



September – October Grapevine

2013

New River Valley Master Gardeners Association

2014 Master Gardener training recruitment is underway!

October is the month to recruit for next year's Master Gardener training class. The 2014 class will run from Jan 16th – early May on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00-9:00 PM (this is different than previous years when it was from 6:30-9:30). We will once again be at the Hahn pavilion. The course will run 60 hours or 20 sessions, and there will be a 50 hour give back of service time. The cost for the course this year is \$125.00. If you know of anyone interested in becoming a master gardener please have them contact Wendy Silverman at wss@vt.edu or by phone at 540-382-5790 to get an application. You are our best advertisers for the program! Flyers are available at the extension office, so please feel free to pick one up and share.

Wendy Silverman

So far... here is the list of nominees for the slate of officers for 2014:

President	Lynn Brammer Maureen Fallon
Vice President	Donna Fern
Secretary	Beth Kirby
Treasurer	Gwen Ewing
Members at Large	Phyllis Eschenmann Pete Imhof Susan Lockwood Evelyn Melia

If anyone else is interested in running for an office, please call Evelyn Melia at 540-98078 or email meliano@comcast.net

Minutes of NRV Master Gardener Association

Board Meeting - August 8th 2013

Location: Montgomery County Government Building, Extension Office, Christiansburg, VA

In Attendance: Maureen Fallon, Lynn Brammer, Donna Fern, Rosemarie Sawdon, Connie Lawson, Gwen Ewing, Robert Lockwood, Susan Lockwood, Evelyn Melia, Kelli Scott

Meeting called to order at approximately 5:35pm.

Minutes from July 11, 2013 approved.

Treasurer's Report approved.

Bob's recommended proposal (#5) of transferring \$475.00 from general fund to the Grants Account approved. Board has approved \$2000.00 allocation for 2014 Community Grants with option for amount to be amended.

Discussion followed regarding possible rain barrel workshop as a means of raising funds. Lynn mentioned that she has 12 names of people interested from the Sustainable Blacksburg Steppin Out Booth. Kelli mentioned another fund raiser might be a composting barrel workshop for which she has the information.

Old Business:

Co-Secretary Linda Harris has resigned; Rosemarie will continue as Secretary and Gwen Ewing has offered to serve as back up Secretary.

As stated above, the Grants Committee will meet to finalize 2014 Grants Budget. Revised "Proposed Protocol for the Administration of the Grants Program of the NRV Master Gardener Association" dated July 2013, has been accepted and adopted.

New Business:

Importance of receiving nominations for Executive Board opened a wider discussion regarding the status of the two active committees, namely, Nominating Committee and Grants Committee.

In view of having efficiently operating committees, after much discussion, the Board has decided that all Chairs, of any Committee, serve no more than 2 consecutive years. This decision is consistent with the By-Laws which state that Officers only serve a two year term. This also allows an opportunity for more member participation. All Chairs serve at the discretion of the Board.

Each Committee will have a listserv of members, and all correspondence will be shared with all committee members.

The motion was approved and is effective as of August 8th, 2013.

Nominating Committee - Chair: Evelyn Melia. Members: Lynn Brammer, Erica Jones

Grants Committee - Chair: Donna Fern. Members: Maureen Fallon, Erica Jones, Rosemarie Sawdon
Bob Lockwood, Gwen Ewing

Nominating Committee will present possible candidates at August board meeting. Two positions, Secretary and Treasurer, will end this year. All Officer positions are open for consideration.

Discussion followed regarding Wendy's request for advice concerning participation of volunteer hours from people taking the course work. Kelli gave several ideas of how other groups work and the cost of the course, such as in Roanoke and Bedford counties. It was decided to table a decision and continue the discussion with Wendy at the next Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50pm

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon

Minutes of NRV Master Gardener Association

Board Meeting - September 12, 2013

Location: Montgomery County Government Building, Extension Office, Christiansburg, VA

In Attendance: Susan Lockwood, Robert Lockwood, Lynn Brammer, Donna Fern, Evelyn Melia, Connie Lawson, Gwen Ewing, Rosemarie Sawdon, Wendy Silverman

Meeting called to order at approximately 5:35pm.

Minutes of August 8th, 2013 approved.

Treasurer's Report approved.

Donna gave a summary for Grants Committee from their August 20th meeting. A mini grant to Gilbert Linkous School was requested by Phyllis Eschenmann for their Greenhouse project requiring additional water hoses. The amount requested and granted by the Grants Committee is \$100.00 after receiving Board approval. It was suggested that Phyllis, as coordinator, try to keep the hoses for use by the project participants only for safe keeping.

Publicity for 2014 Grants will be distributed to school districts in the counties represented, to local newspapers, and radio stations as a public service announcement, local TV stations and Extension Agents, Facebook and appropriate Blog sites. A standard letter will be sent to all Grant applicants, as well as, a follow up letter after conclusion of grant awards.

Grants Committee voted to pay for general expenses, printing, postage, etc., from operating account. Board approved this recommendation as well as continuing agenda as outlined by the Grants Committee.

