



IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

The January 2012 Monthly Journal

www.ramga.org

“Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January, begins with the dream.” -Josephine Nuese,

DON'T FORGET THESE DATES:

January is the time for annual dues!

*January 11, 2012. Wednesday. 6pm-7pm.
Rockbridge Master Naturalist Continuing Ed
program, "Dendrochronology". Old
Courthouse Meeting Room, Lexington.*

CONTENTS:

The President's Column.....	1
Master Gardener Class 2012.....	2
Boxerwood News.....	3
On the Road.....	3
Stonewall Jackson's Garden Reborn.....	4
News from the Rockbridge Master Naturalists.....	6
Volunteer Alerts.....	6
Educational Calendar.....	7

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Pat Kovach



Happy New Year! 2012 brings new some new faces to the RAMGA board - myself, Pat Kovach as president, Faith Vosburgh as vice president, and Sally Nunneley as secretary. Faith is not new to the board; she brings valuable experience to her new position as Vice President. I look forward to working with our new board members as well as the current board members with their invaluable gardening and RAMGA experience.

I want to thank outgoing president Amy Scheuer for her service as President. During her presidency, we saw new projects begin, and a real marketing effort to recruit new members. I also want to thank outgoing secretary Ann Gruner for service as secretary for two years. The secretary's position rarely gets much attention, but Ann's meticulous record was one we often referred to. Outgoing chairperson of the Programs Committee Caren Nash has our appreciation for planning programs that were both entertaining and informative. Although she left the board last year, Tracy Smith-Oliver warrents a big thank you not only for her past service as treasurer of RAMGA,

but for her many years of service coordinating the "Dig-and-Divides" that helps make up a core resource for the association's annual plant sale.

For the truly "master" gardener, January may not be a favorite month. But for many of us, it is a time when bugs, humidity and aching backs are a fading memory, and gardening magazines, seed and plant catalogs in January are the beginnings of gardening ambitions and resolutions. Our January imaginary gardens are lush, weed-free and beautifully planned.

January is a time of planning for new growth. We will be growing with a new Master Gardeners class. And you can help plan the growth of the association. Who do you know who would be good potential Master Gardeners?

January is also time for all RAMGA members to renew their membership. The annual membership is \$15, which allows us to maintain support of our various projects. Please mail your check to:

RAMGA
P. O. Drawer 897
Lexington, VA 24450

Thank you. Here's to a growing 2012.



MASTER GARDENER CLASS 2012 CONVENES JANUARY 10TH

By Jim Davis

The number of trainees signed up for Master Gardener Class 2012 is not as large as hoped, but the RAMGA board has Authorized Dave Buckner, coordinator, to proceed with his plans. So far, ten people have sent their checks to pay for the Class. In the past, some have come forward well after the deadline, and Dave will accept late comers this year. In fact, he is hopeful that more will register. Nevertheless, the Class will convene for those who have committed, even though they number only ten.

Recruitment efforts included the big banner, posters, radio announcements and publicity in our local paper. Results were of course disappointing, and perhaps further study of recruiting methods is needed. At any rate, RAMGA needs Master Gardeners, and it could be said that local gardeners as well as our endangered environment need MG training and organization.

Jane Birzenieks has nearly completed her calls to instructors and the Class schedule. Most aspects will be familiar to members of previous classes, but while changes have been necessary, high quality is guaranteed. Notice this change in the usual schedule: Jane had to put basic biology on the first day and the orientation session on the second.

Dave has asked Ted Jenks to be in charge of interviews. He'll be assisted by Faith Vosburgh and Amy Scheuer. He has said he hopes MGs will show up at sessions throughout the Class, to meet the trainees and show support. "We want trainees to know we care about them as well as the Class," he said. Maybe a large showing on January 10th, the first session, would be a particularly important day to come.

The new trainees are Jill Alvarado, Malcolm Brownlee, Dale Buckner, Jackie Buckner, Patricia Cleaveland, Joan DiNardo, Joan Dubis, Dustin McClung, Rebecca Moore and Richard Wendt.



