

## Letter from the Editors

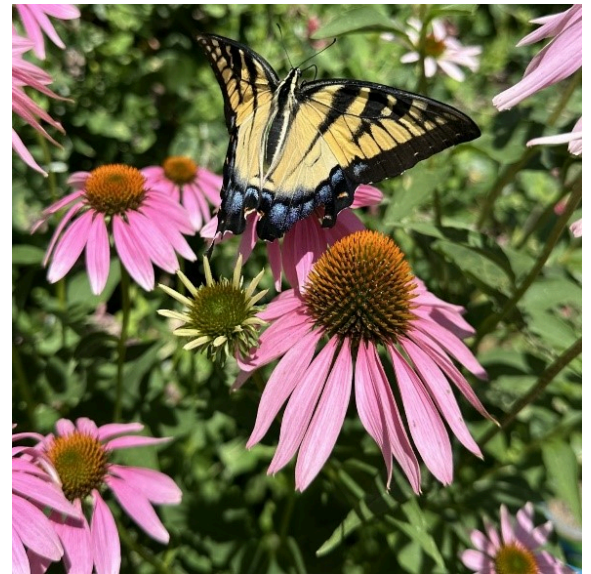
This month we focus on [planning for fall planting](#). **Leslie Cameron** and the Social Media Committee share resources for you to share, below.

Your MGNV Continuing Education Committee presents our Annual Movie Night on Tuesday, 13 August! Join us at Fairlington for a showing of *Uninvited: The Spread of Invasive Species (2021)*. This 55-minute documentary introduces the concept of invasive species and ways to combat their threats to the environment and economy. 6:30-7:00: Fellowship and Popcorn -- bring your own cool drink! 7:00-8:30: Film, followed by discussion. Please sign up on Better Impact. See you at The Movies!

Look this month for articles from your fellow Extension Master Gardeners **Leslie Cameron, Leslie Fillmore, Joan McIntyre, Elaine Mills, Alyssa Ford Morel, Molly Newling, Elena Rodriguez, Pamela Stratton, Scarlett Swan, Julie Hanson Swanson**, and others.

This year, the Board liaisons will no longer be submitting reports from the gardens, plant clinics, committees, and projects to *The Latest Dirt* for publication. Instead, please submit information directly to Nancy and Tyler. You, too, can submit photos, articles, puzzles, jokes, and recipes to *The Latest Dirt*. Articles should be about 200 words. Shorter is better.

Please use the [Virginia Tech Publishing Guide](#) to edit your work. If you refer to plants that are in our [Tried-and-True list](#), please create a hyperlink to [mgnv.org](http://mgnv.org). Similarly, if you mention another organization that has a good website presence, please create a hyperlink to that organization, too.



***Please share recipes featuring your summer bounty!***

See you at the movies and at the Arlington County Fair in August!

**Nancy Smith Brooks**, Newsletter Editor, [nancy.brooks@mgnv.org](mailto:nancy.brooks@mgnv.org)  
 Extension Master Gardener, Class of 2016  
**Tyler Ormsby**, Newsletter Technical Editor  
 Extension Master Gardener, Class of 2017

Photo: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, Coneflower and Butterfly, Arlington, Virginia, 1 July 2024

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MGNV Website

Elena Rodriguez - [elena.rodriquez@mgnv.org](mailto:elena.rodriquez@mgnv.org)

"Members Only" section - [tyler.ormsby@mgnv.org](mailto:tyler.ormsby@mgnv.org)

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**Have Newsletter Questions?**

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**President's Corner**

**Greetings from the Board!**

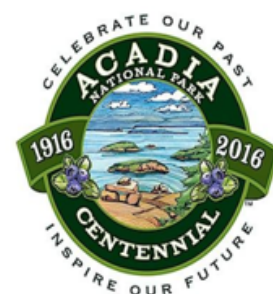
By **Julie Hanson Swanson**, *Extension Master Gardener and President*

The *Old Farmer's Almanac* considers the dog days of summer to begin July 3 and end August 1. This period of weather is linked to the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star, which [Hellenistic astrology](#) connected with [heat](#), [drought](#), sudden [thunderstorms](#), [lethargy](#), [fever](#), [mad dogs](#), and bad [luck](#). Seems on the nose this year so I hope your gardens fared better than mine this July! I was however encouraged to see how my [black-eyed Susans](#) are thriving. Hope springs eternal!



