

# 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

Secretary  
Jane Robinson

Treasurer  
Sherry Foster

Newsletter Editor  
Maryam Zolecki

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Rock Spring Garden Club

Cordially invites

You to

Celebrate the

70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Of our Club's founding

Thursday, May 18, 2023

11:30 a.m.

Washington Golf and Country Club

3017 N Glebe Road

Arlington, Virginia

\$20.00 per member

Hats and Gloves optional

## President's Message



As I now walk regularly through Rock Spring Park with Barley, I am inspired by what is growing and what is no longer growing there. This park has double significance for me: it inspired me years ago to learn more about nature, and it reflects the passion

of our club to grow and tend the gifts of Mother Nature. The park is "our" park. For over fifty years, Rock Spring Garden Club has been in a partnership with Arlington County to promote and preserve the park's health. Over the years, many club members have given their time and expertise to nurturing existing plant life and fostering new growth. We do this under the leadership of the Civic Development/Conservation Committee.

You will all see the fruits of our hard work at our last general meeting on June 8, 2023 when we gather there to install our new officers, the first of the three visits of our program. On the eastern edge of the park off Little Falls Road, you will see the fruits of our hardwork in the flowering plants thriving there: daffodils, irises, asters, etc. Just a few years ago, this stretch of land was barren of healthy growth and full of noxious invasive plants like English ivy, garlic mustard and lesser celandine. The club hosted several "parties" to clear out these invasives to make room for new and healthier growth. For example, if you walk northward beyond our garden onto the wooded path, you can find, in early springtime, bluebells that had been choked by English ivy. Right across from our garden are two river birches planted about ten years ago to honor Emily DeCicco, a long-time member of the club who passed away in 2011. And, there is a bench honoring another now-deceased club member and past president, Joy Peters. Finally, if you walk to

the bridge on the western side of the park, look to the right and you will see the ferns we planted along the bank that previously was overtaken by garlic mustard and lesser celandine.

Our role at the park reflects our commitment to fostering beauty and growth. It is one component of our club's ethos to preserve, protect and foster creation in seeking knowledge in order to create beauty – in natural areas, in flower arranging and in our gardens.

*Dianne*

### Budget Report

Beginning Balance: \$  
 Revenue: \$  
 Expenses: \$  
 Ending Balance: \$



Next Board Meeting – June 1, 2023 at 10 am

No General Meeting Next Month

In lieu of the June 2023 general meeting, club members will participate in a member garden tour on June 8, 2023.

## Committee Reports

### Horticulture

#### Plants Grown for Their Dramatic Foliage

By Christine Wegman

We think of shrubs and trees as having the largest presence in a garden, and this is by and large true. But, the largest, most dramatic, foliage in the plant world is to be found among annuals and perennials. Plants with very large foliage will provide a focal point wherever they are placed in a garden. They will always provide an element of surprise when placed with more familiar plants.

Tropical plants, in particular, whose natural habitat is replete with humid moisture often produce immense leaves.

Many of us are familiar with elephant ears, or taro root (*Colocasia*). Although not hardy in our area, it can be grown as an annual. *Colocasia esculanta* 'Diamond Head' (pictured) makes a massive statement and is beautiful just by itself in a pot. Here is something that can be grown on a small sunny balcony to provide a focal point for a very small garden.



At the other extreme of the habitat spectrum are the agaves. These plants thrive in deserts and are highly drought tolerant. Some can reach 10 feet in height. Many can be grown as perennials in our area (*Agave asperrima*, pictured, is hardy to zone 7a), if given excellent drainage and lots of sun. Agaves are highly susceptible to damage from cold moisture, however, so it may be best to grow the large varieties in pots and protect them in winter. Plant Delights Nursery in North Carolina has a good selection of agaves and reliable advice on how to grow them.

