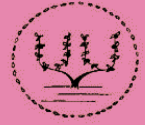


THE GARDENZETTE



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

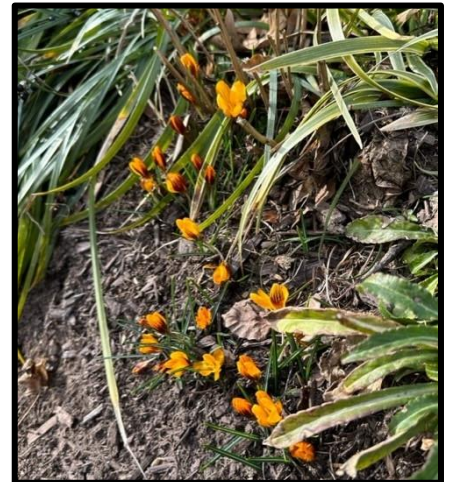
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Dianne Simmons

Vice President
Carolyn Barone

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Jane Robinson

Treasurer
Sherry Foster

Newsletter Editor
Maryam Zolecki



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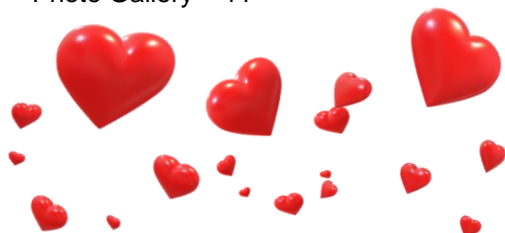
GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, February 16, 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 in order to attend.



This month’s program is titled Anita and Thea’s Big Adventures. Enjoy a fun slide show and talk with club members, Anita Brown and Thea McGinnis, about their May 2022 tour of the gardens of Cornwall and Devon in England, plus their jaunt up to Southwest Scotland. Gardens and castles galore!



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

President's Message



Here we are in the dead of winter, putting us in low energy mode just to keep warm. I, however, have had to channel the energy absorbed during my recent jazz cruise through the Caribbean to keep on top of our upcoming club events. This month's letter is devoted to these.

We are about to enter two "stages" of our club year: renewal of memberships and the work of the nominating committee to develop a slate of candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer for the 2023-2025 period. Charlotte Benjamin is chairing this committee, and I invite you to let her know if you would like to serve in one of these roles. On renewing your membership, VP Carolyn Barone has edited the form which will be passed out at our February general meeting. The Board also agreed to put this form into our digital library, which should make the process more efficient. We hope to offer this avenue for renewal this year.

We will hold a luncheon at Washington Golf and Country Club on May 18, 2023 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of our club. The Board decided to charge each member who will attend \$20, which with the \$1000 we set aside in the budget, will cover all expenses. Members can give their \$20 to Carolyn or myself at the next three general meetings so we have an accurate count by April 20, 2023. We have a planning committee working on this now.

Finally, our March 2023 general meeting will be devoted (after regular business) to discussing how we wish to use funds we have accrued for charitable causes. In the past we have provided some scholarships for flower show schools, for children to attend the weeklong Outdoor Lab summer camp and, during COVID-19, to local organizations in need of food and related items for those facing hardship. But, we have money we need to obligate, especially monies we raised for students to attend the Outdoor Lab; we just have

not had success in collaborating with Arlington Public Schools to make this happen. Please come with ideas!

See you February 16th.

Dianne

Design of the Month

By Charlotte Benjamin



This month's design is Multi-Rhythmic. Most often this is a creative floral design that has two (2) or more rhythms running through the arrangement. It's important to remember that one (1) rhythm must dominate.

Rhythm can be achieved by repetition of form, color or texture (rough/smooth, shiny/dull, etc.). The rhythm can go in any direction and may be continuous, interrupted or crossed.

Gradation is another way to express rhythm in floral designs. It is "a gradual change in size, weight, texture or color. Traditional Designs rely on gradation for pleasing rhythm".

The dictionary defines rhythm as "an ordered reoccurrence." This design is like a rhythmic dance with floral material - enjoy the dance!

