

In Season with MGPW

the quarterly of the
Master Gardeners
Prince William

Winter 2022

snowy scene

photo by Jason Alexander

Winter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome Master Gardener Prince William (MGPW) class of 2021 new gardeners! I encourage all Master Gardeners to reach out to the new interns and make sure they feel welcome and valued.

Even though the weather is cold, there are still plenty of opportunities for training and community involvement. Check Nancy Berlin's email or our MGPW website to find out what is available (<https://mgpw.org/>). I hope everyone is using this slight downtime to reflect on the MGPW accomplishments in 2021, and chart a path to accomplish even more in 2022. It has been quite a challenging year, which makes our accomplishments even more amazing.

Make sure you reserve your spot at our MG Re-certification extravaganza scheduled for 28 February. You need to register to get the zoom link. I hope to see everyone online.

Stay Safe – Stay Healthy

-Janene Cullen, PhD, President, MGPW Board

VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (VMGA) - WHY JOIN?

excerpt from VMGA:

Why Join? The professional society... VMGA is the professional society of VCE-Master Gardener volunteers. Just as some join a professional society associated with a career field, Master Gardeners join VMGA. VMGA shares the mission of professional societies - continuing education, networking and communication.

The voice of Master Gardeners... VMGA is the voice of Virginia Master Gardeners as the statewide association. Through meetings with VCE and VT leadership, the website and newsletter, you are kept abreast of news and issues. These vehicles also provide information from other units which will enable you to improve the efforts in your local unit and to enhance your experience as a volunteer.

Because VMGA needs you... VMGA needs your support. Our voice will be stronger with you as a member. ♦♦♦



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Turf Troubleshooting	2
Lawn Care PWC	2
Snow & Ice on Trees & Shrubs	2
Forested	3
Recipe: Sautéed Greens	3
The Anne Spencer House & Garden Museum	4
The Unexpected Houseplant	4
Planting Trees	5-8
Fantastic Fungi	8
Master Gardener Interns 2021	8
Grandma Lisa's Humming,	
Buzzing Chirping Garden	9
Garden Allies	9
Tree Planting Efforts	10
Landscaping with Nature	11
Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary	12
Report from VCE	13
Eastern Gray Squirrel	14
Spotted Lanternfly Training	15
Vegetable Gardening Course	15
Free Online Classes	16

TOPICS OF INTEREST

- Lawn
- Prized Plants
- Garden to Table
- Out and About
- Book Nook
- Insights
- Congratulations & Welcome
- In the Community
- Courtesy of Plant NOVA Natives
- Conservation at Home
- VA Programs & Coordinator Honored
- Critter Neighbors
- Horticulture Classes of Particular Note
- Free Online Classes

LAWN CARE FOR PWC

Virginia is part of a transition zone between areas where cool and warm season grasses thrive. This can make lawn care in our area challenging. If you're a first time homeowner, new to Prince William County or just looking to better manage your lawn, [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) can help.

We offer help with interpreting soil test results, information on cultural practices, pest identification and pest control recommendations.

For more assistance with lawn care, contact the Virginia Cooperative Extension Environmental Educator at 703-792-4037 or BESTlawns@pwcgov.org.

The [BEST Lawn](#) Program can sample and measure your lawn for you and provide you with a fertilizer schedule that will help promote a healthy lawn.

Save the Date!

March 9th
11:00 a.m.-noon
for

Turf and Weeds

Our BEST Lawns stewards will discuss proper lawn care, types of turf, fertilizing and weeds.

on zoom

[register here](#)

LAWN: TURF TROUBLESHOOTING



photo by Jason Alexander

University of Maryland Extension Webinar

Join UMD turf professor, Geoff Rinehart, to learn answers to the commonly asked questions about lawns and sustainable lawn care best practices.

Friday, February 25, 2022
12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Live Zoom Event!

webinar description:

We know from HGIC's Ask Extension service that turf and lawns are some of the most frequently asked about topics in horticulture. Join UMD IAA professor Geoffrey Rinehart to learn about residential turf basics, practice some turf troubleshooting, and learn how to answer commonly asked lawn care questions. If you're planning to volunteer at any Ask A Master Gardener Plant Clinics this year, this session will be tremendously useful for you!

[register here](#)



photo by Jason Alexander

PRIZED PLANTS: SNOW AND ICE ON TREES AND SHRUBS

originally posted January 17, 2018 by Charlotte Glen, Ed.D., NC Cooperative Extension, thank you to Jamie Nick, Master Gardener Volunteer

The weight of snow and ice can cause limbs to break or topple whole trees. How you deal with damaged trees after the snow or ice melts will impact their health now and for years to come.

For helpful advice, read more here: [Helping Trees and Shrubs Recover from Snow and Ice](#)





Advancing Forest Agriculture

Forested mission statement: Advance forest agriculture, so forests and people thrive together.

