



The Grapevine

September 2018

New River Valley Master Gardener Association Newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Summer Highlights ...	2
Simply Elemental	3
Words & Tips.....	4
Plenty!	5
Orto Botanico Bologna	6
New Project How To...	7
Fairview Home	9
The Plant Historian....	10
Chihuly at Biltmore ...	12
Tips & Events	13
Food Forest Update ...	14
Photos	16

From the MG Coordinator

by Wendy Silverman

I am so proud and honored to be able to work with such an amazing group of volunteers. We are 83 Master Gardeners strong doing 53 different projects throughout the NRV. According to the VMS, in 2018, we have logged in 4849 hours and 2408 contacts so far. That is really impressive, and it doesn't count for the contacts reported on the contact sheets from all of the plant clinics and other events. Once we all log our hours and contacts (me included), we will have a more accurate estimate.

We make a huge difference out there and I can't thank you enough for all of your hard work. You should all be proud of what you have done so far this year.

For those of you who have not gotten their 20 hours yet, there are still opportunities to do so. There are several MG events in September and October, and there is always a need to staff the Master Gardener Helpdesk. If you have any questions about projects or where you fit best in the MG program, please don't hesitate to ask me.

As the growing season winds down, I would like you to think about and reflect on what you like about Master Gardening, and what changes we can make to strengthen the program. Again, thank you for all of your hard work. You are a critical part of Cooperative Extension. Enjoy the rest of the growing season!



Wendy Silverman

Summer Highlights



Jane Sutton



Jane Sutton



Trish Poole



Ruth Ann Whitener



Ruth Ann Whitener



Gwen Douglas



Gwen Douglas



Susan Perry

Simply Elemental 2018: An Outdoor Art Exhibit

By Sharon Eifried

Sunday, August 5th was a lovely warm day for the Opening Reception of the fourth annual edition of "Simply Elemental," an outdoor art exhibit at the Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech. More than 20 artists and organizations created an eclectic array of artistic pieces that are displayed throughout the garden. The many shapes, materials and colors blend together to give the visitor a beautiful and enjoyable experience.



One of the themes of this year's exhibit is "environmental consciousness." Artists created displays that depict a concern for the environment and how our resources are used. Some of the artists focused on reusing and recycling materials.

This year the NRV Master Gardeners, under the leadership of Gwen Ewing, contributed a very creative piece titled "The Power of the Purse." The display consists of a tower of donated purses filled with plants.

The planted purses make a symbolic statement about women having great control over how they use their money to make the environment healthier and more beautiful and improve the quality of life in their community.

(www.hort.vt.edu)

Master Gardener Emeritus, Diane Relf, along with Dave Angle, displayed an inspirational piece titled "Alternate Universes." The artists mounted discarded plate steel in shapes left from multiple cuttings and fabrications on old wagon wheels.

Each giant circle carries the viewer into a different universe, constructed by rethinking refuse.



Another Master Gardener artist, Susan Lockwood, also has an innovative piece exhibited in the Hahn Garden. The title of Susan's display is "Crystal Flowers" which consists of:



A grouping of approximately 15 to 21 three piece clear crystal plates/saucers glued together using waterproof glue and mounted on varying heights of rebar/reinforcing steel rods.

The Simply Elemental 2018 exhibit can be seen between dawn and dusk at the Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech every day until September 30th. If you stop by the Pavilion at the Garden, you can pick up a map of the garden depicting the placement of all 39 art pieces, their titles and the artists.

To learn more, visit the Hahn Horticulture Garden website at www.hort.vt.edu.

Vegetable Word Soup

by Erica Jones

I subscribe to an on-line "Word of the Day" and recently, the theme was vegetables. So far, discussion has focused on the word "bean" -- only some six different uses of the word besides the obvious. The word bean that is a veggie can mean green/string, various types of the dried seeds used in soups, and as a qualifier after "soy". The six non-veggie uses are: money, nonsense, secret, your head (use your bean), the least amount, and energy.

