



# The Grapevine

April 2012

## New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

### ***New River Valley Master Gardeners***

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

*The Grapevine* welcomes news, articles, questions, editorials, and comments. *The Grapevine* is published monthly and provided to all active members of the NRV MGA. Non-members may subscribe for \$15/yr. Please submit all items to the Newsletter Editor **by the 25th** in order to be included in next month's issue.

#### **Officers**

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**MINUTES OF NRV MASTER GARDENER  
BOARD MEETING  
MARCH 12th, 2012**

Location: Montgomery County Government Building, Extension Office

In Attendance: Connie Lawson, Donna Fern, Gwen Ewing, Lynn Brammer, Ini Beckman, Rosemarie Sawdon, Wendy Silverman, Mickey Balconi and Cynthia Mize joined later in the meeting.

Connie opened the meeting at approximately 5:45pm.

Minutes of February board meeting were accepted and approved as written.

In view of Bob's recovery, he was not present to give a Treasurer's report.

Wendy presented the mail, and Donna opened it. She reported that the balance on the B&T Bank statement showed \$3784.25 in the checking account. It was decided that a second person should be able to make deposits or other banking functions as may be needed. Gwen volunteered to obtain a signature card for a second person and also to make the deposit of checks received to date.

Connie thanked everyone for attending the February tree pruning meeting at her house. There were 23 members in attendance. Unfortunately, we did not complete the job, but learned a lot, and made a dent in the pruning. Connie mentioned the General Meeting at her house, Thursday, March 15th, with Jon Vest giving a demonstration of lawn establishment and maintenance. She will send out announcement and directions; as well as a reminder to bring gloves.

Next order of old business: Gwen contacted a person knowledgeable about Plant Sales, and she stated that new and different plants sell well. It was suggested to not have as many regular (ordinary) plants. However ALL plants are welcome, and news articles or pictures about a particular plant, is popular. It was decided that quart size is preferred.

March 12th, 2012 Gwen composed a draft letter to give to the various sources (nurseries) when we ask for donations. She will present a final letter to the members. We are asking ALL members to donate one plant, garden book, garden tool, gloves, or any item that is appropriate to sell at a plant sale. Ini volunteered to do a flyer for the event; Rosemarie volunteered to inform the Roanoke Times, Current Edition, and News Messenger. We need lots of publicity!

Also discussed was the idea of decorated pots which was agreed upon at the February meeting (see minutes). Everyone attending the Potluck Graduation on Friday, May 4th, is asked to bring

a decorated pot which will be sold the next day at the plant sale. The pots will be displayed at the Potluck dinner, and folks can vote for their favorite pot by placing \$1.00 in that pot. The pot with the most dollars is the winner. This is a clever way to raise funds which are needed in order for the Association to fund the grant programs.

The plant sale on Saturday, May 5th, is our big fundraiser for the year, and the Board is asking all members to participate. This is a rain or shine event. In the case of rain, it will be held inside the Government building. Everyone please participate, dig up, propagate, and help make the event a big success. An email is being sent to the membership, and we beg your participation.

Unfortunately, there is a conflict with two other events that day in Shawsville & Floyd, so some members will be needed at those events, with further information forthcoming from Wendy.

#### Future Meetings:

April 9th, Monday, 6:00PM Meet at Cranwell Peace Garden, Dr. John Seiler, Forestry Professor will provide a walk through Stadium Woods explaining the need to preserve this special, old growth forest. Some trees are over 300 years old.

April 16th, Thursday, 5:30pm Board Meeting

April 19th, Thursday, 6:30pm Montgomery County Government Building, Jon Vest will give a presentation on Plant Clinics,

May 4th, Friday, 6:30pm, Potluck & Graduation

June 14th, Thursday, 6:30pm, Elissa Steeves, York Drive, Blacksburg

July 19th, Thursday, 6:30pm Holly Scoggins Blueberry Farm, Newport

April 16th. Wendy asked someone to invite Mark Gordon to the meeting. He is the 2012 trainee representative. Lynn volunteered to invite him.

Wendy then told us about the Virginia Cooperative Extension Volunteer Appreciation Reception & Community Leaders Meet and Greet. Monday, April 2nd, Montgomery County Government Center, Multipurpose Room (Upstairs). This event is in celebration of spring and a thank you to all Extension volunteers, which includes 4H, Family & Consumer Sciences and Agriculture and Natural Resources including Master Gardeners. It is an opportunity to mix and mingle with the Extension Family; and Community Leaders; refreshments will be served. Master Gardeners will have a table. Rosemarie and others volunteered to work at the table.

Wendy needs pictures for a poster, and we will have a power point showing our accomplishments. Anyone with time and talent is welcome to help with this project. Let's show the Board of Supervisors and County Officials the great work we do for Montgomery County to keep the necessary funding for Extension. So please participate, on April 2nd, Monday, 4:30 to 7:00pm.

