

GRAPEVINE



New River Valley Master Gardener Association Newsletter

March/April 2015

Everything is Coming Up Roses

-Carol Cox, NRVMGGA Member

At the January 2015 Master Gardener Association meeting everything came up roses! We enjoyed a presentation by home gardener Linda Fiedler of Meadows of Dan. Linda shared slides of her garden's evolution as she experimented with roses over the years. She outlined a 5-step program of care for what she termed "easy care roses."

1. Site selection:
At least 6 hours of sun and good drainage
2. Preparing for planting:
Digging a hole that is 24" diameter and 18" deep
Adding aged organic matter
Aiming for a pH of 6.0-6.5
3. Pruning:
Early spring pruning is most important taking 1/3-1/2 of height to shape and to clear the center of the bush to open it up
She also pointed out to be aware that 5-leaf nodes are flowering
Nodes
4. Feeding program
1" water per week & mulching to protect from water loss
Heavy mid-spring feeding – she uses RoseTone and follows the first flush of blooms with a 2nd feeding
If you want rose hips, don't dead head after the last flush of blooms
5. Pests and diseases
Roses are prone to blackspot and mildew, slugs, Japanese beetles, aphids, and deer
She shared several methods to deal with these pests.



(Photo: <http://www.tesselaar.com/upload/images/pop/100412115153.jpg>)



Mrs. Fiedler sharing rose knowledge with NRVMGGA President, Erica Jones. Photo: Susan Lockwood

Mrs. Fiedler taught us that there are 3 groups of roses: species roses, old garden roses and modern roses. Her first rose (and seemingly one of her favorites) is the Flower Carpet rose, which blooms from spring to fall, resists disease, and tolerates drought. She gave pointers on choosing roses based on what we want from them. Roses were bred for many characteristics: bloom size, single bloom vs. remonstrant bloomers, disease resistance, growth habit, and/or fragrance. She has worked with climbing roses and suggests making sure they have a horizontal layout (allowing for more blooms), growing them on an arbor rather than just allowing them to grow on their own, and pruning them to insure they grow the way you intend for them to. Lastly, she shared slides of many different roses that she has in her garden and pointed out the pros and cons to help us choose roses for our gardens that match our setting, time commitment, and pest management practices. So her advice to us was summed up in the following quote...

*If you want to be happy for an hour, get drunk.
If you want to be happy for a weekend, get married.
If you want to be happy for a week, kill a pig and eat it.
If you want to be happy for life, be a gardener.*

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Cardinal on a snowy morning. Photo by Ruth Ann Whitener

Welcome, Trainees and Tidbits from the February 10th Potluck “Meet the New MG Class”

-Erica Jones

NRVMGA February general meeting was held on February 10. We had a nice turn-out with a wide assortment of “heavy hors d'oeuvres” to greet the 2015 class. Kelli Scott talked about the background checks which will be started this year. Members who have not already paid for them (i.e. the 2014 and 2015 class) will have to pay \$10 for a three year check. Talk to Kelli if you have had one done lately. We will be getting an email notification.

Members of the 2015 class introduced themselves.

Then Lynn Brammer showed us the power point presentation she uses to promote the program “Share the Spare” (which goes with a plant clinic) at the Roanoke/Draper St farmers market in Blacksburg.

Kelli then introduced the board members and we mostly promoted the grants programs—the community grants (which are now closed for 2015) and the “mini” grants which are still open.

Beth Kirby announced that she will be chair for the plant sale committee and is looking for volunteers. (see her letter on the following pages).

Our perennial helper with the MG classes Alan Bame announce that he still has class dates not covered by an existing MG. He appreciates help with setting up tables and chairs, and cleaning up at the Hahn (he mentioned that he was not as young as he used to be). MG hosts are welcome to discuss their project(s)

Raffles were held! Lots of prizes given away to lucky attendees!