But on to the leaf crops. "Cabbage" has four noun meanings and four verbs. Three of these were originally used about 1703, but the other three are way older: 1391. Cabbage has been with us for a long time!

For the four **nouns**, cabbage can mean money (again). Vegetables have always been important, hey? It can also mean a mentally impaired person. Two less common uses are "scraps of fabric after making a garment" (you quilters are working with cabbage!!), and a term of endearment. So try that one on your significant other.

The cabbage **verbs** are less friendly. It can mean to pilfer, to get intoxicated, and to plagiarize. The term cabbaged means "exhausted". Poor *Brassica oleracea* needs to get a better press agent. *Brassica oleracea* refers to cabbage, cauliflower, leaf cabbages, broccoli, kale, etc., and all those fine vegetables that cabbage worms enjoy. Wild cabbage, the originator of all these, is known as colewort.

Feeling fermented?



Tomato Tips

PSSSST To speed up the ripening of your tomatoes, try:

- Removing all new growth, flowers, suckers, and small tomatoes that don't have time to mature (to focus energy on ripening)
- Gradually reducing water (to trick the plant to believing it's fall)

Tour of Plenty!

By Susan Perry and Cathy Hershfield



On August 16, the NRV Master Gardeners participated in a tour of Plenty! Our host was Rachel, who led the tour. Plenty! is a project whose mission is to provide healthy food and build community. Located in Floyd, Plenty! offers several programs that support these goals. In addition, Plenty! is a Master Gardener project because there is an educational component to help clients learn to grow their own produce. Several Master Gardeners currently volunteer there.

First, it is a food pantry serving 75 – 80 families per week. Some families simply need short-term assistance while others visit the pantry on an on-going basis. Second, Plenty! provides a portable food program from June through November that delivers food to an additional 60 families each week. These clients tend to be homebound and are often seniors. Third, Plenty! hosts community lunches at their facility throughout the year: weekly lunches during the summer on Wednesday and then the last Wednesday of the month from September through May. A special team of volunteers come to Plenty! to prepare the lunch. Which brings me to the final “program” – Plenty! grows about 50% of the produce used in all the programs mentioned above. Using just $\frac{3}{4}$ acre, the year-round grow operation involves a field, a small greenhouse, and a 2100 square foot high tunnel. While not certified, Plenty! uses organic growing practices. The remaining produce is donated by local farmers, commercial and private gardens, the NRV glean team, and local grocery stores (Slaughters and Food Lion).



Plenty! is a non-profit that depends on private donations and funding via grants. They can always use more volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, just show up on a Wednesday and they will put you to work. Then, you're invited to stay for the community lunch. In fact, anyone is invited to drop in to the community lunch (but it's nicer if you volunteer first, although that's only an opinion).

Rachel gave us a tour of the growing operation. We saw the growing field, the irrigation, the beautiful trellised tomatoes in the high tunnel, and curing garlic, onions, and shallots in the old barn. We saw the tractor, but none of us thought to ask for a



ride. And someone (no names — what happens in Floyd stays in Floyd!) chased one of several marauding groundhogs away temporarily. All in all, it was both fun and informative.

Orto Botanico Bologna
The University of Bologna Botanic Gardens
By Susan Perry

This summer I had the chance to visit the Botanic Gardens in Bologna, Italy. This garden is one of the oldest botanic gardens in Italy, established in 1568. Originally located in a small courtyard in the city, it was relocated several times over the centuries. In one case, it moved to a larger site; it moved again to take advantage of a building in which exotic plants could be over-wintered; it moved to the current location in the center of Bologna in the early 1800s. If that weren't enough, a later period of neglect resulted in the growth of a dense natural forest on the site, which was then later partially destroyed by bombing during WWII. Despite all that, the garden has been gradually restored over the past 75 years, and the restoration efforts continue today.



The garden is managed and maintained by the University of Bologna on a 4.5 acre site. It is divided into sections including forested areas, a wetland pond, several greenhouses containing tropical plants and succulents, a medicinal garden, and a recently developed herb garden. The herb garden is modeled on the original herb garden planted in 1568.

