



HICKORY FARMS

APRIL 2026



Bob & Judy Cosgirff's Backyard

HICKORYFARMS.ORG | P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

President Column

Greetings Neighbors,

With spring now springing, our community is starting to come alive again. Lawns are greening, trees are filling out, and flowers are beginning to bloom. It's one of the best times of year in our neighborhood, and a great opportunity for all of us to take a little extra pride in our homes and shared spaces.

As everything grows, we kindly ask that everyone stay on top of basic yard maintenance. Keeping lawns mowed, edging walkways, and tidying up beds and common-facing areas helps maintain the look and feel of our community for everyone. It doesn't take much individually, but collectively it makes a big difference.

I also want to take a moment to again ask for volunteers. We currently have open positions, including Vice President and ACC Lead, and we truly need community involvement to keep things running smoothly. This neighborhood works best when it is supported by the people who live here. If you've ever considered getting involved, now is the time.

In parallel, the Board has begun exploring the option of working with a professional management company. This does not mean any decisions have been made. We are currently gathering information, speaking with different companies, and evaluating what services they could provide and at what cost. Our goal is to fully understand the options available so we can make an informed decision about what is best for the community long term. We will keep everyone updated as we learn more.

As always, thank you for being part of what makes this neighborhood such a great place to live.

Sincerely,
Steve Kubrak
HFCA President

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Upcoming Events

 **HFCA Board Meeting**
Will be held April 28th at 7 pm

 **Newsletter Items Due**
Due on April 25th

How To Contact...

Board of Directors: hfca@hickoryfarms.org
Architectural Control: acc@hickoryfarms.org
Treasurer: treasurer@hickoryfarms.org
Common Areas: cac@hickoryfarms.org
Webmaster: webmaster@hickoryfarms.org
Newsletter: newsletter@hickoryfarms.org
Neighborhood Watch: neighborhoodwatch@hickoryfarms.org

The Birds of Hickory Farms

By: Bob Cosgriff

Despite the crazy roller-coaster weather in March, we had several highlights in our daily species count. First of all, we added four more species—Black-headed Cowbird (BHCO), Yellow-rumped Warbler (YRWA), Red-winged Blackbird (RWBB), and Chipping Sparrow (CHSP)—to our yard year list, bringing us to a total of 37 species seen to date. We also logged a new high day count for the year—28 species—on St. Patrick's Day, which included all six of the possible woodpecker species for a “Full House.” We have seen more than 28 birds in one day on only five different occasions since starting to record this statistic in 2016. Our highest one-day count was 33 (2 May, 2019), followed by 30 (twice, 4 April, 2020; 2 May, 2022), and 29 (twice, 3 May, 2018, 5 Feb, 2025). We also logged several days of 24, 25, and 26 species this March. To put all this into context, if we went to a local birding spot and counted 25 species, we would consider it a good day's outing. This March brought us several good days and one very good day without even leaving our home!

Another highlight in March was the daily presence of a small flock of **Purple Finches** (PUFI). Over the last fourteen years, we have had two years in which we saw no PUFI and in other years saw only one or two fleetingly (and some were in the fall, not the spring). So to have them come and stay in numbers this year is something special. The obvious question is “why?” There is a likely answer. This species breeds in Virginia only in the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Appalachians to our west. So we should expect them to disappear in a few weeks to return to their breeding grounds. This is called “vertical” or “altitudinal” migration. Basically, they are here now because the weather (and hence, the food supply) is better here than in higher elevations in the winter. That said, this is the largest and longest presence of these beautiful birds since we have kept records, a special situation that might not happen again. For this reason, Purple Finch (*Haemorhus purpureus*) is our Bird of the Month. To learn about this species (especially how to distinguish it from the related House Finch), go to https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Finch/id.



There are still at least three songbirds we should be seeing this time of year but haven't spotted yet. These are Fox Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Brown Creeper. We have also not seen Red-shouldered Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, or Black Vulture. As mentioned last month, April is the month when more birds will begin to move into our area. Speaking of that, there are reports that Purple Martins are moving early this year, so we have raised the colony up to prepare for their arrival sometime in April. Hopefully, we'll be able to report on some new arrivals as well as the start of bluebird nesting in next month's article.

