



June Grapevine

2013

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

**NRV Master Gardener
Minutes General Meeting - Graduation - Potluck
May 10th, 2013**

Location: Montgomery County Government Center, Christiansburg

At approximately 6:30pm, Lynn Brammer welcomed members, graduates and friends. In view of the later start, the first item of importance was eating dinner followed by the business meeting, graduation and presentation of volunteer awards.

Maureen Fallon opened the business meeting by again welcoming all present. She talked about the rain barrels that were displayed and the handout from the 2009 rain barrel workshop. Maureen also explained that the barrels would be for sale at the plant sale being held the following day and that the public needs to be educated about their advantages in conserving water.

Lynn Brammer announced that the ordered NRVMG shirts were on the table and directories were also available for those who had not received one. She will be sending out changes/corrections. Also on the table was a sign-up sheet for a new name tag. If you need a name tag, please advise Lynn.

Gwen Ewing talked about the Saturday Plat Sale asking for last minute donations and inviting members and friends to attend rain or shine.

Lynn talked about various current projects including Habitat for Humanity update. Two homes have been constructed on Nellies Cave Road. Planting has been postponed because of drainage problems which the Town of Blacksburg will correct. There will be raised vegetable beds, as well as landscaping. She asked for used garden tool donations for this project.

Lynn asked for volunteers to host gardens for the Friends of the Library Annual Garden Tour, Saturday, July 6th. The gardens are located in Blacksburg and Christiansburg, including a highlight, the Montgomery County Museum. A sign-up sheet was provided, and Lynn will follow up the request with an email.

There are sessions 9-11am 11am-1pm 1pm-3pm 3pm-5pm. She asked that volunteers meet with the home owners to learn about the various aspects of the garden they will host as they meet and greet the visitors.

The Montgomery County Museum garden has been maintained by our dedicated member Beth Umberger. Beth has worked tirelessly with some help from other members, to enhance the Museum garden. She is in the process of replacing the lower garden with native plants. The upper garden will have noninvasive exotics and native cultivar plantings.

Beth needs volunteers to help with this before the tour. Contact Beth for times you may be available. (382-1580)

Next project, Share the Spare, Blacksburg Farmers Market. Volunteers are needed. In addition to the Plant Clinic and acceptance of perishable food for local food banks, there is the Neighborhood Harvest Project where volunteers pick fruit which may be divided between owners of the property, volunteers and the food pantries.

Lynn asked that members become involved by having a Plant Clinic. Plant Clinics can be held at stores (with permission) and community events. This is a great way to become involved in your community, share you knowledge, and the Master Gardener program which sponsors grants to schools and organizations, working with children, and educating the public about the benefits of vegetable gardens and general landscaping techniques. We have a new banner and tablecloths to use for such events.

The Hahn Horticultural Garden is another project which can always use volunteers, meeting Monday evenings at 5:30pm. You can learn, help maintain the garden and sometimes even get unwanted plants!

Wendy asked for volunteers for Pulaski Farmer's Market Clinic, Tuesday, May 14th, between 4-8pm. Wendy will be speaking on soil testing at 6pm.

Carol Moates talked about the quilt project she has volunteered to do as a fundraiser. Sewers are asked to sew a square. It must be a total of 13" for the finished square. The deadline is September 15th. Any color or pattern with a garden theme is acceptable; it will be a "scrappy" quilt.

Donna Fern talked about the Grant Program. This year over \$3000 has been dedicated for various educational programs at local schools, Christiansburg Library, Floyd Library, Radford Library, Montgomery County Juvenile Correction Center and SEEDS Nature Center.

This money is raised through the plant and rain barrel sale as well as the upcoming quilt raffle. For the first year \$1000 is being used for mini grants. Money is still available for members who may have a project with an educational component. You may submit a request to Erica Jones, Chair of the Grant Committee.

Helen Young thanked everyone for signing up to moderate at the Master Gardener College. All times have been taken, however, you may sign up as a "backup" volunteer.

Wendy still needs drivers. Please contact Wendy if you can volunteer to drive to various locations. She has the forms that need to be completed for drivers.

She also encouraged members to sign up for the College, spaces are still available.

