



# GRAPEVINE



New River Valley Master Gardener Association

October/November 2015

## Fall Snapshots.

Yes, the leaves are falling and frost has hit, but gardens are still fun.



Above left is beauty berry.  
To the right is pulmonaria in  
the left front, Hellaborus,  
and Solomon's Seal in the  
back.



## Fall is FUN

Try something new next spring and order yourself up some bulbs to bloom in the fall— hardy cyclamen.

I've been fascinated with cyclamen my whole life. A potted plant of it was one of the first commercially grown flowering plants I owned (someone must have given it to me). Never recovered.

The hardy (fall blooming) cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium* is one species) are fun to grow. They are a much smaller version of the *C.persicum*—the florist's version . The bulbs are about 1" across when you purchase them, so do not need to go much deeper than 1". The whole plant will top out at 6". The pink flowers will appear starting in August or September and bloom through October. Foliage will appear at the same time and die back in the spring. Plant in semi shade in neutral to slightly basic soil. They should be hardy down to zone 5. Being bulbs, they can withstand summer drought very well. Some other varieties of the hardy types are *C. purpurascens*, *C. coum*,. . Most of these species have very pretty variegated, if small in size, foliage. *C. purpurascens* starts to bloom a little earlier; like August. As with a lot of bulbs (except daffodils which seem to grow anywhere I put them) they do not like wet feet and really do not do well in heavy clay . Bulbs that have been in the ground for a while will start to form clumps; but they do not spread as vigorously as most jonquils do.

Since they are fall blooming, (good) catalogs will offer them in with their summer blooming bulbs and not offer them in the fall with tulips and jonquils and the like.

Although lots of references will tell you to put bone meal on bulbs, I have had so much problem with critters digging up the bone meal (with glee) that I stick to using

decent soil and synthetic fertilizer when needed. In my yard the native soil is so acidic I will throw around wood ashes.



Then some fall things are edible.

And witch hazel, for me, is a faithful bloomer; although when the flowers first come out the leaves are still attached.



Besides things to look at, fall is winter squash season. There seem to be lots available this year at many markets.

One I had for the first time was a Delicata. This is an old variety which is making a recent comeback. These girls do not require any curing, and are extremely sweet (best winter squash I've had I think). We have also consumed lately spaghetti squash (OK, but not worth the hype I think), kabocha and sweet dumpling. And don't forget the baking (pie) pumpkin. Interestingly, delicata are more closely related to summer squash (both are *Cucurbita pepo*), and they really only keep for a month or so. The same goes for spaghetti squash. And do not put any of them in the refrigerator; they do not keep much longer and can alter the taste. For a while there we were eating so many of them even the chickens had their fill of squash seeds. The seeds are perfectly edible for us humans, too.

If you have problems cutting them, clean off a hack saw and have at it. Better than trying to stab it with a kitchen knife and having it slip.

Simple cutting in half and baking works well (can add butter or molasses) but here is another idea:

### Baked Squash & Ground Turkey from

<https://www.penzeys.com/>

Recipe courtesy of Nina Templeton



## Ingredients

- 3 lbs. squash ( 1 large butternut; 2 acorn squash )
- 1/2 Cup uncooked brown rice
- 2/3 Cup water
- 1 1/2 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1 TB. PENZEYS CURRY POWDER
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1 jalapeño pepper, minced, optional
- 1 Cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 Cup golden raisins
- 2 TB. chopped fresh parsley

## Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°. Cut the squash lengthwise. Place, cut side down, on a nonstick or oiled baking sheet and bake at 350° for 40 minutes (30 for acorn squash) or until tender. While the squash bakes, bring 2/3 cup water to a boil. Add the rice and cook, uncovered, for 40 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a nonstick pan. Add the curry, onion, turkey and jalapeño (if using) and cook until browned. Remove from heat and stir in the tomato sauce, raisins and warm cooked rice. Remove the squash from the oven. Carefully turn over using a spatula as they can rip when they are soft. Fill the squash with the mix and broil for 6-8 minutes or until heated through and lightly browned. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

This is good without the meat, also.

## Annual Meeting Coming Up

The NRVMGGA annual end-of-year meeting is November 20th. Some hints on what will happen:

1. Bring some food to share, something to eat on and with. Beverages provided.
2. Announce results of election which will be done (electronically) by the time of the meeting. We are still requesting nominations for positions of Pres, VP, Sec, Treas and members at large. from you, the members, BEFORE November 9th. the meeting on Nov20th (Friday). So if you want to run, or if you want to nominate someone else , please contact any board member.
3. Brief report from work done on revising the bylaws
4. Brief report on results from Kelli's survey from early October
5. Reports from recipients of the community grants.
6. Gift basket silent auction.