Among large foliage plants better adapted to our climate is Chinese cabbage (*rheum palmatum*), which is easy to grow in full sun or part shade, as long as its roots are kept cool and moist with mulch. It has huge, eye-catching leaves with beautiful serrated edges. The picture at right, of *Rheum palmatum* var. *tanguticum* is taken at Chanticleer Gardens outside Philadelphia. The Chinese cabbage is in dappled shade, backlit, and surrounded by light blue flowers and light green hosta. This plant can grow up to 6 feet wide and 10 feet high, so it is not one for a small place, but could look striking in the back corner of a garden.



Hosta comes in many sizes, from 8 inches high by 12 inches wide to 4 feet high and over 6 feet wide. Two of these giant hosta stand out as particularly garden worthy. The first is 'Blue Angel' (pictured at left), an old variety with big (16 inch), heavily textured, blue green leaves. The plant will grow about 3 feet high by 4 feet wide, and like all blue green hostas, appreciates a very shady location.

One hosta that I have always loved, but never could find space for, is 'Sum and Substance' (pictured below). This is an old variety that has great "presence" in any garden that is large enough to accommodate it. 'Sum and Substance' has large (9 inches wide by 20 inches long), lightly textured, chartreuse leaves. Both the form of the plant and its light green color immediately draw the eye. About the same size as *Hosta* 'Blue Angel', it needs a lot of space to show at its best. Like all light green hostas, it prefers partial shade, needing more sun than the blue green hosta, but not tolerating full sun.

Large leaved plants can have a lot of impact in a garden. Many are well adapted to large pots, and so can have a place in even a small garden or on a balcony. They can also look very good at the back corners of gardens, where we might otherwise plant large shrubs. Wherever they are placed, they will add an element of interest, even surprise, to any garden.



## Garden Therapy

### Planting Flowers

By Susan Scotti



The April 2023 program for the preschool class at Glebe Elementary School began with a story, "Lola Plants a Garden", read by Carol Froehlich. Lola wanted a flower garden, so her mother helped her through the steps of planning, choosing, buying and planting the seeds. Then, with the watering, weeding and caring for them as they grew. Margi Melnick with her autoharp led a song about planting seeds and the sun and rain making them grow. They had fun as the teacher led the motions while they sang. I showed a variety of flower and vegetable seed packets and the seeds that were in them. I also had examples to show of some seeds that had been exposed to moisture and were sprouting and developing roots.



The children moved to their seats at the tables and each decorated a terra cotta pot with stickers of butterflies, bees, and lady bugs. Then they put on their gardening gloves and were given a marigold to plant in their pot. They filled in the dirt using spoons and gave it water using a spray bottle so not to over water. Also present were Pat Getz and Mary Sliwa who helped us guide the sticker activity and the planting project. It is very helpful having many hands to work with the eight children.

We are looking forward to making Mother's Day arrangements with them on May 11, 2023, which will be the last program for this school year.

## Youth Activities

### Seed Magic

By Susan Scotti



Seeds were the main topic for the program at Tuckahoe Elementary School on April 25, 2023. While the nine second graders ate lunch, Susan Scotti read the Dr. Seuss book, "Oh Say Can You Seed". The book tells, in clever verse, how a seed develops and grows into a plant as it names the parts and explains the process. The students were shown several opened packets of seeds for flowers and vegetables. There were also examples of sprouted lima beans and

grass seeds to view. A few sprouted lima beans had been planted in a soil filled container designed to visualize root growth. The root systems were well developed and two of the beans had stems pushing through the soil with small leaves. After lunch, we went outside to plant marigolds. The children were given gardening gloves and trowels and got busy digging holes in a raised vegetable bed. The last step was watering the plantings, but finding no water source, one boy said he knew where to get water and led us to a rain barrel with a spigot. They all did a good job and paid attention to the gentle guidance of the garden ladies. They also enjoyed it, with one boy saying it was more fun than recess! Many thanks to Carolyn Barone, Carol Froehlich, and Lynda Martin for having fun with and helping guide the children.



