



the newsletter of the Rock Spring Garden Club, Arlington, Virginia [www.rockspringgardenclub.com](http://www.rockspringgardenclub.com)

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#### OFFICERS

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Connie Richards

##### VICE-PRESIDENT

Kate Abrahams

##### SECRETARY

Jenny Sullivan

##### TREASURER

Ann Lunson

##### GARDENZETTE

##### EDITOR

Joan Hession

## JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL RSGC HOLIDAY TEA THURSDAY DECEMBER 8, 2016 FROM 2-4 PM

at the home of Mary Lunger.

Our theme this year is

### **WINTER WONDERLAND**

with all the floral designs in green, white, silver, and gold.



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Come and enjoy refreshments, beautiful floral designs in a beautiful setting, and a celebration of the season.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Connie Richards*

Wow! I know this isn't a very presidential way to begin this, but with the activities of the past month and what is coming up in December, I have to say it. Our meeting in November was so amazing--we had a wonderful speaker, the creative panel designs were beautiful, and the horticulture showed off the gardening talents of our members. Add to that the camaraderie of the people there and lunch with music. No wonder we are getting new members! The guest I invited couldn't believe how accomplished we are and I think that he will join the club. Next, we had the tremendous effort by 34 of our members to make 72 pumpkin floral designs. They were so beautiful many people purchased several! Now I'm looking forward to our Holiday Tea, the final meeting of 2016 and hope to see all of you there!

### TREASURER'S REPORT NOVEMBER 1–30, 2016

*Ann Lunson*

BEG BAL NOV. 1, 2016	\$18,374.80
Total Receipts	2,799.75
Total Disbursements	<u>(1,010.62)</u>
CLOS BAL NOV. 30, 2016	\$20,163.93

### BOARD MEETING

Thursday, January 5 10:00 AM  
Kate Abrahams

## FLORAL DESIGN WORKSHOP

*Kate Abrahams*

Charlotte Benjamin ran a creative panel floral design workshop on Tuesday, November 15 for 16 club members. She shared photos of sample designs in some of her resource books and worked with her own design to demonstrate the important principles.



Anita Brown, Thea McGinnis and Julie Wadsworth also shared their preliminary design ideas with the group. Charlotte emphasized that the panel must be the focus of the design and not a backdrop to the plant material. Any flowers or greens must incorporate the panel design and be minimal. Panels can be twisted or bent and open spaces in the panel make it easier to make the design flow into and out of the panel.



Thank you Charlotte for answering many questions and encouraging us to try a new design!



## GARDEN THERAPY

Mary Kudless

We kicked off the year with stories, vegetables, music, floral designs and snacks at Glebe Elementary on November 16. This year, RSGC has the privilege of working with Jeanne Terrill and her pre-k class of 10 children who range in age from three to four years.



On our first visit, the children were very enthusiastic and heard a wonderful story, prepared and read by Mary Cottrell on the harvest and Native American Indians and their use of corn, beans and squash. Mary brought beautifully prepared fresh examples for each child. Many of the students later incorporated the vegetables into their floral designs or carried them home in the beautiful baskets that Mary donated to our project.



Margi followed the story with a song of Thanksgiving on her autoharp. The children were mesmerized by the instrument and slowly gave up their natural reticence and volunteered what they are thankful for which included parents and siblings and pets! They heard the lovely sounds of the instrument and Margie's voice and crowded around her.

Dorinda led the floral design portion of our project, giving some instruction prior to assembly and then we all assisted the children with placing the greens, flowers and veggies into the baskets. The result was beautiful. Dorinda added a big surprise at the end and gave each child a beautiful turkey feather from her family's farm in Carthage, MS. Many of these went into the floral designs or were a lovely talisman of a special afternoon.



## MINIATURE CONIFERS FOR THE HOME GARDEN

John Auditore



Miniature conifers have been gaining popularity in many Arlington gardens because these take up little space and require little to no maintenance. They all require well-drained soil. While most specimens require full sun many do well in part-shade. These plants are perfect in the following settings.

- Narrow borders
- Foundation plantings
- Rock gardens
- Containers and troughs

The American Conifer Society classifies miniature conifers that grow less than three inches annually. These may eventually get 2-3 feet.

