

# THE GARDENZETTE



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

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## ZOOM GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 10:00 am

Our meeting is free and open to the public. Our March 2022 meeting will be held via Zoom, and to join us, please email [rockspringgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto: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.



Our program for this month is "All About Orchid Care" with Carol Allen. Carol is an Agent Associate at the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources at the University of Maryland, College Park, and she will review the basic cultural conditions for growing orchids correctly so that they can reach their full genetic potential. Carol earned her master's degree in plant science at the University of Maryland working with virus transmission in orchids. Carol will also

take questions about your orchids. Just a reminder that club members should drop off their flower show exhibits from 8:00 am to 9:00 am at Little Falls Presbyterian Church, and then return home to participate in our general meeting via Zoom at 10:00 am with the program to follow. Then everyone can head back to the church for the flower show results!

## President's Message



I must confess that I had difficulty writing this month's letter. Last week the Board learned that our dear member, Linda Martin, died following a very short bout of cancer. You will remember Linda for her enthusiastic involvement in our club, her warm smile and every-present willingness to help out in any way. She loved working on our Holiday Design event. We might have known she was ill had we been able to meet in person, but the pandemic prevented that. Linda leaves two children and two grandchildren. Please think of her with a smile.

Spring is tempting us. While working in the garden a few days ago cleaning out leaves, I was excited to see my mother's irises popping up. I was pleased to know I haven't killed them yet; she was the green thumb in the family. Those irises are just one little witness of the cycle of life, the ever-repeating phenomenon of nature's wondrous march forward. This lovely weather may provide an unexpected plethora of horticultural specimens we nurture in our gardens for display at our upcoming Small Flower Show.

Speaking of the show on March 17th, appropriately titled, "May the Road Rise Up to Meet You," I hope everyone will participate in some way, especially by bringing in at least one horticultural specimen for judging. See Anita Brown's article about the show. I confess I was not aware that sometime in the last few years an amendment to our By-Laws was passed requiring everyone to enter at least one horticultural specimen in a club-sponsored flower show. Now, no one is going to penalize anyone if they don't enter a specimen, but I encourage all to give it a try. Our Show Committee members – and anyone else in the club – are very willing to answer your questions.

As always, I thank each and every one of you for your presence in our little garden club community. And, please come see the show on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

*Dianne*

## May the Road Rise Up to Meet You Flower Show

By Anita Brown, Flower Show Chair



We are getting very near St. Patrick's Day and our exciting Irish-inspired Flower Show!

Because we have so many members working on the show, we are forgoing our March monthly design which will be rescheduled for next year.

I want to remind you again to please drop off your horticulture and design entries either on

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm, or Thursday, March 17, 2022 from 8:00 am to 9:00 am. **Your entries in the flower show will only be accepted at those times.** Entry cards can be obtained from Christine Wegman, Renee Bayes, or myself. Mary Garnett has kindly provided via email a list with your entry number next to your name. As a reminder, our regular monthly meeting is also taking place via Zoom with an excellent guest speaker who will discuss the growing and care of orchids.

When you bring your horticulture and/or design to the church, President Dianne Simmons will direct you to the appropriate location for check-in. The entry desk for horticultural specimens will be just inside the door of the church in the hallway. Christine Wegman is the Horticultural Entry/Classification Chair, **but if you have daffodils**, Charlotte Benjamin will register these in the conference room just to the right of the entrance.

For design, please take your entry card and arrangement to the Design Entry/Consultant Renee Bayes who will be at a round table just inside our meeting room. Once she has checked you in, you can then take your design to the appropriately marked table.

Both Christine and Renee will have assistants helping them, so it is important that once your registration is finalized, you exit the church. A lot of activity will be taking place at this time in the hallway and in our regular meeting room by our Staging and Placement Committees. Additionally, our judges will be arriving in the hall shortly after 9:00 am, and Judges Chair Thea McGinnis will be meeting them and taking them upstairs for coffee until judging time.

Please note that our RSGC bylaws require that active members "submit at least one entry, either in horticulture, design ... to a Club flower show." In advance, I want to thank each of you for your exhibits and for helping in many other ways to make our flower show exciting and memorable.

Finally, the new RSGC Novice Award is available to those members who have never won a first place blue ribbon in a flower show. This award is being offered in all four design classes, so good luck to each of you.

I am looking forward to seeing the results of our judges' decisions and to seeing all of you when the Flower Show opens for members and invited guests in the afternoon from 12:15 pm to 1:00 pm.

