

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

President's Message – 1
Inside the Garden Gate – 2
Committee Reports – 3-6
 Horticulture – 3
 Awards – 4
 Liaison – 5
 Garden Therapy – 5
 Senior Outreach – 6
May Field Trip – 7
Summer Solstice – 8
Garden To Do in June – 8
Member Garden Profiles – 9
Flower Festival in Italy – 10
Photo Gallery – 11

President's Message



This Thursday, we hold our last program of the year, and it promises to be a real beauty. It will be garden party of sorts: visiting three of our members' gardens followed by lunchtime refreshments at our third stop. Details are here in The Gardenzette. What a wonderful way to celebrate our year, and I hope to see many of you there.

I wish all a summer of relaxation and fun with family and friends. It's been another trying year with COVID, but we have reason to be hopeful that life is settling into some sort of normalcy, albeit a new normalcy that our club, like every other forum of human connection, is adjusting to. As I review our members' registration forms to determine committee assignments, I believe we will have a fulsome year of programs and active committees. There may be some areas where we are short of members to conduct monthly programs – such as Youth Activities – but we will meet these challenges with our usual zest for creativity.



The important thing is that we remain a club of enthusiasm, friendship, creativity and outreach. On the latter score, we have several new prospective members coming forth, and I am excited.

Thank you all. Happy Summer.

Dianne

Inside the Garden Gate: Member Garden Tour

By Thea McGinnis

Despite our many travails, we've had a good, solid garden club year. We round it off with an easy tour of three member gardens on Thursday, June 9, 2022. We can begin at **Jo Ella Samp's garden**. Jo Ella is a wonderful, practical gardener with gifted hands, especially when it comes to her container plants and dish gardens. Jo Ella contributes so much to our club and, at this point, almost single-handedly maintains our gardens at Rock Spring Park. So please consider checking with her and lending a half hour or so to the park over the year ahead. After departing Jo Ella's garden, head over to **Maryam Zolecki's garden**. Maryam is a recent member to RSGC, yet she volunteered to take on the job as editor of The Gardenzette. She also discovered a real talent for floral design and even took on the challenge of entering NCAGC's State Flower Show - and ribboned! After enjoying her garden, head on over to our last stop at **Anita Brown's garden, where refreshments will be served**. Anita has been a member of RSGC since 2006. She's an avid gardener, a conifer devotee, and flower show judge. Anita never says no when asked to step up and take on new club challenges. She's been club president, served on many committees, and currently chairs our Show committee. And her personal garden is wonderful. **Please carpool**, and check out page 9 for more information about the three gardens.

I've mentioned many details about our garden hosts because it's important for all of us to remember that all our club members are needed to contribute to the success of our club. None of us can go forward alone. We need to work together, stick together, and enjoy gardening together. Despite all we have been through over the last two plus years, we've stuck together and **survived** a scourge of a pandemic. I'd like to thank each and every one of you for saying **YES** when we would rather have said no. For putting up with Zoom when we would have preferred to meet in person. For not giving up when it was tempting. Thank you, my darling friends!!

Okay - I'm going to brag a little here - Renee Bayes and I have worked really hard to bring our members great garden club programs the last couple years. We've explored floral design, studied the wildflowers of melting glaciers, dabbled in art, learned how to take care of our orchids, learned more about bees, and took a fun field trip to Glen Burnie Gardens in Winchester, Virginia. And helped six student judges complete their credentials by hosting a wonderful Flower Show. And I promise you, next year's programs will not disappoint! Because Renee and I are working so hard for all of us to get the best programs. So, in return, please continue to contribute your gifts and talents back to our wonderful club next year. If our president calls, please say YES! Have a wonderful summer! Love and Hugs, Thea and Renee.



Committee Reports

Horticulture

Hydrangeas

By Christine Wegman

Hydrangeas are a mainstay of the shady summer garden. These beautiful plants seem never to be out of fashion. First cultivated in Japan, where they are mentioned in 8th century poems, their cultivation was brought to China by Japanese diplomats during the Tang Dynasty and from there circulated throughout Asia. Like so many plants native to East Asia, hydrangeas are also native to North America.



