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# on the Bay 2023

Amild winter has us thinking spring blossoms, cleaning projects and home renovations.

In fact, many of the blooms and flowers, usually popping up in April or later, have already appeared, sprinkling the countryside with colors. It's time to start thinking about home improvement projects and garden planting.

In this issue of Windows on the Bay, we explore the benefits and beauty of living shorelines and the new trend of forestry mulching. We also introduce you to a do-it-yourselfer who undertook a seven-year project of converting a grain bin into a

And speaking of housing, unfortunately, the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula are not immune to the rental crisis plaguing the rest of the country. We've talked to a local realtor about the challenges of finding long-term rentals.

With the recent surge in home sales in the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, commercial growth is also on the rise. We've revived a once-popular photo spread of new construction called Brick & Mortar.

So let's say goodbye to winter and spring into spring.

Susan 🕲 Lisa susan@rapprecord.com lisa@rapprecord.com



## on the cover

Shoreline garden along Cockrell Creek photo courtesy Northern Neck Master Gardeners

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## Living shorelines



## Я PLace TO Live The rental crisis .....



## Brick and Mortar



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## Innovative honeybee vaccine receives conditional license

The rollout of a new vaccine is a pretty sweet deal for honeybees, plus the flora and crops they pollinate

Honeybees can now be protected against a common bacterial disease called American foulbrood (AFB), thanks to a vaccine recently introduced from Georgia-based Dalan Animal Health Inc., according to the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Veterinary Biologics granted a conditional license for vaccination of honeybees against Paenibacillus larvae, a disease that weakens and kills colonies.

The vaccine is mixed in a "queen candy" paste, which is digested by worker bees. That substance is transferred to their glands that produce royal jelly, which is fed to the queen and transferred to her ovaries, making her larvae more immune to infection. Tests show no negative impact on queen fitness or honey quality. The vaccine will be available for purchase in the U.S. later this year.

One-third of the global food supply relies on pollination, and healthy commercial hives are essential for high crop yields.

"Global population growth and changing climates will increase the importance of honeybee pollination to secure our food supply," said Dr. Annette Kleiser, chief executive officer of Dalan Animal Health Inc. "Our vaccine is a breakthrough in protecting honeybees. We are ready to change how we care for insects, impacting food production on a global

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continued from page 7

scale."

AFB is one of the most widespread and destructive of the honeybee brood diseases, according to the USDA.

But Virginia's beekeepers have done their part to stop the spread of AFB, said Keith Tignor, state apiarist with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"We rarely see this disease in Virginia," he said.
"Last year no incidence of AFB was reported. Preventive measures by beekeepers to reduce AFB spore exposure are working well in the state."

Virginia Tech researchers say the condition is caused by bacterial spores that infect honeybee larvae up to three days old. AFB's millions of spores can remain viable in honey and beekeeping equipment for over 40 years. Bees inadvertently spread the spores throughout the hive, and humans can transmit the disease by exposing a healthy colony to contaminated bees or equipment.

Before now, there was no safe and sustainable solution for AFB prevention.

"There is an abundance of interest in the vaccine and methodology for its development," Tignor said. "The methodology may be applicable to development of vaccines for other maladies such as European foulbrood and a number of viruses that are more prevalent in honeybee colonies."





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dreaming of building a home in the old grain bin. Barnhardt knew that building in a round structure would be a challenge, so, he focused on first building a conventional wooden framed tiny house to see if building a home inside of a round grain bin would be something that he might enjoy. Halfway into the tiny house construction, it became apparent to Barnhardt that building a house in a round grain bin was the type of challenge he was up for and he

began planning the "Silo Build."

# Repurposed grain bin hew had as a round house



Owner Jamie Barnhardt demonstrates the shelves that are actually a door. His right hand is on the book that operates the latch. Photo by Tom Chillemi

Why a silo
Barnhardt spent three decades restoring British sports car in his shop at Hummel Field airport. Disassembling cars to the frame and keeping track of hundreds of parts and putting them back together as good as new takes a special skill set. But those cars can only be assembled one way. When it comes to building a round house, the options were almost unlimited.

As Barnhardt crested his 60th birthday, the new sexagenarian was looking to do something different. So, he took on the silo build even though he'd never built a regular house. "The challenge of building something out of little or nothing is something that has intrigued me my entire life," said Barnhardt. "After having completed the tiny house and silo build, there is no question that these projects fully met my criteria!"

The two bedroom silo home has two floors with a total of 1,350 square feet. The tiny house, which resembles a cabin, measures 14 feet by 24 feet for 336 square.

> An access door was converted to a window. The retained ladder at right adds to the industrial design. Photo by Tom Chillemi

"The challenge of building something out of little or nothing is something that has intrigued me my entire life."

Jamie Barnhardt



Designing a curved kitchen counter top required some innovation with a cardboard template. Photo by Tom Chillemi

## Persistence

Barnhardt is not easily dissuaded by opinions of those who don't share his vision. When asked, "Did anyone tell you that you were crazy," Barnhardt replied, "Many of the people that I shared the idea with responded with an outpouring of imagination."

On the other hand, he got some blank looks when he explained he was trying to attach square to round. Building in a round structure in a straight world

had many problems and he solved them all. "I referred to it as building a ship in a bottle," he said. "I really had a great time doing it."

Challenges of a round room.
Computer Aided Design (CAD) programs don't work with round rooms, explained Barnhardt. He used cardboard cutouts laid on the floor to design the kitchen cabinets.

The interior perimeter walls were one of the biggest challenges, he said. A wooden stud wall had to be built inside of the round steel bin and it had to be round. Using steam to bend studs was considered, but abandoned. Middlesex County Building Official David Selph had a "brilliant idea" of cutting two-



Alan Richardson, left, and owner Jamie Barnhardt completed more than half of the construction. Photo by Tom Chillemi

inch by six-inch lumber to make curved base and top plates that were four inches wide. Problem solved.

Moisture concerns on the interior of the metal walls were overcome by spraying closed cell insulation on the metal walls and in the gaps between them and the inner stud walls.

Interior walls have decreasing radiuses as they they get closer to the center. Interior room design variations were drawn on the floor with a string and marker.

The area where the round wall meets the flat and square addition had to be cut on a radius, reinforced, and sealed to make a tight fit. Barnhardt explained that when a round grain bin is initially built, it's structural integrity depends on a continuous circle, much like that of an egg. The removal of a portion of that circle required non-standard dimensional "seat of the pants engineering." This required sequencing because a metal wall collapse would have spelled the end of the dream, he said. "This was one of the more challenging aspects of the build as it is on a two-story structure."

Windows and door installation on a round wall was one of the more rewarding challenges faced during construction, he said. Metal frames were designed to fit the round face of the metal grain bin and were welded to seal and provide structural integrity. The design had to incorporate a window



No dust pan is needed with this built in dust vacuum. Photo by  $\mathsf{Tom}$  Chillemi



A mill stone is part of the landing. Photo by Tom Chillemi



A skylight, covered in this photo, is lit with blue miniature lights. Photo by Tom Chillemi



The silo exterior became an interior wall, complete with an added industrial design light. Photo by Tom Chillemi



**Building a "Tiny House" was the inspiration for creating a round house from a grain bin.** Photo by Tom Chillemi

installation and framing to have a finished interior appearance.

Radiant floor heat, was integrated into the hot water system with a maximum efficiency as the objective created the opportunity of having an open loop configuration with a 96% efficient propane hot water heater. All of this required extensive planning, given the very limited space to work with. This all was achievable with the talents of master plumber Keith Thrift.

