

# New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

## The Grapevine

October 2012

### ***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.

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## **Grant Committee Report**

**By: Erica Jones**

The grants committee has received two grant applications (for 2013) already which is great. One was from Radford; the other from Pulaski Co. We really like hearing from non-Montgomery Counties although we do NOT judge by county. We are really hoping the NRVMG members will apply for the "mini" grants. The educational part really is not that hard to cover.

### **Please enter your hours into the Volunteer Management System**

**Wendy Silverman**

Please get your hours entered into the Volunteer Management System. I need to crunch my numbers for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter the third week in October. More than 20 of you have not entered in any hours! This group is so dedicated to the mission of Master Gardening, and I know that our hours that we volunteer are more than what is entered. The problem is, if our hours are not logged in, we are unable to prove to the local counties and state how involved and valuable we truly are. You are an amazing group of volunteers and I want them to see what I see. The Volunteer Management System website is <https://virginia.volunteersystem.org>

### **Recruitment Time!**

**Wendy Silverman**

Yes, it is that time of year again! We are in the process of recruiting for the 2013 Master Gardener Training Class. Applications will be accepted through November 30<sup>th</sup>. This year we will be having daytime classes. Many people have been asking me "why the change?" We need more volunteers who are available during the day. Some people also do not like to drive at night, especially if they live outside of Montgomery County. We hope if they can take the training during the day then they will also be able to volunteer during the daytime as well. If this works out, then we hope to offer a daytime class every third year. This means that we will offer a night class in 2014 and 2015 and another daytime class in 2016. Please talk to your friends, your garden clubs, and other groups about the Master Gardener program. If you find someone interested in the program, please give me their contact information so I can send them an application and contract.

Hope to see you at the October NRVMG meeting and the November 30<sup>th</sup> Pot Luck!

### **Help Needed**

#### **Montgomery County Museum Garden**

The Montgomery County Museum garden (300 S. Pepper Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073) is still in bloom with 'Clara Curtis' Chrysanthemum, New England Aster, Nasturtium, Russian Sage,

oddly one Mexican sage that survived last winter, and soon the bottle brush ginger.

This fall I will work in the garden on Thursday and Sunday from 12 - 2 starting this Thursday, 10/4.

Fall work:

1. Cut back perennials.
2. Remove unwanted perennials--save for the plant sale or take home.
3. Remove perennial weeds and seedlings of weeds.
4. Newspaper and leaf mulch the weedy area behind hollies and hosta.
5. Remove annuals after or just before frost.
6. Edge area of beds near shed.

With the help of my husband I plan to put in fence/trellis behind the picnic bench and cut down a non-native sumac. Dates for this work will be announced.

I just found out that the garden will be on the Library tour for next year... so there is much that needs to be done this year. All the effort to get ahead of some of the more persistent weeds is starting to pay off.

Any suggestions for a quality bench for the garden?

Hope you can join us when you can for good conversations on your hands and knees.  
Beth Umberger's phone is: 382-1580

### **Connie Lawson Profile**

I was in the class of 2009. I had wanted to take the Master Gardener class for many years, but was unable to get to Blacksburg in time for the class where I was working before. Then in May of 2008 I came to work at the Schiffert Health Center at Virginia Tech in the Medical Lab. This made it possible for me to get to the class when it was offered in 2009. We had a very special class with special people. I treasure the friendships that were made possible through this class.

I have always loved to garden and just to see things grow. I enjoy grafting fruit trees and starting my garden plants in the winter when one cannot get outside in an indoor area where I use grow lights and warming pads. I enjoy eating fresh vegetables and fruits. Knowing where they came from makes eating them even better. I enjoy growing several different types of fruits, such as: Blueberries, Raspberries, Blackberries, Gooseberries, and Strawberries. I have 50 + different types of apples in my orchard, as well as peaches, pears, figs, apricots and cherries.

Of my favorite fruits, I would have to say whatever I am eating at that time is my favorite.

Blueberries and apples are my all time favorite fruits. I enjoy most all garden vegetables. I enjoy preserving fruits and vegetables for use after the garden is no more. My Mother canned

fruits and vegetables when I was a little girl and I would help her. I guess those things stick with us as we become adults.

