

Gardening on the Shore

Spring, 2022

Message from the President

The delights of Spring are everywhere. The birds are singing up a storm and nesting, pollinators are buzzing around and my favorite harbinger of spring...the hummingbirds have returned. Nature truly is a wonder with a dance of its own. When the native honeysuckle bloom, the hummingbirds appear. They work together so nicely on their own and I get to sit back and enjoy it all.

For us gardeners, it's a time for dividing plants, moving them around and adding a few new favorites. No need to dwell on the plants that didn't survive. Just think of it as an experiment whose outcome was different than expected! Not to mention, you now have a spot for a new plant that caught your eye. Mine is the Eastern Blue Star (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*), a Virginia native with gorgeous clusters of light blue star shaped flowers.

Spring also brings fun events around the community. Look for upcoming information about the garden tour in Cape Charles to be held June 5, 2022. The local gardens will inspire you to perhaps add some whimsy to your garden or provide a solution to one of your problem areas. I went last year and came back with small garden envy. It is truly amazing how a small space can be turned into an oasis.

But wait, there's more! Our general membership meeting on June 7th is also our annual picnic; details to follow. Its a great time to hang out with like-minded folks, meet our new interns, enjoy good eats and swap plants. As you divide some of your plants or remove "volunteers," pot them up and bring them to the plant swap.

Until then, happy gardening.

Joyce Falkinburg

IN THIS ISSUE

Feature Article

- NCDC Re-Entry Program & Garden

Articles of Interest

- Meet the Interns
- Plant Propagation by Leaf & Stem Cuttings

Gardener Tips

- Spring 'TO DO' List
- Know your Natives
- Excerpt from MG Handbook: Plant Propagation

What We've Been Up To

Volunteer Opportunities

Upcoming Events

Feature Article

NCDC Re-Entry Program and Garden

by John McCormick, ESVMG EMG

On March 29, 2022, I had the opportunity to attend a graduation. In my lifetime I have attended a fair number of graduations but overall, this was a little different. The graduation ceremony was complete like so many others with all the essentials in place. There was music, a procession, invocation, scripture reading, welcoming speech, keynote speaker, people to present certificates and of course the graduates. The only real difference between this and the others I have attended is that this graduation was held in the Northampton County Department of Corrections' (NCDC) Regional Jail Facility located at "The Hornes" in Eastville and recognized the detainees who recently completed the Re-Entry Program at the Northampton County Regional Jail.

In this article I will tell you about this worthwhile program and the creation of a productive vegetable garden led by the Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners.

Re-Entry Program at the Northampton County Department of Corrections Regional Jail

Yup, locked up tighter than a drum, seven women and nine men took a big step in what they hope to be a second chance to move forward in the world that awaits them outside the windowless jail facility. These graduates participated in the Re-Entry Program, designed to assist incarcerated offenders to "change their thinking and behavior through cognitive programming."

The goal of this program, introduced into the Regional Jail in 2019, is two-fold. The first is public safety. It has been statistically proven that individuals who go through the program are better educated, possess usable job skills, regain family values, and have a greater respect for their community. The second goal is to reduce the rate of recidivism which has dropped considerably due to initiatives such as the Re-entry Program. In fact, in this county, it is almost 0%!

Meeting these goals can only be a "win-win" for all parties. The community wins by a reduction in crime and the people enrolled become true partners in the community again. Community groups including the Eastern Shore Community College, the Community Services Board (local mental health agency), local businesses and civic organizations, and the Eastern Shore

community at large support this work by volunteering time and providing employment opportunities for enrolled and released individuals.

The curriculum for the Re-entry Program, now open to both male and female participants, with programs such as “What Got Me Here” and “Responsible Thinking,” is designed to prepare inmates for their return to the outside world. GED classes are available along with vocational classes offered through the Eastern Shore Community College’s (ESCC) Work Force Program. In addition to the educational aspects, program participants are given assignments that promote and contribute to the overall well-being of their local neighbors.

The “flagship” project for the program is the revitalization and maintenance of an organic garden that produces vegetables utilized in the jail kitchen for the facility’s general population and those in need in our community. This year the plan is to till approximately an ½ acre of garden area. And this is where the Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners plan a role.

ESVMG Involvement

So how did our MG unit get involved?

A recent change in personnel, including the new leadership of Mr. Vincent Thomas, led to an interest in expanding the program to include a sustainable organic garden planned and maintained by participants in the Re-Entry Program. Being a “young man brought up in New Jersey,” Mr. Thomas had

no knowledge of gardening and spread the word that he was looking for help. At the time, Lynn Wajda, a member of the ESVMG unit, was working as a GED instructor for the ESCC and was made aware of the interest through her work with the women of the Re-entry Program. Lynn worked with Phil Goetkin, Past ESVMG President, to obtain permission to explore the possibility of ESVMG’s involvement in leading the garden effort.

In June 2021, while working with Lynn at the Cape Charles Garden Tour sign-in desk, I became aware of the possible involvement of the MG group with the Regional Jail and let it be known that I would be interested in finding out more about the overall project when it was ready to start up. For me it was a two-prong interest. First, after ten years of service as an MG, I had begun to think about doing other things, but this Garden intrigued me. Second, it was for me, as a member of the Catholic faith, an opportunity to practice what is called a “Corporal Work of Mercy” by visiting the sick and/or imprisoned. For me a double win, something new to test my knowledge and stamina while practicing my faith at the same time.

