



# GRAPEVINE



New River Valley Master Gardener Association Newsletter

January/February 2014

## Snowdrops Anyone? ... and, I'm talking bulbs, not precipitation

- Lynn Brammer

I have high hopes that by the time you read this we will be seeing those first bulbs peek through the ground. As we head into the spring season it's time for us to peek out as well and make goals for how we would like to impact our community with our service commitment as Master Gardeners. We are a group made up of an amazing variety of talented members. Each of you brings a unique quality and talent.

Our Association will offer a wonderful variety of opportunities to learn, educate, and socialize throughout the year. We plan to visit some project sites this year as well as grant sites that will show us how our grant monies are at work. You may find as you visit these locations a project in which you are inspired to become involved. We have also coordinated more "fun events" that include a garden photography session with the much respected Robert McDuffie of the Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture.

So it's time to look over your calendar and decide what you can offer this year to make our Association stronger and increase the impact we have on all those we serve here in the NRV. Take a close look at the events/meetings and committee opportunities in this issue of the *Grapevine* and consider how you can help. Please email any board member for further information and details.

Thanks to each and every one of you for dedicating your time and talents to collectively achieve the goals of spreading the word about gardening!

## 2013 Milestone Awards

Several NRV Master Gardeners earned Milestone Awards based on their total number of volunteer hours as of December 31, 2013.

### 1000 Hours

Delbert Jones

### 500 Hours

Pat Ceperley  
Phyllis Eschenmann  
Mae Hoover  
Stan Stanley  
Javad Torabinejad  
Helen Young

### 250 Hours

Susan Asselin  
Dennis Naglic  
Sharon Naglic  
Stacy Nichols  
Wendy Silverman  
Carol Volker

*Thank you for your service!*



Cardinal in dogwood tree. Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## In This Issue

- New Project Highlight
- 2014 Gardening Grants
- Practical Plant Terms
- Blacks Bean Salsa Recipe
- VCE MG Strategic Planning
- Pollinator Resources
- New Email Policy & VMS Update



Lynn Brammer talks about *Share the Spare* at January 16 Meet & Greet.  
Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## 2014 NRV MG Training Class

Twenty New River Valley residents are enrolled in the 2014 NRV Master Gardener Training Program. The class meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 6:00-9:00 pm at the Hahn Garden Pavilion at Virginia Tech.

Training topics for March and April include Veggies, Plant Pathology, Plant Stress, Fruit, Risk Management, Pesticide Use & Safety, Soil & Water Conservation, Annuals, Pruning, Flower Arranging, Perennials, Soils, and Lawns. Contact Allen Bame if you'd like to help moderate a training class.

## Project Presentations at Meet & Greet

-Beth Kirby

A NRV Master Gardener Association membership meeting was held January 16 at the Hahn Garden Pavilion at Virginia Tech. This meeting served as a meet and greet for new trainees to become familiar with the Association and the membership. Current Master Gardeners provided heavy hors d'oeuvres and a great feast was enjoyed by all.

Co-President Lynn Brammer welcomed the new trainees to the Master Gardener program and encouraged all to become members of the NRVMG. Four current members presented brief synopses of their projects. Mickey Balconi talked about the Pulaski Garden Tour to benefit Pulaski County Public Library. Stan Stanley described Rain Barrel Workshops at which rain barrels are made from pickle barrels he obtains from the Mt. Olive Pickle Company in North Carolina. The rain barrels are sold as one of the fundraisers for NRVMG Community Gardening Grants program. Lynn Brammer talked about Share the Spare which helps provide fresh produce to area food banks. Debbie Leet shared her experiences giving gardening seminars in Giles County.

Each Master Gardener introduced him/herself and gave a very brief description of the projects with which each is involved.

## Save the Date!

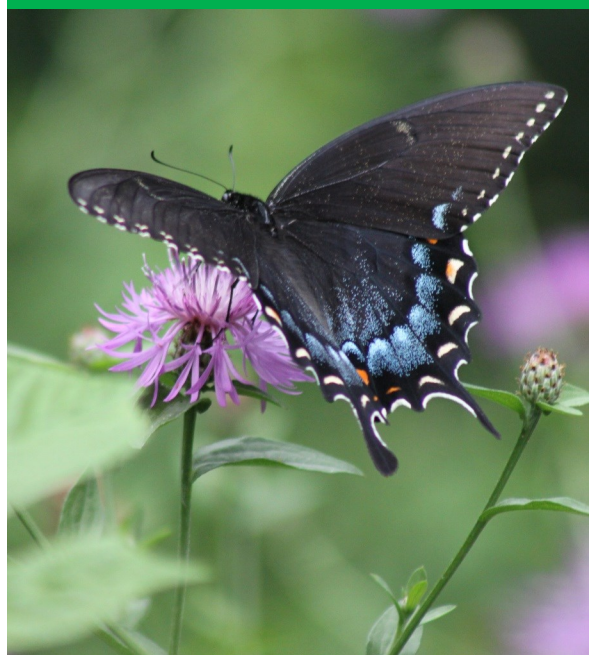
### 27th Annual VCE Master Gardener College

Master Gardener College will be held June 25-29, 2014 at Virginia Tech and feature Land Care Steward Training.