On a brighter note, the 40th Anniversary Logo Tagline Working Group is delighted to announce the **40th Anniversary Logo Tagline Contest!** The first step in preparing for our anniversary next year is to develop a 40th anniversary logo, which will be used to brand anniversary products, publications, events, etc. MGNV Webmaster **Elena Rodriguez** will develop the new logo by building on our current one to include the anniversary design elements.

What we need from YOU is a **tagline** to include with the MGNV anniversary logo. A tagline is a short phrase that is used to describe an organization. It is often used in conjunction with a logo to create a memorable brand identity. Below are examples of anniversary logo taglines.



How can we best capture what MGNV represents in a few words? We are looking to your creativity, passion, experience, and expertise to provide that answer!



Please submit your entries to [suggestions@MGNV.org](mailto:suggestions@MGNV.org) by **5:00 pm on Friday, September 6, 2024**. Submissions after the deadline will not be considered. You may submit as many entries as you would like. In mid-September, the 40th Anniversary Logo Tagline Working Group will meet to identify the top choices. At the Zoom membership meeting in early October, you can vote for your favorite tagline. The **prize** for the submission receiving the most votes will be a **\$40 gift certificate** to one of the garden centers/nurseries that offer discounts to MGNV members. If you have any questions, please send them to [suggestions@MGNV.org](mailto:suggestions@MGNV.org).

Happy Gardening!

Photo: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, Primrose, Arlington, Virginia, 18 July 2024

## Volunteer Coordinator's Report

By **Leslie Fillmore**, *Extension Master Gardener*

Hello Everyone, I'm very excited to share the news that we have another Class of 2023 certified Extension Master

Gardener: **CONGRATULATIONS to Beth Kramer and Nicole Zehfuss**, who have reached certification!

Photo: **Pamela Stratton**, Extension Master Gardener, Bee and Dahlia in Sunny Demonstration Garden, Arlington, Virginia, July 2024

Photos: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, Shady and Sunny Demonstration Gardens, Arlington, Virginia, 21 July 2024



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## Arlington County Fair

By **Molly Newling**, *Extension Master Gardener*

Master Gardeners! YOU can enter your own prize garden products for the chance of a blue ribbon in your class, or even better, a Best in Show!! You would be surprised at all the categories for prize opportunities. Tomatoes and zucchini, of course, but also tallest corn stalk, nuts and berries, and even a mixed basket of vegetables. Among the flowers there is plenty of space for zinnias and marigolds, but have you thought of entering your prized succulent plants? A perfect holly branch? Check out the link to the Competitive Exhibits at <https://arlingtoncountyfair.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-CE-Guide-for-upload.docx.pdf> for a full list of entry categories and rules for each entry. You can also register online so you will be ready to go when you bring in your entries.

The Arlington County Fair is held at Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2nd St South, Arlington 22204.