A reminder that we need greens for 74 flower arrangements for Friday, May 12, 2023 at Tuckahoe Elementary School. If you can donate, call Susan Scotti to arrange a pickup or drop off. Members helping at the school are Kate Abrahams, Carolyn Barone, Carol Froelich, Pat Getz, Mary Kudless, Nancy Linehan, Lynda Martin, Margi Melnick, Mary Sliwa and myself. The event begins at 11:00 am for trimming and sorting the greens, and we go to the classrooms at 12:15 pm. Thank You!

## Awards

### Congratulations to Our Club

By Janis Gunel

I am pleased to announce the Rock Spring Garden Club awards for 2022.

From the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs (VFGC), Piedmont District, we garnered the following ribbons: yellow for Yearbook, red for Newsletter, white for Horticulture, red for Website, and blue for Flower Show Schedule. Our blue for Flower Show Schedule went on to win blue ribbon at the state level!

From the National Capital Area of Garden Clubs (NCAGC), District III, our Yearbook tied for second place (45-69 members) and our newsletter, The Gardenzette, won Outstanding Club Newsletter (51+ Members, 3-12 pages). At the state level for 2022 (NCAGC is designated as a state), our club was presented with a:

- Certificate of Recognition for Garden Therapy at the Mary Marshall Assisted Living Facility,
- Youth Gardening Award for Outstanding Service Towards Promotion of Gardening Among Youth; Annual Special Needs Pre-Kindergarten Program, \$100 award,
- Certificate of Merit, First Place, Large (51+ Members, 3-12 pages) for Newsletter,
- Certificate of Merit, First Place for Social Media/Website,
- Certificate of Merit, First Place for Social Media/Facebook.

These awards represent the interests, talents and dedication of our committees and leadership. I think you will agree, we have much to celebrate.

## Membership

### A Note to Club Members

By Carolyn Barone

Joan Asboth wanted to inform members that the funeral for her husband, Lt. Col. Julius Asboth who passed away December 21, 2022, will be held at the Old Post Chapel at Fort Myer, Arlington, Virginia on Thursday, June 28, 2023 at 11:00 am. He will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. A reception will be held at the Officers' Club at Fort Myer. For those of you who plan to attend the service, an RSVP is needed for entry to the base. Please contact her. Joan will be in town June 22-29, 2023 for those wishing to get together with her.

## Liaison

There will be a Champagne reception with the Executive Director of the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens as she discusses her book "A Garden For All Seasons - Marjorie Merriweather Post's Hillwood" from 4:00 pm-6:00 pm on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at the Yves Delorme Store in McLean, Virginia. Please call 703-356-3085 for more information or to RSVP.

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/>.

Make a day at Green Spring Gardens for their Annual Spring Garden Day and Big Plant Sale on Saturday, May 20, 2023 from 9 am to 3 pm. This popular event features a variety of vendors and countless assortments of plants. Free.

## NCAGC News

By Kate Abrahams

Two National Capital Area Garden Clubs (NCAGC) Flower Show Judges received honors at the National Garden Club Convention held May 2-4, 2023 at The Greenbrier, a resort in West Virginia.



Judge Jo Sellers (pictured) was honored as a Five Star Member, which is given to members who complete all courses and certifications for the four NGC school (gardening, environmental, landscape design, floral design) including achievement of master in each. Completing all the courses and certifications designates one as a Four Star Member, and NCAGC Board Member Danielle Brabazon achieved the honor this year.



Joyce Skoglund, new NCAGC District III Director. RSGC is in District III along with 12 other garden clubs.



Barbara Kiker, new National Capital Area Garden Clubs State President.



Incoming NCAGC Officers.

## Garden Club Conferences

By Tina Foutz

As I sit here in the Writing Room of The Greenbrier, I look back on the whirlwind of garden club conferences that I've attended in the last weeks. The sights and sounds were both energizing and exhausting for me - no one warned me that these conferences go from morning until night! I was warmly received by both the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs (VFGC) and the National Capital Area Garden Clubs (NCAGC) members that were in attendance.

