



the newsletter of the Rock Spring Garden Club, Arlington, Virginia www.rockspringgardenclub.com

Volume 55, Number 7

March 2017

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RSGC GENERAL MEETING

MARCH 16TH 10:00 am

LITTLE FALLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BASICS OF A CREATIVE DINING ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Babs McClendon will demonstrate the Basics of a Creative Dining Room Arrangement. Her presentation will include: container choice, selection of plant material, and an introduction to many available creative materials to add 'pizazz' to your designs.

Babs is both an Accredited Flower Show Judge, and an Accredited Landscape Design Council Judge.

She was raised by lifelong gardeners. She caught the gardening bug early in life. She has had careers in teaching, selling computers, and running her own Interior Design firm. In 1992 she moved to Mount Vernon where she had her first opportunity to join a garden club. Since she "jumped into the World of garden clubbing" she has met and befriended people all over the USA. She claims to have grown in her knowledge of gardening, and through 'trial-by-error' learned the Art of Flower Arranging. She loves sharing the knowledge she has gained with others. Her love for floral arranging has left her with less time to garden. Her garden has become her palette for her floral arrangements. She is involved with the floral art of Ikebana, and is currently taking lessons in the Sogetsu School.

Babs has served on many garden related boards and held many positions. Some of these include: Riverwood Garden Club, Yacht Haven Garden Club, District II Board, National Capital Area Garden Club Board, Central Atlantic Region Board, and National Garden Club Board of Directors.

Jane Robinson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Connie Richards



What is spring? This question was posed by a climate scientist but is also on the minds of many of us with the unseasonably warm weather recently. Is it a date or based on the happenings around us?

It's hard not to enjoy the pleasant days and trees, shrubs and daffodils in bloom. Still I wonder about the effect this may have on pollinators. Our new club project is to help support pollinators. This is the time of year many of us are planning our gardens so I hope that our members will select some native plants that help attract and nourish bees, butterflies and other helpful insects. Our Conservation Committee will be creating a Wish list for plants to add to the beds at Rock Spring Park so people can donate things that they are dividing or purchase extras as they shop for their own yards. Please plan to attend our meeting in March to find out more about this.

TREASURER'S REPORT FEBRUARY 1-28, 2017

Ann Lunson

BEG BAL FEB 1, 2017	\$19,732.45
Total Receipts	1,413.00
Total Disbursements	(726.90)
CLOS BAL FEB 28, 2017	\$20,418.55

BOARD MEETING

Mary Lunger

We will be meeting at Margi Melnick's home on April 6.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Margi Melnick

Our election will take place at the March RSGC general meeting. The Nominating Committee has nominated:

President:	Kate Abrahams
Vice President:	Dianne Simmons
Secretary:	Jenny Sullivan
Treasurer:	Jo Ella Samp

There will be an opportunity for nominations to be placed from the floor. Be sure to get permission from the nominee before making a nomination.

SHOW TUBULAR DESIGN

Anita Brown

Our design this month is a creative design that emphasizes a tubular or circular (round) component that is used to create the dominant part of the design. However, more than one round component or tube may be used. Any number of materials, such as PVC, plastic, paper, or round plant stems such as bamboo, could be used to express the dominance.

This is an easy design to complete and allows the designer to be very creative. If you have not yet submitted your two required designs for this year, I urge you to try this one.

NOTE: I am advised that not everyone who made pumpkins for our sale this fall received credit for a design. Margy Schultz, a member of the Show Committee, keeps the design records, and I suggest that you send her an email letting her know how many pumpkin designs you did. Her email address is: rmshultz@aol.com.



YEARBOOK UPDATE

Kate Abrahams

Please add new member information to your yearbook:

Marion Hart

APRIL FIELD TRIP

Hillwood Museum and Garden

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Joan Asboth

The annual RSGC Field Trip will be to Marjorie Merriweather Post's Hillwood estate in NW Washington. It promises to be a full day of interesting activities to include docent-led tours of the gardens and mansion, lunch with three menu choices, and ample time to view the new and unique exhibit, "Friends and Fashion—An American Diplomat in 1820's Russia." The gardens promise spring splendor—azaleas, rhododendrons and seasonal displays of tulips, daffodils, and pansies – and perhaps even roses! For shoppers, the museum shop is a gem with its selection of tasteful and unique items. Although some of us have visited Hillwood, there are always new fascinating things to learn--new exhibits, beautiful floral arrangements, the orchids, the Japanese-style garden, and other revelations with the added enjoyment of being with RSGC friends.