My co-workers soon learned of my love for gardening and I am always helping someone with a gardening problem, question, or going to their place to help them decide what they may need to do or plant, etc. My Church family is the same. I spend much of my time helping someone with different gardening solutions. I enjoy the fact that this is one way that I can be of some help to others no matter how minor it may be. Gardening is fun even if it is at another person's home.

I have done trial and error for so many years that I know a lot of what not to do and am still learning what to do. There is always new and exciting thing to learn when it comes to gardening.

I think one of the things I have enjoyed most about the Master Gardening program, is the wonderful people that you get to know. I have learned so much from them. I so enjoyed helping with the Master Gardener College. My newest project idea came from one of the Master Gardener College Classes that I monitored. The class was on Hoop Houses for the farmers to extend gardening and grow items that require more time to grow than our growing season. I talked to a gentleman in the class and he had a friend that made a similar concept for the home garden. It is called a raised-bed cloche. I hope to build one this fall. This one is only an 8x4 structure used for growing vegetables. It has plastic sides and uses PVC pipe for the structure. (I have the plans if anyone wants this.)

I do enjoy getting others interested in gardening. I have got my own girls and their family involved. One of my granddaughters has her own garden that I helped her start several years ago. (She is now 12.) I have given plants to children at church and watched them get excited about watching them grow. They will eat a vegetable that they grew, better than something just put before them.

I do enjoy growing about anything. I always seem to grow a large garden and then give so much of it away. I am glad I have been able to do so, however I do realize that in the future I will have to cut my garden down to a size that will be less work even if I may not have as much to give away. I am trying to make my life easier and still enjoy my garden and preserving of the fruits and vegetables that I grow.

Thanks to all of you Master Gardeners! You are special people.

## **Sour-Cream Potato Salad**

**By: Evelyn Meliano**

1qt diced cooked potato  
½ cup minced onion  
1 tbsp chopped chives

½ cup diced celery  
½ cup diced cucumber  
½ cup sliced radishes  
4 hard cooked eggs  
½ cup mayonnaise  
2 cups sour cream  
1 tsp salt  
Garlic to taste  
Dash of cayenne  
¼ tsp black pepper  
1tsp hot mustard  
3 tbsl vinegar

Mix potato with next 5 vegetables. Dice whites of 3 eggs and add to vegetables. Mash the 3 yolks and Blend with rest of ingredients, except remaining egg. Mix with vegetables. Chill several hours. Garnish with remaining egg.

## **A Late Summer Fruit**

**By: Erica Jones**

This year the seasons seem a bit rump-sprung when talking about “when the fruit is usually ripe. This will probably continue to change as our weather changes. But I digress....

Pawpaw (*Asimina tribolosa*) is a native small tree, hardy to zone 5, which usually grow in colonies with multiple root suckers. The tree has large ovulate dropping lovely tropical looking leaves; one of the bigger leaves in our local woodlands. The mature height can get up to 20 feet with a nice yellow color in the fall. In the wild you often find the trees growing in ravines and bottom lands, but they will do fine in your yard on a slope especially if mulched. The brownish flowers are small and a little fetid, but almost worth growing the tree just for them. They are very unique looking. Trees will start producing in about 5 years (assuming you are planting pretty young stock). They can sulk if started in full sun, but as they mature they need more sun to produce more fruit (think of the tree shooting up through the forest canopy). The three trees I have in my yard got to sulk in almost full sun, but survived; and once they got going they shot up.

Multiple sources (one is <http://www.crfg.org/pubs/ff/pawpaw.html>) claims that the fruit is the largest (edible!) Native American fruit; about the size of a mango. The fruit can vary a fair bit in size on one tree, especially if two fruits formed from one flower, and can range from 5-16 ounces and 3-6” long, mostly oval in shape. The skin is smooth and very easy to peel; and the seeds come in 2 rows and are about 1” flattened dark brown numbers.

The flavor has been called similar to a “custard- banana.” The texture is extremely smooth. In my group of “garden club” fourth graders, 100% rated the flavor excellent (as a comparison only 50% rated

persimmons as “OK”). (“So why can’t you buy these at the grocery store?”). I served basically as a raw fruit, but they make fabulous smoothies and can be used anywhere you would use mashed bananas. In previous years seems like they got ripe about the first week of October; this year in this funky weather it was almost three weeks earlier. And this year a bunch of them had hit the ground before I realized that they were ripe. The skin color does not change much so you have to investigate enthusiastically with a knife. Once they fall off the tree they need to be used almost immediately. A certain amount of peeled fruit got into the freezer. Once you peel it, just squeeze out the seeds. If you want to be dainty you can try to save “pieces” but ripe pawpaws do not hold together real well.

