

The Grapevine

January 2008

Newsletter of the New River Valley Master Gardener

JANUARY TIPS FOR TREES, SHRUBS AND GROUNDCOVERS

- ❖ Examine the limb structure of your shade trees. Remove dead, diseased, and storm-damaged branches. If left on the tree, these weakened limbs can cause damage by falling on buildings or passers-by.
- ❖ Assess the energy efficiency of your landscape. Do you have evergreen trees or shrubs blocking a window where the sun's warmth would be welcome? Consider replacing them with a deciduous plant that would let sun in during the winter, but cast cooling shade in the summer.
- ❖ Fertilize broad-leaved evergreens in the winter or spring. Fertilizing in the late summer induces late-season growth that is susceptible to winter injury.
- ❖ Looking for plants suitable for containers with roots capable of withstanding very cold winter temperatures? Try wintercreeper, white spruce, shrubby cinquefoil, yews, English ivy 'Baltica,' Vinca minor, creeping /shore junipers.
- ❖ For large shade trees needing removal of storm-damaged limbs, call an arborist or tree surgeon now to get on their schedule for pruning while the trees and underlying landscape plants are dormant.
- ❖ Check guy wires on trees planted in the fall. Stakes may need to be resecured if they have been heaved out of the soil by frost. Remember to remove guy wires in spring after root growth has started. Trees move with the wind grow stronger than those supported for too long.
- ❖ During thaws, water fall planted and established evergreens.
- ❖ During the short days of winter, landscape ornamentals with striking silhouettes draw attention. Try corkscrew willow, kousa dogwood, weeping cherry, and ornamental grasses. Consider placing one of these where it can be seen from a west window at dusk.
- ❖ Winter is the time to apply miscible oil sprays to kill overwintering mites, aphids, and scale on deciduous trees and shrubs. Spray miscible oils when temperatures are above 40 F, but not within 24 hours of a freeze. Because the oil kills insects by suffocation, avoid spraying on windy days to ensure that all surfaces of the plant are covered.
- ❖ When using salt to melt ice on walks and drives, spread it carefully to avoid damage to nearby shrubs. Damage to needle-type evergreens will be evident next spring by copper and yellow tones. Damaged deciduous plants will have bronze or reddish leaves. Consider using sand or sawdust instead.
- ❖ Brush snow from evergreens as soon as possible after a storm. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion. Serious damage may be caused by heavy snow or ice accumulating on the branches. Prop up ice covered branches and let the ice melt rather than try to remove ice from brittle branches.
- ❖ Don't delay planting a live Christmas tree, especially if it has already been in the house three days or more.
- ❖ Some plants that should be pruned in later winter or early spring are hydrangea, butterfly bush, Rose-of-Sharon, hibiscus and other summer-flowering shrubs that flower on new growth.

- ❖ Seeds requiring stratification, such as many of the woody ornamentals, should be started to condition now. Plant them in your cold frame or put them in your freezer for the required amount of time.

Adapted from Monthly Tips by Diane Relf, January Tips Oct. 1996, The Virginia Gardener Newsletter.

The full article may be found at

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/monthlytips/january/nejant.html>

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** in order to be included in next month's issue.

Officers

Garland Linkous, President (linkousg@msn.com)
Don Rude, Vice President (dwr@vt.edu)
Evelyn Melia, Treasurer (meliano@adelphia.net)
Gwen Ewing, Secretary (ewinggf@vt.edu)
Bill Martin, Member-at-Large (whmartin@cox.net)
Open Position, Member-at-Large
Open Position, Trainee Member-at-Large
Rich Conners, Past President (rconners@vt.edu)

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VCE Master Gardener Program

Barry Robinson, Extension Agent (brobinso@vt.edu)

Contact Us:

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

Virginia Cooperative Extension – Montgomery County Office

Website: www.ext.vt.edu
(MG Coordinator and Timesheets)
755 Roanoke Street, Suite 1G, Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-5790 Fax: (540) 382-5729

NRVMGA TREASURER REPORT

The 2007 Annual Treasurer's Report will be presented at the Jan. Business meeting by Evelyn Melia, Treasurer.