Grand Prize Winner



Judging Vegetables

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## Gratitude Corner

Jessica M. Vasquez  
Senior and Adult Outreach Supervisor – Office of 55+ Programs  
Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation

**Lynn Berry** is a Master Garden with Virginia Cooperative Extension. She adopted our Social 60+ Garden and participants in May 2019 after we started a container garden project with Virginia Cooperative Extension and Social 60+ participants. We had already established two raised garden beds outside our Social 60+ lunch area but keeping up with the garden was a lot for us to handle. We had a modest garden with tomatoes, peppers and basil and with Lynn's knowledge, energy, and enthusiasm we expanded to a full vegetable garden. She recruited seniors to help in the garden - planting, watering and weeding. We added another large, raised garden bed and added many pots which made it possible to create a variety of vegetables and a larger harvest. The garden expanded with green beans, herbs, carrots, radishes, lettuces, cucumbers, and even a watermelon. Lynn includes the seniors in deciding what should be grown in the garden beds. Lynn also started to grow many of our plants from seeds at her home keeping the cost of the garden to a minimum. These vegetables and herbs are used to create fresh salads for the Social 60+ participants who eat a meal at the center Monday-Friday. Lynn has also given several 55+ presentations on Container Gardens, The Care of House Plants and the very popular Evergreen Wreath Making. She freely shares her passion and knowledge of plants with anyone who is interested. She also gave demonstrations to the Social 60+ participants as well. Lynn visits the center at least twice a week starting in March through Sept. tending to the garden with her senior volunteers. Lynn continues to expand the garden with an area of flowers that are cut and placed in the Social 60+ meeting room. Not all of our Social 60+ participants are able to assist in the garden but all of them get to enjoy the wonderful harvest each year that gives their lunches a touch of garden freshness that delights the palate. Lynn has put countless hours in growing seedlings, planting, watering, harvesting and mentoring the garden volunteers.





Congratulations and THANK YOU **Lynn** for the many ways you have supported Arlington's 55+ and 60+ programs, shared your wonderful gardening skills and, have promoted the work of Extension volunteers in the community.

**Kirsten Conrad**

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A special thank you to everyone who helped **Kirsten** with her recovery from knee surgery, whose timeframe has exceed expectations. A shoutout to **Susan Dennis** and husband Bernie for providing accommodations and **Leslie Cameron** who organized all of us helpers. A thanks to all who pitched in and helped in various ways.

**Tyler Ormsby**

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## What's Going on in the Gardens

### **Buddie Ford Native Garden**

Every Saturday 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

### **Fairlington Small Space Garden**

Sundays 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

### **Fairlington Tribute Mini-Garden**

Alternate Sundays 8:30 to 10:30 AM

### **Glencarlyn Library Community Garden**

Alternating Sundays & Mondays, 10:00 AM to Noon

### **Potomac Overlook Vegetable Garden**

Wednesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 AM

### **Quarry Shade Garden**

Alternating Tuesdays and Saturdays, 9:00 to 11:00 AM

### **Simpson Garden**

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 AM

### **Sunny Garden**

Alternating Mondays & Saturdays, 9:00 to 11:00 AM

Watch emails and check [Better Impact](#) as hours do change with the seasons!

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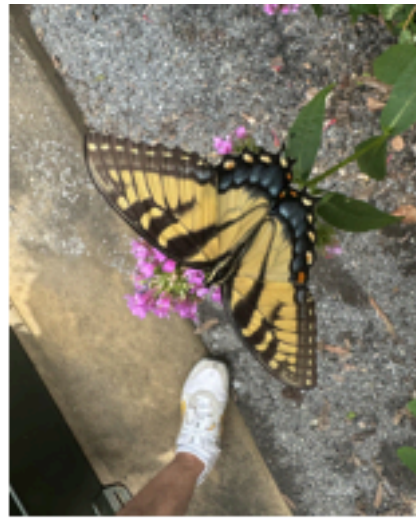
## **Small Space Garden**

By **Leslie Cameron**, *Extension Master Gardener*

The native St. John's Wort is blooming (*Hypericum prolificum*), as well as the native cultivar Jeana phlox (*Phlox subulata* 'Jeana'), and they are getting lots of pollinator visits. The Jeana is a popular option for Small Space Garden visitors, many of whom live in nearby condos and apartment buildings. Our extended drought is making it hard to keep the garden watered, so every bit of rain helps. We continue to get 20 or more visitors each Sunday morning workday, including lots of kids who come in to check on the pizza garden or harvest cucumbers and green beans. A big thank you to **Marilyn Thomson**, who translated our poster on native bees, as well as one on mosquito larvae traps, into Spanish.