The two native North American species, the oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) and the smooth hydrangea (*H. arborescens*), aka Annabelle hydrangea, were discovered by the early American naturalist, John Bartram, who collected seeds for his Philadelphia nursery. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison all purchased hydrangea seeds from Bartram. George Washington grew smooth hydrangeas on the bowling green at Mount Vernon.



Seeds from Bartram's collection made their way to Europe in the early 18th century and a few decades later Japanese hydrangeas were also introduced. *H. macrophylla*, the large leaf hydrangea, became very popular in France and sparked a breeding program at the beginning of the 20th century that developed many of the today's standard hydrangea varieties. In fact, the beautiful blue mophead hydrangeas are still often called French hydrangeas.

There are over 50 species in the genus hydrangea, but only six are commonly grown: bigleaf (*H. macrophylla*), smooth (*H. arborescens*), panicle (*H. paniculate*), oakleaf (*H. quercifolia*), mountain (*H. serrata*), and climbing (*H. anomala* ssp. *petiolaris*).

Hydrangeas have two flower types: mophead with large globe shaped flowers, and lacecap with flat heads of small flowers surrounded by a few larger flowers.

Smooth, oakleaf and panicle hydrangeas have mophead blooms. Mountain and climbing hydrangeas have lacecap blooms. Bigleaf hydrangeas can have either type of bloom.

Hydrangeas flowers come in lots of colors: white, lime green, pink, blue, purple and red. Flowers that bloom pink, purple and blue depend for their color on the pH of the soil. Acid soil produces blue flowers, alkaline soil produces pink flowers, neutral soil will yield purple. A little Holly-tone fertilizer will add acidity to the soil, garden lime will make it more alkaline. For best bloom color fertilize in spring with a fertilizer high in phosphorus.

Although hydrangeas are widely grown and loved by gardeners almost everywhere in temperate climates, there are a few misconceptions about the genus. Not all hydrangeas need shade, but all need lots of water. Hydrangea is NOT a drought-tolerant genus. Most thrive and look their best in light shade, but can stand a good bit of sun if they are kept moist. Oakleaf and panicle hydrangeas produce their best color in almost full sun. In shade, their blooms will not turn pink as they age.



For those of us with smaller gardens, there are a number of dwarf hydrangea varieties. Cityline, from Proven Winners, is a series of dwarf bigleaf hydrangeas in virtually every color that grow to about 3 feet. The National Arboretum introduced two dwarf oakleaf hydrangeas, 'Munchkin' and 'Ruby Slippers' (pictured left). These stay under 4 feet with little or no pruning and if grown in part sun their white blooms fade to lovely shades of pink and red. There are at least three dwarf panicle hydrangeas: 'Little Lime', 'Little Quick Fire', and 'Bobo' (pictured above).



The best time to prune hydrangeas depends on whether they bloom on new wood or last season's growth. Smooth and panicle hydrangeas bloom on new growth and can be pruned in late fall or early spring before the new growth emerges. Bigleaf, oakleaf, mountain and climbing hydrangeas bloom on last season's growth. Prune them after the flowers fade, before they start new growth. Everblooming hydrangeas are bigleaf varieties

and should be pruned right after the first old growth blooms fade and before the plant produces new growth and sets buds.

Awards

Rock Spring Garden Club Publications Win Awards

By Janis Gunel

Every year, the National Capital Area Garden Clubs (NCAGC) celebrates the activities of local garden clubs and members who have contributed so much. This year, Rock Spring Garden Club received a merit award for our 2021 Yearbook, and a first place award for The Gardenzette published in 2020-2021. Our heartfelt kudos to Joan Hession and Mary Garnett!