Connie adjourned meeting at approximately 7:10pm

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon

**Floyd Jr. Master Gardeners**  
**April 1, 2012**  
**By: Shana Maron Kennedy**

April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 marked the beginning of the first ever Jr. Master Gardener program in Floyd County. Eleven excited students arrived at the Jessie Peterman Memorial Library on Sunday afternoon eager to learn about the joys and wonders of gardening!

Five NRV Master Gardeners led the afternoon's lessons, which included a discussion on plants needs, safety and respect in the classroom and garden, a garden site selection, soil tests , and indentifying the different components and layers of soil with a FUN (and messy!) activity. Plenty of fun was had digging in the selected garden sight and we were sure to send the kids home just a teeny bit messier than they arrived--complete with great big grins from ear to ear! Jr. Master Gardener classes will continue to be held on the first and third Sunday of every month April-September with a graduation and certificate presentation at the Floyd Harvest Festival on September 22, 2012.

A great big thanks to all for the many collaborative efforts involved in making this program possible in Floyd County. Thank you also to the NRV MGA for allowing us to purchase the curriculum materials "Literature in the Garden" (and companion story books) and garden tools for the participants. Also thank you to the incredible staff at the Jesse Peterman Memorial Library for allowing our JMG class to use the library facilities and garden space!

We are all looking forward to a WONDERFUL season filled with lots of learn and growing!!!



April 15-21 National Volunteer Week  
By: Wendy Silverman  
NRV Master Gardener Coordinator

Happy National Volunteer Week! You are all amazing volunteers and I am so happy to be able to work with all of you. We have 48 (and counting) Master Gardener projects throughout the NRV. None of these could happen without your dedication and hard work. Thank you again for all that you do.

Long Keeper Tomatoes  
By: Connie Lawson

The following is an excerpt from a conversation I had with Connie at the Reception and is one I asked her to write about so we could publish it to all the MGs. I was way over the top to hear about these and went straight home and ordered seed! "I am still eating Long Keeper tomatoes. I just have a few left, however I have sure enjoyed them. This is the first year I have kept them this long. I usually have them till the first of Feb. I just put them in a lined coke tray and keep them in a cooler area of the house. (She explained she has a canning kitchen where she keeps them that is not heated but I am sure it is warm enough her pipes are safe. I asked about them needing to be in the dark and she replied that the room has windows.) You will lose some, however I check them to take the ones out that start to spoil. They are not real red on the outside, but red on the inside. I leave them on the vine until frost. Some will drop early so try to keep an eye on them. They are a medium size tomato. Believe me they taste better than the ones you buy in the store in the winter.

The following is contributed by Evelyn Meliano and is not only a great idea, but pretty!



# Package Your Seeds for Sharing

*Here's a simple and useful package for wrapping garden gifts.*

*By Mary Caldwell, El Paso, Texas*

MY HUSBAND, Grant, is a seed saver. Right now his workbench is covered with little plastic cups filled with a variety of seeds.

Many will end up in our tabletop "greenhouse," a homemade Plexiglas shelter where our garden begins to sprout. When we have extra seedlings—which we always do—we share them with friends and neighbors to brighten their days and their backyards.

Last year, our seed harvest was so bountiful it sprouted a new idea. Since everyone enjoyed our seedlings, we thought they might also like some seeds to start their own.

So Grant placed extra seeds into envelopes and little plastic sandwich bags, and we passed them on with our starts.

The problem was they didn't look very nice...and we began receiving a lot of phone calls asking where, when and how to plant the seeds.

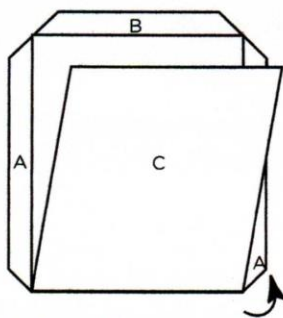
## Perfect Solution

After answering the same questions over and over, I decided to design personalized seed packets that would give all the information needed to plant and care for our gifts of the garden.

We've used these seed packets several times since, and they've worked well. We hope other gardeners will find them useful, too.

Make as many photocopies as you need of the full-size seed packet (at right). Color copies look very professional, but they are more expensive.

