



The Grapevine

June 2019

New River Valley Master Gardener Association Newsletter

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WENDY WORDS

by Wendy Silverman

What a huge Spring! We graduated 17 people, 16 trainees and one already certified Master Gardener. Twenty-two Master Gardeners received Milestone Service Awards ranging from 250 hours to 4000 hours. Congratulations to all of the graduates and milestone award recipients! We had our most successful Master Gardener Association plant sale to date, and we have done six plant clinics this year already! Keep up the great work. What we do matters!

We have several new projects and some wonderful existing ones as well. The 2019 project directory has been sent to your email, and the list of projects in the VMS is now up-to-date. Please check out volunteer opportunities on Page 11. I also encourage you to keep checking the VMS Calendar for upcoming events. I am determined to keep it updated.

Thank you again for all of your hard work. I look forward to working with you throughout the summer!



Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodlawn Garden

by Sharon Eifried

On a recent trip to Lexington, Virginia I was fortunate to visit a beautiful 15-acre gardener's delight known as "Boxerwood Nature Center and Woodlawn Garden." During my visit in April, I enjoyed seeing lovely hellebore, the blooming of bluebells, the eruption of trilliums, and the unfurling of ferns. There were so many lovely plants, shrubs and trees, but to just mention a few: the redbuds were in full bloom, many varieties of red maple were leafing out and gorgeous magnolias were blooming. When I looked down during my walk I was delighted to see a series of swales throughout the garden. I learned that these shallow channels, mostly covered with ground cover, were created to help manage storm run-off and associated soil erosion. Hence, rain gardens were created and the garden contributes to the protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As I meandered through the garden I saw a pollinator garden, two ponds and multiple sculptures mainly constructed from natural materials.

If you explore, you will also find lots of play areas for children. One is a "Play Trail" designed for children under seven where kids can make mud pies, climb into tree houses and enjoy lots of other activities where they get dirty and have a good time doing it. The "rules" are: "make noise, move things around, touch anything, get dirty, be safe and have fun." In the "Fairy Forest" children can use their imagination to explore and create fairy furniture and fairy houses using supplies natural to the environment such as pine cones, twigs, acorn shells, pods, bark and more. I'm sure children of all ages would enjoy building a fairy house!

Through some research, I discovered that Boxerwood is home to "a remarkable collection of dwarf conifers, dogwoods, magnolia and perhaps the largest collection of Japanese Maple varieties in the country (145)." The garden began as home to Dr. Robert Munger and his wife Betty in 1951. The name Boxerwood was inspired by the many boxer dogs that were enjoyed by the Mungers and their three children. Dr. Munger had a great interest in horticulture and acquired thousands of trees and shrubs that he planted and tended himself.

Fast forward to 1997 when the gardens were opened to the public with a mission "to educate and inspire people of all ages to become environmentally responsible stewards of the Earth." As a result, many environmental programs educate all ages, with a strong emphasis on education of children. The instructors and staff at Boxerwood conduct multiple hands-on programs on site and in schools for children from pre-K to 12th grade. Boxerwood has been recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Center for Environmental Education Excellence.

Boxerwood is listed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries as a Virginia Bird and Wildlife Trail in the Mountain Region of the Rockbridge River and Ridge area. Boxerwood is home to over forty types of birds. Species that have been seen include mourning dove, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, northern cardinal, gray catbird, brown thrasher and eastern towhee downy, red-bellied and pileated woodpeckers and yellow-bellied sapsucker. <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/sites/boxerwood-gardens/>

Boxerwood is open dawn to dusk at 963 Ross Road in Lexington. The phone number is 540-463-2697. It's a great day trip from the New River Valley and worth a visit! Learn more at <https://boxerwood.org/garden/>



*Sculpture: Can you see LOVE?
Photo courtesy of Sharon Eifried.*

Food Insecurity in Southwestern Virginia – Time to Highlight What MGs Are Doing About It

by Sarah Smiley



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According to the recently released Feeding America annual Map the Meal Gap study, food insecurity is a real, and growing, concern in Southwest Virginia (SW VA). The term “food insecurity” is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” The Feeding America program expands and adds some depth to this definition, “...a measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household’s need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.”