Other touches include mini splits heat and air conditioning systems, a central vacuum, and a dust pan door on the floor that vacuums up swept up dust. In the primary bedroom ceiling is a round skylight, lit with blue accent lights. A light tube brings natural light to an interior bathroom. A closet door is disguised as a book shelve filled with his grandfather's books. The latch is operated by tilting a book forward. The condensation drain for the HVAC is disguised as an exterior faucet.

Help from a friend Barnhardt's best friend Alan Richardson was

the "Get it done" component that took the builds to the final completion, said Barnhardt. "He and I did 65% of the needed work with specialized contractors completing the balance."

The tiny house foundation was started in the spring of 2015. The complete build out of the two projects took approximately seven years.

So, what's next for Barnhardt? He's not sure. He talks about the energy "bell curve" that falls off as we age and how the silo project was a pinnacle.

There's probably more innovation to come, he just hasn't figured out yet where to put his energy.

"I referred to it as building a ship in a bottle. I really had a great time doing it."

Jamie Barnhardt





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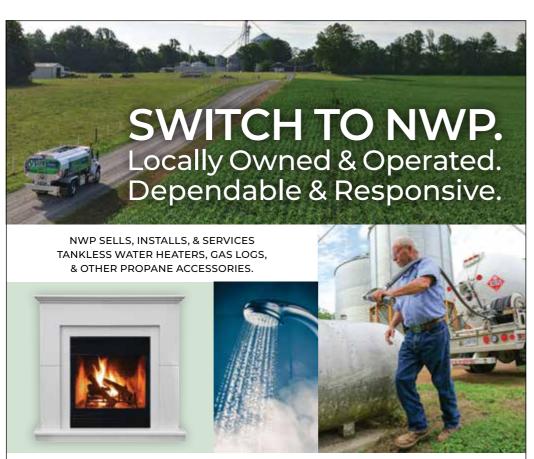


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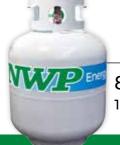
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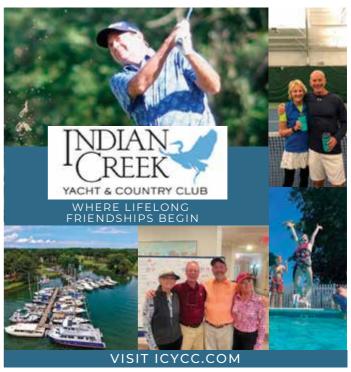


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## LIFE AT WATER'S EDGE:

## working with nature to create living shorelines

shared between the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, managing the delicate area where land and water meet is an interest to many for controlling erosion on their property and for all of us for improving the quality of our waters. Traditionally, bulkheads and riprap have been common ways to shore up a shoreline, but now living shorelines are becoming the preferred method for being both resilient and pleasing to the eye.

Why living shorelines are better Environmental scientists and many state agencies have

Environmental scientists and many state agencies have pushed for living shorelines since they mimic, protect or restore natural shorelines. Using nature as a guide, the creation of a buffer absorbs wave energy and reduces erosion. The plants and other features can also help filter and slow runoff improving water quality. Living shorelines made of native plants also create habitats that support native fish, crabs, oysters, birds and insects.

While shoreline designs for lower wave energy of the bays and rivers lends itself to the gradings and plantings shown here, studies have shown that living shorelines can also work in areas of high boat wake and wave energy. Those methods are still being tested out, but involve engineered breaks and oyster reefs along with marsh plantings to reduce wave action.

BY JACKIE NUNNERY



A gardener's work is never done. Master Gardeners spend Thursday mornings tending to the garden and educating visitors who want to learn about living shorelines. Photo courtesy of Northern Neck Master Gardeners

The parts of a shoreline plan While there are four distinct regions in a typical shoreline

plan, you don't have to do them all, said Master Gardener Janice Mahoney. The highest terrain and farthest from the water, the upland buffer is home to native deciduous trees. A downward sloping bank face is the perfect place to plant deep rooted native grasses, shrubs and herbaceous perennials. Coastal wetlands and beach strands are areas subject to tidal action during extreme high tides and storms. As a result, plants in these areas need to be able to tolerate exposure to some salinity, such as grasses, rushes and sedges. A living shoreline does not have to end at land. In the subtidal waters, submerged aquatic vegetation and artificial oyster reefs can be installed to further absorb wave action and filter water.

Reedville's living classroom
The Northern Neck Master Gardeners' (NNMG) demonstration garden off of Cockrell Creek is proof that imagination and hard work can transform the humblest patch of shoreline. According to Mahoney, the land was severely eroded by run off from the adjacent parking lot of Bethany United Methodist Church and was "full of tires and junk."

In 2005, the NNMG sought the help of local environmental groups-Northern Neck Native Plant Society, Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship, Northern Neck Audubon Society and the Chesapeake Bay Garden Club—to create natural solutions to manmade problems. With funding assistance from the Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District, the Reedville Living Shoreline Garden was born.

The goal of the project, according to Mahoney, was to control runoff, improve water quality and stabilize the bank. As gardeners, they also wanted to show that this could be accomplished through natural solutions, and of course, in the process create a beautiful garden that would enhance the community as well as the shoreline.

Mahoney said most of the runoff was directed toward one low spot, so they decided to work with that situation and create terraced steps, filling them with gravel so that water could drain into the soil/stones, filtering the runoff before it enters the creek.



When parking lot run off created a problem, the Master Gardeners turned it into a feature. Stairs filled with stone and soil allow storm water to drain and filter before eventually entering the creek. Photo courtesy of Northern **Neck Master Gardeners** 

Before



An unused piece of shoreline creating run off into Cockrell Creek was an ideal place to create a living shoreline demonstration garden. Photo courtesy of Northern Neck Master Gardeners



Not only beautiful to look at, the garden has solved erosion and run off issues and created a habit that encourages native species. Photo courtesy of Northern Neck Master Gardeners

## Before



As a demonstration garden, the Master Gardeners want to show how, when properly supported, marsh grasses can return to a low wave energy shoreline. Photos courtesy of Northern Neck Master Gardeners

## After



## Plant selection

Given that one of the goals was to eliminate invasive plants, the first step was a commitment to using native plants. Why? They require less effort and will be more successful because they are already adapted to the climate and soils of Virginia. This location, according to Mahoney would not have any supplemental watering, so it was essential they be able to "tolerate any heat or drought" of Virginia summers. An added bonus: given that many native plants have specialized relationships with native pollinators, when you increase the population of those plants, you also increase the population of those pollinators.

As any gardener will tell you, successful gardens are about having the right plant in the right place. The garden was divided into two zones: the upland slope/lower bank which consisted of most of the land between the parking lot and the shoreline; and the inter-tidal shoreline which is a thin strip of marsh. "The upper bank tends to get inundated with rain, while the lower level gets inundated with brackish water," Mahoney said.

From the wax myrtles at the very top of the garden, to the black-eyed susans on the upper bank, each plant was chosen not just for their beauty or bloom time, but for a specific purpose like deep roots to stabilize the bank or growth habits that crowd out weeds. Plants chosen for the lower also had to include plants that "don't mind getting their feet wet" during a higher tides.

There are a different set of challenges with the shoreline marsh, contending with tidal erosion as well as the possible spread of an invasive species of grass called Phragmites australis. This species of wetland grass can overwhelm native marsh grasses, creating an undesirable habitat for native wildlife. To demonstrate how one could expand a marsh to protect shoreline, a marsh sill was created to show marsh grass plugs filling in a back-filled area.

Nearly 20 years later, are there lessons learned? "You're always learning," Mahoney said. The biggest lesson was creating the steps to handle the major run off, but "as a gardener, we're always bringing in new plants." With spring around the corner, you'll soon see the group spending its Thursday mornings tending to the garden, next to the Reedville Fishermen's Museum, and available to answer any questions, Mahoney said.

