



# The Grapevine

September 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)

Vice president – Ini Beckman – 552-2873  
[inibeckman@yahoo.com](mailto:inibeckman@yahoo.com)

Secretary – Rosemarie Sawdon – 540-953-0379  
[sawdon@msn.com](mailto:sawdon@msn.com)

Treasurer – Bob Lockwood-639-5982  
[svlockwood@aol.com](mailto:svlockwood@aol.com)

At large – Erica Jones—544-7359 [emjones@vt.edu](mailto:emjones@vt.edu)

At large – Lynn Brammer – 449- 6621  
[lbrammer@vt.edu](mailto:lbrammer@vt.edu)

At large – Donna Fern—336-380-5242  
[vafern3@gmail.com](mailto:vafern3@gmail.com)

Past president – Gwen Ewing – 382-9566  
[ewinggf@vt.edu](mailto:ewinggf@vt.edu)

### **Communications**

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### **VCE Master Gardener Program**

Wendy Silverman, Coordinator 382-5790

### **Contact Us:**

#### **NRVMGA**

NRV MGA Website:

<http://civic.bev.net/nrvmga/>

(Membership Dues, Grants and General Correspondence)  
755 Roanoke St.,

Suite G, Christiansburg, VA 24073

Listserv: [nrvmga@listserv.bburg.bev.net](mailto:nrvmga@listserv.bburg.bev.net)

#### **Virginia Cooperative Extension – Montgomery County Office**

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(MG Coordinator and Timesheets)

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**Minutes of NRV Master Gardener Association  
Board Meeting  
August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

Location: Montgomery County Government Building

In Attendance: Connie Lawson, Bob Lockwood, Lynn Brammer, Donna Fern  
Rosemarie Sawdon, Ini Beckman, Gwen Ewing, Wendy Silverman

Connie called meeting to order 5:30pm

Minutes of July 9th meeting (no written copy) approved. Secretary absent for July meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Bob emailed copy of report - \$3871.37 balance in operations account  
\$250.00 received from Friends of Library

Pulaski Garden Tour

\$3737.37 balance in Grants account

Bob suggested we transfer \$1000.00 from operations account to grants account since over \$2000.00 would more than cover anticipated expenses. It was suggested that we order \$100.00 worth of seeds for 2013 which are used as giveaways at Plant Clinics. This was approved.

Grants: Erica Jones is now working on advertising grants for 2013. She is emailing requirements, qualifications and how to apply for grant money in the counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski and Montgomery, as well as towns within these areas. A committee has been formed which includes Erica, Bob Lockwood, Gwen, Donna Fern and Rosemarie.

Nominating Committee: Lynn stated that the following Board positions are open which include President and Secretary. Donna Fern has accepted position of Vice President and Bob Lockwood will continue as Treasurer. Also discussed was the possibility that Donna Fern may consider the position of President if someone would take the Vice President position. Anyone interested in serving on the Board should contact Lynn Brammer. New Board members are appointed at General Meeting in December.

Donna Fern is working on a tri-fold "brag" board. It was determined that a board that can be changed/updated periodically would be the best investment. Donna will present cost and particulars at next Board meeting.

Lynn gave a report on "Share the Spare" and the continued growth of donated produce. She is also receiving produce on campus from employees at Tech. The possibility of giving a receipt for donations was discussed. This is a way of acknowledging the donations and a show of appreciation.

Plant Clinics: Wendy is having difficulty recruiting volunteers for plant clinics at various community functions. She has worked many, or most, of the clinics and cannot continue a schedule which involves every week-end. If volunteers do not come forth, she will have to cut back on the amount of clinics we offer which will have a negative effect on our organization by not having public exposure, in not only educating the public, but also in recruiting new members to the program.

Future Meetings: Board Meeting - September 10

General Meeting - September 20 - Vineyard in Elliston

Ini will send out notice and particulars for September general meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon, Secretary

### **Book Review "Designing with Grasses" by Neil Lucas**

This book is good for beginners and more experienced folks. It is written in a very straightforward manner without a lot of froo-froo. For example, sentences from under section *Grasses for Woodland and Shade* he writes "Shade is not the natural setting for most grasses" and "Heavy shade cast by established trees and shrubs is the most difficult in which to plant successful...". Those, I think, lay it out pretty directly. I have found as a MG and in my work

landscaping types. Two very useful chapters are "*Reinventing the Classic Plant Border...*" and "*Right Grass, Right Place*". The plant border chapter has photographs of redoing a section of a public garden experiences that shade/grass questions seem to come up frequently!

