



# *The Gardenzette*

*the newsletter of the Rock Spring Garden Club, Arlington, Virginia*

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## OFFICERS

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Margi Melnick

VICE-PRESIDENT

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TREASURER

Sherry Foster

GARDENZETTE EDITOR

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM	1
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	2
DESIGN CHALLENGE	3
WAYS AND MEANS	4
TREASURER'S REPORT	5
TUCKAHOE H&G TOUR	5
AWARDS	6
LIAISON	8
PHOTOGRAPHS	13

## Program

June 11, 2015

10am

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

Presentation of Winners

**GARDEN OF THE YEAR**

The owners of all the gardens have been invited to our meeting and lunch. The winners will receive their awards after a slide show featuring all gardens.

We hope that after our meeting you will all be able to get out to see the lovely and interesting gardens on the tour.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Margi Melnick

Writing my last letter to you as President of the Rock Spring Garden Club is bittersweet, as I think back over all our projects, committee activities, challenges of Show and Horticulture, and how much fun most of these activities were for us. At the same time, I'm thrilled with our new slate of officers under Connie Richards' experienced hand and know our future will be exciting.

This is a truly outstanding club, as I'm sure you know, and I feel very privileged to have served you. I thank you for your willingness to "yes" when asked, for your ideas and for your friendship. Perhaps friendship is our most valuable quality. I hope we never lose it.

I think we are like a great ship, always moving forward into new seas. When I became president two years ago, I had some goals in mind: that the committees would run well and accomplish good things through our work with children and our overseeing of the Rock Spring Park. We accomplish skills for ourselves, through the challenges set by the Show committee and the Horticulture committee. My first new goal was to

accomplish non-profit status for our club, something that had been discussed for at least six years. No more. With Thea McGinnis leading the charge and working with Dorinda Burroughs and her lawyer/husband Benton Burroughs, we achieved our goal by joining the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs and coming under their umbrella. This process was carefully handled by our club, and we look forward to a better future with non-profit status. We also have made friends as part of the Piedmont District, and have already gotten new ideas from this relationship. Our own Kate Abraham has become Chair of the District's Garden Therapy section. This new relationship does not interfere with our full acceptance of the NCAGC's activities, which we've always enjoyed.

A second goal was to revive our Garden Therapy committee, and under Renee Bayes leadership, good things happened once again for children with disabilities at the Glebe School. This committee was taken over later by Mary Cottrell, who planned imaginative lesson plans. I must add that we received national recognition from the NGC for this particular project. Actually, we have been honored by both the VFGC and



the NCAGC for many of our committees' accomplishments. Awards are not why we do these things, but they're nice to receive.

We revived our stewardship of the Rock Spring Park. That is an ongoing project, and one that involves continuous work but is also an opportunity for us to join in and help. We held a beautiful fundraiser, the Holiday Design Event, that now is providing six young Arlington students with scholarships to attend a week of camp at the Outdoor Lab.

My final goal was to get a standard flower show back on our calendar. The Board has voted to hold a show, and the membership approved it. Just as with the Holiday Design Event, it will be a fine opportunity for the entire membership to participate. This is very exciting.

So thank you for all your support and your smiles. And cheers for our future!

## DESIGN CHALLENGE FOR JUNE

Anita Brown

### Underwater Design

This is a CREATIVE design having components, including some or all of

the plant material, submerged in water. The components under water must contribute artistically to the overall design and not merely be stems and/or mechanics.



If some components are in water and some not, the effect must be that of a single overall design - not two independent designs. There should be a rhythmic flow from components under water to those not in water. Typically, those components not in water will be placed above those in water but this is not a requirement.

Transparent containers are required and firm, hard-surfaced plant materials



such as tropical flowers, foliage, evergreens, seed pods, and some vegetables and fruits.

Remember that water magnifies the underwater components, including the mechanics. The water must be clear (not colored).



## WAYS AND MEANS

Julie Wadsworth

June 11 will be our last meeting of this garden club year. Where did the year go? It has been another fun year for YOUR Ways and Means committee!

Thank you to the many, many members who have so generously provided donations in support of our effort to

raise money for our club. We received donations from over 20 members. Also, thank you to my delightful and enthusiastic committee. Our team effort proved strong, again!