In a May 6, 2019, Radio IQ segment, Amanda Allen with Feeding America Southwest Virginia stated, “In Southwest Virginia, much like across the country, food insecurity still exists in every single county and city that Feeding America Southwest Virginia serves. So, that’s all of southwest Virginia. It’s about 35 localities total.” What caught my attention in the radio interview was the point that 10 communities in SW VA saw their food insecurity rate increase since the last study, with Radford having one of the highest rates in the region. Radford! It is just shocking – there is a University and job opportunities, but people are having to make tough decisions on basic life needs.

And just to make the study even more shocking, its data shows that the children are the greatest demographic impacted. As Allen eloquently stated, “People still need help. Your neighbors still need help. Their children still need help. So, as much as economic recovery is good, people still need help.”

We know the NRV Master Gardener (MG) program has some excellent work ongoing to help people in our area receive fresh food: Lynn Brammer’s Share the Spare, the Farmacy Garden in Christiansburg, our help with the gardening program at Floyd County High School, the kid’s vegetable garden at the YMCA of Pulaski County, the vegetable garden for 65 residents at the Fairview Home in Dublin, the container garden for fresh vegetables at the Adult Day Care in Dublin, and the Plenty! food pantry in Floyd. I am sure I am forgetting some (apologies). Lynn even updates us as to gleaning opportunities to help fill local food pantries.

My question to the group is: Do folks in the community know what the MG program is doing to address food insecurity? Should we highlight these activities to recruit new MGs?

Whenever I encourage people to apply to the MG program, many tell me that they “don’t have time to grow flowers.” When I mention the gardening and produce activities, they are surprised and they start listening. I don’t know if I have had any luck in actually recruiting anyone, but at least they learned something new about the important work of the MG program. And perhaps, given this most recent report, the MG work on getting fresh produce to the community has become even more important.

If you’d like to read the report, you can find it here: <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>. The interactive map of the country is very interesting and I encourage you to take a few minutes – and if nothing else, just look at what is happening in Eastern Kentucky.

Travels Without Paige: Big Bend National Park

by Erica Jones

I hate February and scheme all year to find someplace to go to break up the doldrums. We now have real heat with a thermostat in our house, so this year I splurged – desert hiking in the dead of winter!

Big Bend is an amazing place; all of west Texas is. Hint – to get anywhere out there, you will need to settle back and admire the scenery – things are very far apart due to agricultural practices (many, many acres per grazing animal) and limited water. Very limited water.

Big Bend is a wonder of many mini climates. The elevation ranges from 1,800' to a high of 7,800'. Precipitation also varies from some 9" a year on the lower elevation to approximately 20" in the mountains. And yes, this 10" really makes a difference. Low down is your basic desert with cacti, agaves and yuccas; and almost everything either sports a thorn or a heavy aroma. In the Chiso Mountains, you can see real trees (pines, junipers and oaks). A lot of the trees looked surprisingly familiar – western versions of some of the stuff we have.

The Chiso Mountains were formed by volcanic action and are just plopped down there surrounded by miles of desert. Temperatures will drop to almost freezing at night in February but then shoot up to close to 60F. Take layers of clothes.



Prickly pear.



This is as thick as the trees get. All photos in this article courtesy of Erica Jones.

But onto the desert. Plant life consists of grasses in areas that have not been overgrazed (few of them), thorny and fragrant shrubs (think creosote bush, sumac, ocotillo), succulents and cacti (only 60 species). Big Bend has 16 species of prickly pear (*Opuntia*).

One of our stops was at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center (in the Davis Mountains). They were propagating some (all?) of the native cacti in a greenhouse (it was heated), and trying to re-establish western pines which had taken a hit from wildfire. They had one of the most scenic hikes we took – down a very narrow canyon to the spring halfway down (complete with tadpoles), back up the other side and out to some 360 degree overlooks. And a fun gift shop.



Agave with "parent" behind it.

Agaves (11 species) look like a yucca, but they bloom once and die, thus explaining the plant corpses you see upended in the desert. A lot of agaves have very long scapes and apparently get top heavy when they die. Shrubs play the role that trees do in our part of the country.

One day our tour guide gave us a demonstration of what one of the agaves (*Agave lecheguilla*) is good for. He took a leaf, striped it, and started pounding on it. The result was a needle with many attached threads.

Wildlife is as scattered as the livestock and tends to come out in the evening. Unfortunately, the reptiles were still quiet – too cool. (The coloring on snakes is rumored to be quite dramatic.) But, we did see golden eagles (a pair) and road runners. One morning when I was first out for breakfast I came upon a pair of javelinas (peccaries) poking around the landscape. They were only slightly alarmed at my approach and pretty much ignored me. Another of their common names is skunk pig which is quite appropriate! Introduced wild pigs were a major problem in the Davis mountain area (just as they are on the east coast).