Session topics will include Community Gardening, Vertical Gardening, Vines and Climbers, Advocating for VCE, and Insect Safety in the Garden.

For more information watch for updates on the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program Facebook page or go to [www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener](http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener).

Master Gardener College is a great opportunity to earn service and education hours and meet Master Gardeners from across the Commonwealth. Volunteers will be needed to drive shuttle vans, lead tours and moderate workshops.



Swallowtail butterfly on knapweed.  
Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## NRVMGA Events

### “How to” for Plant Clinics & Plant Sales

Thursday, March 20 at 6:30 pm

Multipurpose Room, Montgomery County Government Center,  
Christiansburg

Following a brief NRVMGA business meeting, Wendy Silverman will take us through the steps for planning, setting up, and running a plant clinic. Bring a diseased plant or plant question and we will have some fun playing “Stump the Master Gardener”! We will explore the many resources available to us and learn how to make a referral. You are not expected to have all the answers on the spot. Start with a positive attitude and you will find clinics are a great way to learn and share! Kelli Scott will also relate her experience in the nursery industry, preparing us for our upcoming plant sale. Guidelines on plant types, condition, and labeling requirements for your plant sale donations will be reviewed.

### Visit to Crow’s Nest Greenhouses

Thursday, April 17 at 6:30 pm

1811 Brookfield Road, Blacksburg

Jay at Crow’s Nest Greenhouses in Blacksburg has agreed to host our group during his busy spring season. In operation since 1996, the Greenhouses now include a shop, four greenhouses and several small fields of produce. The majority of plants sold are still grown on site and produce is grown without chemical sprays and pesticides. Come and see the incredible selection of annuals, veggie plants and herbs. Learn about the operation of a retail nursery and greenhouses.

Driving Directions: From Rte. 460, take Prices Fork Exit and go 3 miles west on Prices Fork Road. Turn right onto Brookfield Road (Rte. 654) and go 0.4 miles to business on left.

### Graduation & Milestone Awards Potluck

Friday, May 9 at 6:00 pm

Multipurpose Room, Montgomery County Government Center,  
Christiansburg

Join us to congratulate our new trainees and socialize during dinner. Milestone awards will also presented. Please bring a dish to share. Drinks will be provided. The Plant Sale Fundraiser is being planned for the following day, Saturday May 10 in the parking lot of the Montgomery County Government Center.

#### *More to Come!*

Meeting plans for summer and fall include a garden party social event, visits to area notable home gardens, trips to interesting projects funded by our own community grants, a photography class at Hahn garden, and a daytrip to Beagle Ridge Organic Herb Farm in Wytheville.

Contact Donna Fern at 336-380-5242 or at [vafern3@gmail.com](mailto:vafern3@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

January/February 2014

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery.  
Photo by Steven M Cantler.

New NRV Master Gardener Project

### Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery

- Judith Jones

A new NRV Master Gardener project was recently approved at the two-year old Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery on Bagging Plant Road in Dublin. The cemetery is in a beautiful but rather bare setting.



Your help is needed to develop and implement a comprehensive landscape management plan and develop and deliver educational information and programs for visitors and the surrounding community.

The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery is open to the public every day during daylight hours and ceremonies and special events are held on holidays.

Additional photos of the cemetery grounds are available at [www.dvs.virginia.gov/Gallery/Southwest\\_Virginia\\_2012](http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/Gallery/Southwest_Virginia_2012).

#### Want to help?

Contact Judith Jones at [judith@vt.edu](mailto:judith@vt.edu) or Ruth Ann and Olin Whitener at [whitenermusic@yahoo.com](mailto:whitenermusic@yahoo.com).

## News from the Grant Committee

- Donna Fern

### Internal Mini Grants Available

Mini Grants are being offered this year to members of the NRVMGGA to fund their projects of interest. Each qualifying project may be awarded up to \$100. A total of \$1000 has been dedicated to fund Mini Grants in 2014 and the money will be awarded on a continuous basis until the fund is depleted. Guidelines for applying for Mini Grants are available on the NRVMGGA website at <http://civic.bev.net/nrvmgga/grant/MiniGrantApp.pdf>.

Several projects received Mini Grants of \$100 each in 2013 including gardening programs at area libraries and elementary schools, and operation of the greenhouse at the Juvenile Detention Center.

*Now is the time to put your ideas into action!*

### Grant Committee Members Needed

The Grant Committee is in need of new members to review applications for funding and to make recommendations to the Executive Board. Members are encouraged to serve on the committee for a two year term. Meetings are held once or twice in the fall to discuss applications for the Community Gardening Grant Program which is open to the general public. Review of applications for Internal Mini Grants is performed via email on a continuous basis as they are received. You will receive Volunteer Management Hours for your time. Current members of the committee for 2014 are Donna Fern, myself, as chairperson, Maureen Fallon, as secretary, and Rosemarie Sawdon.

### Grant Liaisons Needed

A Master Gardener Liaison is assigned to each Community Gardening project funded by the NRVMGGA. The duties of the liaison are to check in with the project coordinator on a monthly basis to get a report of the progress and funded expenditures. The liaison may visit the project site and assess the need for assistance to help fulfill the educational objectives of the project. Those projects coordinated by Master Gardeners do not require liaisons.