In August 2021, Phil put out a notice that there would be an informational meeting held at the garden site for all those interested in possibly working this project. Four members showed up, Phil, Jocelyn Grover, me and a young lady, who I called “backwards Linda” from Pennsylvania, and after some discussion, I, more or less, volunteered to lead the project.



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5

The pictures above were taken in August of 2021 and show that there was quite a bit to accomplish before getting to the planting of the garden. Picture #1 shows the compost box right next to the hoop house. Picture #2 shows work on the storage shed still needed to be completed. Picture #3 shows the area to be planted is devoid of fencing, mulch pile or a mushroom compost pile. Picture #5 shows that the final plastic cover on the Hoop House had not been installed leaving the Hoop house open the coming winter weather.

Now, let's fast forward to April 2022.

(continued on p. 14)

Articles of Interest

Met Our New Interns

by Kelley (“Poppy”) Durham, ESVMG EMG Intern

With 13 graduates, this year’s MG intern program was a big success. The program was held on Wednesdays beginning in January and continuing into late April and offered hands on activities and instruction on all chapters in the Master Gardener Handbook presented by knowledgeable professionals and experienced Master Gardeners from our own unit. As this was a very active and enthusiastic class, you will likely find yourself working alongside one or more of these new interns as they earn their volunteer hours toward full certification and bring their valuable ideas and specialties to our organization.

And, for starters, thanks to “Poppy” for taking the lead on pulling together the following introductions!



Fron left to right. Back Row: Steve Rulison (EMG), Jan Welch, Joni White, Mickey Palmer, Al Curry, Greg Temple, Paul Tiffany (EMG). Front Row: Candy Perdue, Lisa Gomez, Libby Wright, Melanie Beal, Poppy Durham, Lisa Bashinski, Cindy Holdren. Cindy Shogan is missing as is Christine Williams, Education Committee Chair, who is behind the camera.

Lisa Bashinski



Lisa is originally from Houston, Texas. She moved to Exmore from Norfolk in December of 2020. She describes herself as a tree hugging, dirt worshipping, punk rock artist. She originally took the Master Gardener Class in Virginia Beach as part of her career with the City of Virginia Beach Parks, Recreation and Landscape Management Department.

In relocating to the Eastern Shore, she wanted to learn more about the soil, plants, and trees indigenous to the shore. This class has helped her realize she is truly a naturalist. She believes everything in nature has a job to do and it is contingent on us ensuring we do our best to maintain the balance. "Nature truly is the mother of all art!"

Melanie Beal



Melanie's first memory of gardening was, as a child, planting a corn patch with her dad. He would use a hoe to pull back the dark earth, comfortably warmed by the late spring sun, and she would throw in two pink corn seeds that had been soaked in water overnight. He'd move the hoe and the two seeds were swallowed up by the soil. Then his big boot would land on top of those two seeds. They'd plant several rows every two weeks until the field was done. Then as soon as it ripened, they'd eat fresh picked corn from the stalk and put it into a boiling pot of water mere minutes after harvesting. The flavor was "simply like nothing you can buy from any source. Indescribably delicious."

She grew up in southern Oregon in a large family on a small farm. They raised and grew most of their food, and Melanie's spent her life since trying to recapture the intense fresh flavors of her childhood. She was born in the spring and has always wondered if that is partly why it's her favorite season and she can't resist buying more seeds and planting more plants than I can possibly fit into her garden.

With her husband and children, Melanie moved from the West Coast to the Deep South for graduate school twenty-five years ago. While living there, she took the Master Gardener course for the first time because the climate and flora was so vastly different from what she knew. She and her husband, with their youngest son, moved to Chincoteague Island last summer after living in Alexandria for the past eight years. Once again, she found herself drawn

to the Master Gardening course to help her with the unique climate and flora of the Eastern Shore. Melanie looks forward to continuing to learn and share her passion for growing and has begun her role as a Master Gardener by volunteering to be the class representative. Plants are like friends to her, and she says “You can never have too many friends!”

Al Curry

In the mid 1990’s, the Curry family found a home in Willis Wharf. Al enjoyed working in Wachapreague at the Eastern Shore laboratory, the seaside field station for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Al started his garden adventures by working to create a yard for their boys to explore. The boys aged out, but he remains “hooked” on growing plants. Within the Master Garden program, Al has found a collection of plant-centric people willing to challenge themselves and share their practical garden experiences.

Kelley “Poppy” Durham

As a recent “come here” to the Eastern Shore from Texas, Poppy and her husband chose Accomac to spend retirement. As a native Texan, she met her husband, Jeff, who is from Dover, DE, at Texas A&M University.

Her parents and grandparents loved the outdoors and gardening – she hated it. Poppy admits she should have taken that time to learn from her family because her gardening journey has been tough.

The Durham’s first garden in Albuquerque, NM produced carrots that tasted like soap from the alkaline soil, all their herbs went to seed, and they grew enough cherry tomatoes to feed the entire state population (who knew those darned little plants were so productive?). The next garden was in North Dakota where the summers were filled with mosquitoes from sun-up to sun-down and the winters were brutal. Then they spent the next 30-odd years in Central Texas with heavy clay soil and a shade-laden lot that only got shadier as their oaks spread their canopies.

