interested, you can also create your own program or learn an existing one. Contact Jay today to learn more at jay.templin@jyf.virginia.gov.

Master Gardener Association Dues

2026 MGA Annual Dues

LINDA NEILSON, Treasurer, JCCW

Thank you for being a valued part of the James City County Williamsburg Master Gardener Association (JCCW MGA). Your membership and contributions are truly the lifeblood of our organization. With your support, we continue to deliver meaningful educational outreach and gardening programs throughout our community.

As a nonprofit, your annual dues and donations are essential to sustaining our mission. We sincerely appreciate your involvement and commitment.

Membership Renewal Reminder - 2026 annual membership dues of \$25.00 are due by December 31, 2025.

WAYS TO PAY:

At General Membership Meetings

(October, November, December)

Cash, check, or credit card (via Square).

Online through jccwmg.org

Go to Members Only > Membership Dues to submit the form and pay by check, credit card, or PayPal. *(Please note: PayPal credit card payments include a small transaction fee.)*

Direct link:

[Membership Dues Payment Page](#)

By Mail:

Complete the membership dues payment form and send a check to: JCCW MGA, PO Box 1951, Williamsburg, VA 23187-1951

We are grateful for your timely renewal and your continued support of the Association's work in our community. Together, we grow!

Third Annual Williamsburg Landing Arboretum Program and Tour Announced

JANET ROCHESTER '24

The Williamsburg Landing Arboretum Committee cordially invites you to attend its third annual program and tour, scheduled for Thursday, October 16, in the Charter Room of Assisted Living. This exclusive event provides an opportunity to visit select trees within the accredited Williamsburg Landing Arboretum.

The morning session will start at 10:00 a.m., with a repeat session at 2:00 p.m. The program features an "Update on the Arboretum" by Susanne Clark, followed by "The Hidden Courtyards of Assisted Living and The Health and Rehabilitation Center of Williamsburg Landing," presented by Justin Drewery, Landscape Manager.

After the presentations, attendees will be divided into four groups for guided tours of two different courtyards. During these tours, Arboretum team members will highlight and discuss the various plant species in each area.

Please note that space is limited. Kindly RSVP to the Williamsburg Landing Activities Office at (757) 564-1118. Upon arrival, you will be directed by the guardhouse to the event parking lot at the intersection of Williamsburg Landing Drive and Windward Way. Shuttle bus service will be available from the parking lot to the Charter Room at 9:30 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m.

Urban Forest Roundtable

Save the date! Saturday, October 18, 2025, is the SEVA Urban Forest Roundtable at the VT Hampton Roads AREC, at 1444 Diamond Springs Road, Virginia Beach, VA. This event will start at 8:00 a.m. and end around 11:00 a.m. The event is FREE to attend, but registration is required. For more information, go to <https://www.treesvirginia.org/> or contact Carol King (ck409313@gmail.com).



In The Governor's Herb Garden

BILL DICHTEL '18 and **SCOTT WOLZ '19**

We had an excellent session at the Palace Herb Garden this morning with eight of us working hard to get the job done. We were delighted to see that our oak tree, while dropping plenty of leaves and acorns, is not having a masting year. We did collect white oak acorns and hope to forward them for the Virginia State Forestry collection efforts.

Leaves were removed, and acorn caps were collected for the Nursery Holiday Decoration work. We planted a couple of additional small dill plants from Scott's garden and Calendula to fill a couple of previously bare spots, such as the flat-leaf parsley stripped by yellow swallowtail butterfly caterpillars.

We weeded, controlled invasive grass, coddled and trimmed herbs, trimmed strawberry plants, bent sage limbs to ground to get them to root, and other tricks we pulled from up our sleeves! We even got the weeds out of our dandelion patch! After that, the garden got watered. To top it all off, the group still had the strength to get their picture taken! Pretty impressive! Many thanks to all for a job well done.

Make a Healing Garden

ELIZABETH MCCOY, Writer & Nature Photographer

Sometimes, we all need a place to escape the noise of our daily lives and find some peace. We want a place to relax, to heal, to reconnect with the natural world, and to dream of a better future for ourselves and our loved ones. Our outdoor spaces can provide us with peace, healing, sanctuary, sustenance, and inspiration when we design them with these intentions in mind. [Read more by clicking this link.](#)



Tracking and Harvesting in Your Garden

JANET ROCHESTER '24

You typically harvest vegetables from your garden throughout the spring and summer into fall. From the first radish to the last carrot, you can eat something fresh for six months or more. Keeping track of planting dates, pests or other problems, and harvesting dates provides you with information to use when planning next year's garden. You will get a sense of what vegetables do well, what pests are a problem, and whether a vegetable is worth growing another time.

HARVESTING

One of the advantages of a home vegetable garden is that you can harvest vegetables at their peak and use them right away. They don't need to be packaged and shipped, unpacked and displayed in a store, then sorted and stored at home until you're ready to use them. You can wait until they are ripe and just the right size. For some vegetables, it's better to harvest them when they are smaller or younger, as they can lose flavor as they grow larger. Regular light harvesting encourages new growth and production. Store your harvest properly until you're ready to use it. Preserve or give away vegetables you can't use within a few days of harvesting.

TRACKING

If you started with a garden plan that shows the location of each plant, keep it updated throughout

the season as you add new plants. It's best not to plant the same crops in the same spot every year, so knowing where they were is important. Practicing crop rotation helps prevent two common problems. First, plants absorb different amounts of certain micronutrients, so planting the same crops in the same place can lead to nutrient deficiencies. Second, some diseases and pests survive over winter in the soil, which means they can reinfest the same plants if you plant there again the following season.

