

September, 2025

Meetings at 7 pm at West Main Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

First Monday of the month

6:30 pm Socialize and enjoy refreshments

Keynote Speaker at Spring to Green 2026: Ms. Peggy Silvermann

By Bonnie Hill

Peggy Singlemann, well known as the host and co-producer of Virginia Home Grown on VPM/ PBS and former Director of Horticulture at Maymont in Richmond, will be the keynote speaker at our next Spring to Green event on February 7, 2026. The DMGA Spring to Green Committee is excited to announce that Peggy will present two of our four horticultural talks: "Making Your Garden a Pollinator's Paradise" in the morning and "Lift the Winter Blues with More Color in Your Garden" in the afternoon.

Involved with Virginia's only local gardening show since its inception in 2001, Peggy stepped into the host position in 2016. *Virginia Home Grown* has received 13 Telly Awards and is broadcast live throughout Virginia and nationally via Facebook, YouTube and Roku.

In March 2025, *Virginia Living* magazine featured her in an article entitled "Peggy Singlemann is Horticulture Royalty". She is a horticulture consultant, garden coach and nationally-known speaker and published author through her business, RVA Gardener LLC. [Peggy Singlemann | RVA Gardener, Speaker, Garden Coach, Historic Gardening Consultant, TV Host.](#)

Peggy, and her husband Doug, moved to Virginia in 1983; within a year she accepted the position of Horticulturist at Maymont (website: [Maymont](#)) and culminated her 38-year career there as Director of Horticulture. Peggy researched, restored, designed, and tended the gardens, grounds, arboretum and the programs surrounding them over Maymont's 100 acres until her retirement in 2022.

Peggy holds many certificates and has served on numerous boards such as the Southern Garden History Society and Cornerstone Community Farm. An ISA certified arborist, VNLA certified horticulturist, VSLD certified landscape designer, and Sustainable Landscape Designer, Peggy was the 2016 Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association's Professional of the Year recipient. In 2022, Peggy was recognized by The Virginia General Assembly with a commendation for her accomplishments at Maymont.

Peggy enjoys the outdoors; she spends time identifying native flora and bird watching along with hiking and kayaking with her family. She is active in her community and of course, enjoys gardening at home.

Stay tuned for more Spring to Green news! If you would like to participate in the planning of STG 2026, contact Debra Bailey. Next meeting: 9/4/2026, 5:30 p.m., West Main Baptist Church.

Ms. Peggy Singlemann is our keynote speaker for Spring to Green 2026!



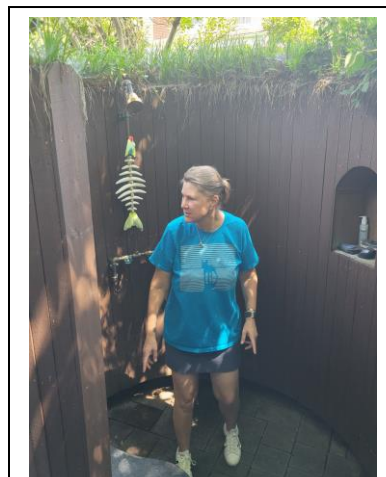
“Just Us” Garden Tour

The “Just Us” Garden Tour held on June 21st featured three fabulous gardens and an historic greenhouse. Nancy Riddell’s gardens include a combination of annuals, perennials, flowering shrubs and trees. It is designed to have texture, color and year-round interest. Nancy is seen below in her Japanese maple fairy garden.

Kelly Adcock shared her amazing urban custom designed raised bed garden which brings food, function and beauty to the city-scape. Kelly is seen below in her snail shaped shower.

Unfortunately, Pat Morgan’s diverse gardens were not available to tour due to illness.

KatieDid Florals provided a tour of her historic greenhouse built in the late 1800’s. Impressive! Thank you all!



Flowering Indoor Plants

By Ann Sylves

Gardeners seem to develop a specialty, or find a comfortable niche as they get more involved with the plant world. I noticed this during my time spent at the Gibson Greenhouse. The late Ann Roberts, who knew a lot about everything, absolutely loved ferns of all kinds, even the asparagus fern! Billy Holley, also a wonderful compendium of information, is partial towards the Tomatoes. We had a volunteer who was “into” succulents, and taught me about sandy soil and watering timetables.