## RESOURCES

- A complete list of plants at the Reedville Living Shoreline Garden, information on the Shoreline Evaluation Program: Northern Neck Master Gardeners, nnmg.org.
- A guide to Northern Neck native plants: Northern Neck Native Plant Society, nnvnps. org
- To purchase native plants: Mid-Atlantic Native Plant Farm, Cobbs Creek. Online only midatlanticnatives.com; New Leaf Nursery, 7851 Jessie duPont Memorial Highway, Heathsville; Dug-In Farms, 155 Fleet Bay Road, White Stone.





Deltaville Maritime Museum volunteers, sometimes deep in the mud, planted hundreds of smooth cordgrass plugs to restore the Jackson Creek shoreline. Photos courtesy Deltaville Maritime Museum and Holly Point Nature Park

If you want individualized help, the NNMG also have a Shoreline Evaluation Program which helps homeowners create their own shoreline protections. For \$60, Master Gardeners will perform a site visit and provide a comprehensive assessment, along with a list of plants. Follow up visits are also available.

## Deltaville shoreline restored

The living shoreline at The Deltaville Maritime Museum and Holly Point Nature Park is a great example of the resilience of nature and people. According to Bill Powell, the living shoreline was begun in 2007 using funds from museum membership and the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. The living shoreline was created by first installing coconut fiber biologs to stabilize the shore and backfilled with soil. A team of museum

volunteers planted countless plugs of smooth cordgrass along the 150 feet of new shoreline, but before they could complete the project, a fire in 2012 destroyed much of the museum and park.

In the aftermath, Powell said two-thirds of the shoreline needed to be completed along with creating a forested buffer zone. The work was eventually finished in 2018. With the passage of time and the maturity of plants, Powell said the shoreline has welcomed the wildlife that have discovered the new habitat. "The shoreline has an abundant fish and crab population as well as a family of heron that live at the foot of the creek," he said.

A Pierwalk was constructed on Jackson Creek to view the living shoreline project from the best vantage point—the water. To visit: deltavillemuseum.com





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## Gardening in the Northern Neck seminar to feature speakers, vendors, exhibitors

Northern Neck seminar, spon- entertain everyone who attends." sored by the Northern Neck Master Gardeners (NNMG), will be held Saturday, March 25, at the White Stone Church of the Nazarene, 57 Whisk Drive, White Stone. The theme is "In Your Own Backyard."

Gardening in the Northern Neck tured speakers, the seminar also seminar again in 2023," said president Lynn Osborne. "We

Speakers will include author and garden educator Barbara Pleasant, biologist and pollinator conservationist Heather Holm and Henrico County Vir-Agent and pest control expert "We are excited to host the Ed Olsen. In addition to the feafeatures vendors and exhibitors.

have three marvelous speakers us they enjoy visiting vendor

as they enjoy the speakers," said Osborne. "We have a great lineup of vendors and exhibitors at this year's Gardening in the Northern Neck Seminar.

"While we don't endorse any ginia Cooperative Extension of the vendors, it provides a great opportunity for seminar attendees to ask questions and gather information," she said.

Miller's Greenhouses Inc., "Many seminar attendees tell an owner-operated retail and Neck Land Conservancy, Northwholesale greenhouse Tappahannock, specializes in native plants, perennials and annuals.

> Fly Home Birdhouses specializes in whimsical, hand-crafted copper roof birdhouses created on their Shenandoah Valley

Abija Blue offers an array of Japanese garden tools, functional hats, gloves and aprons, a collection of seed pollinators and Mason bee houses, peat moss planters and herb scissors. Certified arborists from

Edge Specialty Pruning & Plant Health Care will answer questions on tree and shrub care.

Capt. Tom's Oyster Floats manufactures and sells the equipment to grow oysters.

Other exhibitors include Handbook." the Northern Neck Beekeepers Society, the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, the Northern

The 29th Gardening in the who will delight, educate and and exhibitor displays as much Bartlett Tree Experts and Waters ern Neck Master Naturalists, NNMG, and the NNMG Shoreline Evaluation Program.

> NNMG will offer gardening equipment and books for sale, including the newly revised "Northern Neck Gardening

> To register, visit www. nnmg.org/gnn or call the Northumberland County Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, 580-5694. The fee is \$50.

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## Avoid invasives; consider natives

Homeowners should give due consideration to whether or not plants are considered invasive species before introducing new plants on their properties.

According to the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, invasive species of plants can lead to the extinction of native plants and animals.

Invasive plant species also can reduce biodiversity and cause significant fundamental disruptions to local ecosystems. Though non-native plants are often cherished for their looks, homeowners planting new gardens or supplementing existing gardens with new plants are urged to plant only native species.

Such an approach benefits plants and also local wildlife that depends on native plant species for food and cover.

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## Long-term rental opportunities are becoming more scarce

by AnnGardner Eubank

throughout the Lower Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula may be booming, the struggle to find a home to rent that won't cost an arm and a leg is one area residents have been dealing with since the pandemic began in 2020.

Many young people who have spent their entire lives forging friendships, building careers and planning for futures in the place they've always called home have been left with no choice other than to relocate to urban areas like Richmond and Hampton Roads in order to find housing.

Because the pickings are so slim in the area's rental market, property owners and investors have control over the market at large, and often require established credit scores and steep deposits are required before a tenant is offered a place to live.

How has the market become so scarce over the last several years that masses of the young work force are left with virtually no choice but to leave the area?

According to Kenny Kuykendall, chief broker of Middle Bay Realty, many real estate investors have recently taken advantage of the spike the housing market saw the last few years.

"There is a major shortage in rentals right now. A majority of the shortage lies with the increased housing prices over the past couple of years. A lot of investors have sold their rental properties and that has reduced the rental units drastically. Many

"There is a major shortage in rentals right now. A majority of the shortage lies with the increased housing prices over the past couple of years. A lot of investors have sold their rental properties and that has reduced the rental units drastically. Many investors have cashed out during the increase in housing prices."

Kenny Kuykendall

investors have cashed out during the increase in housing prices," Kuykendall said.

With the market for rentals being extremely scarce and the demand to rent is increasing seemingly day by day, the price to rent has skyrocketed.

"It's been much more difficult to find a rental than it was three years ago. It's 100% harder to find a rental than it was five years ago," Kuykendall

said.

In October 2021, a two-bedroom, one-bathroom onestory home with less than an acre of land that was constructed in the '70s in the corporate limits of White

Stone hit the rental market for \$1100 a month with a \$1100 deposit requirement. This house had 52 applicants within the one month the rental was advertised.

There's no doubt this area is a great place to live, but the idea of where to live is what causes doubts among the young workforce. Because of the drastic rental shortage, many folks have turned

to alternative means of having a roof over their heads. There has been an increase in people paying monthly slip fees and becoming live-aboards on boats at various marinas, as well as several cases of folks living in campers and RVs.

In addition to houses simply increasing in value and investors cashing out, an entirely differ-

ent type of business has swept through the area seemingly in response to the pandemic which has caused further difficulties in sustaining a viable and reasonable rental market.

The short-term rental industry has proved to be extremely lucrative and indemand. Many people have swapped out more traditional vacation lodging options like bed and breakfasts and hotels for a more "authentic" and localized experience by spending their vacations in rental homes through services like AirBnB and VRBO.

"We have investors currently looking hard to pur-

chase full time rentals in our area right now. Their whole idea though is to purchase, fix up and kick up the price," Kuykendall said.

Property investors can easily make a significant higher profit through renting out their properties via short-term rather than long term. With more homes being purchased for the purpose to operate a short-term rental, the potential pool of available homes to rent long-term greatly diminish.

"Short-term rentals have helped compound the problem of limited long-term rentals and has taken a large percentage out from the available full time market," Kuykendall id.