Photos (clockwise from top left):

- *Hypericum prolificum* Bees visiting St. John's Wort
- Eastern tiger swallowtail visiting *Phlox subulata* 'Jeana.'
- Peppers ripening in containers.
- Spanish language version of poster about native bees (left), translated by **Marilyn Thomson**, with English version.
- Raised vegetable bed with cucumbers on a trellis and edamame.



## Glencarlyn Library Demonstration Garden

By **Elaine Mills** and **Alyssa Ford Morel**, *Extension Master Gardeners*

Photos: Photo #1 is by **Linda Carney**, the rest are by **Elaine Mills**

With strained muscles and lots of sweat, new and improved herb beds are being created at the Glencarlyn Library Demonstration Garden. The project, which is led by EMG **Paul Nuhn**, has many elements, including laying brick (donated by **Angela McNamara**) to improve the entrance to the patio and other areas, and removing all the plants from the old herb beds and temporarily planting them in pots or other spaces. Pallets of 6" x 6" timbers and other building materials had to be moved from the delivery site to the patio (which is closed off to the public for the duration of the project). We've measured and remeasured the new beds, which are a new size and shape, dug trenches for the main four beds, laid down an underlayer of gravel, cut the timbers, and painstakingly placed (and re-placed) them.

As of this writing, holes are being drilled for rebar to secure the timbers. Next up will be adding flat timbers to the top which will allow seating, staining those toppers, creating a small new center bed, creating new edges for the surrounding beds, and moving soil back into the beds and adding soil as needed into what is now a larger space. Of course, then the plants need to come back into the beds. The project is moving ahead with many extra work parties, but we hope that it will be primarily finished within the next two weeks.

The Garden Coordinators (**Paul Nuhn, Elaine Mills, Linda Carney, and Alyssa Ford Morel**) are very grateful to the EMGs who have been helping on the project including **Sam Pulcrano, Wendy Mills, Judy Funderburk, Susan Grais, Angie Darrah, Richard Derbyshire, Rosemary Grubb, Mary Frase, Annette Sigillito, and Nancy Davis.**

1. **Elaine Mills** and **Richard Derbyshire** remove plants from the herb beds
2. **Paul Nuhn** and **Linda Carney** discuss measurements of the new beds
3. **Alyssa Ford Morel** and **Wendy Mills** dig trenches for the timber framework
4. Overview of the Garden
5. **Sam Pulcrano** adds gravel to a trench



## Dirt from the Help Desk

By **Molly Newling**, *Extension Master Gardener*

As summer progresses, the effects of the drought this year have become more and more apparent. Unfortunately, many gardeners have not begun to water trees and shrubs until their leaves are drying and dropping. Although we are getting some much-needed rain now, don't forget as a general rule that woody plants need 2" of water a week whenever the ground is not frozen.

Here's a picture of a fun bug a client sent in, of an insect found in Holmes Run Park II, wanting to know if it is a pest:

Far from a pest, it is a native Hercules Beetle, *Dynastes tityus*, also known as the rhinoceros beetle for the "horn"

the male sports and uses in mating competition with other males. It's the largest beetle found in the Eastern US; isn't it a beauty?



## Committee News

### Public Education Committee

By **Julie Hanson Swanson**, *Extension Master Gardener and Chair*

Thank you to our July Zoom Class presenters, **Joan McIntyre** and **Beth Buffington**! If you missed their classes, check them out in the Master Gardener Virtual Classroom: <https://mgnv.org/mg-virtual-classroom/>.

Zoom classes in August will feature [Preparing for Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening](#) and [Succulents for Small Spaces](#).