Nominating Committee: Evelyn gave update of persons contacted for open Board positions and At Large Members. Nominations will be presented for vote at the November 21st General Meeting.

Plans for Potluck, General Meeting, Thursday, November 21st at 6:00PM in the Community Room, Montgomery County Government Building, were discussed. Setup will begin at 5:30pm or earlier.

Grant projects will be displayed by video, and a five minute presentation for various grants will be given by recipients.

Following the success of last year's basket raffle, earning approximately \$90.00, we will again have a basket raffle. All Board members are asked to donate an appropriate item for the basket.

A \$50.00 Kroger gift certificate was approved to send to Stan Stanley for his gracious pizza party social.

Donna asked for suggestions and recommended a donation to Spikenard Honey Bee Sanctuary for the September 19th general meeting. An amount of \$25.00 was approved. The Sanctuary is presently raising funds for their operation.

Maureen is asking for technical help in her efforts to update the website, as well as, information on current projects and for the calendar.

Wendy discussion and announcements:

Further conversation continued regarding agenda for November General Meeting. Wendy has proposed setting up a plant clinic site, as well as, dialog replicating a typical plant clinic situation. Proper protocol needs to be followed when doing plant clinics, and this should serve as a demonstration of what is expected. She also suggested members bring samples, pictures, etc., to identify plants with disease problems, etc.

Kelli Scott, our extension agent, will talk about the effects of our projects focusing on "how the community is affected", the goals to be recognized from an overall community perspective.

Wendy has considered raising the Master Gardener class fee to \$125.00 and offering a scholarship or two for an applicant who displays financial need. Money for the first scholarship would come from the operating fund. The Board agreed with these considerations.

Upcoming Meetings: October 17 - General Meeting - Community Room. Government Office Bldg.
Program: Quintin McClelland Total Tree Healthcare

November 21 - Potluck - General Meeting 6:00PM, Government Office Bldg. Community Room

Submitted by: Rosemarie Sawdon, Secretary

Floyd Livestock and County Fair Results from NRV Master Gardeners

The Floyd Livestock and County fair went on along with the rain on September 21st. The NRV Master Gardeners were there with 5 different gardening activities and kept them going until the winds and rains were too much to stay open. A big thank you goes out to those who helped with this event despite the rain.

Three Master Gardeners, Carol Volker, Shana Merin and Wendy Silverman entered their veggies, flowers, can goods and crafts. The craftiest of the three was Carol Volker, with two beautiful knit hats and a phoebe sweater for her daughter Anya which got a reserve grand champion. All of her items got first place. Although Wendy was determined to beat Shana this time in the amount of prize money, especially after the defeat to Shana at the New River Valley fair, Shana was once again victorious. She had 7 first place ribbons with 2 being best in shows, and Wendy had 4 first place ribbons with 2 best in shows. Both had a scattering of second and third place ribbons as well.

The competition is now fiercer than ever for the 2014 fair season. **Shana must be stopped!** It is up to all of us to submit our entries to next years' fairs and break Shana's winning streak. In all honesty, congratulations Shana! Your submissions were amazing and although Wendy does not want to admit it, you deserved the win...this time....



Shana's Flower Arrangement

Wendy Silverman

The Children's Garden at the Hensel Eckman YMCA in Pulaski

Children love all activities that are fun, interesting and allow them to use their imagination. With this in mind, Master Gardener, Sharon Eifried initiated a Children's Garden Project with the preschool children in the Child Development Center at the Hensel Eckman YMCA in Pulaski. Knowing that children explore their world using their senses, Sharon invited the children to plant a "Sensing Garden." The garden was started with a mini-grant awarded by the New River Valley Master Gardener Association. All Master Gardeners are invited to join the fun and participate in this approved service project.

In the "Sensing Garden," the children planted lamb's ears that feel soft and hen and chicks that feel hard or "pointy," as the children like to say! Pressed lavender smells "pretty" and crushed mint leaves smell like "chewing gum"! Licorice plants and lamb's ears have a light green-grey color and the marigold plants and basil look dark green. As the plants begin to flower, the scene is colored with the purple of the cleome (spider plant), yellow of the marigolds, pink of the phlox and orange of the cosmos. The children actually helped to place the plants in the garden, adding enriched soil and compost and watering the plants with their Disney themed watering cans. For some, watering with "Mickey" or "Dora" was the highlight of the experience!

The activities related to the Garden Project also include fun in the classroom in the form of stories and crafts. Thus far, the themes have included *Caterpillar to Butterfly*, *Busy Bees*, and *Sprouting Seeds*. Age appropriate story books, recommended by Jena Hardy, the Pulaski County Children's Librarian, were read to the children amid their smiles of delight. They especially liked the story about "Bee & Me" in which Mr. Bee can be seen flying, crying or enjoying a flower with the turn of every page! One classroom activity included creating butterflies with wooden clothespins and tissue paper. A second project involved drawing a face on a white Styrofoam cup, decorating it with wiggly



eyes, pom-pom noses, and pipe-cleaner mouths, filling the cup with soil and planting grass seed at the top of the cup. You guessed it...all of the Child Development Center students anxiously waited to see which creation sprouted the best head of green hair!