## Committee Reports

### Senior Outreach

#### Feeding the Birds

By Renee Bayes



On February 22, 2022, members of the Senior Outreach Committee met with some of the residents of Mary Marshall Assisted Living facility for a lesson/activity session on birds. Renee Bayes led the group in a discussion of our winter friends, their eating habits, and their amazing nest building skills. Renee brought in wonderful examples of nests. Then Renee, Janice Haines, Pat Getz, and Helen McMahon helped the group make pinecone bird feeders to be placed in trees around the facility. Residents enjoyed spreading Crisco onto the pinecones and then rolling the cones in boxes filled with bird seed. You can see by the pictures that the residents and our RSGC members really enjoyed the hands-on activity.



### Liaison

NC Flower Show School Course I is scheduled for April 3-5, 2022 at Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, MD (<https://ncagardenclubs.org/event/flower-show-school-course-1-2/>).

The Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs (VFGC) Annual Convention is scheduled for May 1-3, 2022 in Richmond, Virginia.

NCAGC Flower Show is scheduled for April 21-24, 2022 at the US National Arboretum.

Historic Garden Week in Virginia, the biggest and oldest state garden tour, is April 23-30, 2022. Over 250 of Virginia's most beautiful homes and gardens welcome visitors from all over. Famous local gardens include Monticello, Mount Vernon, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Bacon's Castle, and the State Arboretum in Winchester.

The NCAGC Judges' Council and District III present two special workshops on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia. The Day of Designs workshops will feature speaker Betty Ann Galway. There will be a morning workshop focusing on Traditional Line and Traditional Mass designs, and the afternoon workshop will be all about Creative Line and Creative Design. The \$50.00 fee for each workshop pays for flowers, one container, instruction plus design time with the instructor and 2 additional judges. It is sure to be a fun and informative day! Please contact Anne Stuntz or Chris Getek for registration information.

## Horticulture

### Ferns

By Christine Wegman

Ferns are a beautiful and versatile perennial for any shade garden. They are beautiful on their own and they are beautiful in combination with other plants. They make a lovely foil for any broad leaf plant, such as helleborus, hosta or rhododendron. Adaptable to most shady sites, they need consistently moist soil. Although a few are somewhat tolerant of drought, none will thrive in dry soil. Apart from their ability to thrive in shade, one of their most endearing qualities is their resistance to deer.

If you can provide a shaded area that never completely dries out (either naturally or by watering), ferns are easy-to-grow plants that look good throughout the growing season. Some evergreen varieties will even keep their looks through the winter. Most ferns like rich, slightly acidic soil, and it is always a good idea to amend our heavy clay with compost and a little organic fertilizer, such as Plant Tone.

**Evergreen Ferns.** These ferns grow well in our climate and the three named below are somewhat drought tolerant, with handsome leathery foliage. They look good through most of the winter, but as with hellebores, just before the new shoots begin to sprout, it is best to cut back the old foliage.

Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*). This eastern North American native probably gets its name because it was used by early settlers to decorate their homes for Christmas. It grows out from a central crown to about 2 feet.



Tassel fern (*Polystichum polyblepharum*). Probably my favorite fern, the new fronds of this plant emerge stiffly, then droop back to form a tassel. Mature fronds are deep green and glossy, growing to about 2 feet. Tassel fern is slow to establish itself, but mature specimens are garden focal points.

Holly fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*). This beautiful fern gets its name from the its serrated fronds. It has stiff, glossy foliage with coarsely fringed (serrated) edges. It grows to about 2 feet by 3 feet wide.



### Deciduous Ferns.



Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*). This beautiful plant has graceful light gray-green foliage. It grows to about 18 inches and likes alkaline soil. Although often grown indoors in containers, it is winter hardy in our area.

Lady fern (*Athyrium felix-femina*). This is a versatile plant that comes in small (12 inches), medium (18-24 inches) and large (30 inches) variations. There is even a red-stemmed variety.

The cultivar, 'Victoriae', grows to about 18 inches and was a great favorite of the Victorian English, who called it the "Queen of Ferns".



Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium nipponicum*).

This relative of the lady fern, is widely grown and valued for its light variegation that can provide an eye-catching focal point in an otherwise dark and solid green shade planting. It grows to about 18 inches.

