



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Master Gardener College 2023

June 7-11, Blacksburg Virginia



**Register
now!**

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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Continuing and Professional Education at 540-231-5182/TDD* or contact Danielle Moore at dani98@vt.edu during business hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.

Cover image: Virginia Tech photo

Schedule

7

Wednesday June 7

9:00 am – 5:00 pm Tree Steward training
2:00 pm – 6:00 pm Check in

8

Thursday June 8

8:00 am – 6:00 pm Check in
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Tree Steward training
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Tours/Workshops
5:45 pm – 6:30 pm Dessert social and welcome
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Keynote
7:30 pm – 8:30 pm Milestone awards

9

Friday June 9

8:30 am – 9:30 am Keynote
10:00 am – 11:30 am Concurrent 1
11:30 am – 12:30 pm Lunch
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm Concurrent 2
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Concurrent 3
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Plenary

10

Saturday June 10

8:30 am – 9:30 am Q&A with State Office
10:00 am – 11:30 am Concurrent 4
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Concurrent 5
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm Concurrent 6
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm Plenary
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm VMGA Annual Meeting

11

Sunday June 11

9:30 am – 10:30 am Keynote
10:30 am – 11:00 am Closing
11:00 am – 12:00 pm Boxed Lunch Social

About Extension Master Gardener College

Extension Master Gardener College (EMGC) is back on Virginia Tech's campus for 2023! In addition to our lineup of keynotes, concurrents, and tours, we will also be offering advanced EMG Tree Steward training.

New for 2023: Schedule Changes

This year we have made some changes to fit even more programming into EMGC. We have:

- Moved our dessert social to before the Thursday general session (rather than after).
- Changed the length of some concurrent sessions to fit **six** total concurrents (rather than four) into the schedule. Sessions 5 and 6 are one-hour sessions while sessions 1, 2, 3, and 4 are the traditional 90-minutes.
- We will also hold only one keynote session on Sunday (rather than two) followed by optional boxed lunches to allow participants more time to travel home.

Other conference highlights:

VMGA silent auction
VMGA merchandise sales
Book sales

COVID-19 Information

Master Gardener College will adhere to state level, Virginia Tech, and VCE guidelines for COVID safety measures during the conference. Individual participants should do whatever is most comfortable for them within the bounds of campus policies and expectations. Please reach out to the conference registrar with additional questions or concerns. [Check the current Virginia Department of Health guidelines here.](#)

Transportation

The Virginia Tech campus is large and walking is necessary to get from one place to another. Walking short distances will be necessary. We will have a limited number of shuttles available for those who need assistance.

Sunday Boxed Lunch Option

Boxed lunches are available to EMGs wishing to stay and eat lunch before leaving to travel home. Those planning to stay for a boxed lunch will indicate their preference during conference registration.

Sunday's lunch will be a last chance to socialize, trade contact information, and make contacts before going back home. Please indicate dietary restrictions during registration.

On Campus Housing

Attendees have the option of staying on the Virginia Tech campus in New Hall West (an air-conditioned dorm with private bathrooms) or staying off campus and providing their own transportation to and from the conference each day.



EMGC is an opportunity to learn from VCE experts and Virginia Tech researchers, such as the Insect ID Lab's Eric Day (pictured).

Registration information

Registering for sessions

Classes are offered on a first come first serve basis, so make sure to register early to make sure that you get the classes you want. Switching schedules is not advised unless you trade spots with someone. All the classes with limited enrollment are filled by pre-registrations, and there will not be enough materials for unregistered attendees. Please be considerate to your peers and do not “crash” a class, tour, or workshop.

Costs *(subject to change)*

Registration fees:

Registration Fee (until May 17):	\$210.00
Late Registration (May 18–31):	\$235.00
One day registration for Friday or Saturday:	\$110.00
Tree Steward Training:	\$100.00
Agent/Coordinators:	Complimentary

Milestone Discount Registration:

1,000+ Hour Milestone:	\$180.00
5,000+ Hour Milestone:	\$155.00
10,000+ Hour Milestone:	Complimentary

Meals:

A meal plan is required for those staying on campus and will include breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the following rates: Breakfast: \$10.65; Lunch: \$14.45; Dinner: \$15.65

On campus housing:

Single room, per night:	\$65
Double room, cost per person, per night:	\$56

All rates are subject to a 5.3% sales tax. There will be a \$5.50 service charge added to each reservation made via the online registration portal.

Registration deadline: May 31

Milestone Discounts

Milestone discounts are available for milestones reached in 2022 or in 2021 (as long as the 2021 milestone discount was not used for last year’s conference). Milestones earned in previous years do not qualify for discounts.