There are more than 5000 local and exotic plant specimens on display at the garden. The garden focuses on presenting single collections of particular value, such as the succulent collection, which is one of the largest in Italy. The other focus is restoring

and reconstructing natural habitats to display plants as they would occur in nature.

Bologna is a very walkable city, and the garden is an easy walk from almost anywhere. Because it is so compact, it can be enjoyed in between other sightseeing.



Me, a Project? But I don't like flowers!

By Tracy Pouzar

I think I need therapy. When I moved here from Richmond almost 4 years ago, it was to escape hectic city life. I sold my business because I was tired of being in charge. I was done with people looking to me for answers. I was tired of being the responsible one. My kids were out of the house, it was time to just relax. The last thing I wanted to do was take on a project.

If you've read my previous dabbling in writing, you know that the Master Gardener program has changed my life. You also know that I don't like flowers. You pick them, you put them in a vase and they die. I am here to tell you that I may be in denial. This vegetable person may actually be warming up to flowers and be ready to admit that she has a flower problem.

On a recent trip to Florida with a stop in South Carolina on the way back, I found myself digging up all kinds of plants from my sister's garden. Now that we established that I kind of like flowers, let me reiterate that I still do NOT like to be in charge of anything. But the job that needed to be done was a garden at the Dublin animal shelter. I have loved dogs all my life. When I lived in Richmond, my family volunteered with Misunderstood Pitbull Rescue and at the Richmond SPCA. It was my love of dogs that made the project happen, not my love of flowers.

It happened like this. I volunteer walking dogs at the animal shelter. After the dogs tired me out for the afternoon, I was putting the leashes away in the office and talking with the girls who work there. Somehow my love of vegetable gardening came up and the president of the Pulaski Humane Society said they were looking for a Master Gardener. I was like, oh geez. I mean those of you who have been around for a while have heard it, I know you have. Doesn't everyone want a Master Gardener? Then the president took me to see the garden and I even felt bad for the flowers. Everything was overgrown, and weeds were

everywhere, no one was taking care of it. So I said it. I said that three letter word that gets so many of us into trouble. (Dramatic pause) I said yes.



Here's the problem though. I had no idea how to start a project. At my house in Allisonia, there is no high speed internet. Because of that, I have not checked the Master Gardener Website for info, forms etc. Hmmm, what to do? Here is what I learned: reach out to your MG friends.

I am lucky because our Master Gardener training class still gets together for lunch. At one of those lunches, I asked the question, "How do you go about starting a project?" I got the info that I needed. You had to fill out a form. Of course you had to fill out a



form! I knew the project had to be educational. Not sure that that meant, but I did know that the Humane Society was providing volunteers and we were going to be teaching them how to tend to the garden. So there, education. Oh not so, read on.

The second thing I learned was to follow up, and by that I mean be persistent. You have to go through Wendy and Kelli to get your project approved. They are busy, but they make the decision on projects. So, I was persistent and I followed up.

Then the phone call came about the educational side. Seems that teaching volunteers from the shelter does NOT quite make the project educational. Hence, a tri-fold brochure about plants that are dog and cat friendly, and labeling the plants in the garden so that visitors will know what they are looking at. Badda Bing, Badda Boom! I had a project. All I had to do was pick a date and get the word out.

Then I thought, how do I pay for the plant markers, labels, the printing of the trifolds, weed killer, plants for the planters? ARGH, it's never ending! I knew there were grants that were given out once a year. That wasn't going to work for me. I learned that there were mini grants that you could apply for at any time throughout the year. Yes, there is another form, but this time you go through the association. They were kind enough to approve my mini grant and I was one step closer to D-day.

My project was rather large, a horribly neglected garden, and it was an all-day event. To encourage people to come, I arranged for lunch to be provided and Gatorade in Wytheville provided Gatorade and Propel.

