



## HMGA Activity Reports and Announcements for April 2023

### Announcements -

- Put **May 8th** on your calendar to attend the HMGA Member Meeting to honor all of the MG Interns that completed the class and the many MG volunteers that made the 2023 MG Class a big success.
- Information on the 2023 VA MG College is available at: <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/EMGC-program-23.pdf> and the HMGA is offering two \$250 scholarships. Check it out.
- Please complete the Interest and Skills survey that has been sent to all MGs, etc. This will give us the ability to contact interested individuals when opportunities arise.

### Horticulture Learning Center - Bob Durbin -

Laurel Hill presented a plan for selecting plants and bed "stewards" and set up a QR code. Everyone could download the google sheet and share and update information as beds are selected for specific plants and individuals can agree to be a steward of the bed and be responsible for planting as well as maintenance of the bed. The HLC garden area is set up by an alpha numeric system and each raised bed is labeled by a letter and a number.

The google sheet can be accessed by the following:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1b9\\_Bx9wNnOfA9LWi-SmFqHL6EnPTRWwd/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113448005720349480867&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1b9_Bx9wNnOfA9LWi-SmFqHL6EnPTRWwd/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113448005720349480867&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Bob reviewed the budget balance for the HLC as of 4/1/23

Cash donations of \$225

Expenses Since 1/1/23 \$595.73

In-Kind Donations \$2616

HLC Budget Balance 4/1/23 \$3053.17

HMGA has not heard any information on the two grants submission. Beckey Watson has identified an additional grant opportunity (Keep Virginia Beautiful, Green Grant program). The HLC committee suggested applying for irrigation funding to connect the raised beds to existing water sources.

Bob mentioned all raised beds have individuals building the beds and 12 ½ out of 14 sponsors have either made a donation for a bed or agreed to build a bed and present it as an in-kind donation to the HMGA. Only one and one half additional sponsors are needed to completely finance the cost of the raised beds.

The HLC committee reviewed the March 29th work day where additional cardboard and woodchips were placed in the garden. Nine volunteers participated in the work until there was no more cardboard. Bob mentioned the volume of work is so great that mechanized equipment should be

used to fill the raised beds with wood chips and soil. Several members stated they may have a contact for use of a front-end loader. Pat Reyes stated she had talked to Sandy McDougle, of Sandy's Plants and Sandy is willing to donate soil for the HLC raised beds. There will be a \$20 loading fee. Angelette stated that maybe the county would be willing to lend the use of a dump truck to us.

Bob discussed setting a goal for the HLC for 2023 with several objectives. The committee agreed with the goal.

Holly passed out a tentative beginning schedule for volunteers to work in the HLC. The schedule is set to begin the week of 4/24/23. Monday evenings 5:30pm – 7:30pm, Thursday morning 8:0-11:30am (7am-10:00am in July and August) and one Saturday morning a month. It was felt this schedule would allow some volunteers who work during the day an opportunity to volunteer in the HLC. Hopefully a work day on either 4/24 or 4/27 will be used to fill the raised beds with wood chips and garden soil. A frontend loader will be needed for this work.

The HLC committee hopes to have plants in the garden by mid-May. Bob reminded everyone that the HLC will be in a 3 year rotation with Randolph Macon College and the Town of Ashland for holding a tree planting event for Arbor Day.

The HLC will be responsible for doing a presentation on the HLC at the HMGA picnic in June.

**Gleaning - Pattie Bland (Elaine Daniel, Corinna Muldowney, and Pattie Bland, Coord.) -** A total of 38 Master Gardeners took the Farm Safety Training on Zoom April 4 and 6 for the 2023 Gleaning season. Let's get picking!

**Home Gardening Series - Reported by Catherine Hebert - Emily Gianfortoni** presented the last program for the Series on 4/14 at the Atlee Library on Invasive Plants. Emily put together a wonder handout on the topic, which will be posted on the HMGA website in the Pest and Disease section under Resources. Emily has also agreed to write something on the topic to post on the website that uses her slides from the presentation. Thank you Emily!

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

**Educational Grants - Becky Watson (Betty Jane Hughes, Mary Wagner, Doris Gullotta, Mike Little) -**

**Scotchtown Demo Gardens - Doris Gullota -**

- April 13 - Scheduled a work day for Thursday April 20, 2023 10am to 1pm. We will be cleaning up both perennial gardens, removing excess daylilies and planting peonies. Becky has seeds for the kitchen and dye gardens to plant. Patrick will work up the plot for the fiber garden on the 15<sup>th</sup> and it will be ready to move the plants from the cold frame out to Scotchtown on Thursday. Bob and I removed the top to the cold frame on the 13<sup>th</sup> so the plants can harden off.
- Preparations are underway for the event on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. We will be moving plants for sale out to Scotchtown next week.

**Communications - Betty Jane Hughes and Noel Oaks -**

In an effort to ensure the activities we plan match your interests and skills, we'd like to learn more about what skills and interests you have. Because we plan such a wide variety of activities to help benefit and educate the local community, we need an equally wide variety of skills, so please share with us what you're able and want to do! Below you'll find a link to a quick (2 minutes, tops) survey that lets us better understand what abilities you have and what activities you'd be interested in helping with. [Completing the survey does not lock you into anything--we're simply trying to match interests with what we can offer.](#)

There's an area under each section that allows you to provide anything that we may have missed, so feel free to share your ideas under the applicable section.