Projects in need of liaisons this year include Christiansburg Elementary School Garden for Special Needs students, Micah's Garden at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Blacksburg, and the Vermicomposting Project at Floyd High School. Volunteer service hours are earned for serving as a liaison.

Please contact Donna Fern by email at [vafern3@gmail.com](mailto:vafern3@gmail.com) or at 336-380-5242 if you are interested in helping the Grant Committee or would like more information about the Mini Grants.



Orange tulips and poppy anemones.  
Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## 2014 Garden Tours

Spring Fling Garden Tour  
Saturday, April 26  
9 am until 1 pm

The 2nd Annual Spring Fling Garden Tour will feature 3 gardens in the Blacksburg area. Tickets will only be sold at VT Horticulture Club Spring Plant Sale to be held April 24-26 at the Hahn Horticulture Garden. Proceeds will benefit the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, the VT Horticulture Club and the Hahn Horticulture Garden.

New River Valley Garden Tour  
Saturday, July 12  
9 am until 5 pm

The New River Valley Garden Tour will include seven gardens this year. Proceeds will benefit the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. For more information visit [www.newrivervalleygardentour.org](http://www.newrivervalleygardentour.org) or "Like" New River Valley Garden Tour on Facebook.

## 2014 Plant Sale

The 2014 Plant Sale will be held Saturday, May 10 from 10 am to 2 pm at the Montgomery County Government Center in Christiansburg. Our annual Plant Sale is a major fundraiser for our Community Gardening Grants.

Dedicated folks are needed to organize and delegate the various tasks involved with making this big day a success. Please contact Maureen Fallon to find out how you can help make our 2014 Plant Sale our best yet.



Tiny spider on zinnia. Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## 2014 Community Gardening Grants Announced

The NRV MGA awarded 8 Community Gardening Grants this year, providing \$2600 to support educational programs throughout the New River Valley that involve gardening education.

PROJECT & LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	COORDINATOR	MG LIAISON
YMCA Children's Garden, Pulaski	Sensing and vegetable gardens supporting educational programs	\$250	Sharon Efried	Sharon Efried
NRV Juvenile Detention Center, Christiansburg	Teaching residents gardening techniques and horticultural business skills	\$300	Wendy Silverman Diane Relf	Wendy Silverman
NRV Recovery Garden, Radford	Gardening as part of a rehabilitative program for adults with mental health disorders	\$400	Sarah Smidl Eric Lanoue	Bob Lockwood
Micah's Garden, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Blacksburg	Greenhouse for cooperative community garden serving families in need	\$300	Jennie Hodge	Lynn Brammer
4-H Programs, Pulaski	4-H gardening projects at several Pulaski County elementary schools	\$250	Chris Lichty	Liaison needed
Vermicomposting, Floyd County High School, Floyd	Construction of worm composting system to recycle cafeteria waste into soil for the Agriculture Department	\$500	Joseph Tesauro	Liaison needed
Garden Programs, Gilbert Linkous Elementary School, Blacksburg	Hands-on gardening experiences and education for multiple grade levels	\$200	Phyllis Eschenmann	Phyllis Eschenmann
Garden for Special Education Students, Christiansburg Elementary	Children with disabilities learn gardening concepts with help from the VT Sustainable Food Corps	\$400	Rebecca King	Liaison needed

## Rain Barrel Workshop

A Rain Barrel Workshop will be held **Saturday March 15, 2014 from 9am to Noon** in Multipurpose Room 1 of the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. We hope you will join us and invite your friends and neighbors. Our previous Rain Barrel Workshops have been a great success!

### Participants and Volunteers Needed

This is an educational event open to the public. Stan Stanley will instruct the class on how to build their own rain barrel from a recycled pickle barrel. Each participant will take their barrel home for a fee of \$50. Class size is limited to 10 participants.

Many volunteers are needed as we will also be assembling another 10 barrels to be sold at the plant sale. Members who have attended workshops in the past are encouraged to come and assist the public participants.

### Why Rain Barrels?

Collecting rainwater saves water, provides homeowners free water for irrigation, and helps reduce the flow of storm runoff into local waterways.

### For more information

Contact Stan Stanley at [glstanle@juno.com](mailto:glstanle@juno.com) or by calling 540-980-4137.



Completed rain barrel.  
Photo by Donna Fern.



Stan Stanley leading a NRV Master Gardener Rain Barrel Workshop. Photo by Donna Fern.



NRV Master Gardeners recycle pickle barrels into rain barrels.  
Photo by Donna Fern.



Wide variety of seed donated by Hart's Seed.  
Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## We have seeds!

- Wendy Silverman

Thanks to donations from Hart's Seed and Walmart, we have an abundance of flower, herb and vegetable seeds of all kinds. We have corn, cucumber, marigold, okra, spinach, green beans, lima beans, radishes, pumpkins, tomato, watermelon, zinnia, cilantro, carrots, basil, sunflowers, beets, gourds and nasturtium to name just a few!

If you need seeds for any Master Gardener projects please contact Wendy Silverman at [wss@vt.edu](mailto:wss@vt.edu) with types and quantities needed. We will fill your orders the best we can.

You may also receive a few surprise packets with your order as we have an over abundance of a few varieties!