Mickey Balconi asked for volunteers for the Pulaski Garden Tour, Saturday, June 29th. There are six very interesting and different gardens, some at historic homes, as well as a farm. This is the second year for the Pulaski Garden Tour. The first one was a big success in spite of no electricity after the big June wind storm. Contact Mickey if you can volunteer. (540 320-8654)

The floor was opened to members who wanted to talk about a project they were doing or any announcements to be shared.

Wendy acknowledged and thanked Curt Laub for his contributions and generous donations.

Wendy also thanked Jon Vest for his help and advice during the time there was not a local extension agent. Wendy expressed her heartfelt appreciation and presented him with a gift.

Our new extension agent, Kelli Scott was not able to attend because of a prior family commitment.

Twenty Graduate certificates were presented to the class of 2013 by Wendy and Jon.

Also presented were 250 and 500 Hour Volunteer Service Awards to 15 recipients.

David Helscher took a picture of the 2013 graduates and the meeting was adjourned.

Future Dates: Board Meeting - May 30 - 5:30pm - Location to be announced
General Meeting - June 13 - 6:30pm
Stonewood Botanical Garden
Mt. Tabor Road, Blacksburg
Notice will be sent with more specific information.

Submitted by:
Rosemarie Sawdon

Minutes of NRV Master Gardener Assoc. Board Meeting - May 30, 2013

Location: Lynn Brammer's Home, Christiansburg

In Attendance: Lynn Brammer, Maureen Fallon, Bob Lockwood,
Susan Lockwood, Evelyn Melia, Rosemarie Sawdon
Linda Harris

Meeting called to order at 5:30pm.

Maureen opened meeting with request for approval of minutes of April Board Meeting submitted by Rosemarie -- minutes approved.
March Board minutes waiting for approval when received from Linda.

Treasurer's Report - Approved

As of May 29th, all outstanding bills were paid.

Annual Plant Sale proceeds \$2057.75

General Account Balance \$4448.43

Grants Account Balance \$2288.22 (\$600.00 for mini grants) (\$200.00 Radford HS)

Bob offered recommendation to transfer \$2500 from General Operating Account to the Grants Account.

He also recommended that all mini grants be for an amount of \$100.00.

Both recommendations were approved.

A suggestion to have a Grants Committee meeting with all committee members present to possibly edit dates for deadlines and review proposed guidelines be held before the 2014 grants are advertised.

Committee chair needs to arrange this meeting.

Discussion followed regarding Plant Sale. Improvements suggested are better signage - advertise in CURRENT, distribute flyer at NRVHome Show - also have sign-up sheet for email addresses to win plant - use Facebook as tool for advertising - choose date after researching other plant sales, such as, Smithfield - be more selective in plants to be sold - plants need to have labels - more consistent pricing - offer more rain barrels.

After this rather lengthy discussion Linda Harris arrived, and she presented additional criteria for next year's sale. Linda will type up and distribute this information.

A plant sale committee will be formed and anyone interested should please contact Linda or Gwen.

New Business:

Volunteers for the Friends of the Library Garden Tour, July 6th are needed. Lynn is working on recruiting more volunteers and will send email with time slots and gardens open.

Lynn is also coordinating "Brag Board" display at MG College and encouraging our members to attend open events and to volunteer. MGC begins on Thursday evening, June 20th.

Volunteers to moderate classes are arranged by Helen Young and all times are filled.

Upcoming general meeting - June 13 - Stonewood Botanical Garden

Mt. Tabor Road, Blacksburg

Limited parking space requires everyone to

Carpool - Meet Food Lion Parking Area

North Main Street, 6PM

Submitted by:

Rosemarie Sawdon

Hello Gardeners!

