

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

- VIRTUAL -

Master Gardener College

JUNE 25-28 2020

Information, Schedule &
Session Descriptions



**Virginia
Cooperative
Extension**

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University
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Acknowledgments

Thank you to members of our EMGC Advisory Team & to our new College planning committee: Megan Tierney, Peggy Fox, Kathleen Reed, Mary Ann Kincaid, George Graine, Pat Reilly

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Kathleen Reed at reedka@vt.edu (TDD*) 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.

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Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, June 25

Welcome Session	12:30 pm - 1:00 pm
Keynote 1: Shawn Dash	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Concurrent Session 1	2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Friday, June 26

Keynote 2: Erin Ling	12:30 pm - 1:30 pm
Concurrent Session 2	2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Saturday, June 27

Keynote 3: Barb Pleasant	12:30pm - 1:30 pm
Concurrent Session 3	2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Sunday, June 28

Concurrent Session 4	12:30 pm - 2:00 pm
Keynote 4: Holly Scoggins	2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Closing Session	3:30 pm - 3:45 pm

*Note: Sessions will be recorded and made available via Canvas to all registered participants. You do not need to watch all the sessions live, and you can go back and watch multiple concurrent sessions after the conclusion of College.

About Online College



From the State Coordinator

Greetings,

We hope this program finds you safe and healthy. While we wish the circumstances were different, we are excited to invite you to join us online for Extension Master Gardener College 2020.

This event will be very different from our usual Colleges. We will miss all of our fun evening events, tours and hands-on workshops, and opportunities to socialize. However, this year's online college will offer something new: the chance to experiment with learning on a new platform and access to recordings of *all* of our speakers and sessions!

Due to the substantial decrease in registration cost and ease of attending from home, we are also hopeful that many more EMGs will join us!

Kathleen Reed
State Coordinator,
Virginia Cooperative
Extension Master
Gardener Program

Overview of Online College

Why is EMGC online this year?

In order to protect the safety of our volunteers amidst the pandemic, the State Office decided to move 2020 EMGC online. As of April 6, Virginia Tech has moved all summer programming online.

When will EMGC be held?

We will hold EMGC over the same dates-- June 25-28--for which EMGC was originally scheduled. We will use a revised schedule. For schedule information, see the program information below.

How much will EMGC cost?

Registration will cost \$50. Registration will include access to all keynotes and concurrents, which you can watch live OR watch recordings of afterwards.

How do I register?

Registration will not take place through our standard in-person EMGC system facilitated by VT Continuing and Professional Education. Registration will take place via Destiny.

How do I attend virtually?

After registering through Destiny, you will automatically be added to a Canvas course. You will receive an email notifying you that you have been added to a course and prompting you to create an account.

When you are logged into your Canvas

account, you can access “EMGC 2020” as a “course” on your “dashboard.” Keynote speakers and concurrent sessions will be organized into modules with all appropriate links to join sessions listed.

At the time of each session, you will need to click the appropriate link to join the session. You will then be taken to the Zoom conference.

After sessions conclude, we will replace the Zoom conference links with links to the recorded sessions (please allow 48 hours for us to post recording links).

After EMGC is over, you will retain access to this “course” and will be able to go back and use the recording links to view sessions.

Do I have to watch all the sessions live?

No! Sessions will be recorded and made available for access later (due to the limited capacity of Virginia Tech’s Zoom account, please allow 48 hours for us to make recordings available).

When you register for College, you have the option of attending sessions live AND watching recorded sessions later. Once all session recordings are posted, you will have access to all 20+ sessions!*

Do I have to choose which concurrent sessions I want to attend when I register?

No! Our registration process will not include schedule options asking you to choose concurrent sessions.

At the time of each concurrent session, you will need to select the meeting you’re interested in watching live from the list of sessions and follow the link to join that Zoom meeting.

If you wish to watch more than one concurrent session, you can check back later for links to recorded sessions. If you wanted to, you could watch all the concurrent sessions later!

Are there capacity limits for sessions/college?