Now she says she’s in a gardeners’ paradise and learning so much that she can’t decide what to focus on. She is a self-proclaimed tree hugger, so she is considering becoming a MG Tree Steward.

Note: Master Gardener interns are now allowed to get volunteer hours before graduation as long as an EMG is present at the volunteering site. They also now have 18 months to complete the 50 hour requirement.

Lisa Gomez



Lisa is a native of the Eastern Shore and like many young adults left the Shore to pursue a career. After 30+ years, she and her husband returned and settled in Cape Charles. Being back on the Eastern Shore has given her a chance to slow down and explore her interests, one of which is gardening.

Lisa's love of gardening began as a child, spending time with her grandmother tending to her Mom-mom's roses and perennials. As an adult, she began to keep her own gardens, all self-taught. She is very interested in both herb and fragrance gardens. Lisa is also a trained perfumer and is enjoying learning more about odoriferous flowers and plants.

She signed up for the Master Gardener class to improve her knowledge and to meet people with the same interest and passion for gardening. She has found the Master Gardener course to be extremely beneficial and has learned much.

Cindy Holdren



Cindy is a long-time resident of the Eastern Shore and Onancock, having moved to the Shore in 1970 for her first job at Accomack County Department of Social Services (ACDSS). She worked there for a total of 19 years, serving as Director for the last 9 of those years. After remarrying in 1990, she moved to Williamsburg, then Norfolk, and worked in the child support and employment services programs.

She has a son and a daughter both living nearby in Exmore and Salisbury and a stepson in Chicago. Most importantly she has two adorable grandsons! She has gardened for many years, but more so since purchasing her current home in Onancock in 1988. Moving back to Onancock full time in 2007, time has been spent re-doing many beds and installing walkways, a patio, and a firepit area. Retirement in 2021 has given her the time to finally reach her goal of becoming a Master Gardener. Cindy started her ESVMG volunteer work early as the alternate class representative.

Mickey Palmer

Mickey was raised in Connecticut and married her husband, Tim, in 1977. They began their adventure in farming and learned from old-timers and *Mother Earth News* magazine. They raised four boys and built an earth-sheltered home while enjoying the pleasures of hobby farming. Mickey moved to Onancock with her family in 2003. She worked as a Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant before retiring.

It has always been a dream of hers to take the Master Gardener class for “the wealth of knowledge and meeting new people.” They continued to have a small hobby farm in Virginia and are currently caring for many varieties of fruit trees and berry bushes, vegetable, herbs, and flower gardens, chickens, guinea hens and honeybees.

Candy Perdue



Candy spent her school years in Arkansas and after graduating from college, she took a management position with a large company that transferred her and her family to the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1992. She has lived here now for approximately 30 years. After retiring from this career in the food production industry, she took a federal government job with USDA. She worked with USDA for seven years and recently retired from that position as well. Candy currently works for the Eastern Shore Public Library system on a part-time basis. “I enjoy the atmosphere, helping patrons, and love being surrounded by books.”

She has fond memories of working in the family gardens when she was young. She wants to broaden her knowledge concerning gardening and has plans for a greenhouse for starting early spring seeds, growing flowers, and maybe some exotic plants. Her husband has a small business and is very involved with planting, gardening, and landscape designing. She joined the Master Gardeners class because she wants to provide a public service to her Eastern Shore Community and promote sustainable gardening through horticultural educational projects.

Cindy Shogan

Cindy retired to Chincoteague (aka paradise) five years ago. After a career of protecting wild places across the country, in mostly Alaska and Utah, Cindy decided it was time to learn how to care for her plot of wildness and help maintain the gardens on Chincoteague and Assateague.

Cindy and her husband, Brooks Yeager, new author (*Chilly Winds - a Chincoteague Intrigue*), love hanging out with their three grandchildren and birdwatching!

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

Margaret Atwood

Greg Temple



Greg and his wife, Beth, both retired on December 1, 2012, went to settlement on their house in Alexandria, VA, packed up and drove to Onancock, settling on their new home on Market Street on December 4. He retired after working for 36 years in the Amtrak Claims Department.

They lived in Alexandria for 28 years and had been taking long weekend vacations in Onancock for several years, staying at the Charlotte Hotel and then renting a cottage on the North Creek. They fell in love with Coastal Virginia and the Eastern Shore in particular. It was the beauty of the Shore and the pace of life that attracted them, but it is the strong sense of community and the number of interesting, educated, talented and diverse people that has made Onancock a special place to live.

The house on Market Street, while right in town, sits on just shy of an acre of land. The first year was spent redecorating and completing the first of several renovations. Temple had dabbled with gardening in Alexandria, and in the Spring of 2014 decided it was time to “dig in” to this very large and challenging yard. Relying on the generous advice, freely given, by a number of very talented local gardeners, along with many and various gifted plants, he is now entering the 9th season of creating and working the gardens.

He loves that gardening provides short term pleasures and the long-term satisfaction of patience and planning – following a tree from sapling to full growth and seeing a garden plot fill in like it was planned it a few years earlier. And, of course, the ability to be outside and work in the garden during COVID was a godsend.

