

Coordinator's Corner

By Pamela H. Smith



Happy Spring! The warmer weather has finally arrived and the bulbs are blooming. Just as we planted the bulbs last Fall knowing that our past effort would add to the beauty of our current gardens, the past 20 years of Green Spring Extension Master Gardeners has laid the foundation for a more fruitful future. This year, 2022, is a hallmark year for the GSEMG program as we reflect on our past efforts and plan for our future.

We kicked off this pivotal year with our 18th annual EcoSavvy Symposium. Following the theme *Restoring Our Urban Forest, One Yard at a Time*, our expert guest speakers showed the daunting challenges to restoring our urban tree canopy and how public education, grassroots advocacy, public policy changes, and sustainable tree planting practices can mitigate the impacts of canopy loss. As Master Gardeners, it is our mission to continually advocate for sustainable landscape practices. Educating the public on the elements of good tree care for our biggest carbon sequestering plants is an important part of who we are and what we do.

Join us for the All-Hands Meeting on Saturday, Apr. 9 from 9 am - noon. We have a full agenda including an update from the Advisory Council, Better Impact “how to,” and happenings at Green Spring Gardens. I also want to highlight two topics of special interest that we will address on the 9th:

- First – Congratulations! We’re celebrating the 20th anniversary of the founding of Green Spring Master Gardeners in 2022! Plans are starting to form now to highlight our rich history, starting with the five graduates of our first GSEMG Class of 2003 who are still active, right up to the most recent Class of 2021 which represents the next three generations of future GSEMGs. **A picnic celebration is planned for Sunday, Oct. 2 at 11:30 am - 2 pm at Green Spring Gardens.** Mark your calendars for a fun time!

- Second – Staying with the subject of future Master Gardeners, the Virginia Extension Master Gardener State Office established a Task Force on Accessibility and Connection in 2021 to:
 - Perform a comprehensive review of the Virginia Master Gardener volunteer base to determine if the current program reflects the diversity of the larger community, and
 - Make recommendations to effectively meet the needs of our changing communities.

The task force published its report in December outlining key focus areas, e.g., recruitment & application processes and training resources, which require action to overcome impediments to meet the needs of our communities. Our New Class Support and Publicity teams are collaborating to identify some “low-hanging fruit” recommendations that can be implemented in the near term in these areas. [Please read the TAC memorandum \(pdf\)](#) if you haven’t already.

Finally, two big days are almost here: April 16 is the opening of the Green Spring Gardens Plant Shop and May 14 is Garden Day at GSG. Come stroll the lawn and peruse the plant offerings from local vendors, sit at the GSG café for a sweet treat and beverage, or visit the Historic House to see the new exhibit on the history of GSG. Speaking of bake sales: GSEMG and FROGS board member Gioia Caiola Forman will once again be hosting the awesome bake sale and café. She will send an email in May asking EMGs to contribute home baked goodies for the sale. As you have done in the past, please be sure to give her your support by offering to provide your incredible pies, cookies, pecan rolls, sweet breads, and more!

(Groundbreakers, Spring 2022)