We look forward to another interesting and informative RSGC annual excursion. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the March meeting. Please mark your calendars and plan on participating in this Spring-time excursion. We will car pool—the entrance fee, tours and lunch currently would run about \$38 per person. Those over 65 will qualify for the senior rate and we will also use donated passes, thus lowering the overall individual cost (to be determined.)

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Lynda Martin

On Feb. 28th, Marilyn Dougherty and Lynda Martin presented a bulb project at Tuckahoe School. Other committee members participating were Carolyn Barone, Ann Duffey, Anne Larsen and Helen Mc Mahon.

The second graders were excited to learn about the different types of bulbs and their flowers. We showed pictures of bulbs from very small ones like grape hyacinths to large bulbs like amaryllis. The children listened to a story called "That's Not a Daffodil" by Elizabeth Honey and it explained how a daffodil grows. Carolyn Barone read a poem called "Daffodils".

We then planted narcissus bulbs in cups of gravel. The children decorated the cups with spring stickers and planted their bulb to take home. They were sent instructions on how to care for the bulb, to keep it watered, and to place it in a sunny window. They will be watching for green shoots to appear and fragrant white flowers.

We will also be looking for volunteers for our May 12 Mothers' Day project and will send sign-up sheets for volunteers and donations around at the March meeting.

HORTICULTURE GARDENING IN POTS

Ann Duffey

This past summer, with no thanks to the proliferation of bunny rabbits in my neighborhood, I became a devotee of container gardening. The rabbits were feasting daily on every tender green shoot that dared to appear in my garden. By planting in containers above the rabbits reach, I was able to enjoy some of my favorite flowers and herbs. Only a few perennials escaped being devoured by the rabbits.

You do not need to be a full-time gardener to have a range of plants to grace your outdoor surroundings. Container gardening expands the possibilities for growing a myriad selection of plant material. Often plants in pots are utilitarian - a visual or physical barrier, even a food garden. You can create a garden in the air by hanging containers from walls, fences, or trees or by training flowering vines up a trellis. I've grown mint, which is very invasive, in a pot for many years. It's a perennial which comes back every spring. My parsley has been moved to a pot out of harm's way. Some tomatoes have been specially bred to be grown in pots. Keep them watered and fed with a liquid fertilizer.

The types of containers that can be used are endless: traditional terracotta pots, baskets, painted tin ware, a child's wheelbarrow, an old trug. Let your imagination run wild. Almost anything that holds soil and water can be used. Seek out the unusual. Sometimes the most unlikely objects make exciting plant containers. Containers can be used as screens. A large pot filled with an assortment of plants can hide a drainage pipe or an unsightly bare spot. I've had success growing a cyclamen in a pot with a trellis placed in a spot that needed color.

Containers make gardening flexible. You can change the seasons in your garden by rotating the plants in your containers. In the fall plant bulbs along with winter hardy pansies to welcome spring. When the bulbs have faded, replace them with the colorful annuals of summer. Geraniums add color until the first frost and can even be brought inside to a sunny window to overwinter. Chrysanthemums provide a riot of color in autumn. Ornamental "flowering" cabbages, which thrive in cold weather, are an easy solution for the winter months. Miniature boxwood, pines, spruces and junipers do well in larger pots for year round interest. Shady spots are perfect for colorful caladiums and other shade tolerant plants to enliven the area. Hardy ferns in pots can be cut back in late autumn and can be enjoyed for many years. An odd number of pots creates a pleasing grouping. Differing the elevation of the

pots is eye-catching. I have used slightly cracked pots turned upside down as a base for a pot full of flowers or herbs.

There are several points to consider when selecting a container. They fall into two categories: porous and nonporous. Porous containers are those made of materials that water and air penetrate, such as unglazed clay pots, pressed pulp, untreated wood, and moss-lined baskets. Non-porous containers such as plastic, metal, or glazed pots prevent air and moisture from penetrating. Soil in porous containers dries out more quickly so you'll need to water more frequently. To prevent roots in non-porous containers from becoming water logged, you need to have good drainage and soil aeration. The best solution is a hole in the bottom to allow excess water to drain.