I thought and thought about what my specialty could be, and looked around my house and what I liked about the Greenhouse. I seemed to have a lot of indoor plants, and (secretly – don’t tell my husband...) I want to have one of each kind. There must be a category for this...

Well, on-line information abounds, and there are many sub-categories too. So, for this article, and to help brighten up the house, I chose flowering indoor plants. There are many kinds, including: African Violets, Peace Lilies, Christmas Cactus, Bromeliad, and Anthurium (also known as the Flamingo Flower). Snake plants (Mother’s Tongue) and Begonias also flower indoors.

To strengthen my argument about the benefits of indoor plants, it turns out that they have been shown to improve indoor air quality, increase humidity, and introduce décor and even drama into your indoor space. Studies have also shown positive side effects like boosted productivity and creativity, reduced stress, lowered blood pressure, and improved mood!

The care of indoor plants relies upon their specific needs for light and water. They need to see the sky, but not necessarily the actual sun. Get down to their level on the table, and see if you can see any sky out the window. If not, they may need to be moved a little closer. You can use a chop stick or old knitting needle to check for water needs. Stick one into the soil. If it comes out clean, the soil is dry. Every other week add flower fertilizer during the growing season (Jan – June) as this really helps with the flowering. Dead head and prune as needed, and always monitor for pests.

For those of you who find this intimidating, but would still like some indoor plants, there are subscription services that will deliver a new live plant to you every month!

Below Ann and Billy with some of their favorite types of plants!



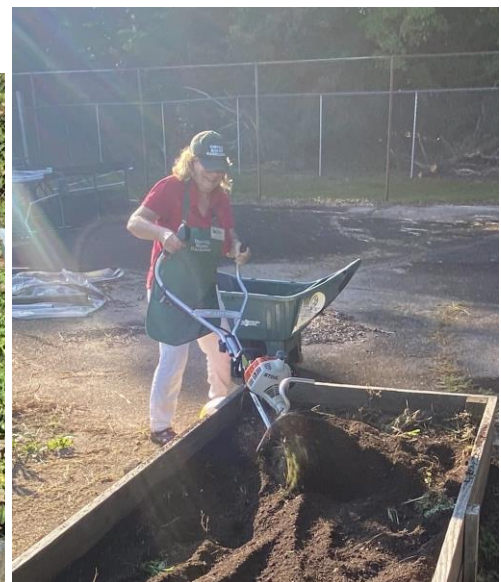
Dig Now for the Spring Plant Sale

By Sandy Pruitt

Now is the time to prepare young tree or bush babies for next April's plant sale which is typically at the Butterfly Hello Event at the Butterfly House at the Danville Science Center. When you find a favorite bush or tree has created a baby, it is almost always still attached to the mother. To sever the feeder root, shovel straight down in a 12- inch circle. Lift the plant with the soil attached until you are sure the feeder root is completely unattached. Now set the plant right back in its original spot. No need to tamp it down firmly. The plant will grow more roots in the 12-inch circle to make a healthier plant to remove and pot up in November after the plant goes dormant. Now is not the time to pot them up. Wait until November to pot them, and place newly potted baby plants outside under bushes or where they will be rained on (but not get soggy thru winter). This works for plants that are less than 15 inches tall. Walk your yard now to identify them before the leaves fall and before the lawnmower finds them. If you need pots , please contact Gibson Greenhouse or Sandy Pruitt.

Greenhouse Prepares for Fall

Our hardworking colleagues hard at work, tilling the raised beds at Gibson Greenhouse.



A Plant that Tolerates Our Summers: New York Ironweed

(*Vernonia noveboracensis*)

By Mitzi Marlowe

The summers in Southside, Virginia at times may be brutal - some years bring too much rain, while others are dry with high humidity. After July and the first week of August, the passing of “dog days” leave most of the garden blooms spent or gone. One of the exceptions is the New York Ironweed.

New York Ironweed is an herbaceous member of the Aster family and is one of the late summer blooming native perennials that can be grown in different parts of the garden. Its height is dictated by the sunlight it receives and soil dampness. If receiving 4 to 6 hours of sunlight and in a damp spot, the growth may top at 6 to 8 feet tall. With less sunlight and a dryer soil, the height is much shorter at 3 to 4 feet. The Ironweed has a bright red/purple bloom that begins in late August and blooms through fall. Tall, erect stems hold up the bloom that branches out in a spray like manner. The leaves are green and may grow up to 9 inches long and two inches wide. When aging, the leaves and stems turn a “rusty” color. Ironweed grows in clumps and to lengthen the growing season and tier the plant, some stems may be trimmed back, up to a third, in May or June.