VMGA Scholarships

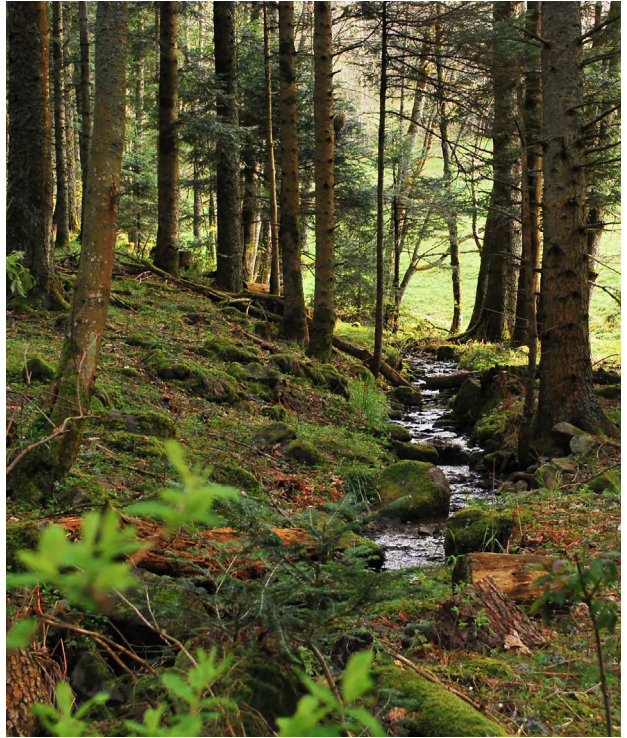
VMGA seeks to award scholarships to those Extension Master Gardeners who, through their dedicated efforts of volunteerism toward VCE goals, have demonstrated exceptional leadership potential or significant contributions in their respective units. [More information available here.](#)

Tree Steward Training

What do you think when you see a huge, beautiful tree? How did it get so big? What can it teach us? How can we help it survive for another generation or more? And what about a newly planted oak – does it give you a bit of hope?

If you are still reading, then you know how important the trees are to our present and future. This includes trees in parks and gardens, on the streets, in the forests, and in our environmental planning. How can you help? You can become an Extension Master Gardener Tree Steward. The opportunity is available at this year's EMGC.

This advanced course was last offered statewide at EMGC 2018. The training program is based on the 2021 EMG Tree Steward Manual (used in draft in 2018). While a few units and regions are able to offer local EMG TS training (based on the same manual), most units cannot muster enough participants or instructors. The EMGC TS Course is meant to fill that gap, encouraging units to grow their own Tree Steward programs with the goal of improving tree knowledge and care as part of Virginia's EMG outreach.



EMGs participating in TS Training in 2023 will start Wednesday, June 7, at 9 AM and spend that day and the next in dedicated classes plus a field trip to the wonderful trees at Historic Smithfield on the VT campus. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, TS-in-training will attend EMG College keynote and concurrent sessions along with other MGC participants. However, they must choose all of their concurrent sessions from a list of TS-identified classes, for which they will have priority.

Students in this course will attend classes on tree botany, tree families, tree selection and planting, pests and diseases, structural pruning, severe weather, native trees, Virginia forests, and climate change concerns. Programming theory and practical examples will also be covered.

Requirements

Students must be EMGs (no interns) and have the express endorsement of their local agents and/or unit coordinators. There is a fee for the course in addition to EMGC tuition. Completion of the training course is the first part of becoming an EMG Tree Steward. The second requirement is to put the lessons into practice after EMGC. Course graduates will return home and work closely with their agents and EMG units to design and work on program/project activities which will then lead to full TS certification.

What sorts of projects are we talking about? In the past, Virginia EMG Tree Stewards have conducted tree inventories, developed educational tours and maps, organized formal arboretum designations, prepared training courses for local children in school and out, and planted trees for historic gardens and stormwater mitigation. Options are many and as varied as local circumstances. Discussion of examples and possibilities will be part of the curriculum.

There will also be Zoom sessions a week before and several weeks after EMGC to get students started on reading the TS Manual (before) and working up their projects (after). With so many lessons already learned and still to come, many TS are better together.

Keynote and Plenary Descriptions

Thursday 6 -7 PM - Why Native Trees Matter - Jim McGlone

For too long trees have been viewed as an ornamental option. A growing body of research, and our own experiences during the pandemic, point to trees, particularly native trees, as not being optional in the health and well being of people and the planet. Learn how you can help fight the 3 great environmental crises of our time.



About Jim: Jim has a PhD in Human Ecology (aka Economics) from Virginia Tech and a Master's Certificate in Environmental Law and Policy from the USDA Graduate School. He has taught economics at Virginia Tech, Ohio State and Northern Illinois University, and done research at the Economic Research Service of the USDA. A self-taught naturalist and ecologist, he has managed the natural resources of a 500 acre park in Fairfax County and is currently an Urban Forest Conservationist with the Virginia Department of Forestry in Northern Virginia.

Friday 8 - 9:30 AM - Trees: They're NOT Just Another Pretty Face - Frank Reilly

No one doubts the aesthetic value of trees. However, trees provide a number of ecosystem services that in turn help us adapt to the challenges of climate change. Current science has shown, irrefutably, that trees have extremely valuable economic impacts. Frank will discuss the services that trees can provide and their estimated value to you, your community, and as mitigating factors for climate change.



About Frank: Frank has been an environmental scientist for more than 50 years. He has been researching and speaking about climate change issues to EMGs for many years including the International Master Gardeners Conference, Master Gardeners of Kansas, and several EMG Colleges. He has helped the Department of Defense, Army, DHS, GSA, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Parks, and other government agencies understand climate change impacts and mitigation strategies. He is the author of chapters in two climate change books and many presentations. Frank has been an active Virginia EMG since 1998 and is a frequent speaker at Advanced EMG trainings, EMGC, and in many local units.

Friday 4:30 - 5:30 PM - Perennials with POW! - Holly Scoggins

There'll be nary a hosta in sight as Dr. Scoggins shares fun, fabulous, high-impact perennials to freshen up borders, attract pollinators, and impress your friends (heh). Some new, some underused, and something for every garden size, style, and growing season. Maintenance tips included.