Despite the amount of homes available for rent drastically shrinking, apartment and town-home rentals should be on the rise soon. While there is a waiting list for current apartment complexes like Ice House Fields Apartments in White Stone and only one unit available at the Fox Hill Drive town homes in Kilmarnock, construction for several new housing complexes are underway.

"Short-term rentals have helped compound the problem of limited long-term rentals and has taken a large percentage out from the available full time market."

Kenny Kuykendall

Crossroads of the Chesapeake, a new apartment complex on Harris Road in Kilmarnock, has been under construction and is coming together quickly.

Additionally, according to Kilmarnock Zoning Administrator Marshall Sebra, there are several other projects in the zoning pipelines in Kilmarnock that are said to offer rental options. Town home complexes are expected to begin construction in the near future in front of the Town Centre Park as well as beside the Marathon gas station on Main Street.

The town of White Stone is also gearing up to begin its business district revitalization project. Within the project's scope of work, several spaces above commercial properties like The Pink Lemon and Docks of the Bay will be renovated to provide apartment spaces for rent.

While securing a rental home with a picket fence in a neighborhood for dogs and kids to run in the area may feel like playing the lottery, the outlook for apartments and town homes is looking up for the future.

The Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula are great places to visit and even better places to live... so long as you can find somewhere to do so.



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## Budget-friendly ways to freshen up your home's exterior

As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an "average cost" of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties, including:

• Power washing — Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after





winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

### A furnished front porch

— A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

• Window box installation — Installing window box planters is another costeffective way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

### Replacing hardware

— Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.







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## Virginians urged to protect their property from flooding

Flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster. With spring rains, followed by hurricane season rapidly approaching, flood preparedness is a must for Virginia's homeowners, renters and business owners.

"Floods are a significant threat, not only in coastal areas, but across the Commonwealth. Our goal is to empower people to assess their flood risk and take the necessary actions to protect their homes and property," said Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) director Matthew Wells.

DCR coordinates the state's flood-protection activities and helps communities benefit from the National Flood Insurance Program, which allows residents of nearly 90% of Virginia's communities to purchase federally backed flood insurance.

"DCR's flood awareness website (https://www.dcr.vir-ginia.gov/floodawarenessweek/) offers tools and information including fact sheets, a cost calculator and a risk-assessment tool," Wells said.

Virginians can learn about their property's flood risk by keying their address into the Virginia Flood Risk Information System.

Even a "small" flood can be catastrophic. FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program estimate that just an inch of water in a home can cause more that \$25,000 in damages.

Therefore, flood insurance is, by far, the most effective way to protect homes and property.

Standard homeowners and renters insurance policies don't cover property damage from floods. Yet only 3% of Virginians have flood insurance, according to the National Flood Insurance Program.

"Virginians should review their insurance policies now to make sure they have the coverage they need," said DCR dam safety and floodplain management director Wendy Howard-Cooper. "It takes 30 days for a new flood insurance policy to go into effect, so it's important to be covered before a storm."

There are additional ways renters, homeowners and business owners can reduce potential flood damage to some, but not all, of their property. These include:

- Storing important documents in waterproof containers, on an upper floor.
- Caulking windows, doors and gaps where pipes and wires enter a building.
- Labeling propane tanks with the owner's name and address.
- Choosing tile or other waterproof flooring over carpeting on lower floors
- "Anywhere it can rain, it can flood," said Howard-Cooper. "DCR is proud to be Virginia's partner in flood preparedness."



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## Changes: They are a-comin'

Across the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, commercial construction is again on the rise, especially in lower Lancaster County where Kilmarnock is experiencing retail growth, and in White Stone, where virtually the whole town is undergoing a renovation.

Years ago, a Brick and Mortar section of Windows on the Bay highlighted new commercial and public-use construction projects in Lancaster, Northumberland and Middlesex counties. With multiple projects again in the works, we have decided to revive that section. Here is just a sampling of some of the commercial and public projects in progress or recently completed in the three counties.

\*Some information provided by Kilmarnock planning and zoning director Marshall Sebra and Northumberland County building official Stevie Conaway.

## Lancaster



Groundwork is underway in Kilmarnock on Irvington Road near the intersection with Harris Road, where The Audiology Offices is building a new 2,600-square-foot office. According Dr. Ann DePaolo, the office should be open early in the fall. There will be 13 parking spaces and a one-story building on the parcel. Franklin Mechanical Contractors of Kilmarnock is the general contractor. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



A new 3,200-square-foot, three-bay storage building has been built by the Kilmarnock Volunteer Fire Department behind its firehouse, 71 School Street, Kilmarnock. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



The 2,200-square-foot Subway, 364 North Main Street, Kilmarnock, has been undergoing renovations for nearly a year-and-half, since a driver smashed into the front entrance of the building. A subsequent sale of the store meant a Subway re-do to coincide with changes to the brand nationwide. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



Renovations and additions at Lancaster Middle School, 191 School Street, Kilmarnock are ongoing as the facility is converted into an elementary school. The project includes demolition of a 1960s classroom wing and construction of an approximately 7,700-square-foot addition for a new main entrance, administrative suite and new classrooms. The renovation scope covers 66,000 square feet. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



Lancaster County Public School's Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC), 235 School Street, Kilmarnock, opened August 22, 2022. The ECEC's new playground officially opened March 6, 2023. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



Stateson Homes of Blacksburg plans to build more than 90 homes in the Hills Quarter subdivision. The company originally announced seventeen homes were slated for completion by the end of 2022. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



A June 15th opening is planned for the new AutoSpa in Kilmarnock. Located in the Walmart shopping center, the carwash will be 3,500 square feet. It will be the eighth AutoSpa for owner Lawrence Fuccella of Middlesex County. Evans Construction is the general contractor. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



A 6,800-square-foot commercial retail center is planned in Kilmarnock, adjacent to Pizza Hut and in front of Tractor Supply. Although ground-breaking hasn't begun, a silt fence has been installed and a land disturbance permit has been issued. A Starbucks will occupy a portion of the retail space. The company has submitted a signage plan to the town. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



Changes can be seen daily on Weems Road, where construction is underway on six, half-acre lots. The buildings, grouped into four units, each with a shared parking lot, will serve as employee boarding houses for the Tides Inn resort in Irvington. Connemara Corporation is the general contractor. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



A new Dairy Queen will soon be located at 433 North Main Street, Kilmarnock. Graybeale Construction Inc. of Mechanicsville is the general contractor. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



The first phase of a renovation and expansion at Bon Secours Rappahannock General Hospital in Kilmarnock was completed in April 2022, nearly a year to the date after its groundbreaking. The first phase features a new main entrance with canopy, new lobby and reception area and a new dining area. A new emergency room is also open but is still undergoing changes. The emergency department will now be a 10-bed unit with private rooms. Expansion of the outpatient infusion center and updates to the inpatient wing are also planned. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi



Construction is moving quickly along James B. Jones Memorial Highway in Kilmarnock where Crossroads of the Chesapeake luxury villas are being built. Forty lots are planned in Phase I, which should be completed in 24–36 months, according to developer Lee Self. Another 88 lots will be developed in future phases. Photo by Lisa Hinton-Valdrighi

## **Northumberland**



A new Family Dollar/Dollar Tree combo should be open by mid-April in the former Callao Supermarket, 35 Northumberland Highway, Callao. The 17,000-square-foot building has recently been renovated by Pine Contracting of Pittsburgh. The building is owned by TRC LLC of Charleston, S.C. Photo by Jackie Nunnery



A 10,000-square-foot building is under construction in Burgess where a Family Dollar/Dollar Tree combination store is planned. TRC LLC of Charleston, S.C., is the owner. HJB Construction Inc. is doing the exterior building and framework with Pine Contracting of Pittsburgh doing the finish work inside. Photo by Jackie Nunnery



A Hometown Community Park is planned in Callao. The project is a major undertaking for the Callao Hometown Community Association (CHCA). Off of Northumberland Highway behind Primis Bank, the park will include a mural wall, walking loop, playground, pavilion, picnic area, farmers market pergola and a stage and open lawn seating. Draft courtesy of CHCA.



