



## HMGA Activity Reports and Announcements for October 2022

### Announcements -

The new Public Facebook Page is now on FB as [Hanover Master Gardeners - Virginia Cooperative Extension](#). The purpose of this Page is to post events, environmental education information, promote our Activities, and increase awareness of Cooperative Extension. This Page will encourage use of our Help Desk and Plant Clinics. There is no ability for the public to post to the Page, to avoid close monitoring and inappropriate conversations. This is new and I'm sure there will be some growing pains. Administrators are Buz Sawyer and Sandy Pence. If you want to be involved with management of the Page contact the Administrators. The longstanding Private FB Group named **Hanover Master Gardeners Association** will continue for Hanover MGs as an internal communications Group.

Virginia Extension Master Gardeners is again sponsoring their Leadership Development Training for all Master Gardeners. This virtual program is each Wednesday in October from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM. Come to one session or all sessions. Registration is required. [See more here](#). All Hanover MGs are encouraged to attend, especially those that are currently on the Board, leaders of Activities, or wish to aspire to those positions. This valuable training can be used in many of your daily life situations.

Taylor Adams has agreed to help the 2023 MG Class Trainees understand the why/how/what of the required Presentations part of the course. He may ask one or two other MGs to help him flesh out the details.

**State Fair - Christy Brennan** - No report.

**Horticulture Learning Center - Bob Durbin** - The committee was busy making plans for the Groundbreaking Ceremony which was changed to 10/14/22 due to severe weather warnings. Multiple donations for the groundbreaking ceremony were made from local farms and individuals. There was no cost for this event since several MG's obtained decorations for the entrance to the garden. Thank you, letters, will be sent out to, Hanover Vegetable Farm, Cabin Hill Farm and Mr. Kreynus. Some last-minute issues evolved, with administrators from Hanover County, by requesting Hanover Board of Supervisors to participate, in the ceremony and in the shovel groundbreaking event. Program accommodations were made to ensure the groundbreaking was a success.

10/14/22, a beautiful day, and a rewarding day for HMGA, at the groundbreaking ceremony. MGs coped with all the changes, due to the date change. Several plant clinic demos were displayed, a donation table and a greeting table were monitored by members. The garden entrance was decorated with hay bales, corn shocks, pumpkins and mums. **Pat Reyes** and **Susan Warren** brought additional decorations including antique John Deer toys. It was estimated around 70 people attended the ceremony and the atmosphere was energized. **Jamaal Willis** led the event, being the Emcee. He was also interviewed by channel 8. The HLC groundbreaking was highlighted on the

5:30pm news. John Budesky, **Angelette** and **Buz** gave speeches which were inspiring. **Laura**, represented VCE, **Doris Gullotta, Jane Ruffin, Marion Jones, Dave Myers**, and **Scott Bateman** (2023 trainee) represented MGs, in placing a shovel in the raised bed. In addition, Mr. Budeskey and several administrators also placed a shovel in the raised bed.

A wish list for the HLC was developed for the groundbreaking, and a temporary donation form was developed. The form will need some revisions, and it needs to be approved by the board.

A planned Zoom meeting will take place on 11/14/22 from 6:30-8pm on establishing a garden irrigation system, as well as a rainwater harvesting system, the type of system planned for the HLC. The session will be conducted with Shawn Jadrnicek, VCE staff at the Roanoke office. Several committee members have been given copies of a RHS manual, suggested by Mr. Jadrnicek, to study and review.

HLC coordinators hope to have an initial 2023 budget to present to the HMGA board by the November board meeting.

**Gleaning - Pattie Bland** (**Pattie Bland** and **Elaine Daniel**, coordinators) - Gleaning is now concluded for the year.

**Home Gardening Series - Katrina Hart** - Saturday, October 15 was an exciting day! This was our first Home Gardening Series. **Betty Jane Hughes** was the presenter, **Katrina Hart** the moderator, and **Susie Knuth, Brenda Burke** and **Jennifer Trainham** our helpers. Even though Jennifer was not present on Saturday, she diligently helped with the purchasing of the food and made sure we had what we needed.

We had a wonderful spread of delicious food waiting for our participants as they entered the room. Betty Jane engaged her audience with her knowledge of house plants and the audience was eager to ask questions. As Betty Jane wrapped up her presentation, she gave away door prizes (Wandering Jews and Spider plants) which was an awesome thing to do and the winners were happy to receive. We had a great turn out for the first session - 10 participants (including two MG's - thanks for your support!).

The next Home Gardening Series will be Saturday, October 29 at the Atlee Library at 10:30 AM. Anne Margaret White will speak about Ferns in Your Home Garden. Come learn about ferns and support your fellow Master Gardener.

