

The Grapevine

June 2012

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

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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.

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MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING NRV MASTER GADENER MAY 14TH

Location: Montgomery County Government Building

In Attendance: Connie Lawson, Gwen Ewing, Ini Beckman, Lynn Brammer

Rosemarie Sawdon, Bob Lockwood, Donna Fern, Erica Jones

Wendy Silverman

Connie opened the meeting at 5:30pm.

Minutes of April 19th, 2012 Board meeting approved

Minutes of April 19th, 2012 General meeting approved.

May, 2012 Treasurer's Report approved.

Connie thanked everyone for working so diligently on the Plant Sale which was a big success with proceeds totaling \$1660.25. This being our first plant sale, there are lessons to be learned, and Connie asked for suggestions of ways to improve for next year's sale. All comments should be sent to Erica Jones. Erica will compile a list of the suggestions.

Discussion followed about recruiting more vendor donations for next year.

This year the following vendors contributed: Crows Nest, Blacksburg

Lacie's in the Valley, Christiansburg

Corrinne's, Christiansburg

Christiansburg Garden Center, Christiansburg

Home Depot, Christiansburg

Bell Nursery, Christiansburg

Rosemarie will send thank you notes to the above-referenced donors. She will also send an article to the Roanoke Times talking about the big success for our first year and how it will be an annual event.

Connie asked for date confirmation for the November potluck. Dates being November 2, 9, 16 with the 16th as preference. Wendy will request room confirmation.

Connie also mentioned the need for Board member nominations. Lynn is chair of the Nominating Committee and "suggested" names for 2013 Board members should be sent to her.

The 25th Annual Virginia Master Gardener College is June 19-24, 2012. Most volunteer positions are filled. Wendy still needs van drivers, luggage handlers and a Moderator for a class on Thursday morning.

This year Master Gardener College is hosting its 1st Annual Trade Show, Thursday, June 21st, 10AM - 5PM at the Smithfield Road Parking Lot, on campus.

Next item, the Logo Contest. The criteria for submitting a logo is the following:

Needs to be: Professional

Shrinkable - Sizeable - Reproducible (it will be used on different items), Identify with NRVMGGA.

Deadline for submission to Wendy is June 30. May be sent via email, regular mail or hand delivered and one must forgo copyright entitlement.

Correction on calendar.....there was no general meeting in May.

Future Meetings:

Board Meeting June 11

General Meeting - June 14th - Thursday, 6:30pm Elissa Steeves. York Drive, Blacksburg

Board Meeting July 9

General Meeting - July 19th - Thursday, 6:30pm at Holly Scoggins Blueberry Farm, Newport

Details for August General Meeting, Vineyard in Elliston

September General Meeting, Pulaski 4H Program will be forthcoming.

Remember to fill out your "Profile" and submit it to Carol Moates as well as articles for the GrapeVine.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:35pm.

Submitted by:

Rosemarie Sawdon, Secretary

A gigantic thank you to EveryONE!! The Plant sale was a tremendous achievement. I'm looking forward to next year's sale.

Also, any one dividing daffodil bulbs - I'll take 'em.

Thanks,

Gwen ~~Safe Travels!!!!!!!

Labor of Love



Gwen Ewing, Cindy Stone, Debra Graff and Vicki Chiocca after a morning of tending Ann Youston's gardens. This is just a few MGs keeping a dear friend and past MG member's gardens in shape. Ann passed away just a few months ago and many of us have very fond memories of her, she was truly a gardener extraordinaire.



Town & Country Garden Tour of Pulaski County

The Pulaski County Town and Country Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 30, 2012, from 10a.m. to 4p.m. There will be six home gardens and the Pulaski County Library garden for you to tour. The Garden Tour is sponsored by both the Friends of the Pulaski County Library and the New River Valley Master Gardener Association. Both organizations will share 50/50 in any profits earned. Three of the homes are owned by Master Gardeners, but we need more help. Please consider volunteering. It would be fantastic if we could have Master Gardeners present at all of the gardens for the length of the tour. To volunteer, please call Mickey Balconi at 540-320-8654 (cell) or 540-980-3952 (home).

The tickets, along with a brochure with the addresses of all the gardens and directions to each, are on sale at the Pulaski County Library on 60 W. 3rd St. in Pulaski and at the Charles & Ona B. Free Memorial Library on 300 Giles Ave. in Dublin. They will be available from June 4, 2012, to the day of the garden tour.