A new 4,500-square-foot building on the Northumberland High School (NHS) campus will include space for a new athletic facility, JROTC room and the NHS Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program. Connemara Corporation is the general contractor. Photo by Jackie Nunnery

## **Middlesex**



A major project was recently completed at Hummel Airport in Topping where the runway was lengthened 1,000 feet and realigned so planes do not need to fly over homes. New asphalt can be seen next to the old runway, which has been removed. A public-private partnership funded the project at no cost to Middlesex County, which owns the airport. Photo contributed by Nancy and Richard Lewis



Middlesex County has partnered with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) to build a \$41 million sewer system that will send wastewater 40 miles to HRSD's Yorktown treatment plant. The sewer system will follow the central water system that was deployed from Urbanna to Deltaville and Topping two years ago. Placement of sewer pipes for the collection system is under construction at Cooks Corner. Photo by Tom Chillemi

## Tips to pick the right plants for your landscape

Each year, gardening enthusiasts anxiously await the arrival of spring. Spring is a great season to plant new flowers, plants, grasses, and trees, making it a popular time of year to spend sunny days out in the yard.

Veteran gardeners may know their landscapes well and be able to pick the right plants on their own. Novices may need a little help as they look to give their landscapes a whole new look. The following are some helpful tips to help homeowners pick the right plants for their landscapes:

 Conduct a site evaluation — A colorful landscape featuring an array of plants and flowers can be eye-catching and add curb appeal to a property. However, where plants will be planted is a significant variable that must be considered before homeowners choose what to plant. The Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst notes that site evaluation is the first step when picking plants. A number of factors must be evaluated, including light availability; water availability; exposure to the elements, including wind and extreme temperatures; and competition from existing vegetation, among other things. Document these variables prior to picking plants. For example, take note of the area you plan to plant to see if it is full sun or partial shade, and then pick plants whose growing conditions align with those you observe.

• Look at more than looks — Aesthetic appeal might be what homeowners most desire from their landscapes, but that appeal is only achieved when the right plants are chosen for a space. If the wrong plants are chosen, they're unlikely to

thrive or they could threaten existing vegetation, thus compromising the overall appeal of the property. Native plants can often handle local weather conditions, so prioritize natives over more exotic plants whose key attribute is aesthetic appeal. If jaw-dropping aesthetic appeal is your top priority, speak with a local landscaping professional about which natives can provide that without compromising surrounding vegetation.

• Consider maintenance prior to planting — Maintenance is another variable gardeners must consider. Newly planted trees may require substantial watering until they've fully established their roots, and some homeowners may not have time for that. In addition, certain plants may require a considerable amount of pruning in order to create and maintain the look homeowners desire. Individuals must be willing to invest the time and effort necessary to maintain new plantings that require such diligence. If not, look for plants that don't require much maintenance while keeping in mind that even low-maintenance plants still require some effort and attention.

• Consider local wildlife — If your lawn is routinely visited by local wildlife, then look for plants that won't look like a meal to these welcome, if uninvited, guests. For example, if you routinely see deer lounging around in your backyard, look for deer-resistant plants. This is a good way to protect your investment, of both time and money, and ensure minimal wildlife traffic through your newly landscaped yard.

Spring gardens are awe-inspiring, especially when homeowners embrace various strategies for successful planting.









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## Northern Neck Historic Garden Week Tour to feature four properties

The Garden Club of the Northern Neck (GCNN) will host Historic Garden Week (HGW) in the Northern Neck on April 19.

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) will celebrate 90 years of Garden Week tours and GCNN is excited to be presenting two never-before-seen historic homes and two historic tour favorites in Warsaw, reported publicity coordinator Hyte Smith.

Recently the town of Warsaw, having undergone a revitalization, offers charming specialty shops and eateries abound along with a new town park and outdoor center with access to lovely trails at The Bounds, said Smith. Three of the four historic homes on the tour have largely remained in the hands of the original families that built them.

Virginia's Historic Garden Week began in the 1920s to preserve trees planted by Thomas Jefferson and is often referred to as "America's Largest Open House." Tour proceeds provide grants and scholarships designed to promote conservation and preservation throughout Virginia, including Stratford Hall, Belle Isle State Park and Westmoreland State Park. Additional details about the homes, tickets and logistics may be viewed on Facebook at Historic Garden Week in the Northern Neck, and Instagram at historicgardenweek-nnk.

## Chinn House

This two-story Warsaw icon was originally home to Judge Joseph William Chinn. Completed in 1908, it is a fine example of the popular hipped roof variation of the colonial revival style. The land was part of a large farm owned by the Douglas family that had been gifted to the young lawyer, a distant relative of George Washington. His bride was Sarah Fairfax Douglas.

In its heyday, the residence was a grand gathering place of families and local citizens. The first floor includes the library, a formal parlor, a sitting room, the dining room, the kitchen and a pantry while the second level boasts six bedrooms. Connecting the floors is a beautiful, custom staircase made of quartered sawn oak that was shipped by steamboat from Baltimore. Much of the home's building supplies, including the rift pine wood floors and concave leaded glass in the front door, the door between the pantry and the custom curved windows in the sitting room, were also shipped to Warsaw from Baltimore during construction.

Local resident, Mary Douglas Lawton, the granddaughter of Joseph and Sarah Chinn, remembers that the family often opened the house to the community for celebrations. After the death of S. Chinn in 1932, followed by Judge Chinn in 1936, the family donated the property to the Virginia Community College System in 1969. With the state government launching a much-needed renovation, the plan is for the home to serve as a community gathering place for cultural meetings, receptions and get-togethers.

The property is owned by Rappahannock Community Col-



Chinn House, photo by Kimberly King

## Jones House

This striking three-story Victorian home was built by Congressman William Atkinson Jones and his wife, Claude Douglas Motley, in 1887. The original house burned down during the Civil War. At the age of 15, Jones fought for the Confederacy as a VMI cadet. He is best known for authoring the Jones Act of 1916, which provided for the independence of the Philippines.

The yard is bordered by original wrought-iron fencing. In the side yard is a gazebo covering a 30-foot-deep icehouse. Family members have referred to the gazebo as the "summer house," a favorite gathering place during Virginia's hot, humid summers.

Portraits dating to the colonial period tell the story of the Jones family and its prominence in the nation's history. In 1970, the grandson of Congressman Jones, Col. William A Jones III, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroic actions in a rescue mission over North Vietnam.

In the parlor are many artifacts and furnishings acquired by Congressman and Mrs. Jones during their travels to the Far East. Original woodwork and family antiques contribute to the overall elegance of the home.

The property is owned by the Jones Family.



Jones House, photo by Fran King



Sabine Hall, photo by Fran King

## Sabine Hall

A fine example of a Colonial Georgian House, Sabine Hall was built c. 1738 by Landon Carter, the fourth son of Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman who was the builder of Historic Christ Church in Lancaster County.

Originally a classic Georgian brick structure, Sabine Hall reflects alterations by both the builder and later generations. In 1764, the south wing was built as a covered passage to the kitchen. The covered "piazza" on the river side of the house was added by Landon Carter and documented in a 1797 insurance policy.

Just inside the front door, the great hall is bright and filled

with family portraits, including one of King Carter. The traverse corridor staircase, just off the great hall, has walnut balusters and the original heart-pine floors are side-pegged. Sabine Hall rises on a ridge of the Rappahannock River, with six terraces sloping toward the water. The garden retains its original 18th century design.

