



# The Grapevine

May 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**

President – Connie Lawson 674-6127 [conniel@vt.edu](mailto:conniel@vt.edu)  
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### **VCE Master Gardener Program**

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#### **Contact Us:**

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**MINUTES OF NRV MASTER GARDENER  
BOARD MEETING  
APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2012**

Location: Montgomery County Government Building, Extension Office

In Attendance: Connie Lawson, Lynn Brammer, Donna Fern, Rosemarie Sawdon  
Gwen Ewing, Mark Gordon, Helen Young, Carol Moates,  
Jon Vest, Wendy Silverman

Connie opened meeting at 5:35pm.

Minutes of March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting approved.

Treasurer's Report - January-March 2012, submitted via email by Bob Lockwood

*General Account Balance \$4004.25*

Concerning this balance, Lynn is checking about payment of  
2012 Directory to printer.

*Grants Account: \$2357.50 has been paid out.* An additional  
\$550.00 has been committed and will be paid out as the  
grant activity shows progress. \$1732.50 remains unencumbered.  
Plant sale monies will be added to this account.

Connie distributed flyers for **Plant Sale, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am-4:00pm**

She requested they be distributed as widely as possible. Ini (out of town and returning before plant sale) will put up signs at government center and has received approval.

Rosemarie will notify papers (Roanoke Times; News Messenger, Floyd Press).

Gwen has lined up volunteers for setting up, pricing of donations, etc. Gwen asks that donations be brought the night of the Potluck/Graduation on May 4<sup>th</sup>. They will be stored in the extension office for the night. Gwen, Donna and Ini will do the pricing.

Jon suggested that a picture of the plant flower helps sell the plants.

Wendy asked that anyone with plastic tables bring them to use for the sale.

Connie will send out advance announcement requesting members volunteer. Also need volunteers for Shawsville event. Wendy announced that to date she had only one volunteer, and that she would no doubt be in Shawville. Carol Moates and others are volunteering at Floyd event; all three events on same day!

*Unsold plants* will be donated to our grant projects and *need to be picked up at 4:00pm* on day of sale.

Graduation/Potluck - Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> - 6:00pm Montgomery County Government Building

There are 14 graduates. Setup for event has been arranged. Wendy's husband has donated a gift for each graduate. A clever matchstick packet. Each matchstick contains a variety of seeds to be planted.

Connie asked everyone to bring a dish. Beverages are provided.

There will be a short meeting before awards are presented. Tom Alston will talk about correct input of hours volunteered to Volunteer Management System and the various features on the site.

May 12<sup>th</sup> is Garden Day at the Blacksburg Farmers Market - 9 to 11:30am. Volunteers are needed; contact Stephanie, Michelle or Ellen.

The "Share the Spare" program at the Blacksburg Farmers Market will begin on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Carol Moates asked for members to contribute material for "Grapevine".

Friends of the Library Garden Tour is July 7<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed and will be educated about the garden before tour. Volunteers are asked to be knowledgeable about the garden, walk around and interact with visitors, and volunteer at just one garden for 3 hours instead of moving around to other gardens. Lynn is recruiting volunteers for this event.

Upcoming events: Graduation/Potluck - May 4<sup>th</sup>  
Plant Sale - May 5<sup>th</sup>  
Board Meeting - May 14<sup>th</sup>  
Board Meeting - June 11<sup>th</sup>  
General Meeting - June 14<sup>th</sup> Elissa Steeves, York Dr., Blacksburg

Connie adjourned meeting at 7:00pm which was followed by General Meeting.

Jon Vest presented information regarding Plant Clinics.

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon

## **Master Gardener College Registration**

Below is the website with all the information regarding Master Gardener College this year. Dave Close says they hope to be up and running for taking registrations on-line by May 10<sup>th</sup>.  
[www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener](http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener)

**NRV Master Gardener Association**  
**Minutes of Meeting and Potluck/Graduation Celebration**  
**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

Location: Montgomery County Government Building

In Attendance: Members and 2012 Graduates

Connie Lawson, President, welcomed everyone and explained that the decorated pots were displayed on the table; and to vote by putting a dollar in your favorite one. The money goes toward the grant program, and the pots will be sold at the plant sale.

Everyone enjoyed dinner and desert at which time Connie held a brief meeting and asked various persons to report on their upcoming projects or other issues.