## Garden Therapy

### Valentine's Day

By Susan Scotti



The Garden Therapy program with the Glebe Elementary School preschool class is still on pause as the in-person volunteer restriction remains in effect and the poor Wi-Fi reception precludes a virtual presentation.

In the past, we have used a Valentine's Day theme for the February program and guided the children in making flower arrangements. Being one of their favorite activities, the idea of bringing precut flowers and containers to school was gladly accepted by their teacher, Jeanne Terrill. She and her aides supervised the project and sent pictures of the children creating and decorating their designs. She said they had a wonderful time! Disappointing not to be there, but great to know they had fun working with the flowers and decorating the container with heart stickers.

We are planning to repeat this activity with Mother's Day arrangements on Friday, May 6, 2022, and with the teacher's suggestion and weather permitting, we will have it outside. Please consider volunteering and having fun with us next year when we hope to be able to return to the classroom.



## In Remembrance



Rock Spring Garden Club member Linda Martin passed away peacefully on February 27, 2022 with her children by her side at the age of 70 after a short but valiant battle with lung cancer. Linda worked at the Library of Congress for 33 years and remained extremely active after her retirement with her many passions and hobbies. She was a member of Dulin Methodist Church, Master Gardeners, Falls Church Garden Club, Rock Spring Garden Club, and the Herb Society of America (just to name a few). She enjoyed gardening, baking, serving as an usher at church, owls, butterflies, and all things lavender. Thea McGinnis remembers Linda fondly, and notes that Linda truly supported

RSGC and regularly attended our meetings and events since her induction in 2014 (see picture on the right). Julie Williams shared that Linda was a fine woman, very kind and helpful over many years. AnnMarie Fay notes that Linda was very nice, easy to work with, and always helpful. Dianne Simmons remembers Linda as an active, kind and gentle person, and she was an absolute joy to have among us and will be dearly missed.



## Membership Renewal Applications Due Soon

By Carolyn Barone

A reminder that 2022-2023 membership renewal applications are due on March 15, 2022 to Carolyn Barone. The renewals are slowly trickling in, and if you do not have a copy of the application form as of yet, email Carolyn to receive the form. Just print, fill out, and return to the address on the from to Carolyn with the appropriate fee in order to continue being part of this great club.

## Archive of American Gardens Project

By Kate Abrahams

During one of our past club programs, RSGC members learned about the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Gardens (AAG) project. The Smithsonian gardens online archive, active since 1987, seeks to "collect, preserve, and make publicly accessible documentation on gardens." The gardens may be public, private or vanished. The Smithsonian solicits documentation from garden owners such as images, plans, descriptions, and other materials related to the gardens to add to the archive. The documentation is generally submitted in a digital format with release forms giving permission to use the materials for museum research, in catalogs, and in the online archive. Some materials may be submitted as "hard copies" such as original 35mm slides or photo prints. Digital photos must be taken with DSLR cameras meaning phone or tablet camera images are not accepted.

Rock Spring Garden Club would like to gauge members' interest in adding their gardens to the archive. A comprehensive guide titled "Five Steps to Documenting a Garden" can be emailed to interested club members who would like more details. There are some bureaucratic forms to fill and technology requirements in order to create a submission to the archive, but in the end, it will serve Arlington's community well to have its gardens represented. If enough members are interested, we could work together to submit the documentation as a club project. If interested, please email Kate Abrahams for more information. The Smithsonian website for more archive information is <https://gardens.si.edu/collections/archives/>.

## Spring Plant Sale Information

- Friends of Riverbend Park's 2022 Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup> from 10am-4pm at the Riverbend Park Educational Pavilion on Potomac Hills Street in Great Falls, VA.
- Mount Vernon Historic Plant & Garden Sale is on April 23 and 24, 2022 from 9am-3pm. Shop for heirloom vegetables, herbs, and annual flowers plus native perennials, trees and shrubs grown in Mount Vernon's greenhouses.
- Virginia Native Plant Society sells native plants starting April 6<sup>th</sup> on the first Wednesdays of the month at 10am-1pm at their plot behind the visitor's center at Green Spring Garden Park.
- Friends of the National Arboretum's Garden Fair and Plant Sale is on April 30<sup>th</sup> from 8am-10am for members only and 10am-4pm to be open to all. The event is located at the National Arboretum's Visitor Center.
- Hosted by the NOVA Master Gardeners, the Glencarlyn Library Springfest Sale is on April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10am to 3pm at the Glencarlyn Library Community Garden in Arlington, VA.
- Aryn Hill Garden Club is having their annual plant sale on the side lawn of the Freeman Store and Museum in Vienna, VA. Pre-Sale ordering is open from March 7, 2022 until April 25, 2022 with pickup on May 7, 2022 between 8am-1pm during the in-person sale: <https://www.ayrhillgardenclub.org/>.
- Long Branch Nature Center Native Plant Sale is also on May 7<sup>th</sup> at Kenmore Middle School in Arlington, VA. The sale is from 10am to 3pm, and preordering is available through April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- On Saturday, May 14, 2022, Green Springs Garden is having a plant sale from 9am to 3pm.
- Walker Nature Center in Reston, VA is having a native plant sale on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 9am-2pm.
- The Native Plant Sale at Locust Grove Nature Center in Bethesda, MD will be on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2pm. The sale will be a blend of pre-order and in-person this year, so check out their website.