As the weather warms and the flowers and flowering shrubs begin to put out their blossoms, it is a good time to get out into our common areas or any nearby parkland to look and listen for birds. As the breeding season starts, males will be singing to attract mates and establish their territories. If you see anything interesting, or have a bird ID question, let me know at bandjcoz@gmail.com. Happy Spring!

Spring Egg Hunt

Easter Bunny Visits Hickory Farms!

Hickory Farms welcomed spring in the sweetest way with our annual Spring Egg Hunt on **March 21** in the Lower Commons.

More than 15 children joined the festivities—and were delighted by a special appearance from the Easter Bunny! With 200 colorful eggs hidden throughout the commons, the hunt was on... and over almost as quickly as it began. In just a matter of minutes, every last egg had been discovered!

After the excitement, families gathered to enjoy cookies and cupcakes, giving our enthusiastic egg hunters (and their helpers!) a chance to refuel and relax together.

A heartfelt thank you to Social Committee Co-Chairs **Laura Bucher** and **Juliette Giordano** for organizing this wonderful event, and to **Doug Winters** for hopping in as our fantastic Easter Bunny!

We loved seeing so many smiling faces and look forward to more community fun in the months ahead.

Call-Out Box: Thank You!

Special thanks to:

- Laura Bucher & Juliette Giordano – Event Coordinators
- Doug Winters – Our Easter Bunny
- All the families who came out to celebrate!

| HFCA Board Vacancies – We’re Looking for Volunteers

| Open Position: Vice President

This is a Board of Director position that helps keep our association running smoothly.

Key responsibilities include:

- Representing HFCA at the Braddock District Council
- Reviewing and signing VPOAA documents on behalf of HFCA for homeowners selling their homes, with input from the ACC and Treasurer
- Ensuring the language in VPOAA Parts 1 and 2 is kept up to date in accordance with DPOR Common Interest Community (CIC) Board requirements
- Completing and submitting the annual registration renewal to the DPOR – Common Interest Community (CIC) Board

| Open Position: Assistant Treasurer

This role assists the Treasurer and helps ensure the financial operations of the association run smoothly. This position may be either a Board of Director role or an Officer position.

Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and concurring with payment of invoices and reimbursements submitted by the Treasurer
- Learning the responsibilities of the Treasurer throughout the year in order to serve as Acting Treasurer if needed
- Conducting the annual review of HFCA bookkeeping

| Open Position: Architectural Control Committee Chair

Key responsibilities include:

- Coordinate the actions of the ACC in reviewing and approving all requests for exterior change to homes.
- Ensure that all restrictive covenants pertaining to appearance, including issues on streets, common grounds (in coordination with Grounds Chair) and properties are enforced in accordance with HFCA procedures, including conducting an annual community-wide house-to-house review/inspection by the ACC and other volunteers.
- Provide VPOAA Part 1 inspection and compliance.

If you're interested in serving your community or would like more information about these roles, please visit hickoryfarms.org/board-of-directors and reach out to the HFCA Board at hfca@hickoryfarms.org.

| Community Yard Sale Update

So, as you know, we're considering having a Community Yard Sale this year. We know a bunch of people have moved in to the neighborhood in the last two years, and it's possible that others may also have stuff to sell. If we do have the yard sale, Pete Scala is willing to run it, and we plan to hold it on a Saturday in late May (or early June?), from 8 am to noon.

Let Pete or the HFCA know if you want to participate in a Yard Sale and when you could do it. He's looking for at least 10 participants to make it worthwhile. Call or email Pete Scala [(703) 764-0730 (landline), (703) 909-6341 (text) or scalapr@verizon.net] OR Melissa (commonareas@hickoryfarms.org).

As in past years, HFCA does the advertising, posts signs, and distributes maps showing yard sale locations (but not names). Because we usually have many families participating, we always get a much better customer turnout than single family or 2 or 3 family yard sales.

April Planting and Garden To-Do List

• Planting & Seeding:

- Plant cool-season vegetables: Broccoli, kale, collards, lettuce, and herbs like parsley and cilantro.
- Plant hardy annuals/perennials: Pansies, violas, and primroses.
- Start seeds indoors: Zinnias, cosmos, sunflowers, and impatiens.
- Divide perennials: Divide overgrown perennials now.