The Public Education Committee would like to present a Zoom class in the late fall or early 2025 on **hydroponic gardening**. The Public Education Committee strives to address the needs of gardeners who have outdoor yards as well as small indoor spaces. As hydroponics is a type of gardening that can be done either indoors or outdoors, it's a great option for people with little or no gardening space, or who want to grow herbs and vegetables through the winter. If you have experience with hydroponic gardening, *please contact Julie Hanson Swanson* ([julie.hanson.swanson@mgnv.org](mailto:julie.hanson.swanson@mgnv.org)). Your input would make for a highly relevant and practical public education class.

Do you have other gardening topics you are particularly passionate about and would like to share with a large virtual audience? If so, **become a Friday Zoom Class Presenter!**

The Public Education Committee hosts Zoom classes open to the public on most Fridays between January and October. *If you would like to present on one of those Fridays or would like more information, please contact Julie Hanson Swanson* ([julie.hanson.swanson@mgnv.org](mailto:julie.hanson.swanson@mgnv.org))



## Social Media Committee

### Garden Challenges

By **Leslie Cameron**, *Extension Master Gardener*

August is not too soon to think about Fall planting. Fall is the best time to plant trees, shrubs, and plants. MGNV.org has extensive resources [on native plants](#). With "right plant, right place" in mind, MGNV has resources on "[best bets](#)" for all kinds of conditions, including dry or wet, shade or sunny, or plants for erosion control, to discourage deer, to attract pollinators, for salt tolerance and more.

The [Master Gardener Virtual Classroom](#) has a video for just about every question a gardener might have, including native plants by growing conditions, by season, and by type; gardening practices; garden design and planning; lawns; soil; water; weeds, and wildlife. Vegetable gardeners will find an extensive collection of videos, including planning, planting, managing pests and diseases, and harvesting. Check out the list of topics on the left.

Look for Between the Rows early in August, with info on watering strategies, managing pests, and a to do list including harvesting the warm weather crops and planning for cooler weather crops. Fall crops can be direct sown or started from seed indoors. Garlic, onions, and shallots can be ordered for fall planting.



Vegetable gardeners interested in planting [fall cover crops](#) can find resources on the website.

Our region continues to experience a rain deficit. MGNV's collected resources on sustainable gardening and landscaping include a section on [conserving water](#), as well as preventing pollution and managing stormwater. Important information on assessing drought stress in trees and plants is [here](#).

Watch the MGNV Facebook and Instagram pages for information during August on the impact of extreme heat and drought on trees and plants and steps gardeners can take to protect them, fall planning, native plants and the native plant garden, and more.

Photo: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, Aster Yellows on Echinacea, Arlington, Virginia, 4 July 2024. The aster yellows pathogen is spread to ornamentals by phloemfeeding leafhoppers, primarily the aster leafhopper, *Macrostelus quadrilineatus* formerly *fascifrons*.

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## Neighborhood Champions

### Mosquito Larvae Traps: A Cheap Way to Control Mosquitoes

By **Joan McIntyre**, *Extension Master Gardener*

Want a cheap way to control pesky mosquitoes in your yard and avoid resorting to commercial spraying that



harms pollinators and other beneficial insects – build your own mosquito larvae traps using a bucket containing water, vegetation, and half a Mosquito Dunk that will attract females to lay eggs and then kill the larvae. Hear from an expert on how these traps work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqcDZDNtP-0>

Once they're in place, add more water and replace Dunks as needed—they should last at least 30 days—and eliminate other sources of standing water. Other strategies for keeping mosquitoes at bay are wearing pants and long sleeve shirts, applying a mosquito repellent with DEET, Picardin, Lemon Oil of Eucalyptus, or IR-3535 (Merck 3535), and using a fan on a patio or deck. Keep in mind that commercial products and services targeting adult mosquitoes will use chemicals that are harmful to other insects.