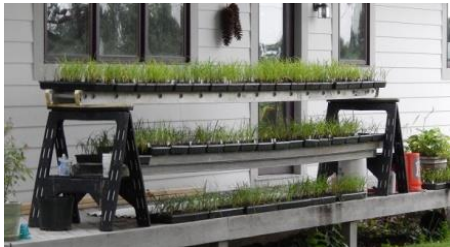
Children are happy to pose with their creations! Project leaders seen in this photo are (L-R) Dora Nichols, and Master Gardeners Sharon Eifried and Stacy Nichols.

By: Sharon Eifried



Meeting held on Thursday, July 18th at Flower Field Farm

In July, the NRVMGGA General Meeting was held at Flower Field Farm, home of Daylily Breeder, Mitch Holcomb in the Prices Fork area of Blacksburg. Following a short business meeting, Mitch gave members a “How To” course on breeding daylilies and shared newer, unique varieties growing in his garden. He has been breeding full time since 2006 and has had as many as 2,000 varieties at his farm. Mitch sells his plants at the Blacksburg Farmer’s Market. With the spring being cooler, many specimens were still in bloom. Although rain threatened our tour, members enjoyed the educational evening at this beautiful property.



New breeds started



Mitch Holcomb discusses daylilies

By: Donna Fern

Meeting at Kentland Farms, Thursday, August 15th

On a beautiful August evening we met in McCoy at the student run farm where the gardens plots produce fruits, flowers, and vegetables. Farm manager Alison Reeves gave us a tour of the gardens and discussed the Farm to Fork program which provides fresh produce to dining halls at Virginia Tech. She explained how produce ready for harvest is integrated into dining hall fare. When student volunteers leave campus for the summer, dining staff travel to the farm and support the daily operations. We learned about the workings of the “fertigate” system, allowing the application of organic fertilizer through established irrigation infrastructure. Test gardens are planted in conjunction with research

programs. Bounty from the farm includes raspberries, beans, corn, peppers, and flowers for special events.



Kentland Farm Manager, Alison Reeves

By: Donna Fern

Meeting at Spikenard Farm, Thursday, September 17th

The rain held out and a group of about fifteen who ventured out to the Honeybee Sanctuary at Spikenard Farm in Floyd. Gunther Hauk, Executive Director and Head Apiarist, founded the sanctuary in 2006 with his wife Vivian. We enjoyed a tour of the farm, lush with forage for tens of thousands of honeybees living in a variety of hives. Gunther explained the workings of the various styles of hives as well as the roles of the different types of bees comprising each structure. He shared his philosophies regarding the current state of the honeybee, expectations for their future, and the effects on food production and our environment. Gunther provided us with an overview of the principles and practices of sustainable/biodynamic beekeeping and encouraged home gardeners to plant forage and become beekeepers, stressing the need for protection and growth of the honeybee population. The evening ended on a high note as we shared a full moon rising beyond the mist laden hills.



Hive filled with honeybees.

By: Donna Fern



Gunther Hauk discusses forage.

Spikenard Honey Bee Sanctuary

The September NRVMA meeting was a visit to Spikenard Honey Bee Sanctuary in Floyd and a presentation by the Director Gunther Hauk a world renowned beekeeper.

He explained the key role bees play in the human and natural world; how they form formic acid, which is essential and the basis of all plant life, and how they are now in a crisis and the colony collapse disorder.

Gunther gave a tour of his gardens of bi-annual, perennial and annual plants which attract bees. Also the planting of buckwheat, and specific trees and grasses to attract bees to his hives. The design of the hives which mimics the natural design was also a feature of the presentation as well as the aroma of the honey..

The danger of losing bees is a very serious issue as they form the foundation of our shared ecosystem, and our food supply is dependent upon them for pollination. Up to 70% of the food supply is dependent upon this process.

Colony collapse disorder is caused by various factors such as varroa mite imported from Asia, beekeeping methods, such as forced and artificial methods, and toxic chemicals.

Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefurn, Imidacloprid, Thiamethoxam are neonics which are found in many popular brands of chemicals used by gardeners and homeowners and are the cause of dying bees.

Please read the active ingredients on pesticide labels before buying the product.

If you decide to use these products, please don't use them on pollinator plants.

For a list of plants, trees and grasses beneficial to bees, you can visit www.spikenardfarm.com

By: Rosemarie Sawdon

Outdoor Pizza Party in August

Many thanks to Stan Stanley and his wife Gabby for hosting a wonderful evening of food and fellowship at their home in Pulaski. Gabby worked in an outdoor kitchen rolling homemade dough and topping each pizza with fresh ingredients. Stan cooked the pies to perfection in his custom built wood fired oven. The result was a delicious variety of pizza enjoyed by all, gathered together on their patio on a warm summer evening. Novices were invited to try their hand at pizza making before the evening came to a close. Plans are being considered for more "social only" events like this for the future!



Stan the Pizza Man.



Gabby makes the pies.

Board

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Maureen Fallon mofallon56@gmail.com

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

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