A friend in town who is a very talented gardener in her own right, and has spectacular gardens, convinced him to sign up for the Master Gardener’s Training Program. He is impressed with the quality and depth of information, and is especially impressed with the dedication, generosity and knowledge of the instructors and local Master Gardeners. The field trips are particularly enjoyable and enlightening. Temple says, “It is humbling to learn how much you don’t know and at the same time exciting to be a part of a community of professionals that are dedicated to educating the public about sustainable practices that preserve the ecosystems of Coastal Virginia.”

Jan Welch

While attending a meeting few years ago, the question was posed, “Where would you be this evening if you didn’t have to be here?” The answer for Jan was an unhesitating, “In the garden!”

Coming from many generations born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland where gardening was a necessary part of life, Jan is thankful for a childhood spent outdoors, where some of her

earliest memories are of wondrous things like lady's slippers and Indian pipes along with some not so entirely fond remembrances of working in her parents' multiple vegetable gardens. There, she must have been unknowingly inoculated with a love for gardening. She and her husband have raised vegetables nearly every year of their marriage, and some of her favorite pictures of their four children are of them growing along with whatever was growing in the garden that year. She is now introducing this thing—gardening—to their grandchildren with the hope that they too will find the garden a never-ending place to learn, to enjoy God's creation, and, of course, to work hard.

Joni White

Born on Eastern Shore and having lived here most of her life, Joni enjoys nature and working with people and all types of animals. Teaching and prevention have been the theme of her life including work as an advanced nurse practitioner (and citizen of the world).

She loves learning something new every day and wants to contribute to a healthy “buffet” for people and wildlife in the yard, garden, community and Master Gardeners supporting those goals. White hopes to inspire others with her passion and action for a positive impact on the land, sea, air when teaching her grandchildren and those wanting to help the community and the world.

One of the mottos she tries to live by came from Chief Seattle, “humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. (1854) ” One can see this philosophy in Master Gardeners classes, too.

Elizabeth “Libby” Wright

Libby, originally from Massachusetts, moved to Maryland in 1990 to work in the G.H.W. Bush administration at the Food and Drug Administration and stayed, working in Washington at various organizations on healthcare policy. She stumbled on Cape Charles in 2000, fell in love with the town, and bought a house with the thought of retiring there, which happened late last year.

Libby worked mostly at Citizens Against Government Waste, a taxpayer advocacy group. Her sister took a similar course in Maine, and she became interested in taking the course to help her make her yard beautiful. She is interested in working at the Roots Garden in Cape Charles and other MG Gardens such as the one at Kiptopeke Park and the Northampton County offices.



Plant Propagation by Leaf and Stem Cuttings

by Jane McKinley, ESVMG EMG



Read the MG Handbook excerpt to find out what may be wrong with these begonia cuttings that I am propagating!

We gardeners love to have new plants! And, as I sit here on a chilly March afternoon, I'm anxious to get to the garden center. But there are limitations to what is available and, even when a retailer is well stocked, plants can be very expensive and sometimes hard to find. These problems can be overcome by propagating one's own. And it can be a fun and an educational enterprise!

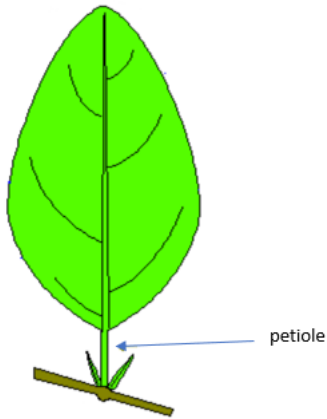
This article will discuss asexual propagation which is done through leaf and stem cuttings. This type of propagation reproduces the parent plant by selecting a piece of the parent plant and

placing it in growing conditions where it will regenerate itself to make a new plant. This allows the gardener to make an identical copy of a plant, called a clone, and is the best way to maintain some species and to propagate others that are sterile or have difficulty making seed.

Cuttings can be divided into five categories: herbaceous plants (including houseplants) and softwood, hardwood, semi-hardwood woody plants, and leaf cuttings. The timing for taking herbaceous cuttings is very flexible, however, success is generally enhanced in the spring when these plants are actively growing and more apt to root quickly on their own. Plants that are often grown from herbaceous cuttings include tomatoes, sweet potatoes, garden mums, poinsettia, and geranium.

Softwood cuttings are those taken from very recent growth with soft stem tissue. These cuttings need to be prepared quickly because, once removed, they become very flaccid. Forsythia, blueberries, crape myrtle, and weigela all root well from softwood cuttings. Unlike softwood cuttings best taken in the spring, hardwood cuttings are most successful when taken in late fall or winter when the tissue is not actively growing. These are some of the easiest cuttings for amateurs. Willow, roses, catalpa, mulberry, button bush, and chaste tree are good candidates for hardwood cuttings.

Semi-hardwood cuttings are neither new growth nor mature, dormant growth but are usually taken when the stem is two to six months old and still has some leaves present. This type of cutting works well for broadleaf evergreen species such as camellia, holly, Japanese



pittosporum, and azalea. Leaf cuttings are used almost exclusively for indoor plants. Leaves of most plants will either produce a few roots but no plant, or just decay. One method is to detach the whole leaf with up to 1" of petiole (the part of the leaf that attaches it to the stem). Insert the lower end of the petiole into the medium from which the new plant will form. Once this happens, the leaf may be severed from the new plants when they have their own roots. African violets propagate well with this method. If the leaf has no petiole, such as with a jade plant and snake plant, insert the cut leaf vertically into the medium.

