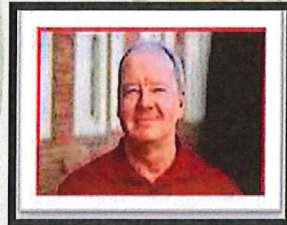


AGRICULTURE

SPRING 2026

APRIL - MAY - JUNE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



HAPPY SPRING TO EVERYONE!

Even though we technically lost an hour of sleep, it's nice to see more daylight in the evening. March sets the stage for spring as we celebrated St. Patrick's Day as well as the "Excellence in Agriculture" Banquet on the 19th, which was a great night of all things agriculture. Great food supplied by Mr. Frank Craft and his team, as well as a wonderful evening of community engagement. We recognized City leadership and the Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP) which has a very positive impact on our agriculture industry. On March 21st, we enjoyed the Creeds Ruritan Barbecue, providing great food and a craft venue for all visitors to enjoy.

The City of Virginia Beach Farmers Market kicked off the 2026 calendar year with the first event of the year "Celebrate Agriculture" on Saturday the 21st to celebrate National Agriculture Week. The market's second event of the spring season is April 18th, which will be the Farmers Market "50th" Birthday celebration. For "50" years the VB Farmers Market has been on Dam Neck Road serving the needs of the community. Come on out and have some birthday cake and enjoy the vendors, crafters, food trucks or your favorite dish from the Princess Anne Grill.

April, May and June are prime time strawberry season and a great time to visit a local strawberry farm, and the "you pick" strawberry operation. Our farms will be at peak strawberry availability. So, whether you are just buying strawberries or want to pick your own, go out and enjoy the weather as well as an on-farm visit. There's nothing better than a Mother's Day strawberry pie to add to the dinner table.

I know there is a lot going on in our daily lives but remember there is nothing like embracing the moment and enjoying the smell of fresh strawberries.

Best to all.
David



DAVID TRIMMER, DIRECTOR

[CONTACT US](#)

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

757-385-5775

CATHY ROGERS, ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST II

KOLBY SNOW, AGRICULTURE INTERN

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE PROGRAM

757-385-8637

JENNY MCPHERSON, RURAL COMMUNITY
COORDINATOR

SARAH GRIMSTEAD COTTEN, ARP COORDINATOR

FARMERS MARKET

757-385-4388

KEN THOMS, MARKET SUPERVISOR

KRISTI MICHAEL, PROGRAM EDUCATOR

BRENNA SMITH, OFFICE ASSISTANT II

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

757-385-4769

ASHTON HOLLIDAY-GOULART, HORTICULTURE
AGENT

ROY FLANAGAN III, AGRICULTURE AGENT

DESMYN OWENS, 4-H YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT AGENT

KAREN MUNDEN, FAMILY & CONSUMER
SCIENCES AGENT

TAMMY MAS, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

SUE DOYLE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MASTER GARDENER'S HELP DESK

757-385-8156

VIRGINIA DARE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

DISTRICT

757-385-4775

KATHLEEN SULLIVAN, DISTRICT MANAGER

CORY HOAR, CONSERVATION SPECIALIST



KOLBY SNOW

SUMMER INTERN EXTRAORDINAIRE



Kolby began her internship with the City of Virginia Beach Agriculture Department in May 2024 and resumed after a semester long break in January 2025 and has been here ever since. She will be graduating this May with a Bachelor's in Agribusiness from The University of Mount Olive.

During her time as an intern, Kolby had the opportunity to:

- Assist with Corn Variety Trials (Summer 2024)
- Assist with Soybean Variety Trials and help coordinate the 2025 Soybean Field Day
- Support Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) programming, including the Crop Conference and Mid-Atlantic Strawberry Program - (MASP)
- Participate in day-to-day ANR activities, including site visits and soil sampling
- Helped coordinate two 4-H camps, both in-office and at the airfield during camp week
- Assist with the 4-H Ham Show in 2024 and 2025
- Facilitated basic 4-H programming during the agent vacancy
- Attended countless meetings with Roy Flanagan

MESSAGE FROM KOLBY

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to David Trimmer and Roy Flanagan, as well as the City of Virginia Beach Internship Program, for providing me with this incredible internship. The experience I've gained here has laid the foundation for my future as an extension agent.

MESSAGE FROM ROY FLANAGAN

When Kolby reached out to me as a sophomore at Ferrum College, asking about a potential internship opportunity, I had no idea that two years later, I would have so much to share. In the summer of 2024, Kolby came to us when we were down a 4-H agent, a horticulture agent and an Administrative Assistant. Kolby jumped right in and was a great asset to me, the Agriculture Agent, with the programming centered around commercial production. She helped sustain the 4-H program in every capacity. It didn't matter what question I asked or what I threw at her, her answer was always "Sure".

From all of us in Agriculture:

We will miss you and don't be a stranger—we wish you continued success!