• Garden Maintenance:

- Mulch: Edge and mulch garden beds to prevent weed germination.
- Prune: Cut back dormant perennials and ornamental grasses.
- Fertilize: Apply fertilizer to bulbs and shrubs (use Flowering Plant Food for blooms, Tree and Shrub Food for green growth).

April Lawn Care Tips for Northern Virginia

• Weed and Feed (Early April)

- Prevent Weeds: Apply a pre-emergent herbicide (crabgrass preventer) when soil temperatures are between 40 and 50 degrees (usually early to mid-April) to stop weeds before they germinate.
- Fertilize: Apply a granular, slow-release fertilizer to provide nutrients as the grass wakes up from dormancy.
- Spot Treat: Use liquid, selective weed killers to tackle existing weeds like dandelions and clover or hand pull weeds.

• Mowing and Maintenance

- First Cut: Start mowing when the grass is 4 inches tall. Keep the first few cuts higher (about 3–4 inches) to strengthen the root system.
- Mow Frequently: To encourage the grass to spread and fill in, try to mow twice a week throughout April.
- Sharpen Blades: Ensure mower blades are sharp to avoid tearing the grass, which makes it susceptible to disease.
- Edge: Clean up lawn edges with a spade for a crisp, professional look.

• Soil and Lawn Health

- Dethatch/Scarify: Remove excess, dead organic matter (thatch) by raking or using a machine to allow air and water to reach the soil.
- Aerate: If your soil is compacted, aerate in late April once the lawn is fully green and actively growing.
- Overseed: Patch thin or bare areas in early April to ensure a dense lawn, especially in areas with cool-season grass like Tall Fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass.
- Water Deeply: Water your lawn deeply but infrequently to encourage deep root growth, rather than shallow, frequent watering.
- Time it Right: Water in the early morning to reduce evaporation and decrease the likelihood of fungal diseases.
- Tip: Flowering stalks (seed heads) may appear; this is normal growth, not weeds.

These tips are provided by Merrifield Garden Center

From the Neighborhood Watch

April 2026

- Personal Safety Presentation - Tuesday, April 21st from 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM at the West Springfield District Station (6140 Rolling Rd, Springfield, VA 22152)
- National Drug Take Back Day - Saturday, April 25th from 10:00AM - 1:00 PM at the West Springfield District Station (6140 Rolling Rd, Springfield, VA 22152)
- Avoiding Scams and Fraud- Tuesday, April 28th from 6:30PM-7:30PM at the West Springfield District Station (6140 Rolling Rd, Springfield, VA 22152)

May 2026

- Coffee with a Cop- Saturday, May 2nd from 10:00AM-11:30AM at the Target (10301 New Guinea Rd, Fairfax, VA 22032)
- West Springfield District Community Advisory Committee Meeting - Tuesday, May 5th from 6:00PM-7:30PM at the West Springfield District Station (6140 Rolling Rd, Springfield, VA 22152)

Spring Clean-Up a Big Success

A small but mighty group of volunteers came together on Saturday, March 21, to help spruce up our community's common areas. Under clear blue skies and perfect spring temperatures, neighbors spent the morning gathering sticks, clearing debris, and enjoying the sounds of birds serenading their efforts—a truly beautiful way to welcome the season.

From youngest helpers to seasoned pros, the teamwork and community spirit were on full display. Buckets were filled, wagons were loaded, and plenty of smiles were shared along the way.

We extend our sincere thanks to the Stark family, Bob Cosgriff, Rick Dudley, Ray LaMotta, Doug Winters, the Schloekre family, Rebecca and Kona Zaman, and Clair Hill for their time and hard work. Your efforts make a meaningful difference in keeping Hickory Farms looking its best.

A special thank you goes to Melissa Stark for organizing the event and keeping everyone fueled with donuts and beverages—much appreciated!

Stay tuned for future opportunities to get outside, connect with neighbors, and help keep our community looking fabulous.

Get Involved!

Want to lend a hand and meet your neighbors? We'd love to have you join us at future community clean-up days and events!

- Help keep our common areas beautiful
- Connect with fellow residents
- Enjoy fresh air and community spirit

Keep an eye on the HFCA newsletter and email updates for upcoming opportunities.