Finally, the day came and both Master Gardeners and Humane Society volunteers showed up. We all weeded out hearts out! I can't tell you how much was hauled out of that garden, but it was a lot. Bushes were trimmed, plants identified, and people got to know each other. It was wonderful to see Master Gardeners sharing their knowledge with dog lovers. I even gave a tour of the shelter to some of the gardeners and they got to see a little of my other volunteering life. I was so excited to see my friends come out to support the shelter and to see new friendships form.

This project is ongoing. The county didn't get the mulch to us and the weeds have come back. We will be planning another huge work day in the fall and will hopefully be getting that much-needed mulch. I am still working on the tri-fold, gathering info from other extension offices to create something special. I will definitely need help again. If you are interested in helping on an ongoing basis, please feel free to contact me at tracy.pouzar.ea@gmail.com



Fairview Home Garden Club

By Jeanne Donovan and Sharon Eifreid

Since 2014, Master Gardeners have been assisting the residents of the Fairview Home, a community in Dublin composed of adults with physical and intellectual disabilities, with their landscaping and gardening efforts. The main focus of the project is utilizing raised beds to grow enough vegetables to provide fresh produce to the residents for use in their meals.

This year MG volunteers Jeanne Donovan, Penny Tully and Sarah Smiley report that they, the residents and the gardens, are having a good year. They planted peas, beans, cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, marigolds and various herbs in the raised beds.

This year block planting was established in the carrot bed using 12" by 12" blocks. This technique provides some shade and is easier to water. Once established, block planting reduces water usage. In addition, block planting is known to attract fewer pests (easier to fly in line-rows and attack), provide a better yield, allow for fewer weeds, allow for companion plants to be placed between blocks, create shade for roots and reduce evaporation. The only negative thing that has occurred at the Fairview Home is that a lot of rain has displaced some of the seeds. The "block" is not as well defined. BUT, it is fun and educational to experiment with new gardening ideas.

One of the measures of success of this project is that the residents are energetic and ready to work when the master gardeners arrive. In addition, the residents are so proud of all the produce that they bring to the kitchen. Fairview Home gardens can always use additional MG volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Jeanne Donovan at jeandnv@gmail.com for additional information.



The Plant Historian: Lavender

By Kathleen Jones

I am a historian who is nearly a full-fledged Master Gardener, and I've been looking for a way to combine both skills. A column about the history of plants seems like a perfect use of my talents. Here goes: my foray into plant history begins with that most wonderful herb, lavender.

I love lavender. In my gardens, you can find English Lavender, *Lavandula angustifolia*, as well as some modern hybrids. In my kitchen, you'll find a jar of lavender for cooking and teas infused with lavender. As summer ends, bunches of lavender are hanging to dry, perhaps for Christmas gifts. In my drawers, there are lavender sachets; in my bathroom, lavender-scented soaps; and in my bedroom, a mister with lavender to soothe the soul (and tame the ever-present odors from two cats!)

I know well the calming, tension-relieving qualities of lavender, and I make an excellent lavender coffee cake. But, until taking the Master Gardener course, I had not thought about how lavender became such an essential herb. A bit of research revealed an herb woven inextricably into the fabric of European and American history. However, its history begins even earlier!

Ancient Egyptians used lavender for mummification. (I'm not sure how it was incorporated into mummy making but centuries later, lavender was still used as part of the embalming process.) Egyptians also turned lavender into cosmetics and massage oils. The Greeks and the Romans bathed in waters scented with lavender. As the Greeks and Romans spread their cultures across Europe, they brought lavender with them to France, Spain, and England. Lavender is even mentioned in the Bible, by its more colloquial name "spikenard."

Lavender reached North America as one element of the "Columbian Exchange." When the Spanish, French, Portuguese, and British explored and colonized the Caribbean and North America, plants, animals (and diseases) also made the trip back and forth across the Atlantic. Yams, chocolate (as cocoa), and tobacco went west; horses, dandelions, smallpox, and lavender came east.