By Lynn Brammer

With gardens going full throttle it is a wonderful time of year to watch what you have take off and start to grow. I can hardly wait to taste that first cucumber. It makes me realize the tasteless things in the produce section of our local stores are pitiful. On that note...To all the gardeners that have given starts of vegetable and herbs to our local community gardeners I say thanks on their behalf. What a treat it was to present these beautiful plants to the YMCA, Airport Acres, St Michaels, Floyd and Lee Street Community Gardens. I felt like St. Nick bringing presents to the kiddies, faces light up, arms outstretched and all I did was make the delivery. Ann and Jim, a couple that coordinates the Airport Acres garden, were adamant that I make sure and introduce them to our very own Deb Graf, whose name and popularity for presenting her square foot abundance talks has raised the bar for our NRVMA. www.squarefootabundance.com<<http://www.squarefootabundance.com/>> The tomato plants they received were spectacular. What a testimony to Debs wisdom, skills and hard work. And that goes for all the rest of you as well. We pass on these plants with no strings attached, but with the understanding that they will pass on their surplus harvest to local programs like Share the Spare.

Share the Spare began its fourth season at the Blacksburg Farmers Market. Mostly greens and asparagus going in the basket this time of year. The vendors at the end of the market day continue to make our weight stats soar when they bring over literally boxes of greens. I'd like to thank Jeanne Donovan for joining me this past Saturday. The fun of interacting and informing the public of our mission is always rewarding. We are a bit off the beaten path this year due to a reconfiguration that effected many. If you shop the market stop by and give us some feedback about how the booth looks. And of course, we would thrilled for you to join us. I would love to be able to float through the main path and inform folks we have moved, so two folks at the booth is a wonderful luxury and helps us to remind folks our season has begun. Don't hesitate to let me know if you have some hours to spare. lbrammer@vt.edu<<mailto:lbrammer@vt.edu>> 381-4846h 449-6621c

Master Gardener College

We are expecting a great turnout at Master Gardener College this month. There are so many roles we can take, from attendee, to volunteer to someone that just stops by to see the brag boards and bid on a Silent Auction item (be on the lookout for my gift basket). Our brag board will be making its MGC debut this year. With the College right out our back door it would be a tremendous loss to not take advantage of taking part in some of the many activities. It's inspiring to see all the programs the various units are involved with, and trade ideas about how to make our group one that takes pride in their contribution to our community. We want to be there to cheer for all the milestone award winners within our group as well. I hope I see you there!

Lynn Brammer

Garden Tours!!!

We have the good fortune to be involved with two within the New River Valley. The Town and Country Garden Tour of Pulaski is celebrating its second year with some amazing gardens. On Saturday June 29 from 10 am until 4 pm, rain or shine, six gardens between Pulaski and Dublin. One of our own, Steve Hale and his wife Trish were kind enough to offer their garden this year. All the MG slots have been filled thanks to you all, so now the rest of us need to go out and support it. Tickets are available at the Pulaski and Dublin libraries. Sharon Eifried seifried@towson.edu<mailto:seifried@towson.edu> or Mickey Balconi johnnmickey@psknet.com<mailto:johnnmickey@psknet.com> for more information.

The New River Valley Garden Tour will be on Saturday July 6th from 9 am until 5 pm. Featuring eight gardens between Blacksburg and Christiansburg, we are particularly proud of The Montgomery Museum Garden that Beth Umberger and a team of volunteers have nurtured and tended since 1990. If ever there was a garden that truly represents the principles of sustainability this is it. I encourage all to visit or assist Beth as she works to show the public what a museum garden can be. Native plants, cultivars of natives and non-invasive low maintenance exotics are abundant. With the idea of placing emphasis on providing habitat and food sources for native insects and birds we should all acknowledge this was done without fertilizers or pesticides! Along with the Master Gardeners, Beth has arranged for members of the Master Naturalist and Native Plant Society to also be on sight to take advantage of this opportunity to educate the public about sustainability and the circle of life all around us and how harmonious we can live. One of the other gardens will feature classical musicians.

I am coordinating the Master Gardeners that would like to spend time at one of these lovely gardens that day. I have contacted those of you that have expressed an interest in hosting, we still have openings. Please let me know if you would like to spend two hours chatting with the tourists as they see the awe inspiring gardens. See the contact information above.

Please don't hesitate to send our newsletter editor Carol Moates an update of your favorite project and it's progress! cymoates@gmail.com

Lynn Brammer

Posted May 23, 2013

Masters at work



Christiansburg Master Gardener Beth Umberger looks at a bed of blooming violas Tuesday at the Montgomery Museum in Christiansburg. Matt Gentry | The Roanoke Times

CHRISTIANSBURG — Although the New River Valley Garden Tour is more than a month away, gardeners are already hard at work preparing for the annual event.