Liaison

Gardens That Educate and Inspire-Celebrate National Gardening Week by taking a virtual tour of eight gardens maintained by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia and six public gardens in the Washington metropolitan area to see examples of good gardening techniques and gain inspiration for your own home landscape. Extension Master Gardener Elaine Mills, a coordinator at the Glencarlyn Library Community Garden in Arlington, Virginia, will showcase best management practices and design concepts employed by her fellow demonstration garden leaders in a wide variety of settings. She will also share highlights from public gardens she has visited regularly for the past 10 years. Elaine is a creative force behind the resource [*Tried and True Native Plant Selections*](#) for the Mid-Atlantic on mgnv.org. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive link to participate. This event is free and scheduled for Friday, June 10, 2022 at 10:00 am to 11:30 am.

Ayr Hill Garden Club is having a Small Standard Flower Show, "The Legacy of Lady Bird Johnson", at the Town of Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna, Virginia from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm on June 11, 2022.

District III Presidents Coffee will be held on June 17, 2022 at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, Virginia. The event will be at 9:30 am and is open to all interested members. Club Presidents for 2022-2023 will be introduced and given three minutes to highlight favorite programs, field trips, service projects, workshops, etc. Please join the D3 Board in welcoming the Club Presidents, honoring the Perennial Bloom nominees and planning the September district fundraiser. Refreshments will be provided by the District Board. Please bring club yearbooks and newsletters to display.

Landscape Design School Course I will occur on October 12-13, 2022 at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC.

Save the Date – The District III fall fundraiser is on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at Meadowlark Gardens in Vienna, Virginia.

Garden Therapy

By Susan Scotti

Butterflies



The preschool class at Glebe Elementary School was buzzing with excitement as we arrived on Thursday, June 2, 2022. Margi Melnick had prepared a wonderful program with a butterfly

theme. As the eleven children sat in a semicircle, Pat Getz began by reading "Waiting for Wings" by Lois Ehlert, a colorful picture book with a simple rhyming text that follows the life cycle of butterflies, from tiny hidden eggs to caterpillars to full-grown ones looking for flowers with nectar to eat. Margi talked about butterflies and of their flitting from flower to flower, unrolling their tongues to sip nectar and never staying in one place long. She then led the class in a cute butterfly song.



The children were shown a sample flower arrangement and after a few simple directions, they quickly moved to the tables,

excited to choose their flowers. They placed the flowers along with sprigs of boxwood in containers prepared with a small piece of floral foam. They added a beautiful butterfly on a thin wire to, seemingly, perch on the flowers and then embellished the containers with butterfly stickers. It was rewarding to see how happy and proud they were.



We were glad to be able to end the school year with this program after the disappointment of having to cancel the Mother's Day program. Hopefully, we will be able to be back in the classroom with our programs in the coming school year.

Senior Outreach

Final Project for 2021-2022

By AnnMarie Fay and Mary Kudless

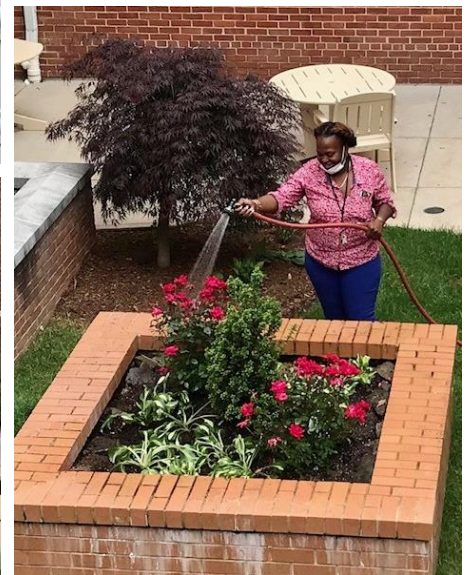


Wrapping up a successful year of on-site projects at Mary Marshall Assisted Living, our energetic group of volunteers was able to continue to bring beauty, nourishment, and gardening knowledge to the residents and staff on May 25, 2022. Sheila Moore, Mary and I shopped for flowers, plants, and herbs. Mary purchased sturdy and beautiful deck-rail planters, and she and her husband prepared them by drilling holes for drainage. Katrina Holmes, Life Enrichment Director at the residence, had potting soil delivered for our use. And, a number of the residents offered us encouragement and gratitude for making their home very pretty! Finally, we were ready to provide the labor and experience necessary to get the job done!