Before you plant in a previously used pot take time to scrub it well with hot water and a brush to eliminate any diseases from previous plants and soil. If your container is porous, soak it in water before you plant so it won't absorb moisture from the potting mix. Cover the drainage holes with small stones, fine-mesh screen, landscape fabric, or even a coffee filter to minimize soil filtering through. For containers without drainage holes, prevent soil from souring by spreading a layer of coarse sand mixed with gardening charcoal (not barbecue charcoal.) Non-porous pots dry out more slowly than porous ones. For good root growth, plant in a soilless mixture using one-half peat moss with a quarter each of perlite and vermiculite, applying a soluble fertilizer every two weeks. Heavy feeders and mixed containers need a slow-release fertilizer, such as Osmocote, to give them an extra boost. Avoid ground soil that is too densely packed. It turns rock hard, drains poorly, and does not hold enough oxygen for container bound plant roots. There is no one potting mix that is perfect for all plants. Premixed soil mixes at any garden center tend to have the base ingredients. Remember to moisten the soil before planting. Choose plants with compatible light and water requirements for your pots.

When planting annuals, their roots are often very compacted. Loosen the roots a bit before transplanting and remember to always water your plants before potting them. Otherwise, when you water the pot the water will just roll around the dry root ball and never wet it. Not only will this make removal from the nursery pack easier but the root ball won't break apart.

The most critical factor in container gardening is watering. Rain will provide some moisture but even a half-day soaking does not thoroughly saturate a container. Plants will require more frequent watering as they grow. Add a teaspoon of water-absorbing polymers (hydrogels) to the planting mix in the pot. These white crystal-like nuggets become transparent and gelatinous when soaked in water and act like reservoirs to deliver water to the plant roots as needed.

Always choose a container that will be roomy enough for fully grown plants. Avoid squeezing a plant into tight quarters. Don't fill the pot up to the rim with growing mix. You need to allow space for the water to infiltrate the whole soil mass. A perennial that will grow in the same container for several years requires a larger pot to begin with.

Thriller, filler, spiller is a phrase often used when thinking about the plants to go into a pot. The thriller is a tall, eye-catching plant for the center of the pot such as foxtail asparagus fern or *Dracaena*. The filler is the color mainstay such as New Guinea impatiens or geraniums. The spiller trails over the edge of the pot, giving the illusion of abundance. Creeping Jenny, sweet potato vine or variegated English ivy make good spillers.

Almost any plant that appeals to you will adapt to container living, at least for a time. Look for plants with special appeal - interesting foliage or lovely color. If a plant intrigues you, give it a try. The more the merrier. Plant a beautiful bouquet to enjoy throughout the growing season. With containers, the opportunity to garden reaches everyone.

WAYS AND MEANS

Sherry Foster

Many thanks as always for your donations to and your purchases from the ways and means table. Our inventory is down now and we are now ready to receive more of your donations. Baked goods always sell well, sooooo get out those cookie sheets!

For our May 2017 meeting we'd like to focus on plants. There is no meeting in April so plan now which of your plants need to be separated or divided or moved and bring some in to sell at our May Ways and Means table!

CONSERVATION MONARCH WAY STATION

Jo Ella Samp

This year the conservation committee is planning to convert a portion of the Rock Spring Garden to a Pollinator garden for bees and butterflies especially Monarch butterflies.

Monarchs exclusively rely on Milkweed as their host plant and a certified Monarch Way station must have a minimum of 10 milkweed plants, made up of at least two different varieties. In the fall five common milkweed plants were planted in the garden. This spring we hope to add more milkweed plants and other nectar plants. WE are asking members who might have appropriate varieties to donate them to the garden. We would even come to your garden in the spring and divide the plants for you if you have a variety that is needed.

Below is a list of perennial plants that are recommended for the Monarch Way station:

Nectar Plants - Perennials

Bee Balm (*Monarda* spp.)

Blazingstar/Gayfeather (*Liatris* spp.)

Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia* spp.)

Caryopteris (*Caryopteris* spp.)

Catmint/Catnip (*Nepeta* spp.)

Coreopsis (*Coreopsis* spp.)

Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.)

Hollyhock (*Alcea* spp.)
 Ironweed (*Vernonia* spp.)
 Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*)
 Mallow (*Malva* spp.)
 New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)
 Phlox (*Phlox* spp.)
 Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
 Sedum (*Sedum spectabile*)
 Senna/Cassia (*Senna* spp.)
 Violet (*Viola* spp.)
 Vitex (*Vitex* spp.)

The Conservation committee and any other member volunteers are welcome to come work in the garden to help with the conversion to a pollinator garden. We will have weekly gardening parties hopefully on Wednesday mornings in April and May to establish the new garden. If you are interested in helping contact me.