Wendy Silverman brought some of her seed packets (she obtained some free ones in 2014 besides the “old” seeds we have bought in the past) and invited members to help themselves for their projects.



PLANT SALE 2015

Saturday, May 9th, 10am— 2pm

Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg



Greetings to all NRVMGGA members.

The 4th annual Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, May 9 at the Government Building on Roanoke Street in Christiansburg.

The annual plant sale is our number one fundraiser for the NRVMGGA. The proceeds fund the grants awarded to community projects each year. Each year, the amount raised has increased by about 30%. This past year, we were able to fund over \$3000 from the proceeds of our plant sale and rain barrel workshops and sales. We would love to be able to greatly increase the amount raised. The only way that will happen is with a dedicated workforce both before the sale and the day of the sale.

I envision the NRVMGGA plant sale as somewhere that home gardeners can come, have a great assortment of plants to choose from, as well as be able to obtain accurate information about the plants they are purchasing. In the past, the sale volunteers gravitated to work in the areas in which they felt comfortable. I would hope that this year we would be able to train the volunteers to staff each department—veggies, annuals, perennials, trees/shrubs. We could even have different colors for each department—green for veggies, red for annuals, blue for perennials and brown for trees/shrubs. Each person in each department would have had a briefing of what is available (or a handout). It would be up to that person to educate her/himself on the inventory. This can be a great learning experience for all involved.

For example: For my veggie department, I will make posters for each kind of veggie. If I have not personally grown the type of veggie in my own garden, I will have researched the variety to give as much information as I can. I will have copies of the extension handouts for each kind of vegetable either to hand out or have an email list from which I could forward electronic copies of the information. I hope that I can encourage a “staff” of helpers to meet with me near the sale to go over the inventory and become familiar with the plants, cultivation and care. Last year, I had several people come up to me asking if I had grown any of the “odd” tomatoes I had started the year before. I know we have repeat customers!

I would hope that each member who volunteers to be a department leader or worker the day of the sale would strive to take ownership of their opportunity to bring knowledge to the community, provide a good quality plant, and raise money for future grant projects that will benefit us all.

Please contact me, Beth Kirby, at nrvmgplantsale@hotmail.com, or leave a message on my cell 540-230-8064. Looking forward to working with some dedicated plant lovers!



Save the Date! NRV Home Expo: March 13-15

The annual NRV Home Builders Association host a "**Home Expo**" each year that is held at the Christiansburg Recreational Department. From **Friday through Sunday of March 13-15** booths are "rented" to various businesses in the NRV. Because we are a non profit we are allowed to set up a booth and have the wonderful opportunity to mix and mingle with the hundreds of folks that attend this event. This is our first "plant clinic" of the season and an excellent venue to inform the public about all we offer. We are busy at the booth handing out soil text kits, giving away seed packets if someone asks a question and making the community aware of what extension and Master Gardeners are all about. If you attended the meeting at the Government Center on the 10th of February then you saw our typical plant clinic set up there in the lobby. We display resource material and encourage the attendees to go to the website and discover all the available extension material that will assist their gardening needs.

This expo is all under the roof of an enclosed space so the outdoor elements are not a factor. For trainees we welcome one and all. You will work with a seasoned Master Gardener and earn volunteer hours during your shift. Shifts are divided into two hour increments (although you are welcome to work multiple shifts). I will be sending out detailed information about your role. We want to make sure everyone that volunteers feels comfortable with assisting with this booth. We encourage all to take advantage of this easy way to interact with the public and earn some hours at the same time.

If you are a veteran of this event or want to commit to a shift now, please email Lynn Brammer lbrammer@vt.edu and claim your shift! Just a reminder to consider, we will ask that you show up 15 minutes prior to your shift to review where things are and any pertinent information that will make your shift run smoothly. Below are the hours. And by the way, if you come in to work a shift, there will



Master Gardeners working at the table at last year's Expo.
Photo: Lynn Brammer



Master Gardeners working at the table at last year's Expo.
Photo: Lynn Brammer

be no fee for admittance to the Expo which is \$5 to the public.