Herbs and tomatoes were planted for the culinary professionals to use in the meals. Knock-out roses were planted for their low-maintenance beauty. Annuals were added to the deck planters. Hosta was donated and planted. We were so happy to see that Katrina had sod added to the courtyard area where we started planting last year. We took this as a sign that our presence had encouraged their participation, even without our direction.

Pat Getz, Ann Stevens Kelly, Jody Goulden, new member Carol Froehlich, Sheila, Mary, and I were the worker bees, and the many hands made for an easier task. Thank you to all who helped on this day and thank you to all the committee members who completed their terrific projects over the past months, in spite of COVID and any other obstacles that needed to be overcome!

We are planning to purchase a dogwood tree in the fall for the front entrance with the money donated by the family of Georga Shaw. Mary has found a company to make a beautiful plaque that will be placed with the tree in honor of Georga.



May Field Trip to Glen Burnie Gardens

By Renee Bayes



On May 19, 2022, twenty-six members of RSGC toured the Glen Burnie Gardens of the Museum of the Shenandoah in Winchester, Virginia. Originally comprising 1,241 acres, Glen Burnie is the historic home of Winchester's founder, James Wood. Mr. Wood most likely chose this site because of the natural springs that continue to produce water for the town of Winchester today.

The house was built in the 1730s. The present gardens were planned and laid out in the 1950s by Julian Wood Glass, Jr., the last surviving descendent of James Wood. The gardens, each with a different theme, are constructed as "rooms" for informal entertaining. The property also contains a family cemetery. Members enjoyed a boxed lunch in the gardens after the docent led tour.



Summer Solstice

By Maryam Zolecki



Each year we have four seasonal markers that help us follow the rhythms of the natural world, and the month of June brings one of these astronomical markers – the summer solstice. These four

calendar markers help us track seasonal changes in the years before the use of technology. They helped us know when to till the earth and plant seeds. They helped guide us to know when to harvest the fields and when to hunt for foraged plants. Seeing the progression of the flowers in your garden through the seasons gives you a pretty good sense of where you are in the year.

The summer solstice is the longest day of the year, and while it is the longest gardening day and welcomes the start of summer, it also begins the slow decline of sunlight each day. The summer solstice is a good time to consider your gardening activities and review your gardening planning to use the lessons from summer to prepare for next year's garden. It is typically too late to plant anything new, so it is a good time to sit back and take in what worked and what did not in the garden.

Some say the sign of a healthy garden is the number of birds that visit your yard, and if you see songbirds fluttering around your yard, it's more than just a beautiful sight, it's a sign of a healthy environment. This is because birds eat earthworms, grubs, and insects, which thrive in good, healthy, and chemical free soils and yards. As you consider your garden, sit back and listen as well. Do you have a quiet garden or are you treated with the songs of birds? If things are more on the quieter side, think about changes that can be made to entice those birds to visit.

In my household, the summer solstice is when we welcome the fairies to our garden. My kids and I build homes from twigs, bark, grass, leaves, and moss, and set a little bouquet made of tiny flowers at the doorstep to encourage the fairies to cross the threshold. We haven't spotted any of the magical folk yet, but we are certain that they visit since the bouquets are always gone the next day!



Garden To Do This Month

By Maryam Zolecki

As the temperature climbs, your garden should be busting out all over. There's not too much to do at this point about putting in permanent plants and perennials due to the increasing heat (although I know we are all tempted and do it on occasion!), so take care of what you got going on right now. Be sure to use sun protection as you go about your work.