To learn more, see:

- Audubon Society of Northern Virginia : [Updated: How to Set Up a Mosquito Larvae Trap](#)
- [What to Know About Commercial Practices for Controlling Mosquitoes](#)
- [Protecting Yourself From Mosquitoes without Harming Pollinators](#)

Photo: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, Bees and Dahlia, Arlington, Virginia, 20 July 2024

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## Announcements

Please see "**Important Dates for MGNV Events and Coordinated Communication Themes,**" online. To add MGNV-related events to the calendar, please contact Scarlett Swan.

### **Continuing Education: Saving Seeds from Native Plants**

Look soon for access to a recording of the **Saving Native Seeds** presentation by Matt Bright, Executive Director of [Earth Sangha](#).

### **Continuing Education Movie Night in August:**

"Uninvited: the spread of invasive species"

Tuesday, 13 August from 6-8:45

Fairlington Multi-purpose Room #118

### **[Arlington County Fair](#)**

15-18 August 2024

See **Molly Newling's** article above.

Sign up to volunteer!

Sign up to compete!

### **MGNV Meeting**

TBD October 2024

More information to come.

### **Continuing Education in December: Tree Physiology**

Dr. John Seiler of Virginia Tech will reprise his engaging Master Gardener College class about Tree Physiology.

Thursday, 5 December at 7 pm by Zoom

More information to come.

### **MGNV Social**

7 December 2024

More information to come.

Photos: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, Extension Master Gardener, 'Naughty Marietta' and other non-invasive hybrid daylilies in a mixed border, Arlington, Virginia, June 2024



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## Plant NOVA Natives

### Supporting your garden through heat and drought

Shared by **Joanne Hutton**, *Extension Master Gardener*

**This month's newsletter article to share.** Please use [this link](#) for social media.

We all know the climate is getting hotter. The week of July 22 included the world's two hottest days in recorded history. At the same time, the average annual rainfall in Virginia has risen, as a warmer atmosphere tends to hold more moisture. Since it also creates more violent storms, the water runs off faster, a problem compounded by periods of drought, which still occur despite the increased total rain. We can only anticipate more heat and more drought in the future.

These changes have not gone unnoticed by local gardeners. Some plants which had always seemed hardy are now struggling in the heat. We see some so-called "sun loving" plants wilting in the heat of direct sun and never



fully recovering. We are not sure what “sun loving” really means at this point. How much direct sun do plants “love” when it’s 95 degrees?

Most plants require supplemental watering when newly planted, but this year even well-established and well-sited plants are struggling in the heat and drought. Native plants have the advantage of being adapted to our local conditions, but what happens when those conditions change? We asked our native plant gardeners to share observations about plants that normally tolerate full sun conditions. Here are some of their answers.

- Some redbuds in full sun that were fine in previous years are now turning brown, which makes sense as it is an understory species accustomed to at least some shade.
- Coral Honeysuckle is doing fine in full sun if the roots are shaded, which also mimics how the vine behaves in nature as it climbs up trees.
- Some Virginia Sweetspire shrubs are wilting under the full force of the afternoon sun.
- Green-and-gold seems to tolerate full sun or dry soil but not both. The same is true of Golden Ragwort.
- The shrubs Arrowwood and Black-haw viburnums, Spicebush, and Bladdernut seem unfazed.
- Examples of perennials and grasses that are holding up well despite the stress include asters, goldenrods, Tickseed Coreopsis, Butterfly Weed, Black-eyed Susan, Wild Petunia and Switchgrass. The plants may not grow as tall, though, when stressed.

Going forward, here are some gardening strategies to consider.

**Shop for Drought-Resistant Plants:** We can’t control the climate, but if we don’t want to spend the rest of our lives watering, we will shop more carefully for plants that tolerate heat and drought. A bit more research on the plant than the information provided by the plant label can pay off.