Try to remember to bring your weapons to eat with AND on although we can always scrounge up paper plants and plastic -wear. The club will provide fluids and cups if you forget containers for fluids. If any club member has a topic they wish to bring up before the group please contact the president so the topic can get on the agenda.

The Nominating committee has contacted many members and the following are ready to serve for next year:

Erica Jones as President Wendy Silverman as Vice President , Sharon Elfried as Treasurer Gwen Ewing, as Secretary. Three members have stepped up as members at large, Steve Hale, Evelyn Melia and Sarah Smiley . We really welcome more nominations, which can be sent to Gwen Ewing on the nominations committee. Do it now!! At the meeting we will be ANNOUNCING the winners of the election so nominations from the floor will have been closed on the 20th. Dates for closing nominations will be decided Nov5th and an on-line ballot shortly after that will be available.

Also for our November end-of-year meeting we are organizing a basket of goodies to auction/raffle off (or hey, if we get enough donations, TWO baskets). Lynn Brammer is coordinating this; so if you have anything that would go in one, please let her know and get the goods to her. Also, feel free to bring old magazines to give away or swap, or anything else you would like to give away. We will set up a "free bee" table. Is a good time of year to find a new home for that house plant, perhaps!

## Visit to Red Sun Farms next to Dublin International Airport

We had a fabulous turnout of members and a few guests for our Monday meeting (was attendance better because it was a Monday??). In any case, we got suited up in row-cover-est long sleeved lab coats; and those folks whose shoes had been out in (garden) dirt got blue shoe covers.

The complex is really just getting started with two more expansions planned. Currently the glass houses cover multiple acres. Red Sun already has growing facilities in Canada and a big one in Mexico, and wanted an presence in the middle of the eastern seaboard. Our guide (chief grower ????) several times commented that western Virginia is not the easiest place to grow tomatoes—too hot at night apparently. Dublin is a central location for shipping up and down the east coast and shipping over the Appalachians.

We got to go in the really really big greenhouse (long and tall—the roof is 27 feet tall) containing tomatoes grown for bunch production. Since the plants are indeterminate, their stems (denuded of lower leaves) are pulled along horizontally with the growing top of each plant hung from strings in the roof. When we were there, each stem contained about 6 bunches of tomatoes. Bunches are picked when all the tomatoes in the bunch show some color. A lot of the bunches had plastic spring supports on them to keep the stems from kinking.

## Red Sun Visit, continued

The organic house was empty. Plants appeared to be grown in containers, of a sort, on the ground. Organic plants are fertilized by top dressing approximately once every three weeks.

Tomato plants are planted early in the year after the whole house is cleaned out. Our guide did mention that there are other crop rotation systems besides all in, all out. The tomato plants in the non-organic area are grown in coco fiber in a hydroponic system. All the water (fertilized) is caught and recycled. They can catch about 75% of their water needs from the greenhouse roof, and purchase the rest from the town of Dublin.

Heating is done by natural gas heating hot water. The water is heated during the day and stored in a very large tank; and the resulting carbon dioxide is piped into the greenhouses. The hot water is piped through the greenhouse along the floors in approximately 3" pipes. Accessing the plants is done between rows on devices that ride along the tops of the heating pipes. Tops of the plants were about 12' tall so you need elevation for plant care.

We toured the broiler room that holds two broilers large enough to set up a small apartment in. The same area also contains tanks for the plant—water system. Used water is treated and put back into the system.

After the tour we had a brief meeting.

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### Report from one mini grant:

The Christiansburg Library has been recipient of grants from NRVGMA for a number of years. This fall the library advertised a "Plant This, and Do NOT Plant This" seminar for me. The library advertising their happenings in-house on a screen above book check-out. Had seven folks show up!

I took in samples of Japanese knotweed (past full bloom), non-native wisteria, barberry and *Houttuynia cordata*. This last one I swear I saw for sale this year after not seeing it for years. Baaad. I confessed my sins to planting three of these; the knotweed came with the property but I see that planted locally, too.

The points I tried to make were 1. even experienced gardeners can make mistakes 2. what is "invasive" for you might not be for other locations (although for the knotweed I suspect you would have to be living in the artic) 3. a lot of "bad" plants have a lot of appeal. I think folks were impressed that I would publically admit to being stupid about buying those four plants.

For the "Plant This" part I raved about allium as a under planted (spring bulb) species. Allium do have the problem of very so-so foliage that dies quickly in the summer, but just tuck them behind something to hid their leaves. Allium come in a pretty good range of colors—white, pink, green, blue—purple, and yellow so you can use with most any other color plant. The library is a classic red brick, so the only thing that looks washed out there are the light pinks. I also mentioned for any bulb—plant in clumps of at least 10 bulbs especially at a public establishment like a library.

