

# 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

President  
Dianne Simmons

Vice President  
Carolyn Barone

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Jane Robinson

Treasurer  
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Maryam Zolecki



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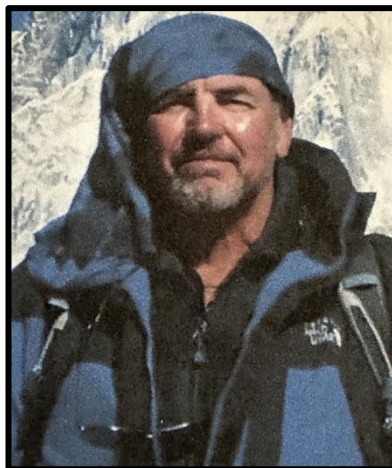
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## GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 20, 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.**



What happens to all the garbage and trash left behind in the Himalaya? Mountain geographer Alton Byers will present a program titled "Restoring Damaged Ecosystems" focused on the conservation and restoration of alpine ecosystems in the Himalayan region.

## President's Message



Spring has sprung, and I see so much potential in the emerging color of plant life around me. But, the predominant image that has stayed with me since Saturday is that of daffodils. Hundreds of them. That is because this past Saturday, I clerked with some of you at the Washington Daffodil

Society (WDS) flower show in Alexandria, Virginia. Walking into the site, I was stunned by the number of species entered into the show. My exposure to daffodils is limited to my mother's gardens in the states we lived in growing up – Illinois, Kentucky, Connecticut, and Wisconsin. She called them jonquils, which I figured was the "New England" term because she hailed from Massachusetts. Saturday, I learned that there are about twelve divisions of daffodils, one of them being jonquilla daffodils. Other divisions include double daffodils, small-cupped daffodils, large-cupped daffodils and trumpet daffodils, to name just a few.

The point of this is that once again my involvement the garden club has provided a learning experience – and in this case many teachable moments - of a floral world I'd not known. Being at the show, with many others who clerked and judged, was an Easter treat as well. Some of our members entered specimens and arrangements and won awards. There are photos of their accomplishments at the end of the newsletter. Kudos to you all.

We have a great program this month, and then two special programs to finish this year, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon at the Washington Golf and Country Club in May, and the June garden tour with an installation of new officers. If you have not, please register for the luncheon. The committee has worked hard to give us a great way to celebrate our club's long life.

*Dianne*

## Design of the Month

By Anita Brown, Show Committee Co-Chair



This month's design is an Underwater Design, and this creative design requires that some or all plant material be under water in a clear container. Any components that may be used should also be partly or wholly submerged.

The NGC Handbook does not specify what portion of the design should be out of water and what portion should be submerged. However, the designer must adhere to the principal of proportion in making that decision.

Not all plant material does well under water. Citrus fruits (lemons, oranges and limes), roses, tropical flowers, lilies, evergreens, and seed pods can be used for their lasting effects.

Remember that components under water cannot float and must be anchored or propped against the side of the container. Also note that water magnifies everything seen through it.

This is an easy design for members to help fulfill their design requirements for the year or to just see how creative they can be! Have fun.

## Budget Report

Beginning Balance:

Receipts:

Expenses:

Ending Balance:

Next Board Meeting – May 4, 2023 at 10 am

No General Meeting Next Month



# Committee Reports

## Horticulture

### Japanese Maples

By Christine Wegman

A maple is a must for every Japanese garden, whether large or small, whether planted in the ground or potted as a bonsai. Japanese literature is replete with poems celebrating the exquisite beauty of these trees. During the classic Edo period (1603-1867), there were as many as 200 hundred named cultivars, although many were lost during World War 2. Since then, breeding has revived and there are now at least 250 cultivars, many available internationally.

Horticulturally, Japanese maples refer mainly to the cultivars of *Acer palmatum* and *Acer japonicum*. The variety has one of the greatest diversity of sizes, forms, colors and potential landscape uses of any group of plants. Dwarf varieties can be as short as two or three feet high, easily trained to cascade over a wall, or can grow as tall as 40 feet, with beautiful vase shaped upright form.



