

# IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

The April 2010 Monthly Journal  
Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' Association

[www.ramga.org](http://www.ramga.org)



"Spring is nature's way of saying "Let's party." Robin Williams.

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## PRESIDENTIAL THOUGHTS

By Nancy Smith

Yea!!! I am seeing signs of Spring all over the place. I have to say the best sighting was with my almost 3-year old granddaughter, Avery. We were swinging on her porch swing, looking way up into the sky when the branches of the maple tree came into our view. Avery saw the red buds and the emerging leaves and even she became giddy with the prospect of more sunny days to come. Everyday now she checks to see if even more buds and leaves have burst forth.

Maybe she has inherited some measure of my gardening passion. I know she delights in the gifts of the earth.

We know for sure the Master Gardener class of 2010 has both the genes and the delight for gardening. After months of invaluable instruction, convivial interaction and intense study, we are about to welcome 19 new MG interns to our ranks. On April 8, from 9:00-1:00, we will have a graduation celebration for them all at Boxerwood. And you are invited to join the party! If you would like to come, please bring something to share for lunch, a covered dish perhaps, or a dessert. Contact Anne Riffey-Buckner at 464-8616 or e-mail her at buckrock@rockbridge.net to let her know your plans. Thanks. It will be a wonderful day.

Since Spring is coming, our thoughts and plans also turn to our signature event...the Master Gardener Plant Sale. There is a scheduled Dig and Divide on April 8. It is especially nice that the MG class is being given the opportunity to participate. If you are also interested, you may contact Mary Adkins or Tracey Smith-Oliver. To help with the Plant Sale in one of many other ways, please contact Ted Jenks.

As you all probably know by now, the State Budget cuts are a real threat to our Extension Office. The proposed budget calls for drastic cuts in funding. A number of offices could be closed or clustered with offices in other cities. The fate of the Master Gardener program is unknown as well. As of this writing, the decisions have not yet been made, though the budget vote had been scheduled to be held on Saturday, March 13.

I know that many of you have contacted those in charge of the budget. I am not sure what more can be done at this time. But I think it is very important that we let Jon Repair and Helen Leslie of our own Extension staff know how much we rely on and value all they do for us as MGs and for the community. Please take the time to stop by the office and offer your heartfelt appreciation. Let's hope and continue to do what we can to work for the best resolution to this dilemma.



## *Fresh Eyes for the Garden*

Do you or a neighbor have a problem area in your landscape? What would you like to see in your landscape?

Find out what works and what doesn't

Our Panel of Landscape Designers will give you some helpful suggestions

*Michele Fletcher, Cochran Lyle,  
Faith Vosburgh*

**Thursday, April 22 @ 7:00 pm**  
Old Courthouse – Meeting Room (2 S  
Main St)

**Send us a picture before April  
10<sup>th</sup>**

if you would like your design discussed at our meeting.

Liz Maurer - [esm306@yahoo.com](mailto:esm306@yahoo.com)  
 Caren Nash - [nashva@comcast.net](mailto:nashva@comcast.net)

Below is some specific information that should be included with your submission.

- Style, formal, informal
- Type of plants you like
- Location – sun/shade exposure
- Irrigation system - yes or no
- Size of garden
- Soil type – drainage problems
- What you would like to see in your landscape structures
- Number of hours per week available to maintain garden
- How much time spent outside - # people like to entertain

Please make sure to describe the area(s) of concern or specific problem to be addressed, add any additional comments along with your garden and house photo.



### **IN PRAISE OF MASTER GARDENERS** **By Jim Davis**

On March third, I was present at our MG Class when leaders came to explain activities of the various teams our unit maintains, and to recruit trainees to their causes. Most of us are team members and are generally aware of what is going on with other teams. But listening to firsthand information, I was genuinely impressed by details, the sound

evidence of high-quality work. Not that we have ever done less than the best; but truly we have matured. Listening to the details of our projects proved to me that we have reached a higher level in carrying out our charge to teach, doing so with greater intensity than ever before.