BOXERWOOD NEWS

Saturday, January 21, 10am (Snow date, Saturday, January 28, 10am) - Winter Tree Walk at Boxerwood. Come join Faith Vosburgh, Boxerwood's horticulturalist, and discover the beauty of trees in winter. We'll be looking at tree form, bark and winter flowering specimens with a little winter botany thrown in. Call 463-2697 or e-mail Faith at faith@boxerwood.org with questions.

Friends of the Garden at Boxerwood.

I would like to develop a corps of garden volunteers at Boxerwood and I am hoping I can convince some of you Master Gardeners to join me. In the past couple of years, we have only had one Master Gardener helping us regularly in the garden (thank you, Karen Carlton!) I work three days a week and Clara, our gardener, is here twenty hours a week. Boxerwood consists of thirty acres - more than we can keep on top of. There is so much work to do - invasives to remove, paths to mulch, grass to mow, trees and shrubs to prune. And I have great plans: monthly workshops and training sessions, field trips, speakers. I would love to see Boxerwood become a horticultural community resource. Won't you help? If this interests you, I am going to be having an **introductory meeting on Tuesday, January 17th at 11am at Boxerwood - and I'll even give you lunch!** If you can't attend, I would love to hear your input. Thanks!

Faith Vosburgh
faith@boxerwood.org
 463-2697

ON THE ROAD

By Becky England

RAMGA's 11th annual bus trip is scheduled for Monday, April 30th. We will return to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond for a guided tour of the gardens. It has been 9 years since our first visit to Ginter and there are sure to be many changes, including the addition of a lovely conservatory. The 24 acre garden is packed with a diverse plant collection and several special gardens, such as Asian, Victorian, etc. After our tour, there will be time for wandering in the garden, shopping in the gift shop, and lunch in the cafeteria.

In the afternoon, we have a special treat. Those of you who toured Virginia House with us a couple of years ago will remember the wonderful terraced gardens and the equally wonderful tour led by Mr. Scott Burrell. At the time, he invited us to visit his garden in Mechanicsville. We have been able to schedule that visit and he and his wife will welcome us. They are both graduates of Virginia Tech with majors in Horticulture and Landscape Design. The Burrells own a landscaping business called The Giving Tree. They regularly open their garden to the public in the spring, teach Master Gardener classes and lecture throughout the Richmond area. We are fortunate to be able to visit the Burrell garden.

To reserve a seat, send a check for \$50.00, payable to RAMGA, to Doris Stark, 30 St. Andrews Dr., Lexington 24450. That amount will cover the cost of the bus, bus driver tip, admission to Ginter and afternoon refreshments. If you have questions,

call Becky England at 463-1728 or Doris at 463-5427. As usual, Master Gardeners only may sign up between now and March 15th. We have a waiting list for guests now.

Several of our regular travelers have asked for a brief history of our trips, so here goes--- Our first trip, in 2002 was to Washington to visit the newly remodeled U.S. Botanical Garden - remember the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin ? WOW! In 2003 we visited Ginter and Maymont Gardens in Richmond, and 2004 found us in Winchester visiting the State Arboretum and the lovely gardens of Glen Burnie. Lynchburg was our destination in 2005 with stops at the Old City Cemetery, poet Anne Spencer's garden and the Randolph Macon Womens College Botanic Garden.

In 2006 we had a special treat when we visited plantsman Paul James' unforgettable 35 acre private garden in Boones Mill. Our afternoon was spent at Western Community College's arboretum with a little plant shopping at the Roanoke market. We headed to Blacksburg in 2007. There we visited Smithfield Plantation, toured the Hahn Horticultural Garden at Va Tech and ended the day enjoying the unique gardens belonging to Elissa Steeves, a most unique lady! In 2008 we drove to Alexandria to the American Horticulture Society's headquarters and on to Meadowlark Garden in the afternoon. Harrisonburg and the JMU Arboretum and the hillside garden of Ron Brown was our destination in 2009. Finally, our last two trips have taken us to historic sites in Virginia. We visited Virginia House and Agecroft in Richmond in 2010 and Oatlands and Long Branch near Leesburg last year. We hope this recap brings fond memories, And we hope to add some more on our 2012 trip. Just to point out how much things change, the bus charge for our first trip was \$575. This year the price is \$1,200 - super inflation!