Have ideas or want to volunteer?

hfca@hickoryfarms.org
hickoryfarms.org

A Lesson about Hickory Farms Wildlife: Why "Left Alone" is Best

A little over five years ago, a well-meaning individual found a tiny fawn (see pictured) tucked away in the boxwood grove of the Hickory Farms Upper Commons. Thinking the baby had been abandoned, he picked it up and began searching the Upper Commons for any neighbors that could help.

Luckily, he crossed paths with a Spinning Wheel Ct. neighbor named Michelle, who was tending to her backyard garden. Michelle, a true deer enthusiast, knew exactly what to do. She instructed him to place the fawn in a shaded, quiet spot near the fence and—most importantly—**to leave it be**.

Michelle spent the rest of the day, from late morning until dusk, monitoring the fawn from a distance to ensure its safety. When the sun finally went down and the fawn's mother had still not appeared, Michelle used a fawn bleat caller, continuing for a couple of hours into the night. To everyone's relief that was involved, the mother deer eventually followed the sound and found her baby well after dark.

Why are baby animals left alone?

It's easy to assume a lone baby is in trouble, but for species like deer and foxes, "home alone" is a survival strategy:

- **Scent Protection:** Mothers often leave their young in hidden spots while they forage. Because babies have very little scent, staying still and solo makes them nearly invisible to predators.
- **Limiting Traffic:** Mothers purposely limit their visits to the nesting area so they don't lead predators (like coyotes or domestic dogs) straight to their young.
- **Foraging Needs:** Nursing requires a lot of energy! Mothers spend many hours away gathering enough food to keep themselves and their babies healthy.

What should you do?

If you spot a fawn or a fox kit this spring:

- **Observe from a distance:** Use binoculars or your phone zoom, but do not approach.
- **Keep pets away:** Ensure dogs are leashed so they don't disturb the nesting site.
- **Do not touch:** While the "human scent leads to rejection" idea is largely a myth, touching an animal causes it immense stress and can lead the mother to move the baby to a less secure location.
- **Wait 24 hours:** In most cases, the mother will return under the cover of night.

The Golden Rule: If the animal is quiet, tucked away, and looks healthy, it is exactly where it is supposed to be.

Let's keep Hickory Farms a safe haven for all our residents—two-legged, four-legged, and furry alike!



Join Our Listserv!

Don't miss any news! There's no better way to stay in touch than through our Hickory Farms email listserv. Visit [Email Listserv](#) and follow the instructions.

HFCA Board Meeting Notice

HFCA board meetings are held via Microsoft Teams the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. Unless otherwise notified, due to unforeseen conflicts.

To join a board meeting, please send an email to hfca@hickoryfarms.org. You will be provided with the Microsoft Teams meeting URL, followed by the meeting number and pass code.

Student Yellow Pages

Name	Contact Information	Service
Lily Bucher	571-386-7648	Babysitter/Mother's Helper, Pet Sitting
Kiera Stark	vastarkvolunteer@gmail.com	Pet Sitting/Dog Walking & Babysitting
Caiden Stark	vastarkvolunteer@gmail.com	Pet Sitting/Dog Walking
Cedar Batz	571-398-1467	Dog Walking/Dog Sitting

If you offer services such as those listed above, or others such as tutoring, etc., and wish to be included in future listings, please email the Kiera Stark at newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

Newsletter Item Deadline and Distribution Notice

Newsletter items are due the 25th of each month, for the following newsletter issue. Please send submissions to newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

Newsletters are distributed via the email, paper delivery and posted on the HFCA website. If you have not received your newsletter via email, please email secretary@hickoryfarms.org.



Words:

- Hickory Farms Deer Spring Birds Volunteer
 Flowers Mulch Chipping Sparrow Bloom
 Plants Neighborhood April Newsletter Egghunt
 Easter bunny

WORD SEARCH

SUDOKU

A 9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers filled in. The grid is 9 rows by 9 columns. The numbers are: Row 1: 7, 3, 4, 5, 9; Row 2: 4, 2, 7, 3, 8; Row 3: 7; Row 4: 8, 6, 5, 4, 7; Row 5: 2, 4, 7, 8, 9; Row 6: 1, 9, 5, 6, 7, 8; Row 7: 3, 7, 2, 5; Row 8: 2, 7, 5, 4, 3; Row 9: 6, 3, 2, 8.