GARDEN THERAPY

Susan Scotti

The February program for the pre-school class at Glebe Elementary was about birds and feeding them in the winter. The 10 children sat in a semicircle as Connie Richards used the book, "About Birds: A Guide for Children by Cathryn Sill", and engaged them with questions, facts and pictures. They were excited to answer the questions "how do birds fly?", as they all flapped their arms, and "what do they eat?" and "what do they eat with?" Participation was key to keeping their attention, as they are so young. They also enjoy music and singing.



Kari Rush led them in a song about feeding birds "in the wintertime when the days are dark and cold and food is hard to find" while she played the tune on a keyboard. She showed them pictures of birds commonly seen in yards here, and pointed out that one frequently seen is our state bird, the cardinal.

They were ready and anxious to move to the tables to make bird feeders. It was fun and easy (and messy) rolling the prepared pinecones in black oil sunflower seeds. After clearing the tables, they were each given a cutout of a cardinal, a wing and a googly eye to put all together with glue on construction paper. They added stickers of the other birds we had talked about, making the picture a reminder of what to look for at home.

The snack was "bird nests" filled with blueberries. They looked real but were made from shredded wheat, coconut, a little brown sugar and butter baked in cupcake liners. Along with the nests were small heart shaped pieces of watermelon.

This was a busy schedule, but the children seemed to enjoy it all. They especially liked the bird feeders and getting to take them home.

I recommend volunteering to assist one time, if just to appreciate the availability of the class and the special teacher this school and our county provides.

AUTUMN VEGETABLE SOUP

Louise Rhoads

(6 servings; makes 8 to 9 cups)

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 medium carrots, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups peeled, cubed (1/2-inch) butternut squash
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- Pinch cayenne pepper, plus more as needed
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme

- 4 cups no-salt-added chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 14 or 15 ounces canned, no-salt-added diced tomatoes, with their juices
- 2 cups lightly packed shredded kale leaves

Heat the oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and carrot, stirring to coat; cook until they begin to soften, stirring occasionally, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute.

Stir in the butternut squash, allspice, salt and cayenne pepper, then add the thyme, broth and the tomatoes with their juices. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low; cover and cook for 10 minutes.

Uncover and stir in the kale; cook for 10 minutes or until the squash is tender and the kale has wilted.

Discard the thyme sprigs before serving. Taste, and adjust the seasoning as needed.

ALMOND COOKIES

Jody Goulden

- 3/4 cup vegetable shortening
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1/2 cup finely ground almonds (Food processor blade chops whole almonds well)
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- Confectioners' sugar, about 1/2 -1 cup

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Cream the shortening, butter and 1/2 cup sugar well.

Blend in both extracts and nuts.

Combine salt with flour and add to the butter mixture.

Roll into small balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet (I used parchment paper on top of cookie sheet).

Bake for 20-25 minutes until medium brown on bottom. Tops will be a lighter color. When cookies have cooled, roll them in confectioners' sugar. Note: walnuts can be substituted for almonds.

RATATOUILLE NICOISE

(traditional dish of the French Riviera)

Barry Wood

Ingredients:

- One large onion (or two small ones), diced
- One eggplant (do not skin), diced
- Three bell peppers, diced
- Two zucchini, diced
- Optional: Beans and any other vegetables you want to use up
- One small can of tomato paste
- Two teaspoons each of basil, oregano, thyme, oregano and sage; or substitute an Italian seasoning mix
- One to two teaspoons cumin
- One teaspoon black pepper
- Half a teaspoon cayenne pepper (more or less depending on your tolerance for spiciness)
- Optional additions: rosemary, marjoram, garlic salt
- One can diced tomatoes
- One can garbanzo beans

Directions:

Starting with the onions, sauté the first group of vegetables over medium heat in enough olive oil to avoid burning. (The eggplant especially takes a LOT of olive oil.) You can add the liquid from the can of garbanzo beans and water as needed to avoid scorching. When the onion turns transparent, transfer the mixture to a stew pot. Dilute the tomato paste two or three to one with water or chicken stock, and add it to the stew. Add the herbs and spices. Stir well over low heat.

You can add chicken, beef, lamb or any other meat at this stage, or leave it as a vegetarian dish.

Add the diced tomatoes and garbanzo beans at the end (say five minutes before serving). Salt to taste.

Ratatouille is traditionally served with couscous, but bulgar wheat or rice work just as well.

LIASION REPORT

Anne Collins

NCAGC/VFGC

National Garden Clubs/South Atlantic Region Convention

March 26-28

Greenbrier Hotel, White Sulphur Springs, WV

Registration required

<http://www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org/convention/>

NCAGC District III Fri, March 17, 10am – 12pm

March 17

Meadowlark Gardens Court, Meadowlark

Gardens Ct, Vienna, VA 22182, USA

National Capitol Area Garden Clubs (NCGC)

District III June bus tour

June 8th, 2017

Barnes Home & Arboretum and Chanticleer Botanical Gardens in PA.

