

THE GARDENZETTE



The newsletter of the Rock Spring Garden Club, Arlington, VA 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; and Southern Atlantic Region, Virginia Federated Garden Clubs, Inc., Piedmont District



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General Meeting

Thursday March 21, 2024 – 10:00 am

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

Lower Level Friendship Hall

6025 Little Falls Road

Arlington, VA 22207

Spring Pruning With Maraëa Harris



Master Gardener Maraëa Harris of Metro Gardenworks shares her expertise on the basics of spring pruning for trees, shrubs, and plants to ensure your garden's best performance. She welcomes questions submitted in advance of her presentation to make sure the program covers the priorities of club members and their gardens. Please email your questions to Sandi Wade.

President's Message

By Maryam Zolecki

Spring will have officially arrived in a few days, and this time of year brings back many fond memories and traditions for my family. The first day of spring is the Persian New Year, and with that, I am immersed in many rituals symbolizing renewal. Our gardens are definitely beginning their reemergence as well, and with the warmer days, additional sunlight, and flowers beginning to open up, the wildlife is also waking up from the winter months. Earlier this year, I applied for and received the National Garden Clubs' Wildlife Habitat Certification, a program through our national organization that allows for certification of one's garden to not only recognize it as a beautiful environment in our suburban landscape, but also as a refuge for wildlife by providing food, water, cover, and places to raise their young. I encourage all of you to do the same, and the application process found at the following link could not have been any easier: [Wildlife Habitat Certification Application](#). While on the NGC website, feel free to look and click tabs to find information about other programs and events of interest. Being an affiliated member of the national, state, and district organizations brings with it lots of opportunities, privileges, and benefits, and I encourage you to check out their respective websites and newsletters to take full advantage of it all beyond what our wonderful local club provides.

February 2024 Budget Report

Beginning Balance: \$20,105.76

Revenue: \$163.50

Expenses: (\$1,027.93)

Net: (\$864.43)

Ending Balance: \$19,241.33

Next Board Meeting

Thursday April 4, 2024 4:30 pm

Attendance options are via Zoom or in-person at Charlotte Benjamin's house.

Floral Outreach

Renee Bayes and Janice Haines created this gorgeous arrangement and delivered it to Alice Conrad in celebration of her 103rd birthday!



Design of the Month

By Carolyn Barone

The design for March will be a transparency design. We have seen this one demonstrated at our meeting in September 2023 by Betty Ann Galway. This is a creative design and must be see-through, meaning some elements of the design should be visible through the transparency of a grid, translucent, or diaphanous background. The floral or plant materials should be visible from the front and back. This design type will be demonstrated at our club's Flower Show in May, so this is a good time to try your hand at this design, in preparation for receiving a ribbon!



Ways and Means

By Margi Melnick

Spring is here! Which means the Ways and Means table will be offering gardening tools plus items that will help in your holiday decorating. Bring vases, ceramic bunnies or whatever, to donate to the cause: raising funds for our club. Garden books and magazines are always welcome. We even have room for some plants you might want to share, house plants included.

Garden Therapy

By Mary Sliwa

The Garden Therapy class at Glebe School celebrated Valentine's Day with a party on February 8th this year. Mary Sliwa started things off by telling them that it's the only holiday that's all about love and how we should love and celebrate it with friends and family. The kids were given little red crowns with hearts on them to wear. Susan Scotti read a book: "Happy Valentine's Day, Curious George", about making cards for his friends. We all sang a song together, and they all clapped their hands, stamped their feet, and touched their toes to the music. Then, like in the book, they

all made Valetine cards, using stickers, to exchange with each other. Then the "garden ladies" helped set up the tables with the flowers: red, white, and pink carnations, the greens, and white baby's breath to put into red cups for beautiful arrangements to take home. By then the kids were so wired that we left the box, decorated for the drawing, and the cards to exchange, with the teacher and her helpers, to do a drawing later, on February 14, Valentine's Day. Thanks to Kate Abrahams for getting the flowers, and Margi Melnick, Susan, and Mary Garnett for helping the children with their arrangements. The finished products came out looking great!



Youth Activities

By Diane Pollack

The tradition of the Rock Spring Garden Club working with students at Tuckahoe Elementary School continued on Tuesday, February 27, when several members of the Youth Activities Committee visited with 12 students from the second grade. Our project was to educate the students about ladybugs and then provide each student the materials to create one of their very own. Anita Brown took the lead, reading to the children about ladybugs and how they benefit the welfare of plants by eating the aphids that attack healthy flowers and leaves. The children absorbed the information, answering questions that were posed to them about what ladybugs eat, how there are different species of ladybugs and what the spots on ladybug shells mean. There were several interesting theories behind the spots on the shells – Did they indicate how old the bug was? Do they mean that the bug brings as many years of good luck as the spots on their shells? Some of the students already knew a great deal about ladybugs, with some of them even volunteering that they had seen yellow or orange ladybugs, validating that not all ladybugs are the traditional red and black we all know so well. Several students mentioned that they had helped their relatives in the garden. The enthusiasm and the interest of the

students made for a very lively discussion! Construction kits were then given to the students, and although they were a bit complicated for a few of them, Anita, Committee members Lynda Martin, Jane Robinson, Susan Scotti, Pat Getz, Joyce Fall and myself, were there to lend a hand so that each student was able to take home a ladybug and a bit of knowledge along the way!