About Holly: Holly Scoggins, Ph.D., recently retired with Emeritus status after 20 years in the Department of Horticulture with teaching, research, VCE, and administrative responsibilities. She is currently employed as Program Manager for NewGen^R Boxwood, a subsidiary of Saunder Brothers, a large nursery grower of quality ornamentals in central Virginia. Holly enjoys sharing her enthusiasm for horticulture at regional, and national gardening and professional conferences and currently serves as President of the National Perennial Plant Association. Because she does not have quite enough horticulture in her life, Holly and her husband run Bee Berry Farm, a you-pick blueberry farm and apiary in SWVA.

Saturday 8:30 – 9:30 AM – Q&A with the EMG State Office – EMG State Office team

Join the EMG State Office as they share relevant 2023 updates and take time to answer questions you might have about the EMG Program in Virginia. A Q&A submission link will be sent out prior to the conference to gather questions from participants. As time permits, there will also be time for day-of questions from the audience.

About EMG State Office: The Virginia Cooperative Extension State Coordinator's Office is responsible for developing programming material, resources, and training materials for Master Gardener Units across the state. The Master Gardener Handbook, Coordinator's Manual, video series, and EMGC are all products of the State Coordinator's Office.

Saturday 3:30– 4:30 PM – Can Insect and Mite Pests be Managed Organically in Landscapes? – Mike Raupp

In light of concerns about risks to beneficial insects including pollinators and natural enemies, jurisdictions around the country are placing new restrictions on several insecticides commonly used by the green industries. Questions have arisen regarding alternative approaches to managing key insect and mite pests. This presentation will discuss that “organic” really means and review biologically based alternatives to managing insects and mites in landscapes and gardens. By protecting conserving and protecting beneficial insects, we strive to increase sustainability of managed landscapes.



About Mike: A Professor Emeritus and Fellow of the Entomological Society of America, Mike is a regular guest on television and radio and has been featured on National Geographic, the Science Channel, NPR, and PBS. He has appeared with media luminaries including Jay Leno, Robin Roberts, Hoda Kotb, and Kojo Nnamdi. He has received more than a dozen international, national, and regional awards for writing, scholarship, and scientific outreach. His “Bug of the Week” website, www.bugoftheweek.com and YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/BugOfTheWeek reach tens of thousands of viewers weekly in more than 200 countries. His most recent book “26 Things that Bug Me” introduces youngsters

to the wonders of insects and natural history while “Managing Insect and Mites on Woody Landscape Plants” is a standard for the arboricultural industry and landscape managers.

Sunday 9:30 – 10:30 AM – Eating Iguana and Tangling with Typhoons: Tales and Travails of a Plant Explorer – Mark Weathington

Strange food, unpredictable weather, and cultural differences are only the beginning when you depart from the big cities of the world. It doesn't really matter if you are poking through the backwoods of Alabama or a remote mountainside in Asia – once you leave the high rises behind, you never know what you'll find.



About Mark: Mark Weathington is the Director of the JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University where he is passionate in his work to connect plants to people. Mark travels extensively searching for new plants to diversify the American landscape. His explorations have taken him to China, Taiwan, Japan, Ecuador, Europe, Mexico, New Zealand, and throughout the US. Mark writes for Fine Gardening, Horticulture and other national magazines and is the author of Gardening in the South, The Complete Homeowner's Guide.

Concurrent session descriptions

🌲 Indicates Tree Steward option

Friday 10:00 – 11:30 AM – Concurrent session 1

Out Standing in the Field – Mike Goatley

Participants will visit with Dr. Goatley and other VT Turf Team staff at the Turfgrass Research Center where they will view and discuss ongoing research trials and variety evaluations in both managed turf and low-input native grasses. Special emphasis will be placed on detailing the strengths and weaknesses of these grassing systems so that Master Gardener Volunteers can provide their clientele the most current information on grassing alternatives in Virginia landscapes. Transportation will be provided to the Turfgrass Research Center.

Yoga For Gardeners: How Mindfulness, Breath, And Postures Can Nurture You In The Garden – Megan Pullin

Gardening is an incredible behavior for holistic well being. Safety in your body can ensure you can keep doing what you love, longer. An integration of mindfulness can increase connection to earth and self. Breath work can invigorate your senses and either calm or activate either your sympathetic or parasympathetic nervous system (whichever you need for the task at hand). For this session, VCE Physical Activity Specialist, Dr. Samantha Harden (who is a 500+ registered yoga teacher), will share some practices that align with these three principles for flourishing. This session will be mostly experiential, so come ready to move, reflect, and ask questions. No prior experience necessary. Please bring a mat or towel if you would like.

Covering your Bases: Getting Started with Cover Crops – Nicole Shuman

Got a garden issue? There's a cover crop for that! This session will cover the various benefits of cover crops, from healthy soil to beneficial insects. Perhaps even more importantly, we will discuss how to get started with cover crops, including selecting the species and season that suit you, seeding, and—critically—terminating the cover.

Weeds and Bees – Shawn Askew

A summary of recent research at the weed science and pollinator convergence including the promotion of “bulb lawns” in managed turf, development of “pollinator-garden sod”, and evaluating how weed management or turf management practices influence ultraviolet reflectance of weedy flowers, nectar production, and associated pollinator foraging behavior in lawns infested with flowering weeds.



Recognizing Your Allies: Arthropod Natural Enemies In The Garden – Tom Kuhar

Arthropods including insects, spiders and mites are important, abundant, and diverse elements of the garden ecosystem. Although some are obviously pests that can threaten plants, many arthropods are providing beneficial services to the garden. Natural enemies (or biological control agents) are a very diverse group. This talk will focus on recognizing the beneficial natural enemies that are commonly found in gardens. Once you learn to identify them, you can better appreciate what they are doing in the garden.