Budget Report

Beginning Balance:
Revenues:
Expenses:
Ending Balance:

Committee Reports

Horticulture

Garden Thugs (One Gardener's Treasure Is Another's Invasive Thug)

By Christine Wegman

Some garden thugs are universally agreed to be unwanted monsters, such as *Pueraria montana var. lobate*, commonly known as kudzu, pictured at left completely engulfing someone's house. Or is it universally agreed? For centuries kudzu has been cultivated in its native China, where the root is used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat fever, acute dysentery, diarrhea, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. This is not to suggest that we learn to love kudzu, since anyone who has driven much south of Blacksburg, Virginia knows how horribly invasive it can be. But, there are obviously places in the world where it grows in controlled conditions and is a valuable plant. Those places just, as obviously, don't include the hot and humid climate of the southeastern U.S.



These days it is popular to think that only "exotic", that is non-native, plants are invasive, but that's not strictly accurate. *Toxicodendron rydbergii* - poison ivy - would never be welcome in my garden, never mind that it's native to our own region. Still, poison ivy does not grow rampantly out of control over square miles of land as kudzu can. And, that is because in its native habitat it exists in an ecosystem that naturally restrains its growth. What makes a plant an invasive monster are the conditions under which it is grown. Those include climate, sun, shade, soil and water.



Not every plant can become invasive. Many spread too slowly ever to be really invasive. It is hard to imagine European ginger (*Asarum europaeum*, pictured at left) or any of the beautiful asarum family growing in unwanted places, but if it is happy it will seed readily. Hellebores, too, when they have been established for a few years will self-seed.

Personally, I feel that it is not possible to have too much asarum or too many hellebores, but I own the possibility that others may not feel that way. I am not a real fan of *Arum italicum* (Italian arum, pictured at right), probably because of its orange berries, which clash with pinks nearby, and because its leaves go dormant in summer. We have it in our garden under an elm tree and when the tree was young and didn't have much of a shade canopy, the arum went wild and spread out of control in lots of places where it was unwanted and has proved impossible to dislodge. As the elm tree has grown, the arum has stopped its wild takeover. The lesson I have taken from this is that a plant's environment is critical to whether it is a treasured specimen or an invasive brute. I have also concluded that labeling a plant as invasive is a very personal thing. I'm the only person I know who considers arum to be invasive. Many friends with beautiful gardens grow and treasure this plant.





Many plants that are invasive in a well-tended garden can be a gardener's only hope in a very difficult location. Nandina is a prime example of this sort of plant. I have mentioned before that we built a house in Albemarle County north of Charlottesville seven years ago and started a garden from scratch in what had been a cow pasture. The soil is not good, there is almost no shade, the land is exposed to high winds in the winter, and our property hosts herds of deer throughout the year. My husband, Charlie, is a wonderful gardener, but he is challenged by the

tough conditions. We have come to love anything that will grow and that the deer will not eat. And this includes nandina. Michael Dirr describes nandina as a "bread-and-butter broadleaf evergreen shrub with alley-cat toughness and durability." Yes, it will sucker, colonize and seed, but it is impervious to disease, pests, deer and wind. If you have a site with disease, pests, deer and wind, nandina is the plant for you.

There are four plant traits that tend to produce less vigorous forms than the species: leaf variegation, light leaf color, white flower color, and compactness of form. Many years ago, I grew a white-berried, light green leaf *Nandina* 'Alba' with a group of the species. Eventually the tougher species crowded out the 'Alba'. I also have an old *Nandina* 'Firepower' which has never suckered or seeded. 'Firepower' is a compact form that does not have berries. Perhaps, then, choosing a compact, dwarf or light foliated plant will mitigate the problem of invasiveness. In addition, the hybridization process often develops forms that do not reproduce readily; many, though by no means all, of the new hybrid introductions (of any plant) will not seed. I love the relatively new *Nandina* 'Lemon Lime' (pictured above) with its compact, three-foot form and chartreuse foliage. Like 'Firepower', it shows no sign of becoming invasive.

So, as the old saying goes, "One man's meat is another's poison." Or, one gardener's treasure is another's monster. Soil, sun, and climate can make all the difference between a welcome survivor and an enemy invader. So too can the variety or cultivar. Lighter foliage or white flower color and compact or dwarf form can limit a plant's ability to colonize.

