



HMGA Activity Reports and Announcements for June 2023

Compiled July 15, 2023 - Sandy Pence

Announcements -

- No HMGA member meeting in August
- Bi-weekly an Extension Master Gardener Update comes out from the state MG office. It contains, among other items of interest, advanced training opportunities hours through webinars and the recordings have links to watch at a later date. Check it out <https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-update/>
- The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia also have a virtual classroom under the Education tab on their website. <https://mgnv.org/>

Horticulture Learning Center - Bob Durbin and Holly Owens -

Notes from HLC 7/12/23 Meeting

- All 19 raised beds in the initial garden area have been placed and planted, except for one, which is currently being planted. In addition, the HLC has several potted plants and two root towers in the garden. All beds have stewards and MGs assigned. Three beds have community volunteers involved.
- Plantings are being recorded in a Google Sheet to create a planting log.
- Workdays in the HLC are on Monday, Thursday and some Saturdays. Morning hours have been changed for the summer to begin work at 7:30am.
- A "huddle" is held before each work session to review the day's assignments. Another "huddle" is held at the end of the work session to review and document the session's activities on an HLC Garden Record Report form.
- First observation of critter damage in the garden 7/12/23.
- Loss of some plants due to watering issues and insect infestation have been documented.
- Loss of some plants due to wind damage.
- Procedures are being written for working in the HLC.
- Documenting and working with the Help Desk to identify garden issues.
- An Inclement weather procedure for contacting MGs is in preparation.
- Procedure for setting up and turning on the water system in preparation.
- Two 4H groups have toured the HLC, 6 adults and 8 Children.
- Jane White and Holly coordinated a donation of multiple garden plants from a MG.
- Ace Hardware Ashland, donated vegetables and herbs for the HLC. Some plants have been planted in the HLC and others have been given away, others are in the quarantine area of the HLC.
- Holly has met with USDA officials about qualifying for a High Tunnel.

- Rappahannock Electric Company requested an update on the Rain Harvest System and Tank set up.
- Primary Focus is now on the rain harvesting system, (RHS) and placing the tank pad. Deadline 11/1/23.
- HLC budget balance is \$6400, most of which will go to the cost of the irrigation and RHS system.
- Preparation to participate in the Ashland Harvest Run (Oct. 21) needs to be started.
- In August the HLC planning committee will begin making decisions about fall crops, cover crops, and what additions to the garden will be made in 2024. How to screen for wind in the coming months?
- A HLC coordinator succession plan is being developed.

Gleaning - Pattie Bland (Elaine Daniel, Corinna Muldowney, Pattie Bland) -

Master Gardener Gleaners have gleaned three times this season. To date, the produce includes 112 half pints of raspberries (Agriberry), 271 pints of blackberries (Agriberry), and 12 bushels of sweet corn (Marion Jones's farm). Deliveries to six different food pantries.

Home Gardening Series - (Reported by Sandy Pence) - Darlette Meekins, Ronni McCord, Noel Oakes -

A lot of planning and brainstorming is currently underway. An update will be provided next month.

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VEC) – Angelette Pryor

No Report.

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

No Report

Scotchtown Demo Gardens - Doris Gullota -

July 12 – Workday in all gardens

We weeded, deadheaded plants, removed spent plants, and saved some seeds in all gardens. Becky planted more collard seeds and is coming back on Friday to plant onions. She also spread fish meal fertilizer in the kitchen and the dye gardens. Pictures were posted on our Facebook page. More work is needed in the perennial gardens so another workday is planned for July 22nd.

Dawn (Scotchtown) gave me the Home Visit pre-visit form filled out by a colleague. It was scanned and sent to Emily Gianfortoni and Linda Hazelwood (Home Garden Visits/Land Care Stewards). When the visit is scheduled, I hope to tag along.

MGs present were **Becky Blake, Pam Barbour, Janet Bailey,** and **Doris Gullotta.** A total of 11 volunteer hours were completed.

Communications - Betty Jane Hughes - No news this month.

Website - Katherine Hebert

The site has had several technical issues over the last month. After continuously being locked out of admin access, we hired GoDaddy for a comprehensive website cleanup. Malware was removed, plugins were updated, and the website's size was reduced, particularly by compressing over 1000 images and files. A full technical write-up was provided and shared with BJ and Scott. The Member-

only access has been restored. There still seems to be an issue with the firewall, and GoDaddy created a workaround.

With the board's approval, we have decided to move the website to a more proactive and service-driven hosting company, TecAdvocate. This is a company based in Atlanta that Katherine has used since 2007. Katherine sent them information about the site cleanup effort, so they know what they are taking on and can make recommendations for optimizing and securing the site as we advance.

The process will begin to move the site to their server in the next week or so. The HMG email address still needs to be addressed to determine if it can stay with GoDaddy or if it needs to also move to TecAdvocate.

Scott Bateman has set up Mailchimp and created a page with a basic mailing list signup form. People can access this page from the site navigation. We can also promote the mailing list at plant clinics, HGS, and HLC events and on Facebook. The form list is <https://hanovermastergardeners.org/email-newsletter/>. Katherine will work on making this page more informational.

Scott also helped with getting Google Analytics set up on the site. The page hit counter has been removed. In the past 30 days, stats show 181 total users, 97% new, 3% returning, and 259 sessions. We can pull reports to see which pages get the most hits and what outside sources refer traffic, such as BI, Facebook, Hanovercounty.gov, etc.