## Website - Katherine Hebert

Site updates:

- Facebook page promoted on home page
- Plant sale flier on home page
- Plant Clinics listed on Better Impact have been added to the home page. PLEASE CONFIRM I HAVE THE TIMES CORRECT FOR THE PUBLIC.
- Reschedule HGS flier created and placed on home page
  - [Scotchtown page updated with plant info and images](#) - - Thanks to Melanie for writing this up.
  - New Song United Methodist Church featured on Grant page - Thanks to Melanie for writing this up.
- Resources page will be the focus for the committee to update and create new content

The Communications Committee met at the Hanover Tavern on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss content and plans for the HMG website. Below is what we discussed who is working on various sections. Katherine still needs to reach out to those who did not attend the meeting to see what they would like to work on. Bad Kat!

### The Website

Site maintenance – Katherine, Scott, Nicky, and BJ will have administrative access to develop new pages and add content. All have WordPress experience. The website uses WP Bakery as a page builder.

Tasks

- Convert existing content in word documents to web pages if still relevant
- Add new content for the Resources sections
- Create new pages and graphics
- The committee will focus on the public side of the site and BJ will maintain ownership of the member-only side of the website.

Content Creation is the primary focus so it can be a better educational tool for the community. A new resource page has been created to organize the topics. The committee will start with the posted sections to clean them up and add new information. Then we will work to add many new sections to cover some of the most common topics and questions we get from plant clinics and the help desk. See below for more details

Editing existing content

- Clean up/rewrite old articles and add photos when needed
- Use a web-friendly format with descriptive headers to divide sections of an article and bullets when appropriate.
- Reference sources
- Check links to ensure they are still active.
- We decided if there is content on the website in the Resource section with no author or sources, we would delete it. (and that will be a lot)

Source content to build out resource sections

- Look for existing content from within HMG. Examples suggested in the meeting include having the interns write articles based on their projects, reaching out to people who spoke in the speaker series and HGS to contribute articles as well, and referring to presentations in archives.
- Post videos from VCE YouTube that fit into a category on the Resource page.
- Try to record presentations where PPTs are posted and new presentations going forward.

Sections we propose adding to the website with information including:

- MG Projects – Better descriptions and photos to communicate how we contribute to the community (grants, gleaning, seedbank, etc) Melanie has already submitted a draft of the New Song United Methodist Church Grant. THANKS MELANIE!!! It is linked from the Grant
- IPM Section
  - Pest and Disease spotlight on home page and newsletter
  - Build up Resource section with articles and tips
- Monthly garden chores – Update previously posted calendar. KATHERINE is working on this now.
- How to be an environmental steward
  - Firewise – Existing presentation to record video?
  - Waterwise - Existing presentation to record video?
  - Articles on these topics
- Maintain slideshow of recent projects
- Master Gardeners in the Press – MELANIE is working on collecting these
- Plant sale page that highlights plants and vendors that will be available and photos from past years.
- Scotchtown – MELANIE wrote up information for this page and suggested Becky Blake would have information too. We still need some plant info and I would love info about why these plants were chosen and how they were used by the Henry's. Photos were added too.

Other suggestions for the site include adding a search function, creating a page to highlight master gardeners gardens (successes and failures) and changing the header to reflect the season. This is where a lot of the work will need to be done by the committee, and countless hours can be accrued researching and writing.

- Resource categories for plant recommendations, care and articles.
  - Gardening Basics - KATHERINE
    - Gardening as age
    - Monthly chores – Jan – April Complete
    - Fertilizers -
    - Plant propagation
  - Natives - HALEY
  - Pollinators - HALEY
  - Creating Good Soil and Compost – SUSAN
    - State fair videos – KATHERINE (these are already created)
  - Kitchen Garden – NEEDS OWNER
    - Veggies
    - Herbs
    - Fruits
  - Pests and Diseases – NEEDS OWNER
- New categories to be added
  - Weeds - KATHERINE
  - Invasives and alternatives
  - Annuals and Perennials
  - House plants – MELANIE – Already found several great resources.
  - Trees & Shrubs
  - Lawns
  - Shade Gardening - SUSAN

### **Committee Workflow –**

- Google Drive – Katherine will create a Google doc/sheet to post content plans and archive documents and photos that the whole team will have access to
- Meeting Schedule and Location – We will have short meetings via zoom monthly and meet in person at a restaurant or somewhere fun quarterly. Zoom meetings will be to touch base, discuss challenges and accomplishments and new communications projects. Same for in-

person meetings, but perhaps we also brainstorm about ideas for development of the website, new content, etc. Or we just have fun.