On April 23-24, 2023, I was at the Hotel 24 in Staunton, VA for the VFGC conference. There was a standard flower show, themed Virginia - The

was a standard flower show, themed Virginia - The Mountains to the Ocean, and it featured Underwater, Group Mass, and Angular Creative Designs. Honorary designs were a lovely display in the corridor that led to vendors with alluring clothing, antique planters and fun modern vases. The centerpieces changed every meal and were offered for donation to VFGC. We were also treated to design programs by Jeanne Ha of Park Florist & Washington Flower School Floral Designs and Mark Frye of Creative Occasions Events, Flowers & Gifts, and former White House volunteer decorator (that's quite the application process!). Their designs were raffled off - lucky winners often had to figure out how they would fit the grand designs in their vehicles. Lastly, the business - we were reminded of the Piedmont dues deadline (5/31/2023) and called on for submissions to the fall issue of Footprints. On August 21, 2023, Piedmont District will hold its Board Meeting, and on August 21-24, 2023, Flower Show School Course 1 will be offered at the Sheraton at Richmond's airport. The budget was presented and approved and awards presented, including a Blue Ribbon for Rock Spring Garden Club.

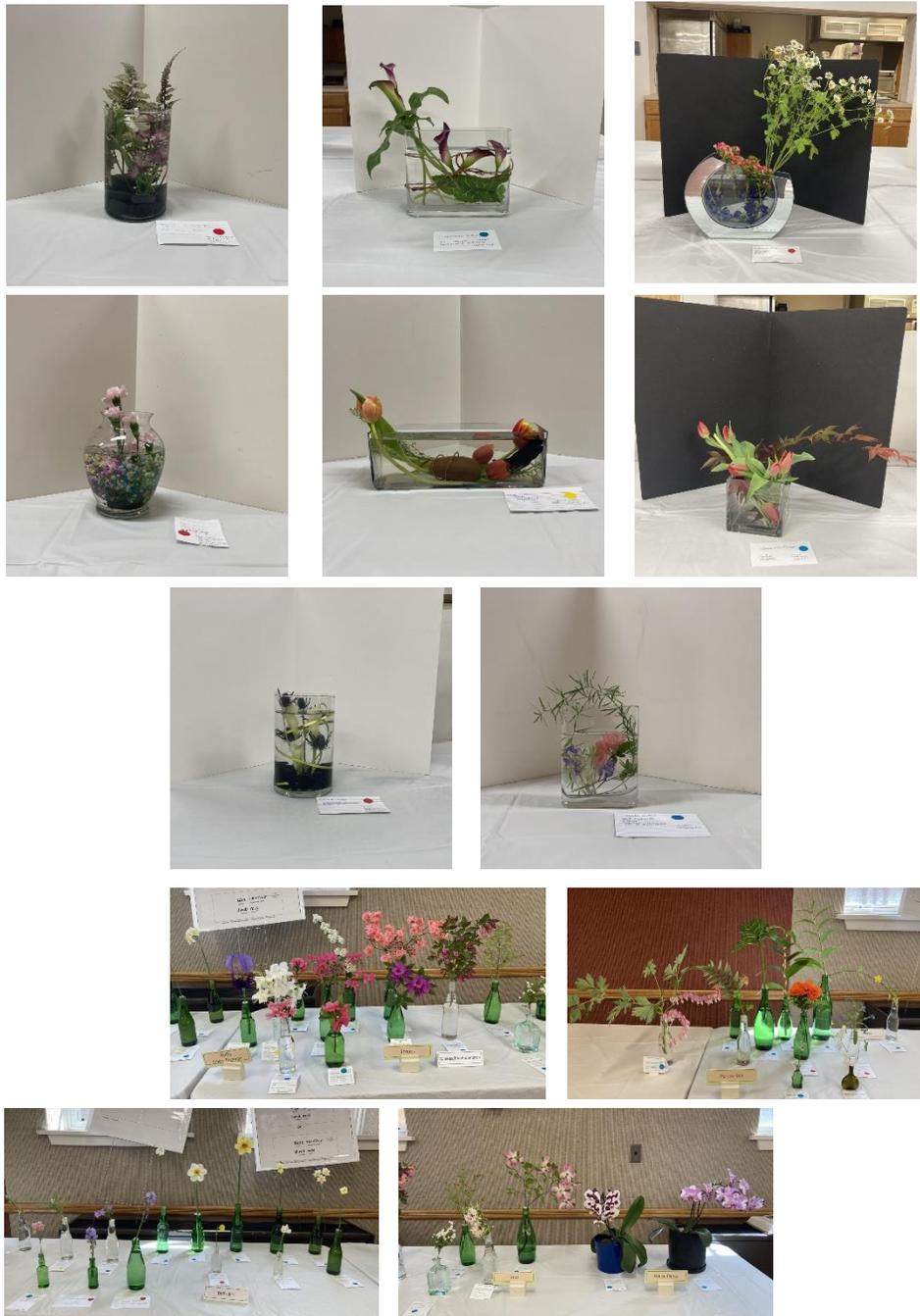
On May 3-4, 2023, I had the pleasure of attending the National Garden Club's 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. We were treated to more amazing vendors that displayed lovely clothing, amazing metal armatures, and local art. We were all gifted a box of bracelets, discount card, and lovely bag from NYC designer Frances Valentine. We learned about orchids, and the First Ladies namesake hybrids developed by Richmond based Chadwick & Son's, Art Chadwick. He noted that he would love to have us to his workshop sometime! Lovely honorary designs were presented by Gwen Kohut and the West Virginia clubs provided whimsical and wonderful designs in the theme, Almost Heaven, that were given to the attendee with the closest birthdays to the incoming President, National Garden Club and, in my case, to Smokey the Bear. We also participated in meal presentations of awards, design showcase of Gillespie's Flowers - celebrating 100 years of designing at The Greenbrier, and the educational and very entertaining Kevin Dodge who taught us all of the Night Sounds of the Appalachias. The last night brought everyone out in their finest for the Inauguration Banquet celebrating our newly elected officers, appointed officers, regional directors along with incoming president, Brenda Moore. West Virginia gave a rousing rendition of Country Roads and we were treated to a wonderful dessert buffet to send us off with a sweet note in so many ways. I look forward to sharing more stories and tips.

