



July - August Grapevine

2013

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

Minutes of NRV Master Gardener Association

Board Meeting - July 11, 2013

Location: Montgomery County Government Building, Extension Office, Christiansburg, VA

In Attendance: Lynn Brammer, Maureen Fallon, Donna Fern, Gwen Ewing, Connie Lawson,
Erica Jones, Rosemarie Sawdon, Wendy Silverman

Meeting called to order at approximately 5:30pm.

Minutes from May 30 Board Meeting approved. Treasurer's Report July 2013 approved.

Discussion followed regarding Grant Committee and proposed changes to "Proposed Protocol for the Administration of the Grants Program" which were addressed at the May 30th Board meeting.

Several changes were proposed and approved. Donna will make changes to document and submit it to Board members and Grant Committee for approval. This document is one of three that will be referenced for all future grants. The other two documents are the "*Community Gardening Grants Program of the New River Valley Master Gardener Association*" and the "*Internal Member Mini Grants Program of the New River Valley Master Gardener Association*."

In addition to the amended protocol, it was decided to send letters to everyone that requests a *Community Gardening Grant* acknowledging the request. After the Grant Committee makes the decision of grant recipients, a letter will be sent either advising approval, or if the grant has not been approved, a letter explaining the reason for denying the request. Grant Committee will have Chair and Secretary to handle correspondence. All grant information will be put in spreadsheet form, as formulated by Donna, with an additional column for "date check was sent to recipient". The Treasurer will receive the information and mail the check. It was also decided that Internal Mini Grants can be any amount up to \$100.00. Discussion also concerned the responsibility of the Master Gardener Liaison to give a monthly report for all active grants.

New Business:

Lynn gave brief report on the "New River Garden Tour" indicating that it was a big success on a lovely sunny day. She will report further at next meeting when she gets final briefing from Friends of the Library.

Rosemarie mentioned the successful Pulaski Garden Tour and that Mickey Balconi said there were double the amount of attendees over last year, and that the NRV Master Gardener Association will receive \$375.00.

Lynn also talked about need for volunteers for the Share the Spare program. Wendy will set up calendar to indicate available times. Lynn also mentioned the Fruit Harvest in local orchards with help from YMCA volunteers. She is sending email message to all members regarding this topic.

Erica has sent an email message requesting additional members for Grant Committee. It was suggested that members of this committee be encouraged to serve a two year term.

Wendy announced that Linda Harris, with deep regret, has resigned as Co-Secretary. Rosemarie has volunteered to continue as Secretary, and Gwen has offered to serve as backup.

Donna is checking with Stan Stanley for "get together pizza party" date at his Pulaski home. August 9th possibility?

Wendy has arranged dates for rain barrel (cleaning) on July 17th, 6PM, and assembly July 20th, 10AM at Stan Stanley's home in Pulaski.

All orders taken at Plant Sale have been filled. Four are available for purchase. NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Wendy also addressed Carol Moates' concern regarding lack of material for GRAPEVINE. Board considered publishing less frequently, perhaps bi-monthly. Wendy checked with other groups and many only publish quarterly.

August Board meeting date to be announced after clarification of date for "pizza party".

Budget for 2014 Grant Funding will be discussed at next Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned approximately 7:30pm

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon

Officers for 2014

The members of the nominating committee which includes myself, Evelyn Melia, and Erica Jones (at this time) are collecting a slate of officer nominations for the year 2014. If you would like to serve on this committee please let me know. If you would like to consider being nominated for an office, please let me know that as well. The direction of our association depends on this important team of officers to guide us in to the new year and beyond. Please consider looking over the descriptions of responsibilities on our website and consider if you have the time to devote to any of these positions. All positions are open. Some of the current officers may agree to run for another term, but that is up to the membership. We announce the slate at our November potluck and then have those in attendance vote. Fresh perspectives and ideas keep us all inspired to continue our commitment to this wonderful group. We have made a tremendous impact through our educational projects as we work to make the New River Valley aware of the Master Gardening program and its accomplishments. But we can always do better. Help us as we continue into 2014, to have a positive impact on those that we serve.

Thanks! Lynn Brammer lbrammer@vt.edu

Keeping up

Would you like to keep up with all the news, events, and activities of Montgomery County Agriculture & Natural Resources? Stay posted with our social media pages. We can be found on Facebook and Flickr. We're working hard to expand our efforts and grow our audience. Please help us spread the word to engage with public and get some real conversation started. Check us out and Like or bookmark our page.