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech. • Virginia State University

2026 Virginia Beach Strawberry Guide

Virginia Beach Strawberry Producers - U-Pick/Pre-Pick

<p>Bay Breeze Farm Pre-pick only Phone 757-689-1505 1100 Sandbridge Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456</p>	<p>Cindy's Produce Pre-pick only Phone 757-427-2346 2385 Harpers Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23453 https://cindys-produce.business.site/</p>	<p>Creekmore's Place Pre-pick only Phone 757-427-0361 3640 Dam Neck Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23453 lexis45@live.com</p>	<p>Cromwell's Produce Pre-pick only Phone 757-721-6226 3116 New Bridge Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456 cromwellproduce@gmail.com</p>	<p>Cullipher Farm Market Phone 757-721-7456 772 Princess Anne Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23457 www.cullipherfarm.com</p>
<p>Flanagan Farm Phone 757-426-5585 Princess Anne Rd at N. Muddy Creek Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23546 www.flanagan-farm.com</p>	<p>The Flip Flop Farmer Phone 757-536-8069 3244 NewBridge Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456</p>		<p>Henley's at Pleasant Ridge Phone 757-426-7501 Phone 757-689-6196 2061 Pleasant Ridge Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456 barbarahenley@cox.net</p>	<p>Henley Farm Phone 757-426-7501 3484 Charity Neck Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456 barbarahenley@cox.net</p>
	<p>Salem Berry Farm Phone 757-818-3156 1763 Salem Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23456 salemberryfarm@gmail.com</p>	<p>Vaughan Farms Produce Phone 757-615-4888 1258 Princess Anne Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23457 vaughanfarmsproduce@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Virginia Beach Farmers Market Pre-pick only Phone 757-385-4388 3640 Dam Neck Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23453 agriculture.virginiabeach.gov/farmers-market</p>	

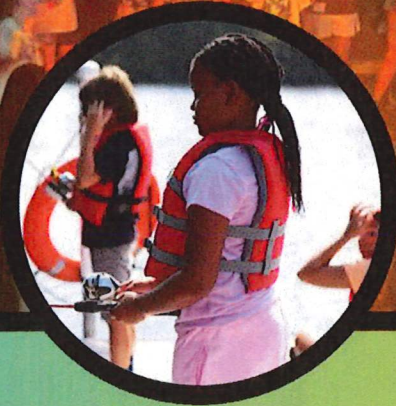
Please call ahead, ideally at least one day in advance—especially for Fresh Picked items—to ensure availability. For the latest hours and current field conditions, contact farms directly via Facebook, email, their website, or by phone.

Other fresh fruits and vegetables are available at many of these farm locations throughout the season.

SWEET STRAWBERRIES LOCAL & FRESH-DON'T MISS OUT!

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



VIRGINIA BEACH
4-H CAMP
JULY 13-17, 2026

- For campers ages 9-13 (as of Sept. 30, 2026)
- Held at Airfield 4-H Center in Wakefield, VA
- Registration is online only. See website & QR code below.
- Cost of camp is \$425 & includes programming, meals, transportation, and lodging. Limited need-based scholarships available.
- Space is limited and spots fill quickly!

**Scan the QR Code
to visit our camp website & REGISTER!**



<https://tinyurl.com/3atjf9fz>

**Virginia
Cooperative
Extension**

Virginia Tech • Virginia State University
ext.vt.edu



Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire assistance or accommodation, please notify Desmyn Owens, 4-H Agent at 757-385-4769 during business hours of 8:am to 5:pm.



4-H Camp S.P.A.R.K.

A weekend specialty camp for neurodivergent youth and youth with intellectual or cognitive differences.

Fri. Jul. 31 – Sun. Aug. 2, 2026
Jamestown 4-H Center in Williamsburg, VA

Cost \$250 per camper
Limited partial scholarships available

Geared towards youth ages (9-15 as of Sept. 30, 2026) Led by 4-H Extension agents, camp staff, and adult volunteers. Parent/Guardian volunteers welcomed!

**Igniting
Camp Spirit,
Friendship, and
Belonging**

**Scan the QR code
to learn more or
to register:**

tinyurl.com/4-HCampSPARK



We welcome families to contact us to discuss individual accessibility needs and determine if our site can safely accommodate their camper.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Cayla Walker, Goochland 4-H Extension Agent, at [804-556-5873](tel:804-556-5873) during business hours of 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is [\(800\) 828-1120](tel:800-828-1120).

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Excellence in Agriculture Award Honors 30 years of Commitment to Preservation

Explore the contributions that earned City Council and the Agricultural Reserve Program this year's top agriculture honor.

A Signature Event During a Week Focused on Agriculture

The agricultural community and City leaders gathered Thursday night at the annual Excellence in Agriculture banquet, held during National Ag Week, March 15–21. The event brought together farmers, local leaders and community members to recognize the importance of agriculture in the city and across the state. This year, the Excellence in Agriculture Committee honored the Virginia Beach City Council and the **Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP)** with the 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Award. Vice Mayor Rosemary Wilson and Councilwoman Barbara Henley accepted the award on behalf of the city and the other Councilmembers in attendance.

Recognizing the Agricultural Reserve Program

The ARP has been an important part of Virginia Beach since it was created in 1995. The program helps preserve the city's rural character and support local agri-business. Today, 11,220 acres of farmland have been protected through the program. "The foresight by City leadership along with a coalition of farmers, conservationists, businesses and civic input dating back to the 1994 came up with the plan to develop a program that is envied by other localities and states as a way to preserve agriculture and forestry land for future generations is something that should never be taken for granted or forgotten," said David Trimmer, Director of the Virginia Beach Agriculture Department.