# Practical Plant Terms

- Erica Jones

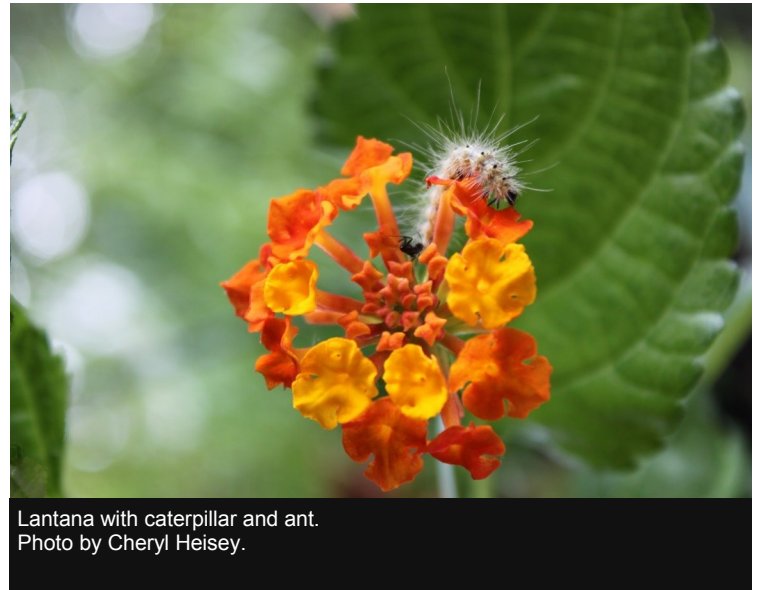
Plants are actually very responsive to their environment in spite of what we may think about something with (usually) roots stuck firmly in the ground. Listed below are some plant responses involving light and color and the terms used to describe these responses.

## Light

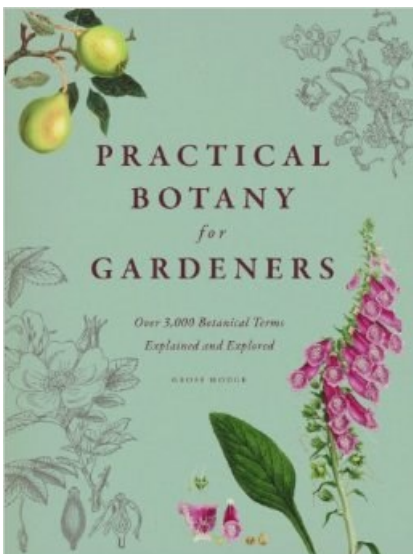
There are many plant processes that start with “photo”. **Phototropism** we may be familiar with – plant tissues grow either towards or away from a light source. Leaves, stems and shoots tend to grow towards light. Roots tend to grow away from light. Charles Darwin did a famous experiment in which he showed that placing an opaque cover over the growing tips of just germinated oat monocots (the coleoptile) prevented the coleoptile from bending towards the light source.

A classic experiment for all ages is the “Will this plant flower when I control the day length?” (**photoperiodism**) using controlled lighting and short-day plants such as chrysanthemums or asters. If you have never appreciated how pervasive this phenomenon is in plants, think about all the leaves that jump ship in the fall when the days become shorter. It is also photoperiodism that triggers many herbaceous perennials to enter a vegetative dormancy before cold weather kills the entire plant.

A less commonly used and less understood “photo” word is the term **photomorphogenesis**. Photomorphogenesis involves plant responses to light that are not periodic or directional. Seedlings are commonly used as an example – shoots will elongate wildly without enough light. The cotyledons of some species supposedly do not open up in darkness; and plants have different receptors for blue light and red light. One side line here; plants strongly absorb the blue light and red light in photosynthesis, but the green wavelengths are reflected back or transmitted through the leaf, which is why plants appear green to us. So plants are hardly green – they can’t use it! What chaos on all the modern use of the term green could be had if we tried to say “plants hate green”!



Lantana with caterpillar and ant.  
Photo by Cheryl Heisey.



## Color

Plants signal pollinators using color. Besides the often discussed “landing strips” on some flower petals, plants have another signal they use. Some members of the borage family will change the color of their flower petals when the flower has been pollinated. This color change benefits the pollinator by maximizing the time the pollinator spends visiting flowers that contain nectar or pollen and benefits the plant by attracting pollinators to the flowers in need of pollination and not to the flowers that don’t need pollination. Lungwort flowers change from pink to blue after pollination; the color change is not just the aging of the flower petals. Some other flowers that change colors after pollination are lupines, morning glories and lantana.

## Good Reference Book

Hodge, G. (2013). *Practical Botany for Gardeners*. University Of Chicago Press.

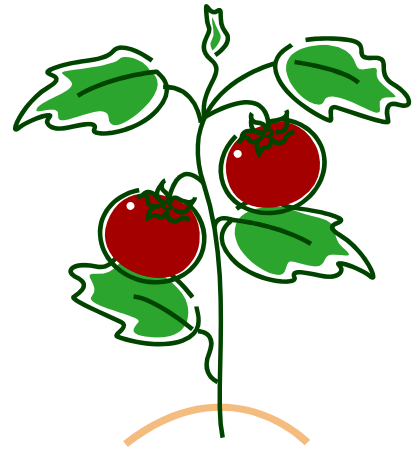
# Black Bean Salsa

- Ruth Ann Whitener

*This one makes lots! Great for large gatherings!*

## Ingredients

- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped (or 2-3 cans diced tomatoes, mostly drained)
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions w/greens, chopped
- 2 cans Rotel diced tomatoes w/green chilies
- 1 can black beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 can black-eyed Peas, drained & rinsed
- 2 cans white shoe peg corn, drained & rinsed
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 (12-16 oz) bottle Zesty Italian dressing (light dressing is OK or Good Seasons prepared according to packet directions)
- Mexican-style cheese, shredded (optional)



## Preparation

Mix all ingredients together in large bowl. Chill several hours or overnight. Serve with tortilla chips.

