



GRAPEVINE



New River Valley Master Gardener Association Newsletter

October November 2014

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Our annual graduation celebration (and end of year pot luck) will be held on the Thursday evening this year (not a Friday as in past years). So mark your calendars—November 20th!

The dinner will be at the Government Center, Christiansburg (Roanoke Rd) starting at 6pm. There is a kitchen there with refrigerator and oven, but no microwave. (I think),

Bring your own plates and utensils if you can; and bring a dish to share.

Lynn Brammer is collecting items to be included in a gift basket to be raffled off to benefit the grants program.

Hopefully some folks will be giving presentations on their projects.

Education Opportunity

Every year for the past good number of years ONLA (an Ohio nursery group) has put on CENTS in Columbus Ohio in January. I have been to it about five times. This year it will be held Jan 7,8, 9 with extra all day workshops on Tuesday. The Tuesday workshops fill early so check it out now if you want to take the “dry-laid walls” seminar.

The format of CENTS is three days of classroom lectures along with a mondo-sized trade show. The classes are broken down into topics such as landscaping, pests and disease, chemicals, ornamentals, arboriculture, horticultural careers, nursery/garden centers and running a business. The day usually starts with a keynote speaker and then sessions split into eight (8!) concurrent sessions one hour long from approximately 9:30 to 5 pm. Some sessions are repeated. Lunch is readily available in multiple places. Check in Wednesday morning was fast and easy last year but you can pre-register.

CENTS is held at the Columbus Convention Center which is directly connected to The Hyatt Regency. In past years registration for Master Gardeners fell under the “educator” category which is \$85 for the three days. And as usual, the web site (<http://centsmarketplace.com/attendees/registration/>) and (<http://centsmarketplace.com/2015-cents-university-schedule/>) is a pain in the bottom to use.

Pictures from the General Meeting at Pandapas Pond



Hostess Barbara Walters and some native asters

Photos

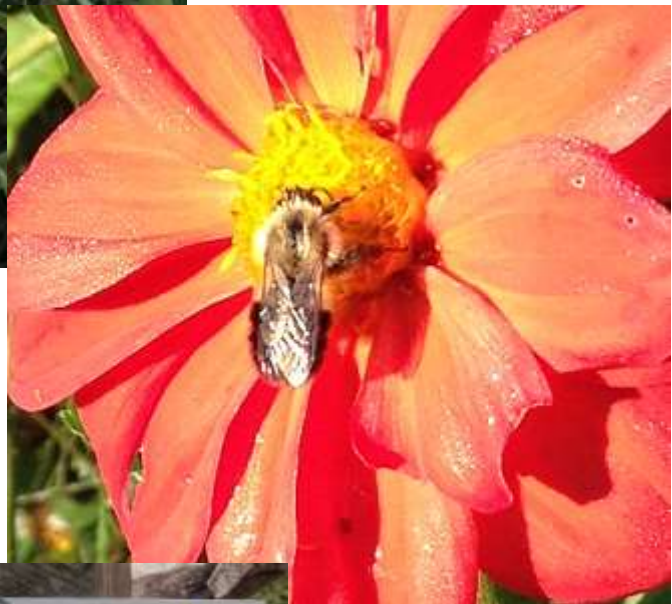


Come to the plant sale next May! See what you can go home with?! (May 9 2015)

These white iris are faithful yearly bloomers; none of this every-other-year stuff..

Dahlias here and on the first page were grown from seed by the Horticulture students at Pulaski High School.

Photos by
Ruth Ann Whitener



Sign at Panpapas Pond explaining the fenced area and pollinators



Containers; Projects

Vegetable Pots

I am sure some of us have seen the pretty pictures of vegetables growing in a container. Lettuce certainly is pretty; but so are we willing to whack it down to eat it? These thoughts have kept me from growing container veggies in the past.

This year I decided to try both tomatoes and peppers in containers since I did not get any (zero; none) production last year from the in-ground pepper/tomato plants. Tomatoes are prone to various soil-borne diseases such as bacterial stem rot, bacterial canker (carried more in plant debris than soil per say), and bacterial spot and verticillium wilt, and nematodes. Peppers can get bacterial leaf spot, bacterial soft spot and anthracnose, and pythophtera.

