

# 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

## OFFICERS

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## GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 10:00 am  
Little Falls Presbyterian Church, Arlington, VA

**Our meetings are open to the public, and guests and potential new members with an interest in gardening, floral design, horticulture and community service activities are always welcome and are asked to RSVP to [rockspringgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:rockspringgardenclub@gmail.com) in order to attend.**



Sogetsu Ikebana designer Yoshie Kurose will demonstrate Ikebana designs to inspire and welcome a happy and healthy New Year! Yoshie is a long-time practitioner of the art of Ikebana and a member of Sogetsu Washington DC and Ikebana International.

Next Board Meeting – February 2, 2023 at 10 am  
Next General Meeting – February 16, 2023 at 10 am

## President's Message



Welcome 2023! I hope all of you enjoyed the holidays with family and friends. My first new year's inspiration is the imminent blooming of my two amaryllises. The second inspiration is that I made no resolutions.

For our Club, we have some exciting events and challenges over the next six months.

The challenges: January's Design of the Month – our Show committee's "ingenious" subject. Anita assured the Board that this is a legitimate design category in the National Garden Club Handbook, and what tickles me is that creating such a design should bring out our humorous (and whimsical) side. See more in Anita's article in the newsletter.

Elections for 2023-2025: The club must identify a slate of officer candidates for the next two years, the guidance of which is in our by-laws. Charlotte Benjamin has graciously agreed to lead the nominating committee, and the composition of it will be announced at the January 2023 general meeting. Its task is to determine the slate of 4 candidates for publication in the March 2023 newsletter. If you are interested in being nominated, please email Charlotte.

We have two major events coming up. The first is a welcome cocktail party for new members who have joined the club over the last three years (e.g. the "covid years"), which will be held at my house on February 23, 2023. The Board agreed to limit the invitees to the new members and the executive committee chairs – so as not to overwhelm the new members and to give ample opportunity to talk to everyone. An invitation is forthcoming, but please put this on your calendar.

The second event is a club luncheon on May 18, 2023 at Washington Golf and Country Club to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a club. The Board voted to provide full funding for the luncheon, and a committee of 10 volunteers will begin planning it. I hope everyone will be available to celebrate together.

Finally, please make every effort to get to know our new members at our January 19, 2023 meeting, especially at lunch. Now that we are safely able to be together in person, we can really get to know each other.

*Dianne*

## Design of the Month

By Anita Brown



Here are the differences in the two designs:

When using the Functional design, the table is set for the actual service of food in the same manner as we set our tables for our meals at home. When doing an Exhibition table design, however, all table appointments (dishes, glasses, etc.) are placed randomly in a creative manner. They may be placed on some structure or even attached to a staging panel.

National Garden Club rules provide two types of table designs – Functional and Exhibition. This month we are choosing a design we have not done in the past – an Exhibition table design.



While a floral design is not necessary for an Exhibition design, some plant material must be used, as seen in the pictures.

I hope you get your creative juices flowing and bring your masterpiece to our January 19, 2023 meeting.

## Budget Report

Beginning Balance:  
Revenues:  
Expenses:  
Ending Balance:



# Committee Reports

## Horticulture

### The Holly and the Ivy (or the *Ilex* and the *hedera*)

By Christine Wegman

“Of all the trees that are in the woods, the holly bears the crown.” As the old song implies, this is the season when holly is most appreciated. For centuries in northern Europe holly has had a central place in midwinter celebrations. It was the subject of popular song and an essential element in decorating houses for Christmas. Any plant that has so endeared itself as to be the subject of song is worth a close look.

Holly comes in almost endless varieties, ranging in height from 4 to 40 feet, and in shape from short, rounded shrubs to majestic domed trees. It has both evergreen and deciduous forms, and is native to Europe, Asia and North America. Some forms have variegated foliage, many have beautiful red, yellow or black berries. Full grown evergreen holly trees have a beautiful, dense, symmetrical appearance, adding elegance to a landscape.



Holly is dioecious, that is all plants are either male or female. Male plants have small flowers and no berries; female plants have larger flowers and produce berries. Female plants need a male plant nearby in order to produce berries. One male plant will be sufficient to pollinate many female plants, but they must be in fairly close proximity. Breeders have made it relatively easy to identify plants by generally giving different cultivar names to male and female hollies. If berries are important, a good nursery will be able to identify the appropriate male and female plants you need.

Hollies need acidic soil and plenty of sun to thrive. In our hot summers, most will grow well in some shade, but the variegated hollies really need full sun.

There are a number of beautiful deciduous native holly cultivars (*Ilex verticillata* and *I. decidua*) that form attractive vase shaped shrubs and produce beautiful fall berries. Many winterberry varieties are quite compact at 5-6 feet high and wide. Varieties may be early or late blooming, so you will need to have a male plant with the same bloom time as the female plants in order to insure berry production.