STONEWALL JACKSON'S GARDEN REBORN

By Marnie Wheeler

Did the rather dull VMI professor and later hard military disciplinarian really enjoy the pleasures of gardening that we know so well? Indeed, yes, for Jackson had a warm side. Deeply religious and charitable, he was also truly one to appreciate the soil. As Jackson's widow Mary Anna Jackson has written, "His garden was a source of very great pleasure to him: he worked in it a great deal with his own hands and cultivated it in quite a scientific way. So successful was he as a gardener that he raised more vegetables than his family could consume."

Our MG team at the Jackson House garden learned all this about Jackson and a great deal more. However, working the soil rigorously by hand was basic and came before all else. The job was not easy. After renovations to the house a few years back, the garden site was filled with hard, compacted soil. Obviously, we didn't inherit the general's loam.

Jackson himself no doubt at first had to cope with Rockbridge clay, soil almost as bad as what we encountered. He had no power tools; his work was done by hand, and so was ours. Donna Noyes along with Sharon and Dick Jones applied their knowledge and turned semi concrete into a garden of rich soil. Cover crops of winter rye and

buckwheat, the use of compost and leaf mulch and crop rotation have made all the difference. This soil has produced extremely successful crops—the pole beans grow way beyond the support teepee and head for the apple trees; the Hollow Crown Parsnips grow over eight feet tall.

For Jackson, insects and diseases were no doubt as formidable foes, in their way, as were the Yankees, and Jackson's dedication is particularly interesting when we consider the other conditions set out for the gardener in the 1860s. Such good success as we've realized has come, as in Jackson's day, without chemicals, mandatory for a nineteenth-century museum garden. We therefore out of necessity have learned much about organic gardening. We cover the squash stems with soil to help fend off the squash borer. We wrap tomato plant stems to discourage cutworms. Companion planting of onions with potatoes, tomatoes along with carrots and basil have been major factors in the high quality of the garden.

In addition to the worms and borers, we've had problems with the larger critters. We do sidestep history a little by using Haveahart traps. At one point we were sure our main problem critter was a groundhog but soon found out it was a skunk. Bob Kovach has probably learned his most unusual lesson from this garden. He now knows how to release a skunk from the trap without getting perfumed.

We have also learned much about the history of the plants. Michael Lynn, director of the House, has asked us to grow only vegetables that Jackson could have known. Identifying these required a lot of research into heirloom varieties that date no later than the 1860s. Pinetree Garden Seeds has been a big help with a wonderful catalogue that gives much history of their products, including the dates they were originally grown. Now that we have acquired and planted heirlooms, we are saving seeds and starting plants either on site or at home.

Part of our learning has been about the hardscape. Jim Kvatch in particular did a beautiful job of

edging the garden with cedar logs. And he likes to say he thinks he's unique because he believes no one else in the world ever totally rebuilt Stonewall Jackson's privy—which is now the garden shed. I'm not sure you can call a scarecrow hardscape, but we do have the job of building an historic one every few weeks. It's made of a potato stuck with five or six turkey feathers and suspended from an arched branch. If there are any turkey hunters reading this, we can always use some of those feathers.

All our efforts have resulted in some of the best hours working in the garden—the contact with visitors. We have grand times telling them what we've learned. One day, Mary Beth Schuder took a young child under her wing and let him taste peas, strawberries, and tomatoes directly from the garden. He couldn't have been more excited and surprised. Many times adults have admired different plants and asked how they could grow them and whether they would grow in their part of the country. Often, if a plant has seeds on it, we'll give them some to take home and try.

The industrious Jackson House team members are Joyce Fraley, Sharon and Dick Jones, Bob Kovach, Kathy and Jim Kvach, Sunny MacDonald, Donna Noyes, Mary Beth Schuder, and me. We all have a wonderful time learning and laughing when we come together once a week to take another step in the Stonewall Jackson garden. We don't want to ration our fun, though. So if there's anyone who'd like to join us, we'd love to have you.