The Ironweed is not considered invasive, although it will spread as it is a rhizome. Deadheading the spent flower will control the seeds as will the removal of volunteer plants. Ironweed likes slightly acidic soil and will grow in both clay and wet soil. In times of dryness, some watering is desired. It has no known insect problem and some air flow or movement is desirable to prevent mildew. Deer do not bother them. If propagating the plant using seeds, cold stratification is recommended.

The plant is like a powerhouse with its lovely tall blooms that last from August to the beginning of fall. Ironweed is a pollinator paradise; having a nectar source, it attracts birds, bees and butterflies, and is a host for the American Painted Lady Butterfly (*Vanessa virginiensis*). Native bees often rest in the hollow dead stems and if you would like to allow this, then you can cut the stems 12-14” after blooming and allow the stems to dry naturally. *

The New York Ironweed is a very versatile plant. Besides being a pollinator and bee and butterfly haven, it makes a wonderful rain or cottage garden. It is a lovely back border in a garden bed, and planted with other varieties of Ironweed of a different color and varying heights, along with other plants, make a lovely late summer garden. The tall, sturdy stems of the plant add notice and structure during the winter months. The tough stems may be used in flower arrangements as well as function as a “light weight” prop in the garden. New York Ironweed may well be a wonderful consideration to add to the garden.

Sources include:

<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-043/426-043.html>

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=VENO

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/new-york-ironweed/>

<https://mgmv.org/plants/native-plants/perennials/vernonia-noveboracensis/>

<https://viriniawildflowers.org/2024/08/08/ironweed/>

*<https://vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety/growing-natives-for-the-garden-2/growing-natives-for-the-garden/>

Mum is the Word (for Fall)

By Isla Wiles

In addition to shorter daylight hours, preliminary tree leaf drop, and a hint of cooler temperatures, a sure sign of fall is the appearance of mums (*Chrysanthemum × morifolium*) for sale and blooming in the garden. (Does anyone remember when the pompom mum was the flower of choice for fall events requiring corsages?) Mums provide color when the blooms of annuals and perennials begin to fade.

Although we associate them with fall, the best time to transplant is summer prior to bud setting. If you want to grow your own, buy rootings to ensure that they are insect and disease free, and are the variety, color and number desired (Olson).

Care involves planting them in organic, well-drained soil. Fertilization depends on the soil and mum variety. Generally, plants with healthy green foliage and thick stems are doing well; light-green leaves and spindly stems indicate they need fertilizer. One tablespoon of 5-10-5 fertilizer per gallon of water applied every 7-10 days is a recommended fertilization routine. Timed weaker solutions are more beneficial than random heavy fertilization (Olson).

They need consistent water without allowing the soil to dry out. To help prevent leaf diseases, avoid watering late in the day and watering the foliage. Pinch your mums! They benefit from at least two pinching per summer but not after mid-July when blooms begin to develop (Olsen). Pinching involves cutting (or pinching) the tips to encourage shoots to develop. Pinching helps to develop a well-rounded plant and prevent “legginess.” (Confession; I did not do this, and mine are sprawled all over the ground.)

Although mums used to be labeled hardy, most are now labeled garden mums and can tolerate various degrees of low temperatures, depending on the type of mum, its location in the garden, and of course, the planting zone. Mulch helps keep the roots moist in summer and adds protection against the intermittent freezing and thawing of winter soil (Olsen).

Common flower types include anemone, single blooms (daisy-like), pompom, spider (fringed petals), and decorative (large to medium petals). The most typical colors are yellow, orange, pink, and purple, with various shades also available (Olsen).

Whether you have them planted in the garden, put them into planters for a burst of color near your house, strategically place them in the garden, or include them in a decorative outdoor assemblage of straw bales and fall figures, enjoy the mums of fall.

Sources include: Olsen, E. (2025) *Garden Mums for the Home Garden*, VCE Publications | Virginia Tech. Available at: <https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-016/426-016.html> (Accessed: 19 August 2025). Adapted and revised from an original publication authored by Paul L. Smeal, Emeritus Extension Horticulturist, Nursery Production, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech.



Watermelon Party at Gibson School

Hosted by the Danville Master Gardeners, a good time was had by all on this beautiful August day!



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