There are at least 7 yuccas in the area.

One other introduced animal species we saw is the Barbary sheep which was always called aoudad (a-ooo-dad) on the trip. As a species they have gotten very rare in their native home ranges in North Africa. In Texas they were introduced as a game animal and do quite nicely in that desert environment. Aoudads can survive on vegetation alone and don't need free water to drink – they can survive on the water contained in lichens and plants. Our guide described them as extremely tasty to eat to boot.

Paige decided to stay home and chew on plants and books while we were gone. I should have purchased her a tour ticket too.



The author



The evidence

NRV Master Gardener Educational Outings in April

by Liz Swinfin

Hale Community Garden

A group of Master Gardeners were recently hosted at the Hale Community Garden in Blacksburg by Arlean Lambert, who graciously donated it as a community garden for town residents, and by Jenny Schwanke, who co-ordinates the garden. In addition to the garden plots, there are also some plots in a solar greenhouse on the property. A small orchard, beehives, a pollinator garden, and a food forest can also be visited in the common areas of the garden.

The Hale Community Garden is a lovely spot off North Main Street where there are 70 garden plots. People pay between \$10 - \$35 a year to garden, based on plot size, and to use mulch and water. Some of the gardeners are from other cultures so it was interesting to see unfamiliar plants being grown.

The gardeners and volunteers come together as a community for monthly potlucks and volunteer days. You can earn Master Gardener service hours here!! More information is available at blacksburgcommunitygardens.com

Montgomery Museum Garden

We also visited with Beth Umberger at the Montgomery Museum Garden in Christiansburg. It was Give Big NRV day, so we were joined by some of the people who ventured to the garden while they were visiting the Museum. This garden will be one of the "Points of Interest" on this year's New River Valley Garden Tour to be held on July 6, 2019.

Beth has been working with this garden for many years and has created a beautiful public garden. She tries to have color year-round and has installed salvaged brick pathways throughout the garden. She is very interested in the insects and birds that use the garden and is participating in a mason bee study, so we saw the collection points and the bee box that have been installed for the study.

Below the garden, she is making a native garden and has had a lot of success planting natives. She showed us some invasive species that she is trying to eradicate: poison ivy, garlic mustard, and English ivy.

The Montgomery Museum Garden is a public garden, so you can visit anytime. Beth sends out very informative emails about what is blooming and what insects and birds are around. Contact her at fredandbeth@verizon.net to be added to her email list.

Thanks to all who came out to support our local gardeners!

GARDENING WITH LYLE AT FALLING BRANCH ELEMENTARY

by Nina & Lyle Templeton

We would like to begin with a quote from the program from Words and Pictures Night 2019 at Falling Branch Elementary School (FBE) in Christiansburg on April 11, 2019:

"A note about Lyle's Garden:

Four years ago Lyle, a golden retriever therapy dog, was introduced to our FBE community and the students fell in LOVE. Lyle is a captive audience as students read to him to build their confidence every Friday. This past fall, Lyle and his mom, Nina, and friend, Jane (Sutton), helped to plant a beautiful garden. They formed a student club called "Gardening with Lyle" to plant and maintain it, as well as revitalizing the existing court yard garden. Thank you Lyle, Nina and Jane for all your love and support."

Lyle's garden has been a great success at FBE with the garden club kids, who have learned a lot, especially from Jane. The children have enjoyed including our secret ingredient with everything they plant - some of Lyle's hair. Everyone else at FBE gets to enjoy the results of their labor, and our gardens have spawned other projects at FBE, including bird feeders, hanging balls of Lyle's hair that birds are using for nests, and an ever increasing collection of kindness rocks that adorn the gardens and other places far and wide.

Our success would not have been possible without the help and support of Jane Sutton, FBE faculty and parents, and ever tolerant husbands Andy Sutton and Tom Templeton. In addition to being very grateful for a MG grant, we want to extend a huge thanks to Home Depot for donating a whole bunch of damaged bags of mulch, to Crow's Nest for giving us a nice discount, and to again thank people who donated plants from their own gardens, especially our own Erica Jones and former MG Don Rude.



Lyle in his garden with two of his 500+ FBE friends.