Agriculture's Ongoing Role in Virginia Beach

Agriculture is the third-largest industry in Virginia Beach and the largest private industry in Virginia. The ARP continues to help the city protect open space, manage growth and support the farms that have been part of the community for generations. By preserving natural resources and farmland, the program strengthens the agriculture industry and helps ensure it remains a vital part of the region's future.

For more information on the program, visit the [ARP website](#).

EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE BANQUET

MARCH 19, 2026

The 2025 “Excellence in Agriculture” awarded to
The City of Virginia Beach leadership
in recognition for their support of the Agricultural Reserve Program
(ARP) and the agricultural industry for more than 30 years.



Vice Mayor, Mrs. Rosemary Wilson - Director of Agriculture, Mr. David Trimmer - Councilwoman, Mrs. Barbara Henley and Mr. Don Horsley.

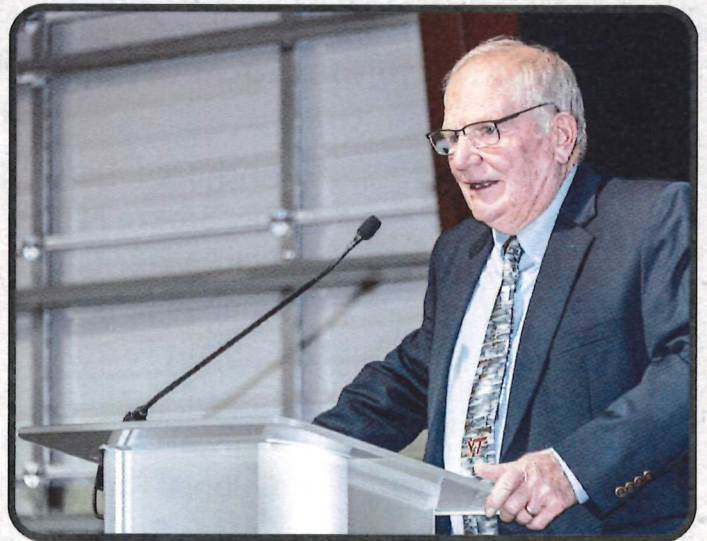
The Blackwater Creeds Foundation and the City of Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture, would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your sponsorship and generous support. Because of your support we are able to strengthen local communities and create a lasting positive impact.

- Anchored Audio Visual
- Bay Breeze Farms
- Blackwater-Creeds Foundation
- Bonney Bright Sand Company
- Cabinet Factory
- City of Virginia Beach Department of Agriculture
- Coastal Cattle Farms
- Colonial Farm Credit
- Creeds Ruritan Club
- Cromwell's Produce
- Cullipher Farms, Inc.
- Dawley Ag Enterprises, LLC
- Delegate Barry Knight
- D. S. Salmons Farms, LLC
- Dominion Energy
- Frank T. Williams Farms
- Gentry's Accounting & Tax Services
- Gilbert Farms, LLC
- Land of Promise Farms Partnership
- MAP Environmental, Inc.
- M. M. Rollins & Company
- Military Aviation Museum
- NAPA Auto Parts - Pungo
- RBC Homes
- R. W. White Farms, LLC
- Salmons, Inc.
- Scott Morris Farms, LLC
- Soscia & Company, Inc.
- Sykes, Bourdon, Ahern & Levy, P.C.
- TowneBank
- Venable Real Estate, LP
- Virginia Beach 4-H Livestock, Inc.
- Virginia Beach Farm Bureau
- Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District

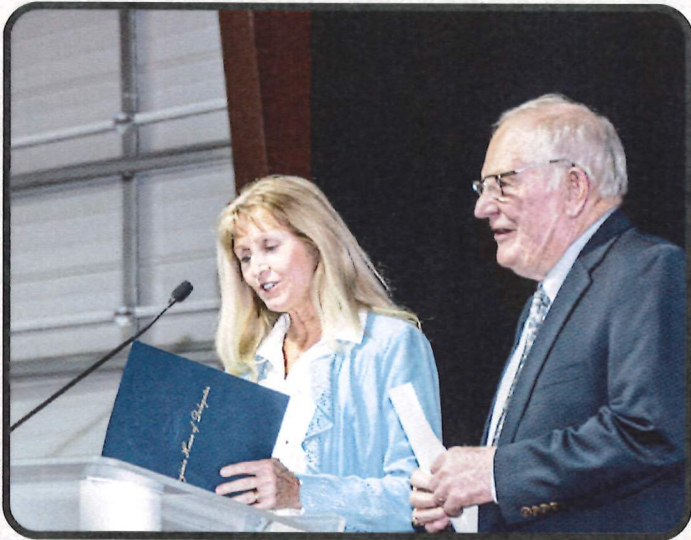
**EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE BANQUET
MARCH 19, 2026**



**Mr. David Trimmer
Director of Agriculture**



Mr. Don Horsley, recognizing the special guests



Mrs. Paula Knight and Mr. Don Horsley



Mrs. Paula Knight presents the proclamation to the family of Mrs. Cindy Barnes in honor of her legacy and contributions.