**Consider Nature’s Place:** Where plants are found in nature is a clue to where we should plant them. If they naturally grow in cooler, shadier, or wetter wild settings, they are likely to require more supplemental watering in a dryer, hotter garden. There are exceptions, though: some plants that grow in marshes, such as Buttonbush and Swamp Rose Mallow, do surprisingly well in compacted, clay soil.

**Monitor Ground Moisture:** Too much water can kill a plant as effectively as too little, so it is important to estimate the moisture level before watering. If sticking your finger into the ground doesn’t appeal, a moisture meter can be very handy and occasionally deliver some big surprises, since water moves down into even slight depressions.

**Use Mulch:** Two or three inches of hardwood or leaf mulch will cool the soil and reduce evaporation. However, too thick a layer can become a water barrier and actually dry out the bed. Wood chip mulch is the preferred choice under trees because water flows through it more easily. Fallen leaves are nature’s solution and can do the job in a garden bed with the additional benefit of providing habitat for fireflies and amphibians.

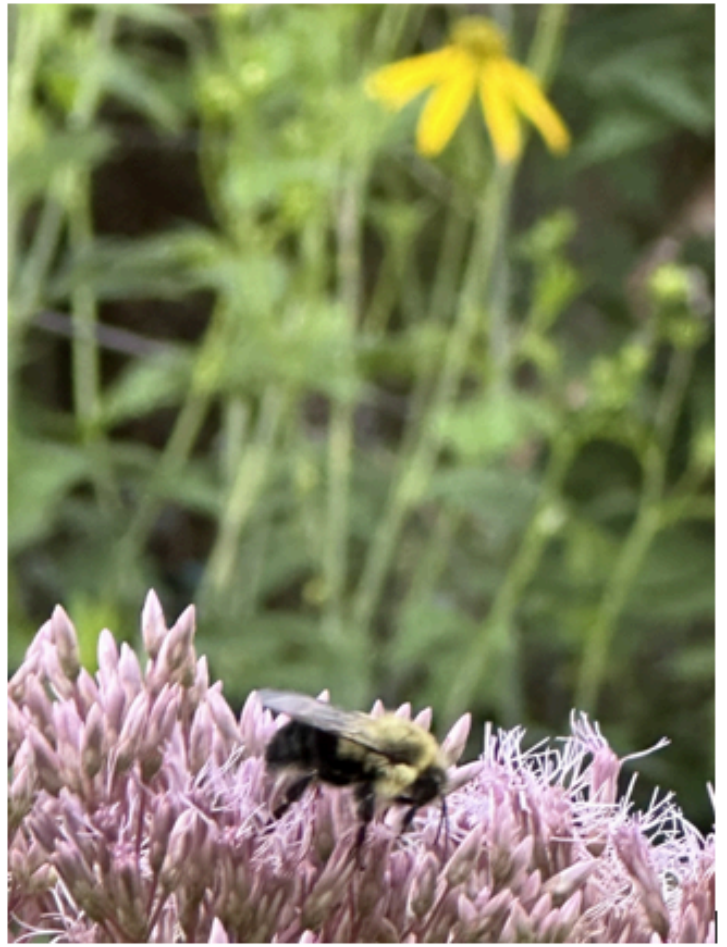
**Plant Green Mulch:** If you use living plants as a kind of green mulch, that can also cool and moisten the soil, though competition for water between plants needs to be considered.

**Plant More Trees:** With temperatures rising, shade gardens are the gardens of the future. Just remember that you should always pull turf grass away from tree trunks out to the drip line, since the roots of trees are quite shallow and have trouble competing with turf for water and nutrients.

Many answers to your questions can be found in the Plant NOVA Natives [online search app](#), which we constantly update as more information comes in. If you have additional observations or strategies to contribute, please send them to [plantnovanatives@gmail.com](mailto:plantnovanatives@gmail.com).

See also [Gardening in extreme heat](#).

Photos: **Nancy Smith Brooks**, *Extension Master Gardener*, Surviving extreme heat, Arlington, Virginia, 27 July 2024



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