Friday 4 pm until 8 pm

Saturday 9 am until 7 pm

Sunday 12 pm until 5 pm

If anyone wants the first shift on Friday or the last shift on Sunday I will ask that you give a hand with set up and break down. Many thanks for considering this opportunity to spread the word about all that extension is and offers!

- Lynn Brammer

Botanical Gardens in Varenna, Italy

In June 2014, I ventured to Italy and stayed for five days in Varenna, a beautiful Italian village which is about 37 miles north of Milan, along the eastern shore of Lake Como. From Varenna, the views of Lake Como and the Swiss Alps are breathtaking. Not far from the center of the town, hugging the shore line, are two beautiful botanical gardens.

The first garden is “Giardini Botanici” or the “Botanic Way” at Villa Cipressi. In the center, stands the lovely villa, a complex of buildings constructed mainly between 1400 and 1800, owned by various noble families since the 12th Century. The villa is currently owned by the Varenna municipality and operated as a hotel. The villa is surrounded by beautifully landscaped and well maintained gardens containing a wonderful variety of approximately 45 different species of plants, shrubs and trees. Several tall Italian Cypress trees (*Cupressus sempervirens*) can be seen growing here which may account for the name of the villa. “Cipressi” is the plural form of the Italian word for cypress!



Villa Cipressi. Photo: Sharon Eifried

From Villa Cipressi there is a beautiful view of Villa Monastero, the second Botanical Garden in Varenna. This amazing garden is landscaped in narrow terraces as it stretches on a steep incline for one mile along the shore of Lake Como. The mansion found in this garden dates back to the 13th Century when it was a convent dedicated to St. Mary Magdalena. The villa is now owned by The National Council of Research and serves as a museum and a conference center.

The Gardens contain several beautiful architectural pieces including statues, temples, bas-reliefs, large vases and fountains. In the 19th Century, the garden acquired a neoclassical sculpture, “Clemency of Titus,” by the famous Giovan Battista Comolli (1775-1830). Woven amid the hardscape are over 50 species of plants, some native and some exotic. The garden is known for its rows of cypress, cedars of Lebanon, African and American palms, agaves, yuccas, dracaenas, citrus trees, oleanders, English roses, and wisteria. Among the plants I enjoyed seeing the day I visited the garden were a spectacular Bottle Brush (*Callistemon*) in full bloom

and a 500 year old Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) with its large trunk and lush green leaves.

In an area near the upper edge of the garden were two Cedar of Lebanon trees receiving infusions of the pesticide, Abamectin. The trees are being damaged by the pine processionary caterpillar (*Thaumetopoea pityocampa*) which is an insect known to be very destructive to pines and other trees in the forest. The horticulturalist reported that this endotherapy with Abamectin was working well for the Cedar of Lebanon trees. In endotherapy the pesticide is injected or infused into the trunk of the tree and distributed through the tree's vascular system. Often this method is preferred to spraying in order to avoid exposing humans, birds, bees, and aquatic life to the toxic effects of the pesticide (Tecnoverd.com). Abamectin is a nerve agent that paralyzes the caterpillar and thus starves the insect and is known to be toxic to honey bees, fish and other aquatic life (<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/profiles/extoxnet/24d-captan/abamectin-ext.html>).

Strolling through these two wonderful botanical gardens in Varenna was most enjoyable and inspiring. The experience was both relaxing and educational. The variety and beauty of the plants plus the amazing views of the lake and the setting make this a must see experience for anyone traveling to the Lake Como area of Italy.