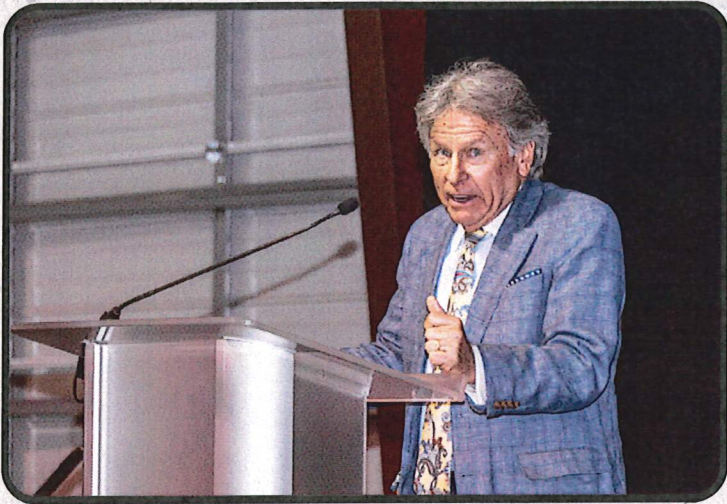


Mr. Billy Vaughan, Invocation



Mr. Ryan Horsley, introduction of sponsors

EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE BANQUET MARCH 19, 2026



Mr. Edward Bourdon Jr., Guest Speaker



Registration table



Councilman Schulman, Delegate Andrew Rice
and Councilman Berlucchi



COVB Agriculture and VCE staff



Past EIA recipients

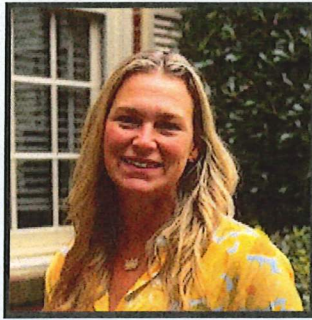
EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE BANQUET

MARCH 19, 2026



Sarah Grimstead Cotten

Agricultural Reserve Program Coordinator



Happy Spring everyone!

I hope you and your family are doing well. What a great start to National Agriculture Week seeing so many familiar farming families attend the “Excellence in Agriculture” Banquet. I would like to extend a huge congratulations to the City of Virginia Beach leadership in recognition for their support of the Agricultural Reserve Program (ARP) and the agricultural industry for more than 30 years. I am so proud to be your ARP Coordinator, continuing efforts to conserve farmland and our rural heritage, one acre at a time.

If any participants in the ARP have address changes, please reach out to me to assist with updating your information with US Bank by May 1st in anticipation of the June interest payments.

We are happy to report on January 21, 2026, Bonney Bright enrolled 90 acres into the Agricultural Reserve Program. This brings our total protected acres to over 11,220! Bonney has been a staunch supporter of the ARP program, with 180 acres enrolled over the last year. A big **THANK YOU** to Bonney for protecting the Bright Farm’s legacy.

If you are interested in leveraging the development rights and protecting your land for future farming generations, please give me a call at the office (757-385-8697). We can discuss whether the Agricultural Reserve Program is a good opportunity for your cropland, forest land, orchards, livestock pastures, hayfields, or gardens. There are so many diverse methods to continue agricultural practices for future generations.

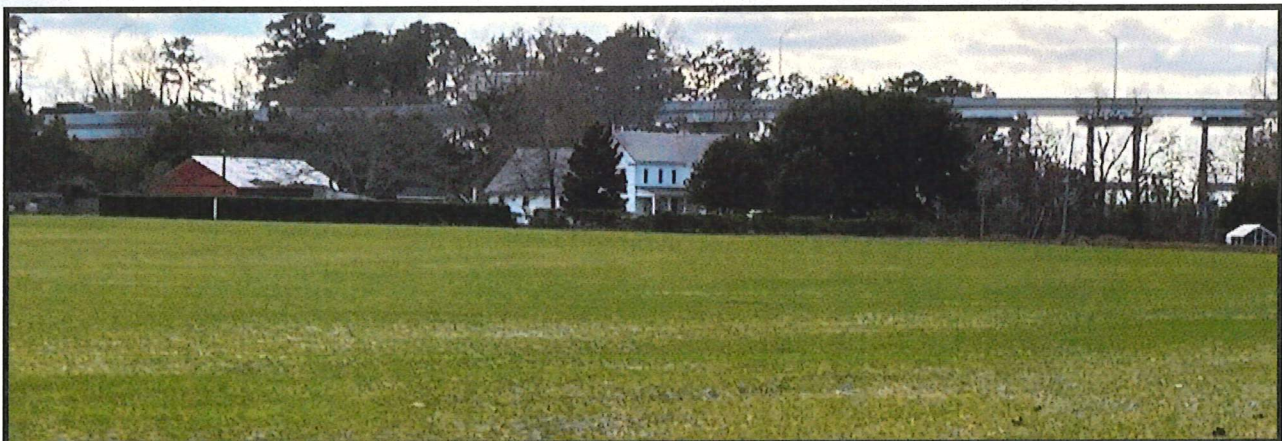


Photo compliments of Dudley Farm - Field on Pungo Ferry Road planted with wheat cover crop



Happy Spring everyone!