The peppers I planted five plants in a rectangular window shaped planter (about 24" long by 8 by 8). . When it looked like they were not going to totally fill up the container I snuck in two basil plants too. The tomatoes got individual (round) pots - the smallest of them was about 14" diameter and the biggest about 16". What soil I filled the containers with was picked carefully; since adding regular soil from garden could have brought disease with it. My favorite container mix is 33% vermiculite, 33% peat moss or compost and 33% pretty clay-y regular soil. So the actual soil I put in plastic bags in put in the microwave to pasteurize it. Any organic matter in soil that you run through the microwave will emit quite the aroma so do this on a day you are willing to ventilate. In the bottom the round pots (all of them were deeper than was going to be utilized by roots) I put Styrofoam peanuts.

I think my experiment was fairly successful. One of the tomato plants did not do well the other two as I had that container sitting directly on the ground, causing it to not drain well and drown the tomato. The peppers produced fairly well but I should have fertilized them more. I certainly got more (bell) peppers from the container than from all of the garden plants combined. One tomato kept producing well into the fall.

One other "vegetable" container I do every year is to pot up herbs and put them in one container for easy picking. Most years I do parsley, basil, oregano and thyme. Herbs take abuse and do OK over stuffed in their home and watered less frequently. They really like full sun though, so if your kitchen door is not close to a full sun spot this is not going as useful as it might be.

Yr editor

Floyd Library Garden Project at the at the Jessie Peterman Library

What happens when you dump compost in a fenced area, talk dirt with children and let them play and mix it up? Well, you get the beginnings of the Floyd Library Kids' Garden! The program was set up for six summer sessions, and we averaged 5-6 children per session. Things started back in May when Sam Bell cleaned off the area, and removed old fencing in the approximately 10 foot by 10 foot area. Volunteer Matt Cox, student in Landscape Contracting at VT, transported compost donated by PME Compost of Floyd. At the first official meeting librarian Lori Kaluzka and master gardeners Wendy Silverman, Mary Halajcsik, and Cindy Steel led a discussion about soil types had an activity to show soil components (sand, silt, clay) and looked at a soil profile. Adults and children then mixed the compost into the garden area and planted flower seeds, tomato plants and onion sets donated by Slaughter's Supermarket.

For the second meeting, insects were the topic. Carol Cox joined us and led the children in songs about insect body parts. We then went on an insect search on library grounds. After the "hunt" kids planted snapdragons and bean seeds.

The third meeting we started out by dissecting flowers and talked about flower parts. Then we searched the library lawn for any flowers that might be there and looked for other flowers in the landscape.

For the fourth meeting, the topic was the water. Everyone was reminded that the water we use today is the same water that people used centuries ago. Pot-bound oregano plants were divided and used to make terrariums in quart jars. Participant took their terrariums home to observe the water cycle in this closed environment.

Seeds were the topic of the next session. Librarian Lori took the lead discussing seed bombs and seed dispersal, and students participated in a seed glove activity.

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More on Projects

Floyd Library Garden Project at the at the Jessie Peterman Library, con't

The final session involved food art. Using fresh produce, kids “played with their food” to make sculptures. They then went outside to look for insects, flowers and to make connections to what we had discussed over the six sessions of the program.

The produce (beans and tomatoes) from the garden were donated to PLENTY. Everyone was excited with the vegetable yield. Mary and Cindy earn gold stars for keeping the garden watered and weeded between the approximately once a week sessions! Also a big thank you goes out to Doug Steel for helping clean up and taking down the fence. Again, a big “Thank you!” to everyone who helped! — Submitted by Carol Cox



MG project - The Fairview Home Gardening Club

How would you like to be part of a Master Gardening (MG) project where there are lots of hugs and the participants welcome you like you are the best part of their day? The Fairview Home Gardening Club was initiated in 2014 with a request from the Activities Coordinator, Jennifer Wilson, to MG coordinator, Wendy Sherman. Wendy then organized master gardeners and the project has proved to be a great success with the club members, the residents and a lot of fun for the MGs involved. Fairview Home, a non-profit organization, is located in Dublin, and has 60 residents ranging in age from 27 to 97. Around 25% (15) of the residents are officially garden club members who attend the twice monthly meetings and assist with caring for the seedlings (that we started inside), plants and gardens. A majority of the residents are low to middle income and have intellectual, mental and physical challenges.

A variety of gardens are planted around the facility. Vegetable gardens are in the raised beds and flower beds are around the front and sides of the main building. The vegetables are part of the Healthy Eating plan that the Fairview Home has put in place this year dependent on the produce coming from these gardens – and many of the club members and residents love to eat the vegetables raw, fresh from the garden, so our goal is to organically raise the vegetables (even the green beans!). Some of the residents were farmers or had their own gardens before they came to Fairview. They enjoy reminiscing about their past gardens and say working in the gardens remind them of their youth. They like to talk about when they canned their garden produce or how their mom served snap beans.