Villa Monastero. Photo: Sharon Eifried

Ready for Spring? Warm up with these recipes during the last few days of Winter

Tortilla Soup submitted by Lynn Brammer

2 onions, chopped

8 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 tsp. salt

2 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon red chile flakes

12 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth

28 oz corn

1 can black beans

diced tomatoes (about 48 oz)

Juice of 2 limes

1 8oz pkg of corn tortilla, cut into 1/4 inch strips

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1/4-in.-thick strips

1 cup chopped fresh cilantro (optional for cilantro phobes)

Sliced avocado, sour cream, grated cheese (our choice), additional chopped cilantro, and/or sliced green onions for topping!

1. Heat 1 tbsp. vegetable oil in a large pot (at least 5 qts.) over medium heat. Add onions and cook until translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in two-thirds of the garlic, 1 tbsp. salt, cumin, and chile flakes and cook 2 minutes.

2. Add broth, tomatoes, and half the lime juice and increase heat to a gentle simmer; cook 20 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, pour about 1 in. of vegetable oil into a small frying pan set over medium-high heat. When oil is hot (but not smoking), add one-half of the tortilla strips and cook until golden brown and crisp, about 2 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer strips to a paper towel-lined baking pan. Repeat with remaining tortilla strips. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt. Set aside.

4. The recipe calls for pureeing the soup in a blender but I prefer the chunky style soup. Purée soup in batches in a blender if you chose. Return soup to pot and resume simmering. In a small bowl, toss chicken (make sure you cut chicken in to bite size pieces) with remaining lime juice, garlic, and 1/2 tsp. salt. Marinate at room temperature for 20 minutes(this step really makes a difference in the flavor!), then add to soup and simmer 5 minutes, until chicken is just cooked through. Stir in cilantro. Serve hot with tortilla strips and your choice of toppings...avocado, cheese,sour cream, green onions, more cilantro.

The make your own tortilla strips are worth the effort! Freezes well, but good luck with have any left over for that!

The salt amount can easily be reduced.

A great way to use some of those harvested tomatoes, garlic and corn from the garden! Hope you enjoy it as much as I do!



Photo: Ruth Ann Whitener



Spiced Chai Tea submitted by Valerie Kinzey

3 cups of boiling water

3 family sized tea bags

3 cups of whole milk or, for a dairy free version, equal parts of almond milk and canned full fat coconut milk.

1 TBS cardamom pods

1 tsp clove

2 star anise

2 cinnamon sticks

5 peppercorns

Bring the water to boil in one pot. Turn off the heat and steep the tea bags.

Heat milk in an another pot. Split open the cardamom pods and break the seeds apart from the shell. Add this to the pot along with the other whole spices. Steep the spices on a low heat for about fifteen minutes. Add the tea to the spiced milk and continue to steep if the flavor is not where you want it. Then add sugar or honey to sweeten. Use a metal mesh sieve to drain the tea and keep the spices out of your mug.

Store your excess in a mason jar. If you would like a stronger spice flavor leave the spices in the tea to enhance the flavor.

You can use ground spices, however it is harder to strain the tea if you do so.

Break up the cardamom pods. You will and add the shell and seeds into the milk.

Steep the tea into the hot water. I like really strong tea, so I used four family size tea bags in three cups of water.

Heat three cups of milk (I prefer full fat for a creamier consistency), steep the spices in the warm milk. Be careful not to overheat and curdle the milk.



Photos: Valerie Kinzey

Recipe and more photos can be found at NRVMA Member Valerie Kinzey's Blog, The Enchanted Homestead <http://www.enchantedhomestead.com/>

Valerie tells us: "I have a farm blog that I started in November. Most of what I have posted focuses around our adjustment to country living, our fowl and farm animals, recipes, essential oils and grapevine wreaths (for Grapevine Wreath info, see next page). I have gathered wild mature honeysuckle or young honey suckle and made a huge stack of wreaths with them. I then wind them and added burlap roses and ribbon to them. I actually donated a couple to the Pulaski Garden Fair last year."