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Bookmark or save page to your favorites to keep up with photos of activities

Sent by: Kelli Scott, Montgomery County ANR Agent

Girl Scouts in the Garden at the Pulaski County Library

Two of the Master Gardener Projects at the Pulaski County Library intertwine in the garden. The Children's Zoo Garden is flourishing in the front of the library along with the Pass-along Plant Garden in the front and the Shade Garden at the back entrance to the library. Additionally, Mickey Balconi has started a Master Gardener project helping Junior Girl Scouts of Troop 1247 attain their Flower Badge. The purpose of earning this badge is to learn "all that is wonderful about flowers." Some of the activities include learning about the science of a flower, how flowers can be healing and calming, and creating something beautiful with flowers.

The Girl Scouts planted pink and white snap "dragons" in the zoo garden to join the "baby duck" petunias planted by the pre-school reading time group. The girls are helping to plant, weed, water and maintain the gardens this summer. This was a great help to Mickey Balconi and Sharon Eifried as they worked to get the gardens at the library ready for the Garden Tour.



According to Carol Smith, one of the leaders of Troop 1247, the girls meet at the library on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays and have been together since their Daisy Scout days in Kindergarten. The other leaders are Gayle Kiser, Lee Spiegel, and Marsha Pack. The scouts have taken on the Library Gardens as their Power of Team Project for the troop. One of the scouts commented that "This is a way that we can give back to the library for letting us meet here." Ms. Smith notes that this fits the spirit of the Girl Scout Promise which instructs the girls to make the world a better place and to help people at all times.



The girl Scouts are meeting with Mickey every week this summer to help care for the gardens. In the photo to the left two of the scouts can be seen dead heading the black-eyed susans in the pass-along garden.

Submitted by: Sharon Eifried

Christiansburg Library Project (mini grant)

There were two public sessions scheduled for the spring at the Christiansburg Public Library. The earlier session is designed for school children, and consists of bed maintenance. I try to cover topics such as a) how to identify poison ivy, b) how to pull weeds (a real art!), c) how to plant bedding plants and d) why we put particular varieties where we do (color, sunlight exposure, watering needs, and “wild flowers”). I also try to discuss “soil” – what’s in it, why we don’t “work” it when wet, what is clay, what is NOT clay. And finally I try to include a brief synopsis of mulch. Other than the poison ivy session and weed pulling, I try to talk to the children while we are all working otherwise the kids get too wiggly.

This year a group of home schoolers were signed up to come. What I ended up with was two (resident) librarians. The staff at the Christiansburg Library is an agreeable bunch! In 2012 we got a batch of 3rd graders but I was told this year the kids would not “appreciate” the out of classroom work. So be it.

The second public session was fairly vaguely titled “Containers” but we had 17 folks show up. Two women left early (see a comment below) but the rest seemed to enjoy it. There were about four under the age of 16 that came too; they got a free “container” plant to take home.

I started with a short tour of the small (container!) water garden and then went terrestrial. I mixed up potting mix from scratch, talked about the particular plants going in the 4 container that got filled, the growing conditions (full sun and potentially fairly hot), how to plant bedding plants, fertilizer, pH, and container design. I could not get any of the audience to get into the dirt with me so I talked while I was doing things, which is a tad harder than just talking.

I mentioned the two ladies who left early as a reminder. With an open session like this you will always get a wide range of knowledge. A skilled presenter may be able put this to work; you can (almost) always find someone who knows a little more about something than you do and incorporate that into

the presentation. If some of the audience knows too much for the difficulty we run the risk of them leaving early.

For funding, I applied for a regular grant for year 2013 and got transferred to "mini" status for funding for plants, containers and potting mix. The library also has a certain amount of money for such endeavors.

The best part may have been getting written up in the Montgomery News Messenger. Go MG!

By: Erica Jones

Healthy Food... Watermelon and Tomatoes are Both Abundant Sources of Lycopene

Watermelon & Heirloom Tomato Salad

2 organic watermelons, peeled & cut into chunks

8 organic local heirloom tomatoes (cut up)

24 mint or basil leaves

2 tablespoons red onion (sliced paper thin)

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar

Feta cheese (optional)

Sea Salt to taste

Pepper to taste

Arrange the pieces of watermelon and tomato on a serving platter. Sprinkle with mint/basil leaves and red onion, drizzle with olive oil and vinegar.