## PLANT SALE:

Since our June plant sale was exceptionally successful last year, we will be selling plants again at this meeting. I have many plants from members' gardens in my garden and truly enjoy seeing them grow knowing the gardens they came from. I have been busy potting plants from my garden - over 25! For sale: fiddle head ferns, 2 varieties of hostas, cleome, bee balm, Black-Eyed Susans, and chameleon. Please consider donating some plants from your garden. Please label all plants you are donating. I believe these plant donations represent the true meaning at the heart and soul of our club.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE:

Items include: Zenbori garden knives, size small garden gloves, small hand rakes, by-pass pruners, Joyce Chen scissors, Easy Arrangers, Superband Bug Bands, Cool Down neckwear, and a denser, firmer, floral foam. Feedback on the new items is welcomed.

**HAND-MADE ITEMS:** new cloth tote bags, kitchen hand-towels, ribbon flower pins

**MEMBER DONATIONS:**

Your continued support is sincerely appreciated. If you have items to donate that are in good condition. You can drop them off at my house prior to our meeting day, or contact me if you need a pick-up. Lastly, if you need more time to gather your treasures, bring them to the meeting by 9:15am so they can be priced and ready to sell.

If you have any questions, please email

individuals that are chairing the committees should submit their budget request for next year to me by June 13.

Thanks very much,  
Sherry Foster



**BUDGET REPORT**

*Sherry Foster*

Balance beginning of May.	\$22,044.45
Income.	+ 1,765.99
Expenses.	- 4,864.50
Balance end of May.	\$18,945.94

Dear Rock Spring Garden Club members:

The RSGC Budget Committee will be meeting on Monday, June 15, to set the next year's budget levels for the functional committees. Those

**INVITATIONAL COMMITTEE**

Helen McMahon

15<sup>th</sup> Annual Tuckahoe Home and Garden Tour May 16, 2015

The Rock Spring Garden Club was invited once again to provide floral arrangements for the annual tour sponsored by the Tuckahoe Elementary School PTA. The tour supports the Discovery Schoolyard at Tuckahoe which includes 10 outdoor classrooms used for outdoor education, encouraging creative and innovative approaches to learning.

Working with the Tuckahoe flower committee co-chairs is always a treat; they created the table tents identifying floral designs by RSGC; provided containers and flowers from Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. Joan Ashboth, Renee Bayes, Margaret Eubank, Janice Haines, Becky Salzinger, Sharon Siems, and Helen McMahon provided additional greenery from their gardens. On May 15, they met at the home of one of the Tuckahoe chairs to create eleven beautiful floral arrangements. The garden club was recognized as an "in kind" donor in the tour program. The tour showcased North Arlington houses built in the early 1900s, 1904, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 2013, and one new home. Connie Richards, Janice Haines, Becky Salzinger, and Helen McMahon together toured all the homes and gardens on May 16.

## **AWARDS**

**Thea McGinnis**

Dear Members, I am honored to report all the awards recognition that Rock Spring Garden Club received for the 2013-2014 year. Congratulations to our members who stepped up and worked so hard for their committees and club endeavors; and to our Committee Chairs and Officers for their support,

guidance and leadership. Thank you!  
**Thea McGinnis, Awards Chair**

## **VFGC Piedmont District Awards:**

**Blue Ribbon - Civic Project with Native Plants at Rock Spring Park (Dianne Simmons, Chair; Barry Wood, Project Lead & Members)**

**Blue Ribbon - Youth Horticulture Education (Susan Scotti, Chair and Committee)**

**Blue Ribbon - Club Newsletter (Carol Cochran, Editor)**

**Blue Ribbon - Club Website (Thea McGinnis, Website Administrator)**

**Red Ribbon - Club Yearbook (Mary Cottrell, Editor)**

## **Virginia Federated Garden Clubs, Inc. State Awards:**

**Blue Ribbon - Youth Horticulture Education (Susan Scotti, Chair and Committee)**

**Blue Ribbon - Club Newsletter (Carol Cochran, Editor)**

**Red Ribbon - Club Website (Thea McGinnis, Website Administrator)**

**Honorable Mention - Civic Projects with Native Plants (Dianne Simmons, Chair; Barry Wood, Project Lead & Members)**

## **NCAGC District III Awards:**

Certificate of Recognition - Club Yearbook (Mary Cottrell, Editor)  
 Certificate of Recognition - Club Newsletter (Carol Cochran, Editor)

