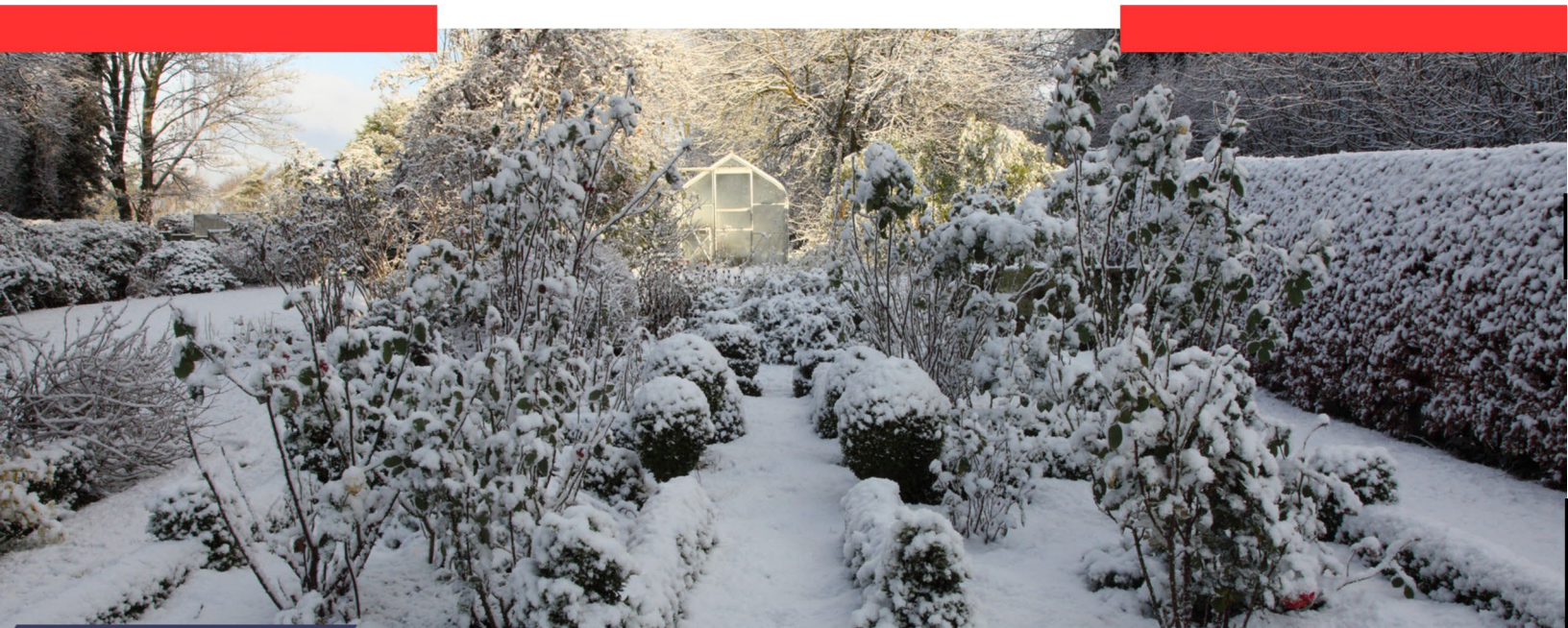


# MASTER GARDENERS

of Prince William County



## BREAKING NEWS

Thank you to all who contributed to the 2024 Newsletters. We are always looking for new articles, items of interest, suggestions, and events to add. Please consider submitting an article to the Spring 25 Edition. Please email your piece to [mgpwnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mgpwnewsletter@gmail.com) by 3/6. Thank you!

Prince William County Master Gardener Volunteers, As we transition into the winter season, I want to extend my gratitude to each and every one of our incredible Master Gardener volunteers. Your dedication and hard work have transformed properties and community gardens into vibrant, flourishing spaces that bring biodiversity and beauty to all. Through rain or shine, your commitment has been unwavering, and the fruits of your labor are evident in every blooming flower and thriving plant. Thank you for your passion, your time, and your green thumbs. We couldn't have done it without you! I look forward to seeing the gardens come alive again in the spring thanks to your amazing efforts.

With heartfelt gratitude - Garden On!!!!  
Janene Cullen, PhD  
President, Master Gardeners of Prince William

# MGPW HOLIDAY SOCIAL

December 15th, 2024 3-6pm

## What We Learned

This is a potluck, and we ask that attendees bring either an appetizer, main dish, or dessert. We will provide the non-alcoholic drinks.