Membership

Membership Renewals

By Carolyn Barone, Membership Chair

It's that time of year again! Renewals for the coming 2023-2024 membership year is fast approaching. The forms will be available at the February general meeting on February 16, 2023. REMEMBER to bring your checkbook to make the renewal process seamless!

One of the many benefits of being a member of our Club is that we are a member of Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, the Virginia Piedmont District, the Southern Atlantic Region, plus the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, District III, Central Atlantic Region AND the National Garden Clubs, Inc. As such, we are able to take advantage of ongoing educational programs, leading to certification in any of the following areas: Landscape Design, Flower Show judge, Gardening studies and Environmental studies. Did you know that you can attend these schools not only in Virginia or the national capital region, but in any other state if you happen to be traveling? A Landscape Design course will be offered on May 22-23, 2023 in Alexandria, Virginia. And, an upcoming design workshop is set for Wednesday, March 8, 2023 in Bethesda, Maryland. Another benefit of the Club is obtaining scholarships to attend any of the schools. These can be applied for by all.

Perhaps one of your New Year's resolutions was to learn something new or create a new design? Well, this is your chance... the Garden Club membership makes this so easy.

Garden Therapy

Forever Evergreens

By Kate Abrahams



On January 12, 2023, the Garden Therapy Committee taught Glebe Elementary School's preschool class about evergreen plants, especially conifers such as pine trees. Kate Abrahams led the program for eight young children and brought examples of broadleaf evergreen shrubs, such as aucuba, camellia, boxwood, holly, and myrtle, and a branch of miniature spruce with tiny needles.

Susan Scotti brought beautiful short pine boughs from her tree with long soft needles bunched together. Kate described the difference between deciduous and evergreen plants, showed a variety of evergreen leaves, and talked about conifers. Pat Getz shared a very large pine cone with opened scales to release its seeds. The children touched some types of evergreen leaves and learned that conifers have cones and needlelike leaves. They smelled a bar of fir scented soap to experience the scent. One child fell in love with a pine bough and danced with it around the room!

Next, a familiar tune with new words about a teeny tiny pine tree kept the kids active as they stood and moved their arms to show the snow weighing down the boughs and lifting up again when the sun melted the snow away and the little pine grew taller every day. It was sung to the tune of the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" nursery rhyme, so some kids continued to hum and sing the song through the program.

Carol Froehlich enthusiastically read a picture book titled *Little Pine* about a pine tree growing from a little seed into a big tree that feeds and shelters birds and animals with cones and strong protective boughs. Carol asked questions about the pictures in the story that the children were happy to answer.



As the finale, the children completed two projects with guidance from Mary Sliwa, Susan Scotti, Pat Getz and Carol Froehlich and several classroom aides. The first was creating a forest scene with tree and animal stickers on iridescent paper and the second was rolling Crisco-covered pine cones into bird seed to make bird feeders. Everyone assisted the children as needed to

complete the projects and store them in plastic bags or paper mailers to take home in time for dismissal. The preschool families will no doubt enjoy watching birds come to pick seeds off the pine cone feeders this month. Many thanks to all the committee members for their energy and enthusiasm preparing for and managing a very busy program in forty-five short minutes!



Youth Activities

Back in School

By Susan Scotti

The Youth Activities committee is finally back at Tuckahoe Elementary School working with second graders. After a three-year hiatus, arriving at the school on January 24, 2023 was pretty exciting - our first program since February 2020. Initially, the pause was for COVID-19, and then for a while, the second grades had different lunch schedules. We were happy to be welcomed back with smiles and greetings in the office and assistance with the new computer identification check-in. The Outdoor Learning Coordinator was there to show us to the room she has designated for our use. It is a real improvement from the hallway where we were previously located. It also has the advantage of being near the cafeteria so the children can pick up their lunch and arrive quickly. Three volunteers from each of the three classes arrived with their trays, happy and anxious to find out what was in store for them. The program was about birds: the ones we see in our yards, our state bird, how they benefit our gardens, what they eat and how we can make life easier for the ones that don't migrate to warmer locations. When asked if they had birdfeeders in their yards, all raised their hands and several had stories and comments to share. The enthusiasm continued with every question and bit of information.