Jane, Nina and Lyle with Lyle's garden club kids. Photos courtesy of Nina Templeton.

Meet Maria: An Interview with Maria Cucinotta

by Maria Cucinotta with Susan Perry

Before moving to Blacksburg, Maria Cucinotta lived in Switzerland. She visited Blacksburg a number of times to see her future husband, who she met in Switzerland, and in 2013 decided it was time for the next adventure: moving to the US and getting married.

Maria became a NRV Master Gardener in 2018, after hearing about the program from an acquaintance. She was always interested in plants, but never had a garden. But becoming a Master Gardener seemed like a good way to learn. It was also a great way to get involved in the community by volunteering and meeting new people. Maria volunteers at the Hale YMCA community garden in Blacksburg, as well as at the Christiansburg Museum garden, the Triangle garden, and for the garden tour. Like other trainees, she also volunteered at a plant clinic and for Share the Spare.

Maria's parents moved to southern Italy after they retired, and she visits them every year in May to help weed the olive groves (which she claims is fun, but that's just because she has a strong back!) and then again in October/November to help her parents harvest olives from their olive groves. Of course, once I heard about the olive groves, I wanted to know more. Luckily, Maria was willing to spill the beans!



Like a lot of other growing, it all starts with the soil. All the ground beneath and around the trees must be kept weeded and in good health. Years ago, olive growers just let the olives fall on the ground and then they spent a lot of time picking them up. But that was a lot of work, so today small farmers spread nets on the ground several weeks before the olives ripen. Mostly women do this work, sewing the nets together around the trunks of the trees. Depending on the terrain, this can be extremely difficult.

Once the harvest begins, time is of the essence. There is a mill/processor nearby and for the

best quality, the olives must be processed at the mill within 24 – 48 hours of harvest. Completely green olives are not mature enough to harvest; when they ripen a little, they become yellowish-green—this is their flavor peak (and ideal for extra virgin olive oil). Finally, the ripest olives are a purplish color. It



turns out that the riper the olives, the milder the taste of the oil.



The olives are harvested by using a special rake to shake them from the trees. Imagine holding a rake above your head for 8 hours a day – ugh! The olives fall into the nets and are then poured into crates. Before taking them to the mill, Maria's family dumps the olives into a sorting machine that uses a big fan to separate the olives from the foliage.



Even though small growers use no chemical sprays, the olives are washed with water at the mill. Then, the olives are pressed in a machine, leaving a paste of solids: skins, pits, and flesh. This paste is slowly and constantly mixed, sometimes over a low heat and sometimes with water added, to cause oil to be released. Then, the oil is separated from the water and the solids by using a centrifuge. All this is done the same day the crates of olives are delivered to the mill.

Maria's family returns to the mill with plastic containers for the oil, and leaves the oil in them for 2 – 3 weeks so that any sediments sink to the bottom. Then, the oil is carefully poured into a different storage

container and left for 2 months in a cool dark location, so that any remaining sediment sinks to the bottom.

Of course, not all the olives from the many groves can be harvested at one time. So Maria's family makes multiple trips to the mill with additional olives, each time slightly more ripe than the prior time. For this reason, it's important to keep the various batches of oils separate, since each represents a different taste and quality. After all the olives have been harvested and processed, after all the sediment has sunk to the bottom, all of the sediment and some of the lowest quality oil are removed and made into soap.



All in all, Maria's family harvests from about 380 trees. Of these, about 120 are older, taller, bigger trees which are more difficult to harvest so instead of using rakes, they just let the olives drop on the nets. The other 260 trees are ones planted by Maria's father in the last 15 years. They've been specially pruned to keep them low, wide, and open – much like fruit trees. These are harvested with rakes, as described above.

After the harvest, trees are pruned and if needed, fertilized. The decision to fertilize depends on how the olives looked and how many olives the tree produced. There's no need to add supplemental water and they make sure they keep the soil beneath the trees healthy.

Occasionally, Maria's family sells their olive oil but mostly it is for their personal use. (I am so jealous!!!) Unfortunately, Maria can't bring olive oil back to the US, so she only gets to enjoy it while visiting her parents. For larger or commercial producers, one consideration is whether they

can receive the "extra virgin olive oil" (EVOO) designation. A panel of 8 – 12 people judge the aroma, color, consistency, flavor, and other factors including percentage of acids, to determine this designation. This is fairly complicated and not a high priority for the small grower who is using the oil themselves.