**I prefer winter and fall, when you feel
the bone structure in the landscape -
the loneliness of it - the dead feeling of
winter. Something waits beneath it - the
whole story doesn't show.**

- Andrew Wyeth

November Meeting Minutes

New River Valley Master Gardener Association

November Potluck brought out our members to vote on the 2008 officers:

Garland Linkous is our 2008 President,

Don Rude is our Vice President

Evelyn Melia remained as Treasurer

Gwen Ewing remained as Secretary

Rich Conners welcomed everyone, Barry introduced his co-workers from the Cooperative Extension office. Barry had a long list of thank-yous for all the helpers for the last year, including MG College, AAG garden in front of the Gov't building, Field Day and 4-H Fair at Sinkland Farms, Montgomery Museum Heritage Day, Sustainable Blacksburg, and the Green Home seminar/tours. In 2008 he would like more visibility and work on something like Sustainable Agriculture as an outreach to the public.

In 2008, we will have new Agriculture agents in place, in Pulaski, Jason Pratt, John Vest in Floyd, Patrick County will have Travis Bunn. We hope to welcome these agents during one of our 2008 meetings.

If you were at the November potluck, who raised their hands and is growing worms?

Happy 2008!

Submitted by Gwen Ewing

Communications Update

MGs,

Happy New Year! I hope you all have had a good start to the New Year. Several updates have been made to the NRVMGA website. <http://www.civic.bev.net/nrvmgga/>

Timesheet: The 2008 timesheet is now on the web. Please use this form for all 2008 hours. The 2007 timesheet has been removed. If you need a copy to submit last year's hours, send me an e-mail and I'll e-mail it to you.

Membership forms: The 2008 membership form is now on the web. Membership forms are needed from new members (transfers) and interns who graduated last fall. The 2008 renewal form is now on the web. This form is for everyone else.

The 2008 VCE MG Continuation Contract is now on the web. All MGs need to sign this form and send it to the VCE at the address shown on the form.

Thanks and as always, please let me know if you have any troubles with the website.

Paula Moore

Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech- Education and Events

Winter/Spring 2008

For more information or to register, visit our web site at www.hort.vt.edu/hhg or contact Stephanie at vtgarden@vt.edu or 540-231-5970

The Backyard Greenhouse Workshop with Dr. Holly Scoggins, Associate Professor and Director **Saturday, January 19, 2008** 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (includes light lunch) **Location: Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion** Love to garden? Then you deserve a backyard greenhouse...a place to start seeds, extend the growing season, overwinter tender plants, and grow flowers and vegetables out of season. Join Dr. Holly Scoggins for this information-packed workshop on how to make it happen. **Session 1: Build it!** Greenhouse styles, construction options, methods and costs of operation, zoning regulations, equipment needs, etc. 9:30-11:30 a.m. **Session 2: Grow in it!** Tips and tricks of successful greenhouse growing, potting media, fertilizers, sanitation, pest management, etc. 12:00-1:30 p.m. **\$25 general public or \$20 Friends of the Garden (fee includes light lunch)**

Special Friends of the Garden Lecture!

Tough Plants for Tough Times with Mark Weathington, Assistant Director JC Raulston Arboretum **Saturday, February 9, 2008** 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. **Location: Fralin Auditorium** With 100 year droughts, water restrictions, and record temperatures the garden can look more like a moonscape than a landscape. Learn about some unusual plants that can stand up to the harshest conditions and still come out fresh as a daisy. **\$20 general public or FREE Friends of the Garden members**

The Do's and Don'ts of Pruning Woody Plants with Dr. Eric Wiseman, Assistant Professor and ISA Certified Arborist **Saturday, March 8, 2008** 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. **Location: Fralin Auditorium** Often wonder when to prune this tree and how to prune that shrub? Pruning is a tricky practice and must be done properly to result in a healthy plant. Dr. Eric Wiseman will share with us proper pruning techniques, why you should/should not prune, the right time of year to prune, and other helpful pruning advice. **\$20 general public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members**

Some Like it Hot: Tropical Plants for Temperate Gardens with Pam Baggett, garden writer, lecturer, and photographer.