After clearing their trays, the project of making feeders by spreading a mixture of cornmeal and Crisco on pinecones then rolling them in birdseed was eagerly approached. When finished, a loop of twine was tied on for a hanger. Most chose to take them home for their yard, but three wanted to hang theirs in the school courtyard to watch from the classroom window. The program was led by co-chair Susan Scotti, and committee members Lynda Martin, Carolyn Barone and Nancy Linehan assisted by setting up, helping the children and making it all run smoothly. We are happy to also have on the committee Pat Getz and co-chair Carol Froehlich, who were unable to be with us. Looking forward to our next program on February 28, 2023.

Senior Outreach

Feeding Our Feathered Friends

By Renee Bayes



Members of the Senior Outreach committee met on January 17, 2023 at Mary Marshall Assisted Living facility for a winter project. The residents enjoyed making pinecone bird feeders using pinecones,

Crisco and birdseed. The pinecones were tied with red and white yarn for placement on trees outside of the facility. A big thank you to the Senior Outreach committee for their continued assistance and support of the residents at Mary Marshall.



Liaison

NCAGC District IV will host a design workshop with NGC Accredited Master Judge Betty Ann Galway on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 in Bethesda, Maryland. To register your spot, email theamcginnis@gmail.com.

Join the Belvoir Garden Club for a bus trip to Blooming Hills Lavender Farm on May 18, 2023. Email josellers@cox.net.

District II members and their friends are invited to a day filled with fun, friends, and flowers with a bust trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show on Monday, March 6, 2023. The price of \$125 includes ticket to show, bus, lunch, snacks, water and wine. Contact Anne Dremulk at 703-606-1742.

NCAGC will be offering Landscape Design School, Course 2 at River Farm in Alexandria, Virginia on May 22-23, 2023. Contact LDS@ncagardenclubs.org for information.

The Prince William Native Plant Symposium is on February 11, 2023. Register at bit.ly/3hCSRYu.

Sissinghurst Garden

By Sandy Wade

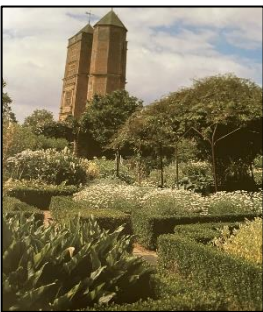


Nestled in the Weald of Kent near Cranbrook, Southeast of London, is one of the jewels of English gardens, Sissinghurst. It was created from the ruins of a 16th century estate by novelist, journalist, and poet Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962), and her husband, diplomat, author, biographer, and politician Sir Harold Nicolson (1886-1968).

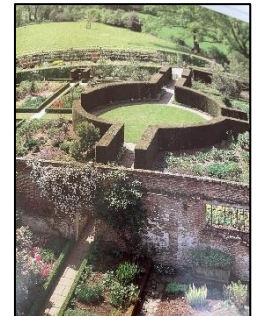
They purchased the 450 acres of dilapidated red brick buildings and fields in 1930. By 1938, approximately five acres surrounding the estate's restored manor house and adjacent buildings had been transformed by living and hardscape structure into magnificent "garden rooms" creating the Rose Garden, Lime Walk, Nuttery, Herb Garden, Crescent, Moat Walk, Cottage Garden, Orchard, and Lake. Perhaps the most celebrated garden room is the White Garden finally completed in 1950. Its color palate is limited to white, grey, silver, and green.



Both Vita and Harold are credited as the designers of Sissinghurst, though several professional landscape designers contributed to the property over the years. Harold's focus was creating the formal geometry of the garden with precise siting of brick walls, axial walks, and high evergreen hedges to gradually reveal a vista or one garden room to another. Vita excelled in designing the exuberant, informal and tightly spaced mass plantings of 200 varieties of roses, perennials, shrubs, and annuals. Each garden room represents a particular theme or color scheme.



In the center of the garden rises the four-story red brick Tower flanked by two turrets. Visitors can climb the spiral stairs inside the tower to a rooftop view of the entire garden revealing its brilliant design and beautiful plantings. Also, within the Tower is Vita's writing study preserved just as it was at the time of her death. On her desk are photos of Harold and very close friend Virginia Woolf.