Structural Pruning for Weather - Jim McGlone 🌲

Weather events can cause damage to trees and property. Learn how proper structural pruning of young trees can reduce this damage when trees get older. And what to do about structural defects that weaken older trees and make them susceptible to storm damage. Learn when to use a saw and when to use a drill.

Out Standing in the Field - Mike Goatley

Participants will visit with Dr. Goatley and other VT Turf Team staff at the Turfgrass Research Center where they will view and discuss ongoing research trials and variety evaluations in both managed turf and low-input native grasses. Special emphasis will be placed on detailing the strengths and weaknesses of these grassing systems so that Master Gardener Volunteers can provide their clientele the most current information on grassing alternatives in Virginia landscapes.

Friday 12:30 - 2:00 PM - Concurrent session 2

Success with Self-Sowing Annuals and Perennials - Holly Scoggins

Long associated with cottage gardens but very relevant to current design styles, these easy-to-grow herbaceous plants provide much bang for the buck. However, some re-seeders have the potential to go from “happy profusion” to “overwhelming.” We’ll cover some of the primary species and cultivars, including seed-starting tips and the importance of site preparation and maintenance.

Defenders of Your Greenhouse: IPM Strategies & Biological Control - Meredith Hoggatt

Come learn how commercial greenhouse IPM strategies can be scaled down to meet your needs in reducing pest populations and the need for pesticide applications in your own greenhouse or hoop house. More specifically, discover some of the most efficient beneficial insects you may like to introduce into your growing space for protection and considerations to make in your selection.



The Reality of School Gardens - Andrea Davis

School gardens have the potential to be an excellent learning tool, but they are often seen as a burden and the failure rate can be high. Learn tips and tricks of successful school gardens. Find out how you can guide schools through a meaningful learning experience.

Rogue's Gallery of Pests of Note in VA - Theresa (Tree) Dellinger

Learn about a rogue's gallery of newer insect pests encountered in gardens and landscapes. We will review some emerging pest species and a few we should remain alert for their appearance in Virginia.

Climate Change And Invasive Species, Pests, And Diseases - Frank Reilly

Climate Change has many impacts. Some are related to increased temperatures, but other more pernicious ones are related to winters that are not cold enough, the release of invasive species, and increases in pest and disease pressure. In this session Frank will review how climate changes are affecting our landscape particularly with respect to changes in resistance to pests and diseases as well as introductions of new pests and diseases. Climate Change is already changing our landscape and our plant pallet. Is there anything you can do about it?

Resilient Tree Species for Urban Environments in Virginia - Eric Wiseman 🌲

Urban environments are stressful for trees due to poor soil conditions, adverse microclimates, and elevated pollution levels. Environmental stress negatively impacts tree growth, longevity, and performance. In this presentation, you will learn about the stressful effects of urban environments on tree health, key characteristics of trees that promote stress tolerance, and recommendations for tree species that are proven performers in stressful urban environments.



Friday 2:30 - 4:00 PM - Concurrent session 3

Fire Ants, An Expanding Threat In Virginia - Eric Day

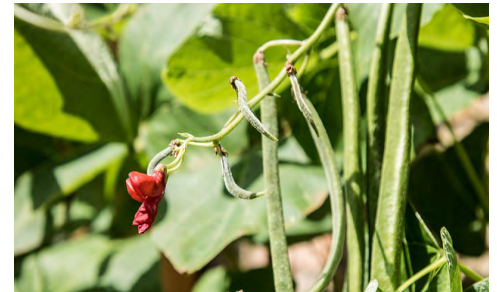
Fire ants continue to expand their range and make things unpleasant for gardeners and farmers. The expanded quarantine has implications for farmers and loggers.

Landscaping with Native Plants - Laurie Fox

How many native plants do I need? Which ones? Where do I get them? Do I maintain them differently? What will the neighbors say? Find answers to these questions and more in this presentation by Dr. Laurie Fox.

Pollinators for Vegetables - Thomas Bolles

It's not just honeybees. Learn about the importance of different pollinators in the vegetable garden. Learn about what plants need specialists, what plants are happy with generalists and what plants don't need pollinators at all. This session will include a discussion of tailoring your garden to meet the pollinator needs of your vegetables.



Round Table: Building Leaders Within Your Emg Group - Vce Faculty, Staff, And volunteer panel

Join EMG Volunteer Leaders & VCE Staff in a roundtable conversation on project leadership in their units. Planned topics include training and encouraging leaders of both established and new projects, helping leaders recruit help and improve volunteer experience, ensuring projects meet the EMG program's educational mission, and evaluating project success. Join in the conversation and share your own experiences to give fellow volunteers ideas to take back to their units.

Technology for Starting and Growing Plants Indoors - Leonard Githinji, Chris Mullins

Greenhouse and lighting technology have greatly improved in the last decade as well as the production systems used in these environments. By adapting some of these technologies, gardeners are able to start plants indoors and successfully grow crops. During this session, participants will be introduced to hydroponic/aquaponic systems, greenhouse design and management, appropriate lighting systems and indoor production. Additionally, participants will be able to construct a small-scale, low cost hydroponic system.