No, since college is online, there are no capacity limits for concurrent or keynote sessions. As many people who wish to can register and attend whichever sessions they want.

What about the milestone ceremony and other “events” offered at in-person EMGC?

EMGC 2020 will not include a milestone ceremony, VMGA meeting, or other virtual “events” comparable to those held at in-person EMGCs. The State Office will publish our milestone recognition booklet digitally, as well as prepare a volunteer recognition video and mail milestone certificates when we resume normal office operation.

**Note: While we will try our best to ensure all recordings are successful, due to the limited capacity of Virginia Tech’s Zoom system and staffing requirements, it is possible that some sessions will not be recorded or will not be recorded in full.*

Registration & Virtual Attendance

About Registration

Milestone discounts

Due to the logistics of registration for online college, we are not able to offer milestone discounts.

Why a registration fee for an online event?

The State Office runs Master Gardener College as a break-even event. Although College is moving online, the State Office still incurs costs, including costs associated with registration, staff time, and printing / mailing milestone materials.

Registration dates

Registration will open in early May and will remain open until June.

Since registration will NOT involve selecting your concurrent sessions, you do not need to worry about certain sessions filling up before you have a chance to register.

Registering for concurrent sessions

Our registration process will NOT involve selecting concurrent sessions at the time of registration. Instead, at the time of each session, you can choose the session you wish to attend and follow the link to the appropriate Zoom meeting. Recordings of **all** concurrent sessions will be made available later.

Registration Cost

\$50

How to Register Using Destiny

Registration Link

When registration opens on **May 4**, we will provide a link to our Destiny registration portal via email.

Payment

We can accept payment through Destiny via credit card. We cannot accept checks.

Online Platform Details

EMGC 2020 will be conducted online using two pieces of software:

Canvas where we will organize all the links to our meetings, post announcements, and provide links to recorded sessions.

Zoom the video platform that allows us to host a webinar online!

This might sound complicated, but we promise it's not!

Here's how it works:

1. Register for EMGC 2020 in Destiny using the link we send out on May 4.
2. Receive an automatic email with instructions on setting up your guest account in Canvas.
3. Log in to Canvas to check out our cool new online college page. We recommend you log in immediately and look around to become familiar with the site.
4. When it's time for College to begin (Thursday, June 25 at 12:30 pm) log back into Canvas and navigate to the appropriate session and follow the

instructions to join the session via Zoom. (We recommend you log in at least 15 minutes in advance of each session and join the meeting a little early to make sure you don't miss anything!)

5. When the session is over, you will have time to take a break before the next session is scheduled to begin.
6. If you want to view a previously-recorded session, log in to Canvas and navigate to the session you want to watch. After each session airs, the Zoom meeting link will be replaced by a link to the recording.

We will have technical support available to help you if you encounter any trouble!



Figure 1: Our EMGC 2020 page in Canvas

Keynote Speakers & Topics

Shawn Dash - Keynote 1 - Thursday, June 25 1:00-2:00 pm

The Mixed Blessing of Garden Insects

Introducing you to the wild world of insects that inhabit your yard and garden! Shawn will discuss the biodiversity of the little things that “run the place,” will then move on to the important players related to insect, plant, bird, and human interactions. Leave this lecture with an understanding of the garden as an ecosystem and ready to invite insects in to the landscape.



About Dr. Shawn T. Dash, Hampton University, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences

Dr. Dash is originally from Baltimore, Maryland where even at the youngest ages spent time exploring the natural world around him. Dr. Dash is continuing his work on ants, soil invertebrates in the context of evolution and ecology. During his time at LSU Dr. Dash developed a strong interest and obsession for science education. Dr. Dash has given numerous outreach programs on insect ecology for audiences from elementary to college level programs. After teaching at community college, research university, and private liberal arts

institutions, Dr. Dash is bringing his passion for learning and hunger for understanding of biodiversity to Hampton University.

