

THE GARDEN GATE

A Community Newsletter by the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners

September 2022



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Welcome, everyone, to the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' community newsletter. Each month we will be bringing you relevant seasonal horticultural information for Rockbridge County. If you enjoy this newsletter, please pass it on. Subscription information is on the last page of this newsletter.

LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS

- **Lexington Farmers Market**, behind the Southern Inn, Weds., 8am – 12:30pm
 - **Rockbridge Baths Farmers Market**, Rockbridge Baths Fire Station, Sat., 9am – 11am
 - **Glasgow Farmers Market**, corner of 10th St. and Kanawha, Fri, 10am – 2pm and Sat., 9am – noon
 - **Kerrs Creek Community Market**, 27766 West Midland Trail, Sat., 9am – noon
 - **Fairfield Farmers Market**, 5613 North Lee Highway, Sat., 9am – noon
 - **Seasons' Yield Farm Market**, 165 Oakland Circle, Raphine, 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 10am – 2pm
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GARDENING EVENTS

Saturday, September 10, 9:00am – 2:00pm. Teas and Trees Open House, Monticello’s Tufton Farm – Fall plant sale, tea tasting, garden tours, 1293 Tufton Farm, Charlottesville.

<https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/calendar-of-events/details/teas-and-trees-open-house/2022-09-10/>

Saturday, September 10, 9:00am – 1:00pm. Fall Plant Sale, Central Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association, Verona United Methodist Church Parking Lot, 406 Lee Highway, Verona. Plant list at www.csvmga.org . Cash or check only.

Friday, September 16, Waynesboro Tree Workshop, “Reveling in the Magnificence of Trees”, Best Western Inn and Conference Center, 109 Apple Tree Lane, Waynesboro. Master Gardener fee: \$55. www.treesvirginia.org

Friday, September 16 and Saturday, September 17th. Fall Plant Sale at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 9:00am – 3:00pm. <https://www.lewisginter.org/event/fall-plant-sale/>

Saturday, September 17, 10am. Early Shrub Garden Tour in Lynchburg, Old City Cemetery, 401 Taylor St., Lynchburg. \$10 fee. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/earley-shrub-garden-tour-tickets-350495921737>

Saturday, September 17, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, “Garden Basics: The Fall Vegetable Garden, presented by the Piedmont Master Gardeners, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1118 Preston Ave., Charlottesville. Free. RSVP here: <https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/garden-basics-the-fall-vegetable-garden/#rsvp-now>

Saturday, September 17, 9:00am – 5:00pm. Annual Meeting of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Natural Bridge Hotel and Conference Center. The day includes speakers, lunch, and field trips. \$50/member, \$80/non-member.

For more information: <https://vnps.org/events/2022-annual-meeting/>

Tuesday, October 18, 11:30am – 1:00pm. Blue Ridge Prism presents webinar “Homegrown National Park” with Doug Tallamy. www.blueridgeprism.org Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/blue-ridge-prism-presents-doug-tallamy-zoom-registration-399576472987>

FALL GARDEN TASKS

- Purchase garlic bulbs to plant in October. Don't use grocery store garlic bulbs as they have often been treated with preservatives.
- Plant cover crops on the bare soil in your vegetable garden.
- If not planting a cover crop, mulch beds so no bare soil is exposed.
- Remove spent annuals and compost them.
- Save seeds from desirable plants. Remember, if the plant is a hybrid, it may not come true.
- Divide peonies and iris.
- Fall is usually a good time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Harvest vegetables as soon as they are ripe to encourage further production.
- Reseed lawn.
- Compost your dead leaves instead of bagging them. Run over them first with your lawn mower so when added to your compost pile, they will break down faster.
- Plant cool weather vegetables such as greens for a late fall, early winter harvest.
- Is your bulb order in?
- Prune late summer and fall flowering shrubs after they go dormant or in the spring.
- Watch for plant sales. Nurseries usually want to sell down their inventory before winter.

PEST ALERT: JUMPING WORMS

The Latest Invader: Jumping Worms

No, this is not a joke: there are such things as jumping worms (*Amyntas spp.*) and they have been spotted in Rockbridge County.

Jumping Worms get their name from their wild thrashing motion when we attempt to capture them. In fact, they will often thrash so violently that the tail end of their body will break off. These worms are a glossy reddish-brown to purple, 3-6" long and .3 - .3 "wide. Their main characteristic, as opposed to the common everyday earthworm, is the appearance of the clitellium, a band of pale colored tissue encircling the body. The earthworm's clitellium is a bit darker and raised while the jumping worm's is smooth and a lighter color.

Unlike earthworms, which are found below the soil surface, jumping worms tend to stay in the uppermost level of the soil. They feed on leaf litter and mulch. This removes the organic matter, changes the moisture level of the soil, and greatly diminishes the soil structure beneath. Nutrient levels fall and soil erosion is increased.