Forests of Virginia - John Seiler 🌲

Virginia's forests are a rich mix of numerous tree species which result in high biodiversity, productivity and aesthetic value. A broad overview of the species found in Virginia's forests will be covered. An overview of the environmental factors controlling tree distribution and productivity in Virginia's forests will be described. Some of the "most amazing" things about tree biology will be discussed ranging from growth and water uptake to tree "communication". Participants will gain a better appreciation of the amazing, huge organisms we call trees. An interactive format will make this presentation engaging and informative.

Saturday 10:00 - 11:30 AM - Concurrent session 4

Pursuing Diversity: Piedmont Master Gardener's Path to an Action Plan - Piedmont EMGs

Like many MG's across the state, Piedmont Master Gardeners (PMG) has struggled to address the lack of diversity in our membership and program reach. To that end, PMG formed a task force last fall to explore the issues. Our first step was to speak with Black and Brown community and institutional representatives to better understand the issues and their efforts to increase diversity. This helped clarify our need for a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultant, to first help the task force formulate a proposal to our board and to then work with us to develop an action plan. During workshops with the Board and project leaders, the consultant is guiding us through the development of the plan which will be available by early summer. This session will present the process and lessons learned as the Diversity Task Force explored the issues, develop our proposal to the Board, and created our Diversity Action Plan. We will then invite attendees to join in a discussion on their similar efforts and/or struggles to address diversity issues in the MG groups.

Wicked, Wonderful Wasps - Mike Raupp

Wasps are an amazingly diverse and fascinating group of insects found on every continent on earth excepting Antarctica. While some strike fear in the hearts of humans, the vast majority are highly beneficial providing the critical service of biological control to key pests of crops, ornamental plants, and forests. Learn which ones are a cause for concern and which ones we should welcome into our gardens. Discover their beauty and observe their quirky life styles.

Utilizing Degree Days and Plant Phenology to Help Mitigate Problematic Insects - Jim Revell

How do temperature and moisture levels impact insect populations? What are Degree Days (aka Growing Degree Days) and are they important in relation to insect activity? How are Degree Days calculated? Can Degree Days be effectively incorporated into Integrated Pest Management strategies for the home vegetable gardener (would you like to be able to implement IPM controls to help target insects at their most susceptible life stage)? What is Plant Phenology and its correlation to determining crop planting dates and best times to initiate IPM strategies? Learn about these valuable tools for the home gardener and how these methods can help mitigate problematic insects in your vegetable garden!

The Landscape Under Water - Laurie Fox

Join Dr. Laurie Fox as she share important updates on water issues that impact your landscape.

History of American Chestnut Restoration - Carl Asher 🌲

The iconic American chestnut was a keystone species in the Appalachian mountains that was decimated by an introduced fungus, *Cryphonectria parasitica* in the first half of the 20th century. In this presentation we will touch on the characteristics of the tree that made it so important, the progression of its loss, the evolution of restoration efforts, the failures, the successes and the state of the species' restoration today.

Saturday 12:30 - 1:30 PM - Concurrent session 5

Flies We Love! Dragonflies, Damselflies and Fireflies - Pat Reilly

These “flies” are some of the most special treats in our landscapes. Besides being beautiful, dragonflies, damselflies and fireflies have fascinating morphology, eating habits, and reproductive strategies. Did you know that fireflies talk to each other? That damselflies are used as ‘canaries in the coal mine?’ These adorable insects require specific habitats and food sources which you need to know to attract these creatures to your landscape. If you'd love to be entertained by more of them, attend to learn.. and enjoy the eye candy!



How to Create a Suburban Habitat Garden at Home - Even with an HOA! (Part 1) - Stacey Morgan Smith

A suburban plot can still integrate all that wildlife needs to survive. See how one EMG adapted her large garden from the Shenandoah Valley to a Suffolk suburb, and learn how native plants play an integral part in her landscape. Take away resources and ideas for how you (and the homeowners you serve) can garden for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife, whether living on a few acres in the country or with an HOA in town.

Landscape Design with Edibles (Part 1) - Kirsten Conrad

A two part workshop will spend the first hour looking at how to make sense of your garden spaces, how to do a site analysis, and understanding the various tasks that go into renovating an existing landscape. The second hour of this workshop will focus on plant selection and groupings that will help to ensure that your edible landscape is healthy, beautiful and productive.

Taking Action for Trees One: Programming for Tree Stewards and Pthers (Part 1) - Carol King, Cynthia Falconer, Laurie Fox 🌲

The first of two classes will consider the topic in a general way, starting with a step-based logical structure. Breakout groups will then brainstorm overarching local program themes and appropriate project ideas, followed by an idea swap about resource needs and sources.

Beyond the Soil Test: The Importance of Promoting Healthy Soil - Elaine Specht

Soil is an intersection of geology and biology. Civilizations from ancient times to the present have suffered grave consequences when this balance is thrown off balance due to soil erosion and degradation. As Extension Master Gardeners, we encourage clients to test their soil. Elaine's presentation will go beyond the soil test to explain the science of soil in plain terms, the impacts humans have had on soil throughout history, and the role EMGs can play in protecting soil health now and into the future.

“Norton’s Virginia Seedling” – Pat Reilly

Had you heard that Thomas Jefferson bred the first wine grape in America? That American wines couldn’t compete on an international stage until recently? That the Norton grape was saved from Prohibition by monks? Bah! Enthusiasts of native plants, insects, plant breeding, plant pathology and wine will enjoy this journey through the history of wine-making in the New World. It’s a story of how American vines both devastated and saved vineyards around the world. The story starts in Florida and weaves through Virginia, Missouri, France and Texas! Dealing with vine death, viticulturists and entomologists worked to solve the mystery of dying European vineyards. The characters of Dr. Daniel Norton, Dennis Horton, Oliver North and Jenny McCloud play roles in the development of Virginia’s claim in the wine world. This is an intriguing tale of ‘right plant, right place’ and the importance of sharing knowledge and not sharing insects and diseases!”

