

# The Grapevine

## Friendly Garden Tour

July 2010

July 10th is the 15th annual Friendly Garden Tour ([www.nrvgardentour.org](http://www.nrvgardentour.org)) and we still have some two hour slots to fill. Please contact Gwen Ewing if you'd like to help out, [ewinggf@vt.edu](mailto:ewinggf@vt.edu). Below is a bit more information about our role.

### *To our Garden Tour Hosts:*

Remember the tour goes on rain or shine, so please be prepared for either extreme. Rain coat, sun hat and please don't forget to wear your name tag so you are identifiable to those on the tour.

We ask that you arrive fifteen minutes before your shift to have time to be briefed(which may happen with your MG liaison for that garden before the tour). Do a walk through. It's important to make note of any details about traffic patterns preferred by the owners, places to encourage folks to watch their footing, and of course facts about the garden itself.

There will be a table at each garden where a member of the Friends of the Library will sell/check tickets for arriving tourists. Also on that table will be extension office information pertaining to that particular garden and the educational aspects we want to highlight. We will encourage folks to check the extension website for their copies(and so much more information!) [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu).

Your role will be to "float" through the garden and make folks aware you are there to answer and discuss aspects of that garden. Many tour-goers are with friends, chatting amongst themselves and may be completely content to enjoy the beauty of the garden without having any interaction. Be a host and welcome them by making sure they know you are there and available if they do have questions.

Most of the garden owners (or a representative in the case of the Quesenberry garden in Radford) are in and out during the day. If they are outside, introduce them to tourists if the opportunity arises. The folks that have been kind enough to open their piece of paradise to the public deserve to hear the wonderful remarks from the admirers as they walk through. But we don't want them to feel compelled to be out the entire day. You may need to gently remind them you are there if they need a break.

And of course remember our most important role as educators. Take advantage of any chance to discuss aspects of what we have been taught to these folks. Obviously highlight any areas that cover current issues with most gardeners everywhere...for example, drought tolerant plants, uses and types of mulch and their purpose, erosion control methods, deer resistant plants, sustainability practices, plant identification etc. If a question comes up that you don't feel comfortable answering there will be a tablet at the desk to write down their question and contact information and get back to them. You could take that upon yourself as a challenge to get the answer and respond to the individual with what you found out.

Also don't hesitate to tout the MG program and your own experience. That tablet can also be used for noting folks that want to take the classes next year. This is a fun way to earn service hours. Enjoy the day, purchase a ticket and take the tour yourself. You will get a reminder call or e-mail about your shift commitment a few days before the tour. Please let that contact know as soon as possible if there is a reason why you can't work that day. Here's to another successful tour, that couldn't be done without your help!

Thanks so much! Lynn Brammer

Saturday, July 10, 2010,  
9:00am—5:00pm  
15th Annual Friendly Garden Tour

July 13-14, 2010  
Water Conference  
Williamsburg, VA

July 19, 2010  
NRV MGA meeting—Floyd,  
Wildwood Farm



charlotte law-graf

## Board Member Bios

### Erica Jones

I have a picture of me aged about 8 years old following my father in the garden when we was transplanting something like broccoli, carrying some sort of bucket; being fabulous help no doubt (a bit of sarcasm here). But as far as I remember I have always liked to garden. Parents later assigned me a grassy plot to do what ever with and I planted perennials and battled grass.

This was before I knew anything about glyophosphate (and I have no idea if anyone had invented it by then). My father and mother did not agree on gardening techniques so they had separate areas

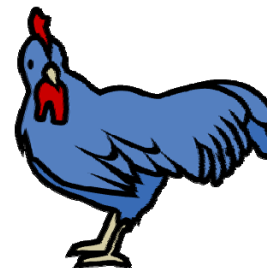
so I guess they figured I needed my own area, too.

Currently, outside, I grow small fruits, veggies, flowering shrubs, annual and perennials. Just started trying some dwarf fruit trees again (with, funny thing, fences around them). Planted some pawpaw and persimmons about 5 years ago and both of them fruited for the first time last fall.

This spring I caught the pawpaw mid bloom and they have pretty neat looking blossoms. Inside is a mess but have orchids (had about 4 protested the cold this winter and look poorly) and ratty begonias and not so ratty African violets.

Things I want to do and have not (yet) a small water garden, graft tomatoes, and put in another cold frame. Maybe even get a greenhouse.

The horses steadily supply wonderful garden additives as do the chickens.



### 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, 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 of each month for inclusion in the next month's issue.