Thursday, March 27, 2008 6:30-8:30 p.m. **Location: Fralin Auditorium** There's no denying it: the East Coast rivals the tropics when summer temperatures soar. Popular tropicals like coleus and elephant ears provide months of dazzling color and bold texture, but there are many other, lesser-known selections that can also give your garden that island look. From grasses and vines to radiant foliage and flowering plants, tropicals prove that heat and humidity are assets when you choose the right plants! **\$20 general public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members**

Digital Horticulture Photography with Robert McDuffie, instructor and photographer.

Saturday, April 12 8:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. (fee includes light lunch) **Location: Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion** This course will cover the basics of digital photography. There will be time spent in lecture on the basics of composition and photographic techniques as they relate to digital photography. Participants should have a digital camera, as we will be shooting images in the Hahn Horticulture Garden and critiquing them afterward. In addition, we will discuss how images can be manipulated or improved in PhotoShop.

*Must pre-register, limited to 30 participants **\$25 general public or \$20 Friends of the Garden members**

Woodland Wildflowers—Jewels of the Forest with William Cullina, Director of Horticultural Research at the New England Wildflower Society. Also a nationally renowned speaker, writer, and expert on native plants. **Thursday, May 1, 2008** 6:30 –8:30 p.m. **Location: Fralin Auditorium** Our woodland wildflowers are both captivating and mysterious, loved and misunderstood. There are no plants more beautiful than Lady-slippers, Oconee bells, trilliums, bloodroot, and hepatica, yet these slow-growing plants are far too rare in gardens. What is it that makes these plants so special, and especially fragile, and how can we establish some in our own gardens? **\$20 general public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members**

EDUCATION

2008 SOUTHSIDE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONFERENCE-HORTICULTURE WORKSHOP

Thursday Jan. 24, 2008 in Danville, Va. Topics for CE include Disease ID, Tree Care Myths and Mysteries, Vegetables, Turf Mgmt., Greenhouses and Rain Gardens. For more information, please call the Virginia Cooperative Extension Danville Office at (434) 799-6558. On-site registration availability may be limited.

MASTER GARDENER CONTINUING EDUCATION

March 8, 2008 in Culpeper, Va. Registration deadline Feb. 15. For more information Contact Alison Bremner at abremner@vt.edu or call 540-341-7950. Speakers and topics include Karen Rexrode – Perennials, the Tried and True and Maybe New For You. (plus) Plant Explorers, Discovering new Plants. Andy Hankins – Biological Control of Insects in Vegetable Gardens. Robert Saunders – Boxwood, a Garden Classic. Bonnie Deahl – Insect & Mite Management in a Changing Climate. John Peter Deahl – Pruning Woody Plants & Some Biology.

The 25th Annual Central Virginia Landscape Management Seminar

Thursday, February 14th, 2008 in Charlottesville, Va. For more information please contact April Pekary at (540) 894-9228. Speakers and topics include Rick Darke “Grasses and the Design of Mid-Atlantic Livable Landscapes”, Dr. Jay Stipes “Experiences as a Tree Doctor”, Nancy Ross Hugo “Remarkable Trees of Virginia”, Ridge Schuyler “Collecting Rainwater: Is a Practice of the Past a Wave of the Future?”

TRAVEL

GARDENS OF SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Garden lovers may wish to travel with Robert F. McDuffie as he takes a group to the gardens of Spain and Portugal. The dates are from May 14-28, 2008. He is with the Dept. of Horticulture at Virginia Tech and been taking groups on garden adventures for ten years. For more information please see the website:
<http://www.mcduff.hort.vt.edu/Spain2008/Index.html>



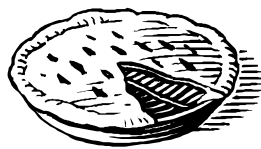
❄️ January Meeting and Social ❄️

New River Valley Master Gardener Association

6:00 PM on Monday, January 21, 2008

1st Floor Multipurpose Room
Montgomery County Government Center
755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg

- Business meeting
- Dessert Social-bring plenty of your best to share
- Book and magazine exchange



New River Valley
Master Gardener Assocation
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