Dwarf conifers grow 3 to 6 inches a year and may get to heights of 3 to 6 feet. Many are appropriate for a small garden. There are thousands of registered varieties. It can be so hard to choose which ones you want.

With small conifers one can enjoy many varieties that come in many shapes, colors and textures. To any garden these beauties add unique dimensions. Having a wide array of small conifers can provide more interest than having a few larger specimens.

Because some dwarf and miniature conifers stay small these do not become over grown. An added bonus is that they typically do not require trimming. Because these are evergreen they look great all year. During the winter they provide interest in an otherwise sparse garden.

The conifers work well with other plants. These compliment small annuals, perennials and other small shrubs. Many gardeners in Arlington have small yards and do not have adequate space to grow many large conifer specimens. These little plants grow slow and stay manageable.

There is an increasing interest for these little treasures among bonsai enthusiasts, rock garden, containers and of course the fairy garden folk (I know that you are out there.) These plants come in different colors and most keep their needles year round and are very easy to grow.

Miniature Conifers have always fascinated me. In nature these plants are actually what is known as 'witch's brooms'. These genetic abnormalities are found growing on forest trees and have little to no chance of survival without human intervention. A clipping off a broom can be grafted onto a little seedling of that particular species. If the result is a plant uniquely different than anything else available, it can be named and registered with the American Conifer Society. Then new cultivars can be propagated at nurseries via grafting to duplicate and sold to others.

Here are some of my favorites that I recommend.





*Abies koreana 'Icebreaker'*

This is a true miniature fir. The unusual silver-foliage dwarf conifer is quite unique. With a little patience it will become a treasured heirloom. Icebreaker is a sport of the larger *Horstmann's Silberlocke* and was selected by Jorge Kohout for its compact growth and display of the silver undersides of its leaves. A 10-year old specimen will be only ten inches wide. It is unusual and rare. I recommend it for a container and with our hot summer sun I find it needs a little afternoon shade.



*Abies procera 'Blaue Hexe'*

Blaue Hexe is German for "blue witch." This is a dwarf form of the blue Noble Fir. I recommend the 'glauca' or 'glauca prostata' *Abies procera*s. This is an excellent foliage conifer, it only grows 1 in. per year. Over time it will become two feet tall. The foliage is a beautiful soft blue. It tends to grow horizontally and will form a blue carpet.

It is a great choice for the rock garden or along a stone wall. It will not crowd out other plants.



*Cedrus Atlantica 'Saphire Nymph'*

This is a miniature mounding form of the Atlantic Cedar. It is an elegant and unusual plant. 'Saphire Nymph' will grow in layers over itself. The new foliage is a very light blue, almost white color. The older foliage is light green. This juxtaposition of colors provides a great deal of interest in a small space. It grows wider than it does tall.

*Cedrus libani 'Hedgehog'*

This is one of the smallest of the Lebanon Cedars. It is one of my all-time favorites. The *Cedrus libani* is a miniature and can look like a little hedgehog in the garden. It will only grow about one inch per year. The foliage is a blue-green.

*Cedrus deodara 'Pygmaea'*

This is another great miniature. This *Cedrus deodara* has short blue-green needles and grows only one-half inch per year. 'Pygmaea' contrasts nicely with dark green conifers. It needs a little afternoon shade and good air circulation.

*Chamaecyparis obtusa - Hinoki Cypress*

Hinoki cypress are widely available. There are many slow growing, miniature-to-dwarf sized cultivars in this species that are easy to grow. Hinoki cypresses have few pests or diseases. These are quite attractive in many landscapes. Some of these conifers are propagated by cuttings



and grow tight to the ground while others are grafted to make "little trees".



*Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Hage'*

First introduced in 1928, this miniature form of the Japanese Hinoki Cypress is a real gem. I have a specimen in a trough container. The scallop-shaped foliage is a rich green and catches the light beautifully. It is very slow-growing and makes an excellent choice for the rock garden or in a mixed container.

*Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Little Markey'*

This is a dwarf, yellow, columnar variety of Japanese Hinoki Cypress. It sports leaves that are congested and yellow. The plant has a very narrow habit and grows 2-3 inches a year. It is a great choice for troughs and small gardens. 'Little Markey' offers a vertical element and contrasts well with globe shaped cultivars.



*Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Snow'*

Snow is a great selection for part-shade areas. It is a very cool plant that forms a dwarf round globe. Because it has white foliage it has the snow moniker. This cultivar is still considered a miniature, but is at the larger end of scale. Because of this provide it a bit more space than most miniatures. 'Iceburg', a sport of 'Snow', and will stay quite white even in full sun. It goes well in front of azaleas and rhododendrons.

*Cryptomeria japonica 'Tenzan'*

Growing about three inches a year this lovely green cryptomeria is a super slow grower. It has an irregular, broad pyramid shape. Over time 'Tenzan' grows at an angle as if it has been wind-swept. For an Asian garden it is perfect. I have a ten-year-old specimen that commands attention in my rock garden. It is definitely in the miniature category and resembles a bonsai specimen. 'Tenzan' is widely available. For best results plant this conifer in full sun with well-draining soil. It will need water during droughts.

*Cryptomeria japonica 'Nana Albospica'*

'Nana Albospica' is a selection for part-shade. It is a widely available plant that is a miniature/dwarf variegated form of Japanese Cedars. The plant grows in a conical, upright form. The juvenile foliage is entirely white. It may grow faster than other similar varieties and can take a little more sun. In ten years 'Nana Albospica' will grow three feet tall and two feet wide.

*Picea abies 'Little Gem'*

This is a dwarf form of Norway Spruce with needles that are very small and bright green in color. This cultivar only grows about 1-2 inches a year and forms a tight round bun. These are perfect for containers and a great variety for close-up interest.



*Picea glauca* 'Zuckerhut'

'Zuckerhut' is the smallest Alberta Spruce. Growing very slowly to one foot in ten years, it forms a little conical tree and is very cute. You want to make sure it is not crowded by nearby plants and receives full sun. I once saw a little forest of these planted in a miniature conifer garden. It is a perfect choice for a trough. You will treasure this little tree that comes from Germany, not Alberta, Canada.

*Picea glauca* 'Blue Planet'

This is a beautiful powder blue spruce that slowly develops into a miniature little globe. Blue Planet will never outgrow its place in your garden and it has the smallest needles of any *Picea glauca* cultivar. This is very hardy and easy to grow. In the coldest spots it will perform well. 'Blue Planet' likes full sun and very well-draining soil.

*Thuja plicata* 'Whipcord'

Whipcord gets its name because it looks like lots of small whipcords strewn together. It has arching dark green lacey whip-like branchlets and grows into a rounded dwarf shape. This is an eastern arborvitae and is native to eastern North America. 'Whipcord' like most thujas is easy to

grow. Because of its unusual habit it is an attention grabber. For best results plant it in full sun in tall containers then place it in your garden.

*Tsuga Canadensis* 'Moonfrost'

Dwarf varieties of the eastern hemlock, such as the *Tsuga Canadensis* make interesting specimens. These may be used in somewhat shadier areas. Its new growth is white and is said to resemble the glow of frost on a moonlit night. In winter its needles take on a pink hue. 'Moonfrost' grows best with morning sun and afternoon shade.

Good companions for the conifers I recommend include dwarf varieties of spirea, cotoneaster and dwarf ginkgo. They also go well with low growing perennials and sedums.

Many conifers are available at local nurseries. Susanna Farm in Boydsville, Maryland has a great array available. It can be worth a trip just to see the lovely, rural setting in Northern Montgomery County.

For growers selling online I recommend looking at Forest Farm and Conifer Kingdom in Oregon plus Broken Arrow Nursey in Connecticut.

With all the wonderful dwarf and miniature conifer options I could go on and on. Currently my garden features over forty dwarf and miniature conifers. I have found the plants addictive and exciting.

## WAYS AND MEANS

*Sherri Foster*

Many thanks to RSGC members for making November another banner month for W&M - we sold almost \$800 worth of merchandise! And the good news is we are getting more and better donations! Please feel free to call Diane Pollack or Sherry Foster for a donation pick up or you can drop off your donations at our houses. We would also like to thank our volunteer bakers who



brought our total sales up. Julie is thinking of new craft items for the January meeting. Also, if you have any requests for Tools of the Trade please let Julie know!