The house has always been owned and occupied by direct descendants of Landon Carter and is both a Virginia and a National Historic Landmark.

The property is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carter Wellford IV and Mrs. Peter Drayton O'Hara.

## Belle Ville

Nestled at the end of a long straight drive with an allee of Pin Oak trees and a Horse Chestnut tree planted in 1860 in the back, this property was built between 1826 and 1832. The first known structure on the farm and property was built circa 1730.

This is the first time this beautiful Federal-style house, which has two stories and five bays above a high English basement, has been on the garden tour. The bricks, laid in Flemish bond, were made on the property. There is an ample classical-style front porch with four columns, reached by a flight of steps gracing its entire width.

The interior has all original woodwork and original windows and glass. The front hallway and stairwell feature lovely architectural design, ascending the entire stairway tying it into the elegant and spacious hallway. The interior also features original family pieces such as a dining table and chairs and a wicker child's rocking chair.

The owners are in the process of a renovation using salvaged materials and lumber from the property, which provides an intriguing view of before and after.

Descend into the backyard and view a setting of agricultural fields and naturalized daffodils filling the remains of the rolling terraces of the once formal gardens.

To the left is the Warsaw Female Institute where several hundred local children were educated between 1871 and the mid-1920s along with other interesting out buildings.

The property is owned by Charles and Patty Lamb.



Belle Ville, photo by Fran King

## Tour information

Tour headquarters may be found on the Campus of Rappahannock Community College, 52 Campus Drive, Warsaw. Tour hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Advance tickets are \$40 per person at vagardenweek.org.

Restrooms may be found at Tour Headquarters and Warsaw Town Park, 171 Main Street, Warsaw.

Parking is available at Tour Headquarters, Main Street, Town Park, Sabine Hall and Belle Ville.

Box lunches may be pre-ordered until April 12 for \$15. Contact Anna Garrett, 296-8899 or Agarrett7790@gmail.com. There are takeout or eat-in options, as well as gluten-free options.

Complimentary refreshments will be available at the Garden Market on Main Street for GCV ticket holders.

There will be special activities from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Garden Market Place on Main Street. Tour guests will find outdoor seating to enjoy lunch, floral demonstrations, a native plant sale and a free tree sapling from Bartlett Tree Experts.

This is a self-driving tour. Properties require walking and have uneven ground. Walking shoes are highly recommended.

## Places of interest

Other places of interest nearby include:

- The Saddlery, 171 Main Street, Warsaw. This harness shop was constructed in 1832-1833 and is now the home of Northern Neck Visitor's Center and Menokin's Outdoor Adventures.
- Menokin, 4037 Menokin Road, Warsaw. The home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is a National Historic Landmark and one of the best documented 18th century houses in the U.S. Menokin is a waterfront refuge featuring pristine nesting and migratory bird habitat.
- Stratford Hall, 483 Great House Road, Stratford. This historic home was established in the 1730s by the Lees and is one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in the U.S. Tour the Great House, birthplace of Civil War General Robert E. Lee. The Garden Club of Virginia has completed restoration work on its gardens and grounds, most recently in 2018. Admission is waived for HGW ticket holders on Northern Neck's tour day.
- St. John's Episcopal Church, 5987 Richmond Road, Warsaw. Completed in 1835, the Greek Revival entrance has a triple-arched loggia with plastered columns leading to two Gothic Revival doors. In 1924, a memorial given by the Philippine Republic was erected over the grave of Congressman William A Jones
- Richmond County Jail and Museum, 5874 Richmond Road, Warsaw. Located in the c. 1872 jail on the courthouse green, this museum tells the story of Richmond County from prehistoric to present day through its collections

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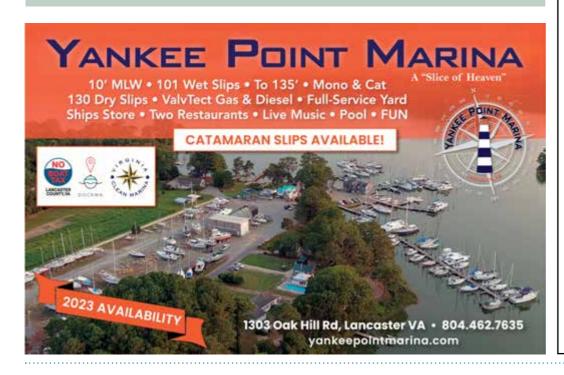


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## Garden Club of Gloucester-Mathews Tour. "Ware We Live!" features three homes. two churches and one elaborate garden

The 2023 edition of the annual Garden Club of Gloucester-Mathews Tour is set for two sessions on Saturday, April 15. The morning session runs 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and the afternoon session runs 1:30-5:30 p.m. The tour headquarters is Ware Episcopal Church, 7825 John Clayton Memorial Highway, Gloucester.

All details are available by visiting the website at www.VAGardenWeek.org/tours/gloucester/ or by emailing Tour Chairman Leslie Belvin or Tour Co-chairman Margaret Singleton at gloucester@vagardenweek.org.

The ticket includes admission to the following three homes, two churches and one elaborate garden in Ware Neck.

## Ware Episcopal Church

Ware Parish was founded about 1652 at another location; the current building dates from about 1718. It is one of Gloucester's four original parishes and one of Virginia's earliest churches. Of the school of Sir Christopher Wren, the church is oriented to the sun instead of the four points of the compass. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The walls of Flemish bond with glazed headers are three feet thick. The present pews date from 1854, the electric lights from 1926. It holds about 180 people. There have been about 1,000 burials since the first in 1723. The graves of Gen. Wm. Booth Taliaferro and other Confederate soldiers occupy an historic cemetery. Today, this ancient burying place is a leafy haven imbued with beauty and serenity. Docent led tours of the church and a brochure of historic trees on the grounds will be available on tour day. A musical concert, performed by musicians, "Strings and Things," will be presented from 1–2 p.m. in the sanctuary. Call 693-3821 or email warechurch.org.

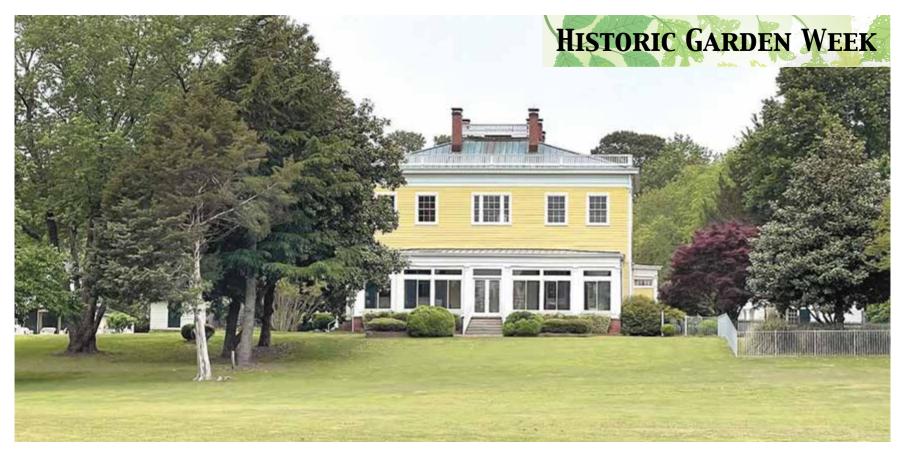


## Singleton United Methodist Church

On July 14, 1875, the cornerstone for the present building was laid and some time later a steeple and vestibule were added and the doors changed. In 1933, the Memorial Methodist Church, Gloucester Charge that was built in 1893 (and closed in 1928) was given to Singleton Church. This structure was taken down and the materials used to construct a church school annex "for the growing congregation at Singleton." In 1949 work was completed on the church annex, which completely separated the annex into six classrooms. In 1954, the sanctuary was remodeled with stained glass windows, a memorial window above the pulpit, and a new chancel rail. Chimes were added in 1965. In 1971 the Educational Building was begun and completed in 1972.