Several characteristics are shared by all Japanese maples. They are deciduous, that is, they lose their foliage in the fall. All share a characteristic palmate shaped leaf, some highly dissected with a lacy appearance. Leaf color can vary from green to yellow to orange to red. New growth is very bright, mellowing out as the season progresses, with a final burst of color as the weather cools. Many varieties have red new woody growth, which continues through winter. *A. palmatum* 'Sango Kaku', the coral bark maple, is a popular variety, but there are many others with bright winter stems. All share a graceful form that is beautiful throughout the year, whether leafed out or bare branched. Most need some shade, especially those with variegated leaves, but a few of the red-leaved varieties will tolerate full sun. Japanese maples, like all

maples, prefer slightly acidic, well-drained soil, with minimal fertilizer, are not particularly bothered by disease, and are generally pretty deer resistant. Maples are shallow-rooted trees, so they will perform best if they are given their own space without competition.

Japanese maples can provide a beautiful focal point for a small garden or even a balcony. They are particularly effective when planted with conifers. There is a size that will fit in any garden, and they are widely available in local nurseries. Many dwarf varieties are well suited to containers, but should not be combined with other plantings in the same pot because of their shallow roots. Dwarf maples will grow well in containers if they are fertilized on a regular basis and not allowed either to dry out or get too wet.





Maples can be pruned and shaped easily and the top growth of weeping varieties can be somewhat controlled by clipping off a few of the tallest new shoots. I have a dwarf weeping maple that was given to us by my parents as a housewarming present. After 40 years, it has only reached a height of 4 feet. Pruning can be done at any time of the year, except in early spring when the plants first break dormancy and the sap is running high. (This is a general rule for all pruning.)

Unfortunately, most of the dwarf Japanese weeping maples sold in nurseries are trained on thick, straight, single stems (see picture at left) and pollarded, that is cut off at a certain height and trained in a sort of umbrella shape. This destroys their graceful natural shape and looks particularly unattractive in winter. It is

worth searching for one that has been allowed to grow into its natural form, as seen in the picture at the beginning of this article.

## Information Management

### Technology Grants

By Joan Hession

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic caused the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. (NCAGC) to be concerned that their member clubs would not continue meeting. As a result, NCAGC started a program to help member clubs improve communications with their members. Over the last two years, Rock Spring Garden Club (RSGC) has been the recipient of technology grants from NCAGC to assist with using the Zoom platform. In the beginning, NCAGC had a seminar on how to set up a remote meeting so that members could safely meet during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first grant that RSGC received in 2020 was for an HD USB computer web camera. It has been a big help for including members via Zoom to board meetings and general meetings for the last two years. It is portable – I can use it or Mary Garnett can use it with our personal computers to display the current meetings on Zoom.

The second grant, which we received this year, was for a USB C to HDMI adapter. We currently have a projector which we can use for speakers. The connection for the speakers' presentations requires a cable from their machines to the projector. We have a HDMI cable and most speakers have HDMI connections on their machine. However, Thea McGinnis and Anita Brown needed to use an iPad for their presentation in February 2023, and since we did not have a USB C adapter, we used the technology grant to purchase one to resolve this issue for future meetings.

We are allowed one technology grant each year. If any of you has ideas of what upgrades we can use, please talk to Mary Garnett or myself, and we'd be happy to consider it for the next grant application.

## Liaison

Ayr Hill Garden Club will be holding its annual plant sale on May 13, 2023 from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Freeman Store and Museum in Vienna, Virginia. There will be plants available day of sale, as well as online in advance of the in-person sale. Check out their website: <https://ahgcplantsale.square.site/>.

Five Hills Garden Club plant sale is April 29, 2023 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm next to Freeman's Store at 131 Church Street, NE Vienna, Virginia. For information contact [bothwellandy@gmail.com](mailto:bothwellandy@gmail.com).





## Youth Activities

### Planting Pansies

By Lynda Martin



The Youth Activities Committee team met at Tuckahoe Elementary School on March 28, 2023. Our group included Pat Getz, Nancy Linehan, Susan Scotti and Lynda Martin. We had a brief lesson on the care and planting of pansies and the

children then decorated clay pots with stickers and magic markers. We helped the children to plant the individual pansies in the decorated pots. The remaining pansies were planted in the front garden of the school.

### Volunteers Needed

By Susan Scotti

On Friday, May 12, 2023, the Youth Activities Committee will assist the three second grade classes at Tuckahoe Elementary School in making Mother's Day arrangements.

