



Portsmouth Master Gardeners Association Newsletter September 2022

Note from the President-

Greetings, Portsmouth Master Gardeners! I am delighted to welcome the inaugural issue of the new member newsletter. Thanks to Louise Roesser and the Education Committee for spearheading this effort. We have a busy fall lined up with many outreach and educational activities planned. Our September PMGA meeting is on September 20 at City Park at 11:30 am. Please sign up through SignUpGenius if you plan to attend. The September Library Lecture is on Fall Gardening on September 21. We will be participating in the Virginia Beach Fall Festival at the AREC Center on September 24. And our Fall Festival and Plant Sale is October 8 at the VCE gardens. The Board of Directors has worked to update the bylaws to include a standing committee for horticulture as requested by the membership and you will see that amendment for your review soon. We have been invited to attend Doug Tallamy's Zoom lecture on Home Grown National Parks by the Norfolk Master Gardeners on September 15. I hope you will be able to participate in some or all of the activities coming up. I look forward to seeing you on September 20!

Barbara Byers, President

MG College Returns to Blacksburg June 22-26, 2022 by Ben Dukes

I have been looking forward to attending MGC since my last visit in 2019, hosted locally at The Main in Norfolk, following a 2-year hiatus due to the C19 pandemic. Blacksburg was the site of MGC 2018 and all prior meetings since 1987. This year's theme and advanced training focused on Land Care Stewards.

Opportunities to meet newly MGs from across our beautiful state and reconnect with many familiar faces are a highlight of attending. As usual, the speakers presented on a myriad topics such as local food economics, urban agriculture, learning about bees, Virginia Wildlife Viewing Plan, and the 4 The Soil Initiative. My favorite session was a presentation by Alonso Abugattas on Floral Folklore in Ethnobotany.

MG College always offers many breakout sessions and tours to choose from, focusing on specialized learning and fun. I selected to learn about drones with Dan

Upcoming Events

Sept. 20- Members Meeting at City Park-11:30am
Sept. 29- Field trip to Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens-8am
Garden Talks- 6:30-7:30pm at Churchland Library
Sept. 21- Planting a Fall Vegetable Garden
Oct. 8- PMG Fall Festival-9am-1pm
Oct. 19- Creepy Scary Plants
Nov. 16- Making Holiday Decorations with Garden Materials
Dec. 21- Decorating the Garden to Attract Wildlife

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Swafford, who has almost 40 years of experience using this technology. The workshop included classroom time and hands-on usage (my first time flying a drone!). Also, I toured a small portion of the Ag Quad with Eric Day learning about plant problems on 18 selected specimens, many were old-growth hardwood trees. Each of these sessions had about 25 attendees so you can see how popular they are.

I urge you to attend if you have not already been and come again if it's been a while. MG College for 2023 will be held in Richmond.



The PMG Wildlife Garden by Michelle Ryan

The Wildlife Garden's summer bounty of bee balm, butterfly weed, coral honeysuckle, baptisia, and mountain mint is winding down, but the unique Dutchman's pipe groundcover (*Aristolochia fimbriata*) should have its pipe-shaped flowers a little while longer. The blooms of the blackeyed susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*) have faded but seed heads remain for song birds to enjoy. The leaves of the garden's Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) will turn beautiful shades of red and gold for fall, as will the Rabbiteye blueberry (*Vaccinium ashei*) now that the juicy fruit has been enjoyed. Soon the aster (*Aster lateriflorus*) will be in full bloom, providing pollinators with important late season fare. The native witch-hazel tree (*Hamamelis virginiana*) will put on a show of fragrant yellow ribbon-like flowers that bloom from October through December, and goldenrod's (*Solidago altissima*) golden blooms will signal the transition from late summer to autumn. Summer is nearly gone but there is still a lot happening in the Wildlife Garden!



Join Us for a Fun-Fill Day at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens on Thursday, September 29th at 8am

Local Gardens to Explore

by Kathy Rivenbark

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

(Note: Each month our newsletter will feature one or two interesting local gardens or places of interest that our Master Gardeners may enjoy visiting. If you have any suggestions to share, please don't hesitate to contact us!)