On Oct. 19, 1975, Singleton presented a special 100th anniversary celebration and opened the 1875 cornerstone. Only four coins survived while all other contents of the metal box had disintegrated. These coins were added to other mementos of the day and placed in a glass tube sealed within a copper box that was also sealed. On Nov. 2, 1975 the cornerstone was reset with the hope it will be reopened in the year 2075. Descendants of the Singleton family are buried on the west side of the present chapel. In the cemetery you will find graves of veterans from the Civil War through the World War II. There are many gravestones and monuments with many interesting epitaphs.





Glen Roy Plantation

With sweeping lawns down to the Ware River, Glen Roy is one of the most elegant historic properties in Gloucester. The large Georgian Revival manor house has a characteristic four-over-four plan with a three-section center hall and a central staircase that winds three floors up to a sky-lit cupola with a widow's walk. The interior features Greek Revival detailing with 13 rooms, 12 fireplaces, 40 windows, and 15-foot ceilings. Glen Roy's land went through many owners in the early years of Gloucester but took the name "Glen Roy" from owners John B. Roy and his wife Mary, who purchased it in 1832. William Patterson Smith, son of Reverend Armistead Smith, purchased the 910-acre plantation in 1837 and built the current manor house in 1854, after the original house burned in 1850. Several outbuildings remain on the property. The oldest, dating to the late 18th century, is a single story, one room schoolhouse with an east gable entrance and oyster shell mortar. This original structure is now a charming library and dayroom. Additionally, there is a 19th century carriage house, now a guest house, and numerous barns and sheds. In April of 1863 Glen Roy was the site of a skirmish between a Yankee gunboat in Ware River and a band of local partisans. Shots were fired from the river and the partisans retreated. The gunboat crew came ashore, stole supplies and burned the barns, destroying them and the grains they housed. This is sometimes called "The battle of Glen Roy." Sherri and John Milner are the owners.

The Leigh House
The Leigh home, situated on the North River side of Ware Neck very near Ware Point, is all about the view. Every room in the house has a sweeping vista of Mobjack Bay. Built in 2020, the home has a very open and airy feeling which is punctuated with appealing works of art, often with a nautical theme. A 12-foot antique Chinese tapestry dominates the dining room. In the nearby kitchen there is an arresting chandelier and interesting tilework on the backsplash. Be sure to check out the New York baseball batter on the counter. The first-floor owner's bedroom is fully handicap accessible. On the second-floor landing, Civil War relics are on display. From the Leigh House you can see the house where scenes in Tom Cruise's film "Minority Report" were shot.

A lap pool, putting green, dock and beautiful landscaping call you outside. There you will also find a barn (1993), a potting shed (1995), and a garage (1997). An original house on the property was built in the 1920s, and the Leighs used its footprint to site the new house. Catherine and Timothy Leigh are the owners.



## The Lighthouse

The Lighthouse was built in 2017 and was designed to "enhance the coastal experience while ... offering protection from ... the harshest of coastal weather." It features a fully fiberglassed, epoxy exterior for protection against the elements and a lookout room offering scenic views of the North River. The building is the eight-sided, red-roofed type of lighthouse prevalent on Chesapeake Bay, and stands on galvanized steel pilings so that rising water can sweep underneath and wash back out to sea. The wrap-around-windowed living room has a feeling of wide-open spaces and overlooks 400 feet of frontage on the North River and Mobjack Bay. Don't miss the compass rose in the floor. The house is full of artwork featuring sailboats, fish and fanciful critters. A pair of sculptured butlers stand by, one offering a Corona beer. A four-stop elevator through the center of the house goes from the ground level all the way up to the lookout room 40 feet above the ground. (The two-person elevator will not be available for tour day.) On the top level there is a wrap-around deck affording 360-degree views. Please note this property involves steps, has stairs-only entry to the first and second floor and is not accessible to those with disabilities. Paul W. Howle III is the owner.



## **Tickets**

Tickets are only sold online for morning or afternoon tours at VAGardenWeek.org and are \$50 per person. No tickets are sold at the featured properties and no tickets are sold the day of the tour. Tickets include admission to three homes, two historic churches, and one expansive garden.

Guidebook and local brochures with area maps are available at both shuttle lots while supplies last.

## Lunch/refreshments

A Nuttall's Country Store box lunch is available if you pre-order/pre-pay \$18. They are available for pick-up between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Ware River Yacht Club, 5992 Ware Point Road, Gloucester (in Ware Neck). Pre-order by calling 693-3067 or emailing nuttall-store@gmail.com. by Friday, April 7.

The Positive Pizza food truck will be available as a lunch option from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Brent and Becky's Bulbs, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester. The Chesapeake Bay Room at Brent and Becky's Bulbs will be available for guests eating on the premise.

Complimentary refreshments will be served from 2–4 p.m. at the Gardens at Belle Terre.

## Special activities

A musical concert will be performed by Strings and Things from 1 to 2 p.m. in the sanctuary of Ware Episcopal Church. Music will include classical and popular selections inspired by the beauty of flowers and gardens. Strings and Things is a network of professionally trained musicians in the rural, coastal Virginia area. Also, docents will be available for tours of Ware Episcopal Church throughout the day. A map of historic trees on the grounds will be available. Ware Episcopal Church is at 7825 John Clayton Memorial Highway in Gloucester.

Master Gardeners of Gloucester will be available for guided tours of Brent and Becky's Bulbs, Chesapeake Bay-friendly gardens from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester, call 693-3966, or email brentandbeckysbulbs.com.

Dan Lonergan, an arborist from Bartlett Tree Experts, will be available at the Gardens at Belle Terre from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free tree seedlings will be distributed.



## The Gardens at Belle Terre

The Gardens at Belle Terre are made up of about seven acres on Belle Ville Creek. The graciously landscaped greensward is dotted with special areas such as "Lily of the Valley Way" and the "Woodland Walk." Sue Perrin, with an advanced certificate from the New York Botanical Garden, is interested in form and texture, and it shows in the massing of plants in groves and shrub borders. Maps will be provided that show the visitor a route through the garden, and docents will be scattered throughout. In the pool area, don't miss the sculpture, "Frog Baby" by Edith Parsons. The original of this work is in the Brook Green Gardens on Pawley's Island, SC. From the dog graveyard on the point, visitors will get a view of the North River. Refreshments will be served in the gardens between 2 and 4 p.m. Susan and William K. Perrin are the owners.

## Parking and shuttles

Glen Roy Plantation shuttles begin and end at the Brent and Becky's Bulbs, 7900 Daffodil Lane, Gloucester, at the designated parking lot to the left of the bulb shop. Please don't park in customer parking area. Glen Roy is located within five minutes of the parking lot via shuttle.

The Lighthouse, the Leigh House, and Gardens at Belle Terre shuttles begin and end at the Ware River Yacht Club, 5992 Ware Point Road, Ware Neck, parking lot. The properties are located within five minutes of each other from the parking lot. The last pick-up from the shuttle lot is at 4 p.m.



Chestnut Grove, 2308 Manfield Road, Aylett is one of the homes on the King William County tour.

## King William County also featured

A sure sign of spring is the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week. The King William County tour, hosted by the Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula, is set for 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday, April 21. The tour will showcase four distinguished homes that are open for the first time for Historic Garden Week. Visitors may enjoy a homemade box lunch (available for pre-order) and desserts, brief history presentations, and gospel music at two neighboring historic churches.