For Europeans and Americans, lavender was an essential part of the herbal medical tradition that came from Greek civilization through the work of the physician Hippocrates (of modern "Hippocratic Oath," do no harm, fame). Until the 19th century and based on Hippocrates's medical understanding, sickness was usually attributed to an imbalance among the body's four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile.



Bloodletting was a vital part of the medical arsenal to rebalance humors, but so also were herbal treatments. Both physicians and laypeople relied on herbal medicines, but most could not afford the services of physicians and apothecaries (how little has changed!). Instead, women healers often served as midwives, while also providing their communities with medical treatment and herbal remedies. Herbal lore passed from mothers to daughters, and those with kitchen gardens were sure to grow medicinal herbs like hyssop, comfrey, fennel, and of course lavender. Nicholas Culpepper wrote in his book *The English Physician* (1652; also called the *Complete Herbal* where he attempted to codify herbal remedies) lavender "is so well known, being an Inhabitant of almost every Garden, that it needeth no Description."

As to medical uses, Culpepper suggested that "two spoonfuls of the distilled water of the flowers taken helpeth them that have lost their voice; as also the tremblings and passions of the heart, and faintings and swoonings." A half-century later another physician found that lavender was "good against the bitings of serpents, mad-dogs and other venomous creatures" when applied as a poultice to the wound" (William Salmon, *Botanologia: The English Herbal, or History of Plants*, 1710).

Having a ready source of lavender was crucial from the 14th to the 17th century when the Black Plague decimated the population of Europe -- lavender was thought to offer protection. "Plague Doctors" dressed in outlandish costumes including a mask of a bird with a large beak, placed lavender in their masks to prevent infection as they treated the sick. Laypeople fled the city to protect themselves, while others tried to ward off the disease by wearing sprigs of lavender on their wrists. That lavender might have antiseptic properties was tested later during World War I. Before the era of antibiotics, medics turned to lavender to treat battlefield wounds.

Beyond its value as medicine, Europeans and Americans found many everyday uses for lavender. During the Middle Ages, it was an aphrodisiac, but it was also an ingredient in smelling salts and as a snuff flavoring. Lavender seemed to protect linens from moths, and cure animals and humans of lice. During the reign of Queen Victoria, genteel ladies created some of the modern uses of lavender. While women continued to regard lavender as a medicine, they also used lavender oil as a perfume and put dried lavender in sachets to freshen wardrobes (not a small thing for a civilization that regarded regular bathing with disdain). Their desire for lavender turned the British town of Mitcham (a London suburb) into a center of lavender oil production, part of a global trade in lavender.

Many of these historical uses of lavender continue today. As aromatherapy, lavender is used to induce sleep, ease stress, and relieve depression. Lavender compresses applied to the forehead help with sinus congestion and headaches. And its sweet scent still fills sachets, soaps, vinegars, and teas. I haven't touched on its uses in food preparation – something for another research excursion. What I can say is that from the history of medicine, to the history of the bourgeoisie, to the history of imperialism and commerce, lavender has had a part to play in our past. It is not the only herb that can be found "scenting" these historical developments, but it is surely one of the sweetest.

The Plant Historian will be glad to research plants of your choice for future issues of the *Grapevine*. You can send suggestions to Kathleen Jones, kjwj@vt.edu



Chihuly Display in the Biltmore Gardens

by Sharon Eifried

It is always enjoyable to include a stop at the Biltmore House when visiting Asheville, North Carolina, but this year a visit to the gardens includes the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular work of American glass artist Dale Chihuly. A tour of the landscape reveals sixteen very large, beautiful, vibrant and colorful Chihuly glass sculptures. It is not surprising that it took two years from planning to installation for this monumental exhibit and that it took several weeks to physically install the glass art.

The Biltmore House became a family home for the Vanderbilts in 1895. The Biltmore was opened to the public in 1930 and to this day is preserved by the descendants of Mr. George Washington Vanderbilt, II, his wife, Edith, and their daughter Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil. The home remains privately owned and sits on an 8000 acre estate. The dramatic Chihuly sculptures are positioned beautifully amid the classic landscape design of the 1890's. The Chihuly Exhibit certainly brings to life Vanderbilt's desire to create a "garden of ornament" for guests.

