

THE GARDENZETTE



Rock Spring Garden Club
Arlington, Virginia
www.rockspringgardenclub.com

Rock Spring Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Atlantic Region, National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., District III, South Atlantic Region, Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., Piedmont District

OFFICERS

President
Dianne Simmons

Vice President
Carolyn Barone

Secretary
Jane Robinson

Treasurer
Sherry Foster

Newsletter Editor
Maryam Zolecki



IN THIS ISSUE

General Meeting Information – 1
President's Message – 2
Design of the Month – 2
Committee Reports – 3-4
 Horticulture – 3
 Garden Therapy – 4
Holiday Drive – 5
Garden To Do in January – 5
Budget Report – 5
Creating a Four Seasons Image – 6
Small Standard Flower Show – 6
Sale Plant Lot – 7
Photo Gallery – 8



ZOOM GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 10:00 am

Our meeting is free and open to the public. Our January 2022 meeting will be held via Zoom, and to join us, please email rockspringgardenclub@gmail.com for the link. Guests and potential new members with an interest in gardening, floral design, horticulture and community service activities are always welcome.



For the health and safety of our membership and guests, the club meeting has pivoted to Zoom for the month of January 2022. Our planned program featuring Ikebana designer Yoshie Kurose has already been rescheduled to January 2023.

Following our business meeting, we are welcoming back a good old friend of Rock Spring Garden Club, Sarah Von Pollaro, by viewing her WETA television program, *Flower Empowered*. You may recall that Sarah was our very first Holiday

Floral Design guest designer - and what a successful event for our club that was back in 2012! Our first Holiday Floral Design event had a very positive effect on the successful trajectory of our club today.

President's Message



"Nature always wears the colors of the spirit." This is a quote by the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson that was on the front of a Christmas card I received this year. It reminds me of the ethos of our club, the energy to move along in the face of obstacles. Despite the surge in the COVID-19

variant Omicron, we will plod on, adjusting our activities to protect ourselves and others.

The Board decided we will hold our January 20, 2022 meeting via Zoom only, and we have adjusted our program to a previously recorded PBS video presentation from Sarah Von Pollaro, moving our Ikebana program to a later date.

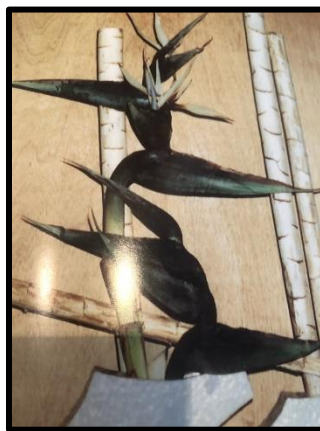
The Board also approved a small flower show – for our club members only – to be held at our March 17, 2022 general meeting. The theme is inspired by St. Patrick's Day, and titled May the Road Rise to Meet You. This show will give all members the opportunity to participate, and one class of the show schedule will be for novices only – those who have never participated in a flower show or who have never won a ribbon. Let's hope Omicron will have run its course by then. I encourage all of you to participate and share your gifts of organizing, flower arranging, and gardening (i.e., specimens for the horticulture section).

January isn't a month for gardening inspiration, I admit. But, as the snow and cold settles in for a while there is much to observe outside to feed our spirits. Last week I watched a pileated woodpecker snack on insects in one of our oak trees. He was there for twenty minutes, his black, white and red body reminding me that life, and nature, is always present.

Dianne

Design of the Month

By Anita Brown



January's design is a Creative Design that incorporates Asian influence. Our yearbook specifies that this design should be simple and use a minimum number of flowers, and that the design should be light and airy. Remember that

your arrangement should be creative (see page 72 of the NGC Handbook for more detail), and your container can even be the dominant part of the design. Feel free to use any components evoking an Asian influence, such as a Buddha, chopsticks, bamboo, etc. In general, Asian designs are not heavy and cluttered, although they can vary considerably. With that said, this month's design will be judged only considering the requirements listed above. Have fun completing your masterpiece!

NOTE: Given that our January 2022 general meeting will be held via Zoom, I encourage you to try your hand at this month's design, take a picture of it, and submit it to The Gardenzette for inclusion in next month's edition.