Don't be put off by the book title thinking the book is aimed at highbrow (well, big pocketbooks) formerly inhabited by ailing conifer, if you want some inspiration. The "*Right Grass*" chapter discusses green roofs, sun, drought, shade, wet places and lawn alternatives. And the last chapter in the book has some 90 pages of Genus species, descriptions, zones, and (yeah!) color pictures. There are grasses back here I have never heard of for sure. Happy reading! Erica Jones

### **Seed Swap**

I would be happy to seed swap with anybody that wants to- I've got pink and purple Lupine seeds, black radish seeds, Shasta Daisy seeds, "Banana Cream" daisy seeds, "Chocolate" Cosmos, "Envy" soy beans (good for edamame) and plenty of Lemon Marigold seeds also. I will have plenty of Heliopsis seeds as well in a few weeks. I've also got a very pretty and fuzzy Apple

Mint and also a fragrant Lemon Balm that people are welcome to dig up a piece of if they would like- there is still plenty of time for it to root before frost and they practically live through the winter here anyway...

Shana Maron-Kennedy

I am interested in jonquil and narcissis bulbs if anyone has extra. I will have some white four o'clock seeds, very fragrant.

Carol Moates

I save seeds and am interested in swapping.

Connie Lawson

### **Home-made sun-dried tomatoes**

**Erna Kubin**

Preheat oven to 200 degrees.

Wash and halve tomatoes and put on a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Sprinkle with salt. Bake until tomatoes take on a leathery texture. Time depends on size. Smaller tomatoes will be done in a few hours; larger ones, up to a day. Store in plastic bags in the freezer or for a week in the refrigerator. So much cheaper than store-bought. I paid \$3.49 for 3 oz.

### **Tomato, Peach, and Fresh Herb Salad**

**Contributed by: Erna Kubin**

**Adapted from Fine Cooking**

2 lb tomatoes -- a mix of colors and sizes is attractive, larger ones cut to match smaller size  
1 lb ripe peaches, sliced  
(1/2 small red onion), sliced  
2 T. ev olive oil  
2 T orange juice or mango etc. nectar  
1 T balsamic vinegar (white preferred)  
1 t soy sauce  
1/2 t grated lemon zest  
1/4 t kosher  
1/2 c lightly packed whole small mint and basil leaves, large leaves should be torn  
edible flowers

Whisk oil through lemon zest and pour over peaches and tomatoes and peaches (onion if used.) Toss gently before serving. Add mint, basil, and edible flowers over individual portions.



## Pressure Canning Workshop Canning Meat & Game!!!



Conducted by Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Food Volunteers with  
guest instructor Cecil Sink of the Virginia Department of Health!!

**SATURDAY September 15<sup>th</sup> 1 - 5 p.m.**

Fee \$15

Call or email to register: 540-745-9307  
[VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com](mailto:VCEMasterVolunteersFM@gmail.com)

**Location: Floyd Farm Bureau**  
**(335 East Oxford Street, Floyd, VA)**

### ***PARTICIPANTS WILL:***

- *Learn how to safely preserve a variety of meat and game at home.*
- *Participate in hands-on pressure canning.*
- *Review equipment, supplies and resources for pressure canning, including recipes.*

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## 2013 Master Gardener Training

Fall is now here and preparation is underway for the 2013 Master Gardener training. We are trying something different this year. We are having a daytime class. Classes will be held at the Hahn Pavilion on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 AM -12:30 PM, February through early May. The new class kickoff is still planned for the January monthly meeting. In 2014, we will have an evening class like usual. We are giving the daytime class a try and if it is successful, we will offer a daytime class every third year. So start talking up the Master Gardener program with your friends, give them my contact information, and applications will go out in October. I will also need help with distributing information about becoming a master gardener to area stores, restaurants, libraries, and other public facilities. Please let me know if you would like to help in this effort.

Wendy Silverman

### **Ini Beckman's Profile**

Master Gardener Since: May 2009

Current MG Activities: Wednesdays at Smithfield; Occasional Plant Clinic; VP of the NRVMG/Board meetings; Organizer and attender of our monthly "Outings"; help here or there.

Background: Elementary school teacher, missionary, tour guide. With my Father as an entomologist, how could I not be interested in nature and growing things. I had compiled a herbarium.

Occupation: Massage Therapist and "Health Coach in training" (ready in December).

Favorite MG Training Class & Why: Insects. I think because of my father's interest, but also I won the door prize, a book called "1001 Questions Answered About Insects".

Gardening History: Started as a tiny tot, 3 years old, raking the (garden) beds of my Mother, had my own little plot at age 7, and I never stopped, not even in Yemen.