# Sign-up for NRVGA Committees!

- Lynn Brammer

We have a number of active committees within the Association. Your participation on our committees is welcomed and very much appreciated. Please look the list over below and consider joining the committee(s) that suits your skills and interests. Please contact any board member with questions or to sign-up.

Note we are in particular need of help with **History & Records Retention**. History & Records Retention includes archiving our events, projects and fundraisers and updating our brag board as needed. We would also really like to make videos of our workshops, starting with one of our great rain barrel workshops!

NRVGA Committees	Contacts
Programs	Donna Fern
Communications	Maureen Fallon, Erica Jones, Cheryl Heisey
Nominations	Lynn Brammer, Evelyn Melia
Membership	Evelyn Melia
Grants	Donna Fern, Maureen Fallon, Rosemarie Sawdon
History & Records Retention	OPEN
Outreach & Public Education	Wendy Silverman
Fundraising	Maureen Fallon
Finance	Pete Imhoff, Bob Lockwood



# VCE Master Gardener Program

## Strategic Planning Session

Extension Specialists, Agents, and Master Gardener volunteers, including Kelli Scott and Lynn Brammer from the NRVMG, met December 5-6, 2013 in Charlottesville to help plan for the future of the VCE Master Gardener Program.

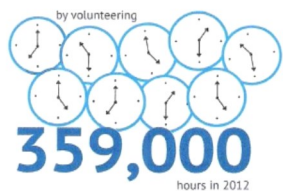
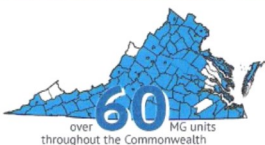
The group drew from data from a recent online survey and information from Master Gardeners from across Virginia to clearly define the **MISSION**, **VISION**, and **CORE VALUES** of the VCE Master Gardener Program.

Three priorities were also identified for the VCE Master Gardener Program: more **TRAINING** opportunities, enhanced **PROGRAM SUPPORT**, and **BRANDING** to promote the tie between VCE and the Master Gardener Program.



## The Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program

THE VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM  
*Sharing knowledge. Empowering communities.*



for an economic value of more than

**\$8.1 million**

Virginia Cooperative Extension  
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

### Mission

Sharing Knowledge.  
Empowering Communities.

### Vision

To be the Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteer organization extending horticultural and environmental outreach across the Commonwealth.

### Core Values (Internal & External)

#### Respect

- The environment, each other and those we serve

#### Accountability

- Wise stewardship of resources
- To our organization, our community and each other

#### Collaboration

- Willing to work with a diverse group to reach a common goal
- Actively seeking out partners



## Volunteer Value

A new VCE Master Gardener Program summary sheet based on the results of the strategic planning session highlights the value of VCE Master Gardener volunteers to the Commonwealth.

## Want to Read More?

A 2-page report on the outcomes of the strategic planning session is available online at [www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/newsletter/StrategicPlanningOverview.pdf](http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/newsletter/StrategicPlanningOverview.pdf).

## Upcoming NRV MG Events & Education Opportunities

- March**
- 7-9 **Plant Clinic**, NRVHBA Home Expo, Christiansburg Rec Center (Lynn Brammer, lbrammer@vt.edu)
  - 8 **Grow 2014: A Celebration of Trees**, Lexington ([www.grow-2014.com](http://www.grow-2014.com))
  - 15 **Rain Barrel Workshop**, Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg, 9 am—noon
  - 20 **NRVMGA Meeting**, Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg, 6:30 pm
  - 20 **3rd Annual Shenandoah Valley Plant Symposium**, Waynesboro
  - 29 **Garden Flow**, Hahn Garden Pavilion ([www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events))
- April**
- 5 **NRV MG Children's Activities at Kids' Tech University**, Virginia Tech, 9 am
  - 13 **Spring Seed and Plant Swap**, Christiansburg Library, 2 pm (Brenda Graff, [graff\\_brenda@hotmail.com](mailto:graff_brenda@hotmail.com))
  - 17 **NRVMGA Visit to Crow's Nest Greenhouses**, 1811 Brookfield Road, Blacksburg, 6:30 pm
  - 24-26 **Virginia Tech Horticulture Club Plant Sale**, Hahn Garden Pavilion ([www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/event](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/event))
  - 26 **Spring Fling Garden Tour**, Blacksburg ([www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/event](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/event))
  - 26 **Project HELP Fun and Family Fitness Day**, Christiansburg, 10 am (Lynn Brammer, lbrammer@vt.edu)
- May**
- 3 **Spring Seed and Plant Swap**, Blacksburg Library, 2 pm (Brenda Graff, [graff\\_brenda@hotmail.com](mailto:graff_brenda@hotmail.com))
  - 3 **Earth Day Celebration**, Floyd EcoVillage, 10 am-4 pm
  - 3 **EastMont Garden Day**, Meadowbrook Center, Shawsville, 9 am-1 pm
  - 9 **Graduation and Milestone Award Potluck**, Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg, 6 pm
  - 10 **NRVMGA Plant Sale**, Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg

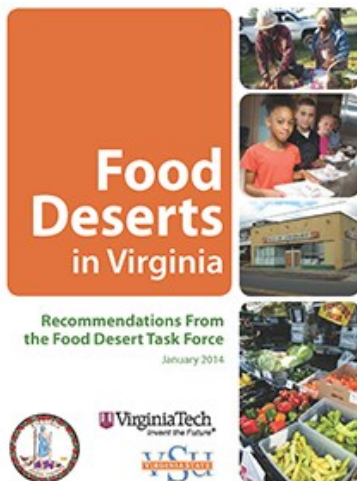
## Food Deserts in Virginia

### New VCE publication

In the November/December 2013 edition of the *Grapevine*, Erica Jones reviewed the book "The American Way of Eating" by Tracie McMillan. In her review, Erica talked about food deserts, areas in the United States where people cannot access affordable and nutritious food.

If you'd like to learn more about food deserts in Virginia and ways in which community-based food systems such as farmers markets, community gardens, and gleaning for food banks help provide food security, see the new VCE publication *Food Deserts in Virginia* available at [www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/VCE/VCE-294](http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/VCE/VCE-294).

NRV Master Gardeners support several programs that help make affordable and nutritious food available in the New River Valley including Share The Spare, Micah's Garden, Plant A Row, Christiansburg WIC Community Garden and the Y Neighborhood Harvest.



## Follow Us on Social Media

Add the following groups to your favorites and 'LIKE' us on our social media sites:



[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)



[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

- **Montgomery County Cooperative Extension - Agriculture & Natural Resources**
- **New River Valley Master Gardener Association**
- **Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program**
  
- **VCE Montgomery Co AG Nat Resources** (Sign-in at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), Scroll to "Communities", Select "Search Groups" on the drop-down menu, Click on "People", Type in "VCE Montgomery Co AG Nat Resources", Click on "Search" and link will appear.)



Honeybee on knapweed, a beautiful but invasive non-native plant. Photo by Cheryl Heisey.

## Growing Native Plants for Pollinators

- Cheryl Heisey

Determined to capture photos of “critters” on flowers for a photography class I took a few years ago, I soon found myself taking more pictures of the “weeds” growing out behind the picket fence that surrounds my backyard than of the manicured beds of marigolds and begonias I was growing near the house. There were just many more bees and butterflies flitting out among the wildflowers!

The time I spend focusing on flowers through the lens of my camera has given me a new appreciation of native plants, both for their benefit to pollinators and other wildlife and for their beauty. Sure, I still pull plenty of “weeds” in my yard, but I’m more likely now to leave a few to grow where they may and I’m always looking for ways to create and preserve pollinator habitat.

Pollinator-friendly gardening is especially important as many pollinator species are in decline. Two recent local gardening education events focused on gardening strategies to support pollinators.

**Dr. Holly Scoggins**, Associate Professor and Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden, Virginia Tech gave a presentation on “**Hostas or Habitat? The Beesness of Gardening**” at the February 20 NRVMGA Meeting, discussing the differences between native plants, non-natives, cultivars, and nativars (native cultivated varieties) and providing bee-friendly gardening strategies and plant suggestions. Native plants are ideal to support native pollinators, but many non-native plants are also good sources of pollen and nectar, the foods bees need. Dr. Scoggins explained the importance of providing food sources for pollinators over as long a season as possible. Plants that flower very early in the growing season such as *Sanguinaria canadensis* (bloodroot) and early *Phlox* (*P. stolonifera*, *P. divaricata*) and those that bloom in very late fall such as late-season asters (*Symphotrichum* species, *Aster tartaricus*) are especially beneficial. It is also important to include a variety of flower shapes and sizes in your landscape, a source of clean water, and natural areas where pollinators can nest and find shelter, not all turf and mulch. Pesticide use should be avoided whenever possible. Insecticides containing the chemical carbaryl and broad-spectrum, persistent pesticides are highly toxic to pollinators. The plants *Eupatorium maculatum* ‘Gateway’ (Joe Pye weed), *Calamintha nepeta* subsp. *nepeta*, *Mondara* x ‘Raspberry Wine’ (bee balm), and *Agastache* ‘Blue Fortune’ (hyssop) were suggested in combination with herbs for a bee-friendly perennial bed.

**Barbara Walker**, Volunteer Coordinator for the US Forest Service Eastern Divide Ranger District, gave a presentation on “**Pollinator Habitat at Pandapas Pond**” at the Hahn Horticulture Garden Lunchtime Learning event on February 26. The Pandapas Pond Pollinator Garden is devoted to plants native to the New River Valley, providing beneficial habitat for pollinators and serving as a demonstration garden for the creation of backyard habitat using native plants. The Garden was first planted in 2008 and local volunteers continue to maintain and improve the 1-acre site. You can earn Master Gardener Service Activity hours for volunteering at the Pandapas Pond Pollinator Garden. Contact Wendy Silverman at [wss@vt.edu](mailto:wss@vt.edu) or Barbara Walker at 540-552-4641 to find out how you can become involved.

