



NURTURING THE SOIL AND YOUR SOUL

Tips for engaging your green thumb, even if yardwork is merely a memory

By Annie Tobey

For those who have experienced the pleasure of working the soil, of watching plants grow and relaxing in their quiet companionship, giving up a yard can feel like saying goodbye to an old friend. Whether you're admitting you need help with a large yard or moving to a community where yardwork is someone else's responsibility, the change may feel more like losing a limb than gaining an advantage.

Fortunately, you can say goodbye to the never-ending cycle of seeding, fertilizing, watering and mowing a lawn and still keep your ever-green thumb engaged with ornamental and edible plants.

A SYMPATHETIC SOUL

Diane Burns understands the pleasure of working the earth, of nurturing plants that provide both aesthetic and culinary plea-

sure. After a first career as a foreign service officer with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security for the State Department and the birth of her second son, she decided to switch to the field of horticulture. Since completing her training, she's worked at Monticello and managed her own landscaping business in Richmond. Now she manages the gardens at Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards in Albemarle County.



Diane Burns tending to the garden
Photograph by Eric Kelley, courtesy
of Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards

In addition to growing herbs, vegetables and fruits for use in the Pippin Hill restaurant's kitchen, she maintains ornamentals on the grounds around the tasting room. I met with Diane on a recent trip to Pippin Hill for recommendations on keeping a green thumb busy.

CONTAINER GARDENING

Planters in a variety of shapes and sizes,



Photograph by Annie Tobey

indoors and out, enable any wannabe gardener to engage with soil and flora.

At Pippin Hill, Diane artfully arranges large pots from parking lot to patios. She subscribes to the “thriller, filler, spiller” strategy: a tall, *thrilling*, eye-catching centerpiece; smaller complementary plants to *fill* the base of the centerpiece; surrounded by foliage that *spills* out of the container.

Diane started my tour of the grounds with two regal terra cotta planters. Elegant evergreens act as thrillers in such large pots, like sentinels guarding the property. Other thrillers include the tree hydrangea and lemon tree, which can grace the patio or a home's interior, depending upon the weather. Smaller pots can host smaller ver-

tical plants, like angelonias.

While trees maintain their post in a pot long-term, fillers and spillers can change with the seasons. Diane's recommendations include diamond frost euphorbia and cool-weather violas to fill; and Silver Falls *Dichondra* and *Calibrachoa* million bells to spill.

Depending on your budget, Diane suggests using Italian containers by Enzo Zago Terrecotte, which are guaranteed to withstand frost and freezing, even down to -20 degrees Fahrenheit.

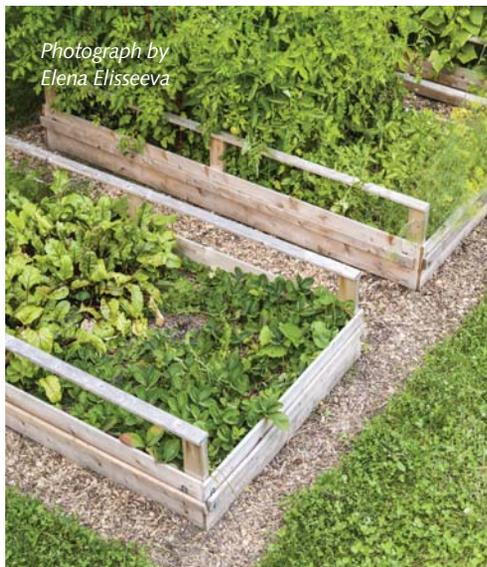
Diane also maintains potted herbs at Pippin Hill, which provide visual and fragrant appeal as well as culinary value.

Window box containers can easily be changed seasonally, adding the spice of

EASIER LIVING HOMES

variety and highlighting holidays. Besides living displays, window boxes can be decorated with oranges, evergreen and pine cones in the winter; holly and hearts for Valentine's Day; and gourds in the fall.

In some Pippin Hill planters, Diane uses coconut liners. These natural-fiber products hold water, releasing it slowly, while also providing good drainage, aeration and small amounts of beneficial minerals.



Photograph by
Elena Elisseeva

RAISED BEDS

If your yard has limited space, you may still have enough for one or more raised beds to fill with ornamental or edible plants.

Diane's kitchen gardens at Pippin Hill are a veritable patchwork quilt of raised beds. Such wood-framed plots enable the gardener to fill the frame with quality soil.

Beds can be purchased pre-made, or you can easily construct one yourself with four pieces of lumber (untreated only, and preferably rot-resistant oak, cedar or redwood) and rebar.

IF YOU'RE LUCKY

Some neighborhoods and new developments in Richmond offer community gardens, a larger piece of land divided for individual use – pick a plot to call your own!