Interests and Hobbies: Hiking, Camping, Reading, Knitting, Health, Nutrition, the "Fabric of Life," and... Gardening.

Favorite Plants: flowers: Nasturtium, Zinnia, Dahlia; vegetables: Okra, Jerusalem Artichokes, Patty Pan, Green Beans; small fruit: Red and Black Currant, Fig trees.

Recent Additions to my Garden: two more raised beds growing enough vegetables with the first one to provide all the veggies my husband Bob and I need over the summer.

I wish I knew more about and dared to prune my trees.

Plants I would like to share: copper colored chrysanthemums.

Plants I would like starts of: phloxes (and they were offered and I had no time to get them!).

What is the most important thing about gardening to me: time spent in nature with growing things; with sun and rain and wind; with birds, and worms and butterflies (but I still dislikes the bugs on my Collards!) I feel like a king in my kingdom. I feel the spirit; I come alive. I also check on and learn how things grow; what guests descend and settle in my garden; how the compost progresses. And finally, the garden feeds us!

My favorite gardening book(s): I don't read many gardening books. I find I learn more by doing.

Advice to other gardeners: Talk to your garden. Enjoy it. Watch it grow. And we may become wise like Solomon.

### **May 2013 Plant Sale**

Soon we will bring in our house plants that have been enjoying the outside summer time. As you check them over, think about dividing some for our annual plant sale for this coming May. They can be potted up now to over winter and grow to be more beautiful for our sale.

If you will be separating your outdoor plants and can spare some for the sale, now is a great time to pot them up and get them ready too.

Remember to label as to sun or shade, water requirements, size, and what it will look like in bloom or at full growth, and does it spread. Photos are nice, but not necessary.

Gwen Ewing

### **Changes**

This year August was full of changes for me. My grape harvest all came in, my autumn flowers bloomed, my winter squash vines died, and all of that was a month earlier than normal. Even with the tomato blight I am still canning tomatoes like crazy. My basil plants were very bitter when I would have normally made pesto, I wondered if maybe the heat was the cause. Jon Vest told me to cut them back and see if they can come back—which they have, so pesto making is happening late. I even had a bout with squash bugs toward the end of August and they have been early summer for me before. There are enough leaves on the ground to rustle through as I walk to the car now and have been so for almost two weeks.

If anyone else has had changes this year, let me know for next newsletter. Also, if anyone attended the climate workshops/talks at the MG College, please write us a short article.

Carol Moates

My apples are early this year. My spaghetti squash is also early. I think we are going to have an early fall from the way the weather has been. My Autumn Sedum is already in bloom, they are usually blooming in September.

Connie Lawson

## MARIA'S PAGE

# Five Truths about Gardening

**T**he other day, I was puttering about in the veg patch and planting some seeds. The fine smell of good, clean dirt was cleansing my brain. But when I looked down, the label I had *just put in place* was missing. Gone. Vanished. I picked up my new Japanese weeding knife and laughed a little.

How many of these knives had I bought over the years? Maybe 10 or 20. How many did I have now? Maybe two, if I'm lucky. Where are the rest? Who knows. A garden is like a clothes dryer, and tools are like socks. They are somewhere, but also they are nowhere. That got me to thinking about the five immutable truths of gardening. —*Maria Rodale*



**1. YOU WILL LOSE TOOLS.** Let's face it: Tools usually get lost before they wear out. You can paint the handles red or be meticulously organized, but it is almost assured that one or two tools per season will go missing. You can blame it on the kids, the pets, the spouses, or the neighbors. I blame it on the gnomes.

**2. YOUR BODY MIGHT FEEL STIFF** after gardening, but your mind and soul will feel more limber. A good gardening session is accompanied by a combination of ouch and ahhhh. The ouch usually involves legs, back, arms, splinters, fingernails, scratched corneas, or bites and rashes. But the ahhhh, that's the sound of a peaceful mind, a spirit that has been literally grounded by the earth. It's helpful to remember that the ouches usually result in stronger muscles and a healthier body. The ahhhhs definitely restore your soul.

**3. SOMETHING WILL SURPRISE YOU.** It could be the status of something you planted—perhaps it's growing faster or slower than expected (or disappeared altogether). It could be a batch of mice nestled in the bowels of your compost pile. It could be something squishy you step on in bare feet. It could be the sheer mass of excrement a pet can scatter about your yard. It could be the incredible beauty of a flower or a bird you didn't expect to see. It could be the discovery of a long-lost tool. But every interaction with your garden will surprise you with something.