*I. verticillata* ‘Red Sprite’ is a beautiful compact plant that grows 5-6 feet and will be pollinated by *I. verticillata* ‘Jim Dandy’. There is a true dwarf form, named *I. verticillata* ‘Red Sprite Nana’ (pictured), which grows 2.5 to 5 feet, also pollinated by ‘Jim Dandy’. *Ilex verticillata* are good plants for rain gardens, since they are very tolerant of both wet and dry conditions.

Japanese holly (*I. crenata*) is a versatile shrub. One particularly attractive variety is 'Sky Pencil', which grows 6-8 feet tall and only 2-3 feet wide. It would be perfect in a protected courtyard. I tried it once in a fairly windy site near my front steps, and by spring the poor plant was splayed to the ground.

One of my favorite plants is the 'Miss Patricia' holly (*I. x latifolia* 'DAPAT'). This is a dense, compact holly growing to about 8 feet high and 5 feet wide in 10 years. I have five mature plants at the back border of my garden and they make a beautiful evergreen hedge. I have planted white 'Acoma' crape myrtles in front of the hollies, and this makes a pretty cool summer view.

Another favorite is the 'Dragon Lady' holly (*I. x aquiperyi* 'Meschick') (pictured), a complex hybrid that produces a beautiful relatively narrow tree, 10-20 feet high by 6-8 feet wide. This makes a great plant for the corner of a house. Mine is six years old and impervious to fairly windy conditions and herds of deer.



Recently there have been two new introductions of *Ilex glabra*, our native inkberry holly, which are real improvements over the species. Inkberry holly is a pretty evergreen holly. It is a salt and wind tolerant shrub that has a strong tendency to lose its lower leaves and get leggy as it ages. 'Gem Box' and 'Strongbox' (pictured) are hybrids that are claimed to retain their bushy shape and lower leaves as they age. I tried five 'Gem Box' in a very exposed area about a year and a half ago, and they have done very well. Both varieties are Proven Winner plants, which I have found to be very reliable. There doesn't seem to be much difference between the two. They form attractive 2-3 feet high and wide shrubs.

Although this article is titled, 'The Holly and Ivy' because of the song, there is not a lot we like to say about the ivy these days. Nonetheless, I think we have gone overboard in our aversion to ivy. It is only invasive when it sets seeds, and this only happens if it is allowed to climb. I have a beautiful variegated Persian ivy, *Hedera colchica* 'My Heart' (pictured), that has been in my garden for over 40 years. It meanders along the ground and has never shown any tendency to climb. It makes a very pretty ground cover.



## Liaison

GreenScapes Symposium is on February 17, 2023. This virtual conference is the largest in the mid-Atlantic focused on sustainable landscapes and native plant gardens. For Master Gardeners, GreenScapes offers continuing education units (CEUs) from the Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Pennsylvania Master Gardener programs. To learn more about the speakers & topics and to register, visit [www.brooksidegreen.org](http://www.brooksidegreen.org).

The NGC Convention is scheduled for May 2-May 4, 2023 at The Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Check out [2023 NGC Convention Details | National Garden Clubs, Inc.](https://www.ngcconvention.com) for more information.



## Senior Outreach

### Bringing Holiday Cheer

By Mary Kudless

2022 marked our third year of collecting and gifting socks and personal bathing items to the seniors who reside at Mary Marshall. Our members' overwhelming generosity was greatly appreciated by the residents and staff and our gifts were distributed to the residents on December 24, 2022.



Terry Holmes kindly led the project by receiving in person donations and continuous packages to her home over a two week-period. She and her husband, John, sorted and organized the hundreds of donated socks and bath products and we thank them and Ann Duffy who came and spent a long afternoon assisting in this effort.

A delivery team of AnnMarie Fay, Liddy Schwartz, Mary Garnett, and John and Mary Kudless brought the many bags of donations to the residence and were greeted by Katrina Holmes, the Residential Life Coordinator who intended to match the donations to each resident's individual needs using some very clever gift sacks and bags that AnnMarie and another Club member donated to the effort.



The Senior Outreach Committee thanks our Club members for their creativity in selecting and purchasing the many styles of socks that the residents need. We also noted many great choices in the bath product category. The residents do not have the disposable income to buy these items on their own, and as we all know, there is nothing like putting on a pair of well-fitting and comfortable socks after a nice warm shower and shampoo!

Thank you RSGC members for your kindness and generosity.

## Holiday Tea

This year, Club members were able to partake in the annual Holiday Tea celebration, and a wonderful afternoon was spent at the home of Renee Bayes enjoying the delicious food provided by the host committee and the beautiful designs created by club members.





## Photo Gallery

Alum Rock Park in San Jose, California. The park dates from 1872 and is now a wildlife refuge. There are mineral springs, and at one time, there was a spa for healing baths. It is one of California's oldest state parks. The Penitencia Creek runs through the park. One photo shows peppercorn hanging in a pepper tree. The California pepper tree is native of Peru and it was introduced to California by Spanish missionaries.

~ Kate Abrahams