Erin Ling - Keynote 2 - Friday, June 26 12:30- 1:30 pm

Social Marketing for Behavior Change

As Extension Master Gardeners, we know that our outreach has more value when we can understand what makes people tick and what it will take for them to change their behavior (think native landscaping instead of fertilized turf, for example). Community Based Social Marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of society as a whole. This session will provide a description of this approach, approaches for identifying barriers to adopting a behavior, tools that can be used to encourage behavior change, and methods for evaluating impact.



About Erin Ling, Senior Extension Agent and Program Coordinator, Virginia Household Water Quality Program, Biological Systems Engineering Department, Virginia Tech

Erin Ling is a Sr. Extension Associate in the Biological Systems Engineering Department at Virginia Tech. Erin graduated from Virginia Tech with a BA in International Development and has Masters Degrees from Penn State in Environmental Pollution Control and Rural Sociology. Erin currently coordinates the Virginia Household Water Quality Program, which provides affordable water testing and education to the 1.7 million Virginians who rely on wells, springs and cisterns and serves as State Program Leader for Natural Resources for Virginia Cooperative Extension. She served as a contractor for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for several years, supporting their grantees in implementing Community Based Social Marketing approaches.

Barb Pleasant - Keynote 3 - Saturday, June 27 12:30-1:30 pm

Innovative Home Composting

Every gardener needs more compost and helping compost to happen is easy if you understand the process. In addition to using a bin or heap to capture unsightly materials, organic gardening expert Barbara Pleasant will share dozens of time-saving composting techniques shared by gardeners thinking outside the bin. Learn how to use sheet composting, trench composting, captive earthworms and other simple techniques to dispose of biodegradable waste and create healthier soil.



About Barbara Pleasant, Author/Speaker

Born and raised in Mobile, Alabama, Barbara Pleasant is “one of America’s most trusted garden writers” according to Cheryl Long, editor-in-chief of Mother Earth News magazine. She has been covering organic gardening and self-sufficient living for more than 30 years. After starting out with Organic Gardening magazine, Barbara eventually moved on to Mother Earth News, American Gardener and GrowVeg.com. Pleasant’s articles and books have garnered multiple awards from the Garden Writers Association and the American Nursery and Landscape Association. Her newest book, *Homegrown Pantry – Selecting the Best Varieties and Planting the Perfect Amounts for What You Want to Eat Year-Round* was a finalist for a 2018 INDIE Forward award. Pleasant lives in rural Virginia near the Blue Ridge Parkway, where she grows vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruits along with a few chickens, who all have names.

Holly Scoggins - Keynote 4 - Sunday, June 28 2:30-3:30 pm

Gardening and Gardeners: Yes, We Make a Difference

With so many ways to spend your time (and money) - why choose gardening? For those attending MGC 2020, the answer is probably easy. But with SO much going on in the world - how do we both remain relevant and communicate it to those around us? What are the best opportunities and resources available? How do we inspire the next generation? Holly has spent decades with her hands in the dirt and also educating others, from rank novices to professionals. With her heart (perpetually) on her sleeve, she brings a unique and informed perspective that will leave you amused (bemused?) and hopefully inspired as you return to your own special part of this green and growing world.



About Dr. Holly Scoggins, Director of Educational Programs for AmericanHort; President-elect of the national Perennial Plant Association; and co-owner Bee Berry Farm, a you-pick blueberry farm and apiary in southwest Virginia

Holly Scoggins, Ph.D., retired from Virginia Tech in January of 2020 after 20 years in the Department of Horticulture with teaching, research, and cooperative extension responsibilities. She taught Greenhouse Management, Herbaceous Landscape Plants, Ornamental Plant Production and Marketing, and Plant

Propagation. Her research focused on nursery production of perennials as well as field production of hops. She served as Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden from 2002-2014. Holly continues to share her love of plants and the green industry at state, regional, and national gardening and professional conferences and symposia. Her latest adventure is Director of Educational Programs for AmericanHort, the national professional association with nearly 14,000 members and affiliate businesses. She also serves as President-elect of the national Perennial Plant Association. Because she doesn't have quite enough horticulture in her life, Holly and her husband Joel Shuman own Bee Berry Farm, a you-pick blueberry farm and apiary in southwest Virginia.

