

Library News | Summer 2022

From the Friends of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library



26th Annual Garden Tour

Dear Friends,

The 26th Anniversary Garden Tour will be Saturday, July 9, from 9:00 - 5:00, rain or shine. Plan now to visit six lovely gardens, all within Ellett Valley and the town of Blacksburg. Check out photos of this year's gardens at our website:

www.newrivervalleygardentour.org

Tickets are available for \$15 at MFRL libraries—Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Jessie Peterman, and Meadowbrook. Tickets may also be purchased at any garden the day of the tour. You may also buy tickets online at the above website. The day of the tour, bring your

emailed receipt to any garden to exchange for your printed tickets, brochure, and map. Note: online sales will be closed at 5:00 pm on Friday, July 8.

The tour is brought to you by an all-volunteer committee of members of the Friends of the Library with assistance from the NRV Master Gardeners. All proceeds go to library programs.

The gardens on this year's tour are as follows:

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General News Cont'd

THE BROWN GARDEN | 703 York Dr, Blacksburg. Marcus & Fiona Brown

Located in a long established, charming in-town neighborhood, the Brown Garden began five years ago with some of the lovely beds and plants already in place. Many additions have been made by the owners. Designed with a free flowing, whatever-happens-happens approach, this garden features a variety of perennials, bulb flowers, and annuals, including the owner's favorite large sunflowers. Featured trees include a variety of fruit trees, a Japanese Maple, and a bitter orange tree.

Careful placement of plantings allows for minimal watering in this garden, while leaf mulch collected from the yard helps conserve moisture. Natural fertilizers such as manure and compost provide a nutritional boost in the spring. Bird houses made by the owner add to the wildlife friendly environment enjoyed from a comfortable porch vantage point.



THE GOLDEN GARDEN | 2095 Plank Rd, Blacksburg. Paula & Terry Golden

A beautiful curved rock wall at the property entrance, curved deck and an interior curved wall inspired the contrast between the straight lines of the house and more organic shapes in the garden areas and patio, while sites visited by the owners during overseas travel inform much of the look and feel of the Golden Garden.

A grotto garden takes its inspiration from the magical water gardens of King Ludwig II. Colonnades seen in the missions of California are echoed in the long area under the deck. Millstones placed in the water feature connect the spirit of the house to those who provided for daily food needs with their toil and labor. The small stream mimics those found in our area, as well as ones in the Black Forest where Paula's family used to picnic.

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If you haven't renewed your Individual or Family Membership with the Friends group, please do so here:

<http://www.mfrlfriends.org/wp/become-a-friend-renew/>

General News Cont'd

[continued from page 2] Over the past two years, pollinator friendly plants have been added, including a wide swath of milkweed for monarch butterflies. Decorative additions include three large circular metal pieces from an Oklahoma City yard sale and glass flowers made by the owners' daughter.

A central element in the garden is the 190-year-old Eastern Red Cedar that provides shelter and food for a variety of birds. The Golden Garden is a certified wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.



THE HAHN/CHANCEY GARDEN | 2068 Lusters Gate Rd, Blacksburg. Betty Hahn & Doug Chancey

The gardens at Paris Mountain Farm are a mixture of long-established areas and new “from scratch” areas. New sections include a patio area by the historic 1700s house, a garden alongside the fence by the recently added pool, and a large fenced-in quarter acre that contains the garden structure known as the “Tea House”. Originally part of a hay field, the fenced garden was created about 12 years ago and designed around a central fire pit with circling paths. It has evolved since that time as the owners have continued planting trees, mostly food bearing, edible and medicinal herbs, and annual vegetables.

The various gardens on the property form a beautiful backdrop to the view of Paris Mountain behind them. A lovely, fragrant row of lavender borders one of the paths to the fire pit. Other favorites are the various monardas or bee balms in multiple colors. Favorite trees include the pawpaw trees which bear delicious fruit, lush hazelnuts and a Horse Chestnut tree which is so beautiful when it blooms.

The gardens are grown organically, incorporating a compost blend of kitchen scraps, grass clippings, leaf mulch, and manure, overlaid with natural mulch. Cover crops enrich the soil. The quarter acre garden is protected by a deer fence rigged by adding wire fencing to existing wood fences, with deer resistant plants in the areas outside the fence.

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General News Cont'd

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THE RAJAGOPALAN/MURALI GARDEN | 2770 Green Meadow Dr , Blacksburg. Padma Rajagopalan & T. M. Murali

Evolving from a nearly blank slate since 2007, this spectacular display of flowers has grown over the years. The dahlias come from bulbs planted more than 10 years ago, while many coneflowers and daisies started from just 2-3 plants. In late spring, there are rows of peonies in different locations in the garden. In summer, the pergola area is ringed by banks of dahlias, tithonias, daisies, coneflowers and rudbeckias, creating a colorful vista.

This beautiful garden is home to a fantastic collection of approximately 40 peonies that together produce over 1,000 blooms and includes several heirloom varieties. In addition to a lovely corkscrew willow tree, there is a delightful pergola with brick pathways in the front yard. Vines climb two trellises in the backyard.

Since their parents were avid gardeners, Padma Rajagopalan and T.M. Murali were introduced to gardening from an early age. They have planted a variety of flowers that grew at their childhood homes (hollyhock, tithonia, dahlias, nasturtiums, jasmines, and roses) as an homage to their parents' gardens. A particular example is the rose "Crown Princess Margareta."