Tickets are \$10 and will admit you to all the gardens and enter you into a drawing for door prizes. The drawing will be on Monday, July 2, 2012, and the winners will be notified. If you have not gotten your ticket beforehand, on the day of the tour tickets will be sold at the library in Pulaski and at three of the gardens.

Three of the gardens you will see are on and near Claytor Lake. Signs from South 81, Exit 94 will point you to the lake gardens to the left and also to the town gardens to the right. Coming south on Rt. 11 from Radford there will be signs to gardens on both the right and left off Rt. 11 before Dublin and into Pulaski.

For more information and specific directions please go to <http://www.pclibs.org> or call Mickey Balconi at 980-3952.

Homes on the Town and Country Garden Tour

Becky & Charley Smith
6031 Vest
Dublin, VA 24084

Stan & Gabriella Stanley
5119 Alum Spring Road
Pulaski, VA 24301

Mrs. Peggy Hubble
1409 Hix Street
Pulaski, VA 24301

Pulaski County Library
60 West 3rd Street
Pulaski, VA 24301

Mickey & John Balconi
6293 Old Ferry Road
Hiwassee, VA 24347

Lakewood Lodge
Jerry & Sherry Vaughn
6200 Old Ferry Road
Hiwassee, VA 24347

Contentment on the Cove
Jan & John Woodward
6200 Allison
Hiwassee, VA 24324

Connie's Garden
By: Connie Lawson



Why is it that gardeners have a hard time to "cut back" when planting a garden?

This year I had decided that I would need to cut back on the size of my garden. I had planned to plant only one side of the garden and put the other side in a cover crop. Well, I still have my Long Keepers to plant and a few Sweet Potatoes and both sides of the garden seem to be planted. So my good intentions went out the window. Oh well, I guess once gardening gets in your blood, it is hard to change. Next year I will plan a little better and put that plan into effect and only plant one side.

Mulching helps me to maintain the larger garden. I put cardboard down between the rows and cover it with grass clipping and around the plants. Yes, there are still weeds, however, there are much fewer to weed. The mulch also makes it possible to walk down the rows even when it is wet. So I can pick the vegetables even after a heavy rain. The mulch also helps to keep the moisture in the ground, so if a dry spell happens, the plants do not suffer quiet so bad. Of course, the grass clippings and cardboard deteriorate by the next season and then this is

plowed into the ground. This is so good for the soil, so there are several benefits for using mulch. I also use wide row planting which cuts down on weeds and saves space. This makes it easier to maintain as well.

Next year I will have to plan a little better and plant only half of the garden. As for this year I'll be donating A LOT of produce to my family, friends and neighbors, as well as giving surplus to Share the Spare!

Nature, She's A'Changing

By: Carol Moates

This year here in Floyd County has been markedly different than all years prior in my garden and blueberry patch. I have squash and cucumbers on the vine, I even have small Brandywine and Juliet tomatoes on the plants. I could write this off as I put in extra large plants – but – when my blueberries began coming in I really took notice of a change. All years previous there have been two bushes that begin and they would ripen at the rate where I could pick every other day or even every third day if I chose. This year I have three bushes going strong and three others showing pink with occasional blue. Normally I pick up until fall; wonder what will happen this year? I have already picked twice one day and then once the following day with a friend to get caught up. At first I was assuming it was a normal year and wanted to leave them until there were a lot to harvest but when I looked closer I realized I was already behind. It is a very noticeable change. I'm all for early harvest as I am as impatient to get those fresh vegetables and fruits as the rest of you, but this has made me sit up and take notice. Anyone else out there with the same or similar things going on? If so, please write in and tell us and give your location.

Carol Moates

Editorial – Sustainability

To start with I will admit that I inherited a “thing” about word usage from my mother. So I hope this inspires some discussion.

I sat in on a spiel several years ago delivered by a fellow who claimed he was a (the) guru of sustainability. His definition seemed to greatly involve the natural ecological progression of grassland to mature forests; at least for this part of the country. Nature WILL have its way; birds/wind/animals will spread seeds to new locations regardless of what we do in our garden(s). Myself; I already have some woods (not mature but they can work on that on their own). I do not want woods; I want garden; sunny garden; so by that definition all gardening I do is not sustainable. Oh well.