- * If you haven't already done so, stake and support floppy perennials. Insert a stake into the ground about 4 to 6 inches from the crown of the plant, and make your stake about a foot taller than the anticipated height of the plant. Pound the stake a good amount into the ground with a mallet or hammer. Then, using material that will not damage the stalks, tie them in place securely, but not tied so tightly that the plant can't move.
- * Remove fading flowers from annuals to encourage continuous blooms. You can prune flowering shrubs that have just lost their blooms.
- * Make a sketch of where your spring flowering bulbs are before the foliage completely dies back. This helps mark the location of any that you will be dividing in the fall while you can still tell where they are.
- * Walk around your garden and cut a bouquet for the indoors (or perhaps a little posy for those bashful fairies).

Inside the Garden Gate: Member Garden Profiles



Jo Ella Samp – My garden started in 1986 when we purchased the house because it had the largest yard. We began clearing out the weeds and wisteria vines and planted some grass, southern magnolia, now 40 feet high, and a Kwanzan cherry tree. The gardens also started with pachysandra and ivy, which I have now taken out. The gardens grew larger over the years with vegetables and different flowers until I grew tired of trying to keep out deer, groundhogs, and rabbits and began to use more resistant plants. Seven years ago, I became a Master Gardener and began converting my yard to include more native varieties, and to exclude invasive plants. First, I had the Norway maple removed from the front yard and made a pollinator garden with milkweed, asters, beards-tongue, bee balm, and goldenrod.

Slowly, I removed all the ivy and planted ferns and other native perennials. I recently added winterberry, beauty-berry, service berry, and a paw paw tree. My yard is also a certified Audubon At Home yard, supplying food and water for the birds with no use of herbicides or pesticides and minimal amounts of fertilizer.



Maryam Zolecki – The garden at my house is a mix of a little bit old and mostly new. There are mature trees and shrubs kept from when we moved to the house in 2016, and then about half the existing shrubs and almost all of the flowering perennials have been planted within the last four years. My garden is sunny with a few shadier sites here and there, and fairly informal and cottage garden in style (sadly minus the mature planting but rather in spirit and anticipation). In summer 2020, I dug up most of the grass on the front south facing side and established 40 feet by 20 feet edible garden. Given its status as a fairly new garden, it is always “under construction,” and the information I have gained since becoming a member of RSGC in 2021 has inspired me to

work towards native, chemical-free, and pollinator friendly plantings as I go forth with the updates. My garden projects are also a constant negotiation with my kids since they would like to hold on to as much of the grass as possible to play soccer, badminton, and baseball – you will notice on your visit the two bald patches where my son stands to hit balls. My garden is a happy place where I can spend the entire day occupied with one thing or another, or just lounging around with my family.



Anita Brown – Last year I added a dwarf conifer garden which requires lots of sunshine. Until I lost my large oak, I also had a shade garden with brunnera, hostas, etc. Now this garden gets semi-shade. Having completed daffodil school, I have recently started a new daffodil garden on the southwest side of my house but all these flowers are gone and there is only a mulched area now. My oldest garden is just off my deck. I started this garden after I moved into the house a number of years ago. Unfortunately, my lack of invasive plants was very limited at the time so this garden does not represent what I would now like. Several years ago, I planted a Sango kaku coral bark maple in my center garden, and it is my pride and joy. The trunk is outstanding in winter followed by lovely lime green leaves that turn red/orange in the fall. Over the last few years, I have planted conifers, maples and shrubs in lieu of perennial flowers. I think gardeners do this as they age!

Flower Festival in Italy

By Sandy Wade



In May 2022, we attended the Infiorata di Noto, which is an annual floral mosaic festival in the southeastern Sicilian town of Noto. It was started in the 1980s as a celebration of spring and takes place the third weekend of May. Noto is a UNESCO World Heritage site that was settled initially in pre-Roman times. A major earthquake in 1693 virtually destroyed the town and killed over half its residents. The city was rebuilt as an homage to Sicilian baroque style, and it's absolutely beautiful.