I hope you and your family are doing well. It was nice to see so many folks from our farming community attend the Excellence in Agriculture banquet on March 19th during National Agriculture Week.

We kicked off our Farmers Market event season with “Celebrate Agriculture” on March 21st, and it was a beautiful day. Special thanks go to the Virginia Beach Master Gardeners who maintain the Children’s Education Garden and the Kitchen Garden, plus they are available to help answer all of your gardening questions too.

School tours have started again so if you are looking for a hands-on field trip option, look no further than the Farmers Market. Field trips are geared towards children Pre-K through 5th grade, but occasionally we have requests from high school groups too. If you have a group that is interested in coming to the Rural Heritage Center for a tour, please call our Farmers Market office to reserve a date.

Friday Night Hoedowns will start on April 3 with The Dallas Band. The Hoedowns will be held every Friday night from 7-10 pm through October 30. Our Hoedown Schedule is included. Come out and enjoy an evening with family and friends. Bring a chair and dust off those dancing boots!

Please join us at our upcoming events:

April 18 – Birthday Bash

We will have birthday cake while supplies last, to celebrate 50 years of the Farmers Market.

May 16 – Strawberry Jamboree

The Butterfly Society of Virginia will host their annual spring plant sale.

June 13 – Honey Festival

Enjoy learning about bees and buying some local honey.

We hope that you will continue to support our local businesses at the Farmers Market as well as our local farmers at their produce stands and markets as they open for the season. Daily and weekly spots are available at the Market for rent by farmers and crafters, so call the office at 757-385-4388 for more details.

Our farmers will be busy planting crops soon to start another season, so remember to watch out for them as they move their equipment from farm to farm. Please be cautious as you travel our rural roads and respect their space. I hope everyone will take time to visit with our strawberry farmers to pick your own strawberries and maybe even make some homemade strawberry jam. I must say that freezer jam is my favorite, and it is so easy to make, so give it a try.

Mark your calendar for:

Friday, May 29 for the Virginia Beach 4-H Livestock Show and Sale, and the 4-H Country Cured Ham Show to be held at the Creeds Ruritan Community Complex.

Please come out and see our 4-H members show their project animals that they have been raising and support them in the sale.

Take care and hope to see you soon,
Jenny



VIRGINIA BEACH

FARMERS MARKET

2026 Hoedown Schedule

Friday Nights 7pm- 10pm

***Rain or Shine**

Bring a lawn chair or blanket to enjoy
free, live, local music.

** Management reserves the right to delay or cancel events.*

APRIL

3 DALLAS BAND
10 COUNTRY REBELS
17 COUNTRY REBELS
24 TIMELINE

MAY

1 RAW BEET'S
8 COUNTRY REBELS
15 DALLAS BAND
22 TIMELINE
29 COUNTRY REBELS

JUNE

5 DALLAS BAND
12 TIMELINE
19 COUNTRY ROCKERS
26 COUNTRY REBELS

JULY

3 RAW BEET'S
10 TIMELINE
17 COUNTRY ROCKERS
24 COUNTRY REBELS
31 ROB OLIVER

AUGUST

7 COUNTRY REBELS
14 COUNTRY ROCKERS
21 TIMELINE
28 RAW BEET'S

SEPTEMBER

4 DALLAS BAND
11 TIMELINE
18 COUNTRY ROCKERS
25 COUNTRY REBELS

OCTOBER

2 DALLAS BAND
9 TIMELINE
16 COUNTRY ROCKERS
23 ROB OLIVER
30 ROB OLIVER

Like us on Facebook
@ VB Farmers Market

3640 Dam Neck Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23453

757-385-4388





VIRGINIA BEACH
FARMERS
MARKET

BIRTHDAY BASH

Saturday, April 18
10 am to 4 pm



VIRGINIA BEACH
FARMERS
MARKET

STRAWBERRY JAMBOREE

SATURDAY, MAY 16
10 AM TO 4 PM



VIRGINIA BEACH
FARMERS
MARKET

HONEY FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 13
10 am to 4 pm



For students in preschool through 5th grade

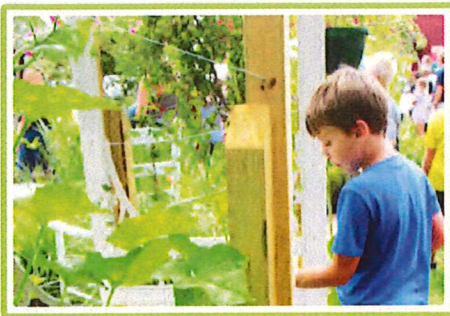
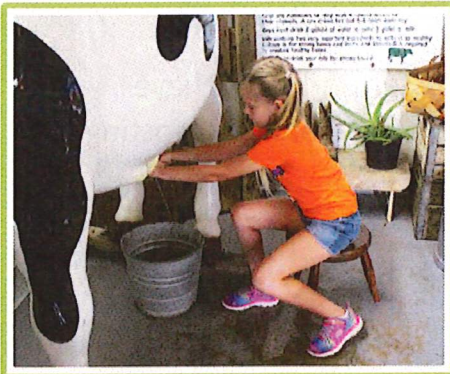
FUN on the Farm

Field Trips at the Virginia Beach Farmers Market
An interactive tour to learn about Agriculture and have fun!