We are also requesting a non-perishable food item to be donated to the NV Food Rescue Warehouse. We will deliver all donations. Hope to see you there!

Meadowbrook Woods  
Clubhouse - 13200  
Superior Court,  
Manassas, VA 20112



Questions? Ask Robin Finehout  
[robinfinehout@gmail.com](mailto:robinfinehout@gmail.com)





**Merrifield - Fresh Greens**

**Arrangements**

**Workshop Dec 7th,  
2-4pm, Fairfax III .**



III .

**Merrifield - Tree  
Decorating Demo Dec 7th,  
3pm, Gainesville**

**Demo: Feeding &  
Maintaining Sourdough  
Starter Dec 9, 5-7pm, King  
Arthur Baking- Fairfax Pop-  
Up Location**

**Meaningful Watershed  
Educational Experience  
Dec 11 12-4pm**

**Sourdough Basics@  
Hobby Hill Jan 11, 10am,  
HobbyHillFarm.com**

**Seed Exchange- Green  
Spring Gardens Feb 3,  
Alexandria- Eventbrite for  
more details**



## **FREE LITTLE LIBRARY -ARTICLE: LESLIE PAULSON, PICTURES: JIMMIE JONES**

WE HAVE BEEN TENDING THIS GARDEN THAT THE MONASTERY ALLOWED US TO HAVE SINCE 2000+. WE HAVE WELCOMED SO MANY PEOPLE THAT HAVE COME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GARDENING AND NATURE. THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF VIRGINIA HAVE BEEN SO GENEROUS IN ALLOWING US TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE THIS AREA. AS WELL AS USE THEIR WATER. THEIR SUPPORT HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE GARDEN GROWING AND MATURING. IT IS WHY WE ARE DEDICATING THIS LITTLE LIBRARY TO THEM. WE THANK THEM SO MUCH. AND MAY GOD BLESS THEM ALL.

HARRIET, ROBIN, AND JIMMIE FORMED A COMMITTEE TO GET THIS DONE. HARRIET DID MUCH BRAINSTORMING, ESPECIALLY WHILE BOB WAS IN THE HOSPITAL. ROBIN STEPPED IN TO HELP AS WELL. JIMMIE JONES DONATED THE LITTLE LIBRARY. IT'S JUST A REMINDER THAT IT TAKES A VILLAGE, AND A FAMILY OF SORTS, TO KEEP ALL OF WHAT YOU SEE HERE GOING. IT BECOMES A LIVING PART OF THOSE WHO WORK IN THE GARDEN. (COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE) THE DEDICATION SIGN READS: IN APPRECIATION TO THE BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF VIRGINIA FOR ALL YOUR LOVING SUPPORT AND KINDNESS, THE MASTER GARDENERS OF PRINCE WILLIAM DEDICATE THIS LITTLE LIBRARY TO YOU.





# World's Largest Indoor Vertical Berry Farm

RICHMOND, VA., Sept. 24, 2024 - Today, Plenty Unlimited Inc. opened the world's first farm to grow indoor, vertically farmed berries at scale. Plenty farms are the most technologically advanced farms in the world - removing the unpredictability of Mother Nature and making it possible to grow produce with peak-season flavor, year-round, almost anywhere in the world. The Plenty Richmond Farm is designed to produce more than 4 million pounds of strawberries annually in less than 40,000 square feet by growing vertically on 30-foot-tall towers. The farm will exclusively grow Driscoll's strawberries, combining Plenty's advanced technology with global premium berry leader Driscoll's advanced genetics. The first strawberries from the farm will be available in early 2025. < Read the rest of this interesting article on the Plenty.Ag website QR code provided link

- Chesterfield County, VA
- Opened 9/24/24
- Growing Driscoll Berries
- Produces over 4 million lbs of strawberries annually
- Less than 40k sq ft
- 30' tall towers
- uses AI to analyze date, control light, temp, humidity and engineer pollination
- 90% less water and no pesticides than traditional farming



*Book Nook*

## FOLKS, THIS AIN'T NORMAL

by Joel Salatin

From farmer Joel Salatin's point of view, life in the 21st century just ain't normal. In **FOLKS, THIS AIN'T NORMAL**, he discusses how far removed we are from the simple, sustainable joy that comes from living close to the land and the people we love. Salatin has many thoughts on what normal is and shares practical and philosophical ideas for changing our lives in small ways that have big impact. / Exploring the American Food System - Folks This Ain't Normal Unit Study is also a wonderful guide for youth (& youthful at heart) trying to learn more about the current food system.