The 71 students will be provided with flowers (usually 3 big carnations) and baby's breath. The general membership has always generously clipped and donated greens for this project. On the morning of the event, we will all gather in the school courtyard to sort and trim before going to the classrooms.

This year, the timing is still in question, but most likely will be at 11:00 am for working with the greens and around 12:00 pm for in the classrooms.

Let me know if you can help with this fun and exciting project and I will send you a link to submit a volunteer request form. This can take 1 or 2 weeks, so let me know as soon as possible.

If you are unable to help at the school, you can give your clipped greens to me or call me and I will pick them up. Boxwood works great, but almost anything that can be trimmed to 5–7 inches will work. And, feel free to contact me with any questions.

## Garden Therapy

### Ladybugs

By Pat Getz



The Garden Therapy committee continued its work with preschoolers at Glebe Elementary School with a program on ladybugs. Participating were Kate

Abrahams, Margi Melnick, Mary Sliwa, Susan Scotti, and Pat Getz. Pat started off by showing the children models of a ladybug in its four stages of development: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. We then passed the models around for the students to examine while Pat read *It's a Good Thing There Are Ladybugs* by Joanne Mattern. The book explained the lifecycle of ladybugs, their different sizes and colors, and how they help farmers and gardeners by eating pests, especially aphids. Kate read a story called *The Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle, which introduced the signs of spring and how they cheered up a grouchy ladybug. The children enthusiastically enjoyed listening to the books and examining the models. Margi and her autoharp then lead the group in singing "I'm a Little Ladybug," sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot." The children had great fun singing along and acting out the lyrics as Margi encouraged them to flap their pretend wings and crawl around like ladybugs in a flower pot.



After the song, all the committee members helped the children complete ladybug craft kits and coloring sheets that we provided. There were some very creative interpretations of ladybug shapes and colors evident in their finished products! Their teacher, Jeannie Terrill, told us it was a special treat to be able to color with the makers we supplied, more fun than the crayons they usually use. Jeannie and her classroom aides continue to be very supportive and appreciative of our Garden Therapy program. It is a joy to work with these wonderful children and educators!

## Design Workshop

By Maryam Zolecki



NCAGC District IV hosted a design workshop with NGC Accredited Master Judge Betty Ann Galway on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 in Bethesda, Maryland. The workshop

focused on traditional designs in the morning, and the afternoon featured creative designs. Several Rock Spring Garden Club members attended for a wonderful day of learning and creativity.



## 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon News

By Carolyn Barone

Our luncheon on May 18, 2023 is fast approaching! The planning committee for the event is calling on all members to bring your photos, scrapbooks, albums, or any memorabilia which you have accumulated over the years relating to Rock Spring Garden Club to the general meeting on April 20, 2023. We are working on a display for a "walk down memory lane" during the luncheon, and your input will be much appreciated. Your contributions will be returned to you at the end of the luncheon.

## Native Plant Symposium

By Maryam Zolecki

The U.S. National Arboretum hosted the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Lahr Symposium on March 25, 2023. The focus for this year was native plants and how homeowners and small lot gardeners can help in restoring native plants to our landscape.

The first speaker was Devin Floyd who is the Principal Investigator at the Center for Urban Habitats in Charlottesville, Virginia. Attendees learned that the Virginia Piedmont housed thousands of small and forgotten places that are the remnants of a rich, pre-settlement natural world that provides hope for and insight into a future of greater biological diversity. By planting some of these remnant grassland species, such as the purple false foxglove, big bluestem, scaly blazing star, narrow-leaf mountain mint, little bluestem, and Gray goldenrod, the home gardener can do their part to support biodiversity.

Landscaper Carolyn Summers was the next speaker, and her focus was how native plants can be used in a variety of garden situation from formal front yards to more naturalistic mixed borders. She inspired us to experiment with a broader native plant palette and to strive to have 70% of our gardens comprised of native plants.

Leirion Sorensen and Nathan Shampine of Mt. Cuba Center in Hockessin, Delaware focused on creating diversity within our garden in order to create resilient and adaptable gardens, which in turn support diverse and adaptable species from the smallest bug to suburban predators. The final speaker, Dean Norton, who is the Director of Horticulture at George Washington's Mount Vernon in Alexandria, Virginia, took inspiration from our first president's love of trees and attitude towards conservation to inform our decisions about plantings.