**Virginia Cooperative Extension (VEC) – Angelette Pryor -**

Huge thank you to everyone that helped and is helping with HLC – great crowd and good relationships are being built! I need photos, please email them to me. angellp@vt.edu

Special thanks to **Jamaal Willis** and **Bob Durbin** and the planning committee!

VCE is represented at Hanover Museum of History and Culture exhibit that opened Thursday 10/13/22.

Please consider running for an office – we need choices when we vote in December! New ideas help energize our mission.

Send photos of MG activities during 2022 to Caroline Velazquez: She is putting together the Final Report that is presented at the December membership meeting. carolinenvelazquez@gmail.com

**Educational Grants - Becky Watson** (**Betty Jane Hughes, Mary Wagner, Doris Gullotta, Mike Little**) - We received an online application for the Roddey Jones Memorial Grant on September 15th from Rural Point Elementary School. They have a community garden at the school that needs to be brought back to life after a neglected period during Covid.

The grant application was forwarded to the Grants Committee members for evaluation and scoring. I am attaching copies of the scores and comments from each committee member. Several think that this will be a good partnering opportunity.

The HMGA Grants Committee unanimously recommends the Rural Point Elementary School Roddy Jones Memorial Grant application for funding.

### **Scotchtown Demo Gardens - Doris Gullota -**

September 21, 2022 - Contacted a local chapter of the American Daylily Society for recommendations for other daylily varieties. As of October 14, I have not gotten a response.

September 22, 2022 - Work day was for all four gardens. Becky worked on cleaning up both the kitchen and dye gardens removing spent plants, pruning and planting some fall greens. I spent several hours spreading shredded mulch on the perennial gardens. I used up all eight bags I had purchased and drove to Montpelier to purchase eight more. All but two bags were used with some spread on the dye garden. The garden has a cleaner look for the event scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The remaining two bags will be used later in the season or saved for next year. There were two volunteers present for seven total hours.

October 1 - The Fall Festival was canceled due to the storm. No further date is planned.

**Communications - Betty Jane Hughes** - I collected the email addresses of former master gardeners since 2015 when the Horticultural Learning Center was first proposed. These former members were invited to attend the ground breaking ceremony.

I am currently reviewing multiple documents that need periodic updates including the Handbook and instructions for using BI in anticipation of the new trainee class. Let me know if you are aware of any updates that are needed.

**Website** – We had a few recipes accessed from the public page of the web site. They have been moved to the Members Only Area. Please send me any recipes you are willing to share.

**Land Care Steward - Linda Hazelwood** - Home Visit to Gardenbrook Subdivision, Compass Point Lane & Castle Grove Drive, Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Date Visited: September 25, 2022

Master Gardeners Names: **Emily Gianfortoni, Linda Hazelwood, and Mike Little**

**Overview of Property:** The neighborhood is approximately 4.5 years old with 49 residential homes. We met with Dee Sexton and 7 homeowners. The common area is near the entrance of the subdivision on Compass Point Lane and Castle Grove Drive and includes mailboxes and a playground. The common area bordering the playground hosts a variety of plants, shrubs, and trees.

**Goals of Visit:** Gardenbrook HOA requested we identify some existing plants and to recommend additional shrubs and perennial flowering plants for the two corner beds at the entrance of the subdivision, the common area playground slope and bases of trees, and pond slope to enhance the eroded grassy bank to reduce runoff into the pond.

**General Recommendations:** The Master Gardener team recommended planting native species that are grown in our (Hanover County) region. Such plants are suited to local soils with less need for fertilizers and pesticides for growth.

Get a soil test through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Virginia Tech Soil Test Laboratory. Also recommended to test each general area. The tests will help to assess the need for fertilizer and lime depending on what is to be grown.

Because the topsoil in the development was removed, we recommended adding organic material, such as compost to improve the planting areas.

A list of native plants, shrubs were recommended for the areas around the neighborhood and information given for when to plant and how to maintain these plants until they are established. This included how to plant, watering these plants, and the importance of mulching.

Native grasses were recommended for the slope at the pond area.

**Meetings, Trips & Tours, Continuing Education - Eleanor Fukushima, VP** - Our next meeting will be 12/8/2022. There is no meeting in November.

Mary Sketch will be speaking on 12/8/2022 for the HMGA annual meeting. This will be held at the Hanover Evangelical Friends Church 6420 Mechanicsville, Turnpike. This will be a potluck dinner at 6:30.

Mary is the Coordinator of the Virginia Soil Health Coalition which works with partners across the commonwealth to advance collaborative soil health strategies. She has experience working with collaboratives and coalitions across the country at the intersection of economic and environmental wellbeing with a focus on working lands and rural communities. She previously worked at the Center for Rural Strategies where she helped coordinate the Rural Assembly, a coalition of rural stakeholders across the US. She has her Master's degree in Fish and Wildlife Conservation from Virginia Tech and her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Brown University.