Some other definitions I have heard bandied around seem to imply that perennials are better than annuals. Well; obviously without annuals eating would be tough going. We could shoot deer, munch on asparagus and eat cherries for sure but I'd miss all those other veggies. Maybe the biggest unsustainable culprits are those faithful producers of glorious flowers each summer; the annuals. They bloom their socks off for a year; make seeds and poof! they are gone. So what is unsustainable about collecting seeds (commercially or as a home gardener) for next year? Perhaps some of the objections to annuals is the method they are produced. Modestly talented gardeners should be quite capable of producing their own plants with very minimal outside inputs besides the purchased seed and recycled plant containers. Shoot; some plants that are sold as "annuals" will cheat and show up the following year. Last year's mild winter gave way to early and prolific magnificent towers of snapdragons. At the time (June) I am still awash in subjects for cut flowers to bring inside and give away. And folks; perennials plants are produced and marketed in a very similar fashion as annuals; they are just supposed to last longer.

I hope some of my ramblings will provoke some thought and discussion on what seems to me to be a vague, overused and hard to define term.

Signed grumpy (aka Erica Jones)

Rebuttal for Sustainable Foods

So, just for fun I decided to put some rebuttals in here for Erica to think about. Seed saving is only as good as you make it, meaning if you do not use any hybrid seeds or plants, otherwise you might get something very strange the following year. Also if you plant more than one type of, let's say, green beans, then you have to go to pretty stringent lengths to avoid cross pollination, or plant to ensure they don't bloom near the same time. There is a lot to saving seed correctly so they are viable the coming year/s. That would be an article unto itself.

Now for the nothing to eat part; there is a bounty of greens that are edible, taste good and are very nutritious: chickweed, wood sorrel, dandelion leaves, Jerusalem artichokes, purslane, water cress, violet leaves and flowers, wild onions and wild mustard, young fiddle head ferns, stinging nettles (yes, ask your German friends and they will explain how good they are for you and once steamed or boiled they do not sting, I use them for pestos) to name several. There are many kinds of nuts around (more than just Erica and I). There are mushrooms that are very tasty, *but be certain to have an experienced guide with you so as not to get the poisonous ones!* There are several tubers or corms that are good; Jerusalem artichokes, burdock is very similar to Chinese chestnuts when cooked, Spring Beauty which is amongst the first to bloom here in spring. Along that type of texture there are cattails before the fuzzy stage. Violets, yucca, wild rose and rose hips, and daylilies are flowers that are good and available for many uses. Fruits are abundant: wild grapes (pick after frost) blackberries, red and black raspberries, persimmons, wild strawberries, Sumac berries make a great lemonade type drink that is pink, sassafras inner bark makes wonderful tea, there are many mints for refreshing drinks, and bee balm is what is used for the flavoring of Earl Grey tea. Plenty of meat and fish and fowl if you hunt.

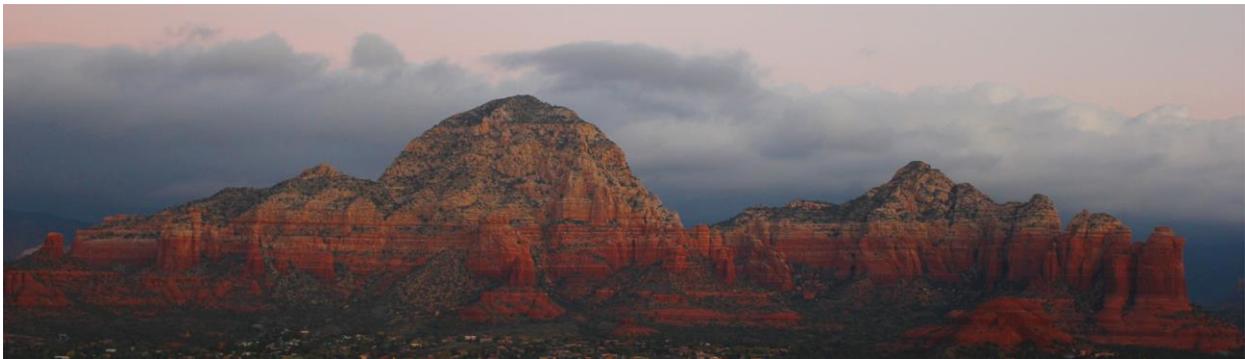
From: *Billy Joe Tatum's Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook, Edited by Helen Witty*

So, to my thinking you would not starve, but would have to evolve into a very different style of eating. Plus, cooking over an open fire which I bet many of you have not experienced (grilling does not count!).

Wild Foods was one of my favorite classes in herb school so excuse my ramblings, it just excites me to share this information with folks!

Happy Carol Moates

My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant's point of view. ~H. Fred Dale



Sedona Sunset

New River Valley

Master Gardener Association

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