A visit to the Italian Garden at Biltmore reveals five of the sixteen spectacular glass sculptures designed by Chihuly. They all sit in the formal water gardens that are surrounded by classical statuary. It was fascinating to see Chihuly's *Float Boat* (2017) and *Fiori Boat* (2017) alongside the swimming koi and floating water lilies. The wooden vessels, filled with gorgeous colorful glass, call forth the imagination and bring smiles and happy exclamations from visitors. The *Palazzo Ducale Tower* (1996) is the perfect glass sculpture for the aquatic garden when seen flanked by the Italian stone sculptures. Also, you cannot miss seeing the beautiful *Neodymium Reeds with Fiori Verdi* (2014) as you venture through the garden.



A short stroll directly south from the Italian Garden brings you to the Walled Gardens where two tall bright orange and yellow glass sculptures rise surrounded by a carpet of plants blooming in complimentary colors. The *Electric Yellow and Deep Coral Tower* (2017) can be seen framed by the wooden structure along the pathway through the garden and the *Paintbrush Tower* (2014) can be seen as it appears to be "blowing" in the breeze.



It appears to be "blowing" in the breeze.

Along the South Terrace of the Biltmore House there is a lovely pergola providing welcome shade provided by vining wisteria. Four marble busts along the stone wall represent the four seasons: Spring with flowers, Summer with wheat, Fall with fruit and grapes, and Winter with wind. It is here that one can view Chihuly's *Pergola Garden Fiori* (2018), an array of colorful glass "flowers" popping up in front of the statues.

This is one of the few Chihuly works created just for this show.

In addition to the pieces mentioned in this article you can also see Chihuly glass sculptures nestled near the entrance to the Biltmore House and in the Winter Garden found just as you enter the house. There are also Chihuly glass chandeliers hanging in the Conservatory and additional glass sculptures displayed in the Antler Hill Village.

If you enjoyed these few photos, there is still time for you to personally visit the Chihuly Exhibition in the Gardens at the Biltmore. ***The exhibit continues until October 7, 2018.*** Please see <https://www.biltmore.com/events/chihuly-at-biltmore-daytime-1> for more information.



Tips:

- Late summer and early fall is a great time to plant perennials when they still have time to get established.
- It's not too late to plant a fall crop of lettuce.

Upcoming Events:

- Yoga Jam festival 8/30—9/2/18 will donate \$1000 to Plenty!
- Dining with the Stars 9/16/18 at Plenty!
- Food Forest: fall cleanup date TBD
- Dublin Animal Shelter: fall cleanup date TBD

Community Food Forest Update

by Lara Nagle

Juicy strawberries, shining red currants, translucent gooseberry spheres, oblong and whitish-blue honeyberries, engorged blackberries, and dainty clusters of wine-colored elderberry were all part of this season's harvest at Blacksburg's Hale YMCA Food Forest.

In the past few years, groups of NRV Master Gardeners who have toured the Food Forest have learned it is an annual and perennial forest garden featuring edible plants. Food forests, at their prime, are comprised of seven layers: canopy, sub-canopy, shrubs, herbs, ground covers, root crops, and vining plants. Between and within these layers, "guilds" ideally

establish among plants. The guilds enhance productivity and support synergies of the involved layers. One example of this is growing comfrey under fruit trees. Although comfrey requires thoughtful placement because it can be difficult to remove, it provides numerous benefits. Comfrey, a medicinal, is also a nutrient accumulator due to its deep taproot; its flowers attract pollinators and beneficial insects; its live growth competes with weeds and its dead leaves provide thick, nutritious mulch for the fruit tree and other plants.



Comfrey grows beneath the apple tree in the Food Forest

The concept of guilds is important in permaculture, a movement closely intertwined with the goals of a food forest. According to the Permaculture Research Institute:

Permaculture (the word, coined by Bill Mollison, is a portmanteau of permanent agriculture and permanent culture) is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people — providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way. Without permanent agriculture there is no possibility of a stable social order.