Note: This is the ninth in a series of articles reporting the activities of our unit's projects. The series was mandated by the RAMGA Board and is overseen by Vice President Pat Kovach. The purpose is to keep all MGs aware of how busy we are and what good work we do

News from our Sister Organization, the Rockbridge Master Naturalists

The Rockbridge Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists will hold an information session in the Old Courthouse Meeting Room on Wednesday, January 18 at 7:00 pm for individuals interested in becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist and enrolling in the chapter's 2012 training course, which starts February 14.

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a grass-roots effort to train a corps of volunteers who will work in their local communities to improve the environment through education, outreach and service. Virginia Department of Forestry/Western Region is the sponsoring agency for the Rockbridge Chapter.

To become certified as a Virginia Master Naturalist, volunteers must first complete a basic training course that includes a minimum of 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences. Within a year of graduating, they must also complete an additional 8 hours of Advanced Training and 40 hours of service. To maintain certification, volunteers must complete 40 of service and 8 hours of Advanced Training annually.

The Rockbridge course will run from February 14 through June 2012. Classes will take place most Tuesday evenings from 5:30-8:30 at Boxerwood Nature Center in Lexington, with occasional Saturday field trips. Enrollment is limited to 20.

A course syllabus, schedule and enrollment form are can be found on the RMN webpage: www.rockbridgemasternaturalists.org. For more information and to register, contact one of the following: Bernadette Bowen (bbowen00@gmail.com), Keith Maurer (vapapops@gmail.com), or Karen Stanley (karen.stanley@dof.virginia.gov).

Volunteer Alerts

1. We are still in need of a new Program Coordinator and committee for next year, starting in January. Duties include contacting prospective speakers for RAMGA meetings, which are held on the 4th Thursday in February, March, April, May, October and November, reserving the meeting place and setting up the room for the meeting, writing an article for RAMGA newsletter and publicity. If you are interested, or have an idea for an upcoming program please contact Pat Kovach at 540 463-7713 or patkovach@embarqmail.com



January 2012 Educational Programs

January 11, 2012. Wednesday. 6pm-7pm. Rockbridge Master Naturalist Continuing Ed program, "Dendrochronology". Old Courthouse Meeting Room, Lexington. Founder and Director of the Tree-Ring Laboratory at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory from 1975 to 2002, Gordon has sampled trees in 17 countries. Learn about Tree-Ring Analysis from Rockbridge Master Naturalist (and Rockbridge Master Gardener) Dr. Gordon Jacoby. Contact: Liz Maurer at esm306@yahoo.com or 540-377-9095***1 credit hour***

January 11, 2012. Wednesday. 12:00- 1:00pm. "So You Want to be a Beekeeper..." Hahn Horticulture Garden, Va Tech, Blacksburg. Veteran beekeeper Mark Chorba will give an overview of backyard beekeeping and details about the Beginner's Beekeeping Course sponsored by the New River Valley Beekeepers Association (two day course - Jan 28 and March 31). Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone or email vtgarden@vt.edu **1credit hour***<http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html>

Jan. 13-16, Jan. 27-29, Feb. 18-20, and March 3-4, 2012. 2012 Permaculture Design Course: Sustainability Strategies for the Blue Ridge. A 72-hour course held near Charlottesville. Cost- \$900 to \$1200. Limited scholarships may be available. Contact Terry Lilley at tygerlilley@gmail.com or 434-296-3963. Website - <http://www.blueridgepermaculture.net/courses.html>

January 19 2012. Thursday. (Snow date January 26, Thursday). Danville Master Gardeners Hort Symposium "Spring to Green". Stratford Courtyard Conference Center, Danville. Speakers include Dr. Alex Niemiera, Robert McDuffie and others. Topics: Sexy Trees, Invasive Plants, Basic and Advanced Rose Care, Top 10 Worst Landscape Design Ideas, Small Fruits in

the Home Landscape, Garden Photography in the Digital Age. \$40. More info: www.danvillemastergardeners.org ***5 ½ credit hours***

January 20-22, 2012. Friday-Sunday. Virginia Flower and Garden Expo, Virginia Beach Convention Center. \$10. Speakers throughout the show. www.vafgs.org ***6 credit hours***

January 25, 2012. Wednesday. 12:00-1:00 p.m. Diagnosing Plant Problems in Your Garden or Landscape. Hahn Horticulture Garden, Va Tech, Blacksburg. Elizabeth Bush will share with us the procedures they go through to diagnose plant problems at the Plant Disease Clinic at Virginia Tech. □Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone or email vtgarden@vt.edu ***1 credit hour*** <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html>