Located less than two hours from Portsmouth is Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond. If you haven't had the opportunity to visit, you may want to check out this beautiful and engaging landscape. Once you arrive, you will be treated to 50 acres of themed gardens. The focal point of Lewis Ginter is the gorgeous Conservatory that currently houses the Butterflies LIVE! exhibit. The exhibit is available until October 10. Other gardens include a Children's Garden, Conifer Garden, Fountain Garden, Healing Garden, and so many other natural spaces to enjoy. Despite its many diverse gardens, Lewis Ginter is very "walkable" with clearly defined paths, and numerous benches to sit and relax with nature during your stay. In addition to the outside areas, a Café and garden gift shop are available in the Visitor's Center. Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens hosts many special events throughout the year. This summer, they offered "Flowers After Five" with outdoor concerts and food available for purchase. For the holidays, they will host Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights from November 21-January 8).
Important Facts to Know Before you Go...

- Location: 1800 Lakeside Avenue Richmond, VA 23228
- Phone: 804-2629887
- Hours: 9-5 daily year-round (closed Thanksgiving, Dec. 24-25)
- Admission: Tickets 8.00 (children) 14.00 (seniors) 17.00 (adults) Check their website lewisginter.org for updated ticket information
- Outdoor food of any kind is not permitted at the gardens. The Café is available if you would like to eat while you are visiting

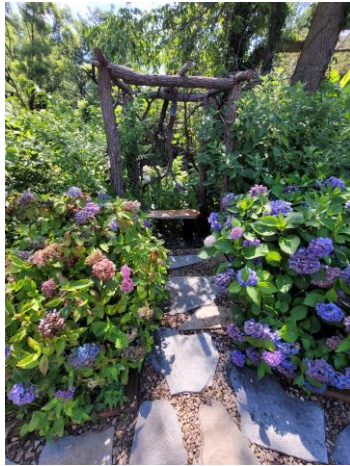
Lake Lure Flowering Bridge Garden Visit, July 6, 2022 by Ben Duke

During my recent attendance at the National Convention of the American Daylily Society in Asheville NC, I ventured to a local garden that was quite a treat for the senses. This garden is a repurposed former bridge-highway connecting the Lake Lure community and the majestic Chimney Rock State Park areas.

As I strolled through the paved pathways just after 8 a.m., I enjoyed many themed gardens including children's, pollinator, native, herb, rock, and a dog sanctuary

which was rather whimsical. Signage was very good, seating was abundant, the crowds were non-existent and the butterflies and bees were very active.

Take an hour or two as you soak in the beauty of this gem if you are planning a trip to Western North Carolina.



THE MOST RESILIENT SUCCULENTS by Diana Davenport



Succulents are classified as hardy or soft based on their response to temperature. Soft succulents can be grown out of doors until the temperature drops to 40 degrees. At 40 degrees they need to be moved indoors.

Hardy succulents are called sempervivum and the name means always alive. They originated in the mountains of central and Southern Europe. Their tolerance for cold allows them to remain outdoors all winter in Tidewater. Many sempervivum can survive temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees.

The sempervivum have a rosette form with

small serrations along the edges of each petal. They are commonly referred to as House Leeks or Hens and Chicks due to the large number of offsets they produce.

In recent years hybridization has produced a number of different varieties that may have gloss or mat leaves and there is a wide range of colors. Hens bloom only once after which it dies. The chicks quickly fill in the space left by the hen. Gardeners that are eager to raise larger sempervivum cut off the flower stalk to extend the life of the hen.



Like all succulents, sempervivum grow well in gritty soil that drains readily. A commercial cactus/succulent mix is a good medium when raising succulents in pots. If they are raised in the ground be sure to amend the soil to make sure it will not be too dense with clay or organic matter, by using gritty material such as coarse sand, pumice, perlite, crushed oyster shells, or chicken grit. They can tolerate bright sun to partial shade and are drought tolerant.

Sempervivum thrive on infrequent watering. Watering as infrequently as once a month during the growing season should be adequate. Less water is needed as the temperature drops. Only water when the potting medium is completely dry and avoid the plant to sitting in wet soggy soil. It will cause the roots to rot.