Concurrent Session Descriptions

Concurrent Session 1 - Thursday, June 25 2:30-4:00 pm

Birds in your Virginia Landscape

Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger, Bridgewater College, Associate Professor and Chair of Biology and Environmental Science

Join Dr. Robyn Puffenbarger for an introduction to Virginia bird-watching! Robyn will introduce a number of species you can expect to see in a Virginian suburban landscape and cover topics including population variation based on migration patterns. She will also give you ways to welcome birds safely to your space. Robyn's own yard is a very 'birdy' place with an average of 74 bird species a year seen in or nearby since 2003.



Supporting Your Gardening Community with a Garden Planner

Bill Kealy & Lisa Lloyd, Extension Master Gardener, New River Valley Unit

The Master Gardener Program provides trainees with an extensive and comprehensive education in gardening and horticultural practices. However, program graduates can sometimes find it difficult to contribute to the VCE unit results by extending this vast knowledge to the public. To address this need a committee of eight Master Gardeners met early 2019 to design and develop a Garden Planner—a seasonal checklist that provides the public specific advice for growing various types of plants. During the presentation on this project, Bill and Lisa will discuss the steps undertaken to produce the planner, from an initial needs analysis to decisions on product design, cost and print media production.

What is the FDA Produce Safety Rule and How Does It Apply to Me?

Joell Eifert, Virginia Tech, Director, Food Innovations Program, Department of Food Science and Technology

Every year, an estimated 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. Fruits and vegetables have been a major cause for foodborne illness outbreaks within the United States. The Produce Safety Rule establishes, for the first time, science-based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables grown for human consumption. This presentation will give you a basic overview of the Produce Safety Rule as well as cover how these standards can be used to grow safe fruits and vegetables whether you are growing enough to sell at markets or growing for your family and community.

Garden Extroverts

Dr. Holly Scoggins, Director of Educational Programs for AmericanHort; President-elect of the national Perennial Plant Association; and co-owner Bee Berry Farm

Geek out with Holly on these terrific selections to energize your garden or patio containers. From unusual annuals to pollinator-attracting perennials, there is something for everyone!

Chestnut Restoration

Tom Saielli, American Chestnut Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Regional Science Coordinator

At the turn of the 20th century, blight wiped out the American Chestnut tree from Maine to Georgia. These days, those chestnuts you hear of “roasting on an open fire” originate in Europe and Asia. Tom will describe efforts that are underway in breeding, bio-control and bio-technology to help restore the iconic tree throughout the eastern hardwood forests.

Native Lawn Alternatives

Rod Simmons, City of Alexandria, VA, Natural Resource Manager / Plant Ecologist

For many years, the American lawn has been viewed as a status symbol. Traditional lawns, unfortunately, require excess water, nutrients, pesticides and maintenance. Traditional lawns also support few wildlife species. Rod will introduce you to native alternatives to the non-native grass lawns. By selecting native plants suited for a homeowner’s site, the homeowner can reduce the time and supplies needed to maintain turf grass and can provide habitat for wildlife in the process.

Concurrent Session 2 - Friday, June 26 2:00-3:30 pm

Insects: The Under-Celebrated Partners of the Bird World

Dr. Shawn T. Dash, Hampton University, Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences

Shawn’s presentation will focus on unraveling the complex interactions and interdependent natural history of insects and birds. He will cover all aspects of bird and insect interactions, from feeding and parasites to the importance of insects in your yard and garden.

Landscape Woody Plant Adaptations: A View From the Forest

Jim McGlone, Virginia Dept of Forestry, Urban Forest Conservationist

No tree is adapted to the modern residential landscape. They have adapted to conditions in natural landscapes that make them suitable for similar landscape stressors. By looking at where trees grow in nature and how they are adapted to those sites we can get a better idea of what trees will do well in our landscapes. Jim McGlone is both a forester and arborist and will bridge the gap between these two perspectives in talking about landscape trees and natural communities.