National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. State Awards:

Certificate for Outstanding Garden Club Achievement (60+ members) - recognizes all our club's activities, education and contributions  
 Yearbook Certificate of Merit (70-99 members), Mary Cottrell, Editor  
 Outstanding Club Newsletter (70-99 members), Carol Cochran, Editor  
 Arbor House Service Certificate (Felicia Schwenk, Coordinator and Member volunteers)

Citations for our financial contributions to NCAGC Scholarships, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Fern Valley, and Rain Gardens at the US National Arboretum  
 NGC Certificate for Increased Membership

District III received recognition for Outstanding Electronic District Newsletters - Mary Cottrell, Editor

Central Atlantic Region Awards (Will be presented in October):

Publication Award - Educational Children's Book (for Horticulture/ Garden Therapy), Mary Cottrell, Author  
 Horticulture Therapy Award, Renee Bayes, Chair, and Committee

National Garden Clubs, Inc. National Awards (Presented May 16, 2015):

Award of Merit - Horticulture Therapy, (Renee Bayes, Chair, and Committee)







Connie Richards  
giving a lesson  
in Garden  
Therapy

consider volunteering next year to help with this project. Volunteers receive a 10% discount on their purchases the day they work. You also get to chat with some very interesting people who come into the shop and ask questions about the arboretum.

## LIAISON REPORT

Felicia Schwenk

### Arbor House Volunteers

All of us owe a big thank you to the club members who volunteered along with me at the National Arboretum's Arbor House gift shop, in April, May, and June: Louise Rhoads, Carol Cochran, Connie Richards, Parvaneh Limbert, and Anita Brown. Please

### NCAG & NGC Meetings/Events

Saturday, June 13

District III Garden Tour and Faire in collaboration with Town of Vienna. For program description, schedule of events, and online ticket purchasing (small credit card fee), visit <http://www.viennava.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2544>. Tickets will be available on the day of the tour at any of the homes



on the tour (cash or check only) or at the Freeman Store, unless the tour is sold out.

Friday, June 19, 10:00 a.m.

District III President's Breakfast,  
Meadowlark Gardens, Vienna, VA.

All club members are invited. Club presidents will be asked to share their club's year, such as public garden and civic work, fundraisers, and successful programs, to inspire others.

#### Events at U.S. National Arboretum (U.S.N.A)

Located at 3501 New York Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C., visit  
[www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov) to check out  
U.S.N.A. programs, including the  
following:

Friday June 12-Sunday, August 2  
3<sup>rd</sup> National Juried Bonsai Pot  
Exhibition, National Bonsai & Penjing  
Museum.

Saturday, June 13, 11:00 a.m.  
8<sup>th</sup> Annual DC Plant Swap. Free. See  
website above for details.

#### Other June Events

Friday, June 12

#### Water-wise Gardening

Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA.

For program and fee details, and to  
register, visit [http://  
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/  
greenspring/ed-adult.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ed-adult.htm).

Sunday, June 14, 2:30 p.m.

Growing Chrysanthemums for Gardens/  
Exhibition

Falls Church Community Center, 223  
Little Falls Street, Falls Church, VA  
The Old Dominion Chrysanthemum  
Society will present tutorials, answer  
questions, and discuss the October  
National Show in Fair Lakes (see last  
item in Liaison Report). Free and open  
to the public. For questions, call Jim  
Dunne at 703-560-8776.

Friday, June 19, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Arlington National Cemetery (ANC)

Walking Tour, National Pollinator Week

In this tour join Arlington's  
horticulturist Kelly Wilson as you learn  
about the ways Arlington is embracing  
the value of pollinators with some of its  
sustainable landscapes around the  
cemetery. Free, but you must register in  
advance at

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/  
arlington-national-cemetery-  
walking-tour-pollinator-](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/arlington-national-cemetery-walking-tour-pollinator-)

[landscaping-techniques-tickets-16534212274](#)