# April Meeting Recap

For the April 2023 program, speaker Alton Byers drew on his decades of experience and studies to bring to light an important topic: the waste and garbage left behind in the Himalayas and its impact on the ecosystem of the region. It was a highly entertaining and informative presentation, and Dr. Byers did a terrific job of integrating his personal endeavors with his professional interest to keep up entertained and informed throughout the presentation.

The design of the month was an Underwater Design, and this creative design requires that some or all plant material be under water in a clear container. It may sound quite simple, but as our designers effectively demonstrated, there is so much more to this design than simply “sticking plants and flowers under water.”

This month, the horticulture specimens were impressive as usual. It definitely showed that our gardens are beginning to come to life with a promise of so much more color, texture, and interest still to come.



# Photo Gallery



Jo Ella Samp's visit to Keukenhof in the Netherlands.



Anita Brown's visit to Bunny Mellon's garden, Oak Spring, in Upperville, Virginia.



George Ruppert's poppies growing along the sidewalk.



Sandy Wade's visit to Japan.

Kenrokuen, located in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan, is a strolling style garden constructed during the Edo period by the Maeda clan.



The East Gardens of the Imperial Palace are large landscaped gardens in the grounds of the palace in Tokyo first built in 1888.



Anita Brown's garden.



Renee Bayes Garden.





I visited these delightful gardens at Keukenhof, which display Dutch bulb growers artistry for a duration of eight weeks. Six million bulbs are planted in layers so that old ones can be removed and new ones below will bloom. There are also pavilions displaying blooming bulbs indoors, explaining Dutch history of growing tulips and selling bulbs and souvenirs. I was grateful we had a sunny morning!

~ Kate Abrahams