#### Officers

Gwen Ewing, President ([ewinggf@vt.edu](mailto:ewinggf@vt.edu))  
Connie Lawson, Vice President ([conniel@vt.edu](mailto:conniel@vt.edu))  
Erica Jones, Treasurer ([emjones@vt.edu](mailto:emjones@vt.edu))  
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#### NRVMGA

NRV MGA Website: <http://civic.bev.net/nrvmga>  
(Membership Dues, Grants and General Correspondence)  
P.O. Box 747, Blacksburg, VA 24063  
Listserv: [nrvmga@listserv.bburg.bev.net](mailto:nrvmga@listserv.bburg.bev.net)

Virginia Cooperative Extension –Montgomery County Office

### Share the Spare/Plant Clinic

Also the Share the Spare/Plant Clinic booth will be at the Blacksburg Farmers Market as usual from 8 until 2. I plan to set up and get started at the market and then need to run over to the garden I'm "hosting" to put up directional signs and work the 8:45 to 11 shift. It would be wonderful if someone could be at the market booth during that time. 8:30 until about 11:30 would be great. There is a written description at the booth giving details on what we're doing and how to handle questions and interest from the public. It's been a ton of fun and we're getting more donations each week that make it so rewarding.

If you have an interest in those hours that day or any other day, let me know. And thanks so much to those of you that have been helping out. [lbrammer@vt.edu](mailto:lbrammer@vt.edu)

### Summer Haikus

blue washed sky  
swifts loop the loop  
summer is here

slow to darken  
garden sprinkler hisses  
deep blue night

Even the crows  
cannot rob the cornfields  
of yellowness

# Gardening To-Do List for July

## Planting

To have color from late summer to fall, plant begonias, impatiens, salvia, marigolds, verbena, and zinnias

For permanent plantings, try perennials such as bearded iris, lavender, coreopsis, statice, gazanias, and gloriosa daisy

For a late harvest of beans, beets, carrots, corn, cucumbers, and summer squash, sow seeds or plant seedlings

Plant full sun annuals like sweet alyssum, cosmos, ageratum, celosia, petunias, marigolds, portulaca, salvia, verbena, vinca, and zinnias

Plant shade annuals like begonias, coleus, and impatiens

Plant trees at least 6 feet (2 m) away from sidewalks and concrete pools, so growing roots do not crack the concrete.

## Maintenance

Check sprinklers and drip systems to make sure that all outlets are working correctly

Dig and divide crowded spring-flowering bulbs and tubers, including bearded iris when the foliage dies off

Divide and transplant bearded iris using the vigorous ends of the rhizomes. Discard the old center portion.

Cut the leaves back to about 8 inches (20 cm).

Feed roses after each bloom cycle, water regularly, and remove spent flowers

Fertilize cymbidiums to encourage flower formation for next winter's bloom; feed them with quarterstrength liquid fertilizer every time you water them

Feed blooming annuals at least monthly to keep them producing flowers

After harvesting June-bearing cane berries, cut spent canes back to the ground. Leave new green canes; tie them up when they are tall enough. On everbearing raspberries, cut out only the upper half of each cane that bore fruit this year.

To encourage more flowers, cut off developing seed heads of coreopsis cosmos, dahlias, marigolds, rudbeckia, and zinnias

Feed potted plants twice a month with half-strength liquid fertilizer like 20-20-20 or less often with a controlled-release pelleted fertilizer Fertilize Bermuda, St. Augustine, and zoysia lawns monthly through October.

Cut the first flowers of lavender to encourage a second crop.

In summer, indoor plants should be protected from strong sunlight that can cause foliage burn. Closing sheer curtains or partially shutting blinds will shield tender leaves.

Don't chill tropical house plants by watering them with cold tap water. Let the water stand until it reaches room temperature so delicate root hairs aren't harmed, or even killed, by low temperatures.

Be sure house plants are kept away from cold drafts caused by air conditioning vents.

During hot, July weather, be sure to mow your lawn to the appropriate height. This reduces water loss and helps lower soil temperatures.

Mushrooms or toadstools usually grow in decomposing organic matter, such as a buried root, stump, or board. These fungi are beneficial because they help to break down woody debris and add humus to the soil. But mushrooms in the lawn can be a nuisance, and the decayed organic material can result in depressions in the yard. There are no chemical controls for toadstools since the fungus often grows so deep that chemicals do not penetrate entirely.

Organic mulch materials decompose rapidly in hot, moist weather. Add additional mulch where needed.

Pull and compost spent crops. Turn the compost pile and wet it down to hasten decomposition. Leave the pile with a depression in the center to catch rainwater.

Train and trim plants on arbors. Take care to ensure ties do not girdle branches.

July is a good time to begin looking for native and cultivated plants from which you can collect

seed pods to use for decorating this fall and winter. Be on the lookout for such material as thistles, cattails, dried corn tassels, and seed pods from locust, redbud, and chaste tree. Check the soil moisture of container-grown vegetables and flowers daily. As the temperature rises, some plants may need watered twice daily.

If you have been pinching back your mums this summer, mid-July is the time to stop so they will be able to develop flower buds for the fall.