Questions: Nancy Moats, smoats5555@aol.com

703.434.1147

VFGC- Looking ahead

April 2-4 VFGC Convention, Hotel Roanoke and Convention Center, Roanoke, VA

See for more information-

http://www.viriniagardenclubs.org/VFGC/VFGC_Convention.html

Piedmont District Meeting, Doubletree Hotel, Midlothian

March 13 See for more information –

<http://www.piedmontdistrictvfgc.org/piedmont-district.html>

Landscape Design School, Course I

April 11-12

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.

See for more information

http://www.viriniagardenclubs.org/VFGC/Landscape_Design_School.html

PROGRAMS/LECTURES/EVENTS

PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW

March 11-19 See for more information-

<https://theflowershow.com/>

Food & Flowers

April 12 12 pm to 2 pm

A demonstration using vegetables and fruits as containers, a component in flower designs and creating beautiful food platters with vegetables, fruits and flowers. Many of these designs and ideas will be used to create a buffet display of which you will sample. (Light lunch included)

Registration is required. Fee: \$70

See for more information

<http://www.flowercraftbygail.com/>

US BOTANICAL GARDENS

Multiple programs throughout the month

See for more information-

<https://www.usbg.gov/programs-and-events>

MERRIFIELD GARDEN CENTERS

Multiple programs throughout the month at all locations

See for more information-

<https://www.merrifieldgardencenter.com/events/>

HILLWOOD ESTATE MUSEUM AND GARDENS

March 24 Hands-on Workshop: To Repot or Not?

Keep your plants thriving and beautiful by repotting it every 1-2 years.

\$25-30

Multiple programs throughout the month focusing on orchids

See for more information see

<http://www.hillwoodmuseum.org/calendar>

GREEN SPRINGS GARDEN PARK

Harry Allen Winter Lecture Series

Sundays, 1:30–3pm in January, February and March

Annual, well-subscribed series of presentations by authors, garden designers, scientists, and other garden enthusiasts on the cutting edge of horticulture. After the lecture, meet the speakers and enjoy refreshments. \$10 Limited seating.

Looking ahead- Adult Programs- See for more information-

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

LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDENS

Multiple programs throughout the month
See for more information-

<http://www.lewisginter.org/learn/adult-classes/current-class-schedule/>

MASTER GARDENERS OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Multiple programs at various locations throughout the month.

Vegetable Gardening Part 3: Manage, Maintain

Tuesday, March 21, 7-8:30 pm, Fairlington

Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, 22206,

or.....

Saturday, March 25, 10:30-noon, Fairlington

Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, 22206

See for more information-

<https://mgmv.org/2017/01/16/february-public-education-events/>

STATE ARBORETUM OF VIRGINIA

April 4, 1-3 p.m.

Small Tree Pruning & Care Tuesday, Scott Johnston, Johnston Tree Care Prepare your trees for the growing season. We begin with an introduction to proper pruning and tree care. We will then move outside for demonstrations and hands-on practice, with plenty of time for Q and A. Dress for the weather. FOA members \$10, nonmembers \$12 Reservations Required—Space is Limited

See for more information-

http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/blandy_web/all_blandy/2017SpringPrograms.pdf

SMITHSONIAN GARDENS

March 13 – 3-4 Arlington Central Library

Smithsonian Garden Director Barbara Faust will give a virtual tour of the Smithsonian gardens (including the Enid Hope Garden at The Castle) that are designed to complement the museums they border and to enhance your overall museum experience of learning, appreciation, and enjoyment. A Q&A will follow her presentation.

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - ARLINGTON

This site has many great resources

<http://ext.vt.edu/lawn-garden.html>

MEADOWLARK GARDENS

March 11- 10:30-11:30 Plant propagation.

Registration required. Fee

https://apm.activecommunities.com/novaparks/Activity_Search/beginner-plant-propagation-workshop/1972

PHOTO GALLERY

President, Connie Richards and Vice-President, Kate Abrahams welcome new member, Robin Fitch and her sponsor, Ann Marie Fay at the February meeting.



February design of the month: Small Traditional Design



Blue ribbon
Julie Wadsworth



Red ribbon
Anita Brown



Yellow ribbon
Parvaneh Limbert



Honorable Mention
Margy Shultz

February Horticulture