How EMGs can Encourage Homeowners to Grow Natives (Part 2) – Stacey Morgan Smith

Creating your own habitat garden is the first step to supporting wildlife. Encouraging other homeowners to do the same broadens the environmental impact of the EMG program. Learn why some people don’t plant natives in their landscapes and see real examples of how EMGs can inspire them to join the cause. Share and learn from others and go home with a plan to get more people in your own community growing native plants.

Landscape Design with Edibles (Part 2) – Kirsten Conrad

A two part workshop will spend the first hour looking at how to make sense of your garden spaces, how to do a site analysis, and understanding the various tasks that go into renovating an existing landscape. The second hour of this workshop will focus on plant selection and groupings that will help to ensure that your edible landscape is healthy, beautiful and productive.

Rethinking the Invasive Conundrum – Mark Weathington

Throw out your preconceived notions and forget about dealing with the symptoms. We’ll discuss the science behind the causes of exotics in natural areas, discuss some of the myths and bad science, and look for real-world solutions to the threat of invasives.

Taking Action For Trees Two: Programming for Tree Stewards and Others (Part 2) – Carol King, Cynthia Falconer 🌲

The second of two classes will be seminar format, covering examples of tree steward projects from around the state: inventories, classes, tours, and tree plantings will all be covered. Participants will be encouraged to generate ideas for their own activities post-EMGC.

Tours and Workshops

All tours and workshops occur on Thursday, June 8. All tours are half day, AM/PM, final schedule subject to change.

Please select only ONE morning and ONE afternoon tour or workshop. All of the morning sessions overlap and all of the afternoon sessions overlap – there is no way to take part in multiple tours during each time block. If you choose to join the all day tour of Floyd, that is the only tour you'll be able to attend on Thursday. Please note that there are two tours that are offered in the morning and then again in the afternoon (Falls Ridge and NRV Garden Tour) these are the same tour, please do not sign up for both sessions.

All day tour: (If you choose this tour option, you may not register for any other AM or PM tours)

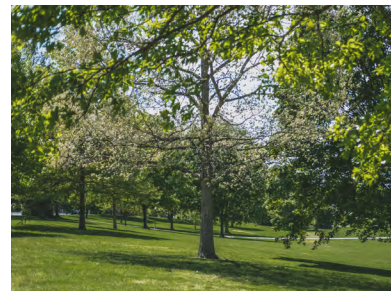
Tour de Floyd!

Join this all day tour to learn more about some of Floyd's horticultural spaces! Our tour begins at Wood Thrush Nursery. They are a small producer known for sustainably growing "rare and unusual plants" native to the Virginia mountain region. We then go to PLENTY!, a farm and food bank where an Extension Master Gardener project is held. Tour the farm, and learn how they distribute what they grow and donations to people in need, and learn about the Master Gardener Small Space Demonstration garden and the Garden Rangers Summer program. From there we travel to the town of Floyd for lunch and a bit of shopping. After lunch we get a private garden tour at the home of Jane Cundiff. Jane property has a plethora of native plants. We will tour her vegetable garden, forest, orchard, herbs and edible weeds. It is truly a unique place. Then onto Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, where Alex Tuchman will give us a tour. "Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary has transformed from a pasture on Hideaway Lane to a thriving biodynamic farm which is home to a vibrant flowering landscape, gardens, orchards, camping facilities, a caretaker cabin, a pavilion, and of course, some very happy and healthy honeybee hives." Our last stop of the day is to Riverstone Organic Farm, where they have CSA, sell at the Blacksburg and Floyd Farmer's Market and at various restaurants and natural food stores in the NRV. – Fee: \$15

AM Tours and Workshops (Choose **only one** AM tour)

Tree Tour of Virginia Tech

You are invited for a tree tour at Virginia Tech! Please join Jamie King, Urban Forest Manager and University Arborist, for a 3 mile walk to see how public land use has been shaped by American conservation efforts and how our decisions today support that legacy. This outdoor walk will include stairs and transitions from pavement to turf and other uneven surfaces. – Fee: N/A



Gardening for Everyone

There is research evidence that gardening is beneficial for health. On this tour, we will visit three community projects led by EMG volunteers, which bring these benefits to adults with cognitive and physical disabilities. Project leaders will provide an overview of and answer questions about goals, tools and methods. Visitors will have opportunities to interact with participants at some sites. – Fee: \$12

New River Valley Private Garden Tour

The New River Valley Private Garden Tour will feature two of Blacksburg's best, Elissa Steeves garden and Stonewood Garden. Stunning in any season, Elissa's garden is constantly evolving and changing. A complement of natives, rare and exotic plants have been arranged in the most delightful designs and patterns. Fabulous garden rooms with a surprise around every corner, she has successfully blended plants and art with a strong dose of whimsy. Creative reuse of upcycled art puts this garden in a category all its own. Stonewood Garden is the two-acre private garden of Mary LaLone & Kim Knight. Mary has a greenhouse with tropicals, including orchids and carnivorous plants, and gardens outside with tropicals, heaths & heathers, and potted plants. Kim has designed, built, and gardens all the rest of the property, including an Italian garden, arbors and terraces, a Japanese garden with pond and stream, a potager, and a cactus greenhouse/orangerie. – Fee: \$12