They are very proud of their work. The plan for 2015 is to add two raised vegetable beds and plant an herb garden. Fairview Home has the goal of providing fresh garden vegetables to their kitchen to feed the 60 residents and the additional raised beds are necessary to achieve this goal.

The flower beds, with various colors, textures and scents, are used to enhance the sensory perception of the residents. The residents and club members enjoy giving flowers to visitors when they come – so for 2015, we are planning to plant more cut flowers. This year, we had several educational projects, such as creating watering jugs while discussing the importance of watering and garden management, painting garden signs, having a tree talk/walk and having a talk on honeybees. We even transplanted geraniums during one of our last meetings from the outside pots and window boxes into individual containers as the residents wanted to keep them in their rooms and in the social room through the winter.

Currently master gardeners on this project are Sharon Eifried, Annette Perry, Jeanne Donovan, Larry Meador and Sarah Smiley. **October 22 was our final meeting and club garden party as we've put the flower/vegetable beds to rest for the winter. We look forward to again working with Jennifer Wilson. She is a key part of this team as her enthusiasm, creativity and work ethic made the club a success this year and will do so next year. We welcome other MGs to join us in January 2015 when the club reconvenes and we start planting seeds and getting ready for spring gardening.**



Above—Jeannie Roper dead heading marigolds. To the right—some club members with Larry Meador (class of 2014) enjoying the radishes

GOD to ST. FRANCIS: Frank, ... You know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

St. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it-sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

ST. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD: No!? What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about...

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

No trees were killed in the sending of this message. However a large number of electrons were terribly inconvenienced.

BOARD MINUTES

NRVMGA BOARD MEETING OCTOBER 16 - VT GREENHOUSE CLASSROOM

The minutes of September meeting were approved.

Treasurer's report: Total amount in treasury as of September: 6823.20. General operating account has \$1625.41. Grants account has \$5197.79.

Grants committee: Donna reported that she had received only a few applications for grant funding but expected more to come in as the November 1 deadline approached. Funding for the grants was decided to approve at least \$3200 for grants, \$1000 for mini-grants the 2015 year. The actual figure will be whatever the balance is in the grants committee account at the end of October. It was felt that the association raises funds for the purpose of providing money to groups for educational purposes. If the money is limited by trying to keep more back for the operating account, opportunities may be lost to provide for good projects.

Nominating Committee: There is still no candidate for President for the upcoming year. It was discussed that we may need to share the president responsibilities among the Board members depending on interest and availability. Another email will be sent out by Lynn asking members to step up to volunteer to help.

Rain barrel workshop report: October 4 Stan Stanley led a group of volunteers and participants in creating rain barrels from pickle barrels. 16 barrels were available for purchase. 12 barrels were sold, leaving 4 to be painted by high school art students for sale at the May plant sale. Income \$720 less \$436.61 cost = \$283.39 profit to go toward grant funding. Another workshop will be held in the spring—hopefully in the Blacksburg area.

Master Gardener Coordinator position: Interviews are taking place right now. There were over 10 applicants for the position. Hopefully the position will be filled quickly. In the meantime, there may be some plant clinics that may not be staffed due to lack of volunteers/coordination.

General membership Potluck dinner: Will be held on Thursday, November 20, 6 pm at the Government Building in Christiansburg. Wendy will be asked for a detailed list of agenda items that need to be discussed at the meeting. Can we get access to a laptop for a power point presentation that can run during the dinner. Kelli will be approached for this. Grant project leaders will be asked to present a 10-15 minute presentation of the funded project. Suggested projects were: NRV Detention, Floyd County HS Vermiculture, Micah's Backpack/Garden, YMCA Garden. A thank-you will be held for Wendy for all her hard work and dedication in the past years. This will be before the meal.

New Business: A date for a November Board meeting will be decided prior to the Potluck meeting. Grants approval will be the main agenda.

We will once again contact the general membership for donations for a raffle basket for the Potluck. Beth will be starting some spearmint plants for table center pieces to be used as raffle gifts.

Upcoming dates:

November TBD Board meeting for Grants approvals
November 20 Potluck dinner , 6 pm, Government Center, Christiansburg
May 9 Annual Plant Sale, Government Center, Christiansburg

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Kirby, sec.

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association



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NRV Master Gardener Coordinator position is open

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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 NRV MGA 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.

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