Lynn Brammer talked about the Blacksburg Farmers Market Event, Garden Day, Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 9AM-11:30AM. Members of the Jr. Master Gardeners will participate. Lynn also talked about the "Share the Spare" program held each week at the Blacksburg Farmers Market and that this program will begin on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:00AM - 2:00PM. Volunteers are needed. Lynn mentioned that we are also taking part in "Plant A Row" a national program asking for people that plant a vegetable garden to plant an extra row for those in need (food banks).

Next item, the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual New River Valley Garden Tour, sponsored by Friends of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. Volunteers will be needed for each garden, all located in Blacksburg this year. Lynn talked about volunteers spending more time at one garden, rather than changing locations, and also that the volunteers meet with the owner of the garden to become fully acquainted and knowledgeable about the garden, also while volunteering, to mingle with the guests and answer questions. In other words, we should be engaged with the guests and able to answer questions, not sit at a table.

Mickey Balconi talked about the Town & Country Garden Tour in Pulaski County, on Saturday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. She asked for volunteers and will send out information regarding this event. This is the first year for this garden tour.

Evelyn Melia, who graciously did our 2012 Directory, asked everyone to check

Tom Alston gave a presentation on the Volunteer Management System now on the web <http://virginiavolunteersystem.org>. Everyone should use this program to record their volunteer hours. Tom explained the features, such as, Calendar of events, clicking on event gives a description, under General Information, the Grapevine newsletter, the tutorial, and our Projects. As you add your hours, there are drop down menus for certain categories, and you need to list your travel time & miles separately from the volunteer/educational time. In other words, there are two listings for each event...the event & travel. You can change your

information after it is entered, you can request specific dates, and you can run reports. You can also change your Profile. If you have any questions, Tom is in the Extension Office on Monday afternoon, 2-5PM.

Carol Moates, our Newsletter Editor, distributed "Your Profile" sheets for everyone to see as an example. This will help us in getting to know one another better, and she may just call you to be the Profile of the month, so be prepared. This is a casual way to get acquainted and not something meant to delve into your personal life. Hopefully it will be fun. Carol has asked for articles, recipes (if from a cookbook, give name of book) and any information of interest, concerning projects, your garden, gardens you may have visited, etc., any requests of topics of interest, anything of interest regarding horticulture. She needs input from the members, so please cooperate.

Next certificates were presented to the 14 graduates by Jon Vest and Wendy Silverman.

Award Recipients as follows:      *Congratulations to ALL*

2000 Hours – Gwen Ewing      1000 Hours – Lynn Brammer

500 Hours – Erica Jones, Jane O’Keeffe, George Zolovick

250 Hours – Tom Alston, Ini Beckman, Phyllis Eschenmann, Maureen Fallon,  
Kelly Glavaris-Young, Brad Jones, Bob Lockwood, Carol Moates, Jeanne Roper,  
Dave Orcutt, Sally Shrader, Helen Young, Joan Zolovick

Connie reminded everyone about the Plant Sale, next day, Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> 10AM – 4PM, Rain or Shine and thanked everyone for participating.

Submitted by:  
Rosemarie Sawdon

## **Logo Contest** **By: Carol Moates**

Jon Vest spoke to our group about the importance of ‘standing out in the MG crowd’ with a stunning table, backdrop, shirts, and anything we can think of to set us apart from the rest. We are going to have a contest for a new logo for our NRVMGGA and then we will develop a theme for our table set up and maybe even shirts or hats. Many of the other area MGs have put a lot of effort in their set up and it draws attention in a very positive way. Let’s think of how we want to present ourselves in public to be more of a WOW!!

## Master Food Volunteers have arrived in the NRV

By: Dawn Barnes

Master Food Volunteers is a Family and Consumer Sciences program that combines your love of cooking, nutrition, physical activity, and helping others. The program helps Extension reach more Virginians with up-to-date, research-based knowledge on food preparation, nutrition, food safety, and physical activity.

Volunteers help support family and consumer sciences agents through education and outreach efforts in a variety of ways. The opportunities include health fairs, food demonstrations, farmers market displays, grocery store displays, 4-H youth programs, judge at fairs, food preservation demonstrations, newspaper or newsletter articles on healthy eating, physical activity, and food preparation, after-school programs, assist with education at food distribution sites and cooking classes.