Available at [PolyfaceShop.com](https://PolyfaceShop.com)



# GARDEN TO TABLE



## Squash Risotto

the recipe can be found on  
<https://blog.farmtopeople.com/>



- 1 Large [Tetsukabuto](#) or other [Squash](#)
- 1 cup [Arborio Rice](#)
- 1 Tbsp [Butter](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Olive Oil](#)
- 4 cups [Chicken](#) or [Vegetable Stock](#)
- ½ cup White Wine
- ½ cup Grated [Parmesan Cheese](#)
- 1 Tbsp Chopped [Rosemary](#) (optional)
- ½ [Yellow Onion](#), chopped
- [Sea Salt](#) and [Black Pepper](#)



Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Pour stock into pot on back burner over medium heat until it begins to simmer; then, reduce heat to low.

Slice squash in half, lengthwise, and remove seeds. Rinse under water and remove any strings and bits of squash. Pat dry; place in small bowl. Stir 1 tablespoon olive oil and sea salt into seeds until evenly coated. Spread in an even layer on baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes, or until seeds start to pop. Remove from oven and let cool on baking sheet.

Meanwhile, fill large saucepan with 1-inch water; place over flame until it begins to simmer.

Place squash flesh down in pan to steam. Once soft enough to easily pierce skin and flesh with fork, remove squash. But be sure to reserve ½ cup steaming liquid and add to stock. Scoop flesh of squash into bowl and discard skins.

Place saucepan over medium low heat. Add butter, oil, and onion. When onion is translucent, add Arborio rice. Stir to coat with oil and butter. Toast rice 1 minute. Add squash, breaking up any large pieces, then wine; reduce 2 minutes, until only ½ liquid remains.

Add 1 ladleful of stock mixture. Stir every few minutes until liquid is almost completely absorbed. Repeat this step for 30 minutes, until rice is almost fully cooked and about one ladleful of stock remains in pot.

Remove large saucepan from heat. Add final ladleful of stock, cheese, black pepper, and rosemary, if using. Stir until completely combined. Cover for 10 minutes.

Top with roasted squash seeds and serve.

Tetsukabuto squash is a Japanese hybrid squash that's a cross between a butternut and kabocha squash. It's also known as a Japanese pumpkin and has the following characteristics:

- The rind is knobby, mottled, and dark green, and may develop orange and pale-yellow striping as it matures. The flesh is thick, dense, and firm, with a deep orange color.
- The flavor is complex and nutty, with notes of hazelnut and browned butter. It's not as sweet as a butternut or honey nut squash.
- The flesh is compact, slightly starchy, smooth, and filling. When cooked, it retains a firm texture.
- Tetsukabuto squash holds up well in soups, stews, salads, and meat dishes. It can also be cut into cubes.
- Tetsukabuto squash should be stored in a cool, dark place, such as a pantry or root cellar, at around 50°F.
- The name Tetsukabuto translates to "iron helmet" in Japanese.



After another busy summer, **BEST Lawns and Landscapes** applications have finally slowed down just in time for the holidays. But it'll be spring and another BL&L season before we know it. We were just shy of our County goal this year and I hope that we can continue spreading the word about our program at Farmer's Markets, clinics, and other outreach events. This program is crucial to teaching residents about preserving water quality AND saving them money on fertilizer. While lawn issues were still the primary reason for enrollment in 2024, we received numerous applicants who also sought tree and garden evaluations. Many applicants expressed interest in learning more about native plants or planting lawn alternatives after meeting with a Master Gardener as well.

As the program grows, I am always looking to have more volunteers to help carry out site visits. It's an easy way to get some hours, explore different neighborhoods, and conduct one-on-one education while also being outside. For those who are interested but haven't done a BEST Lawns since their internship days, I am hoping to plan a BEST Lawns and Landscapes refresher class sometime in the Winter or Spring before things ramp up. Thank you for your continued support!