Sempervivum propagates by producing a chick at the end of each stolen. The stolen can be clipped and the chick can be placed in a pot of its own. As the young plant begins to form roots it will need less light and slightly more water. Once roots are established revert to the less frequent watering schedule.

Portsmouth Olde Towne Farmer's Market **(OTFM)** by Ben Duke

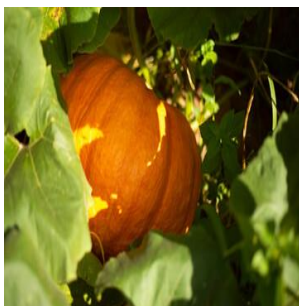
Our organization has been given the opportunity for many years to be a part of the OTFM. Steady growth in our city and the demand for community activities have helped to sustain the OTFM -- a Saturday fixture at the corner of High and Court Streets.

I would like to publically thank Keith and Barbara Byers for alternating weekends in maintaining our presence throughout the past few years. As well, to the many fellow Master Gardeners and Interns who have put in countless hours, your time is highly lauded. It is truly an honor to help the public in their gardening endeavors.

The market itself has grown exponentially in the first part of 2022 from approximately 18 vendors late last year to an astounding 52 or more per Saturday as of early July.

The market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the summer months, it's worth the visit just to see what OTFM has to offer.

Celebrate Fall with VA Beach Master Gardeners by Diana Davenport



PMG will again participate in the VA Beach September Fall Festival after the absence of two years. This year our membership is presenting information on the planting, propagation, and pests involved in growing houseplants.



The large and capable MG group in VA Beach have wonderful experiences planned for gardeners of all ages and levels of experience. Master gardeners will have a plant sale and because you can never have too many plants. They have invited at least twelve different societies or groups that have a focused interest in specific plants groups such as daylilies, camellias, and African violets or are dedicated to closely related content. Many of these groups will also be offering plants for sale and sharing information about their plants with participants

Planning for the day includes an area where children can explore hands-on nature related activities. There will be a raffle, an artisan's sale, a trash and treasure sale of items appropriate for your yard, two guided tours that include the arboretum and the theme garden.

Arrive early. The Make and Take Demonstrations begin at 10:30, and will throughout the day address Mason Bees; Blue Bird Houses; Walk, Talk, and Prune; and Building a Raised Bed. Locate the tent and register early. Each session will accommodate only 20 participants. Mark your calendar for September 24th. The fun begins at 10:00 and runs until 3:00.

*Join us at: Virginia Tech Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center
1444 Diamond Springs Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23445*



Garden Reminders for Mid-September to Mid-October

by Louise Roesser

- ❖ Think PANSIES! These cool season annuals come in array of colors and will bloom from fall to spring. Lots of bang for your buck! Just give them plenty of sunlight, fertilize several times, and deadhead (remove spent blooms) if possible.
- ❖ Mid-September is the time to start bringing outdoor houseplants indoors. Don't forget to spray them with an insecticide before bringing them in or you may have an invasion of crawly creatures in your house.
- ❖ Add some fall chrysanthemums whether annual or perennial to your garden, deck or patio. They too comes in a variety of colors.

- ❖ Since we are still in hurricane season, why not plant a hurricane lily or *Lycoris squamigera*. This perennial bulb flower appears magically on a naked stem during late summer or fall. After flowering, leaves appear which hang around until late spring. They come in colors of red, pink, yellow or white.
- ❖ Keep an eye out for azalea caterpillars that strip off leaves and can defoliate a small plant in no time. Look for yellow and black caterpillars with red 'feet'. Spray or dust with Bt.
- ❖ If you plan on reseeding your lawn with fescue it should be done at once while the sun and ground are still warm. Remember the newly sown grass seed needs constant moisture to germinate.
- ❖ Fall in Hampton Roads is the best time to plant most trees and shrubs and dividing perennials as we head into the cooler months.
- ❖ According to the VCE Hardiness Zone 8A planting chart now is a good time to plant beets, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kale, collards, lettuce and spinach. Refer to the website for more details.

https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/426/426-331/SPES-170.pdf





VCE Gardens- L. Roesser



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