Once a cutting is taken, it must create new roots to quickly reestablish its ability to transpire water and absorb nutrients. Roots that grow from a stem or leaf are referred to as *adventitious* because they appear where they don't usually grow. Plants have either preformed root initials or must make new roots after being cut. Plants with preformed roots are the easiest to propagate because these pre-roots are ready and waiting in case the plant is damaged. Once a stem with preformed roots comes into contact with soil or water, new roots begin to emerge. Plants with preformed roots include coleus, sweet potato, willow, hydrangea, and tomatoes.

Plants without preformed roots must be induced to form new roots. Once the severed end is healed, new roots, triggered by the plant's auxin hormone, will begin to grow. Auxin is naturally synthesized in new plant tissue, such as young leaves, and then moves downward to the roots where it helps to initiate new growth underground. This hormone can also be "repurposed" to

create new roots at a wound site. Auxin can only be transported downward, which is why it's important to insert the cutting "right side up" so that the cut end that faced downward is inserted into the planting medium. Auxin can also be added to a cutting in the form of a rooting hormone to help encourage new roots to form.

The potting soil, or medium, in which a plant grows, must be of good quality and moist to supply moisture around the cutting's surface. It should be porous for root aeration and drainage as well as capable of water and nutrient retention. An equal mix of peat moss, vermiculite, and perlite is good and favors moisture retention. A 50/50 mix of peat moss and perlite favors good aeration. Since it doesn't hold much water for long, coarse perlite alone can be used to start cuttings of cactus-type plants which would ordinarily rot in higher moisture.

Plants have either preformed root initials or must make new roots after being cut. Plants with preformed roots are the easiest to propagate because these pre-roots are ready and waiting.

(continued on p. 16)

NCDC Re-Entry Program and Garden

(continued from p. 4)



#1



#2



#3

Now up to April, 2022. Picture #1 shows the compost box had been moved behind the Hoop house. Also notice that the raised beds, perfectly square and level, are new and were assembled by the women. This picture also shows a solar panel installed to power the exhaust/intake fan for the Hoop house. Heat is a problem, so the purchase of shade covers for the Hoop house is under consideration. Picture #2 shows the male crew's answer to the ladies raised beds, also found to be "somewhat level." *Don't you just love competition!* Note the framework for tunnels to protect the seedlings that harden off prior to field planting. Picture #3 shows the inside of the Hoop house. Please take note of the various wire and wood racks for seedlings. Also note the stone dust floor for absorbing water; the two roll-about worktables; and the overhead "misting" irrigation which is, honestly, still a work in progress. All these items were built by either the women or men of the Re- entry Program. What is not shown are two piles of mushroom compost imported from Pennsylvania and a mulch pile purchased locally. You also can't see what I term the "Bay Creek deer fence" which entirely surrounds the first garden.

2021 Planting and Harvest

It was decided in late August /early September to try a fall crop. First, to raise morale - our "Krew" wanted to see that, with a little hard work, they could actually grow something. Second, the "Krew" wanted to show the Sheriff and his staff that we could accomplish what we had set out to do which was to feed the facility's general population. We planted string beans, collard greens, mustard greens, lettuce and summer squash. In mid-November, just prior to a major frost, the "Krew" harvested enough to feed ½ of the General Population for one meal.

We were in the game! And, with that, we covered another 35 x 60 plot of ground with black plastic to prep for the following spring.

2022 Planting

Besides the second 30' x 60' plot that was being prepped for the 2022 spring planting, a third plot measuring 30' x 160', has also been tilled and will be used to plant white potatoes, sweet potatoes and sweet corn. The original first two plots will have about 52 rows of veggies including an assortment of greens, string beans, lettuce, cucumbers, squash, beets, cabbage, tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli and watermelon. We also left room for a 5' x 30' pollinator garden and, running along these two plots, is a 4' x 60' sunflower garden. The raised beds along both sides of the Hoop House have white and red onions, sweet peppers, hot peppers, white potatoes left over from the field planting and basil, parsley and sage. Other plantings will occur but, as of now, they are undecided.

2022 and beyond

What's in the future? At this point in time, we don't know. Our long-range goal is to provide about 80% of all the vegetables fed to the general population of the facility for one year. Right now, there are approximately 60 or so people occupying the building plus staff. This is a lofty goal, but we believe it to be attainable given time. We have all jumped in with both feet and will learn as we go and with learning will come success. If we are truly wise people, we will learn from our mistakes and improve what we are doing.

Some of the Players and their thoughts on Re-entry and the Garden

Ms. F: The Re-entry Program saved my life and has given me the tools to grow into not just a better person but a stronger person. The tools I have now will certainly help me be better when I get out. The garden I very simply just love. I have learned that I can accomplish something and if I stick to it there will be a great satisfaction in knowing that success. Plus being outside in the fresh air can't be beat!

Ms. W: The Program has given me another chance to have a better life and the tools I have now should help in the coming days when I get released. The garden and spending time outside, I just love it! WE have accomplished a lot together and have learned that we /I can really learn how to do stuff and accomplish good things without filling myself with garbage.