Finish with salt and pepper

ENJOY!

Sent by: Rosemarie Sawdon

Looking for EDU hours? Read a book from the lending library. It is located on our office.

The NRVMGGA has a lending library full of various books and even a leaf/flower press! The Library is in the storage area in the Montgomery County Extension office. There is a clip board with a sign out sheet there, and a list of books. Also attached to this email is the library list as well. There is no borrowing time limit, but please be respectful and return a book when you are done, or if another person contacts you for the book, that you make arrangements to get it back to the office so it can be checked out again.

By: Kelli Scott

NRVMGA Meeting held June 13, 2013 at Stonewood Garden

For the June general meeting more than twenty members visited Stonewood Garden, the private two-acre garden of Mary LaLone and Kim Knight on Mt. Tabor Road in Blacksburg. Kim shared his experiences designing and building gardens, arbors, terraces, water features and a greenhouse located

throughout the property. Mary invited us into her greenhouse of tropicals, including orchids and carnivorous plants.

Members relaxed by the edge of the Japanese garden with koi pond and stream, and enjoyed lovely vignettes of lush plantings and potted plants. We are grateful to Kim and Mary for the opportunity to explore their beautiful gardens. Be sure to check out additional photos shared by Kelli Scott on Flickr at the following link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/97708084@N06/sets/72157634194489397/>



Creating and maintaining a water feature.



Gravel paths weave throughout the property.



Kim Knight talks about the property.



Terraced landscaping.

By: Donna Fern

2013 Garden Tour

The stats are still being calculated, but it seems that this may have been a record breaking year for our New River Valley Garden Tour! We play an important role with the tour each year. I want to thank each and everyone who assisted in taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity to let the community know about the many aspects of sustainable gardening practices that were evident in the eight gardens on the tour. I would also like to single out our own Beth Umberger and her amazing team that proudly displayed the Montgomery Museum Garden that was on the tour. The many lessons to be learned from that garden should make us all proud that the public had the opportunity to see for themselves how a garden can reflect an environment that that can thrive and encourage using native plants without using pesticides and chemicals. The over 500 tourists Saturday the 6th witnessed what has been done in this wonderful garden as well as eight others. Thank you Beth and all the others that played such an amazing role in making the tour a success!!

By: Lynn Brammer

Share the Spare/Neighborhood Harvest

The collection booth at the Blacksburg Farmers Market is seeing more and more donations each week. The generous vendors also seem to have more to share at the end of the market. We remind everyone that we are a drop point for their own backyard excess. If you take it to your friends/neighbors/church then thank you, you just saved us a step. I'm sure we all do our best to make sure that our own extras get on the table of someone that would love to see that healthy home grown option. Now it's time to ask you to be on the lookout for local fruit trees that aren't being picked. If you could note the address and pass it on, we will attempt to get a team together and go pickin', after asking permission of course. We collaborate with the Blacksburg YMCA on this. We have a list serve of volunteer pickers we have collected (most live in Blacksburg where we do most of the harvesting). When we pick, we offer the homeowner a portion of what we pick, although they have usually gotten all they want already. We offer the team of pickers helping that day a portion to take in gratitude for their efforts and then the rest we send off to the local pantries. Also, if there is rotting fruit on the ground we try to pick most of that up as well to pass on to our local farmers market pig farmers. So it becomes a win-win for all! If you would like to be added to our list of pickers, please send me your name and email and we will add you to our list. We pick at various times and of course, try to dodge the heat. Not everyone will be able to make every picking, but you come as you can. We had a beautiful cherry tree in Christiansburg that belongs to our own MGer Matt Hart. Thank you Matt!

Please let me know:

- * if you would like to spend some hours at the booth Saturdays 8 until 2 (we are under a tent!, we skip Steppin' Out weekend August 3rd)
- * if you have garden surplus
- * if you would like to be added to our pickin list
- * if you know of a tree (or grapevines/berries)

Together we can work to see that excess local produce gets on the tables of those in our communities that might not otherwise get these healthy options!