Today, eight fulltime gardeners maintain Sissinghurst for the several hundred thousand annual visitors. If you are in Kent to see Sissinghurst there are several other glorious gardens to see in that part of England: Scotney Castle, Hever Castle (childhood home of Anne Boleyn), Leeds Castle, and a bit further away in Sussex, Great Dixter.

Happy 102nd Birthday

By Renee Bayes



Alice Conrad joined Rock Spring Garden Club (RSGC) in 1971 and served as president in 1991-1992. Over the years, Alice has gifted many of us with her beautiful pottery, which we all cherish. Alice is a much loved RSGC member, and a very creative floral designer and wonderful teacher and friend.



Alice's birthday arrangement designed by Renee Bayes.

January Meeting Recap

Sogetsu Ikebana designer Yoshie Kurose stopped by to demonstrate Ikebana designs to 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. Club members learned that the three elements of Ikebana flower arrangements are line, color, and mass. Although there are “no strict rules” in these types of designs, Yoshie’s designs highlighted fresh approaches, movement, balance, and harmony, and the effective use of “space”.

For the general meeting, club members learned about the different committees, and please do not hesitate to reach out to committee chairs to learn more or if interested in joining and contributing to a committee.

The designs contributed by club members were lovely, and the horticulture specimens were a reminder that nature continues even in winter!



Plants to consider for New Year's designs include:

pine

bamboo

nandina

flowering quince

pussy willow

ornamental cabbage





January Design of the Month: Exhibition Table Design
 a table design where all table appointments
 (dishes, glasses, etc.) are placed randomly
 in a creative manner





MINISTRONE SOUP

Serves 6-8 people

Ingredients: 3 tablespoons olive oil, 1 28 oz can or two 14.5 oz cans of fire roasted diced tomatoes (Muir Glen brand or Hunts preferred) , 1 medium yellow or white onion, peeled and diced, 1 cup celery, trimmed and diced (3 ribs), 1 cup sliced carrots, peeled, trimmed and sliced thinly like coins (2-3), 1 cup Yukon Gold potatoes, 2-3 peeled and diced, 1 tablespoon minced garlic, 8 cups water, 2 Tablespoons Seasoned Vegetable broth base concentrate (Better Than Bouillon) in jar, 1 cup fresh green beans, trimmed and sliced into ½ inch pieces, 1 teaspoon dried basil, ½ teaspoon dried thyme, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 can white cannellini beans, drained and rinsed, 1 can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed, 1 cup zucchini, diced, 2-3 small, 2 cups fresh spinach, sliced or torn into small pieces, 1 cup dried elbow macaroni pasta, pepper to taste, parmesan rinds if you have some

In large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, carrots and celery and cook stirring often until onions become soft. Add minced garlic and stir to keep from burning. Add fire roasted tomatoes and potatoes.

Then add 6 cups of water. Add vegetable bouillon concentrate and simmer stirring to mix together. Add green beans, kidney and cannellini beans, basil, thyme and oregano and stir well. If you have parmesan rinds to add for flavoring, throw them in. Allow to simmer until potatoes are nearly cooked. Then 15 minutes before serving the soup, add the macaroni pasta, zucchini and spinach pieces. When pasta is al dente, time to remove the parmesan rinds, season with pepper to taste and serve the soup. The bouillon base is quite salty so you probably will need to add more salt. If the soup is too thick, add more water and bouillon concentrate as needed.

Serve with grated parmesan cheese and Italian loaf bread.

Tips: You can substitute other vegetables, beans, regular canned tomatoes, chicken broth, etc. and add more herbs or hot pepper flakes to make it to your liking. This recipe is a general guide to a typical minestrone recipe. The fresher the vegetables the better it tastes and serving it right away is best! Save parmesan rinds in your freezer for this soup.

Optional: Parmesan cheese rinds. These add a lot of flavor while soup is simmering and be sure to remove before serving.

Photo Gallery



Succulents Collection



Reflective Design



Terrarium



Dish Garden

Piedmont District Judges Council Standard Flower Show on January 23, 2023. The theme was Winter Wanderings and the challenge was finding horticulture during the winter months.

~Thea McGinnis



Not much color in the garden, but the bulbs and hellebore are hard at work through cold weather. ~Kate Abrahams



~George Ruppert



~Maryam Zolecki