Mr. G: The Re-entry Program can help a lot for us going back to the outside. If you come in with your whole heart it can be a life changer. Mr. Thomas is a true hands-on guy and if you don't show that you are all in, then he can't go to bat for you. The garden is good and getting better all the time. Everyone is buying into it and all the work it takes and it is only showing how when we come together it all gets done.

Mr. S: With our circumstances, the Re-entry Program is the best you can be involved in. It can be life changing for sure. I love being involved with the garden and have learned a bunch of stuff about tending it and seeing what can happen when you go all in together.

Equipment wise, it would be nice to have our own well with solar power to keep it humming. Right now, our water covers at least two football fields to get to us and there are only two faucets on site. We can only use one faucet at a time which causes a problem when it is time to water the crops. Also, with our own well, we could run drip irrigation throughout the whole area which would allow the gardens to become more efficient and productive.

All in all, it is not just the garden. It is all the people involved that make this venture a success. The Sheriff, the Deputies, the civilian staff, the college, the yoga lady, the detainees and, of course, the ESVMG gardeners give us the support and encouragement to help make it happen. That is what will make this “GARDEN” a success for years to come and perhaps a good memory that will give strength to someone who may be standing on the edge. *Who knows!*



Plant Propagation by Leaf and Stem Cuttings

(continued from p. 13)

Coarse vermiculite alone has excellent water-holding capacity and aeration but may dry out rapidly via evaporation if not covered in some way. Commercially prepared mixes contain a mix of sphagnum peat moss and vermiculite, both of which are generally free of diseases, weed seeds, and insects. The medium should also contain little or no fertilizer, too much of which will damage or inhibit new roots. Plain water can be used to propagate some cuttings. This is possible and actually works quite well for some species which root easily. You may recall rooting potatoes in water in a sunny window when a kid. It certainly provides the needed moisture, but if the water is not changed on a weekly basis, it will become stagnant, oxygen deficient, and inhibitory to rooting.

Furthermore, roots produced in 100% water are different from those produced in solid media. These baby plants may undergo greater transplant shock and will need to be kept exceptionally moist until acclimated to their new environment. So, even though not the most ideal method for most plants, it is certainly feasible.

Cuttings should be made with a sharp blade and are best taken in the morning. To prevent transmitting diseases, ensure that the cutting tool is clean by dipping it in rubbing alcohol or a mixture of one part bleach to nine parts water. Select good, healthy plant material that is free of pathogens and insect damage.

Once the cutting is removed, place it in a plastic bag with a small amount of water to increase humidity and, if you are working outside for an extended period in the hot months, place the bag in a cooler with ice. When cutting a stem, cut it into 3- to 4-inch pieces so that the tip of the branch is at the top (referred to as a “tip cutting”) and at least one leaf bud is at the bottom

with little, if any, remaining stem on the end. Remove the lower bud and lower leaves that would touch or be below the medium.

Also, remove any flower buds to allow the cutting to use its energy and stored carbohydrates for root and shoot formation rather than fruit and seed production. Make a hole in the medium and insert the cutting deeply enough to support itself, making sure that the point where the lower leaf bud was removed is below the planting medium surface. Remember to keep the cuttings moist while preparing them. To hasten rooting, increase the number of roots, or to obtain uniform rooting (except on soft, fleshy stems), dip the stem into a rooting hormone prior to “planting,” preferably one containing a fungicide. Prevent possible contamination of the entire supply of rooting hormone by putting some hormone in a separate container for dipping cuttings. Discard this hormone after all the cuttings are treated.

Try to keep both the air and medium temperature warm at between 70-75°F. If your house is cool and you want to increase the success rate, electric heating pads can be purchased and put beneath containers to maintain a constant temperature. Good air circulation around the cuttings is also necessary to discourage fungal growth. Place the prepared cuttings in bright, but not direct light. Like Goldilocks seeking the best bed, a west window is too warm, a south window too bright, north is too dim – but an east window is *just right*.

Keeping the cuttings humid until they can root is very important. One way to provide good moisture conditions is to use a mist bed which sprays a fine mist of water every few minutes, however, this may not be practical in a home operation. An alternative is to imitate a mist system by creating a humidity dome. This is done by covering the cuttings and their container with a perforated or slit clear plastic bag. This increases the relative humidity and inhibits water loss by the plant and medium yet allows air circulation.

References

VCE Publication 426-002, “Propagation by Cuttings, Layering and Division”

Fine Gardening Magazine, April 2022 issue, “The Science of Propagating from Cuttings”

Master Gardener Handbook, Chapter 10, “Plant Propagation”

Still Needing Help with Better Impact?

If so, consider watching the 30 minute training video for VCE volunteers which is available through a link on the Better Impact home page or at <https://bit.ly/382ni2h>.

Gardeners' Tips

SPRING 'TO DO' LIST

Although, since this issue of "Gardening on the Shore" is getting to you a little later, you probably still have spring chores still outstanding. Be sure to include the following on your "To Do" list.