To produce the largest flowers, the main stems of dahlias should be kept free of side shoots, allowing only the terminal bud to develop. In larger varieties, a single stalk is the best. Adequate support must be provided to prevent wind damage. Water well.

Cut back and fertilize delphinium and phlox to encourage a second show of bloom.

Many plants are easily increased by layering. Verbenas, euonymus, pachysandra, ivy, daphne, and climbing roses are some of plants that will root if stems are fastened down on soft earth with a wire and covered with some soil.

## Weed and Pest Control

Control tomato hornworms: look for chewed leaves and black droppings; look for them among the foliage.

Handpick the worms off or spray *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

If budworms are eating the flower buds of petunias or geraniums (look for holes in buds and little black droppings), spray plants every 7 - 10 days with *Bacillus thuringiensis*

Red or yellow lights attract fewer night-flying insects than white or blue bulbs. Use them on your deck or patio.

Hot, dry weather brings out red spiders mites. Inspect roses, evergreens, and marigolds in particular for pale-green coloration. Hold a white sheet of paper underneath a leaf and briskly tap it. Tiny, crawling mites will drop onto the paper if they are present on the leaf. If infestation is light, discourage mites with a forceful, direct spray of water from the hose. Severely infested annual plants should be removed and destroyed. Mild infestations can be controlled with organic pesticides.

Water your plants several hours before applying pesticides, especially during dry weather. Droughtstressed plants have less water in their plant tissues; the chemicals that enter the leaves will consequently be more concentrated and may burn the leaves.

A piece of corrugated cardboard, such as the side from a box, forms an effective and portable barrier to use when spraying a non-selective herbicide next to desired plants. By changing the angle of the cardboard, it's easy to spray weeds growing right up to the base of a desirable plant while shielding the stems, branches, and leaves. Since some herbicide will get on the shield, the same side should always face the sprayer when moved from one location to another.

*(continued)*

# Pulling Weeds

Weed pulling is definitely a fine art. I can say that confidently having done it on a volunteer basis, home owner basis, and have gotten paid to do it by more than a few people.

Weeds come in several lifestyles and personality types. I admit I do not get along with a few certain species; but on the whole they are an agreeable lot (agreeably come out of the ground, that is).

Some of these are:

There is the seemingly polite, but sneaky lot. These are often annuals like crabgrass which pull up easily, but leave behind rampant numbers of offspring who will show up the following spring. But at least you do feel a little better in the summer/ fall when you dispose of the parental units.

Some weeds really like to put up a fight and challenge us humans to expend some energy and money (for a robust set of tools which are up to the challenge). One that comes to mind here is the pokeweed. A good friend of mine was recently praising *Phytolacca americana* – they make colorful fall berries and the leaves turn nice colors. How can

you beat that? I will add one; if you leave them in place long enough they will develop roots with enough density to be useful in your woodstove (and might require a pry bar to uproot).

Then there is the “admire me from a distance type”. If you had never had an affair with *Toxicodendron radicans*, don’t rub it in to us normal folks. Not to mention greenbrier. If you make the mistake of moving quickly and thrashing around when you first encounter GB, he will quickly have you tidily wrapped up and pinned to the ground. If you back out of that situation, you might be the winner and come away with the roots, but with a certain penalty and some blood.

Some weeds have a decidedly clingy type of personality. You get close to them, and they are friends for life. My good friend Mr. Burdock may only be a biennial, but that last year he goes really all out. Not only do burdocks balls grab my sleeves in their talkative nature, they grab my socks; my pants, my hat, my hair. And while they are being so sociable they are merely (underhandedly) finding a way to propagate and spread themselves over hill and dale. One reference

once claimed that if you had burdock, you probably had fairly decent soil. You also might have humans and livestock on the premises to spread them, too.

And of course you can’t talk weed without talking about the plant version of a country with nuclear bombs in their arsenals, and no fear of using them- Ms. Stickweed. Everyone I know is complaining about them (at least in this part of the country). They must have the inside source at Monsanto, and stole the formula for resistance to every weed killer known to man. Mowing? No problem, I can just send up new shoots. Pulling up? Well maybe, but only if not too mature and the ground is really really soft. But don’t leave any (root) remnants. And Good Luck.

As an aside, if you think you are off the hook for pulling weeds in the winter; well guess again. Anytime you can get out into the garden and the ground is not frozen and/or 14” under snow, is fair game for the weed-wars. Get your armor on (knee pads are wonderful), and have at it.

## Gardening to-do List for July (continued)



### For Fun

Ouch! Thorny rose stems are a problem when arranging cut flowers, but leave the thorns on to get maximum life from cut blooms. Research in the Netherlands revealed that removing leaves and thorns from the bottom six to eight inches of rose stems decreased their vase life as compared to deleafed, but not dethorned blooms.