Using a rain gauge to track rainfall helps you see exactly how much water your plants receive. If you record these measurements throughout the year, you can add them up for each month to get a total. Rainfall next year may be quite different, but it's interesting to notice patterns, similarities, and differences.

KEEP A NOTEBOOK

It doesn't need to be as formal as a garden journal, but keeping a notebook to record important events in your garden will help with planning. Unusual frost dates, rainfall, or temperatures might explain why a crop thrived or failed. A list of pests and diseases you observe will show what to prepare for next year.



Gardeners' Diary

PAT ABRAHAM '10



Beautiful weather, lovely plants, and a hardworking crew made for a successful day at Shields! Our schedule is a bit out of sync due to an event on the patio last weekend and another planned for today. We attempted to incorporate new fall plants while retaining some fading summer plants to enhance the garden's appearance.



The crew removed peppers, basil, and sweet potatoes and created seven new hill rows. That's a lot of hoeing. They planted broccoli, Swiss chard, and kale. The shadiest bed presents a challenge with roots, but Charlene and Tom managed to tame many of them. Janet, Sandra, Lorraine, and Pat L. cleared another bed and planted five rows.

The new plants installed last week look great, thanks to the recent rain. We finished the weeding and general cleanup. Many thanks to the crew for a very busy day—and to the nursery for the excellent plants!



Sept. 9, 2025— *Fall Planting and Harvesting*

Master Gardeners and Arc of Abilities friends held our first fall meeting at Williamsburg Botanical Garden. We put in lots of fall and winter veggies from both plants and seeds.

During the July and August break, the AoA group had harvested Patty Pan Squash, Tomatoes, Peppers, Okra and Basil at WBG, which they cooked at their center. They made pesto twice, one of their favorites!



We mapped out the beds, dug holes, planted Cabbage, Collards, Swiss Chard and Broccoli in the bed shown above, then watered. We also planted seeds for Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Carrots and Beets in the trellis bed.

Karen and Steve Brooks arrived in time to help harvest the large Pumpkin we had grown, then Dev carried it to the AoA van, to be enjoyed at their place. Some Okra, a Pepper and Cherry Tomatoes were also gathered.

Snack

The AoA group brought a tasty snack called “Ants on a Log” that everyone enjoyed!

Sage and other Plants

Barbara Floyd did a great job of leading today’s session. She provided the plants and seeds, then brought different types of Sage from her garden for everyone to smell!

She also brought other beautiful flowers that she had grown, including a very fragrant lily.

At right, she shows and explains the variety of sage plants, while Thomas sniffs one being passed around.



Interpretive Signs at the Brickyard

JUDY KINSHAW-ELLIS '15

Developing a new project is challenging, but it's exciting to see the progress as each phase is completed. Recently, JCC park staff installed the interpretive signs. One small sign explains which native plants to choose instead of some common nursery plants we often see: Plant This, Not That. Although we already have some of the plants suggested on the sign, we will be adding more so visitors can see the native species mentioned.

The Riparian Buffer sign highlights some animals you might encounter along the river and explains the function of a dry riverbed swale. This sign is placed near the largest of the three swales in the park.

The third sign describes the Meadow Habitat. While the meadow plants and seeds haven't thrived as we hoped, the meadow critters probably don't mind the abundant dog fennel and sweet gum trees. This sign features both plants and animals that may inhabit the meadow. Although our focus has been on planting native species throughout the garden, we also seeded the edge of the meadow with zinnias and cosmos to provide nectar for pollinators and seed for birds.

Each of the signs features a QR code linking to the Brickyard Landing Park web page. We will be able to add links for our plant lists, swale construction, and any additional information we want to share. If you want to visit the park but don't have time to pull weeds or haul mulch, consider visiting any time other than Monday and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. when you'll be enlisted to work.





Swale Building At the Brickyard

Master Naturalist Linda Hughes and Community Forester Daniel Brooks placed the medium-sized rocks over the landscape fabric and small stones, while these five quickly worked on a short swale at the base of the meadow. Pictured holding some of the new tools purchased with grant funding for the park, from left: Drew Ellis (JCC Parks volunteer), Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, Steve Day, Mike Beckman, and Anne Annala.



In Memoriam: September Remembrances

Honoring Our Master Gardener Family

September has been a month of profound loss for our Master Gardener family as we have experienced the passing of two spouses of key members. Their absence is deeply felt, and our thoughts are with all who are grieving.

Remembering Raymond Thomas Cingale

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to Angela Cingale, whose husband, Raymond Thomas Cingale, passed away on September 6, 2025. For those wishing to learn more or offer condolences, an [informational link to his obituary and service details has been included here.](#)

In Memory of Fran Kleppinger

We also mourn the loss of Fran Kleppinger, the wife of our president, Dave Kleppinger. Fran's life and legacy will be celebrated on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 11:00 AM. The service will be held at James River Baptist Church, located at 4931 Centerville Road, Williamsburg, Virginia. [Please refer to the informational link provided for her obituary and service details.](#)

Coming Together as a Community

These losses remind us how special our group of gardeners truly is. I, along with many others, feel a renewed appreciation for the camaraderie and support we share within our community. As we support Dave and Angela in honoring the passing of their spouses, I know that many of us will extend our support to them at this challenging time.

Let us continue to garden and work side by side, grateful for the connections we have made and the good we do together in sharing our love of gardening with one another and the community.



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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