All the speakers' message was consistent in that using native plants supports the systems they belong to, and as gardeners, we need to strive to do our part in utilizing native plants in order to restore the natural ecosystem. The use of native plants, however, is deemed "messy" by some gardeners, and as Joan Iverson Nassauer noted in her article, "Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames," designing orderly frames to house the native plants will allow us to combine aesthetics with native planting. Set your goal at 70% native plantings, and have a "frame" to plant in, and you and the ecosystem with benefit.



# Villa Carlotta, Lake Como, Italy

By Sandy Wade



A mere two miles or so north of Lenno in the lakeside town of Tremezzo is the stunning Villa Carlotta. Its grand façade and stairs cascade down a hill to meet the main road of western Lake Como. Whereas one can imagine living in Villa Balbianello's intimate size and dreamy tranquility, Villa Carlotta was created to impress with its opulent building and extensive gardens.

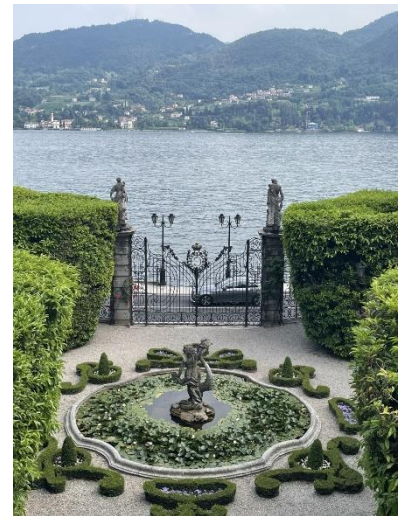
Villa Carlotta was built in the late 17th century by Marquis Giorgio Clerici of Milan. It passed through several owners until being sold in 1843 to Princess Marianne of Prussia

who gifted it to her daughter Charlotte (1831-1855) when she wed. Following Charlotte's early death, the property was tended and further developed by her husband, Duke George II of Saxe-Meiningen, among others. By 1921 the estate was passed to the Italian state for preservation and care of the gardens. Today, the main villa houses a museum with valuable masterpieces and collections of paintings, sculptures, cameos, ceramics, and the Salon of Marble. The furnished second floor of the villa includes Carlotta's room, a sitting room, the Tapestry room, a dining room, a bedroom, and Duke George II's studio. Throughout the villa are large doors and windows that frame lovely views of the lake.

Exploring the acres of gardens at Villa Carlotta begins with the Italian Garden, initially designed during the period of the Enlightenment which stressed reason over sentiment. The result is a formal or Italianate form with symmetrical axes, tightly trimmed and shaped hedges, fountains and water features, statuary, and geometric elements in planting beds and hard landscape. Two tunnels of citrus trees first



planted by the earliest owners provide structure on one of the terraces in front of the villa. It's unusual for citrus trees in this climate to be grown in soil and not in pots, so these tunnels are protected in winter by installing plastic sheeting around them with a system of gas stoves to prevent freezing. Also prominent in the Italian garden are two particular varieties of roses: the yellow Goldener Olymp, and the pink Harlekin. And surrounding the villa on all sides are many of colorful Camellia japonica cultivars which were popularized throughout Europe in the first half of the 19th century.



Several paths lead away from the formal garden area around the villa to what is called the Romantic Garden. One can spend hours strolling through this expansive hillside of lush green spaces flowing gently from mass plantings of hydrangeas to springtime blooming azaleas and rhododendrons. A rock garden of herbaceous plants and succulents is replanted throughout the season when blooms fade. Additional sections of the Romantic Garden feature tropical plants, aromatic plants, trees (cedar, cypress, redwood, pine, plane, beech, tulip, and bamboo), and a fern valley.

If planning a trip to Lake Como there are other notable gardens to visit on the eastern side of the lake, accessible via frequent passenger ferries. The town of Bellagio hosts the beautiful lakeside botanical garden Villa Melzi as well as Villa Serbelloni. There's also Villa Monastero and the magnificent Villa Cipressi in Varenna.



## Announcements

Nancy Snell welcomed her new granddaughter, Isadora Rae, on January 27, 2023 to proud moms, daughter Elizabeth and Calina, who live Atlanta, Georgia.