Do you know how many ways you can use an old (or new) plastic laundry basket? When you’re going out the “North 40” to work, use your basket to carry your hand tools, gloves, seeds, and fertilizer, and when you’re finished gardening, haul all those weeds and clippings to the trash can or compost pile in your handy basket. When harvesting root crops such as beets, turnips, or carrots, leave your bounty in your basket while you wash it with a forceful squirt from the garden hose



### SMART IRRIGATION MONTH

Established by the Irrigation Association to encourage efficient watering practices, to provide information about highly efficient irrigation products, and to raise public awareness of outdoor water conservation. Time to focus on products and practices used in irrigating agriculture, turf and commercial and residential landscapes. July is a peak water-use month. The ultimate goal is to use less water while producing healthy crops, turf, gardens and landscapes all year. HOMEOWNERS (and other irrigation managers) information at: [http://www.irrigation.org/Resources/Smart\\_Irrigation\\_Month/Smart\\_Irrigation\\_Month.aspx](http://www.irrigation.org/Resources/Smart_Irrigation_Month/Smart_Irrigation_Month.aspx)

# Why do I garden?

I garden because the garden is there.  
The soil and the sun call out to me.  
Ini, come out, I need you to work me.  
To open me up, and plant the living things.  
I will reward you, with color and taste.  
The bees will come, and the moths, yes, even  
the butterflies.  
But put up a fence, because of the deer!  
I have seen squirrels and rabbits too:  
Keep them out. They can find their own food.

The sun calls me to give of her warmth,  
her radiance, her glow  
My eyes rejoice when I see the sunbeams  
filtering through the soft green of the maples  
above me  
She warms my cold hands, my arms, my face.  
Even when I turn my back on her, she warms  
my back.  
The sun is there for me, and for my plants;  
but I am there too for the sun:  
We commune, the sun and I, the soil and I, the  
plants and I.

I can not help but smile when I see a new  
stalk:  
Last year's Easter lily pierced the ground;  
the forget-me-nots are blooming.  
It took them two years! Well..., from May 09  
till April 10.  
The primula, with radiant face.  
The peonies with the ants on top,  
the buds ready to burst: one purple, and one  
pink.

And what do I do? I marvel.  
They grow by themselves, but they want me  
there.  
The eleven young trees in the tree nursery.  
Do they know I come by almost every day?  
The last one shows one tiny leaf, and I am  
glad.

Someone broke last year's new pear tree.  
Was it a dove, a rabbit, a child?  
My heart was sore, I had watched it grow.  
But now it shows new leaves, and I say:  
"Make it little tree, grow, please grow..!"

## What do I garden?

I put seeds of peas in the raised bed.  
I used a planting finger bought at the farmers  
market.  
One hole, one seed, and press down the soil.  
Water gently with the new metal watering can.  
Water from the newly minted rain barrel.  
Ten days later little green heads appear:  
lovely, curly fingers, reaching up  
Onions in a row, they're tough.  
They grow even if they first flopped down.  
You can buy them at Lowe's, in a bunch.  
How many onions at the end of summer?

Strawberries have their own bed.  
Newly grown, from last year's plants.  
Their white petals turn toward the sun.  
When shall I cover them with a net,  
so they'll be for me and not for the birds?

Barry tells me it's too early,  
Too early for the warmth loving tomato.  
But two of mine are in the bed,  
They may have cold feet and I cover them  
over  
at night: they're under an upturned pot.  
Will they grow stronger than the ones that will  
join them later?

The broccoli I started indoors were weak.  
One or two weeks' produce just died.  
But once outside in the fresh air  
They grow, the sickly stalk strengthens itself.  
The miracle occurs:  
Soil and sun, or is there more?

And kale I found, was it in Shawsville?  
At the Farmers Market and the Garden Club?  
Those people who love plants love each other.  
Plant or person, sun or soil,  
Aren't they all part of God's creation?  
Children of one Father.

## What do I want to grow?

I have a hemmed in area in the large yard be-  
hind the house.  
It is to the side, like a boundary.  
There is one old, twisted grape vine. Or is it a  
weed?  
I would love to change that area in a very small  
vineyard.  
I will have to root out the trashy trees,  
the ligustrum, or privet, and the Japanese hon-  
eysuckle.  
They don't belong here, they're in the way.  
They're unruly and wild, though they may smell  
sweet  
When will I have my vineyard?  
First the dream, then the time, then the hard  
work.  
One day, I will have a vineyard.

I also have five hazelnut trees.  
They arrived in the mail, carefully packed.  
Where shall I plant them?  
Where will the deer not harm them?  
I shall build a little fence around them:  
three stakes and some strong cloth  
Will they like the sun?  
Will they like our yard?  
Will the man who cuts our lawn not mind them?  
We shall see...

*from Ini Beckman in Blacksburg, VA*



*Submit Articles to  
the Grapevine  
Anytime!*



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