Home Garden Visits/Land Care Stewards - Linda Hazelwood & Emily Gianfortoni -

The land care stewards visited a residential property to assess the back portion of the lot, which was overgrown with both native and invasive species. The homeowner was given recommendations for removing invasive species and a list of native perennials and shrubs to replant.

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

- The June HMGA Picnic was a hit, with over 40 MGs and guests in attendance. The HLC was presented with a \$750 grant from Keep Virginia Beautiful that will go towards the rain harvesting system. Bob Durbin and Holly Owens shared information about the garden. After enjoying the delicious picnic food and desserts, MGs and guests toured the garden.
- No HMGA member meeting scheduled for August.
- Native Plant garden tour in Westover Hills on August 19. See BI
- The HMGA picnic and plant swap will be held on September 16 at the Taylor Complex. Henrico MGs and partners who help with the HLC are invited. Information on the plant swap will come in August Reports.
- The July HMGA member meeting on July 10th was both informative and engaging. Thank you to **Mike Little** and **Joan Van VanDervort** for their presentation on the tree steward program; to **Pattie Bland** for sharing her personal history with MG College; **Kristy Brennan** for the slide show on the organizational structure of the master garden program and the benefits that Associations provide to the program's success; and **Angelette Pryor** for a demonstration on hydroponic gardening.

Plant Sale - Pat Reyes

No report.

MG Help Desk - Val Kish -

2023 Help Desk 2nd Quarter Report

This is the second quarterly report of 2023 summarizing Help Desk activity. Monthly contacts (April 37, May 47, June 56) total 140 for the second quarter. This compares with 63 contacts in the first

quarter (January-March) of 2023. This information is detailed in the 2023 Master Gardener Help Desk Contacts spreadsheet (attached).

Most of the contacts registered in the Inquiry Log come from email or phone calls, with fewer as direct walk-ins. Part of the reason for this is because when a client calls or emails, the contact is registered as phone or email. If the client then brings a sample to the Help Desk based on discussion with a Help Desk volunteer, the client is not registered as a walk-in, since the initial query has already been recorded in the Log. Another way of saying this is that the "walk-ins" are those clients who "show up with a sample" without first contacting the Help Desk.

Now that the Help Desk is working with the HLC in analyzing plant samples for insect damage or plant diseases, the number of walk-in contacts has increased. HLC volunteers contributed 11 samples to the Help Desk in June. Prior to June no HLC samples were submitted. Each sample is in a Ziploc bag with HLC and Bed identifier written on it. Following standard procedure, each volunteer completes a form (Insect ID or Plant Disease Diagnosis) giving details about the sample. The completed form and the bagged sample are placed in the bin in the white frig in the Help Desk room. Of those 11 samples submitted in June, 10 were diseased plant samples and 1 sample was for insect ID.

HLC – HELP DESK GUIDELINES: To coordinate and define the activities of the HLC volunteers and the Help Desk volunteers with respect to sample collection, Bob Durbin, Holly Owens, Emily Gianfortoni, and Val Kish devised a set of guidelines (attached). The idea is to make certain that all volunteers understand their responsibilities with respect to sample collection from the HLC beds. These GUIDELINES are attached.

Thank you to all Help Desk volunteers. Your service to the Hanover community is invaluable and your commitment to providing research-based information is unwavering. The volunteers listed below will receive a copy of this report.

INTERN VOLUNTEERS: Scott Bateman, Kathy Davis, Ronni McCord, Alexia Miles, Boshia Nelson, Noel Oakes, Holly Owens, Sherri Prunty, Janice Thomas, Marianne Vermeer, Bill Wittig. Note: some Interns may now be Master Gardeners. Intern status is based on the Roster in BI last updated June 3rd. To those who are now MGs, congratulations!!

MG VOLUNTEERS: Chris Baum, Pat Bruker, Jane Copland, Emily Gianfortoni, Mike Little, Darlette Meekins, Kate Sandy, Patty Skjei, Joan VanDervort, Rosemary Wilkinson.

2023 MG Training Class (MGTC) - Ann Margaret White and Joanne Einsmann - Plans have begun for next year's class. Update coming in August.

Extension Office Demo Garden - Sandy Pence -

Clustered Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*) is a popular plant for pollinators, such as bees, wasps, and flies, who enjoy its nectar and pollen. While it is a spreading plant, it can be easily controlled by cutting the runners in the fall or spring. It is also easy to maintain when planted in contained areas like it is in this garden. See more information about it in the Native Plant Guide for the Capitol Region and the Missouri Botanical Garden - [Pycnanthemum muticum - Plant Finder](#)

Of the two types of goldenrod in the garden, one is not thriving because it is infested with aphids and lace bugs every year. The other goldenrod is doing well. The best solution I have found for treating the unhealthy goldenrod is to remove it. I believe that this location is too hot and dry. It will be removed in the fall and potted for the plant sale next spring.

Pole Green Butterfly Garden - Sandy Pence -

The garden was cleaned up in preparation for the Tomato Festival, and a notice was posted on Facebook to inform people about the garden and its location.

Speakers Bureau - Carol Brown

We have received 2 requests for speakers in the past month. Both requests were sent out to our group. No responses have been received as yet.

One is for AGAP, an Adult day care facility at 8090 Mechanicsville Turnpike. There is interest in house plants and small gardens. Any Thursday or Friday would work best for them. They have a "sun" room with house plants and vegetables in it.

The second request came from Clay Spring garden club, meeting at the Ashland First Baptist church. They would be happy with a speaker on any topic. Bluebirds and insect control are of special interest. They meet at noon on the second Tuesday of each month. Open months are October, January, February, March and May.