GARDEN TO TABLE: FORESTED

by Maria Stewart, Master Gardener Volunteer

Several years ago, my husband Jason and I attended a gardening symposium in Washington, D.C. Perusing the listings for the different lectures, I stopped short on an offering promising to discuss forest gardening. *What? Forest gardening? Gardening in the forest?* I was intrigued, so we signed up. That's how we learned about [Forested, founded by Lincoln Smith, and located in Bowie, MD](#). We visited Forested's Forest Garden a short time later to learn more and see the forest garden in action. It was an exciting and eye-opening experience.

On a clear autumn day, we pulled off the main road, parked, and followed a path on foot to arrive at the yellow gate, and the entrance to the Forest Garden. Lincoln Smith welcomed us and several other visitors, to his oasis. It's ironically tucked behind a conventional farm field which, at the time, was bare, without any cover crop to enrich the soil or suppress carbon.

Lincoln gave us a tour of his prolific garden. He showed us his mushroom logs, and chestnut, persimmon, and paw paw trees. He also showed us how he was safely raising ducks alongside his resident fox family, and growing greens such as sea kale, and sorrel (a favorite with children because it tastes a lot like the Sour Patch Kids candy), to name only a few.



[a glimpse of the forest's bounty gathered for a gourmet brunch](#)

We were astounded at how this patch of forest provided such a diverse and delicious bounty. As we sat out in the garden, learning ways to incorporate forest garden practices in our own landscapes, Lincoln prepared samples of fruits, nuts, and sauteed vegetables—yum!

Lincoln offers free advice on how to get your own forest garden started. He also has many paying clients. He's helped design and install forest gardens for private residences, and public spaces. Since our visit, Forested has expanded its events offerings at the garden, hosting a full gourmet brunch prepared by accomplished chefs, yoga in the garden, permaculture design courses, tours, and volunteer opportunities.

Forested is a shining example of how humans can really live more harmoniously with the natural world—a world humanity too often neglects and abuses. Forested is a hopeful place, an attainable solution to many of our environmental problems. ♦♦♦

RECIPE

Sauteed Greens

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Bunch of kale (or other greens such as Collards etc.)
- 2 Cloves of garlic
- 1 Small onion
- 2 T Olive oil
- 1 t Apple cider vinegar
- 1 pinch of red pepper flakes
- Salt & pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Wash greens, set aside (do not dry)
- 2) Chop onion and sauté in olive oil over medium heat until translucent
- 3) Mince garlic, add to onions
- 4) Add greens (in batches if needed)
- 5) Add pinch of red pepper flakes and salt & pepper
- 6) Cover and cook on low-medium for about 10 minutes
- 7) Add vinegar, stir well and serve

**a dash of wine or broth can be added when greens are added

source:

[Michigan State University Extension](#)

OUT AND ABOUT: THE ANNE SPENCER HOUSE & GARDEN MUSEUM



The Spencers and their friends in the garden;
[*The Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum*](#)

by Maria Stewart, *with thanks to Jamie Nick, Master Gardener Volunteers*

Kick aside those winter blues with a plan to visit [The Anne Spencer House & Garden Museum](#) in Lynchburg! Not only a Virginia landmark, the house and garden are also on The National Register of Historic Places.

Anne Spencer was a librarian at Dunbar High School for twenty years, a civil rights activist who helped found the Lynchburg Chapter of the NAACP, an important poet of the Harlem Renaissance, and a gardener. Anne Spencer, with her husband, Edward, opened their home and garden to many visiting intellectuals, and offered hospitality to travelers denied access to hotels during segregation.

The Hillside Garden Club, with guidance from The Garden Conservancy, has restored and maintained the garden for the past 28 years, twice earning the Garden Club of Virginia's Common Wealth Award for their efforts. I'm looking forward to warmer weather, and a visit to this important, and beautiful place. ♦♦♦

MASTER GARDENERS PRINCE WILLIAM TEACHING GARDEN

The Teaching Garden is a project of the Master Gardener Volunteers. It began as a garden to grow fresh produce for the Plant a Row for the Hungry project and a place where Master Gardeners could teach homeowners how to grow vegetables. The Teaching Garden displays low maintenance gardening techniques that homeowners can implement in their own gardens. It also features plant material that grows well locally.

View the [Teaching Garden Brochure](#) which contains a map of the teaching garden bed layout. View the upcoming events at the Garden [here](#) as well as other horticulture classes offered by the Master Gardeners.

Sign up for [The Teaching Garden](#) blog to stay-up-to-date, and get the latest *In Season* with MGPW newsletter!



photo by Lynne Lanier Master Gardener Volunteer

“...lovely photographs, and lots of details...”