The principal reason, no doubt, is owing to the devoted and imaginative folks of our ranks. We should recognize the energies of some early and special leaders, such as our founders Katherine Smith, Becky England, Pat Tichenor and the late Chuck Norrington (and Caroline, not late but half of a valuable pair). These MGs have set high standards for us from the early days. More recently, one might recognize the work and achievements of many others. The list of these is far too long to print here; more important, any accidental omission is likely to be a major one.

Is it fair, therefore, to focus on one *project* as an example of the new excellence? Perhaps not. But school projects deserve special mention, not only because they outnumber other categories, but also because they create an important awareness in children they otherwise might never grasp. The school projects are Natural Bridge Elementary, Parry McCluer High (special education), Fairfield Elementary and Effinger Elementary. The daily classroom and outdoor activities captivate pupils, often binding them to an MG, perhaps known as "The Garden Lady," present in more than one manifestation. Deserving mention also are Waddell School's Roots and Shoots program and Boxerwood, both assisted now by MG volunteers.

Evidence of our success, the hard work of team members and leaders, of course shows up elsewhere. Consider the greater emphasis on heritage and historically appropriate plants at the Jackson House, careful plant choice for an increasingly pleasant downtown respite at the Campbell House, civic pride incarnate at the Buena Vista Visitor Center, wondrous organization of the Extension Office hotline, a pleasant and educational bus trip to gardens as distant as Washington, DC. And although no one could duplicate Chuck Norrington's efforts, we do hold a few plant clinics each year. Thanks to a vigorous and well-organized dig and divide team and a—*is spectacular* too strong a word?—plant sale, all our projects are well financed.

Coordinating our unit is RAMGA, and we mustn't forget its officers and board members who attend long meetings, of which, unlike our projects, most of us are unaware. We have a fine newsletter, too, a component important as a means of binding us all together, especially during months when there are no monthly meetings or gatherings at project sites. Finally, but not least, consistent support from Jon Repair and Helen Leslie has been more than a boon. (It somehow seems appropriate to say that *boon* is a word for *prayer* in the language of Old Norse.)

I write, then, not of teams, but of a team, our entire Master Gardener unit—a group of folks who may initially have *thought* they just wanted to learn more about gardening, but who have come to devote themselves to teaching others.



## DID YOU KNOW.....

**April Fool** - Since April is the first month of Spring, when all things are green, it stands to reason that people are green then too, and, no more than half awake after a long winter hibernation, in prime condition to be easily hoaxed. The custom was apparently brought across the channel from France to England about the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, as Jonathan Swift, in his journal to Stella, enters under March 31, 1713, that he and others had been contriving "a lie for tomorrow."

**Feverfew** - French is not the only language to suffer mutilation when lifted bodily into English. Latin has also suffered. In Roman times a plant, a centaury, was known to possess properties which could soothe a feverish person. For that reason the plant was also known as febrifugia, from febris, "fever," and fugare, "to drive away." Passing through French, it was at first taken by the people of England to be feferfuge, later corrupted in common speech to feather-few, fetter-foe and, eventually, feverfew."

**Cockscomb** - The spelling, though common from Shakespeare's time, conceals the source. The original was cock's comb, the comb or crest of a cock. And, back in the time of Queen Elizabeth the First, and later, it denoted the cap worn by the professional fool or jester, having the cut and color of such a crest, sometimes with small bells sewn to the tips. The jester himself became the cock's comb, and, because of his foolish pretensions, and conceits, it was not long before any man of like characteristics, any pretender, became a cockscomb in the eyes of his fellows.

### WANT AD

The Potting Shed is looking for a gardener interested in working two days a week April - June. It's a great way to learn plants. Some week-end work. \$10/hour

<u>April</u>	<i>CALENDAR</i>
1,8,15,22	Creating Your Backyard Oasis
3	Pruning & Propagating Historic Roses*
7 & 8	21 <sup>st</sup> Annual Environment VA Symposium*
9	Tree Care Symposia*
10	Botanical Herbs Workshop*
10,17 or 24	Spring Wildflower Walk*
13	RAMGA Board Meeting - 2pm
13	Groundcovers*
16-18	16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Garden Faire*
17	Community Garden Workshop*
22	Fresh Eyes For the Garden*
24	Wildflower Walk*
27	RAMGA Bus Trip*
<u>May</u>	
11	RAMGA Board Meeting - 2pm
1	Annual Festival of Gardening*
14-18	Spring Wildflower Symposium*
15	Sustainable Gardening Workshop*
27	2010 MG Interns Present!*
* See Educational Events Calendar in this issue	