With raised beds, a few scattered pots or a community garden plot, you can keep your ever-green thumb ever engaged. **EL**



Beets

Photograph by Diane Hubbell,
courtesy of Pippin Hill Farm
& Vineyards



Lavender

Photograph by
Serban Enache

IDEAS FOR TASTY BEAUTY

A local garden store can help you choose hardy plants that suit your conditions. Edible and attractive plants that Diane Burns recommends include:

- Tasty Mara des Bois strawberries, grown in a container or raised bed, produce fruit during the summer and into the fall.
- Easy-to-grow nasturtiums and marigolds are both colorful and edible!
- In addition to its edible leaves, the perennial African blue basil boasts edible pink and purple flowers with a lengthy blooming season.
- Lavender, always a delight to the senses, can be dried to extend the fragrant options.
- The hardy and aromatic Arp rosemary hosts profuse blue flowers that provide additional landscape value.
- Garlic grows in the winter, to keep your green thumb happy year-round. Choose hardneck garlic and harvest the scapes for cooking.

FOOD BUZZ

whiskey barrels with Stage Road Scottish Wee Heavy-style ale – a malty, sweet beer with caramel, earthy and smoky notes – then returned the empty barrels to the distillery, which aged a whiskey.

On deck is a collaboration with Three Stars Brewing in Washington, D.C., anticipated for a fall 2018 release. Three Stars brewed an Old Stock Ale using two-row barley, Vienna malt, oats and a touch of caramel malt and chocolate malt.

The Brewers Batch Virginia-Highland Whisky joins a lineup of several other offerings from Virginia Distillery, including the distillery's flagship Port Cask Finished Virginia-Highland Whisky (which recently won "America's Best Blended Malt" at the World Whiskies Awards), Cider Cask Finished Virginia-Highland Whisky and Chardonnay Cask Finished Virginia-Highland Whisky.

Brewers Batch spirits will be available at the distillery (along with tastings of the spirits, cocktails and tours) and in select Virginia ABC stores.

VADistillery.com

RESERVOIR DISTILLERY'S MASH-UP SERIES

Here in Richmond, Reservoir Distillery has taken those ideas to another level. For its Mash-Up Series, Reservoir distills an unfermented beer. Flavor distinctions come from the beer – stout, Kölsch, doppelbock, gose, barleywine and IPA – and the barrels.

Reservoir is spreading the love to other craft beverage makers, too: finishing whiskey in barrels from Michael Shaps Wineworks; finishing gin from James River Distillery in Reservoir Rye Whiskey barrels; using a grappa-like distilling method for mead from Black Heath Meadery; and distilling Blue Bee's Damson Berry Cider.

Follow Reservoir Distillery on Facebook for updates on available Mash-Ups. Reservoir products are available at the distillery tasting room (serving cocktails as well as spirit samples), with the Reservoir Rye and Wheat whiskeys on shelves at select Virginia ABC stores.

ReservoirDistillery.com **B**

Wine writer John Stoner recommends four Virginia wineries that feature worthwhile events as well as top-notch wines. Pull out your corkscrew and your calendar and start planning! BoomerMagazine.com/spring-2018-va-wineries



Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards
Photograph by Eric Kelley

WINE, MOUNTAIN VIEWS AND GARDEN-TO-FORK FOOD

Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards

By Annie Tobey

You know the idea: sip sumptuous Virginia wine with friends, relaxing on the tasting room patio, with fields, vineyards and the soft, lush greenery of the Blue Ridge Mountains laid out in front of you like a gigantic picture postcard.

But the concept at Pippin Hill takes you the extra mile.

Of course, the tasting room offers the signature Sauvignon blancs, crisp Blanc de

Blancs, barrel-fermented Chardonnays, Cabernet Francs and other delicate and hearty varietals, created by winemaker Michael Shaps. And in a classic tasting room with a stunning view at that. But the winery also offers guests dining and wine-pairing cuisine made in the Pippin Hill kitchen – utilizing vegetables, herbs and fruit grown on the grounds by master gardener and horticulturalist Diane Burns.

Envision dining on freshly harvested asparagus, peppers, squash, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, beets, arugula, strawberries, figs and heirloom apples, seasoned with freshly gathered chives, basil, dill, rosemary, parsley and garlic. The kitchen

FOR GARDENING TIPS FROM
DIANE BURNS, SEE PAGE EL-24.

also prepares charcuterie, seafood, pasta, meats smoked on site and more. Sustainably grown and locally sourced, the ingredients are better for you, the environment and the local economy. And quite tasty.

This creative agritourism destination also offers cooking classes, including “Gluten-Free Gluttony” (April 18), “Chesapeake Bay Goes Gourmet” (May 16) and “Shenandoah Summer” (June 13). The winery also hosts mini-farmers markets – the fresh goodness that visitors don’t purchase from the farmers goes onto Chef’s menu – live music, wine dinners and other special events. And of course, it’s a beautiful venue for weddings and other private gatherings.