In addition to the olives, Maria's parents grow broccoli, grapes, potatoes, beans, peas, tomatoes, artichokes, peppers, eggplant, squash, onions, garlic, herbs, cherries, walnuts, apples, pears, oranges, mandarins, lemons, pomegranates, and figs. They also make some wine and vinegar from their grapes. (I couldn't be more jealous) Pretty impressive.

Share the Spare Plants Seeds for its Ninth Season

by Lynn Brammer

Nine years ago, the New River Valley Master Gardener Association (NRVMGA) set up a tent at the Blacksburg's Farmers Market to see if market patrons would consider buying an extra item of produce. This extra was placed in a basket at the booth to donate to those in the community who might not be able to purchase local healthy produce. Through the generosity of our community, the NRVMGA has passed on tons of locally grown fresh fruit, herbs, and vegetables through the years. Making it easy to contribute was the goal, along with the emphasis on local and fresh. The generosity of our community has proven we can do big things when we work together towards a common goal. The farmers at the market often give a bit more when the purchaser mentions it is for Share the Spare. At the close of the market, many growers donate their extras as they are packing up.

The staggering statistics about food insecurity tell the story. Over 49 million Americans live in food insecure households that experience hunger on a daily basis. Almost 16 million facing hunger each day are children.

As a community member, there is a way to contribute even more. Share the Spare connects with a Garden Communicators International program called "Plant a Row." PAR is rooted in the heartfelt tradition of gardeners sharing a bountiful harvest with others. Home gardeners, schools, church groups, youth and community organizations and even area businesses can all help make a difference for their neighbors who experience the threat of hunger. PAR encourages backyard gardeners to grow a bit extra with the intent of donating it to those in need.

Share the Spare has expanded to become a donation site for individual backyard gardener surplus. When tomatoes or other bounty come in and you are overwhelmed with the amount, Share the Spare can pass them on. Pickups can be arranged if you are unable to come by the market. Share the Spare works alongside local gleaning teams as well. If you have a garden and travel throughout the summer months, invite our volunteers to stop by and harvest. Our mission is making sure locally grown edibles are not wasted.

Share the Spare passes on its donations to Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, Giving Tree Food Pantry, the Interfaith Food Pantry, and PLENTY! (a Floyd County food program). These groups recognize the perishable nature of our collections and work diligently to place this food on tables in a timely manner.

This Master Gardener Share the Spare booth also serves as a Plant Clinic, answering questions about gardening, distributing soil test kits and planting charts and sharing seeds with those interested in gardening. Master Gardeners are Virginia Cooperative Extension trained volunteers dedicated to sharing research-based information through education and service to the public. Our Association is a nonprofit organization that awards grants to community projects such as the Pulaski Grow initiative, the Farmacy Gardens in Christiansburg and Pulaski, and many other educational gardening initiatives throughout the NRV.

Come and visit us on Saturdays from 8 until 2 at the downtown Blacksburg Farmers Market and at the Floyd Farmers Market throughout the summer growing season. Our continued success with this program reflects the generosity of the friends and neighbors in our community. Share the Spare would love to have a presence at each NRV farmers markets. If you are interested in assisting or would like more information, contact: lbrammer@vt.edu

<http://www.nrvmastergardeners.com/>
<https://gardencomm.org/StartPARCampaign>
<https://stmarysblacksburg.org/the-glean-team>
<https://www.pulaskigrow.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/TheFarmacyGarden/>

Welcome, Interns!



Back (L to R): Dean Spader, Bill Kealy, Ed Hurysz, Gorden Trutt, David McEwen, Dan Stewart, Andrew Smith, Angie Estrada, Avis McCutchan
Front (L to R): Carol Trutt, Donna Stewart, Rhea Davenport, Deborah Waldeck, Rosemary Hartmann (returning MG)

Upcoming Events in Search of Volunteers

Share the Spare Blacksburg: All summer (6 volunteers/ week, 2-3 per time slot). To sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c48a9aa2fabf94-20195>

Claytor Lake Festival: June 8th (8 volunteers, 2/time slot). Please contact Wendy.

NRV Garden Tour: July 6th. Click on the following link to sign up. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c48a9aa2fabf94-20194>

NRV Fair Plant Clinic: July 22nd through 27th. More information coming soon.