Craft: Wild Grapevine Wreaths submitted by NRVMGGA Member Valerie Kinzey

When you are pulling out mature honeysuckle vines or young wild grapevines, turn them into something useful and beautiful by making your own wild grapevine wreaths. Since moving out to the Catawba Valley a little over a year ago, I have made a hobby out of making wreaths from the abundance of wild grapevines on our property. With a little bit of effort, anyone can make a sustainably harvested wild grapevine wreath!

One of the most important aspects of gathering wild grapevine is to be sure to identify that the vines are not poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Poison ivy vines will have fuzzy if not hairy like vines. Their leaves grow in clusters of three. Not everyone is allergic to poison ivy. It is wise to avoid it however, because the urushiol oil can be easily transferred to another person. I consulted local arborist Carl Absher and he stated that the plant remains toxic even when it is dormant.

March and April are good months to harvest the wild grapevines. The weather is not as cold in early spring and you will not have snakes to contend with because they are still in their inactive hibernation-like stage. Once you ensure that your vine is not poison ivy, you can begin to harvest the vines. Some species of wild grapevine include: Fox Grape (*Vitis labrusca*), Summer Grape (*Vitis aestivalis*) and Riverbank Grape (*Vitis riparia*) Their leaves are large with sharp edges.

I like to work in small batches, cutting down one or two vines down at a time. If you use the vine within a few days of cutting it, you will be able to wind the wreath easily. Waiting a few weeks will cause the vine to dry out; this makes it harder to weave.

Photos
courtesy of
Virginia Tech
Department of
Forest
Resources
and
Environmental
Conservation



To form the wreaths, I begin by wrapping, weaving and twisting them into circular or slightly oval shapes. The wreaths only need three to four layers. An advantage to making your own is that you are able to make them as thin or thick as you desire.

After you have your wreath done, you can leave it like this or you can embellish it with dried flowers, evergreen branches or you can make your own fabric flowers. Burlap, felts, and muslin fabrics, as well as many others, are suitable materials to make roses. Recycled burlap from coffee sacks can even be obtained to make the burlap roses if you are on a budget and want to be sustainable.

The result is a unique slightly whimsical and wild piece that will make a beautiful display on a door, wall or window. Burlap can be folded to look like ribbon or cut to be shaped as leaves to accent the roses. Decorative ribbon can also be used as a finishing touch.



Photos: Valerie Kinzey

Sources:

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-109/426-109.html>

<http://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=128>

<http://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=130>

www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/wild_grape.htm

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: Rockin' Afterschool Program at Dublin Elementary

By: Judith Jones, NRVMA Member

During 2014, Master Gardeners worked with the children enrolled in the Dublin Elementary Rockin' Afterschool Program teaching them short classes on many topics. MG Olin Whitener, Jr. taught the children about our patriotic holidays, and Veteran Emil Moldovan and MG Judith Jones taught them about our flag. MG Paul Schmidt taught the children about the beautiful grounds at the many American Battlefield Cemeteries in Europe. The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets captivated the children with a class on folding the flag. The children were eager learners. The program was part of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteer project which focused on landscaping, education and resource development for the grounds at the Cemetery. Dublin Elementary School is located directly across the road from the Cemetery, providing the children with ample



MG Olin Whitener teaches the students about patriotic holidays. Photo: Ruth Ann Whitener



Members of the Corps of Cadets. Photo: Ruth Ann Whitener

opportunities to learn not only about gardening but also about patriotism. A major project of the Cemetery Volunteers is the annual holiday wreath laying ceremony in December, during which a live green wreath is placed on each veteran's resting place. Nearly 450 wreaths were laid in 2014. The Rockin' Afterschool children worked with MG Ruth Ann Whitener and volunteer Jean Nelson learning patriotic songs to sing at the ceremony held on December 13. Despite the bitter cold, the children gave it their all. Although they were scheduled to leave on a school bus immediately after singing, they asked to stay and participate in the wreath laying ceremony. Other MG's involved in the project were Larry Meadors, Carol Cox, and Chuck Vehorn. The Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers is a 501(c)3 organization developed to support the cemetery and educate the public about the services provided to veterans and their families. The volunteer board is composed of twenty-five members representing several related civic organizations. Anyone interested in learning more about the volunteers or the Rockin' Afterschool Program may contact Judith Jones.

