

# *HOPE from the Garden*

## *Helping Our Planet Endure*



***Mission Statement: Identify, Practice, and Promote gardening principles that have a positive impact on the environment.***

**Goochland-Powhatan Master Gardeners Association  
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[www.gpmga.org](http://www.gpmga.org)

## HOPE from the Garden

Our planet is in an environmental crisis. Many of our traditional agricultural and horticultural practices contribute to the production of damaging greenhouse gases that trap the sun's heat, and lead to drought, excessive rain, and dramatic temperature swings around the world.

We see the effects in our own gardens and landscapes. Flowers bloom earlier, plants we once relied on are struggling, while others we thought too tender may thrive.

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It's more than inconvenient. Pollinators can't find the right flowers at the right time, migrating birds look for seeds and berries in vain when and where they once were plentiful, and caterpillars can't find the leaves they depended on for food.

Populations of countless invertebrates, vertebrates, and plants are diminishing or even disappearing completely. Like these organisms, we gardeners rely on precious natural resources like healthy soil, pure water and clean air to keep our gardens (and ourselves) healthy and productive. If we use our resources wisely, they will be available for generations to come.

Through the HOPE from the Garden initiative, Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteers will learn, adopt, and share research-based gardening practices to help everyone protect our natural resources and stem the loss of these organisms -- one garden at a time.

# Goals and Objectives

## 1. Keep our soil healthy

A gardener's primary concern is the soil that covers the land and the organisms that grow in or live on it. HOPE focuses on:

- Understanding the soil/food web and its impact on how we work with the soil
- Building and maintaining healthy soil
- Minimizing the use of pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicide, etc.) and synthetic fertilizers
- Reducing lawn areas
- Incorporating native plants and trees into our gardens
- Providing a healthy wildlife habitat

## 2. Keep our waters clean and plentiful

Life on Earth depends on adequate, clean water. HOPE focuses on:

- Minimizing water runoff and evaporation and encouraging water infiltration
- Building structures to collect water for later use
- Providing clean sources of water for wildlife and insects
- Growing plants that don't need a lot of water
- Reducing the use of synthetic agricultural chemicals

## 3. Minimizing gardening activities that contribute to air pollution.

Air is essential to most life. Agricultural practices generate contaminants that often end up in the air and contribute to climate change and health issues. HOPE focuses on:

- Avoiding the use of garden equipment that runs on fossil fuels
- Planting and protecting trees to reduce carbon dioxide and provide shade, windbreaks and oxygen to breathe
- Adopting practices that sequester carbon
- Reducing our methane footprint

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