Newport Fair Plant Clinic and Plant Sale: August 10th

Deanna's Doings

by Deanna Reid

Hello NRV Master Gardeners! While in graduate school, I have been trying to keep up with the things you are doing, and it has been fun to see all of the new projects and adventures that are happening. I miss you all and hope you are doing well!

I wanted to send an update about what has been going on in my life these past two years. Though I have enjoyed my time in Kansas, I am looking forward to being back in Virginia, possibly even the New River Valley! I got to walk in the Graduate School's graduation ceremony on May 17, and am working hard to finish my thesis by the end of June. I am getting married in September, so I will certainly be home by then. There are lots of significant events happening this year, so I don't have any time to be bored!



When I'm not writing papers, going to class, or teaching classes, I have greatly enjoyed exploring Kansas. Though much of the state is pretty flat, I have discovered there is more to do here than one can possibly experience in two short years! Shortly after I moved here, my brothers and I found the most adorable prairie dog colony in the vacant lot beside Home Depot in Hutchinson, KS. I highly recommend a visit if you are in the area; though they are considered pests by the locals, they do all sorts of cute prairie dog things and are quite entertaining.



Fox squirrel enjoying Kansas. All photos courtesy of Deanna Reid.



The Home Depot prairie dogs.

The Flint Hills, in northeastern Kansas, are beautiful and offer a respite from never-ending wheat fields. One of my favorite places to hike is Konza Prairie in Manhattan, KS. The views from the top of the hills are stunning in every season, and the native grasses and flowers are too.



Summer sunset at Konza Prairie.

Kansas State University also has lovely gardens that are well-maintained by students and staff. Their large collections of irises and peonies are simply gorgeous in the spring, and the daylily beds are beautiful during the summer.



Daylilies in bloom at Kansas State University Gardens.



Presenting research at an agricultural communications conference.

School has kept me very busy, of course. Since starting my Master's degree in 2017, I have been taking agricultural communications classes and have also been researching the types of posts, photos, and messages Midwestern consumers want to see on horticultural business Facebook pages. Basically, that means I have been studying Facebook and horticultural marketing, which has been challenging and fun. My thesis should be published by the end of the summer, and I am very much looking forward to completing it. I have been able to use what I learned as the NRV Master Gardener Coordinator in many different ways, which has made my time here at Kansas State so much better.

Love to you all,
Deanna

Limestone Quarry to Dream Garden

by Sharon Eifried

Who would have thought that a worked-out limestone quarry could become a gorgeous 55-acre garden? Well, this was Jennie Butchart's dream. Mrs. Butchart, a self-taught gardener, began making her dream come true in 1904 and today Butchart Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, is close to a million visitors annually. In 2004, after being in bloom for 100 years, the Gardens were designated a National Historic Site of Canada.

The estate, situated on Tod Inlet on Vancouver Island, began as home to the Butchart family and the site of a cement factory owned and operated by Jennie's husband, Mr. Robert P. Butchart. The quarry on the property provided the needed limestone until 1909 when it could no longer be excavated. Around this time, Jennie was basking in the enjoyment of a Japanese Garden that she had established on a gentle slope down to the sea at Butchart Cove, far from the cement factory and the quarry. Once the quarry was abandoned, Jennie became determined to follow her bliss and create a garden on the spent site. What exists today on the old quarry foot print is a horticultural delight known as the "Sunken Garden."



*The Sunken Garden.
All photos courtesy of Sharon Eifried.*

In addition to the Japanese Garden and the Sunken Garden, there is a Rose Garden, an Italian Garden that was originally the site of a concrete-surfaced tennis court, a star-shaped pond that was originally home to Mr. Butchart's collection of ornamental ducks, and a Mediterranean Garden. The cement factory was demolished in 1993, but the poplar trees that were planted to screen the cement factory from the Gardens still stand today. The Gardens are still owned and operated by family.



Golden Chain Tree

Butchart Gardens is lovely in all seasons, but some plants and trees that I enjoyed during my visit in May were: Rhododendron, azalea, wisteria, bleeding heart, allium, columbine, begonia, bleeding heart, delphinium, Japanese maple, poplar, kousa dogwood, monkey puzzle tree, weeping sequoia, and golden chain tree. The plants and trees were all in their glory, maintained daily by a dedicated, hard-working, and friendly staff that are willing to answer any questions from visitors.

The vastness of the Gardens and the vibrant color throughout are breathtaking. If you have visited the Gardens, you know what I am talking about. If you have not visited, I suggest you put it on your bucket list. Perhaps, the accompanying photos will help you decide!