### Interested in learning more about native plants for pollinators?

Check-out these great resources:

- \* **PLANTS Database** at [www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov)
- \* VCE eBook, ***For the Birds, Butterflies & Hummingbirds: Creating Inviting Habitats***, at <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/HORT/HORT-59>
- \* ***Flora of Virginia*** 2012. Weakley et al. Brit Press.
- \* **Pollinator-friendly practices** at [www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators)
- \* **Native plants lists** and ideas for **backyard habitats** at [www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat)
- \* Download a ***Pollinator Friendly Planting Guide*** from the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign by going to [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org) and entering your zip code
- \* ***Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden*** brochure at [www.fws.gov/pollinators/PollinatorPages/YourHelp.html](http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/PollinatorPages/YourHelp.html)

# New Policy For Emails to NRV MG List serve

## NRV Master Gardeners~

It has come to our attention that many folks are feeling overwhelmed and unsure how to manage the large number of emails they receive from the NRV Master Gardener Program and Association. We have a great deal of valuable information to share with you, and we do not want to dilute this information in large summary emails. We want to make a clear attempt to reach each of you.

In an effort to organize the number and type of emails you receive from the NRV Master Gardener Program and Association we are implementing a new system for emails in 2014. The goal of this system is to streamline the emails you receive from us. While no system is perfect, this update is an effort to make your life a little easier, your inbox a little less busy, and our messages clear and concise.

See below 1) the steps you can take to change the frequency at which you receive emails and 2) the new codes to include in email subject lines to clearly communicate the type of content the email contains.

We appreciate your service, time, and all community efforts!!! - Wendy Silverman & Kelli Scott

### Steps to Change Frequency of Email Delivery

1. Visit the following website address: [www.googlegroups.com](http://www.googlegroups.com)
2. Click the "My Groups" tab
3. Click the "NRV Master Gardener" link
4. Click the box in upper, right hand side of screen with an image of a person
5. Click "Membership & Email Setting"
6. See drop box option half way down the page and choose one of the following two options:
  - a) Send me an email every new message
  - b) Send daily summaries
8. **DO NOT CHOOSE:** *Combine update for every 25 message.* The information emails on events, meetings, and educational opportunities are pertinent and timely. We do not want you to miss any valuable content.

### New Codes for Email Subject Line to Clearly Describe Email Content

Email Content	Code	Subject Line Examples
Volunteer Opportunities	<b>VOLT OPP:</b>	<b>VOLT OPP:</b> Share the Spare, Sat. Dec 14, Bburg
Educational Events	<b>ED EVT:</b>	<b>ED EVT:</b> Lunchtime Talk @ Hahn Hort Garden, Dec 20
News	<b>NEWS:</b>	
Meetings/Monthly Gatherings	<b>MEET:</b>	
Association	<b>ASOC:</b>	
Wanted/Needed/Requested	<b>WANT:</b>	
Publications/Newsletters/Articles/ Grapevine	<b>PUBS:</b>	

Starting February 2014, all email addressed to the NRVMG list serve at [nrvmastergardeners@googlegroups.com](mailto:nrvmastergardeners@googlegroups.com) should include the following in the subject line:

- \* Code from table below
- \* Name/Title of content (if available)
- \* Date (if applicable)
- \* Town Name (if applicable) (Abbreviations: Cburg, Bburg, Rford, Pski, Pburg, Nport, Fyd, Sville, PFork...)

# Virginia Master Gardener Volunteer Management System

<https://virginia.volunteersystem.org>

The NRV Master Gardeners are expanding use of the Virginia Master Gardener Volunteer Management System (VMS) this year. In the past, NRV Master Gardeners have accessed VMS primarily to log their volunteer hours, travel time and contacts.

## Updated Features

Thanks to the efforts of Jon Low the General Event Calendar on VMS is now being kept up to date so Master Gardener volunteers can stay informed of upcoming volunteer opportunities and education events. There is also a member roster with email addresses and phone numbers and a list of current projects for which you can volunteer.

## Why Log Your Volunteer Hours?

It is important our local government and VCE know the extent of our volunteer work. Extension agents report the activities of their offices to local officials and VCE Administration, and Master Gardener efforts are a substantial part of these activities. Documenting your volunteer activities in VMS in a timely manner makes it easier to report accurate data that represent the full extent of our efforts. The hours and contacts you log in VMS help justify the existence of the Master Gardener program, support the need for funding a NRVMG Coordinator, determine the Milestone Awards you receive, and can reduce the registration fees you pay if you choose to attend the annual Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech.