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Longtime member and former RSGC President, Mary Cottrell, has relocated.

Cards and visits are encouraged.



### **NCAGC District III March Awards Meeting**

Rock Spring Garden Club and its members were honored with a number of awards. Stay tuned for more information!



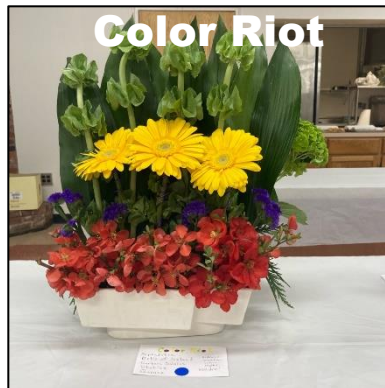
## March Meeting Recap

During the March 2023 meeting, Carol Allen, Agent Associate at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland, provided a fascinating and educational talk on botanical nomenclature, which is the scientific naming of plants. As club members, we are required to provide the name of our plants for the horticulture table, and Carol's information provided great context about the botanical nomenclature by giving us its history and the rules on how names are handed out to our plants.

The design of the month asked us to partner up to create a Duo Design, and four club members took on the challenge and designed beautiful contrasting designs.

The horticulture table was dominated by daffodils and reminded us that these bulb plants are as diverse as they are lovely. It was nice to see houseplants making a good showing this month.

Just a reminder to complete your renewal application and pay your membership fee if not done so already.



Duo-Design is a creative design organized in one container or containers joined to appear as one and organized as two designs in the container(s) that are back-to-back. Each side of the design must be different from the other side and given a name. Four members partnered up to try out this design.





## Photo Gallery



Kate Abrahams ~ Primroses, daffodils, Virginia bluebells, hyacinth, pansies, and anemone.





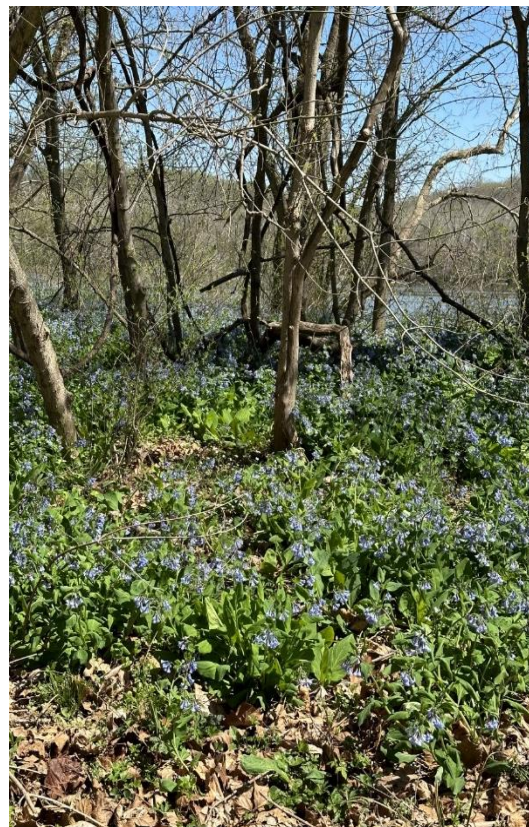
George Ruppert ~ Irises starting to bloom rather early this year.



Renee Bayes ~  
Virginia Bluebells at  
Riverbend Park.



Ann Marie Fay ~  
In Florida, when our  
orchids stop blooming in  
the house, we attach  
them to the trees outside  
and they are there for all  
to enjoy, year after  
year, as they thrive in this  
climate!







Pat Getz ~ Atlanta  
Botanical Garden





The Piedmont District of Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs held its spring meeting on March 20, 2023 in Richmond, Virginia. Featured was floral designer and Master Judge, Betty Ann Galway, and the program demonstrated taking the "Mystery out of Mechanics" with Betty Ann demonstrating the many ways to create reusable structures for decorative home designs and "going green" by designing without the use of floral foam.



The Washington Daffodil Society (WDS) held its 70<sup>th</sup> annual Daffodil Show on April 8-9, 2023 in Alexandria, Virginia. A number of RSGC members assisted in the organization and running of the show, judging, clerking, and participating in the show through their horticulture and design submissions. It was an all around rewarding day of learning, creativity, and mingling.