Tickets are \$35, available for online advance purchase at VaGardenWeek.org. or \$45 on the day of the tour at Tour Head-quarters. Box lunches are \$16 and may be pre-ordered by April 13 at www.mckendree23106.org.

McKendree United Methodist Church, 4347 Manfield Road, Manquin, will serve as tour head-quarters and the marketplace.

Houses on the tour include Cherry Grove, 4381 Manfield Road, Aylett, which dates to the late 1700s. Built in 1759, Chestnut Grove, 2308 Manfield Road, Aylett, is an historic house and farm that has been loved and preserved by eight generations of the same family. Hollyfield Manor, 289 Hollyfield Lane, Manquin, is a stately Greek Revival manor with large patio overlooking a 28-acre lake, with unique history dating from the 18th century. Srykefyre, 648 Pampatike Road, King William, is a gracious newer house built in 1990, surrounded by a lush landscape that

A sure sign of spring is the arden Club of Virginia's Historic arden Week. The King William seasonal foliage.

Also on the tour is Rock Spring Baptist Church, 4134 Manfield Road, Aylett, which was organized in March 1877 when members began worshiping in a log cabin. Rock Spring will host a dessert bar and sweets-to-go from 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., as well as a brief lecture on local history at 11 a.m. (15 minutes) and a sing along of gospel favorites at 1 p.m. (15 minutes).

This tour is coordinated by the Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula, which covers Middlesex, Essex, King & Queen and King William counties. The tour rotates every year. Last year it featured King & Queen County and this year it features King William County.

For information, email lenotre1727@gmail.com.



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When the business of clearing an area is complete the Takeuchi Mulcher leaves the ground covered in a layer of mulch. There is also no ground disturbance which means no permits are required to do the work. This photo was shot on Rappahannock Avenue in Urbanna on land owned by the Urbanna Oyster Festival Foundation. Photo by Brian Fletcher

## Urbanna has used both goats and mulchers to tidy overgrown spots

by Larry Chowning

Times past, a man's goat herd was often in demand by neighbors and friends who wanted some of their Tidewater Virginia overgrown brush land cleared off.

More than a half century ago, Alex Johnson, who lived outside of Urbanna, walked into town daily pushing a large wheelbarrow full of tools. He was the yard maintenance man for landowners who could afford yard work in town. He also kept a few goats for brush clearing work and would tell you his male goats were the best and fastest clearers.

Goats are browsers that feed on leaves, woody plants such as shrubs and branches of trees. When Alex had a brush cleanup job in town it meant bringing his goats and metal stakes and long lengths of rope to corral his goats. There were times when a goat would escape, venture into a neighbor's flower garden and you can envision the rest.

A year ago, the Urbanna Oyster Festival Foundation (UOFF) purchased 3.5 acres of land on Rappahannock Avenue in Urbanna next to the Town of Urbanna's Taber Park. It had been a few decades since goats had seen the light of day on



This photo of the 3.5 acres next to Taber Park in Urbanna shows the clearing ability of the Takeuchi.

Photo by Larry Chowning

the property and it was an overgrown thicket.

The UOFF purchased the property with help from a \$140,000 grant from Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF). The land was purchased to assure public open space inside the town limits and to enhance the future of the oyster festival and recreation in the town. Then chairman of the UOFF Joe Heyman was instrumental in making it all happen.

Can you imagine, Heyman going to Urbanna's zoning administrator Roy Kime and requesting permission to bring in a herd of goats into town to clean up the property. Most likely, Kime would have found an ordinance or two to discourage that.

## After Hours Site Work LLC

Instead, UOFF hired Affordable Lawn Care of Urbanna and After Hours Site Works LLC (AHSW) of Locust Hill to remove the thicket. AHSW owns a Takeuchi TL disc mulcher and it was brought in to do most of the clearing.

Brian Fletcher of AHSW said that the job on Rappahannock Avenue took him about four days to clear everything away. "They make bigger machines than I have but I bought this one primarily to accommodate homeowners," he said. "You might have a small job for me that would take you a month to clear or burn, or however you are going to do it. I can come in and take care of it in a few hours. The mulcher eats everything up and spreads a layer of mulch across the ground, which pretty much eliminates hauling any debris away.

"The great thing about a mulcher is that it is not considered to create any land disturbance, which means county and state permits are not required to do the job," said Fletcher. "I can come on-site and start to work without spending time having to get permits," he said.

Heyman praised Fletcher's work and said that the 3.5 acres was so thick with brush that UOFF officials were unable to truly evaluate the land. "When the land was opened up, we could see what we had and what we needed to do," said Heyman.

UOFF is in the process of applying for a grant to improve the property and add a drainage pond. "We are able to walk through the property now and determine exactly what needs to be done," said Heyman.

Fletcher and his company recently were the subcontractor hired to clear out the Middlesex County Heritage Trail at Cooks Corner. "The mulch we left on the ground really worked well in defining and laying a good base for the walking trail," said Fletcher.



The Takeuchi can work in close places and is the smallest one designed specifically for use for residential lawn care. Photo by Larry Chowning



This photo shows the density of the brush next to Taber Park in Urbanna before clearing started. Photo by Brian Fletcher



This photo shows the Takeuchi knocking down and mulching the ground next to Taber Park in Urbanna. Photo by Larry Chowning

## Details to include in a renovation work contract

for all parties signing on the dotted lines. A contract is an agreement between two parties that creates a mutual legal obligation.

do a home improvement project that involves the use of contractors and other professionals, he or she should have a contract drawn up. A contract can ensure that the work will get done safely, within a given time frame and accordshould contain certain details.

1. A defined scope of work: The scope of the job should be

Contracts provide protection spelled out in detail. Include the materials being used, what the homeowner has requested, special details, and who will take care of each facet of the job.

2. Procedure for changes: Note Any time a person sets out to the process that will be followed for any alterations or additions to the project.

3. Floor plans: In some instances, the contract will include floor plans, architectural drawings and other details.

ing to specifications. A contract clause that indemnifies the property owner against legal liability should any damages or injuries take place on the property.

5. Work schedule: Identify the requested start time and estimated end time for the project. Parties should understand that inclement weather or other delays could affect the schedule.

6. Cost: Reference the agreed upon bid price, highlighting the agreements for procedures if additional materials are needed or if the job runs long

7. Warranty: If a warranty is being offered, the details should 4. Indemnity clause: Include a be included in the contract. Homeowners should expect a reasonable one-year warranty to cover any defects in the contractor's work.



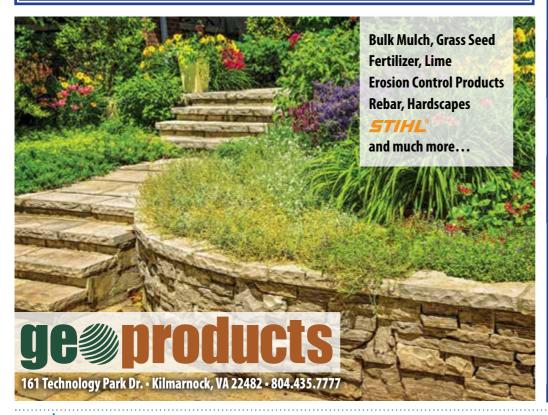


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Although plants might not seem like the first thing individuals think of when they ponder long-term investments, perennials can be just that.

The home and garden experts at HGTV note that some perennials can live for a very long time. For example, according to HGTV, the colorful flowering plant peony, despite a blooming season that usually lasts just seven to 10 days, has been known to survive for 70 to 100 years.

Hostas are another popular perennial because they require little maintenance, and that extra free time can add up over the course of the hosta's life, which can exceed 15 years.

Long-living perennials are not necessarily unusual, but gardeners should know that many perennials, and particularly those characterized as "short-lived," tend to live around three years.

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