\$8 per child

Teachers & parents are free



The Rural Heritage Center tour includes hands-on activities.

Planting • Churning butter • Grinding corn

Milk "Beachy" the life-size, fiberglass cow

Wash clothes with a pitcher pump
and washboard

See antique tools and machines

Learn about plants, pollinators and chickens
in the Children's Garden

This program aligns with Virginia SOL topics including
insects, vermiculture, plants and farm animals with an
emphasis on life cycles, habitat, recycling and more.

Learn more: Visit VirginiaBeach.gov/FarmersMarket

"We had a wonderful time on our field trip! The students loved all the activities. Every learning opportunity was partnered with a hands-on aspect and that is something you never see in a field trip. Staff was not only knowledgeable, but completely passionate about everything. We will certainly be back."
~ Kathleen, Virginia Beach Teacher

**Schedule
Today!**

Contact Farmers Market Management Office
farmmrkt@vbgov.com • 757.385.4388



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH
Agriculture



Spring Field Trips – Fun on the Farm!

Spring is defined as the season after winter and before summer, in which vegetation begins to appear. Ironically, the effects of vegetating the past few cold, dark, long winter months have appeared around my waist line!

It's time to open the windows and get rolling. Fun on the Farm Field Trips at our Farmers Market have begun and the calendar is filling up. Our 2-hour tour teaches children pre-K through 5th grade, about agriculture, in an interactive and fun way for **only \$8 per child**.

Did you know that just about everything we eat, drink and wear, is a product of agriculture? Even medicines, sports equipment, makeup, and home décor may have roots on a farm.

Public, private, home schools, church groups, and daycares have been booking year after year for the past 20 years. Groups of 10 or more are welcome.

Activities include planting a plant the kids get to bring home; old timey chores of washing clothes in a basin on a wash board and hanging them out to dry on the clothes line. Milking the life-size cow, grinding corn, churn cream into butter and gather eggs at the henhouse.

We make a craft, tour the beautiful gardens our Virginia Beach Master Gardeners have created, to learn about pollinators, different kinds of plants, vermiculture and composting. It's a wonderful program that wraps up with story time and ice cream.

If you're curious about our Fun on the Farm Field Trips,
call Kristi at 757-385-4388.

We'd love to get your group on the calendar.

So, why did the foal cough? Because he was a little horse.



VIRGINIA BEACH

FARMERS MARKET

THANK YOU to our 2025 Annual and Special Event Sponsors for their support!
We are looking forward to 2026 together!



We invite you to join us throughout the year. The Farmers Market is open year round so stop by to visit our Merchants:

Beach N' Seafood, Chapman's Flowers, The Country Butcher Shop, Creekmore's Place, Flutterby Soaps, Gilly's Creamery, Holland Produce, Kempsville Florist, Nature's Treasures, Princess Anne County Grill, S & H Produce, Season's Best & Skipper Farms

3640 Dam Neck Road, Virginia Beach | VirginiaBeach.gov/farmersmarket | (757) 385-4388 | @VBFarmersMarket

2026 EVENTS	Celebrate Agriculture	Birthday Bash	Strawberry Jamboree	Honey Festival	Apple Extravaganza	Harvest Fair	Fall Festival	Santa's Workshop
	3/21	4/18	5/16	6/13	9/19	10/10	11/7	12/5

Craft shows are held from 10 am to 4pm during each event. Vendors who would like more information about participating can contact the Market Office at (757) 385-4388



Happy Spring 2026!

It is sunny and warm, and everything is starting to bloom—prime time for everyone to head outside and tackle their lawns and gardens. Before you jump straight into your yearly routine, though, it's worth taking a moment to assess what your yard actually needs this season. A little upfront evaluation can make all the difference in keeping your lawn and garden healthy, vibrant, and easy to maintain.

Inspecting your turf and garden in April, when plants are just beginning to wake up, gives you a clear picture of what winter left behind and what your landscape requires before you start your full spring routine. The goal is to understand the condition of your lawn and beds before you invest time, money, or effort in the wrong tasks.

1. Assess turf and garden health as growth resumes

A slow walk-through in early to mid-April helps you spot issues that only become visible once temperatures warm and new growth begins.

- **Turf:** Look for bare patches, matted grass, lingering mold, or signs of pests. These early indicators tell you whether overseeding, dethatching, or targeted treatments will be necessary as the season progresses.
- **Garden beds:** Check for broken stems, frost-damaged perennials, and ornamental grasses or shrubs that need a spring pruning. April is the ideal time to clean up winter damage without interfering with active growth.
- **Moisture patterns:** Notice any areas that stay soggy or compacted—these often need attention before roots deepen later in spring.

This early assessment prevents you from jumping into tasks that may not match what your landscape requires.

2. Test and evaluate your soil while it's workable

April is one of the best months to test soil because it has thawed, dried slightly, and is ready for accurate sampling.