## 2014 NRV MG Volunteer Hour Requirements

<b>Trainees and Interns</b>	<b>Certified Master Gardeners</b>
<b>Service Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 50 hours minimum (no max)</li><li>• Up to 10 of your 50 hours can be Volunteer Management</li><li>• 5 of your 50 hours (10%) MUST BE time at a Plant Clinic, Master Gardener Help Desk, or Share the Spare.</li></ul>	<b>Service Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20 hours minimum (no max)</li><li>• Up to 10 of your 20 hours can be Volunteer Management</li><li>• 2 of your 20 hours (10%) MUST BE time at a Plant Clinic, Master Gardener Help Desk, or Share the Spare.</li></ul>
<b>Volunteer Management (optional)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hours devoted to the NRVMG</li><li>• Your first 10 Volunteer Management hours count toward your 50 hour Service Activities requirement. Any additional Volunteer Management hours are treated as Contributed Time.</li></ul>	<b>Volunteer Management (optional)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hours devoted to the NRVMG</li><li>• Your first 10 Volunteer Management hours count toward your 20 hour Service Activities requirement. Any additional Volunteer Management hours are treated as Contributed Time.</li></ul>
<b>Educational Hours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 60 hour Master Gardener Training Course</li><li>• Educational Hours are a separate requirement from the Service Activities requirement outlined above.</li></ul>	<b>Educational Hours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 hours minimum</li><li>• Educational Hours are a separate requirement from the Service Activities requirement outlined above.</li></ul>
<b>Contributed Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Includes your travel time and maintenance-only projects</li><li>• Does not count toward your yearly Service Activities or Educational Hour requirements but does count towards your yearly total.</li></ul>	<b>Contributed Time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Includes your travel time and maintenance-only projects</li><li>• Does not count toward your yearly Service Activities or Educational Hour requirements but does count towards your yearly total.</li></ul>

## Questions?

Please contact Wendy Silverman with any questions regarding your volunteer hour requirements.

# I heard it through the *Grapevine* ... NRV MGA MEETING MINUTES

## MINUTES

New River Valley Master Gardener Association  
Montgomery County Government Center  
January 9, 2014

In Attendance: Lynn Brammer, Evelyn Melia, Wendy Silverman, Susan Lockwood, Bob Lockwood, Beth Kirby

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Lynn Brammer

Minutes of November 14, 2013 were approved.

Treasurer's Report was approved. The 2013 books have been audited and approved. 2014 Grant checks have been mailed. About 30 members have renewed their memberships. A discussion about another fund-raising project to bolster the bank account ensued: A rain barrel workshop in conjunction with the May plant sale, seminar day with silent auction. Further discussion is needed.

Old Business: The location of the board meetings is an issue since Wendy will be conducting evening MG training classes at the Hahn Pavilion. Beth will check with Jeff Burr at the VT greenhouses to see if the classroom would be available for use at that time, also moving the meeting to 6:30 pm to accommodate Wendy's training schedule.

The potluck will be held on January 16 at the Hahn Pavilion at 6 p.m. Members will be asked to bring finger foods/heavy hors d'oeuvres. It will be a time to meet the new trainees and offer some insight on projects that are in works. There will be 4 presentations of current projects by members Stan Stanley, Lynn Brammer, Debbie Leet and Mickey Balconi. Each member will be asked to introduce him/herself, give number of years of service and projects involvement.

### New Business:

Cheryl Heisey will be the new editor of the *Grapevine*. She will send out her schedule for submission of articles. There will be six issues a year. Lynn asked to place the by-laws in the newsletter. Approved.

Lynn asked that the by-laws and a list of approved projects be placed in the membership directory. Approved.

The plant sale date will need to be chosen. It was discussed about how to improve the plant sale to a bigger money-making project. A plant sale committee will be chosen soon.

Lynn will ask the new trainees who would be interested in having a mentor, then will attempt to match them with an appropriate MG to make the experience worthwhile for all involved. Lynn will ask members who might be interested in mentoring to contact her.

A new list-serve for the new board will need to be developed.

Wendy said that shirt/apron sales will be put on hold. The MG Coordinators are looking into a new state logo that may be put on the shirts.

For the plant sale participation: prep time for the sale will be considered management time/ the sale will be counted as service time.

A speaker/activity is needed for the next meeting on February 20. Lynn will schedule.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm

### Next important dates:

- January 16 NRV MGA meeting/meet and greet new trainees. 6 p.m. Hahn Pavilion
- February 13 NRV MGA Board meeting, 6:30 p.m., VT greenhouse classroom
- February 20 NRV MGA meeting, TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Kirby, secretary





The New River Valley Master Gardener Association is a nonprofit organization working in conjunction with the Montgomery County Virginia Cooperative Extension Office to bring horticultural education and enjoyment to people in the New River Valley.

As Master Gardeners we are committed to learning about gardening and communicating our knowledge of gardening to others. We direct our efforts to creating and maintaining an awareness of the need for intelligent stewardship of the environment.

## Share your know-how and enthusiasm for gardening in the *Grapevine*!

All NRVMA members are welcome to contribute articles and other materials for publication in the *Grapevine*. We welcome project highlights, photos, book reviews, gardening tips, event announcements, stories on garden visits, how-tos, favorite recipes, and other garden-related items for publication in the *Grapevine*. And, remember, time spent researching and writing articles counts toward your Service Activity hours.

Please send your submissions for the *Grapevine* to Cheryl Heisey at [rogersmca@verizon.net](mailto:rogersmca@verizon.net). The deadline for submission for the March/April edition is April 22, 1014.

The *Grapevine* is published six times a year and delivered to the NRV Master Gardener community electronically via our list serve and website. We also mail printed copies of the *Grapevine* on request.

## Contact Us

### Executive Board

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