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Wreath laying ceremony. Photo: Ruth Ann Whitener

Gardening Events In & Around the New River Valley

MARCH

- 14 Dan Benarcik "Design Principals of the Pros That Can Be Applied to the Home Landscape," VT Campus, Fralin Hall. 10-11:30 AM. We are helping to sponsor this speaker from Chanticleer Gardens. \$30
- 19 NRVMGGA General Meeting, VT Greenhouse classroom, 6:30 pm (See Event Highlight Box).
- 20 Shenandoah Valley Garden Symposium 8 am - 4pm Waynesboro Parks & Recreation Department \$80 Registration required. Call 540-942-6735
- 25 Lunchtime talk at the Hahn: Debbie Graff

APRIL

- 11 VT Big Event – VT students available for volunteer work. If you want to use them, you will need to provide tools and close supervision. Beth Umberger has already put in an application to use these volunteers on the stadium woods. She needs volunteers! 540 382-1580
- 15 Lunchtime talk at the Hahn: Dwarf conifers
- 18 Historic Garden Week begins <http://www.vagardenweek.org/>
- 24 Garden Affaire, Abingdon, VA. This is always worth the drive south to attend. Good speakers and some good vendors.

MAY

- 8 MG Graduation, Potluck, Christiansburg Government Center, 6 p.m. **May program during graduation and potluck dinner: "Proper Body Mechanics for Gardening" by Physical Therapist Glen Davis**
- 9 **NRVMGA plant sale, Montgomery County Government Center Building**

JUNE

- 13 Garden Gala at the Hahn Horticulture Garden
- 24-28 **Annual Master Gardener College**

Event Highlight:

NRVMGA General Meeting

Thursday, March 19 6:30 pm in the classroom attached to the front of VT Greenhouses. (The entrance faces Washington Street.)

Robert McDuffie, new Hort Garden director, will speak briefly about his vision for the garden followed by Stephanie Huckestein, education and outreach instructor, who will present a program on "Caring for Indoor Houseplants"

City Trees (<http://www.takingroot.info/about/>) an editorial Submitted by: Erica Jones

When I was at the 2015 CENTS “University” (3 days of lectures; each day had about 8 lectures going concurrently) the final one I sat in on Friday was from a representative of “Taking Root”. Scott Beuerlien is on the Cincinnati (Ohio) steering committee and is also on the Cincinnati zoo’s board of directors.

Their plan has four parts for maintaining and spreading the urban tree. First is to plant (and maintain!!) two MILLION NEW trees in the Cincinnati region; mostly trying to emphasize urban tree planting. The group is worried about the areas urban tree canopy with the approach of emerald ash borer (in some areas ashes are 40% of the species in the area). They have a registration system for trees planted, and admit that getting people to register is a problem. The second focus is to better maintain trees (and urban forests). The third is to promote the benefits of having healthy trees growing in YOUR yard. And finally, the last part is to foster tree stewardship. At one point during his talk, he mentioned that there is nothing worse than seeing trees planted but not watered the first year after planting and then dying. That frustration is seconded by seeing urban trees planted in impossible situations. Yes they may survive, but no, they will not grow much. And then there is the spread of ornamental pears and bush honeysuckle into woodland edges.

Besides worrying about losing ashes (10% of the trees in the region overall) he mentioned Walnut twig beetle, Oak wilt, and the Asian Longhorned Beetle. The latter attacks some 100 local species of trees and has been found in 5 states including Ohio. This pest dines on maple, ash, elm, Sorbus, poplar, hackberry, mimosa, birch and horse chestnut among others.