## Calendar of Educational Events – April 2010

Date	Event/Credits	Content	Location/Contact
<b>Thursdays, April 1, 8, 15, 22,</b> 4:00-6:00pm Cost \$116	<b>Creating Your Backyard Oasis</b> <i>Credits: 8 hrs total</i>	Take your home landscape to new places: step-by-step advice on plants best suited for the Richmond area, site preparation, proper planting techniques, finishing touches.	Richmond, VA Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden <a href="http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=230">http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=230</a>
<b>April 3</b> 9: 30–11: 30am Cost: \$10 Reservations required	<b>Pruning and Propagating Historic Roses</b> <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Old roses possess a grace, charm, and beauty unique among cultivated garden plants. Join a workshop devoted to the care of these plants, and start your own.	Monticello, VA Tufton Farm <a href="http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html">http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html</a>
<b>April 7 &amp; 8</b> Cost: Check webpage	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Annual Environment Virginia Symposium: Optimizing Stewardship in a Challenging Economy</b> Governor McDonnell to provide keynote on 4/7 <i>Credits: ***</i>	Tracks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory Updates: air, water, stormwater, waste</li> <li>• Restoring Chesapeake Bay</li> <li>• Strategic Land Conservation</li> <li>• Energy Development</li> <li>• Viable/Sustainable Farms</li> <li>• Adapting to Climate Change</li> <li>• (Re-)Development</li> </ul>	Lexington, VA Virginia Military Institute <a href="http://www.vmi.edu/show.aspx?tid=27299&amp;id=29369">http://www.vmi.edu/show.aspx?tid=27299&amp;id=29369</a>
<b>April 9</b> 8:30am–4:30pm Cost: \$90 all day	<b>Tree Care Symposia</b> <i>Credits: 8hrs</i>	Recent research on essential elements of tree feeding. Potential Impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer on Tree Populations in Virginia, Ultimate Tree Stress: Hidden Soil Compaction, Bare Root Planting, Tree Stabilization Systems, Trees and Risk	Richmond, VA, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden <a href="http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=466">http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=466</a>
<b>April 10</b> 9:00am–3:30pm Cost: \$20 Mail regis/payment by April 5 to: VA ST UNIV, Attn: Andy Hankins, Box 9081, Petersburg, VA 23806.	<b>Botanical Herbs Workshop</b> <i>Credits: 3hrs</i>	Daylong workshop on how to grow woodland and field herbs and shiitake mushrooms. Speakers include Jackie Greenfield of Gaia Herbs, Inc., Dr. Jeanine Davis of NC State University, Andy Hankins of Virginia State University, and Bill Worrell of Virginia Extension.	Gate City, VA <a href="http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/events/specialtyhortdocs/2010_VA_Botanical_Herb_Program.pdf">http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/events/specialtyhortdocs/2010_VA_Botanical_Herb_Program.pdf</a> Phone (804) 524-5960 or <a href="mailto:cstreetman@vsu.edu">cstreetman@vsu.edu</a> .