**4. YOU WILL CONFRONT YOUR FEARS AND GAIN CONFIDENCE.** Perhaps it's primal, but fear of gardening exists and is real. The fear that we might eat something poisonous or touch something dangerous or confront a beast that will kill us surrounds us all. But have no fear! Nine times out of ten, nothing bad happens. And when something bad does happen, usually the worst outcome is massive annoyance. A few good books and a friend or neighbor who can answer your questions is the best solution.

**5. NATURE ALWAYS WINS.** Seriously, you can have a perfect-looking lawn and the tidiest garden on your block, but don't be fooled for a minute. It will only be days before nature creeps back into control. This is not a bad thing, although it can be frustrating. This is the ultimate lesson of nature and gardening and perhaps life: If you can't beat her, join her! Then you, too, can be on the winning team.



**Floyd Harvest Festival**  
**September 22**  
**Floyd Extension Office**

Enjoy a fun day in Floyd on Saturday September 22nd!!!

Sustain Floyd will be hosting "Breakfast in the Market" from 8:30-11am featuring delicious local foods. The \$7 breakfast menu will include two seriously hearty buckwheat pancakes, scrambled eggs, stewed apples, sausage (for \$2 extra), Red Rooster Coffee, and local fruit syrups, jams and jellies- it's all you can eat, so come hungry!!! (Or sign up to volunteer for a two-hour shift and receive your breakfast for free!!) <http://sustainfloyd.org/were-serving-breakfast-again-on-september-22nd/>

Enjoy breakfast with live folk music, then shop the farmers market for lots of delicious local eats, and then walk on over to the Floyd Harvest Festival at the VCE Office just three blocks away and enjoy a tractor parade, local craft vendors, BBQ by 4-H, live animal exhibits, traditional festival exhibits, games and activities for kids, and all of the fun festivities that Floyd has to offer on that day!!

We are hoping to have a great turn out this year. Think about entering something---- vegetable, canned goods, handmade items, photographs, flower arrangements; there are many categories of interest. Check out this information at: [floydharvestfestival.com](http://floydharvestfestival.com). All the rules and information for entering will be on the website. The items will be accepted at the Floyd Extension office on Sept. 20.

This year we will also be having our first graduation of the Floyd Jr. Master Gardeners program. There will be music, food, entries for judging, and many vendors. Should be fun for the whole family.

Do plan to come!

Shana Maron-Kennedy, Carol Moates

**Montgomery Museum Heritage Day**

Heritage day was August 25, at the Montgomery Museum on 300 Pepper Street S. Christiansburg, VA. Beth Umberger is the project coordinator who as revamped the garden to a new height. Come and visit this garden.

"Thanks so much for all who have helped in the garden over the year. On Heritage Day everyone enjoyed the garden in different ways. Some used the rough draft of the pamphlet to help us try it out. Some sat at the picnic table to enjoy their food. Two little boys delighted in chasing each other around the Russian Sage. A little girl wandered up next to the cardinal flower to get a closer look. Lots of folks were taking pictures. The plants peaked visitors

curiosity and they asked questions or requested seeds or cuttings. The children were involved in their paintings and liked taking plants home with them. We, Master Gardeners were able to share our knowledge with old and young alike. The entomologists were catching insects with their nets to use in their exhibit and helped us identify a beetle on the Swamp Milkweed.

What a joy it is to work with all the volunteers and community service workers. Thanks for allowing me this opportunity to pursue something I love.”

Beth Umberger

**GLADE FARM GATHERING PHOTOS  
AUGUST MASTER GARDENER MEETING  
By: Dave Helsher**



## After Harvest

When canning season is over and the jars are all lined in the pantry, I love marveling at the rows of colors in those shiny jars. Canning is one thing I will never be able to give up until I simply cannot do it and cannot find someone to help me. I get an overwhelming feeling of joy and abundance seeing the food stored to feed us through the months until next year's produce comes in. So many who know me love going into my pantry to see the full jars there, but a few always say, "I can't imagine all the work that took and why you go to all the trouble when you can buy the same stuff at the grocery". To me there is no comparison to my home grown and home processed fruits, vegetable, and meats. There is no taste nor quality comparison at all to purchased foods. I know where my food came from, exactly what it is and on it, and how it was processed as well. As far as FDA standards, well, that's another subject. So, I am thrilled each year to start out with greens and strawberries and know from past years what will be next, and then next, and then last to put up.

Carol Moates



"Never a day passes but that I do myself the honor to commune with some of nature's varied forms. George Washington Carver

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