I tried to get volunteers to help plant the allium and daffodils I had( with no luck )(besides the MGer in attendance) . I did give some leftover bulbs to the head librarian though which was nice to be able to do.

Erica Jones

MINUTES  
NRVMGA BOARD MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 2015 VT GREENHOUSES

The meeting was called to order by President, Erica Jones at 5:30 pm .Present: Erica Jones, Lynn Brammer, Beth Kirby, Evelyn Melia, Gwen Ewing, Nina Templeton.

Treasurer's Report: Rain Barrel income—\$585;Expenses: Rain barrel hardware, speaker gifts, etc—\$603.43.Current Balances:Operating\$1594.05, Scholarship\$125.00, Grants\$6918.44.Total \$8637.49.Approved.

Secretary Minutes from September: approved.

Nominating Committee: Gwen Ewing, Steve Hale and Evelyn Melia have agreed to be Members at Large. Gwen Douglass and Stan Stanley have been approached for the Vice-President. An email will be sent to all members for nominations.

Grants Committee report: An advertisement for the grants has been placed in the Roanoke Times.

Old Business: Kelli Scott has sent out the By-laws survey. Nina and Erica have looked at the site. Erica noted that when she tried to save it, it was submitted. Be careful when filling it out.

Microphone: Gwen Ewing has found a microphone that is available to VCE groups free of charge. It is stored in the AV office in Saunders. Kelli will be able to authorize its use for our functions.

Meeting Dates: discussion about changing the day of week for general meetings in hopes of getting more attendance. Will be brought up at annual meeting.

Vice-President's job: Seems it has morphed into the VP's job to secure a speaker. Will clarify in by-laws.

Website domain: Erica has secured a new host for our website—Moca Host. The new domain name will remain the same—[NRVMGA.org](http://NRVMGA.org).The cost was about \$15.It was approved to pay Erica for her expense regarding domain name. Hosting of the site will be about \$14 per year. Erica did not have the exact numbers. Beth moved to sign on with Moca Host—approved. The information on the website will be transitioned ASAP.

Share the Spare: Lynn reported that it has been closed down in the Blacksburg Market for the year. The Christiansburg Market will continue until it closes later in the year. Still looking for volunteers to man the tent on Thursday evenings.

Potluck/November meeting: The date is Friday, November 20, 6 pm at the Govt Center. Nina was concerned about having enough help to set up since she might have to work that day. Several people have helped to set up in the past. It was noted that drinks are often in short supply. Instead of having a raffle "basket", donations would be encouraged from the membership to raffle off as individual items. The centerpieces for the tables will be plants that can be used for the raffle. Beth has several plants left over from the plant sale that she has divided and will provide. It was suggested to recognize Stan Stanley at the meeting for his great efforts with the rain barrel workshops. The slate of officers will be presented at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

NRV Fair Plant Clinic Booth: a discussion was held concerning the lack of participation by the public. It is the location in an area primarily used by political parties and vendors? Would we have a better response if we could be positioned in the exhibit building near the produce? Erica noted that she thought we used to be in that building.

Classes for next Master Gardener training will start after the first of the year.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Kirby, secretary

MINUTES September 2015  
NRVMGA BOARD MEETING 5:30 PM GOV'T CENTER, CBURG

The meeting was called to order by President Erica Jones. Present: Donna Fern, Sharon Eifried, Nina Templeton, Mo Fallon, Lynn Brammer, Stan Stanley, Kelli Scott, Evelyn Melia, Beth Kirby.

Stan Stanley was invited to speak first due to time constraints. He is holding rain barrel workshops this fall and suggested that the price of the workshop barrels be increased to \$65 from \$60 for the next workshop Sept. 12 at the Gov't Center. 6 barrels have been sent to area artists to be painted for the next plant sale and Mo noted that more could be done. The prices suggested for the plant sale were \$75 for black and up to \$150 for painted. The cost of barrels and hardware is about \$29 each. He picked up 18 barrels in the last load—2 were free. Nina moved to approve new pricing—Approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** A detailed breakdown of income/expense was provided to the Board and Approved. There are still 3 rain barrels that have not been paid for. Pulaski Friends of the Library made a donation to the club in honor of Mickey Balcony's contribution to the Garden Tour. They also sent in ½ of proceeds from the Garden Tour. Total income for August \$1195.00. Expenses included speaker Thank You gifts, and rain barrel hardware for \$58.10.

No Scholarship or Grants funds awarded. Present balances: operating 1699.24, scholarship 125.00, grants 6831.68, Total \$8655.92

**Minutes** from August 6 meeting provided by Erica and amended by Nina—Approved

**Grants:** Donna reported that the Grants Committee met on Sept 1. They reviewed the protocol that has been in place since 2013—dates for deadlines, etc. They plan to advertise by Sept. 15, receive grant proposals by Nov. 1, have evaluations done by first week of November to present grant recommendations to the Board by December 1.