<p><b>April 10, 17, or 24</b> 9:00am–12:00Noon Cost: \$10</p>	<p><b>Spring Wildflower Walk</b> <i>Credits: 3hrs</i></p>	<p>Hike winds through the woodlands of Monticello to the Rivanna River. Enjoy the botanical treasures of early spring: trout lilies, Virginia blue bells, spring beauties, and more. Be prepared for a strenuous trek.</p>	<p>Monticello, VA <a href="http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html">http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html</a></p>
<p><b>April 13</b> 7:00pm Cost: Free</p>	<p><b>Groundcovers: There's More to Life Than Junipers</b></p>	<p>Boxerwood Gardens – Faith Vosburgh</p>	
<p><b>April 16 – 18</b> \$5 / day</p>	<p><b>16<sup>th</sup> Annual Garden Faire: Grow Your Own</b> <i>Credits: ***</i></p>	<p>Really Low Maintenance Perennials, Composting, It Starts with a Seed, The Woods in Your Backyard, Is This a Good Bug? Bluebirds, and more!</p>	<p>Abingdon, VA <a href="http://www.gardenfaire.net/">http://www.gardenfaire.net/</a></p>
<p><b>April 17</b> 8 am – 3:30 pm Cost: \$12 Registration deadline: 4/5</p>	<p><b>Community Garden Workshop</b> Sponsored by the VMGA <i>Credits: 7.5 hrs</i></p>	<p>Interested in starting a community garden? Learn about vermicomposting, compost tea, food preservation at the community garden level.</p>	<p>Roanoke, VA Natural Science Center, VA Western Community College Mildred McDuffie 540-774-7271 <a href="mailto:mmcduffieduff@verizon.net">mmcduffieduff@verizon.net</a></p>
<p><b>April 22</b> 7:00–8:00pm Cost: Free</p>	<p><b>Fresh Eyes for the Garden</b> <i>Credits: 1 hr</i></p>	<p>Rockbridge Area Master Gardener Education</p>	<p>Lexington, VA Old Courthouse</p>
<p><b>April 24</b> 9:00–11:00 a.m Cost: \$20 Register now, as class size is very limited.</p>	<p><b>Wildflower Walk with Dr. Holly Scoggins</b> <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i></p>	<p>Last year's hike was so much fun, we're doing it again! Trillium, jacks, bloodroot, columbine, bluebells, ferns.</p>	<p>Montgomery County, VA <i>Hike location to be determined</i> <a href="http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html">http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html</a></p>
<p><b>April 27</b> Cost: \$53.00 Send your check, payable to RAMGA: Doris Stark, 30 St. Andrews Drive, Lexington 24450.</p>	<p><b>2010 RAMGA bus trip and garden tour</b> <i>Credits: 4 hrs</i></p>	<p>To Richmond to see Agecroft and Virginia House, both rescued from pending destruction in England and reconstructed in the 1920s overlooking the James River. Charles Gillette, the noted landscape architect, designed both of the gardens.</p>	<p>Questions: Becky England, 463-1728 or Doris Stark, 463-5427</p>

<b>May 1</b> 8:30 – 1 Cost: Free	<b>Annual Festival of Gardening</b> <i>Credits: ***</i>	The Hill City Master Gardeners present a day of educational events, plant sale, and children's activities.	Lynchburg, VA 31 Grove Street <a href="http://www.hcmga.com/calendar_events.asp">http://www.hcmga.com/calendar_events.asp</a>
<b>May 14 – 18</b> Cost: \$120	<b>Spring Wildflower Symposium</b> <i>Credits: ***</i>	The focus is on native wildflowers and related topics such as ferns, native birds as well as their supporting ecosystems. Sessions of 1-2 hours include walks, lectures or workshops that are led by instructors who are experts in their field.	Wintergreen, VA <a href="http://www.vmga.net/Calendar/14May%20Wintergreen%20Spring%20Wildflower%20Symp.htm">http://www.vmga.net/Calendar/14May%20Wintergreen%20Spring%20Wildflower%20Symp.htm</a>  For further information contact: 434.325.8169
<b>May 15</b> 9:30 – 11:30 Cost: \$10 Reservations Required	<b>Sustainable Gardening Workshop</b> <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Tour the Monticello Vegetable Garden for an overview of sustainable gardening techniques, including natural pest controls and beneficial insects and a hands-on workshop demonstrating various bed preparation methods.	Monticello, VA <a href="http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html">http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html</a>
<b>May 27</b> 7:00–8:00pm Cost: Free	<b>2010 MG Interns Present!</b> <i>Credits: 1 hr</i>	Come hear from a few of the new 2010 Master Gardener interns presenting their interesting MG projects.	Lexington, VA Piovano Room Rockbridge Regional Library
<b>LOOKING AHEAD:</b>			
June 22 – 27	Master Gardener College	More to come!	
Credits *** Contact Kip Brooks for credit questions: <a href="mailto:kipb@rockbridge.net">kipb@rockbridge.net</a> or 462-6160			

**2009-2010  
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**IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN**

Editor-in-Chief Sherry Smith  
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The newsletter may also be viewed at [www.ramga.org](http://www.ramga.org)

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