# Spring Equinox

By Maryam Zolecki

This year, the spring equinox occurs on Sunday, March 20, 2022. This event marks the astronomical first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and the start of the spring season. The earth begins tilting more towards the sun, and with that comes brighter and warmer days. The crocuses, hyacinths, early daffodils, chionodoxas, and snowdrops are in bloom, other spring bulbs are poking up their heads, buds are fattening up on trees, bushes, and shrubs, the birds are inspired to sing, and the worms and grubs are reappearing. This rebirth is what spring is all about, and no wonder that our traditions and gardening practices are so very intertwined this time of year, and in so many ways connected to the changes happening in nature.

In many ways, with a predominantly agrarian society of our ancestors, it made sense to follow the sun and the rhythm of plant growth. The Roman year began on the Ides of March (March 15th), and the Persian New Year begins on the spring equinox. In many spring traditions, renewal, rebirth, and rejuvenation is a common theme. Whilst the balance of day and night is equal, it is ready to tip over in favor of light and life. The vernal equinox is considered by many traditions and cultures to be the dawn of new life, and our gardens are certainly of that perspective as well this time of year.

It is true that many flowering plants respond to the lengthening of days of spring to begin their growing process, but interestingly, it is in reality the shortening of the dark nights rather than the longer days that promotes the plant hormones to encourage growth and then flowering. This process is called photoperiodism. Even more interestingly, many of the vegetables and salad plants that we grow are less driven by photoperiodism. For example, radishes are one of these 'day neutral' plants.



One sure signal of spring in my garden is the emergence of the "wild onions." This time of year, my garden has wild onions coming up all throughout the beds much to my chagrin. I have been pulling them up

year after year, and they seem to come back stronger every year. My neighbors tell me that the previous owners made onion soup every spring with their bounty, and given my abundance, perhaps I should give it a try this spring as well!



## Garden To Do This Month

By Maryam Zolecki

The weather can be finicky in March, but there will be plenty of mild days to get some early spring gardening jobs completed. March is a great month to set the scene for the reemergence of perennials, shrubs, and trees in the garden. It is also a great time to start thinking about what vegetables to grow.

- \* March is an excellent time to top all beds with a heavy layer of mulch. It keeps the soil moist and cool, and it blankets out any weed seeds thinking of getting a head start on the perennials. Who wants to weed when you can spend your time enjoying those beautiful blooms.
- \* This is a good time to start seeds indoors for outdoor transplant in late spring. Seeds are an economical way to get a lot of vegetables planted. Warm-season crops to start indoors are beans, cucumbers, eggplant, melons, tomatoes, and squash.
- \* Cool-season crops that are the easiest to start from seed outdoors later in the month include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, leeks, peas, radishes, and lettuce.
- \* Cut back ornamental grasses that were left up for winter interest to about six inches and clean up any leaves that get stuck around the crowns. Also cut down any other perennials that were left up for winter interest, including sedum, coneflowers, and astilbes.
- \* Prune rose bushes before the buds break.
- \* Plant hardy annuals such as pansies.

## February Meeting Recap

Since the club meeting for February 2022 was held via a Zoom format, the program for that month was rescheduled to another time next year, and club members instead engaged in a lively, informative, and fun discussion about the upcoming Small Standard Flower Show to happen on March 17, 2022 in conjunction with the next club meeting.

New club member, Sandy Wade, was inducted (see Sandy's information on the right), and with that, the membership for Rock Spring Garden Club continues to grow and add talent, enthusiasm, and camaraderie.