- **Soil testing:** A Virginia Tech soil test will show pH, nutrient levels, and organic matter, along with recommendations. In Virginia Beach, you can pick up soil sample boxes at local libraries, the Extension Office, or the Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

- **Texture and compaction:** Pay attention to how the soil feels. Dense or compacted turf may need aeration later in spring, while heavy garden soil may benefit from added compost to improve permeability and structure.

Understanding your soil now helps you avoid unnecessary fertilizing or amendments later.

3. Clean up and prepare the site for active growth

Once you've assessed the landscape and understood your soil, April cleanup sets the stage for healthy growth in May and June. Delaying spring clean-up to mid to late April also gives our native pollinators a chance to survive some of our last predicted frost dates and wake up for the season! Some steps when preparing for garden and yard cleanup include:

Remove winter debris such as leaves, sticks, and fallen branches so sunlight and air can reach the soil surface.

Cut back dead plant material from perennials and ornamental grasses, taking care not to disturb new shoots emerging at the base.

Lightly rake turf to lift matted areas and improve airflow, which encourages stronger shoot development.

Define garden borders now so you're ready for compost and mulch deliveries later in the month.

This preparation ensures that any seeding, fertilizing, mulching, or planting you do in late April, or early May will be far more effective.

Extension Programs with Ashton

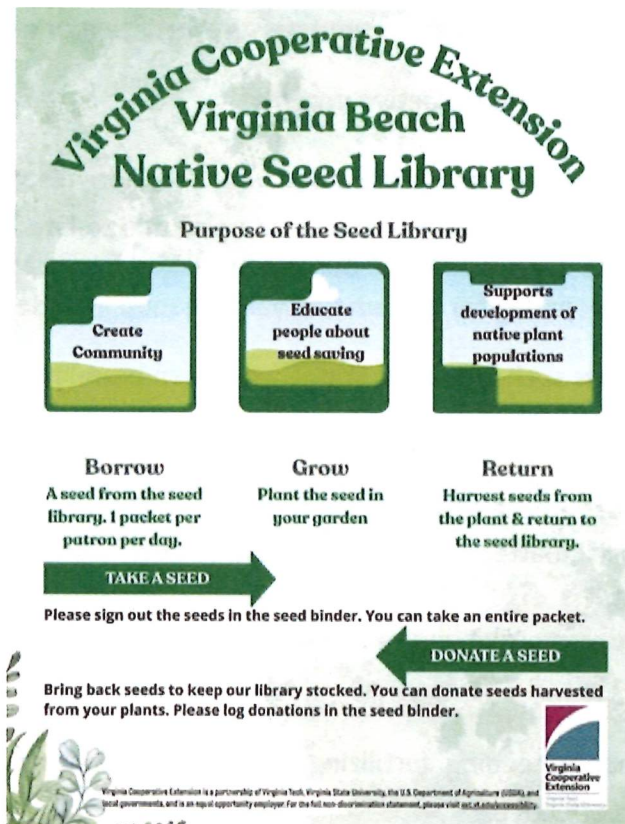
Ashton and the local Hampton Roads Agents collaborate to host a couple of Pesticide Recertifications and Trainings throughout the year. If you need the information to gain credit for your Pesticide License, please reach out to her to be put on her mailing list!

Virginia Beach's Newest Native Seed Library

Ashton, in collaboration with her Master Gardeners, Dr. Laurie Fox at the AREC, and the Virginia Native Plant Society – Hampton Roads Chapter, has been diligently collecting and packaging native seeds to build a robust stock for her Native Seed Library. Located in Building 14, the library offers community members access to a diverse selection of native seeds along with educational resources about each plant.

The mission of the Native Seed Library is twofold: to provide citizens with the tools and knowledge to grow native species, and to inspire them to contribute back by donating seeds of their own. By encouraging seed sharing and replenishment, the library fosters a cycle of sustainability and community engagement.

Ultimately, Ashton's seed library serves as a hub for connecting people through horticultural education and resource conservation, empowering the community to preserve native plants while cultivating a deeper appreciation for the environment.



Virginia Beach Extension Master Gardener Seed Libraries

The Extension Master Gardeners of Virginia Beach, in Community Partnership with the City of Virginia Beach Public Libraries, have established 6 seed libraries. They are free to the public for home gardens, along with instruction sheets. Seeds for a vegetable, an herb, and a flower are available each month with a rotating selection. Master Gardeners interact on each site twice a month for questions and information. We hope to grow new gardeners, introducing our community to the joy of harvesting their own food, using herbs in their cooking, learning about a variety of flowering plants, and helping preserve the biodiversity of our plant population.

The seed libraries can be found in the following libraries:

- Bayside Library
- Oceanfront Library
- Princess Anne Library
- Central Library
- Kempsville Library
- Great Neck Library

Each packet provided has information on planting your seeds. Below you will find further explanation of the categories on your seed packet and helpful planting tips.

Resource Conservation

Create Your Rain Barrel This Year with Virginia Beach Master Gardener Water Stewards!

Use waterwise practices to aid in your summer gardening season by learning how to make a rain barrel. You may ask what a rain barrel is and what purpose it serves. Rain barrels collect rainwater from rooftops during each rain event. The collected water can then be used around the landscape. You can use the collected water to water gardens and lawns, clean garden tools, fill fountains, extinguish campfires, etc. (Penn State Extension, N.D.).