Thank you! Lynn Brammer lbrammer@vt.edu

Town and Country Garden Tour of Pulaski County

The Town and Country Garden Tour of Pulaski County was held on June 29th following the theme of “Gardens to Visit: Lessons to Learn.” The weather was gorgeous and the gardens beautiful as can be seen in the accompanying photos of two of the six gardens. Every garden was spectacular in its own way and everyone who attended is grateful to the owners for their hard work and willingness to share their creations with the community. This year, 75 people attended the garden tour which is nearly twice as many people as attended in 2012. The proceeds of \$750.00 are shared equally between the Master Gardeners Association and the Friends of the Library of Pulaski County. The Library generously donated the supplies necessary for producing posters, tickets and signage for the day of the tour.

Volunteers from the Friends of the Library of Pulaski County welcomed visitors to the gardens and sold tickets. Master Gardeners circulated in the gardens with the visitors and answered questions. Every person who purchased a ticket to the garden tour was invited to enter their ticket stub into a raffle drawing. Ten businesses located in Draper, Dublin, Fairlawn, and Pulaski donated prizes. The donors included Draper Mercantile and Holy Cow Antiques in Draper; Vaughn’s Nursery and Wal Mart in Dublin; Lowe’s in Fairlawn; Ayers Produce, Emmanuel Bookstore, Flowers by Dreama Dawn, Magic Mart, and Poor Boys Produce in Pulaski. On the Monday following the tour, winners of the raffle were notified by telephone and asked to come to the Pulaski County Library to pick up their prizes.



The above photo depicts Master Gardener Evelyn Melia (left), Deena Stowers (center) and a visitor at the beautiful Stowers garden. Evelyn and Ms. Stowers mingled with garden visitors and shared a great deal of wonderful information about the plantings and the design of the garden. A map was available showing the names of many of the plants and their position in the garden. This was a most educational experience.

The photo below depicts the raffle prizes as they were displayed at the Pulaski County Library before and during the tour.





The photo to the right shows the refreshment table set in the gazebo at Hillcrest, the home of Ann Bolt. The above photo depicts the sweetheart swing in "Ben's Memorial Garden" that Ms. Bolt created in memory of her late husband. This is a great example of what visitors to the gardens referred to as the "heart and soul" present in many of the gardens on the tour.



Old Cucumbers? Here's a Recipe

Peel , cut long ways, deseed and thinly slice cucumbers. For every 2 cup slices, mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ t Kosher salt. Let stand at least 30 minutes. Squeeze hard to remove juice.

For 2 cups slices add:

- 2 T lemon juice
- 1 t sugar
- Chopped shallots
- Chopped parsley, mint or dill.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced green pepper

Can also add:

1 cup sieved yogurt (about 2 hour drain), 1 small clove garlic mashed, 2 t lemon juice, 1t olive oil, chopped dill or mint

OR 1 T wine vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ t sugar, chopped veggies as desired.

I don't really like cucumbers but I really like this salad for a summer dinner.

By: Erica Jones

The New River Valley Fair

The 2013 New River Valley Fair was from July 22nd to the 27th. This was their 60th annual fair and the 2nd annual rivalry of exhibit entry submissions between Wendy Silverman and Stan Stanley. Last year, both claimed winner since they both can't remember who actually made the most money. This year, Wendy claimed victory by \$9.00 until....Shana Maron also entered her produce, flowers and canned goods. Then it was a 3- way Master Gardener rivalry and she is the true winner of the competition. Shana got 2 grand champions! Congratulations Shana! Now the real test is on. Who will join in the competition next year? Can we fill up the agricultural displays with Master Gardener submissions? Will Stan and Wendy seek revenge, or will Shana or another master gardener claim the top winner?

The Plant clinic booth was a hit. We served 180 people in a 6 day period. On Monday, Stan Stanley did a rain barrel demonstration and then we raffled it off on Saturday. The other days we did children's activities from plant propagation to playing with soil, to making herb gardens. More adults than children made herb gardens so that was by far our most successful activity.

There are several more area fairs this summer and fall so please enter you garden produce, can goods and crafts for display. The more items entered the better the displays look and you even may make a few bucks (although the bragging rights among fellow Master Gardeners is the best prize).

List of fairs:

Newport Fair, Friday and Saturday, August 9-10

Prices Fork Fair, Friday and Saturday, August 16th and 17th

East Mont Tomato Festival, Saturday, August 17th (strictly tomato and tomato product display)

Floyd Livestock and County Fair, Saturday September 21st

Reminder: We will be having plant clinics at the Newport Fair, East Mont Tomato Festival and the Floyd Livestock and County Fair.

Shana Maron's Favorite entries...



By: Wendy Silverman

Board

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