Next Board Meeting – February 3, 2022 at 10 am

Next General Meeting – February 17, 2022 at 10 am



Committee Reports

Horticulture

The Beginning of a New Year in the Garden

By Christine Wegman

I am writing this article just after the second snow storm of the season. The Christmas season is officially over, and the days are beginning to get longer. It really feels like the beginning of a new year. The evergreens are showing well, a few Japanese maples have beautiful red stems, and the nandina berries are showing brightly. And yes, there is one beautiful yellow flower blooming freely in my Albemarle County garden.



I have a cluster of leather leaf mahonia (*mahonia bealei*) in full bloom and it is a lovely cheering sight. This is just about the first flower of the year and its sulfur yellow blooms last for almost a month. You can cut the blossom head off the plant and bring it indoors, where it will last very well, but I love the look of it on the plant. After all, this is the time that forced amaryllis are blooming indoors, so I feel I really don't need to take mahonia blossoms inside. I love leatherleaf mahonia for its sturdy evergreen form that adds

interest to any shade garden, and I am especially fond of it this time of the year when it flowers. As the flowers fade, they are replaced by beautiful blue berries, which last into the early spring.



As I look around the neighborhood, this is about the only plant that I see blooming now, but a *daphne odora* in the neighborhood has buds that are swelling. In a few weeks this lovely prima donna will open its buds. This is not the easiest plant to grow, but it is well worth the effort if you have a shady, sheltered spot. It needs very well-draining, pH neutral soil, and is especially intolerant of wind. It doesn't much like our hot summers either, so a shady

spot is essential. Pick daphne blossoms just as they are beginning to open and they will fill a room with their heavenly fragrance.



The flowering almond (*prunus glandulosa*) is another very early bloomer, sometimes appearing in January. It blooms on bare wood and appears too delicate to survive the cold temperatures. It is not a long-lived tree, nor are its blossoms long lasting, but they are spectacular and always lift the spirits.

Two of the earliest bulbs to bloom are the winter snow drops (*Galanthus nivalis*) and Adonis (*Adonis amurensis*). Snow drops naturalize readily and are easy to grow. Adonis is a slow-growing clumping bulb with an intense yellow color. It grows about six

inches high and is particularly effective just next to a path. It needs light, humusy soil and good drainage.

Because there are so few plants that flower in January or February, the ones that do are very special, and particularly welcome on a cold winter day. Excepting the daphne, they are easy to grow. Having a few blooms in the garden in January is a wonderful reminder that a garden is for all seasons.



Garden Therapy

Delighted to Be Back in the Classroom

By Pat Getz



On December 9, 2021, Susan Scotti and Pat Getz led the first in-person Garden Therapy program at Glebe Elementary School since February 2020. The theme was the transition between seasons and fun in the snow. Susan shared her extensive pinecone collection and passed around different types of evergreen branches for the children to see and touch. The students were the most impressed with the giant pinecones! Pat read two stories, "Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter", which informs about the changes that occur in nature when the seasons change, and "One Snowy Day", which features rhyming and counting as a group of children go about having fun in the snow – sledding, snowball making, and constructing a snowman. We all sang Jingle Bells (acapella!), which the children had been practicing in their music class. We supplied various sized bells for the students to shake as they sang, and they particularly liked the large old-fashioned bells that had once actually been used on a sleigh. Finally, we gave each child a craft kit to make snowman ornaments that can be hung on a tree or a doorknob. The kit included a sheet of numbers, which the instructions suggested could be used to include the year 2021 on the snowman. Many of the children, however, found it was more fun to make other "numerical designs".



We were happy to be back in the classroom, and teacher Jeannie Terrill was very welcoming and is always supportive of the Garden Therapy program. We were looking forward to continuing in the classroom through the remainder of the school year, but sadly, it seems that we will need to take a pause. Even with the safety measures of having all volunteers complete the Arlington County Public Schools volunteer application and certification process to include proof of COVID-19 vaccination, having all staff, students, and volunteers wear masks at all times, and omitting the snacks for the children, given the rise in the COVID-19 cases, it would seem best if we were not in the classroom at this time. And, the poor Wi-Fi reception in the classroom eliminates a virtual option. The Garden Therapy Committee has pivoted and adapted admirably to meet the challenges so far this year, and we will no doubt bounce back when circumstances allow in order to continue providing this valuable experience for the children.