1. You can at last **clean out the garden beds** of dead plant debris from the winter. As the weather warms up, it is safe to remove the mess that you allowed to remain on the garden bed as protected shelter and food sources for birds and other wildlife.
2. Before it's time to plant those tender annuals, **focus on hardscaping needs** such as repairing damaged retaining walls, leveling out your walkway stones, and cleaning out your gutters. These tasks are easier to accomplish before the plants go in or begin to leaf out.
3. **Clean out debris from your pond or water feature.** Scrub and sterilize (1 part bleach/5 parts water) your bird bath and containers before establishing them in the garden for the summer.
4. If you haven't done it within the last three years, consider **testing your soil** to determine what nutrients it needs. Also amend your soil with compost and/or humus to increase its moisture retention and overall health. If you see earthworms and other garden creatures in the soil, that's a good sign that things are going well.
5. **Prune shrubs and trees** to remove dead or damaged branches and suckers. Heavier pruning should be saved for the winter months when the plants are dormant. Be careful not to remove flower buds on such spring blooming shrubs as azalea forsythia, ninebark, quince, and weigela.
6. Just as they are emerging, spring is the time to **divide and transplant perennials** that have outgrown their space. To avoid disrupting their bloom cycle, stick to the summer and fall blooming perennials while waiting for fall to divide spring blooming plants.
7. And, one of the most fun tasks, after the threat of frost (mid- to late-April) **plant your containers and garden borders** with summer blooming annuals. Keep an eye out for "blackberry winter" when the temperature drops to an unseasonably low, and be ready to cover tender buds and foliage.



EXCERPT FROM MASTER GARDENER HANDBOOK

The Master Gardener Handbook was a primary source for the article on the propagation of leaf and stem cuttings. Below is an excerpt from this source which reviews the advantages of asexual propagation and a brief description of this method.

Asexual propagation, as mentioned earlier, is the best way to maintain some species, particularly an individual that best represents that species. Clones are groups of plants that are identical to their one parent and that can only be propagated asexually. The Bartlett pear (1770) and the Delicious apple (1870) are two examples of clones that have been asexually propagated for many years.

The major methods of asexual propagation are cuttings, layering, division, and budding/grafting. Cuttings involve rooting a severed piece of the parent plant; layering involves rooting a part of the parent and then severing it; and budding and grafting are joining two plant parts from different varieties.

Many types of plants, both woody and herbaceous, are frequently propagated by cuttings. A cutting is a vegetative plant part which is severed from the parent plant in order to regenerate itself, thereby forming a whole new plant. Take cuttings from healthy disease-free plants, preferably from the upper part of the plant (this season's growth). Avoid taking cuttings from leggy stems, heavily fertilized plants, or plants showing symptoms of moisture stress or nutrient deficiency.

Remove cuttings from the plant with a sharp blade to reduce injury to the parent plant. Dip the cutting tool in rubbing alcohol or a mixture of one part bleach to nine parts water to prevent transmitting diseases from infected plant parts to healthy ones. Remove flowers and flower buds to allow the cutting to use its energy and stored carbohydrates for root and shoot formation rather than fruit and seed production. To hasten rooting, increase the number of roots, or to obtain uniform rooting (except on soft, fleshy stems), use a rooting hormone, preferably one containing a fungicide. Prevent possible contamination of the entire supply of rooting hormone by putting some in a separate container for dipping cuttings.

Place stem and leaf cuttings in bright, indirect light. Root cuttings can be kept in the dark until new shoots appear. Some additional tips for successful propagation include: cuttings from young plants root better than those from mature plants; lateral shoot cuttings are more successful than terminal shoots; avoid flower buds (*did you see buds on my cuttings?*); take cuttings in the morning and keep them cool and moist until ready to plant; space cuttings so that each will receive adequate light and ventilation (*are mine spaced too close together?*); ensure that buds on cuttings are pointed upwards.

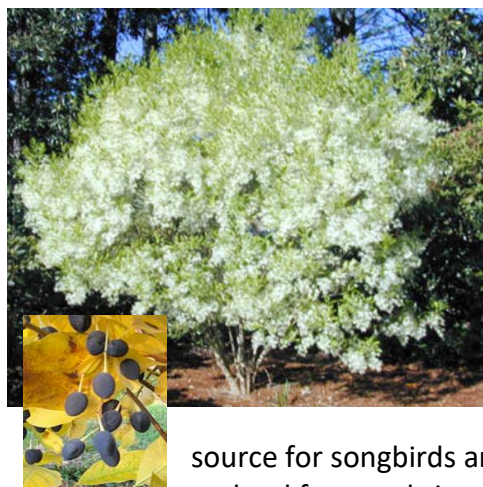
Master Gardener Handbook
Chapter 10, Plant Propagation



KNOW YOUR NATIVES

As interest in native plants and how to incorporate them into one's landscape grows, with each issue, this series introduces the reader to a select variety of native plant. The plant featured will be at its most attractive during the current season. For the spring, the fringetree takes center stage with its yellow petals contrasting against its bare branches. Fragrant flower clusters with creamy white fringe-like petals.

Fringetree, *Chionanthus virginicus*



Native to both Accomac and Northampton counties, the fringetree is a small deciduous tree generally growing from 12 to 20 feet tall and wide. It has a multi-stemmed rounded habit but can be trained into a single trunk. This plant grows best in full to part sun with the best foliage in partial shade and the best flowering in full sun. It prefers a moist environment but will tolerate occasionally dry soil

The striking spring flower clusters, attractive to pollinators, are followed by showy blue-black fruits which mature in late summer. These fruits provide a food source for songbirds and small mammals. Its bark with scaly dark brown ridges and red furrows brings winter interest.