A new garden on the tour this year is located at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center at 300 Pepper St. in Christiansburg.

There, Master Gardener Beth Umberger, with the help of other volunteers and community service workers, has been planning and planting over the past three years.

Umberger has even begun the expansion of the garden into an adjoining shaded woodlot where she plans to have a labeled native plant garden.

“She has done so much for our garden,” said museum director Sue Farrar. “It’s quite lovely, and it’s going to get more so.”

Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, the 18th-annual tour is slated for July 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Two gardens in Christiansburg, including the Montgomery Museum location, and six gardens in Blacksburg will be featured.

Advance tickets, available June 1, are \$12 and can be purchased at public libraries in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd, Radford, Salem and Shawsville. Day-of tickets are \$15.

For more information on the tour, visit www.newrivervalleygardentour.org.

By **Matt Gentry**

The Roanoke Times | 381-8620

Speed: Photo 1 of 5



[Master Gardeners](#)

5/22/2013 -- MATT GENTRY | The Roanoke Times The Montgomery Museum garden is one of eight gardens on the tour this year, scheduled for July 6. Photo By: Matt Gentry

Master Gardener Working Schedule

Below is a list of the events we have going on from the end of May through July. These events will be added to the calendar on the Volunteer Management System. This is a working list, and other activities may be added as they arise. Wendy

June

1st Share the Spare 8-2

8th Share the Spare 8-2

8th Come outside and play at Glen Alton 10-3 plant clinic and children's activity

11th Pulaski Farmer's Market Plant Clinic and talk on Summer Crops and Fair up-date 4-8 PM

13th NRVMGGA meeting Stonewood Botanical Garden

15th Share the Spare 8-2

19th-23rd Master Gardener College – Tech Campus

29th Share the Spare 8-2

29th Pulaski Garden Tour time?

July

6th Mont/Floyd Friends of the Library Garden Tour 9-5?

6th Share the Spare 8-2

9th Pulaski Farmer's Market Plant Clinic and talk on Insects

11th NRV MGA officer meeting

13th Share the Spare 8-2

18th NRV MGA meeting Mitch Holcomb, daylily breeder in Blacksburg

20th Share the Spare 8-2

22-27 NRV Fair Mon, Wed Fri 5-10 PM, Tues, Sat 2-10



Town & Country Garden Tour of Pulaski County

The Pulaski County Town and Country Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, June 29, 2013, from 10a.m. to 4p.m. The tour includes five beautiful home gardens located just off Route 11 and in Downtown Pulaski and the three gardens at the Pulaski County Library. At the Library there is a pass-a-long garden, a shade garden and a unique zoo garden. The landscape includes annuals and perennials, veggies and herbs, vintage plantings, flowers galore, floral gardens, raised beds, orchards and conifers. Advance tickets, along with a brochure with the addresses of all the gardens and directions to each, are now 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. 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 1, 2012, and the winners will be notified. If you have not gotten your ticket beforehand, tickets will also be available at all the gardens on the day of the 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. For more information and specific directions please go to <http://www.pclibs.org> or call Mickey Balconi at 980-3952. Also, call Mickey if you would like to volunteer to help out on the day of the tour.

Locations of Homes on the Town and Country Garden Tour

- ✧ Pulaski County Library
60 West 3rd Street
Pulaski

- ✧ Lee Spiegel
511 Fifth St NE
Pulaski

- ✧ Dr. Don and Deena Stowers
1098 Red Fox Lane
Pulaski

- ✧ Jackie and Roy Hunter
6050 Chickwood Drive
Chickwood Estates

- ✧ Ann Bolt
Hillcrest
5280 Black Hollow Road
Dublin

- ✧ Steve and Trish Hale
6350 Hazel Hollow
Dublin

Mickey Balconi

More “Garden” Travels

Lilypons apparently was started in 1917 as “Three Springs Farm” when the founder turned his goldfish and water lily hobby into a business. The name Lilypons came from a popular opera singer of the time. The postal service told the community that there was a post office needed, and the owner suggested using the name Lily Pons(which got merged into one word). And here I always thought the name was a pun!