Dragon Fountain

Hahn Garden Van Trip

by Erica Jones



The display area & the display greenhouse. All photos courtesy of Erica Jones.

The Hahn offered supporters a spring garden trip in early April to Walter's Greenhouse in Hardy, and then a tour at a private home in SE Roanoke. I worked at a garden center once that purchased plants from Walter's for re-sale, so was delighted to see the source of those plants in person. Walter's Greenhouse is run by all women and was founded by the current owner's father.

We were promised space for purchases, but things got a little tight after our stop at Walter's. No one had to go home with plants on their lap, just under their feet. I bought some lovely 4" coleus for use in the

Containers class I taught in late April and some fountain grass type "spikes," and a two pretty oddball plants I had never seen before for my own containers. They had a very nice selection of annuals and perennials, and some larger potted exotics. (Why did I not purchase that tree peony??)

The owner discussed several growing challenges including that our late, cold spring made hardening off plants, particularly perennials, difficult. They harden off plants between the multiple greenhouses. Walter's installed a neat aerial method for moving plants in-between greenhouses that allowed them to place plants closer together in the (expensive) heated areas.



Hardening off area between greenhouses.



Hypertufa & bonsai.

After touring the greenhouses, we cozied up with our plants and drove to the second stop of the tour, a private garden in Roanoke.

This house, in a very nice neighborhood, started life as a brick ranch house on a steep, triangle-shaped corner lot. The lot was fairly shaded when they bought it, so the owner has planted a lot of early spring bloomers, rather than cutting down trees. Extensive remodeling to the house includes garage and house additions, a front



The color blue featured prominently in the garden: furniture, bottle tree, & plant containers. There are blue chips in the concrete.

porch, a back patio with a six foot high retaining wall, and painting the brick white. There were multiple camellias in the yard, and two were still blooming when we visited.

Blah blah blah, Latin Lingo, and the Beatles

by Susan Perry

I've been gardening for the last twenty years or so, but I have to admit that my eyes still glaze over when I walk into a garden store and someone starts spouting off Latin plant names. Have you ever seen that Far Side cartoon where the human is talking to their pet? The words are English, but all the pet hears is, "Blah, blah, blah." Well, most of the time, that's how I feel about Latin plant names ... blah, blah, blah. Of course, sometimes I feel that way about other things too.

For example, many years ago, I was in a shopping mall and noticed a crowd had formed a line outside the store I was entering. Seeing a store clerk nearby, I asked what was going on. She said, "Russell Simmons is here signing autographs with Dr. (muffled name)." Responding to my quizzical look, she said, "You know, the guy from fat farm." At least, that's what I thought she said so I did a mini-aerobic move and said, "Oh that guy with the exercise routines." Even now, I have to smile. "No, Russell Simmons, the hip-hop mogul: Dr. Dre, Phat Farm clothes. You're thinking of Richard Simmons." Duh, I guess I should have known. But it was Phat Farm that really threw me blah, blah, blah.

Well, Latin plant names are the same sort of thing. First, which would you rather spit out: hemerocallis or daylily? I mean, come on, it's a no-brainer. Second, at this point in my life, why would I want to learn a new, albeit dead, language? I'm still trying to figure out "bling"! Third, those pesky Romans developed a language with pronunciation challenges galore. After all, how would you know, looking at the Latin botanical name 'cotoneaster' that it's pronounced 'cah-toe-knee-aster' with emphasis on 'toe'? It's like h'ors d'oeuvres, 'or derves', you know?

Sure, there are some plants that are just widely known by their Latin names, and I say stick with that. Some plants have several common names, like red valerian (also known as jupiter's beard and foxbrush) so use of the Latin name, *centranthus ruber*, minimizes confusion. But I promise I'm not going to start calling black-eyed susans by their Latin name, *rudibeka*, any time soon.

OK, now you may think I'm lazy but I prefer relaxed, down-to-earth, and anti-establishment. Either way you look at it, though, I'm not going to change when it comes to Latin plant names. Daylily it is, even if that means I've become my parents, whose comment about the Beatles was, "We can't understand the words." Or maybe I'm just a Far Side creature, at least the far side of 40. But hemerocallis ... let's just say, it's all Greek (oops, I mean Latin) to me. Blah, blah, blah

MASTER GARDENER PHOTOS

by Ruth Ann Whitener



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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!