Anyone who has an interest in food preparation, nutrition, food safety, or physical activity can apply. Applicants should possess a desire to enhance their skills and knowledge and enjoy working with people. There is no prior educational requirement for those interested in becoming a Master Food Volunteer. Volunteers will complete the mandatory 30-hour training course for which there is a \$95 fee that covers program costs and materials. After completing the 30 hours each volunteer will reciprocate with a minimum of 30 hours of service during the following year.

One participant said *"I really enjoyed the interactive activities, including group activities. I am a hands-on person and learn best from seeing and doing."* After a recent presentation by two Master Food Volunteers one participant said *"I didn't know what bulgur was and would not have included that in my family's meals, now I will".*



If you, or an organization that you belong to, would like to hold a Master Food Volunteer presentation, or you would like more information on how YOU can become a Master Food

Volunteer with the Virginia Cooperative Extension,  
Please email:[VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com](mailto:VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com) or contact FCS  
Agent Dawn Barnes at [540.745.9309](tel:540.745.9309). Please email:[VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com](mailto:VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com) or contact FCS Agent Dawn Barnes at [540.745.9309](tel:540.745.9309).

Connie adjourned meeting at 7:00pm which was followed by General Meeting.  
Jon Vest presented information regarding Plant Clinics.

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon

## **Mountain Gardening**

### **By: Fern Cone**

In the summer season of 2011 we opened our garden located near New Castle, Virginia to inner city children of Roanoke that volunteered to work in it. We started with our seven grandchildren and then when their friends found out, three others volunteered to help.

We had great discussions while working in the garden. We talked about work ethics. We discussed the importance of good hard work. Antonio said, "It is just like John Smith (one of the first settlers), if you don't work, you don't eat!" One of our topics was how to take the time to do a job well so we didn't need to go back and re-do the job; like pulling weeds or picking beans again and again until the job was complete. We talked about character building, about how character is what we do when we think no one is looking. We brain stormed about anger management; which is the best tool a person has, how to keep your hands to yourself and observe the 'Golden Rule'. We spoke about treating others the way you would like to be treated and about remembering that we have no control of others, only ourselves.

We taught the children about how to prepare the soil before planting the seeds. We helped them plant seeds and transplants. Then, we showed them how to hoe the rows to keep the weeds down so they didn't steal nutrients from the produce. We explained to the children how keeping the plants hoed gave them more oxygen which helps them grow better. Finally, we showed how to harvest the crop to feed their families. Four families really benefitted greatly from the fresh veggies! We taught them about a balanced diet and life for a happy, complete life. We all talked about not being couch potatoes and the importance of exercise.

Self awareness, self acceptance, and self approval are all important things that come from within; everyone needs these to be a whole and happy human being. We must love ourselves before we can love others. The importance of friendship was one of our topics and what makes a good friend. We tried our best to deeply instill the importance of truth and honesty. Gentle kindness is the only way to peace so we talked about how we all need good communication skills so that we are able to negotiate our differences. We discussed problem solving skills.

We had many interesting and practical conversations. We had bug identification, wind and rain damage to the corn crop which devastated the children. They had worked so hard and had the corn looking so good! By some miracle the corn righted itself; but then the cows got in and ate one row because we were in a hurry and left the gate open. A squash borer devoured beautiful hills of zucchini and summer squash all in one day!

We even talked about how to market our excess vegetables. Many lessons were learned. Our whole purpose was to teach the children life skills which don't seem to be taught in today's schools, such as how our survival depends on our planet, Earth.

**Where better to teach these values than in the garden?!**



### **FOR THE GARDEN OF YOUR DAILY LIVING**

PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS:

1. Peace of mind.
2. Peace of heart.
3. Peace of soul.

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH:

1. Squash gossip.
2. Squash indifference & add articles to the MG newsletter.
3. Squash grumbling.
4. Squash selfishness.

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE:

1. Lettuce be faithful & add articles to the MG newsletter.
2. Lettuce be kind.
3. Lettuce be patient.
4. Lettuce really love one another.

NO GARDEN IS WITHOUT TURNIPS:

1. Turnip for meetings.
2. Turnip for service.
3. Turnip to add articles to the MG newsletter.



TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE MUST HAVE THYME:

1. Thyme to add articles to the MG newsletter.
2. Thyme for family.
3. Thyme for friends.

WATER FREELY WITH PATIENCE AND CULTIVATE WITH LOVE.