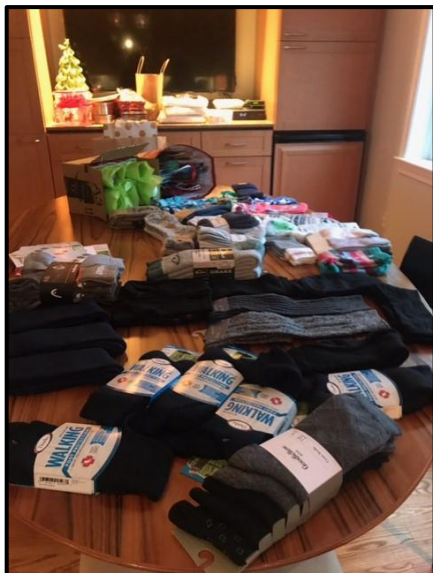
Dearest Rock Spring Garden Club Friends:

Words cannot adequately express my deepest appreciation for the beautiful cards and heartfelt sentiments you sent me after Julius' passing. These certainly buoyed my spirits and filled me with gratitude for having such caring friends. It has been a challenge moving from Arlington to McLean, selling our home and grieving the death of my husband within a very short period of time. I treasure each and every one of you - very special blessings! A million thanks.

Love, Joan Asboth

A Successful Holiday Drive

By Mary Kudless & AnnMarie Fay



Thank you to the members of Rock Spring Garden Club for a successful holiday drive event benefiting the residents at the Mary Marshall Assisted Living. In early December 2021, a donation request for much needed personal items for the men and women who live at the residence was made, and our club

members responded generously and enthusiastically. Close to 200 pairs of socks and 52 shampoo/conditioner bottles were donated, and the Senior Outreach Committee also provided 52 gift bags and wrapping materials to assist the staff at the residence to present the socks and bottles to the residents with as much effectuality and holiday cheer as possible.

We are most grateful to Terry Holmes who organized the event, received the donations at her home, and sorted all the socks into male and female bundles. We also want to thank John Holmes, Terry's husband, who assisted with managing the whole process. The donations were delivered on December 17, 2021 by Mary Kudless and AnnMarie Fay to a grateful Divina Alston, Executive Director of Mary Marshall Assisted Living. We are so appreciative to our club members for making this holiday drive a continued success story.



Garden To Do This Month

By Maryam Zolecki

The leaves have fallen and the deciduous trees and shrubs are standing upright and bare. The annuals have been pulled, and the perennials have lost their color and are dormant in preparation for the cold winter days ahead. With the exception of the evergreens, the garden and landscape are a stretch of browns and grays. With the "bones" of our gardens showing, now is a good time for auditing and editing.

- * Winter is a time to evaluate the garden layout. After the cold weather lays everything bare, you can more clearly see the architecture or "bones" of the garden. This is a great time to take stock of what is there, and begin the thought process and sketching of what needs to be included, moved, or removed.
- * After taking stock, head inside to make a cup of tea, peruse your garden center and plant nursery websites and catalogues, and place your orders for seeds, perennials, and shrubs you want to plant in the spring.
- * If you have been storing bulbs, comers, and tubers, check them to make sure that they are neither rotting nor totally drying out.
- * You can prune certain trees, bushes, and shrubs. Some can be pruned in early winter (December and January) and others in late winter (February and March). For trees, any time in winter, when the leaves are gone and you can clearly see their structure and spot potential problems (missing bark, fungus, etc.), is ideal to prune out branches that are dead, diseased, or that cross each other.