Hike Falls Ridge Preserve

Part of a rugged ridge that rises from the valley of the North Fork of the Roanoke River, Falls Ridge Preserve boasts a spring fed travertine waterfall approximately 80 feet in height. Salem Fault runs through the preserve, dividing it into two different rock types – Precambrian limestone and shale/sandstone. The corresponding difference in soil types generates a diversity of vegetation, particularly wildflowers and smaller flora. Join this tour to walk through this beautiful preserve, learn about its flora, fauna, and what makes it unique. Falls Ridge Preserve is currently closed to the public due to high visitation and overuse of the trails. This is an intermediate-level hike with both steps and inclines. Paths may be less defined because it is closed to the public. Please be sure to bring long pants and hiking boots to protect your skin from poison ivy and ticks. – Fee: \$12

Common Pests in the Landscape: Walking Tour of VT

Bring your walking shoes and join us as we walk around campus and look at trees and plants and discuss insect, mite, and plant diseases. We will look at actual symptoms and pests and talk about things to look for as the season develops. – Fee: N/A

Nematode, Nematode Quite Contrary, How Does My Garden Grow

Nematodes are quite contrary because some of them are harmful to the growth of plants, but on the other hand, some are beneficial because they kill insect pests, but most of all, they are all indicators of soil health and are useful predictors of how well your garden will grow. By sampling nematodes in the fall, the kinds and numbers of nematodes can monitor the health of your soil. Plants need lots of bacteria and fungi to have a healthy environment because the bacteria breakdown the nutrients in the soil and the fungi transport those nutrients to the plants. Their numbers can be monitored by the numbers of bacterivores and fungivores that are present in the soil. The feeding types of nematodes are easily identified from the morphology of their mouthparts. On the other hand, if the number of plant-parasites are high, the soil is very unhealthy and the predators and omnivores need to be encouraged. Learn the four tactics that improve the health of your soil. – Fee: N/A

PM Tours and Workshops (Choose **only one** PM tour)

Gardening with Moss

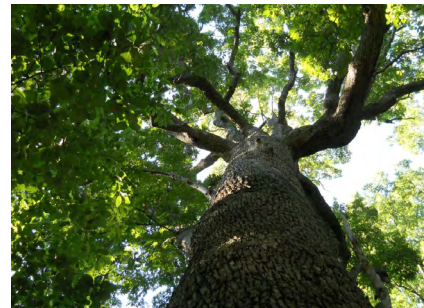
While sometimes not invited, moss can add beauty to our landscapes. For those homeowners who bring turf troubles to us as EMG volunteers, moss may well be a viable option. This workshop seeks to combine knowledge about growing moss with the activities of identifying mosses and creating a moss garden of your own to take home. Attendees will learn moss botany and taxonomy, incorporating moss into the landscape design, and establishing and maintaining moss. Samples will be provided for the identification activity. – Fee: \$25

Beliveau Wines – Vines and Vineyards

Travel to a local winery and vineyard to sample local wines and more. \$12 transportation fee and \$30 tasting fee. Maximum 10 participants. – Fee: \$42

A Walk Through Virginia Tech's Stadium Woods

Join Dr. John Seiler for a tour of Stadium Woods, an old-growth urban forest near Lane Stadium that covers more than 10 acres. It contains over 250 large trees, including dozens of white oak trees estimated to be over 300 years old. This will be a great chance to take an enjoyable afternoon walk and learn more about this amazing spot on Virginia Tech's campus. – Fee: N/A



Floral Design Workshop: Corsages, boutonnieres and posies, oh my!

This workshop will focus on creating personal flower designs, such as boutonnieres, corsages and posies. You will learn the basic skills necessary to create these types of personal flower designs, including bow making, stem replacement, how to care for your creation, etc. You can display your creation on your own frock, bestow one on a fellow Master Gardener and freshen up your space with the posy creation! Sara Rutherford, Extension agent and floral designer in a previous life, will guide you through the creation of these personalized design pieces. Join us to increase or improve your basic floral design skills for personal flower design. Let's get creative! – Fee: \$35

Hike Falls Ridge Preserve (duplicate of AM tour)

Part of a rugged ridge that rises from the valley of the North Fork of the Roanoke River, Falls Ridge Preserve boasts a spring fed travertine waterfall approximately 80 feet in height. Salem Fault runs through the preserve, dividing it into two different rock types: Precambrian limestone and shale/sandstone. The corresponding difference in soil types generates a diversity of vegetation, particularly wildflowers and smaller flora. Join this tour to walk through this beautiful preserve, learn about its flora, fauna, and what makes it unique. Falls Ridge Preserve is currently closed to the public due to high visitation and overuse of the trails. This is an intermediate-level hike with both steps and inclines. Paths may be less defined because it is closed to the public. Please be sure to bring long pants and hiking boots to protect your skin from poison ivy and ticks. – Fee: \$12

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Extension Master Gardener College Tips from EMGs

Compiled by Stacey Morgan Smith

Extension Master Gardener College (EMGC) is in early June at Virginia Tech in 2023. This wonderful educational conference is a chance to get together with volunteers from units across the state and learn with – and from – them during a wide variety of talks, workshops, tours, and other learning opportunities. The downtime of meals and evenings also gives you the opportunity to network and get to know volunteers outside of the classroom.

If you're attending for your first time on campus, you may have questions, and we want to help! This document pulls together tips from those who've attended before.