General News Cont'd

THE SCHNECKER GARDEN | 2791 Yarrow Rd , Blacksburg. Linda & Dennis Schnecker

At the entrance to this beautiful property, the visitor is welcomed by a cozy stand of trees with a grouping of picnic tables. The curving, tree lined drive winds up a gentle slope to the house, which is nestled amongst colorful gardens. To the south is a vast, clear meadow overlooking Ellett Valley and Paris Mountain.

Since 1989, Linda and Dennis Schnecker have worked to turn a blank slate of overgrown scrub and blackberry brambles into thriving, diverse garden beds of trees, shrubs and flowers. Also on the property is a stream and water garden developed around native limestone, providing a favorite resting place to observe several types of fish and a variety of water plants.



THE SUTPHIN GARDEN | 1279 Catawba Rd, Blacksburg. Joann & J.B. Sutphin

Still Meadow Farm has been owned by the Sutphin family since 1935. The 2 story brick farmhouse on the property was originally built c.1840 by Croswell Henderson. In 2014, the property was placed in a land trust, thus preserving the beautiful vistas and acreage overlooking Paris Mountain and the Roanoke Valley. JB Sutphin, who was born on the property, is responsible for the beautiful native stone walls and walks found around the patio and yard.

A spring supplies water for the patio water feature and water for the gardens and grounds. The front yard features a beautiful old sycamore tree and a large black locust covered with English ivy. The building in the back yard, originally an icehouse, conceals a trough in the floor where melted ice drained into the root cellar below. Hand hewn logs are visible on the inside. JB and Joann have worked on the yard and garden for 20 years, adding the patio and deck, a vegetable garden, a dry stream rock garden and a children's garden.



By Frieda Bostian & Esther Davis (Montgomery Friends)

General News Cont'd

ADDITIONAL DETAILS | Also, as in years past, **beautiful full-color notecards** featuring this year's gardens will be for sale. Musicians from the New River Valley will be performing to compliment the beauty of the gardens. Along the route **Bootleg BBQ** food truck will set up at Gateway Baptist Church for those ready for a lunch between visiting gardens featured on the tour.

A longstanding tradition has the **New River Valley Master Gardeners** stationed in each garden throughout the day to assist the garden owners in answering questions related to the garden. Master gardeners also promote and highlight the sustainable features of each garden. The usage of drought tolerant plants, mulching methods, irrigation techniques and more are educational components the master gardeners are available to discuss. Visit the Master Gardener Plant Clinic tent to pick up your soil test kit, planting charts and ask questions about your own garden issues.

The tour also welcomes the **New River Land Trust** that will set up in one of the gardens, demonstrating the educational backpacks that were provided to the local libraries through a national grant.

Beginning May 5th, the Blacksburg Library will host a showing of **plein air art** created at the New River Valley Garden Tour in 2021. Outdoor (plein air) artists have become a popular addition to the tour that will celebrate its 26th year in 2022. The garden tour, hosted by the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Friends of the Library, welcomes artists that are invited to position themselves in various corners of the gardens, catching that perfect angle of the flowers, water feature or other artistic structure in the garden on the day of the tour. The Friends of the Library thank Teri Hoover of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association for coordinating this unique feature.

Please also enjoy these **Points of Interest** in Blacksburg (no ticket needed): The [Alexander Black House and Cultural Center](#), 204 Draper Rd. SW. Featuring sunflower artist Candace Monaghan in the gallery. 10 am until 4 pm.; The [BRAA Art Space](#) @The Artful Lawyer, 318 N. Main St. 10 am until 4 pm.; The [Blacksburg Farmers Market](#), 108 W. Roanoke St. 8 until 2 pm. Food trucks on site until 2 pm.; The [Hahn Horticulture Garden](#), 200 Garden Lane, VT campus. Food truck on site starting at 11 am.; [Wong Park](#), 303 Wilson Ave.

The Friends of the Library thank the business and private sponsors that support the tour. Blacksburg Breakfast Lions Club, Bonomo's, Capone's, Crow's Nest Greenhouse, Old New River Books, Carolyn and Don Rude, Shelter Alternatives and Vintage Cellar.

If you know a hidden gem of a garden located in the vicinity of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Riner or Shawsville you would recommend for a future tour, please contact Lynn Brammer lbrammer@vt.edu.

Ellen Hall (President, Montgomery County Friends)

Help Wanted: Friends of the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library Digital Newsletter Editor |

Become a volunteer Newsletter Editor for the Friends of the Library and support the library system and its many, many services to the community. You'll own publication of the quarterly electronic newsletter which is distributed to hundreds of our members. Primary tasks include: using MS Publisher or similar software to design the layout and place article submissions in a consistent, reader-friendly format; reviewing submissions for grammar/content; communicating with article submitters on content when needed; coordination with other stakeholders

on content and design depending on upcoming events; and coordination of distribution at time of publication. Don't worry though, all articles are submitted by Friends stakeholders; your job is simply to organize the submissions into the newsletter, do a little light editing, and to create the final PDF. You'll also need to attend monthly Friends meetings (typically the 3rd Tuesday each month) to ensure you're in the loop as well. If you've been looking for a way to give back, appreciate the library system's mission, and have adequate editing and computer skills, this volunteer position is for you! Apply today.

Ken Vaughan (Newsletter Editor)

Thank You

Sponsorships | Friends of the Library are deeply appreciative of the following businesses and individuals for their significant support of library programs and events. Each has contributed \$200 or more as named sponsors of the Summer Reading Program or the Garden Tour.:

Don and Caroline Rude



Blacksburg Breakfast Lions Club

With the simple motto of " We Serve "



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