THERE IS MUCH FRUIT IN YOUR GARDEN BECAUSE YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

Author unknown. Thanks whoever you are for such a thoughtful piece.

**Contributed by: Gwen Ewing**

## **“Plant When the Dogwoods Bloom”**

**By: Carol Moates**

Humans have closely observed Nature and her cycles since ancient times and have planted crops, moved their tribes, or prepared for winter using what they learned. A checklist of flowering dates for cherry trees in Kyoto, Japan, compiled from diaries and chronicles written by Emperors, aristocrats and monks from that region dates back to the early ninth century. Here in the twenty-first century we have a name for this ancient practice of observing Nature’s cycles. Phenology is the science of studying the influence of climate of biological phenomena such as plant flowering, bird migration, and fish spawning. The decisive factor for these life cycles is temperature. Since the weather fluctuates from year to year, dates are notoriously unreliable for planting safely. Corn seed packets that say “plant after all danger of frost is past” aren’t much help because that date changes from year to year.

What does stay the same are the cycles of plant emergence—they just occur earlier in warm years and later in cool ones. If those packets said “plant when the dogwoods bloom” we’d have reliable instructions since dogwoods require a certain number of days at a specific temperature to bloom. From years of observation, Native Americans knew this. Planting corn too early just causes it to rot in the ground and planting it too late means you may not have a good crop, especially if the fall frost comes early. But Nature knows what’s best; her cycles are “on time” every year despite the date.

One positive aspect of using Nature’s cycles is that you can easily adapt to it wherever you live. If you move a few hundred miles south, you’ll naturally plant things earlier. If dogwoods bloom there in early March, that’s when you plant your corn!

This ancient art provides us with all sorts of beneficial information. We can determine the best dates for crop planting, track insect emergence to control pests at their most vulnerable, design orchards for pollination and ripening sequence, design bee forage plantings, farmscape with insect refugia (cover crops, hedgerows, strip crops) to attract beneficial insects and enhance biological control, design perennial flower beds and wildflower plantings, and predict global warming.

One of the best benefits of phenology is its ability to reduce overall pesticide use and enable us to apply pesticides that don't remain in the soil as long. Accurately timing pesticide squash vine borers if you set them out when you transplant, then remove them once the threat of borers is passed but before the squash required pollination—when chicory starts to bloom. You can control gypsy moths by spraying them with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) soon after the caterpillars emerge from their eggs, which happens when the shadbush and redbud are in bloom.

Phenology does have its limits, though, particularly for pest control. It isn't useful for folks living in frost-free region like south Florida, or for combating insects that migrate into your region after starting life somewhere else; their internal clocks were set by different weather conditions. And because phenology's value lies in helping you time your protection to coincide with some vulnerable stage in an insect's life, it isn't much use for controlling species such as aphids, which breed more or less continuously.

### **Learning More**

I was introduced to phenology by *Martha Stewart Living*, which is one of the sources I used for this article. I turned to the internet using Google as a search engine just to see if anything would show up when I typed in phenology. Much to my amazement, my search turned up 24,500 results! I checked out a few and got an even bigger surprise. Phenology isn't just a weird science that we gardeners might be interested in. People worldwide are collecting, compiling and sharing data to track ecological and environmental changes and activities to monitor global warming. There are school programs set up for children and even the U. S. Naval Observatory is in on the data collection.

For more details check out Google for links to everything – bloom calendars, articles about phenology, school programs you can get involved with, and general observations of Nature's ways.

It seems this art of observing Nature's cycles has come full circle starting as a basic lifestyle and survival tool, then finding itself scoffed at and called folk lore when "real science" came along, and finally becoming a respected method used on a global level to gather information that serves a multitude of purposes.

### **Phenology Examples**

- ~When daffodils begin to bloom, it is time to plant peas.
- ~When the blossoms of the apple tree begin to fall, plant your corn.
- ~When dandelions are blooming, plant beets and carrots.
- ~Plant corn when young, pinkish oak leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear.
- ~Plant perennials when maple leaves emerge from buds.
- ~Plant squash and beans when lilacs bloom.

- ~Plant Irish potatoes when dandelions first bloom in open, sunny areas.
- ~Prune roses when forsythia blooms.
- ~Plant corn when the dogwoods bloom.



The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul. **Alfred Austin**

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Master Gardener Association  
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