General Information:

Before you head to campus, share your phone number with other attendees from your unit. It helps with meeting up, especially in the age of group chats.

One evening during the conference includes the VCE-MG Milestone Awards Ceremony. Plan to attend, even if you aren't adding a pin this year. You can cheer the recipients in your unit and join in to recognize volunteers in other units. Celebrating one another is one small way to say, "thank you!"

Campus housing includes a meal plan. Eat with your unit or take the opportunity to sit with someone new. If you are staying off campus, consider bringing a debit or credit card with you to eat lunch with other volunteers. Great conversations are had as we all share how we do things!

Have questions about classes or where to find your session? Conference info booths are present during most breaks, or look for a volunteer wearing a very, very bright neon-yellow shirt.

All attendees are welcome to join the VMGA meeting, whether members or not. Learn the advantages of membership and opportunities to contribute to the EMG program across the state. You'll also earn a volunteer hour or two (check with your unit coordinator).

VMGA offers scholarships for attendees who haven't received one before. Keep an eye out for the announcements, and let your VCE Agent or EMG Coordinator know you'd like to be nominated.

The Association also sells EMG gear – shirts, jackets, bags, etc. – during the conference, and your purchase helps support the VMGA EMG Coordinator Endowment. If your unit is small or doesn't get the chance to order often, or if you just want a different color or style of apparel, stop by! VMGA may also host a silent auction of gardening-related items donated by units. Bring a little extra money with you to bid on donations.

TAKE PICTURES!!! This event is a wonderful experience with old and new friends. Bring a camera or use your phone and take photos of you and your fellow volunteers. Share them with your unit to encourage others to join you in the future. Send up to 5 favorite EMGC photos to VMGATreasurer@VMGA.net, and we can use them in future articles.

What to Bring for the Residence Hall:

After you register and pick your breakout sessions and workshops, you get to decide where to stay. While hotels in the area offer the same conveniences you'd expect on most vacations, staying in a residence hall on campus has its own benefit: you're in the middle of activity, with only short walks to the planned lecture spaces at Litton-Reaves Hall and the food options you'll find in D2 at Dietrick Hall. (A prepaid meal card is part of the on-campus room-and-board package.) It also saves a little gas! There is walking involved with attending EMGC, whether staying on campus or off, but shuttles or vans can take you and your luggage from your car to the residence hall and to workshops/tours.

It takes a little more planning to get set up in a residence hall room. If you're a minimalist, you may be good with just a sleeping bag, toiletries, and a towel. If you're more "glamper than tent camper," you may want your fluffy slippers and coffee maker. (Keep an eye out for official information from the State Office on items like pillows; depending on the year, bed linens have been available.)

A big improvement in 2022 was the addition of microwave/refrigerator/usb outlet combo units to the rooms in New Hall West! You can see one and other photos of the general room arrangement here, including shelving, clothing rods, a private bathroom, and bed.

Bed & Bedside Table

- Sleeping bag
- Twin XL mattress pad (helps sheets stay on firm vinyl-covered mattress)
- Egg crate, foam pad, or blowup mattress
- Twin XL sheet set
- Pillow(s) and pillowcase(s)
- Blanket or throw
- Desk lamp
- Earplugs or white noise app
- Alarm clock if you use one
- Power strip and power cords for electronic devices



Sink & Bathroom

- Toiletries, including soap and shampoo
- Sunscreen and insect repellent for tours
- Cup for sink
- Bath towels / hand towels / washcloths
- Bath mat or extra towel for floor
- Suction-cup hooks
- Hair dryer
- Medications
- Bag to hold trash (dispose in bins outside, where recycling is also available)
- Clothes
- Clothes hangers
- EMG name badge
- Unit EMG shirt
- Dress for weather (shorts and lightweight clothes, etc.)
- Shawl or light jacket (lecture hall temperature fluctuates)
- Raincoat and umbrella
- Walking shoes and waterproof or extra shoes if attending



- outside workshops or tours
- Hats for outside workshops or tours
- Shoes / slippers for the room

Food

- Snacks & Drinks
- Water Bottle / Coffee Mug – can refill in D2 and during breaks
- Light snacks are often provided between sessions

Odds & Ends

- Copy of schedule (should also receive one at check-in)
- Notebook / pen for sessions
- Saucers or lined boxes to put under plants from workshops, registration gifts, or farmers market
- Cash for VMGA silent auction and gear/clothing sales
- Camera

Security & Help

If you get into your residence hall room and have any issues at all, go down to the first floor, where there's a desk staffed by students. They will even make sure your bed is the right height if it wasn't lowered quite enough or help with lost keycards. The building has an elevator and stairs and is secure. The floors are accessible only with keycards.

If you choose to stay in a residence hall, you can lodge with a friend or by yourself, and you will have opportunities throughout the day to visit your room if you need anything. It's only a 5-minute detour on the way from "learning" to "eating."



Still to Come in May: Getting Around Campus & What to See & Do in the Area

Please send your tips/questions now or in the future to improve this information!

If you've stayed on campus and have tips and advice to share, including the things you MUST bring with you, please [share your tips here](#).

If you have any questions about attending EMGC, send email VMGATreasurer@vmga.net, and we can get the answers for you and add them to future articles.

Thank You!

This information began in the Northern Shenandoah Valley and grew from volunteer contributions. Thank you to volunteers from Fairfax, Loudoun, Norfolk, Northern Shenandoah Valley, Prince William, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, as well as some anonymous contributors.