So why are trees beneficial in our yards? Well, natural air conditioning (he thinks that cheap energy prices and advent of air conditioning brought down a lot of street trees), reduce runoff, retain soil, make soil (organic matter), homes for wildlife and improve community aesthetics. So why don’t we plant trees given their enormous benefit in our yards? I have a few theories but would be interested in what you all think. So write to me, please! I for one am corrupted by owning some 90 acres of a hillside covered with mostly rocks and trees; most of it has not been logged for about 60 years. But when the gypsy moth came through our woods you suddenly do not feel as secure about the viability of those (mostly oak in this case) trees. Wouldn’t a lot of neighborhoods in our four (or five) counties look better with more trees in the yards? Do you too feel uneasy looking at brand new houses built on former grassland/pasture/hay field with not a tree in sight?



Walnut twig beetle

Grants News

NRVMGA just finished awarding our “community” garden grants. The grants for 2015 are listed below. In past years we only gave these out every other year but recently we switched to an every year system. Admittedly that means that smaller amounts are given, but we thought the publicity would serve us better doing it every year.

If you are a member of NRVMGA (remember; some folks are master gardeners without belonging to NRVMGA) you are eligible for what we call “Mini Grants”. These are good for amounts up to \$100 (or less). The same criteria apply with the same basic application process. With all our grants we like to emphasize education. If you want to do some landscaping for a garden, you had better figure out how to include some education in the process if you want NRVMGA to grant you the money. Our website has a page - <http://civic.bev.net/nrvmga/grant/GrantApplication.htm> on hints for writing a grant application.

Follows is a list of our Community Grants for 2015 for a total of \$3567.00 We try to get these finalized early in the year so the grantee can start planning. BUT NRVMGA still needs a “liaison” for some of these grants. Being a liaison can consist of two visits a year up to digging vigorously in the soil on a regular basis. NRVMGA has found in the past that some groups have many good intentions but for assorted reasons do not get around to actually spending the money where they said they would. Also, photographs are very nice (be sure to get waivers if you have pictures of identifiable children).

If you want to apply for a mini grant and need some help/ideas; OR want some hours and are interested in being a liaison please feel free to contact anyone on the grant committee – Steve Hale, Sharon Eifried, Sherry Walker, Maureen Fallon, and Donna Fern. Contact Donna Fern vafern3@gmail.com for more information.

Pulaski 4-H Programs	Purchase of bedding plants and potting mix for gardening programs at three elementary schools, community garden, and workshops	\$550
Radford City Schools	Plants and soil to aid new Agriculture Program in Radford City Schools; Plans include vegetable and fruit gardens.	\$400
MarketKids, Blacksburg	Potting soil and starter plants for gardening and marketing program for 6-12 year olds	\$250
Fairview Home, Dublin	Funds for two raised vegetable beds and an herb garden for residents of financial need with intellectual, mental, and physical challenges	\$422
Plenty, Floyd	Materials for four raised beds at Willis Elementary School for curriculum integrated gardening program	\$275
Pulaski YMCA Gardens	Plants, labels, soil, compost, and supplies for children's gardens and classroom activities at the Child Development Center	\$437
Radford University, Selu Conservancy	Funds to purchase water storage tanks and compost for student volunteer-run garden; Educational speakers hosted and produce given to local meals program.	\$400
Harding Elementary, Blacksburg	Supplies to build additional raised beds at the elementary school as part of a community garden with VT involvement	\$350
Juvenile Detention Home, Christiansburg	Funds for topsoil, peat moss, fertilizer, and four solar-powered vent openers for use in projects teaching horticulture and business skills	\$483

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by President Erica Jones. In attendance: Erica, Maureen Fallon, Susan and Bob Lockwood, Annette Perry, Nina Templeton, Beth Kirby, Sharon Eifried, Javad Torabinejad, Evelyn Melia.