**Plant Sale - Pat Reyes** - Email was sent to all MGs encouraging dividing and potting perennials for the Spring Plant Sale.

**Plant Clinics - Needs a Coordinator.**

**Youth Activities - Needs a Coordinator.**

**MG Help Desk - Val Kish** - 2022 MG Help Desk Quarterly (July-Sept.) Contacts Report

This is a quarterly update of the contacts received at the Help Desk. This summarizes walk-in submission of samples, emails and phone calls. I have also added information on the first and second quarters. The total number of contacts from the first of the year through the end of September is 315. I also summarized the information on percentage of each type of contact for the third quarter and for quarters 1-3.

Number of contacts/quarter

1. Jan-Mar 70

2. Apr-Jun 118

3. July-Sep 127 (22% walk-ins + 31% emails + 47% phone calls)

Total ( Q1-3) 315 (14% walk-ins + 35% emails + 51% phone calls)

**2023 MG Training Class (MGTC) - Val Kish** - Thank you for the opportunity to educate the HMGA Board and other MGs about the 2023 Training Course.

PLANNING THE COURSE: The 2023 MGTC Planning Council (**Henri Haskell '22, Val Kish '08, Cathy Nault '22, Kate Sandy '20, Ann Margaret White '22, Jane White '19**) met once a month June – September. Our flyer outlining the course dates etc. (designed by Cathy) was distributed throughout Hanover County primarily by electronic means, but also at other venues such as the

Tomato Festival and plant clinics. A description of the course appeared in local newspapers on 10 August. Some potential Trainees indicated that they had learned of the MG Program by word of mouth. So...let's keep spreading the word to anyone who will listen.

The Council and other MGs interviewed people interested in the MG program during late summer and early fall. **Angelette** was instrumental in setting up those interviews at VCE.

Our Open House was held the afternoon of 4 October at VCE and attracted a diverse group of Trainees and MGs. In my opinion, the Open House was a success, based on the food and drink consumed, animated conversations, and comments made by participants as they left the event.

**Angelette** played a significant role ensuring that potential Trainees were made aware of the requirements to join the course. She expeditiously carried out the reference and background checks. Potential Trainees were encouraged to pay the \$200 fee as soon as possible to have a seat in the course.

Based on this team effort, we unexpectedly filled the 15 seats by mid-October, much earlier than in past years. The name of each Trainee is in our BI roster with the % sign indicating '23 Trainee status. Our new group, 4 males and 11 females, brings plenty of excitement, energy, ideas, and skills to the MG community. Each Trainee also understands that educating the public defines our mission.

**IMPLEMENTING THE COURSE:** Support for our Master Gardener Training Course is critical to the success of the MG program. Although support can take many forms, most impactful is direct involvement of MGs. Each of the 20 sessions builds on past sessions, not only in terms of horticultural information, but also in terms of relationship building. Trainees need guidance, handholding, and they need to be shown the path to engagement in our activities. This is hard work! This is most effectively accomplished by friendly and **supportive MGs** who really care about the new Trainees. I ask that MGs step forward and participate as course coordinators: January 10 – March 23, 6-9pm, Tuesday and Thursday, at VCE. I will send a separate email to the Board and MGs/Interns regarding the course schedule and specific needs for coordinators during each of the 20 sessions.

To smooth the transition of Trainees into our program, I am interested in organizing an effort to invite each Trainee to HMGA meetings. The idea: we have 15 Trainees. We need 15 MGs/Interns who would be willing to invite a Trainee to a meeting. This would begin in December and continue throughout 2023. Please discuss and let me know if this is an idea worth pursuing.

**Extension Office Demo Garden - Sandy Pence** - New additions to the garden are a sign with information on the garden and a large planting container for winter interest. Pansies will be planted in the container and in the garden before the HLC Ground Breaking Ceremony. The swallowtail butterfly caterpillars have been enjoying the garden fennel. As many as two dozen caterpillars were found one day. Thank you to **Ginny Nicholas** for helping with a day of weeding and placing the container. Thanks to **Bob Durbin** for adding a line onto the irrigation to water the planting container.

**Pole Green Butterfly Garden - Sandy Pence** - A sign was placed in the garden with information on the garden and links to the HMGA website. The swallowtail caterpillars are also enjoying the fennel in this garden.

**Rural Point Elementary School Garden - Sandy Pence** This teaching garden has been used by teachers for eight years. The pandemic and summer construction has taken a toll on the ability to maintain the garden. This Activity will allow MGs to share environmentally sound garden practices with parents and teachers in a hands-on setting.

The first day was attended by **Susan Bennett, Sammye Daou, Mary Wagner, Paula Willoughby, Bonnie Weber-Lehman**. Next day in the garden is Thursday October 20, 3:00 - 5:00.

**Seed Bank - Melanie Smith** - No report.

**Speakers Bureau - Carol Brown** - No requests for speakers.