The first time I went was in the last 1960’s being a (gold) fish fanatic and I dragged my poor mother. I think she managed to restrain me from buying anything.



In any case, I managed to pop back in on a recent trip to Maryland. The 200+ acre farm is southwest of Frederick with mailing address of Adamstown, MD (although you can still see the original name sake post office building). The property borders on the Monocacy River and is about 5 miles from the Potomac River. They sell

pond supplies, hardy water lilies, other water plants, goldfish and koi for your outdoor pond. Take your camera and allow some “tour” time. They have set up some 10 different pond “displays” for ideas for us home gardeners in a variety of sizes; and then there are the production ponds to go walk around. I have never seen so many ponds in my life! Most of them are still producing water plants and lilies but a few outliers have not been maintained. I was there a bit early for prime blooming lily season, but still it is fun to wander around, look for muskrats/beavers/mink/egrets/herons while ooo-ing and ahhh-ing over the blossoms. Do watch where you put your feet though! The Christiansburg Library (grant project) has a small water container on the patio for the last three years. That’s what started all of this.



Top – the young lady has quite the view. And, the arborvitae on the left must really have some age on them – they are huge!

Bottom – pickerel weed and I’m not sure which iris. *Iris pseudacorus* is a way pesky invasive but I thought smaller yellow blossoms. There are other iris bog species available in a variety of colors, and some cute blue natives that are not so aggressive.

Erica Jones

Rhubarb Torte

Now is rhubarb season. If you can find it at the roadside stands or your local farmer's market, it makes some delicious treats. I don't know whether we'll have enough for shares yet this year: we're trying to develop a strong patch.

My mother used to serve a rhubarb sauce with tapioca pudding. It was a lovely mixture of tart and sweet. Sometimes in the mornings when I make a potful of nettle and mint tea (to help with the springtime allergies), I chop a stalk of rhubarb in to give it a nice tang. I think it could be a nice addition to lemonade.

Here's the recipe for rhubarb torte that we love. We don't make it often because it has a lot of sugar. My sister-in-law suggested that I try agave for the granulated sugar next time.

Shortbread Crust:

1/2 c. butter

5 T. confectioner's sugar

1 c. flour (I use whole wheat pastry flour)

Mix and press into a buttered 8x8 pan. Bake 15-20 minutes at 350.

Rhubarb Topping:

1 c. sugar (or 3/4 c. agave?)

2 eggs, beaten

1/4 c. flour

1/4 t. salt

3/4 t. baking powder

3 1/2 c. rhubarb, cut in 1" pieces

Mix all ingredients. Pour over baked shortbread and bake 35 minutes longer at 350. I doubled the recipe for a 9x13 pan, though you could get away with only 1 1/2 times the shortbread. If you have some lemons, add a few tablespoons of grated lemon peel.

**Will the author please come forth and take the recognition for this recipe? I put it in my June 2012 GV folder and omitted the author's name by mistake. I apologize. I have been working in many places other than home recently so has been difficult.

Product Review

No, I do not have stock in this company, but I have discovered something pretty fabulous for you avid weeding types.

My yard has had, for the last 40 years, quite the stand of poison ivy; some of it going up some trees has trunks as big as my wrist. Yeah, poison ivy makes a really impressive fall leaf and berry color show, but still... P.I. of that age sends out underground runners and comes up all sorts of inopportune places, not to mention getting spread by berry.

Tec Laboratories sells a product called “tectum” which is used to cleaning skin after exposure to Poison Ivy. You can use it even after time has elapsed and you have developed a rash. Wet skin cold water, apply, rub vigorously for 2 minutes & presto! off you go. Even when you are at the rash stage an application is better than nothing.

I had to beg for it at the pharmacy. Seems they keep it behind the counter.

Erica, less itchy Jones

Board

Co-Presidents – Lynn Brammer lbrammer@vt.edu

Maureen Fallon mofallon56@gmail.com

Vice president – Donna Fern—[336-380-5242](tel:336-380-5242) vafern3@gmail.com

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