BOOK NOOK: *THE UNEXPECTED HOUSEPLANT* BY TOVAH MARTIN

by Jamie Nick, Master Gardener Volunteer

Not your average houseplants book, with not your average houseplants! *The Unexpected Houseplant, 220 Extraordinary Choices for Every Spot in Your Home* by [Tovah Martin](#),

is my go-to houseplants reference book. Even after ten years, it reads fresh and new, never disappoints.



Tovah Martin shows 220 extraordinary plant choices by season with lovely photographs, and lots of details, all pleasantly delivered with her keen sense of humor. Happy reading! ♦♦♦



photo by Jason Alexander

INSIGHTS: PLANTING TREES

by Abbie & Vincent Panettiere, Master Gardener Volunteers

On September 21st, 2021, when our Nancy Berlin asked us to help plant trees, saying “These tree planting projects are great volunteer efforts that really make a difference in our community. The county either currently has these areas planted in turf that needs mowing and would like to convert to native trees to build a forest ecosystem over time”, it gave me an excuse to give another look at trees, which I love.

There are more than 3 trillion trees on earth presently which seems to be a number so large it is hard to grasp until you consider that the earth, because of logging, clear cutting, burning and other causes of environmental degradation in recent history, has lost nearly eighty percent of the trees that used to be on the planet.

With the effects of global warming becoming inescapable, more and more people and countries are taking the need for tree planting seriously. The need is particularly acute in areas where logging or clearing lands for agriculture and home or industrial building have denuded large areas of forest cover.

On a personal level, many more people are becoming aware of their “carbon footprint” (the total amount of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, that are generated by human actions). There are now sites on-line that will help estimate the amount of carbon you are adding to the atmosphere by your everyday actions. The Nature Conservancy, for one, provides an example to help you calculate your carbon footprint which takes into account travel, home, food and shopping. (<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/carbon-footprint-calculator/>)

As a part of that effort, planting trees is an excellent way to decrease – even on a very small scale – the size of your carbon footprint and here again, there are sites online that will tell you how to figure the amount of carbon being sequestered by each tree to see how well you’re doing and what trees and how many to plant.

Several sites provided the means to calculate how much carbon would be taken up by planting each tree, and how many trees one should plant to reduce one’s carbon footprint. Since some of the sites I visited had calculating methods which were difficult to use, here are a few simple generalizations and observations to consider:

1. Each year, the average American consumer adds 16 tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.
2. An acre of trees will capture approximately a ton of CO₂ per year depending on the

Explore the wonders of the mycelial network:

Fantastic Fungi

a mind-opening, must see film



“There is a world under the earth full of magic and mystery. It holds the consciousness of nature’s connection to all living things.”

[available on Netflix](#)

Insights: Planting Trees

Sources & For More Information

<https://treeproject.net/>
TREEPROJECT

<https://theeuropatimes.com/pakistan-environmentalists-slam-10-billion-trees-project/>
The Europa Times, Wednesday, 9/15/2021
Pakistan: Environmentalists slam '10 billion trees' project

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/interactive/2021/pakistan-tree-billion-tsunami-photos/>
The Washington Post, By Tik Root, 8/20/2021

<https://www.kashmirica.com/blog/chinar-tree/>
Kashmirica
All You Need to Know About the Majestic Chinar Tree
by Mir Saeid, 4/4/2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/13/worlds-lost-forests-returning-trees>
The Guardian
A eureka moment for the planet: we're finally planting trees again
John Vidal

<http://www.carboncalculator.ncsu.edu/Trees.aspx>
NC State University

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg12717273-700-technology-plastic-trees-may-turn-the-deserts-green/>
New Scientist
Technology: Plastic trees may turn the deserts green
By Anthony Luke, 7/27/1990

<https://savingnature.com/offset-your-carbon-footprint-carbon-calculator/>
Saving Nature; Carbon Footprint Calculator

<https://ethical.net/climate-crisis/carbon-farming-sequestering-carbon-in-plants-and-soil/>
ethical.net
Carbon Farming: Sequestering Carbon in Plants and Soil
Elizabeth Waddington
6/4/2020

age of the trees, the climate they live in, the type of forest and the soil they're planted in. All trees will absorb CO₂, but the peak years for carbon sequestration generally occur when they are young, from ten to 45 years after being planted.

3. It takes about 1,025 trees to offset the average American's emissions.
4. Each tree absorbs about 31 lbs. of carbon dioxide per year.

It is encouraging that people are taking the growing need for more trees seriously. To get some idea of the scope of this response to threat of drastic climate change, in 2020 a published report listed one hundred countries in the order of their number of trees planted at that time. China came in first, with 2,407,149,493 trees planted. The United States was in 10th place, with 315,586,982 trees, and Brazil was in 16th place with 144,078,245 trees. In some countries, after trees had been removed through logging (legal and illegal), or for farming or the expansion of cities, efforts have begun to reverse this trend. Some countries are implementing schemes to plant trees, native trees if possible, to return bare and useless areas to productive ones. Progress is being seen in the reforestation of these areas.