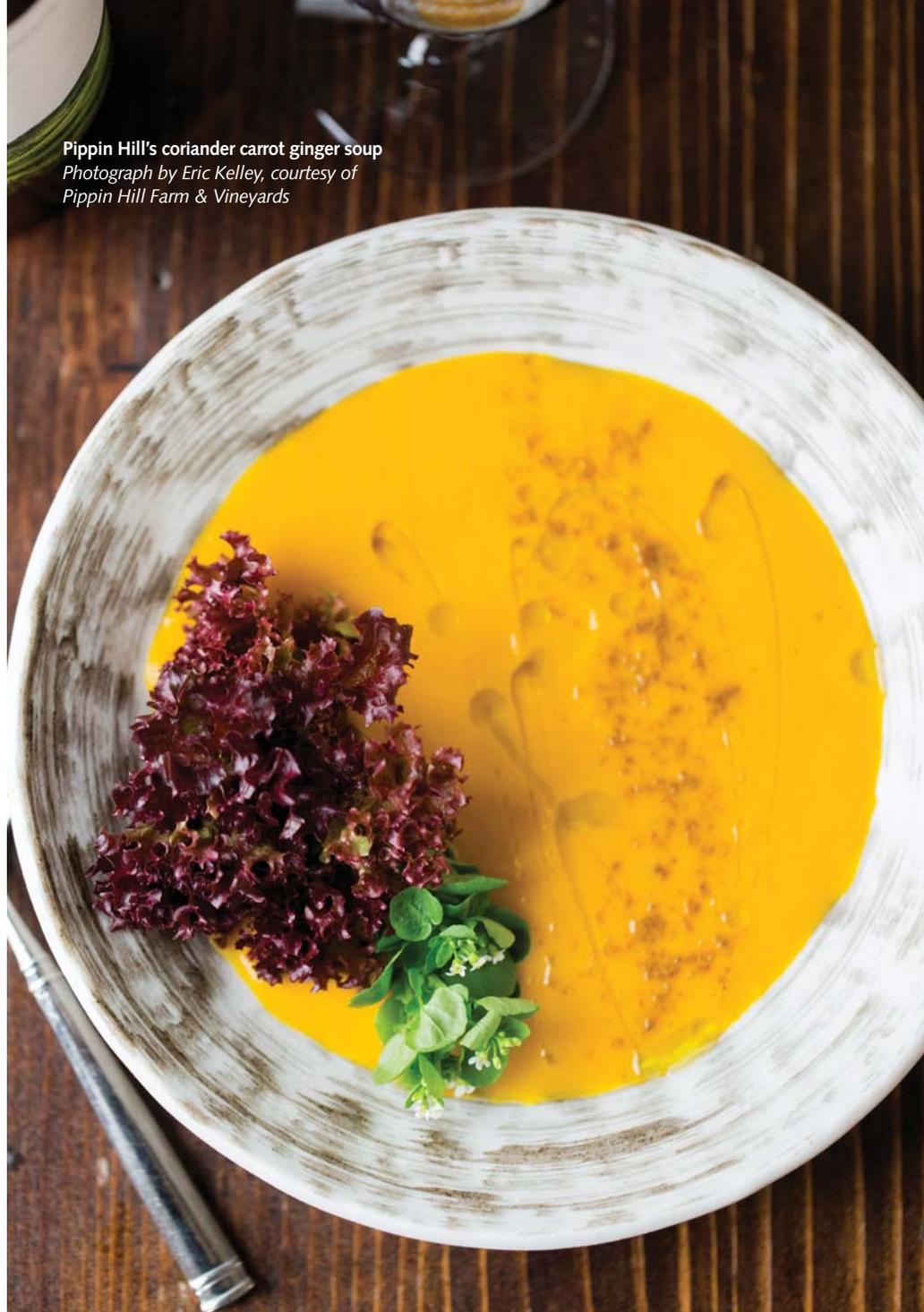
So picture yourself at this Albemarle County winery, sipping, supping and soaking in the beauty of Virginia

5022 Plank Road, North Garden
PippinHillFarm.com

CORIANDER CARROT GINGER SOUP RECIPE

This recipe is from the kitchen of Executive Chef Ian Rynecki at Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards. Serves 8-10 people

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup leek, sliced
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons cumin*, toasted and ground
- 1 teaspoon coriander*, toasted and ground
- ½ teaspoon fenugreek seed*, toasted and ground (optional)
- 2 tablespoons of harissa paste
- 5 pounds carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 3 quarts vegetable stock
- 4 tablespoons of sherry vinegar
- Drizzle of parsley oil or crème fraîche for garnish



Pippin Hill's coriander carrot ginger soup
Photograph by Eric Kelley, courtesy of
Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards

Heat the olive oil in a medium stockpot. Add the leek, onion, garlic and ginger. Allow vegetable mixture to cook for 5-10 minutes over medium heat until vegetables are softened.

Add cumin, coriander, fenugreek and harissa paste to the softened vegetables. Cook for two minutes before adding the carrots and vegetable stock.

Simmer for 15-20 minutes, until carrots are soft and tender. Transfer soup over to a blender (alternatively you can use an immersion blender) in four separate batches. While

soup is blending, slowly drizzle in olive oil and sherry vinegar until a smooth texture is reached. Finish by straining soup through a coarse mesh strainer.

Serve hot with a drizzle of parsley oil or crème fraîche.

Pairs well with Pippin Hill 2015 Merlot Reserve. B

**Preferred preparation for spices: purchase the whole spice then toast gently in a dry sauté pan. Allow the spice to cool, then grind.*