**Hanover Master Gardeners - Hanover Cooperative Extension (Public Facebook Page)** - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086429378777>

**Land Care Steward - Linda Hazelwood** - No Report

**Meetings, Trips & Tours, Continuing Education - Eleanor Fukushima, VP**

- The presenter for the 5/8/23 May HMGA member meeting will be Patrick Johnson, certified Permaculturist. This will be an interesting and informative presentation on an emerging subject. <https://rvapermaculture.com/about-us/>
- The June HMGA member meeting will be a picnic at Taylor Park, home of our office and the Horticultural Learning Center (HLC), and learn about the planning and implementation of the HLC.
- Plans for the July HMGA member meeting are to have an informal discussion with those that attended or have attended Master Gardener College to hear about their learning experiences. Additional ideas are still being discussed. Stay tuned.
- Eleanor is still working on several potential trips/tours over the summer.

**Plant Sale - Pat Reyes**

**MG Help Desk - Val Kish** - Spreadsheet attached.

**2023 MG Training Class (MGTC) - Val Kish** -

SUBJ: 2023 MG Training final report

Our MG Trainees are now Interns! YAY!!!

The speakers were fantastic, as reported by members of the three monthly MG teams. For the first time, a group of 3 MGs led the Presentations part of the course. The goal was not only to ensure that the Trainees understood the importance of the presentations and the rationale for doing them in the first place, but to introduce three more MGs to the Trainees. Over the 10 week training, the Trainees were exposed to and hopefully interacted with about 25 MGs. The opportunity to talk with and meet MGs is invaluable for these new MGs-to-be.

FYI: The list of presentation topics shows the varied interests of our newest Interns:

Acorns, Basil, Boxwood blight, Clover, Garlic, HLC beginning designs, Moss, Mulch, Oyster mushrooms, Predatory insects, Slugs, Soil microorganisms, Trap crops.

Overall we have an excellent group of new and excited Interns to join us in activities over the next year. Please welcome them as you meet them at the Extension Office, at meetings, or during various volunteer activities.

On April 13th there was a post-mortem meeting of interested MGs to discuss not only the 2023 training but also to look forward to 2024. The summary of the meeting is attached.

I expect Angelette will have more to say at the Board meeting about this group of Interns, as she has interacted with them more directly than I have.

2023 MG Training Course

Post-Mortem Meeting 13 April 2023

Mike Little, Cindy Barrow, Angelette Pryor, Kate Sandy, Anne Margaret White, Eleanor Fukushima, Rosemary Wilkinson, Val Kish (Lead)

Hi everyone,

Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this conversation about MG Training in 2023 and a look ahead to 2024. Let me know if you want to add anything to this summary and I will do so. Val

Take home messages from our wide-ranging comments and discussions:

1. 2024 course:

a. Covenant Woods, January 9 – March 29, Tuesday and Friday mornings, 9:30am-12:30pm, maximum of 20 Trainees.

b. Co-Leads: Anne Margaret White + TBD

2. Advertising: Course flier will use 2023 flier model with same photo and relevant information changed. Fliers will be sent out electronically to all MGs and Interns and to the Hanover County community (Angelette has a list).

3. Interest in 2024 course: Currently there are 7 people waitlisted from 2023 course who will have first priority; another 9 have indicated an interest in becoming a Master Gardener.

4. Open House: Kate will reserve a room at Covenant Woods, early to mid-September 2023, morning. (We did not discuss this but the Open House in fall 2022 slated for 1-5pm was too long and at that time we thought to reduce it to a few hours in 2023).

5. Interviews: Interview option will be available during the Open House. Those with a completed application may be interviewed then or at another time. Interview questions need to be re-evaluated. A committee will be formed to take care of this important issue.

6. Speaker retention: each speaker was given copies of the evaluation form completed by Trainees. Speakers were very appreciative of this information. A spreadsheet of all speaker evaluations is still in the works. Comments from those MGs who were present for many of the classes supported the idea that our speakers are outstanding. Other speaker options are in a list of all speakers prepared by Val.

7. Course evaluations by Trainees: Angelette will see if Henri will send out the questions from the 2022 Trainee Course evaluations to the 2023 Interns. In progress...

8. Monthly MG leads: the inclusion of this opportunity for MG Leads to not only supervise classes, but also interact with the Trainees is important. Trainees will have met more than 20 MGs during the course, good for Trainees and for the MGs as well. It may be that in 2024, since there will be the co-leads present at each class for the entire 10 weeks, the need for the monthly MG Lead teams of three people will not be as great.

9. Presentations: A team of 3 MGs were responsible for ensuring that the Trainees understood the rationale for this part of the training. There were many opportunities for the Trainees to have their questions answered, with the goal of making their presentations the best possible. Practice time was also appreciated by some of the Trainees. Continuing this model relieves the course Leads of some responsibility while also introducing the Trainees to additional MGs.

**Extension Office Demo Garden - Sandy Pence** - The garden was weeded and trimmed of dead foliage, leaving dead hollow stalks standing for bee nesting. Compliments of Intern, **Bill Wittig**, and **Sandy Pence**. The Mountain Mint has spread to cover most to the left garden space as planned and the Coral Honeysuckle is happy and blooming waiting for the hummers to visit.

**Pole Green Butterfly Garden - Sandy Pence** - Clean up will begin after the plant sale.

**Rural Point Elementary School Garden - Sandy Pence** - Will check in with this Activity after the plant sale.