Fringetree is a nice specimen plant in lawns as well as in a native garden. Plant it in small groups along a woodland border or, to enjoy its spring fragrance, include it in a children's or sensory garden.

What We've Been Up To

ESVMG General Meeting

The April general meeting was held at Brownsville Preserve where members were treated to a "field trip" of this interesting outdoor venue. Members were able to add continuing education hours through attending a presentation by the Nature Conservancy's representative, Jenny Miller.

Farm Day-ish 2022

Accomack County 3rd and 4th grade students got a tractor-load of learning about Virginia agriculture in early April. In lieu Farm Day this year, our Extension Office teamed up with the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District (ESSWCD) to present a morning of fun-filled activities at the Accomack County Elementary schools. Cindy Holdren and Poppy Durham, 2022 Master Gardener Trainees along with Pauline Melbourne, joined Theresa Pittman, Unit Coordinator Extension Agent, on April 5 at Accawmacke Elementary for a delightful morning educating the students about Virginia agriculture.

Some of the activities included Pollinator Jeopardy, Ag Bingo and petting *live* baby chicks. If the smiling faces and happy chatter were any indication, the students enjoyed the event almost as much as the Master Gardeners!

Earth Day at the Salisbury Zoo

ESVMG volunteers Chuck Maddox, Eileen Brown, Paul Sears, Diana Schaney, and Ray Schaney enjoyed their “work” at the April 23 Salisbury Zoo Earth Day event with its “Pollinators” theme. There was a steady stream of visitors to our booth from 10am till 4pm. Many children. All ages loved the various hand stamps and stickers we had for them. ESVMG teamed up with the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge to emphasize the importance of native plants to wildlife, especially pollinators.



Arbor Day 2022

On April 30, ESVMG volunteers enjoyed a beautiful sunny morning helping the Cape Charles Tree Advisory Board and Eastern Shore Soil & Water District in celebrating Arbor Day and the second year of Cape Charles being recognized as an Arbor Day Foundation “Tree City.”

Volunteers manned a Plant Clinic table and helped to distribute free seeds, seedlings, and trees to eager passersby.



Christine Williams, Libby Wright, Paul Tiffany, Cindy Ray, and Phil Goetkin, along with other ESVMG volunteers listened in as Libby Hume of Cape Charles reads the Arbor Day Proclamation.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are all aware of the need for volunteers at the numerous ESVMG-supported gardens across the Shore, and many of us help out with these projects. Of special note is the need for volunteers at the CSB garden in Parksley (contact Robin Swert), at the Chincoteague Museum Garden (contact Bob Schendock) and New Roots Youth Garden in Cape Charles (contact Phil Goetkin). There are also a couple of other opportunities coming up this year that you may consider for fun and to earn volunteer hours.

Cape Charles Garden Tour

ESVMG will be holding its second Cape Charles Garden Tour on Sunday, June 5, from noon – 4pm. In addition to the New Roots Youth Garden, there will be five private residents included on the tour this year. Volunteers will be needed at New Roots and at each of the residential gardens. Volunteers will have an opportunity to tour the gardens on the prior Saturday morning. Contact Diane D’Amico or Jane McKinley to let us know that you are available.

Fall 2022 ESVMG Garden Symposium

Planning continues for the upcoming 2022 ESVMG Garden Symposium, "Garden with a Purpose," to be held on October 22 from 8-4 pm at the Chincoteague Center, 6155 Community Drive, on Chincoteague Island. Doug Tallamy, Barbara Ellis, Ginny Rosenkranz, and Mikaela Boley will be the featured speakers. The all day event also includes a light breakfast with a selection of fresh breakfast pastries and coffee from Amarin, a boxed lunch and afternoon treats. There will be a silent auction/raffle of lovely locally sourced gift baskets to bid on too! Tickets will be sold exclusively online beginning in June. Come volunteer for this event, either now with the planning or on the day of the event to help make this the best Symposium ever! Contact Jocelyn Grover to let her know you want to get involved.

WRITERS NEEDED

You may have noticed that I had help writing the articles in this season's newsletter! Thanks to John and Poppy for stepping up and helping with this task – which can be lots of fun, actually, and done at a leisurely pace at home.

But I still need writers for future issues. Time spent can be counted as volunteer hours, and what a nice way to get credit during a time of bad weather, convalescence, or just plain curiosity! You can pick the topic and, of course, work on it as your schedule allows.

Please let me know if you would like to help out with this fun and educational activity.

UPCOMING 2022 EVENTS

June 5, time TBD	ESVMG Cape Charles Garden Tour
June 7, time TBD	ESVMG Annual Picnic & General Meeting*
Oct 22, noon – 4:00	ESVMG Garden Symposium

* Julie Cardinale's house at 28035 Dockview St, Harborton. Watch for more details.

2021-22 ESVMG BOARD MEMBERS

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Past President – Phil Goetkin
Vice-President – Jocelyn Grover
Secretary – Nancy Arnold
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Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners

Newsletter Editor: Jane McKinley

23303 Front St., PO Box 60, Accomack, VA 23301.

Phone: 757-787-1361/Hotline: 757-678-7946. E-mail esmgv@gmail.com.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Jill Wright at [757-385-4769](tel:757-385-4769) during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. TDD number [\(800\) 828-1120](tel:800-828-1120).

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