Photo: Cornell Cooperative Extension: Warren County

Adult worms are usually found in late summer or early fall when they have their full growth. If you find them, Virginia Tech recommends placing them in a plastic bag and letting it sit in direct sun for 10 minutes or more before disposing in the trash or drowning them in a container of soapy water.

If you suspect you have jumping worms, the Extension Office would appreciate it if you could bring in a specimen (place in a jar with rubbing alcohol), a short video or an up-close photograph. This helps monitor the worms travels throughout the state.

Keep an eye on your gardens for these invaders. Their casings look like dry, grainy coffee grounds. Loose, crumbly soil in purchased potted plants may contain eggs. Be cautious with any mulch that hasn't been heat-treated.

Sources: <https://warren.cce.cornell.edu/gardening-landscape/warren-county-master-gardener-articles/invasive-asian-jumping-earthworms>

https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/ENTO/ENTO-427/ENTO-427.pdf

WEED OF THE MONTH - STICKWEED

Stickweed or Wingstem?

That tall sturdy, yellow-flowered plant that is blooming everywhere right now – and I am not thinking of goldenrod – is it stickweed or wingstem? I have heard it called both interchangeably. It turns out to be two different plants. Yes, they are in the same family, *Asteraceae*, and they do look remarkably the same, except for the fact that Stickweed, the one I mostly find in the field behind my house, is often called Yellow Crownbeard (*Verbesina occidentalis*), has opposite leaves up and down the stem and Wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*) has alternate leaves. There is some Wingstem, too, in my yard, easily identified by the “wings”, raised ridges, along the stem. Both are native plants beloved by pollinators. Several native plant nurseries actually sell these plants. They should refer people to my backyard.



I have to say I do think of both as weeds, as does Virginia Tech's Weed ID website (<https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/>). If only the plant would stay in the fields and not hop into my perennial and vegetable beds. I am, for the most part, an organic gardener, and these plants are a devil to get out. I can see why they are listed as drought resistant. Those stems are tough! The mower will chew up the leaves, but often leave the stem standing. If you

do want to use an herbicide on these plants, our Extension Agent, Tom Stanley, had an excellent article on the subject in the August 5th issue of The News-Gazette available through the Rockbridge Regional Library's website with your library card.

Source: <https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/profile/397>

September: When Fall Comes in to Its Own

By Karen Carlton

Aha! Fall my favorite time of the year. I love it as the air begins to feel crisp and cool. The leaves turn to a brilliant orange, yellow and red of Fall colors. The gardening work doesn't feel like labor to me, and I suddenly have more energy this time of year. Perhaps, I feel the relieve

of the hot, humid weather. Who knows, maybe it is the nesting instinct before the Winter weather comes into full swing. Which means that there is some gardening work yet to be done during this time of year.

This is a great time to start ordering Fall bulbs for those Spring flowers you enjoy seeing after a cold Winter. Daffodils and Alliums are pest -free (deer resistant!) and a good choice for those just getting the gardening bug. One doesn't have to think of planting flowers for the Spring either, so this is a good time to plant some Fall vegetables, like lettuces. They love the cooler weather and grow best in the conditions that Fall provides. The greens like kale and collards do very well when planted during this time of year. Winter radishes and turnips are great additions to a Fall into Winter Garden. This is also a good time of the year to start collecting seeds from flowers and vegetables.

If one is thinking about having strawberries for next year, you need to start planning now. You need to select a site then amend the soil. It would be a good idea to get a soil test for the site where you are planning to grow your strawberries. Cover it with black plastic until you are ready to plant your strawberries in the Spring. When you are ready to plant, hopefully you will have strawberries in June.

September is also when you plant new trees and do lawn care, maybe some light pruning of shrub roses. Now is a nice way for nature to help us ease into the Winter months. This is when the snow is falling, and we are tired of the cold short days. Now we have the time to sit in our nice warm homes and savor the joy of looking at our seed catalogs.

Dreaming of the gardens we will have in the Spring and Summer requires us to prepare now and plan for a glorious garden.

A Neglected Annual...

I often make a trip to Milmont Greenhouses in Stuart's Draft in mid-July to purchase annuals, usually on sale by this time, to freshen container plantings or to plug in the garden where spring annuals (breadseed poppies and nigella) have died back. Almost always, I find plenty of one of my favorite annuals: Evolvulus (*Evolvulus glomeratus*).

This little beauty really comes into its own mid-summer to fall, which is why it is often ignored by early shoppers who are wooed by the abundance of annuals in full flower in May. Blue flowers are hard to find, and this is one of the best, a bright sapphire blue. Its common name is Dwarf Morning-Glory, but it really doesn't look much like your typical morning glory and is certainly not as invasive. It is non-vining with trailing stems, perfect for a basket or container. The spread is usually around 2' or so. Evolvulus also makes a good bedding plant and will mound to 9-18". As with morning glories, the flowers close in the evening. The plant does deadhead itself; just give it a shake occasionally.

Put it on your list for 2023. You won't regret it.



my patio, September 2022

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<https://www.ramga.org/what-s-happening>

EDITOR: FAITH VOSBURGH, fvosburgh@gmail.com

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