Budget Report

Beginning Balance:

Receipts:

Expenses:

Ending Balance:

Creating a Four Seasons Image

When club member Jane Robinson opened the envelope to reveal the Christmas card from a neighbor, she was immediately intrigued and charmed by what she saw. To make the card, her neighbor Jim Heidish, who is a talented graphic artist and photographer, had used four images to create a time lapse of a tree branch through the seasons. Jim Heidish shared how to go about creating a four seasons image, and encouraged our garden club members to give it a try as a way of share with others their love of gardening. With the snow so beautifully coating our gardens right now, no better time than the present to capture that first image!

1. Pick out a good center of interest (like a bird bath) that has seasonal change in flowers and leaves around it.
2. Take your first image when ready at the peak of the season, and be sure to mark the location (you can also use the already taken image as your guide).
3. Take images throughout the remaining three seasons at the same location.
4. Put all four seasonal images together.
5. To make a card, print on heavy paper and fold accordion style along the picture edges.



Rock Spring Garden Club Is Hosting a Flower Show

Mark your calendars for a SMALL Standard Flower Show that will be held in conjunction with our March, 17 2022 general meeting. The finalized schedule is almost ready and will be send out soon via email!

May the Road Rise Up to Meet You



An NGC Small Standard Flower Show
Presented by: Rock Spring Garden Club

Member of District III, National Capital Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs, Inc., National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Working Schedule

Staging: 3/16/2022 3:00pm

Entries: 3/16/2022 4:00 pm-5:00 pm and 3/17/2022 8:00 am-9:00 am

Judging: 10:00 am-11:30 am

Open by Invitation: 11:45 am-12:45 pm

Site: Little Falls Presbyterian Church, 6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington VA 22407

When: March 17, 2022

Sale Plant Lot at Local Garden Center

By Maryam Zolecki

No trip to the Merrifield Garden Center is complete until I make a stop at the plant sale section housed in their parking lot. If you park on the side lot adjacent to Gallows Road, you very well may miss it, but park in the scruffier back lot, and check out the selection of sale plants as you make your way to the garden center. More often than not, I walk away without a find, but the dozen or so deeply discounted plants I have brought home through the years have not disappointed so far.

One of my earlier finds was a Japanese maple tree that over the years has displayed incredible deep red foliage with a mound form that seems to be staying small and adding great interest to my shade garden. As is the case with a number of the sale plants I have snagged up over the years, the tag was missing at the time of purchase, so I am uncertain of the tree's exact botanical nomenclature making this one of the



drawbacks of the sale plant lot. I have found though that this drawback is a worthwhile gamble, and when a tag is missing, I do seek out the expertise of the staff for identification, and if that does not yield success, an internet search using Google Lens usually identifies the plant well enough in order to be able to have some idea of its habit and size. Other plants without tags purchased include a St. John's wort, an Annabelle hydrangea, a Joe-pye weed, a type of bee-loving caryopteris (bluebeard), and a gorgeous viburnum.

My sale plant adventures have also resulted in bringing home plants that I would not typically go for. A Gold Star potentilla is one such example given that I am not drawn to yellow in flowers, but I could not resist the sale price, and it inspired the new color scheme of my side garden plot. Same for the boxwoods that I purchased to cover up my gas meter given that I consider boxwoods to be exuberantly expensive compared to other evergreens, but in the sale plant lot, they were just the right price!



Other times, I have had to wait longer than a typical purchase to get the full benefit from the plant since their sad condition at the sale lot may make for a longer acclimation period. This *Pieris japonica* 'Flaming Silver' took two years to flower and now is a stunner in all seasons along my patio. To be more certain of the plant's success, check to make sure it is not completely dried out and look for buds and new growth as the plant will most likely survive even if not a single leaf is on it. My most recent summer purchase was a Strawberry Sundae

hydrangea, and I cannot wait until next summer for it to bloom. Just this past week, I picked up a dwarf evergreen to include in my foundation garden.



Photo Gallery



Carolyn Barone's Christmas Window Arrangement



A Visit on Christmas Day with Friends (and their English Labradors) in Middleburg, VA

Julie Williams' Christmas Celebration



Louise Rhoads' Fire (amaryllis) and Ice (hellebore)



Pat Getz and Longwood Gardens Holiday Display



Jane Robinson Visiting Family at Hilltop 7 Farm in Bozeman, Montana