Regarding the flower show, as club president Dianne Simmons noted, it may look complicated, but it really is doable and participating is encouraged and can really be fun and a great learning experience. Please reach out with any questions to the committee folks (see flower show information posted in previous pages of newsletter).

### **Shared with Rock Spring Garden Club by NGC President Mary Warshauer:**

**April 26, 2022 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, renowned conservationist and landscape architect credited with having created public parks providing city dwellers "a sense of enlarged freedom," being restorative in nature and connecting communities. I'm delighted to share a video created by historian Kirk Brown to commemorate Olmsted's birthday. Kirk entertains and educates garden club members and history lovers with his energetic and passionate horticulturally related presentations.**

**This is the first of a President's series planned for the next year that will entertain and educate National Garden Club members. This video will be available until May 11, 2022. Enjoy!**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwplhCANDMg>

Carolyn Barone notes that RSGC welcomed Sandy Wade in January 2022 as our newest member. She sought out our Club after visiting her sister's garden club in Maryland. She decided to join after attending our meetings and meeting membership requirements. She is enthusiastically looking forward to "digging in." She and her husband have been in Arlington for over 20 years where she enjoys gardening, ballet, theater and traveling. She tries to incorporate visiting gardens with her travels. She is also passing her love of gardening on to her granddaughter... perhaps a future RSGC member? We look forward to having Sandy among our ranks.

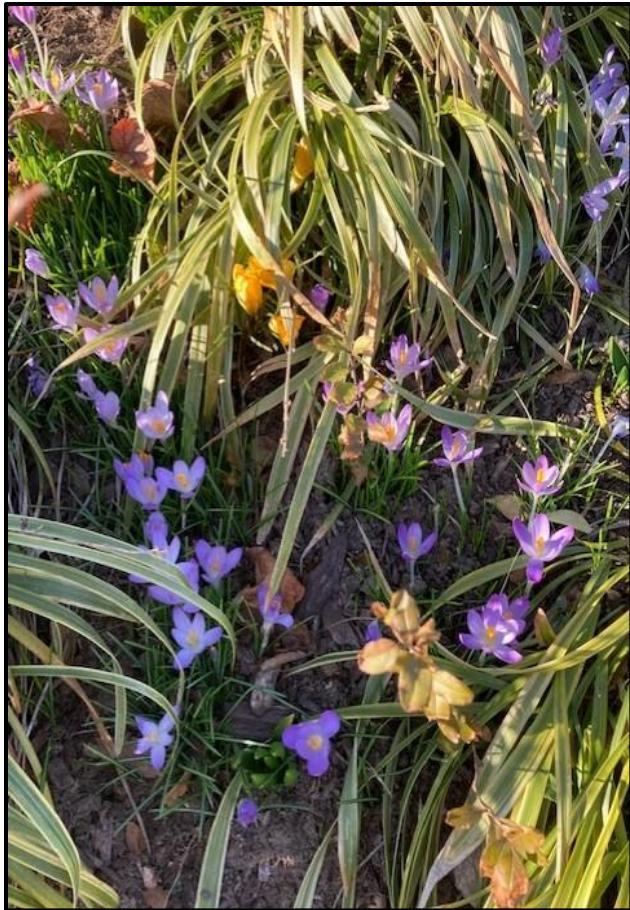
### Budget Report

Beginning Balance:  
Receipts:  
Expenses:  
Ending Balance:

Next Board Meeting – April 7, 2022 at 10 am

Next General Meeting – April 21, 2022 at 10 am

## Photo Gallery



Kate Abraham's crocus and daffodils  
blooming in late February and early March.



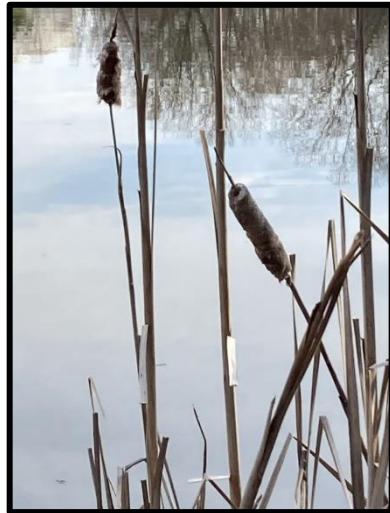
George Ruppert's amaryllis progressing through its bloom!



Forsythia branches forced to bloom indoors by Maryam Zolecki.



Great blue heron and cattails spotted at GMU by Kate Abrahams.



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