As an example, the Washington Post printed an article this year on August 20th covering the efforts Pakistan is now making to reforest areas that had been stripped of trees. Several other articles, also have covered the same project, which aims to plant ten billion trees to allow Pakistan to become more resilient in the face of global warming.

A report from 2014 said that tree cover in Lahore, Punjab was .03% of land area, and that deforestation and degradation of forests were continuing at the alarming rate of 1.5% per year so that only 1.2% of Balochistan territory was given over to forests.

By 2018, climate change was recognized as increasing forest loss because glaciers in the Himalayas were reduced or disappearing which, in turn, shrunk water reservoirs resulting in Pakistan suffering extreme events of flooding and drought.

With the project underway to repair the damage from legal and illegal removal of forest cover, the aim of this project of recovery is ultimately to provide 31% forest coverage to Pakistan.

That Washington Post article, written by Tik Root on August 20th described the working of the project states:

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, residents of all stripes, from government officials to Boy Scouts, fan out along the hills. They bring with them chinar tree saplings — which can grow to nearly 100 feet tall — along with other varieties, and they begin digging.

It's all part of an effort that started in 2015, when Imran Khan — then a provincial politician and now Pakistan's prime minister — backed a program dubbed a 'Billion Tree Tsunami.' The initiative reached its province-wide target in 2018 and was so successful that federal officials expanded the drive nationally in 2019 with a new goal of 10 billion trees — or, the 'Ten Billion Tree Tsunami.'

Unfortunately, projects of this sort are not universally accepted and are subject to criticisms, many of which are valid. An article in The Europa Times, September 15, 2021, entitled *Pakistan: Environmentalists slam '10 billion trees' project* showed that critics believed it to be an "unsustainable and expensive waste of resources." One expert said that the plan was being undertaken without any proper planning. Rather than oversight by experts, saplings were being planted where there was a scarcity of water by "...bureaucrats who know less about forestation and causes of deforestation." They hadn't carried out an empirical study into the availability of water, putting available groundwater reserves under added strain.

To the government's claim that the project would cost a little over 125 million rupees (\$750 million), the critics found several issues to raise. Administrative and other expenses, they said, were not being included in the projected cost. Students were brought in to plant over 50,000 saplings and their transportation and other costs were not in the project budget.

Objections were raised to overplanting grazing areas since the grazing animals were able to lessen the chance of forest fires by clearing brush from the area; natural springs would

<https://www.coolearth.org/projects/queens-green-canopy/>
Earthshot, Cool Earth, The Queen's Green Canopy
"Plant a Tree for the Jubilee"

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/queens-green-canopy/>
Woodland Trust

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/earthshot-prize-everything-to-know/>
Global Citizen Explains Defend the Planet
What Is the Earthshot Prize? Everything to Know About Prince William's £1 Million Climate Award; By Helen Lock
10/15/2021

<https://www.zee5.com/articles/from-the-field-costa-rica-points-the-way-to-a-sustainable-world-9>
From the Field: Costa Rica points the way to a sustainable world.
By Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo - PNUD
10/18/2021

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/carbon-footprint-calculator/>
The Nature Conservancy
Calculate your Carbon Footprint

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg14219223-000-technology-inventor-turns-tide-on-power-generation/>
New Scientist
Technology: Inventor turns tide on power generation
By Anthony Luke, 4/22/1994

be adversely affected, making water even more scarce; any non-native trees would not survive well. One critic said that trees previously planted in an area had all burned from the intense heat and from the lack of water or proper care. The project supposedly created some 85,000 jobs but an anonymous government official wanted to know where there was record of these 85,000 workers. And one official said that "...a number of people close to the chambers of power have set up nurseries from which the government buys the trees for planting." Government supporters are benefiting from the project, the official claimed.

This is only to underline the fact that large well-intended projects may have not been well thought out and would face complaint and criticism. By and large, however, the desire for tree-planting projects is well appreciated in these times when the world is showing the effects of increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Countries all over the world are taking seriously the need to plant trees to offset the damage done by years of clear-cutting for agriculture, housing and city development, and also for the damage done by illegal logging.

Signs of progress are that former farmlands in Ireland, Norway, and France are now covered by tens of thousands of hectares of small sapling trees. England proposes to plant 50 million trees in a forest intended to go from coast to coast.

A very serious problem for countries with large areas of desert where trees cannot be supported led one scientist, Antonio Ibáñez de Alba, an engineer, researcher and scientist from Spain, to develop trees made out of plastic to mimic the actions of real trees in order to bring back a supply of water to begin the re-greening of desert lands.

An article in *New Scientist* of July 27th 1990 by Anthony Luke, explains how the plastic trees work. The intention is to "turn desert areas green by changing the meteorological patterns in the desired zones, principally through the increase of precipitation. 'If rain is caused by the meeting of cold and warm air, all you need to do is create a source of low temperatures to spark precipitation.'"