Elesha Young (she/hers)

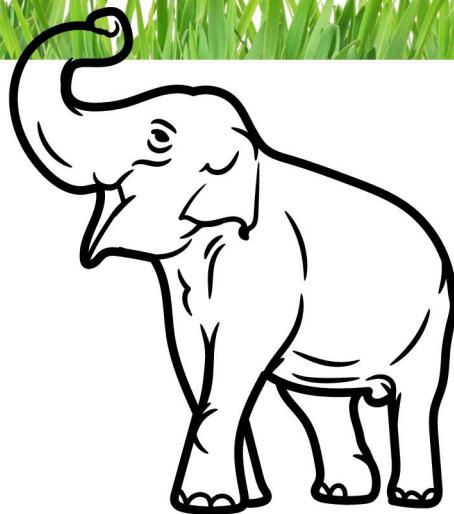
Education and Outreach Specialist/BEST Lawns and Landscapes Program Coordinator



## Elephant Stew

### Ingredients

1 elephant  
2 rabbits (optional)  
Brown gravy  
Salt and pepper



### Directions

Cut the elephant into bite sized pieces (this will take about 2 months)

Place into a very large pot and cover with brown gravy

Cook over a kerosene fire at 465 degrees for 2 weeks.

Note: this will serve 3,800 people. If more are expected 2 additional rabbits may be added BUT only if necessary! Some folks get upset if they find hare in their stew!

Jimmie Jones





## Teaching Garden 2024

Our Teaching Garden is closed for the year. Of course, there are still things to see out there if you need a walk and some fresh air. To all who worked so hard this year to finish all the tasks, I thank you. It takes a village and more to get through a season. If you have not visited our Garden this year, I hope you will take some time to come out next year. We start up again in March. The Cook's Garden group starts on March 11th at 9 am. They will put in the potato starts and remove any cover crops that are in the way. We really hope to find more Master Gardeners who want to learn more about growing vegetables. The processes will help you learn how to make your garden successful. Help is needed in all areas to enlarge our Team for many areas. Besides the beds, this includes the compost team as well. More hands make for lighter work, and we share the joy of our Garden.

We dedicated our Little Library on Saturday November 16th. This was an idea from Harriet Carter and together with Robin Finehout they came up with ideas for getting done. Jimmie Jones helped to build it and donated the finished library. We have seen new books appear and others taken home. We dedicated the Little Library to all the sisters at St Benedict Monastery. These are the words we used for the dedication: The Master Gardeners of Prince William Dedicate this Little Library to the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia in Appreciation for All Your Loving Support and Kindness to Us.

We also dedicated a new brick in our Memorial to Bill Scott. He and his wife Janet are from the Class of 2002. Bill passed away on September 15th. Bill was very engaged in our community as a volunteer throughout his life. Bill served as a long- time member and Board Treasurer of both our Prince William County Master Gardeners, MGPW, and at the state level, he served as Treasurer and then President of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. He also served on the Extension Leadership council. Bill and Janet were dedicated BEST Lawns workers. Bill did 41 Best Lawns Visits. He also served on the Board of Directors for Opportunity Builders, Inc., a non-profit whose mission is to support youth and adults with disabilities to experience full inclusion in their communities as they learn, work, and pursue their paths to personal success. Bill finished his career in Finance with the non-profit sector serving as Chief Financial Officer for the American Association of Blood Banks and then as Director of Finance at the U. S. Soccer Foundation. During his career, Bill was an active volunteer in the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), National Association of Accountants (NAA) He and Janet were happily married for 56 years. He is survived by his wife Janet, sons Bill and Chris Scott, their wives Karen and Deb, and grandchildren Lauren and Lexi Scott. Next time you go to the Teaching Garden, take time to visit our Memorial area. And maybe remember some of those who help contribute to our many Master Gardener Programs.

Thank you, Leslie



# B.E.S.T. Lawns and Landscapes

Building Environmentally Sustainable Turf and Landscapes

Curious about having a...

More sustainable and ecologically friendly landscape?

Healthier lawn, or have problem areas that need help?

Native plant garden/wildlife habitat?

For details,  
scan here



## OUR SERVICE

Enrollment in our program (\$40 fee) includes one soil analysis, a site evaluation from a Virginia Master Gardener, and a customized nutrient management plan that includes fertilizer and lime recommendations for your landscape.

## WE PROVIDE RESEARCH BASED INFORMATION ON:

- Weed, insect, and disease control
- Fertilization
- Lawn alternatives
- Native plant recommendations
- Home gardening



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## Questions?

Email us: [BestLawns@pwcgov.org](mailto:BestLawns@pwcgov.org)

Call us: 703-792-4037

Learn more and apply: [pwcva.gov/bestlawns](http://pwcva.gov/bestlawns)

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