The minutes from the January 15, 2015 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Currently \$3901.99 in the combined accounts. Approved.

Sharon had met with past Treasurer Pete Imhoff to go over records/change account signature cards/procedures. She has filed forms for both federal taxes and VA Tax Exemption Certificate. We may be levied a \$10 fee for late filing of the ST-9 form for last quarter of 2014. It was voted that Pete should be responsible for this fee.

The bad check from October has been resolved.

Sharon presented a proposed budget for 2015 which was approved

Sharon proposed that we close the Ameritrade account (grants account) since it no longer provides any added income from interest. Approved. She will consolidate into BBT account once all checks have cleared.

Treasurer guideline information will be written to help with future treasurer.

Grants Committee: Donna Fern via email: All the Grant Committee members from 2013 have agreed to serve again in 2014. No new members have come forward to serve on the committee. I will send out a call for new members again in June.

Also, no members have come forward to act as liaisons on the MarketKids project or the two Radford projects, Selu and City School programs. I guess the best strategy would be to ask specific members who may be interested directly. Maybe at the board meeting some suggestions could be made and I will follow through and contact them.

Javad made a presentation before the board concerning the Cooperative Extension requirement for current active Master Gardeners to pay for their own background checks. He feels that while the price of the check is not the issue, the issue is that Master Gardeners should have to pay anything at all. He feels that the VCE should assume all debts incurred. He proposed that the Association should approach Kelli Scott with a letter stating its disapproval of the cost to MG's. After much discussion, it was decided not to pursue a letter to VCE.

OLD BUSINESS: General Meeting Dates: Leslie Mathews, the new MG Coordinator, had sent out a poll to general membership requesting preferred meeting days. Thursday was the overwhelming day chosen. Some of the meeting days will be determined by speaker availability, so while most meetings will still be on Thursdays, there may be some meetings on other days as needed.

NEW BUSINESS: 1) Plant Sale: Beth volunteered to Chair the PS committee. The sale will be held at the C'burg Gov't Center Saturday, May 9. An announcement will be made at the general meeting on February 10 looking for volunteers. There were several areas of issue noted with the last sale (duplication of vendor solicitation, pricing, accounting, poor member follow-through) that will be dealt with this year. A post sale round-up was done after last year's sale and hopefully this will be helpful for this year.

2) Webmistress needs a current copy of the bylaws to put on the website. Some discrepancy was noted between the 2014 Directory and the website.

3) Updating bylaws. Last done about 5 years ago? Evelyn will look into this, but won't be ready to publish for 2015 directory since needs membership vote.

4) Master Gardener Trainees are invited to be non-paying members of the NRVMG during their training/internship year.

5) Hahn Garden Director: Dr. Robert McDuffie is the new director of the Hahn garden. He will be making a short presentation at the next general meeting on March 19 at the VT Greenhouse classroom at 6:30 pm. Stephanie Huckestein will be our speaker about Indoor Plants. A short business meeting will be held after the speaker's presentations.

6) Newsletter: Most newsletters are sent out electronically, but there are still some who prefer to receive a hard copy. This is at an additional cost to the organization. It was approved that starting with the 2016 membership, those preferring a hard copy will be charged a \$5 fee for the year. The electronic copy will continue to be at no charge.

7) Directory: The directory continues to be a big expenditure for the association. Several still remain from 2014 that either were never picked up or were extras printed. It was approved to make the directory available on-line. An updated membership list will be made available in a hard copy to serve as an addendum to the 2014 issue for those who want to keep a hard copy.

8) Master Gardener graduation will be held May 8 at the Gov't Center. Discussion about having a very short speaker— Susan has a prospective speaker on the biomechanics of gardening. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm. Many thanks to Susan and Bob for providing their lovely home and refreshments to those attending.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Kirby, secretary.

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association



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 Leslie Mathews at lesliem2@vt.edu.

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