**Friday-Sunday, June 26-28**

**The National Capital Daylily Club**

**Regional Convention, Largo, MD.**

There will be a bus tour of four gardens, a raffle, auctions of daylilies, and two speakers. For more information and to register, visit [www.daylilyclub.org](http://www.daylilyclub.org) or contact Kathleen Schloeder

**Looking Ahead at Fall 2015**

**Thursday- Saturday, September 24-26**

**NCA Gardening Studies School, Course 3, of Series IX,**

**Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA.**

Curriculum will include pruning techniques, growing outdoor flowers, teaching tour of a botanical garden, classifying plants, and factors that influence plant growth. A registration form and fee schedule will be available on the NCA website soon. For questions, please contact Joyce Skoglund

**Friday, September 18**

**District III Fall Meeting, Meadowlark Gardens, Vienna, VA**

**All members are invited. Save the date.**

**Monday, October 5**

**NCAGC General Meeting, District IV hosts. All members are invited. Save the date.**

**Friday-Sunday, October 23-25**

**National Chrysanthemum (NCAGC affiliate) Society Show, Hyatt Fairfax at Fair Lakes, Fairfax, VA. Free and open to the public 1:00-5:00 p.m. Saturday October 24 and 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on Sunday October 25. Horticulture and Design Division entries will be accepted on Friday October 23. To secure a design spot, contact Dorrie McDonald at 301-855-7448 as soon as possible. The design schedule will be available at [www.ocdsmums.org](http://www.ocdsmums.org) and [www.mums.org](http://www.mums.org).**

**HORTICULTURE**

**Mahonia: an American and Asian Native**

**Christine Wegman**

As some of you know, my husband and I are building a holiday/summer home north of Charlottesville, VA in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The site we have chosen gets ferocious winter winds and plays host to herds of deer. To landscape around the house, I have been looking for plants that are

drought, sun and wind tolerant, as well as deer resistant. That's a tall order, and I have sadly rejected one after another of my favorite plants. But not the leatherleaf mahonia; this is one tough plant that is also a particular favorite of mine. A few years ago I cut one of my mahonia down to the ground thinking that the space was too crowded for everything I had stuffed in. The plant obligingly disappeared for a season, but the next spring it shot up to six feet with multiple stems and never looked better. Needless to say, I have left it where it is partly because I couldn't figure out how to remove it, but mostly because I really do like it.

There are two types of mahonia that are common in the nursery trade: leatherleaf mahonia (*mahonia beaeii*) from East Asia and Oregon grape holly (*mahonia aquifolium*) from the US Pacific Northwest.

The most common mahonia is the Asian variety, pictured here in flower and with its blue fruit. Leatherleaf mahonia has eye-catching light yellow flowers in late winter that are followed by long-lasting blue fruit in spring. Although it will tolerate almost any conditions, it does prefer partial shade, shelter from harsh winds, and fertile

acidic soil. It is very upright growing, but will form multiple branches if encouraged by pruning, which should be done after the fruit fades. It makes a very attractive foil to the rounded shape of boxwood, azaleas, or low hollies. I particularly like it with Vardar Valley boxwood, with its dark bluish green foliage. Do not plant it too close to a path because a brush with its spiny leaves can be painful.



There is another Asian mahonia that one sees often in nurseries, marketed as 'Soft Caress' mahonia. When this first came out, I was mad to have one, but alas, like hundreds of other folk in this area I lost it to one of our harsh winters. It is beautiful and has lovely spineless leaves, but if you try it you should put it in a very sheltered spot.





Our Pacific Northwest native mahonia shares many of its Asian cousin's characteristics, such as lovely yellow blooms and beautiful blue fruit, and likes the same growing conditions. It does not have the same strong upright form as the Asian mahonia and can look ragged in an exposed location. Unlike the Asian variety, Oregon grape holly has beautiful, shiny, light green and bronze new foliage, pictured here, and turns a brownish mahogany color in winter. Given a sheltered spot, it is a very handsome plant.



Oregon grape holly has a low growing, suckering form, pictured here, that tops out at about 18 inches. The suckering habit may need a bit of controlling, but it makes a good looking, unusual low

shrub, that looks striking underneath a tree, or in front of taller shrubs.



## LADEW TOPIARY GARDENS

Kate Abrahams



Rock Spring Garden Club is a member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., the National Garden Clubs, Inc and Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc