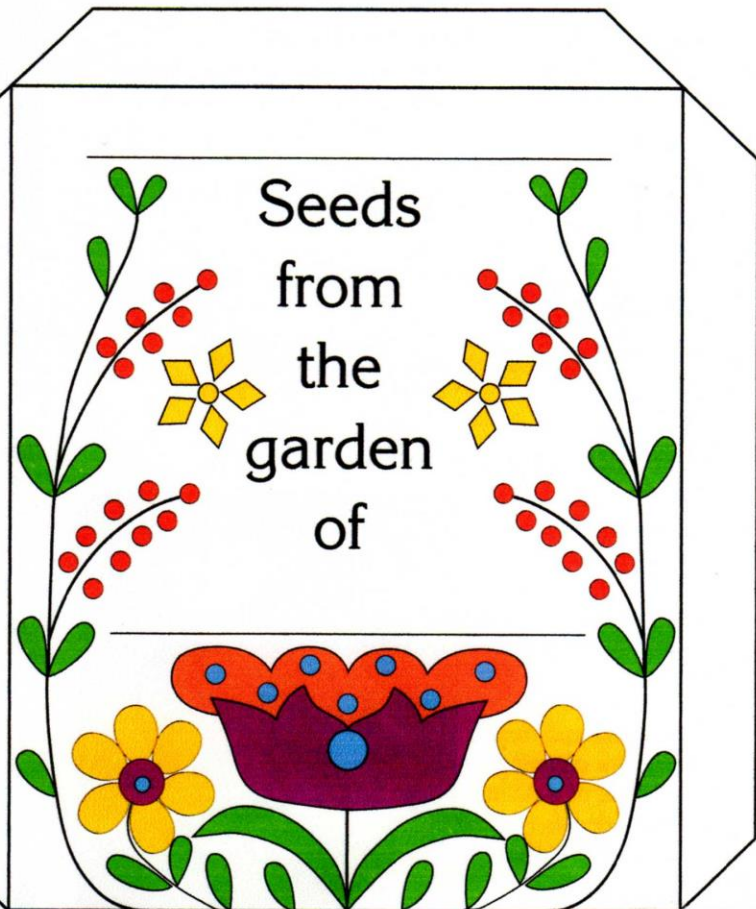
If you make black-and-white copies, add your own special touches with crayons, colored pencils or markers.



**GIFT-WRAP** garden seeds by copying this handy envelope. Simply cut it out, fold in half and glue tabs A to C.

To assemble, cut each seed packet along the outside borders with scissors (trim just inside the borders to ensure a good fit when folded). Crease the seed packet in half at the centerline and fold the two side flaps (A) to the back (C) and glue.

When dry, write the name of the seed type and any important information that will help your friends




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Instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

Color \_\_\_\_\_ Height \_\_\_\_\_

Partial \_\_\_\_\_ Shade \_\_\_\_\_ Sun \_\_\_\_\_

Perennial \_\_\_\_\_ Annual \_\_\_\_\_

successfully plant your seeds in their gardens. Then insert the seeds and tape down the top flap (B).

Now you're ready to share neatly packaged seeds that are guaranteed to grow friendships!

## **Recipe of the Month**

### **Connie Lawson, President**

Skunk deodorizer (Use this when your dog gets sprayed by a skunk)

1 quart of peroxide

1 box soda

2 Tablespoons of Dawn Detergent

Mix together and rub solution on the fur of your dog (or cat if you are brave enough). Let set for 5-10 minutes. Bath the dog with regular shampoo. Be sure to get their head and face, carefully avoiding the eyes.

### **April's Tasks**

#### **The Whole Garden**

- \*Begin digging new garden beds when the soil is workable.
- \*Prepare the soil for seeds.
- \*Start weeding your beds.
- \*Water newly planted trees, shrubs, flowers, and vegetables frequently.
- \*Remove winter mulch when growth begins.

#### **Trees and Shrubs**

- \*Remove the compost mounded over the base of your roses as the weather warms.
- \*Plant bare-root roses when the soil is workable.
- \*Prune repeat-blooming roses when the buds begin to swell.
- \*Dig up and replant rooted suckers from own-root shrubs and roses.
- \*Replant new shrubs and trees that have heaved out of the soil.
- \*Finish transplanting shrubs before the buds swell.
- \*Plant trees, shrubs, and vines you purchased balled-and-burlapped or in containers.
- \*Tidy the mulch in your shrub beds, adding more when necessary.
- \*Prune shrubs grown for interesting summer leaves or winter stems.

#### **Flowers and Grasses**

- \*Replant frost-heaved perennials.
- \*Cut back ornamental grasses and sedum 'Autumn Joy'.
- \*Transplant and divide summer- and fall-blooming perennials.
- \*Clean up ground cover beds and divide overcrowded plants to give them room.
- \*Add a layer of finished compost to your flowerbeds.
- \*Sow seeds of hardy annuals and perennials outdoors.
- \*Plant pansies and other cold-tolerant annuals.
- \*Harden-off hardy and half-hardy seedlings.
- \*Repair the lawn by sowing grass seed or laying patches of sod.

#### **Fruits and Vegetables**

- \*Begin planting asparagus roots in early to mid-spring.
- \*Lay planting rows with black polyethylene or fiber mulch.
- \*Direct-seed peas, fava beans, beets, and onions.
- \*Direct-seed lettuce, endive, escarole, and spinach.

- \*Direct-seed onions and shallots as soon as soil can be worked.
- \*Sow radishes throughout the season beginning now.
- \*Move broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower transplants into the garden.
- \*Start melons, pumpkins, summer squash, and winter squash indoors.
- \*Start tomatoes indoors.
- \*Start kitchen herbs indoors, to be transplanted outside.
- \*Cut back shrubby herbs.

Now that April is done, we have completed the *Garden Almanac, A Month-By-Month Guide* published by Country Living. It seems many have enjoyed this continuation and I need advice from you MGs as to what you would like, if anything, to replace this ongoing article. Please call or email me regarding your thoughts.

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