The festival each year is an artistic and civic triumph. Local artists design images that will be recreated with flower blossoms and petals on a 200-yard stretch of via Nicolaci, one of the most elegant streets of the city centre. They work nonstop on Friday and Saturday to outline their designs in chalk, then bring the images to life with hundreds of thousands of flowers. The festival opens on Sunday morning and visitors walk the sidewalk on either side of the street to enjoy the spectacle. During our visit, about an hour after the festival started, a brilliant opera singer came out on one of the balconies and sang for the festival crowd. Magical!



Photo Gallery



This orchid hadn't bloomed for years, so I guess it really likes its new location and is making up for lost time!
~Mary Garnett



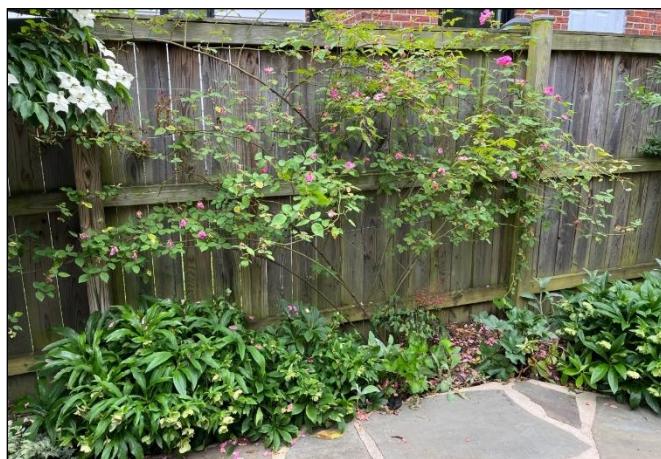
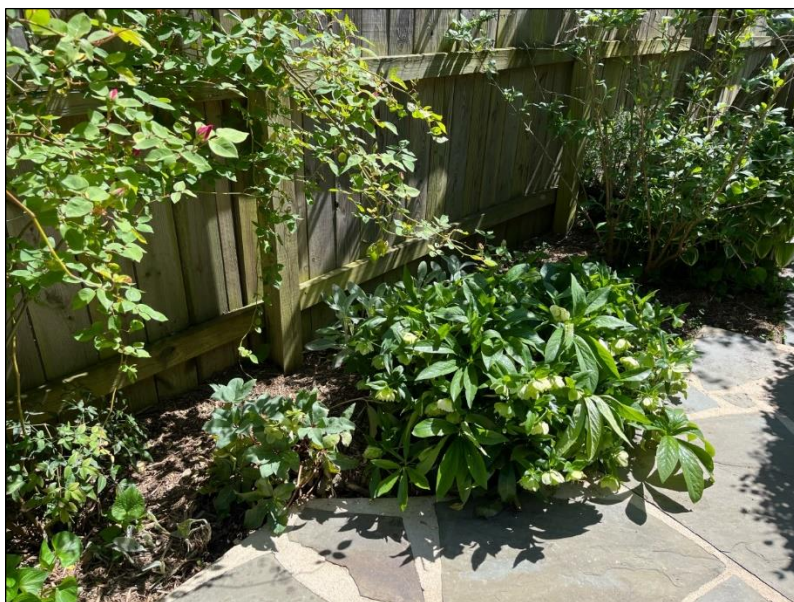
A blooming rhododendron missing a branch or two on the right side from a tree falling on it.
~Susan Scotti



My three-year-old, seven foot fig tree did not fare well after the cold weather and ice storms this past winter. I had given up on it, and in early May, a little sapling started peeking out from the base and the tree is now quickly adding height.
~ Maryam Zolecki



Sheila Moore, Sharon Siems, and I designed 14 centerpieces for the Neighbors' Club centennial celebration on June 1, 2022.
~Renee Bayes



A tough goodbye to my Arlington,
Virginia garden that I developed and
lovingly tended for 47 years.
~Jane Robinson