At the Virginia Beach Farmers Market, join the Virginia Beach Master Gardener Water Stewards to construct a 55-gallon sealed rain barrel. Each barrel includes a diverter kit for installation on an existing downspout. At the workshop, additional barrels will be available for purchase.



Other Virginia Beach Master Gardener Programs for 2026:

Talking Dirt –Tips for the Casual Gardener

(Classes are free, but a Recreation Center membership or day pass is required).

These classes are for those curious about their garden, how to plan a garden, and other horticultural topics! A list of upcoming classes are below! Registration for the classes can be found here: <https://www.vbmg.org/greenthumb-599702.html>

Gardening - Companion Planting

Ever wonder why some people's gardens look so great? Discover how pairing the right plants together can naturally boost growth, deter pests, enrich soil, and maximize harvests. Join us for Companion Planting: Nature's Secret to a Thriving Garden.

Kempsville Recreation Center

April 1, 2026, Wed 6:45 PM - 7:45 PM

Gardening - Companion Planting - Nature's Secret

Ever wonder why some people's gardens look so great? Discover how pairing the right plants together can naturally boost growth, deter pests, enrich soil, and maximize harvests. Join us for Companion Planting: Nature's Secret to a Thriving Garden.

Princess Anne Recreation Center

April 21, 2026, Tue 6:45 PM - 7:45 PM

Gardening - Defend Your Garden Against Common Spring Weeds

Spring: so many weeds! Winter weeds are fading; summer weeds are starting. What are all of those? What are they called? Why should you care? Identifying weeds will help you fight them. We will also discuss Integrated Pest Management, which means using a variety of management methods. Let us help you win the War on Weeds!!

Kempsville Recreation Center

May 13, 2026, Wed 6:45 PM - 7:45 PM

Gardening - Weeds!

Spring: so many weeds! Winter weeds are fading; summer weeds are starting. What are all of those? What are they called? Why should you care? Identifying weeds will help you fight them. We will also discuss Integrated Pest Management, which means using a variety of management methods. Let us help you win the War on Weeds!!

Princess Anne Recreation Center

May 19, 2026, Tue 6:45 PM - 7:45 PM



Virginia Beach Extension Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale

- Wagons & carts are welcome - we'll have a few available for customers to use Rain or shine!
- If extreme weather causes a change in schedule, we'll announce it on our [Website](#) home page and [Facebook](#) page.
- Cash, credit or check accepted
- Free parking and admission

Virginia Beach Master Gardeners
2026 Spring Plant Sale

Save the Date
May 2: 9 AM-3 PM
May 3: 10 AM-2 PM

The Virginia Tech Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC)
1444 Diamond Springs Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
More info at vbmhg.org

We'll have thousands of plants at low prices! All dollars spent support our community education programs.

- Natives
- Veggies
- Herbs
- Perennials
- Annuals
- Shrubs & Trees
- Planted Containers
- Succulents
- Houseplants

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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Tammy Mas at 757-385-4769 during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. TDD number (800) 828-1120.



Building a Better Credit Score

In today's economy, it's clear that while some people can stay financially secure and access what they need with ease, many of our neighbors are working hard just to keep up. One major reason for this gap is the difference between good credit and poor credit. Individuals with good or excellent credit scores typically qualify for lower interest rates, while those with low credit scores often face higher rates or even denial of credit. Credit refers to any money you borrow or any product or service you use with the agreement to repay the amount owed, usually with added fees and interest.

You may be wondering what factors influence a credit score and how to improve yours. Although a credit score is based on five main components, a person can have more than 50 different scores because various industries use their own scoring models. Credit scores generally range from 300 to 850. Higher scores lead to better interest rates, while lower scores result in higher rates or limited access to credit.

The key components of a credit score include:

- **35% Payment History**
- **30% Debt-to-Income Ratio**
- **15% Length of Credit History**
- **10% New Credit Inquiries**
- **10% Credit Mix (Diversity of Credit)**

Negative impacts on your score can come from late payments, overdue debts, the number and types of credit accounts you have, how much debt you carry, how often you apply for new credit, and any negative data on your credit report.

The first step in managing your credit is to obtain a copy of your credit report from all three major credit bureaus (Equifax,

TransUnion, and Experian) by visiting www.annualcreditreport.com. You can access free credit reports weekly. After that, you will want to get your credit score, which typically requires a small fee unless provided through a financial institution or service.

The most effective strategy for improving your credit score is simple: pay every bill on time, every time. Paying more than the minimum on credit cards and loans, and paying before the due date, can also help. Review your credit reports for errors and dispute any inaccuracies. If you have credit cards with zero balances that you are not using, avoid closing them, keeping them open helps maintain a longer credit history and improves your credit utilization ratio.

Finally, aim to keep your credit card balances at 30% or less of your available credit to maintain a healthy credit profile.

To get more financial tips visit the Virginia Beach Family and Consumer Sciences Facebook at



<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61566577606202>



Karen Munden

Unit Coordinator

Senior Family & Consumer Science Agent