Why Your Agent Should Say ‘No’

Laura Maxey-Nay, VCE Agent ANR, Hanover County, VA

Extension Master Gardeners can get so excited about new knowledge and want to start projects to put this knowledge to use. Consideration, however, needs to be given to how that project will fit in with the agent’s Plan of Work. Laura will define the Plan of Work and describe how the POW is created. The discussion will include the usual sources of funds for Extension programs and the expectations of the stakeholders, and why funds are not always available for the project ideas you have. Come learn why your agent may decline your project and how to make your projects fit into larger programs needed by the community you serve.

The Future of Boxwood

Bennett Saunders, General Manager, Saunders Genetics, LLC

After the record rainfall in 2018, Boxwood Blight became a common disease active in many gardens in the mid-Atlantic area of the United States. With the increased incidence of Boxwood Blight, researchers have recently identified many commonsense ways to reduce the incidence of Box Blight at both the nursery and garden level. We will explain the “one two punch” of 1) Best Management Practices and 2) more tolerant cultivars to minimize the incidence of Boxwood Blight.



The Soil Food Web: Building Healthy Soil, a Diverse Ecology and a Healthier Planet

Ralph Morini, Extension Master Gardener, Piedmont Unit

We generally know that soil is important for a plant’s ability to thrive but we don’t normally think about soil as a living, breathing entity. Perhaps consider, in the broader scheme of things, that soil is the foundation for a healthier environment! Ralph will introduce you to the many characters that play a role in the Soil Food Web, explaining the individuals and their interrelationships, and how organic matter is key to all. Learn what is necessary to strengthen the soil food web and the best practices for maintaining healthy soil.

Planning to Preserve

Barbara Pleasant, Author/Speaker

Wouldn’t it be great to eat from your garden every day of the year? Learn proven strategies for stocking your own homegrown pantry, from the ground up. Start by choosing easy-to-grow crops that store themselves, and then learn simple ways to preserve vegetables and fruits so they are welcome in the winter kitchen. Award-winning garden writer Barbara Pleasant, author of Homegrown Pantry, will share dozens of tips and ideas to help you eat from your garden year-round.

Concurrent Session 3 - Saturday, June 27 2:00-3:30 pm

Sip of Western Garden History

Bethany Beck, Extension Master Gardener, York/Poquoson Unit

Did you know that Frank Lloyd Wright was a farmer? How about the influence of Italian culture on gardens? Join Bethany for this discussion of the history of gardens in Western Civilization. Take a trip through time, discovering gardens beginning with the Middle Ages and ending with the 20th century.

Benefits of the Urban Forest

Jim McGlone, Virginia Dept of Forestry, Urban Forest Conservationist

For a long time urban trees have been viewed as having aesthetic value and not much more. Now we recognize the urban forest is a vital part of the infrastructure supporting the quality of life. From the air we breathe to the value of our homes to our peace of mind, learn about new discoveries of the benefits our urban trees provide.

Warm Season Lawns: Pro's, Con's and How To's

Dr. Mike Goatley, Virginia Tech, VCE Turfgrass Specialist

With our climate trending warmer and the increasingly cold-tolerant varieties available, warm season turfgrasses are increasing in popularity as a lawn. However, each warm-season grass has certain strengths and weaknesses that should be considered when choosing a grass for a lawn. This presentation will detail the pro's and con's of the warm-season turfgrasses, where they can be grown in Virginia, why they would be selected for a particular location, and general establishment and maintenance tips.

Successfully Tackling Invasives with Public Support

Rod Simmons, City of Alexandria, Virginia, Natural Resource Manager / Plant Ecologist

How can humans benefit from green infrastructure and ecological landscape restorations? Restoring native plant habitat is vital to preserving biodiversity of flora and fauna. Each patch of habitat becomes part of a collective effort to nurture and sustain the natural landscape. Rod will discuss ways we can achieve a sustainable coexistence with the rest of life on earth. Models of restorative landscaping in residential and community settings will be highlighted as well as thoughtful plant selection, ecosystem functionality and how diversity can be maximized.