So what is the rub? Well, they ripen all at once. I really mean at once. I did manage to store some in the refrigerator for about a week that I picked; I think you could count on the “season” being about two weeks. Interestingly in the internet research I did, I did not find “extending the season” as criteria for any of the breeders.

As an aside, a detailed article about pawpaw breeding and genetics can be read in July-Sept 2003 HortTechnology. And U. of Kentucky has a flyer:

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/NewCrops/introsheets/pawpaw.pdf>

### **Master Food Volunteers News**

The VCE Master Food Volunteers were recently featured on the Virginia Tech website for their work in the community. This article discusses their recent "Tomato Preservation Workshop" taught by MFV Rebecca Shannon (wife of MG Michael Mallabone) and assisted by fellow MFVs Sherrie Lunsford and Dawyn Schutz. The workshop was attended by several NRV Master Gardeners and focused on preserving the bounty from our gardens! This program was held in collaboration with Micah's Backpack and Micah's Garden programs at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Blacksburg, and a portion of the produce used in the workshop was grown by and donated through the Micah's Garden program.

Here's a link to an article:

<http://www.vt.edu/spotlight/impact/2012-10-08-food/master-food.html>

For more information about upcoming VCE Master Food Volunteer classes/workshops or for information on our upcoming Master Food Volunteer training, please email [ycemastervolunteersfm@gmail.com](mailto:ycemastervolunteersfm@gmail.com).

### **Change**

I made the first page quite blotto on purpose this month. I think we could use a brighter opening page!! I am seeking ideas and suggestions on how to remedy this. Please let me know my phone or email. We have worked this summer on a new logo. Should we use that? What would you folks like *your* newsletter to look like?? I want to thank everyone who has contributed and hopefully the ones who haven't yet have noticed a big change in our

newsletter due to input from the MGs. Please share with the rest of us!! Always I welcome any additions!!

Carol Moates, your editor

### Ini Beckman's Beautiful Garden



Bee feeding on Sedum



Nasturtiums



Camillia



Rue

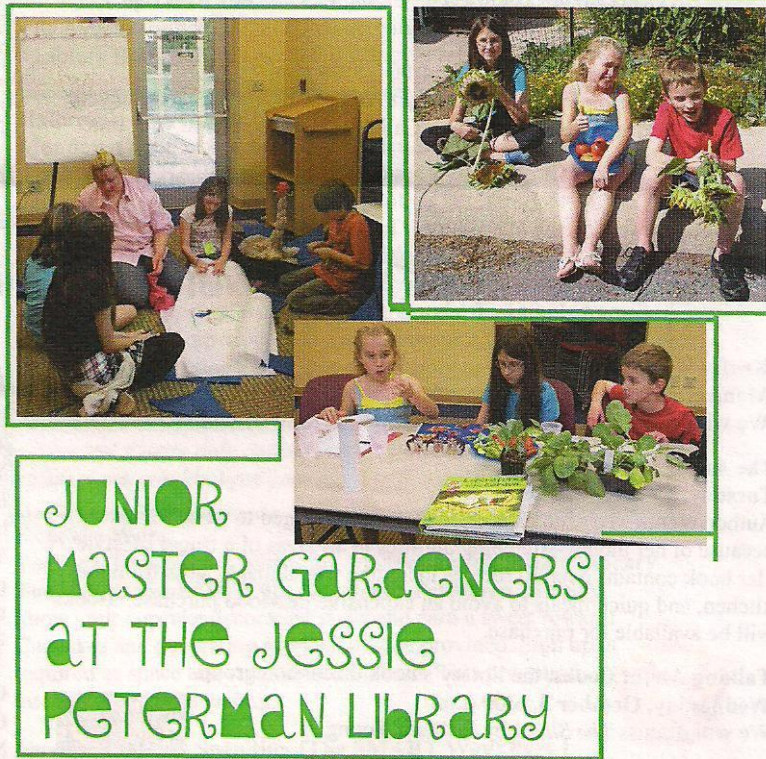


Tropical Ginger bought at May Plant Sale



Gerber Daisy

**Floyd Jr. Master Gardeners Meeting**  
**Taken from Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library Newsletter**



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