## CELERY SOUP

*Sheila Moore*

- 2 Tbs. butter
- 1 and 1/2 lbs. celery, diced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 baking potato, peeled and cut into 1/2 cubes
- Coarse salt
- 1 to 2 Tbs. lemon juice

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan. Add celery, potato and onion to pot and sauté until vegetables begin to soften. (8 to 10 minutes)
2. Add 6 cups chicken stock to pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes until vegetables are soft.
3. Purée the soup in batches until quite smooth. I used an immersion blender but the Cuisinart will do it too. Return purée to pan and add lemon juice.

I added some Half and Half before serving but this was because I did not think we had enough for the crowd there today. The soup does not need the Half and Half. Of course, calories almost always make things just a bit better but it is up to you. Bon Appetit!

## LIASION REPORT

*Anne Collins*

### NCAGC/VFGC EVENTS

#### **District III Bus Trip - Richmond Virginia**

When Wed, December 7, 10:00am – 9:30pm

Description Maymont Mansion and Lewis Ginter Gardens

<http://www.ncagardenclubs.org/calendar.html>

### PROGRAMS/LECTURES/EVENTS

#### US BOTANICAL GARDENS

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.

Programs through the month, including many holiday programs

Space is limited – seating first come first seated

See- <https://www.usbg.gov/> for more information

#### NATIONAL ARBORETUM

##### **Azalea Work Day**

When Sat, December 3, 10am – 3pm

Where United States National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002, USA ([map](#))

Description Sometimes we have to cancel. I don't like to do this, but in the event of wet or drizzly weather or if you are at all wondering, please call 202-245-4523 before 8:30am on the morning of our work day before leaving your house – to check if I have had to cancel. See- [www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov) for more information

#### HILLWOOD ESTATE MUSEUM AND GARDEN

Programs through the month

You all saw Ann Stevens Kelly's email about tours through the house and gardens

See-

<http://www.hillwoodmuseum.org/whats/events-and-programs/garden-events>

For more information

#### MERRIFIELD GARDEN CENTER

Dec 3-10am

Make your own Christmas decorations at Merrifield and Gainesville locations

See-

<https://www.merrifieldgardencenter.com/events/> for more information

#### MEADOWLARK BOTANICAL GARDENS

November 18- January 9 5:30-10pm

Winter Walk of Lights

Various programs throughout the month

See-

<https://www.novaparks.com/parks/meadowlark-botanical-gardens/events> for more information

#### BULL RUN REGIONAL PARK

November 23- January 8- 5:30-9pm (10 on weekends)



### Festival of Lights

See-<https://www.novaparks.com/events/bull-run-festival-of-lights> for more information

Tickets can be purchased in advance for both events

### GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

December 4 12-4pm

Gardener's Open House- Festive decorations, refreshments

Registration required

See-

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring/ed-adult.htm> for more information

### STATE ARBORETUM OF VIRGINIA- BLANDY FARM

December 3 and 4 at 9:30 and 1:30 both days

Holiday Workshop

Registration required

See-

[http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/blandy\\_web/all\\_blandy/2016FallPrograms-COMBINED.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/blandy_web/all_blandy/2016FallPrograms-COMBINED.pdf) for more information

### LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDENS

Through January 9 (closed 12/24/25) 5-10pm

Dominion GardenFest Lights Illumination

See- <http://www.lewisginter.org/event/dominion-gardenfest-of-lights/2016-11-25/>

for more information

### SHAKESPEARE THEATER COMPANY

Through December 31

In conjunction with the production of The Secret Garden STC is sponsoring

several garden related events

See- <http://www.shakespearetheatre.org/secret-gardens/> for more information

### LONG BRANCH NATURE CENTER

Sunday December 4 1-4pm

Holiday Wreath Workshop

Registration Require- \$30

See- <http://arlingtonparks.us/snag/#p=8>

For more information

## PHOTO GALLERY

Kate Abrahams shared the floral designs from the Morning of Design:



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## November Meeting:

### New Member Marisol Aldahondo with Dorinda Burroughs



### Elders Isaac Meldrum and Ethan Jones



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## November's Floral Design: creative panel design



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## November Horticulture



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