Libya, in 1990, planted 50,000 plastic trees, at a cost of nearly \$1 billion, to see if the plastic trees could do what they were supposed to do.

Another expert in the field was less than impressed and said that, for example, a million dollar artificial tree removes on average 100 tons of carbon from the atmosphere. An acre of real trees does the same thing for \$10,000.

It's been more than forty years since the plastic tree project was started in 1990. I didn't find anything more than the opinion that it was too early to comment on success or failure of the project.

From Costa Rica to Nepal and Peru to Mongolia, tree planting has become a political, economic and ecological cause, and a universal symbol of restoration, regrowth and faith in the future. More than 120 countries promised in 2015 to plant and restore large areas of forest as a response to the climate crisis, and the United Nations set a target to restore 350 million hectares by 2030 – an area bigger than India. Then, in 2017, the United Nations set another target to increase forested land by 3% worldwide by 2030.

England is setting an example with two projects. First, The Queen's Green Canopy, with a slogan to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee," in honor of the Queen's seventy years of service to Great Britain. Her Majesty has set an example throughout her reign by planting more than 1,500 trees worldwide and has joined Sir David Attenborough in speaking of the importance of trees in the planet's future. The project has the hope that all Britons from individuals and groups to whole towns and cities will educate themselves and then plant thousands of trees to reforest Britain. Existing woodlands will also be marked with commemorative plaques in the Queen's name to preserve forests for the future and commemorate her years of service.

Also, on October 17th, 2021, a ceremony was held to award £1 Million prizes to five winners in a contest initiated by Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, Sir David Attenborough, and a charity founded by Prince William and his wife, the Duchess of Cambridge. The prize goes to five winners for their solutions to the most serious environmental problems of our time. Prizes will be awarded every year until 2030 from an award fund of £50 million. Other supporters of the Earthshot Prize include Greenpeace, the UN Environment Program, WWF and corporate members including

What is a Master Gardener?

Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners (VCE-MG) are trained volunteer educators who provide the public with environmental information that draws on the horticultural research and experience of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and Virginia State University.

Join Us!

[click here to learn more](#)



Master Gardener Volunteer Cynthia Long answering questions about Charlie the snake at the Manassas Farmers Market

photo by Jason Alexander

Microsoft, Bloomberg, and Ikea.

One of the prizewinners this first year was the country of Costa Rica for its efforts to reverse environmental damage and develop in a sustainable way. Coming from a low in the 1990s, when Costa Rica had the world's highest global deforestation rate and its forest cover had been reduced to less than a quarter of its original size because of agricultural development and logging, Costa Rica is one of the only countries in the world to have increased economic growth while stopping biodiversity loss and brought forest cover back to over half its territory.

There are many other examples of successful projects being undertaken and the hope is that the successes will outweigh the failures, such as Brazil and the Amazon forest, and give us hope that the challenge of lowering earth's runaway temperatures can be met.

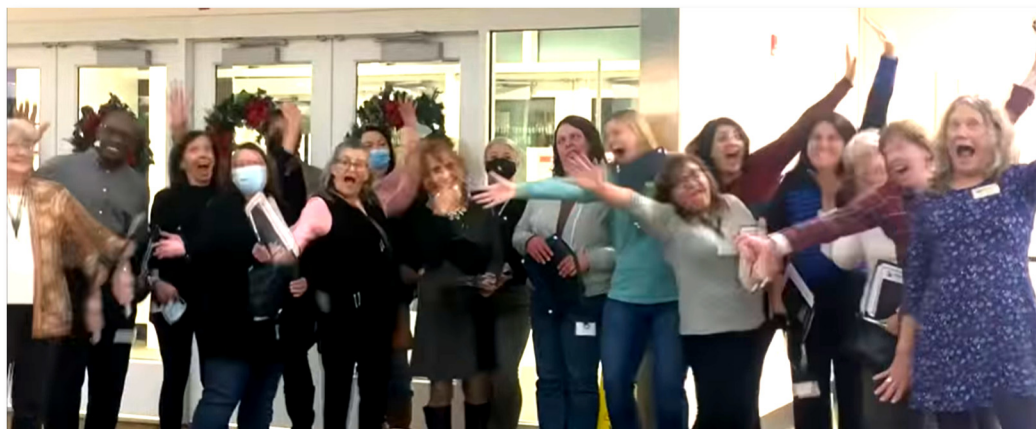
Trees, which give us such pleasure to look upon, and help to provide the very air we breathe, are our strong friends. The more of these friends we have, the happier all of us will be. ♦♦♦

CONGRATULATIONS & WELCOME: MASTER GARDENER INTERNS 2021



Be sure to say *Hello and Welcome!* to our new Master Gardener Interns!

We're looking forward to seeing you out in the community as you share your time, talents, and enthusiasm!



BOOK NOOK, CHILDREN'S CORNER:

GRANDMA LISA'S HUMMING, BUZZING CHIRPING GARDEN BY LISA DORSEFF

by Pam Rock, Master Gardener Volunteer

This charming and beautifully illustrated children's book not only tells a story but also introduces children to native plants and the creatures that are attracted to and thrive on them, in a fun and entertaining manner. The story line features Grandma Lisa who moves into a new home with the typical non-native plant landscaping. She involves the grandchildren in renovating the garden to natives and explaining why as she goes along. The children see animals and life return to the garden and find a new appreciation for nature along the way.

“...Doug Tallamy...writes ‘Grandma Lisa’s book has it all...’”



Grandma Lisa is a former Virginia Master Gardener and a Lancaster Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward. The illustrator, Duncan Robertson, calls himself a visual storyteller and it shows.

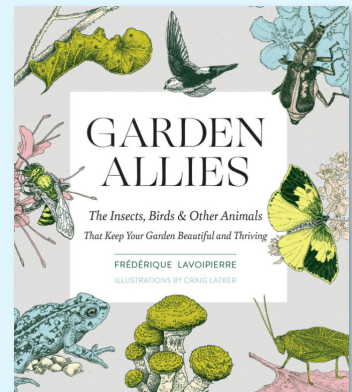
Doug Tallamy (professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, national speaker and author of Bringing Nature Home and Nature's Best Hope), writes “Grandma Lisa’s book has it all: wit, rhyme, wisdom and above all, a very important and timely message for parent and child alike.” For ages 5-10. ♦♦♦

BOOK NOOK, EXTRA:

GARDEN ALLIES; THE INSECTS, BIRDS & OTHER ANIMALS THAT KEEP YOUR GARDEN BEAUTIFUL AND THRIVING BY FREDERIQUE LAVOPIERRE

Thank you! to Jan Rice, Master Gardener Volunteer, for the recommendation.

See Fairfax County Master Gardeners' full review: [Who's Who in the Garden: Beyond Pollinators](#) by George Graine, Master Gardener Volunteer





Volunteers hard at work planting trees, helping the environment and our community
 photos by Nancy Berlin

IN THE COMMUNITY: TREE PLANTING EFFORTS

by Jannell Bryant, Lead Master Gardener Volunteer



On October 23, 2021, Master Gardener Volunteers, Prince William County Arborist Julie Flanagan, Master Gardener Coordinator Nancy Berlin, and Climate Reality Volunteers planted 200 native trees at two riparian (streamside) sites - at Rocky Branch and Bull Run in Prince William County. These trees will mitigate stormwater runoff, and reduce maintenance requirements and costs for turf at both sites.

Trees planted included:
 American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*),
 sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*),
 redbud (*Cercis canadensis*),
 willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), riverbirch (*Betula nigra*),
 swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*),
 sweet bay magnolia



(*Magnolia virginiana*), Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*). ♦♦♦





Plant NOVA Natives is the joint marketing campaign of a grand coalition of non-profit, governmental, and private groups, all working to reverse the decline of native plants and wildlife in Northern Virginia.

Our strategy is to encourage residents as well as public and commercial entities to install native plants as the first step toward creating wildlife habitat and functioning ecosystems on their own properties.

All are welcome to participate in this collective action movement!



COURTESY OF PLANT NOVA NATIVES: LANDSCAPING WITH NATURE

reprinted with encouragement from [PLANTNOVANATIVES, January 8, 2022](#); thanks to Leslie Paulson, Master Gardener Volunteer

In the winter, as you drive across the American Legion Bridge or across many of our creeks, you may be startled to see large numbers of trees with bright white trunks and branches. You may worry that climate change has struck and left them bleached. Worry no more: those are American Sycamore trees, sometimes known as the Ghosts of the Woods, whose bark normally peels as the trees get taller, leaving a white and brown pattern that shows best once the leaves have fallen. These congregations of sycamores help us notice that our seventy or so locally native tree species are not randomly distributed throughout the woods but rather are living in natural plant communities. As our region ramps up the [Plant NOVA Trees campaign](#), understanding natural communities can help us design our landscaped environments to better support our local ecosystem.

Sycamores and other trees that live in wet soil can survive there because their roots can tolerate low oxygen conditions. They don't necessarily need a lot of water and can thrive in the low oxygen conditions of many of our dry, compacted lawns. Unlike non-natives, these native trees will provide food for vast numbers of caterpillars and thus for the birds and other critters that eat insects. The contributions of native trees to the food web, combined with the increasing numbers of beautiful species available for sale, are why they are the default choice in all but the harshest of our built environments. Planting any native tree is a very good way to contribute to our region's effort to expand the tree canopy.

Having said that, though, is it possible for us to do even better by taking plant communities into account? Again, trees are not randomly distributed in the woods, and neither are the birds and other critters that depend on combinations of specific plants. It is not within our power to fully restore the ecosystems which we have destroyed, but we might at least nudge them in the right direction by grouping plant species that would naturally live together on the terrain we have occupied.

If your yard has wet or compacted soil, an American Sycamore could be a great choice. But what if you live on a dry hillside and your soil is not compacted? In that case, you might prefer to choose trees and accompanying understory plants that are more representative of a hillside natural community. For example, Mockernut Hickory, Flowering Dogwood and Maple-leaved Viburnum underplanted with Virginia Creeper and Blue-Stemmed Goldenrod would give you the start of an Acidic Oak-Hickory Forest, a very common plant community around here.

Dozens of plant communities have been identified in Northern Virginia, but only a few of them are very common. How can you tell which is most appropriate for your property? This is no easy task, even for experts, not only because it is highly technical but because humans have altered the landscape in many places beyond recognition. However, you might be able to make a reasonable guess based on the elevation of your yard in relation to the nearest creek. You can then look at a plant list for the relevant community and decide which ones you might like to add to your property, given its current light, soil and moisture conditions. Just as in nature, as your trees grow and shade out the understory, sun loving plants will give way to shade tolerant ones, providing future residents with a haven from the heat, far more useful than a sun-scorched lawn in this warming world.

Details about the plant community concept (and about how you can find someone to help you implement it) can be found on the [Plant NOVA Natives website](#). Even if you have no planting plans, if you have even a passing familiarity with our native trees and other plants, reading about our natural communities can add to your pleasure as you walk through our woods and notice the patterns. ♦♦♦

CONSERVATION AT HOME: AUDUBON AT HOME WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

by Leslie Paulson, Audubon at Home Prince William Coordinator and Master Gardener Volunteer

Now that winter has arrived all around us, I ask you to look at what kinds of wildlife have bedded down in your yard. We had a bird feeder scare this year but you can, with a bit of work, still safely feed our feathered friends. Just remember to clean your feeders every couple of weeks with a 10-1 mixture of water and bleach. Woodpeckers would be so happy to find some suet to eat as well as seed. Suet feeders need a scrub with a stiff brush and hot water to clean. Then a good spritz of *eau de bleach* and you will be all set.

If you have a birdbath and can add a heater to it, you will find a multitude of different species coming to get a drink. I have a video camera, Blink, which allows me to see foxes, possums, raccoons, rabbits, and skunks come to have a drink of water. I swear there is some kind of signal, as often they come to the video camera within minutes of each other, each taking their turn. This summer, our animal



cedar waxwings and robins

“...training for new Audubon at Home Ambassadors on Tuesday, January 25th...”

cam allowed us to watch a family of foxes play and feed as well.

If you have not considered having your yard evaluated as a wildlife habitat, please give it some thought. Yes, we watch and enjoy the birds and four-legged critters, but the insects and butterflies and moths need help as well. Converting your yard into a wildlife habitat is as easy as putting in more native plants that bloom at different times across the seasons.

Master Gardeners Prince William will be having a **training for new Audubon at Home Ambassadors on Tuesday, January 25th at 10:00 a.m., in the Jean McCoy conference room at Sudley North Government Center, 7986 Ashton Ave., Manassas. The class size will be limited to 35, please register at: https://vce.azi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bf4eV9CfU0oodP8**. We've gotten many site visit requests from our county residents. Having more Ambassadors will help meet the demand, and create more habitat for our native critters. ♦♦♦



fox



skunk



raccoon

video still shots by Leslie Paulson from her backyard wildlife sanctuary video camera



Prince William has a core group of trained Master Gardeners in the [Audubon at Home program](#) who have certified over 100 homes. To make more land in Prince William County wildlife-friendly, start to certify your property today! If you are ready to make your backyard or community space more environmentally friendly, give us a call at 703-792-7747 or email master_gardener@pwcgov.org.

VIRGINIA PROGRAMS & COORDINATOR HONORED:

A REPORT FROM VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Several Virginia EMG programs were recently awarded 2021 Dr. David Gibby Search for Excellence awards, recognizing the outstanding contributions of volunteers through unique, innovative, and impactful programs in their communities. Stacey Morgan Smith, Northern Shenandoah Valley EMG Coordinator, was also recognized as the coordinator of the year for the Southeast region.

Please join us in congratulating these programs and take a moment to learn more about each project below. As part of the awards process, [each unit has also created a short video explaining their project, which are linked after each project description, click here.](#)

Congratulations 2021 Dr. David Gibby Search for Excellence award winners!



*Special Needs Audiences (senior, disabled audiences or horticultural therapy)
First Place Award*

Resiliency Gardening Program: The United Service Organization (USO) and Green Spring EMG Program Partnership

Green Spring Gardens Extension Master Gardener Program



Youth Second Place Award

Learning Beyond the Classroom: The Wolf Trap National Park & Green Spring Gardens Extension Master Gardener Partnership

Green Spring Gardens Extension Master Gardeners Program



Demonstration Gardens Second Place Award

Fred Heutte Square Foot Gardening Demonstration Garden

Norfolk Master Gardeners



Community Service Second Place Award

Seed Exchange at Blandly
Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Program



*Research (applied scientific methodology)
Second Place Award*

Citizen Science Spotted Lanternfly Detection Program

Northern Shenandoah Valley Extension Master Gardener Program



Outstanding Coordinator of the Year: Southeast Region

Stacey Morgan Smith, Northern Shenandoah Valley Extension Master Gardener Program

CRITTER NEIGHBORS: EASTERN GRAY SQUIRREL (*SCIURUS CAROLINENSIS*)

by Jason Alexander, Master Gardener Volunteer

Eastern Gray Squirrels are adaptable omnivores most frequently seen east of the Mississippi, which makes them native to our area.

They prefer to den inside tree cavities, but will construct large nests of leaves if tree cavities are not available.

Litters of two to three young are produced once or twice a year, in February and March, and again in July through September.

Yearlings and some adults will strike out in September to establish their own home range of one to two hectares. This process is called “fall reshuffle.”

Although Eastern Gray Squirrels are successful, on average, they only live about 11-12 months. Severity of winter, lack of food, and parasites, including the mange mite, can impact survival. However, there have been some individuals surviving more than ten years in the wild.

◆◆◆



**photo by
Jason Alexander**

Source:

Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History;
<https://www.si.edu/>

WANTED!

Master Gardener Volunteers
train as Citizen Scientists
to help detect the
Invasive Spotted Lanternfly

*training is self-paced and
available online at:*

Citizen Scientist Detection Program for Spotted Lanternfly in Virginia

If you accept this challenge, let
Nancy Berlin know so she can call
on you to help once this pest
arrives in Prince William County



HORTICULTURE CLASSES OF PARTICULAR NOTE:

VEGETABLE GARDENING COURSE 2022



Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Vegetable Gardening Course 2022

An online class provided by
Virginia Cooperative Extension – Prince William

Growing your own food, using nature as a guide and incorporating sustainable practices is good for our bodies and good for the earth. This course covers the essential topics — planning the garden from seed to harvest, using organic and sustainable techniques to develop healthy productive gardens, growing good soil, dealing with wildlife and specific techniques for container and indoor vegetable gardens. Taught by the Master Gardener Cook's Garden Team.

The course is set up to allow you to learn at your own pace. The videos and handouts will be available online. The course will be open for enrollment from February 1st to July 1st. Discussion boards will allow you to interact with the instructors and there will be 3 live question and answer sessions

Q & A Sessions, 10:30 – 11:30 am

Saturday, March 19th

Saturday, April 16th

Saturday, May 21st

There is a \$5 charge for this program. Enrollment is on-going starting February 1st so you can register even after the course has started. Please register at

<https://tinurl.com/2022-PW-Veg-Gardening>

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Virginia Cooperative Extension – Prince William at 703-792-6285/TDD* during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

Master Gardeners Prince William

Master Gardeners of Prince William (MGPW) is the supportive organization for active Master Gardener Volunteers in Prince William County, Manassas City and Manassas Park. There are approximately 200 active volunteer environmental educators serving in various capacities.

Volunteers and volunteerism are central to the MGPW mission as we strive to make our community a more sustainable, healthy and beautiful place to live and to educate residents about the many benefits of gardening, including the opportunity to grow nutritious, healthy food, environmentally friendly landscapes, all with the ultimate goal of protecting water quality in local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

FREE ONLINE CLASSES

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) is hosting classes via zoom Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. to Noon. For a schedule of classes, click here: [Prince William County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Classes](#).

Please register for classes by contacting the [Horticulture Help Desk](#) at mastergardener@pwcgov.org or call 703-792-7747.

All classes as well as [Teaching Garden](#) tour videos can be found on our [YouTube channel](#).

Although Prince William County Buildings are closed to the public, VCE staff and Master Gardener Volunteers are working remotely to answer your lawn and garden questions. Please contact us by emailing mastergardener@pwcgov.org or call 703-792-7747.

Help Support Master Gardeners Prince William while you shop with (click the icons to learn more):



Master Gardeners Prince William

Virginia Cooperative Extension
Prince William Office
8033 Ashton Avenue, Suite 105
Manassas, VA 20109-8202

Phone: 703-792-7747
E-mail: Master_gardener@pwcgov.org
Website: MGPW.org
Website VCE: www.pwcgov.org



FOLLOW US ON [twitter](#)



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

-Send submissions, questions, or comments to

MGPWnewsletter@gmail.com

The Editors,

Jason Alexander & Maria Stewart, Master Gardener Volunteers