The 2016 Grants announcement will be disseminated to area schools, newspapers, Facebook, extension agents, 4H. They will be evaluated for educational/environmental impacts. Letters will be sent to approved recipients with monetary award, and to non-recipients with explanation. It was suggested that Master Gardener members encourage likely grant proposals and help to write, also to increase the liaison participation. In August, the Board approved \$2500. Sharon suggested to keep \$3000—1000 mini grants, 1000 barrel expenses, 1000 seed money—and provide the balance for the grants. Approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Discussion about sending the President to Master Gardener College was tabled since Susan Lockwood not present.

By-Laws: Kelli will be sending out a survey to the membership to find out what everyone thinks about the organization—where it is going, how it is doing as a whole, etc. Should be out by mid-Sept and returned by end of Sept. There will be a by-laws meeting on Oct. 12 for the board—2 hours with facilitator. Would a vote be possible at the November meeting? By-laws committee: Evelyn Melia, Kelli Scott, Mo Fallon, Jon Freeborn, Susan Lockwood.

Kelli is working on a directory of grants that can be presented to various groups/meetings that are attended by extension agents to promote grants.

November meeting- scheduled for Thursday November 19, potluck at Govt center 6 pm.

Kelli noted that there are several interns from the MG class of 2015 who have not yet completed their hours. This seems to be an increasing problem—the students are not following through with the Master Gardener commitment. Interviews will be held for future students to try to wean out the people unlikely to follow through with the training/time commitment.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Plant clinic boxes: we already have two. Darlene Smith in Giles has asked to have one stay in Giles to prevent excessive travel to pick one up in Cburg. Evelyn Melia moved to buy plant clinic box with limit of \$100. Approved.

Mo Fallon suggested a change in meeting date/time due to member involvement in the Cburg Farmer's Market on Thursday evenings. Since no other day of the week works for the majority of Board members, suggestion was tabled.

Leslie Mathews will be leaving. She has accepted a job at VT as a full time librarian. \$50 was approved for a gift for her. Kelli will get it. Her position will be advertised. Lynn Brammer was appointed as our representative to the VMGA. Annette Perry has resigned from her position on the Board as a Member at Large. Erica will be looking into a website provider for the NRVMGA website. Needs to be done by December 31.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Kirby, secretary

UPCOMING DATES:

October 1	NRVMGA Board meeting, VT Greenhouse classroom, 5:30 pm
October 12	By-laws committee meeting, location TBD, 6-8 pm
October 19	NRVMGA meeting, Red Sun Greenhouses, Dublin, 6 pm
November 19	NRVMGA Potluck Dinner/meeting, Gov't Center, Cburg, 6 pm

(NOTE - date wrong in these minutes—new /correct date is Nov 20)

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## Misc Stuff

The training class schedule for 2016 is not cast in stone, but last I heard the classes start in March 1st 2016 and will be held 1-4pm "on the Tech campus". Tell your buddies if you know of anyone willing to put in the 50 volunteer hours needed to fulfill the obligation. Extension has been struggling with the problem of people who want to take the class, but really do not intend to fulfill their volunteer obligation.

The coordinator job is not currently being advertised. Stay tuned.

The web site HAS been moved. New address is : [www.nrvmga.org](http://www.nrvmga.org). Anyone interested in setting up a (connected?) blog page please contact current web mistress Erica (Jones).

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## Year in Review

We have had a really nice selection of meeting speakers organized enthusiastically by Susan Lockwood (who is stepping down off the board this year). In years past I have been bad about getting to the club meetings but I really enjoyed them this year. Would have liked more attendance at some of the meetings, though.

We have had Barry Robinson talk pruning, Stephanie Huckstien talk in the VT greenhouses on indoor plants (made me think about my watering technique), a tour of an organic vegetable farm in Floyd, a tour of a very large commercial vegetable greenhouse in Dublin, a look at Debra Grafts home production garden, and had a time to contemplate the meaning of peace and violence in our society and specifically on the VT campus. We had a wonderful plant sale (where it did not rain ) which will fund community grants for next year. Stan Stanly went out of his way to organize and hold some five water barrel clinics where folks in all of the NRV counties got a chance to put together a rain barrel. Pearisburg and Christiansburg started having plant clinics at their new farmers market on Saturdays. The club, again this year, as for approximately the last three years, spent more on operating expenses than we brought in money labeled for such. Our operating costs are such things are the cost of a web site, supplies for pot lucks, thanks yous, outdated seed packets to give away;, plant clinic materials, and other gifts



## 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 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 and/or education.

We need a Grapevine editor. Please consider doing this! We don't bite!

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### Contact Us

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**The NRV Master Gardener Coordinator position is OPEN**  
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