A well-established food forest is intended to mimic a natural forest ecosystem, and be a low-maintenance, productive source of fibers, foods, medicinals, dyes, etc. Food forests are common in tropical regions, where they are often simply called home gardens. They are typically near houses or are used as a way to farm steep hillsides while also preventing soil erosion. There are many plants that can grow below the canopy in tropical regions, forming various layers of vegetation as they compete for available sunlight. Although plants in temperate areas is more limited, food forests can be successful with proper selection of shade tolerant species in the understory.

Gardeners may be familiar with agroforestry terms such as alley cropping, polyculture, or inter-cropping. These are systems that take advantage of mutually beneficial plant growth habits over time to use land efficiently and to reduce inputs into the system. Finding successful combinations of companion plants requires research and trial-and-error experience. Agroforestry research groups and organizations, such as the USDA National Agroforestry Center and the Association for Temperate Agroforestry (AFTA), as well as permaculture and food forest guides, case studies, and blogs provide helpful educational resources online, including plant lists and results from growing trials.

Cathie Bukowski envisioned the YMCA Food Forest around 2013 as part of her Ph.D. work in Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech. With the help of volunteers, grants from VT Engage among other sources, and support from Jenny Schwanke, the Y Garden Coordinator, the concept became a reality, including educational signage in multiple languages for select plants. There is ongoing opportunity for volunteers to learn about a food forest and its cast of characters by establishing new plants, maintaining existing ones, and updating educational signage about them.

Maria Cucinotta, a Master Gardener intern, has devoted time to mulch and weed in the Food Forest this season. "What I like about volunteering is the chance to learn something I am interested in by doing it. It is great to work with Jenny. She introduces me to people, she shares her knowledge and gives me the chance to express my ideas," Maria explained. Volunteering for the YMCA community garden at large has introduced Maria to different international gardeners, many of whom grow unique plants and share knowledge about gardening from their home countries.

Susan Perry, another NRV Master Gardener and a community gardener at the Hale YMCA site, found a way to protect the hazelnuts in the Food Forest from insects using floating row cover. This successfully prevented the complete defoliation of the young hazelnuts and their subsequent struggle to recover, with hopes that they will have energy to produce some nuts this year.

For additional information about food forests, permaculture, and perennial edibles, you may be interested in these books and online resources:

- *The Community Food Forest Handbook* by Catherine Bukowski and John Munsell
- *Creating a Forest Garden: Working with Nature to Grow Edible Crops* by Martin Crawford
- *Edible Forest Gardens* by Dave Jacke with Eric Toensmeier
- *How to Make a Forest Garden* by Patrick Whitefield
- *Perennial Vegetables* by Eric Toensmeier
- Virginia Cooperative Extension: "Native Fruit and Nut Trees and Shrubs of the Virginia Mountains and Piedmont"

Indeed, the YMCA Food Forest is still a relatively young project, with room to grow.



Honeyberries are blueberry-like fruits, ripening early in the season.



Please contact Lara Nagle (laraknagle@gmail.com) regarding volunteering or donations of edible, perennial, disease-free herbs, shrubs, and/or trees for fall or spring transplanting.

MORE MASTER GARDENER PHOTOS



Ruth Ann Whitener



Susan Perry



Ruth Ann Whitener

NRVMGA Executive Board

President: Lisa Lloyd

Vice President: Lisa Lloyd

Secretary: Carol Cox

Treasurer: Darlene Smith

Members at Large

Dianne Blount

Olin Whitener

Ruth Ann Whitener

MG Coordinator:

Wendy Silverman, wss@vt.edu

Website: www.nrvmastergardeners.com

VCE Montgomery County Office:
540-382-5790



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Comments, questions, and submissions can be sent to co-editors: Sharon Eifried (seifried@towson.edu) or Susan Perry (susan_perry@peacenlove.org)

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of the newsletter.
You know who you are!