January 29- February 2, 2012. Sunday-Thursday. Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course. Marriott at City Center, Newport News. \$95/day register by 1/15/12. <http://www.mahsc.org/program.php> ***multiple credit hours***

Save the Dates:

February 2, 2012. Thursday. "What's Buggin' You? Insects in our Gardens" The Virginia Horticultural Foundation Home Gardener Day at the Marriott at City Center, Newport News. 8 am-2:30pm. Registration \$75 before 1/13: \$90 between 1/14-31: \$100 at door. Info at www.mahsc.org ***4 credit hours***

February 8, 9, 2012. Wednesday, Thursday. 8am-4pm. "Treading Lightly on the Land". Winter Symposium and CVNLA Short Course. Massey Conference Center, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. \$40/day. www.lewisginter.org ***5 credit hours per day***

February 9-12, 2012. Thursday-Sunday. Maymont Flower and Garden Show, Richmond Convention Center. Richmond. \$10. Speakers to be announced.

<http://macevents.com/show.cfm/eventID/139>

Feb. 10-11, 2012. Friday, Saturday. Virginia Association for Biological Farming (VABF) Conference. Koger Center, Richmond, VA. Fee: \$100. More information on website.

<http://www.vabf.org> ***multiple credit hours***

February 11, 2012. Saturday. 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Woody Plant Propagation Workshop, Hahn Horticulture Garden, Va Tech, Blacksburg. Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone or email vtgarden@vt.edu ***2 credit hours*** <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html>

February 16, 2012. Thursday. Piedmont Landscape Assn 29th Annual Seminar. Paramount Theater, Charlottesville, VA. \$55 -register by 1/13/12. Speakers' topics: deer management, meadowscaping instead of lawns, stone in garden design. More info at www.piedmontlandscape.org

February 25, 2012. Saturday. VMGA program: 3rd Annual MG Day at VSU - "Focus on Food-from Field to Table". Ettrick, VA. Registration open 1/2/12. Limited to 200. \$15-\$20. More info: www.VMGA.net ***5 credit hours***

February 25, 2012. Saturday. Four-County Master Gardener program "Sparkling Creativity in Your Garden". 9am-4pm. Germanna Community College, Culpeper. Speakers include Dr. Holly Scoggins and Karen Rexrode. \$35. Seating limited to 300. More info at www.fourcountymastergardener.org and Margaret Hutcheson 540-543-2220 or mfhutch3@vabb.com ***4 credit hours***

March 7, 2012. Wednesday. "The Nature of Trees", Trees Virginia Workshop, Western Virginia Community College, Roanoke, VA. Speakers include Dr. Douglas Tallamy, Dr. Bob Lyons, Jim Flott and Dr. Neil Hendrickson. More info will be available at www.treesvirginia.org.

May 1-4, 2012, Tuesday- Friday. Southern Region Master Gardener Conference at Natchez, Mississippi. Register by 1/14/12 \$105. 1/15/12-\$155. Details and info at <http://msucares.com/srmg> and registration at <http://www.regonline.com/srmg> .

A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Officers

Pat Kovach, President
 Faith Vosbaugh, Vice President
 Bob Kovach, Treasurer
 Sally Nunnely, Secretary
 David Mims, Representative, Virginia Master Gardeners Association

Standing Committees

Carol Schoner, Records Coordinators
 Faith Vosburgh, Publicity
 Ted Jenks, Plant Sale
 Liz Maurer, Education coordinator
 Molly Delappe and Cecile West-Settle Newsletter

IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

Editors-in-chief Molly Delappe and Cecile West-Settle

In and Out of the Garden is published monthly by the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association. Items to be published in the newsletter must be submitted not later than the twentieth of the month prior to publication. Articles, Letters to the Editor, and inquiries about subscriptions may be addressed to the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association, c/o Molly Delappe 1705 Raphine Rd Raphine Virginia 24472 or e-mail mkbluce@yahoo.com.

The newsletter may also be viewed at www.ramga.org

Subscription rates: \$10.00 per year.