A Whirlwind Tour of NFT Hydroponic Lettuce Production Systems

Tim Durham, Ferrum College, Associate Professor of Ag Science

Are you interested in “alternative” year round agriculture? Demystify the art and science of soil-less production in a hydroponic greenhouse setting. Dr. Tim Durham will take you on a nutrient film technique odyssey. An interactive, virtual tour of Ferrum College’s teaching and demonstration hydroponic facility will teach you the ins and outs of nutrition, lighting, energy efficiency, and environmental management. Learn how you can repurpose non-ag real estate for a bountiful indoor harvest every season.

Insects and Fruits: Friends and Foes

Laura Maxey-Nay, VCE Agent ANR, Hanover County, VA

Pollinators are needed for trees and shrubs to bear fruit but other insects cause damage to leaves and fruits, or other that need fruit-bearing plants necessary for their life cycle. How does the home gardener achieve a balance? Join Laura to learn the best ways to attract and keep healthy the friends while managing the foes.

Concurrent Session 4 - Sunday, June 28 12:30-2:00 pm

Ticks & Tick-Borne Diseases: Advances in the Research

Dr. Liz Gleim, Hollins University, Assistant Professor, Biology and Environmental Studies

What is this about a new tick species in Virginia? How does fire affect tick-borne disease risk? How has Lyme disease ecology changed in Virginia? Join Dr. Elizabeth Gleim, a tick-borne disease ecologist, as she shares some of her own research on prescribed fire and ticks, as well as Lyme ecology in southwestern Virginia. She will also cover some of the recent happenings regarding ticks and tick-borne diseases in the state of Virginia. Her talk will also review the basics of ticks, how to protect you and your loved ones from tick-borne disease and how to reduce ticks on your property.

Living With the Wild Stuff

Frank Reilly, Senior Consultant and Research Fellow, Logistics Management Institute

Living farther out in the country can present new challenges. Should you fear finding an endangered species in your landscape? What’s the difference between invasive species and just pesky weeds? Are wild critters running amok in your yard? Frank deals with invasive, pesky and endangered species in his career every day AND is a Master Gardener who has lived close to the edge most of his adult life. Let him share the facts and the techniques you need to live with the wild stuff.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Dr. Diane Zahm, Virginia Tech, Associate Professor, Urban Affairs and Planning

As Extension Master Gardener volunteers, we have the ability to make landscape design and plant suggestions to homeowners in our communities. Have you ever thought about plants preventing the occurrence of criminal acts? Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) seeks to use our physical environment to make it uncomfortable for potential perpetrators of crime. Dr. Diane Zahm will discuss the principles of CPTED and how landscape design, plant selection and maintenance can enhance the feeling of safety and reduce the incidence of crime. Learn how to make your communities safer through plants!

Public Perceptions of Turf Management

Dr. Dan Sandor, Virginia Tech, Collegiate Assistant Professor Turfgrass Science

If only we could convince all homeowners to practice lawn care BMPs! This session will be a unique opportunity for attendees to participate in give-and-take on the public's perception of lawn care with turfgrass specialist Dr. Daniel Sandor. What are the public's beliefs, perceptions, behaviors and norms regarding turfgrass lawns? Understanding this may lead to improved results for lawn care programs, more satisfied homeowners and healthier lawns.

Nontroversy: Evaluating the Science Behind Genetically Modified Organisms

Tim Durham, Ferrum College, Associate Professor of Agricultural Science

Since their rollout in 1996, genetically modified organisms (GMO's) have erupted in a firestorm of controversy. Derided as "Frankenfoods", opponents have claimed widespread environmental and human health effects - but what does the science say? Despite their rep, are GMO's an essential prescription for food security in an increasingly resource strained world? Just what is natural? What about corporate control and loss of "seed sovereignty" that we hear about? We'll evaluate some of the ethical and practical arguments for /against GMO's and separate the wheat from the proverbial chaff.

**Learn more about online EMG College &
prepare for registration at:**

mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/college/registration