HORTICULTURE

By Christine Wegman

Hellebores

A couple of weeks ago, my husband, Charlie, and I drove down to Clarksville, Virginia for our annual trip to Pine Knot Farms Nursery. This is a wonderful nursery on the North Carolina border, started in 1983 by hellebore experts, Judith and Dick Tyler. Judith passed away some years ago and Dick has sold the nursery to a new generation, but happily the business continues. Although Pine Knot is only open to the public for a few weekends in spring and fall, they have a good website from which you can order plants to be shipped. If you are looking in local nurseries, February and March are the best time to shop for hellebores because you can see them in bloom.



Hellebores are my favorite perennial. They are attractive evergreen plants, with a beautiful garden presence throughout the year. Pest, disease, and deer resistant, they bloom in February and March, just when we are getting tired of winter and think spring might never come. Best of all, their blooms are seductive: singles and doubles, spotted, plain, picotee-edged, with colors of red, pink, purple, white, light green, and yellow. They are infinitely variable, when grown from seed, no two hellebores are exactly alike. In the garden they are very effective planted with early daffodils and snow drops.

Although hellebores make ideal woodland plants, they typically grow in open meadows in their native range, primarily in the northeastern Mediterranean. There are around 17 species of hellebores, and those are divided into two groups, those with tall above-ground stalks and those with below-ground

stems, that is rhizomes. I have tried to grow the stalked varieties (*H. argutifolius*, *H. lividus*, *H. foetidus*) but they do not like the heat of our summers and get very leggy. The second group is by far the most common group, and includes *H. orientalis*. The different species have all been

so thoroughly interbred over the years, that we now generally use the inclusive designation, *Helleborus x hybridus*, unless we have a single species or a simple cross.

A lot of breeding – about 70 years -- has gone into the hellebores that are now on the market. When I started gardening in the 1970s there were only a few seed strains available, most notably, the ‘Royal Heritage Strain’ from England. These, like almost all hellebores then had down-facing blooms. The only up-facing species is *Helleborus niger*, and until recently it proved impossible to breed *H. niger* with other species. That changed a few years ago, when some German breeders made a breakthrough, introducing the ‘Ice n, Roses’ series (‘Ice n’ Roses Red’ pictured at right), and now most of the hellebores for sale are *H. niger* crosses and have at least somewhat up-facing flowers.



I love the plants with mottled foliage, and these all come from crosses with *H. lividus*, a Spanish species. The beautiful double flowered hellebores come from a single group of plants, discovered by English plants-woman, Elizabeth Strangman. Bloom color has improved over the years, with intense, pure deep purples and reds, bright pinks, and even the relatively new yellows. As they say, these are not your mother’s hellebores.

Hellebores are pretty easy to grow. They are not fussy about soil type, but prefer rich, moist soil. They do need good drainage. They tolerate drought and neglect, but will do better with regular fertilizing. Although they are naturally full sun plants, they thrive in partial shade, but will not bloom well in heavy shade. They are easy to grow in containers. Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery cautions that, in containers, they need plenty of water in their spring and fall growing seasons, but not in the heat of summer.



Hellebores need regular pruning to look their best. How you prune depends on the type of plant. For most plants, those without long stalks, it is best to cut off the old leaves before they bloom, either in the fall or winter. They will put out new growth immediately and look beautiful in their fresh foliage and blossoms. For stalked hellebores, cut off all the old stalks after the blooms fade. The plants will not re-bloom on old stalks. With this relatively small amount of attention hellebores will give you some moments of pure joy just when you need it in the dead of winter.

Senior Outreach By Janice Haines

The Senior Outreach Committee met at the Mary Marshall assisted living facility on February 13. The program, led by Janice Haines and committee members Renee Bayes, Mary Garnett, and Helen McMahon, assisted the residents with Valentine floral designs. The 12 residents filled small glass jars with pink carnations, baby's breath and greens from members' gardens. The residents completed their designs with a sparkly Valentine heart. Helen McMahon baked delicious Valentine cupcakes as a special treat for the residents and committee members. The committee also made a floral arrangement for the front desk with the extra flowers. At the March 12 Senior Outreach program, the residents will make pinecone bird feeders.



From the February General Meeting

RSGC welcomed new members Janet Nuzum and Katherine Skiba



Guest speaker Peg Riccio discussed growing unusual herbs



Creative Line Designs

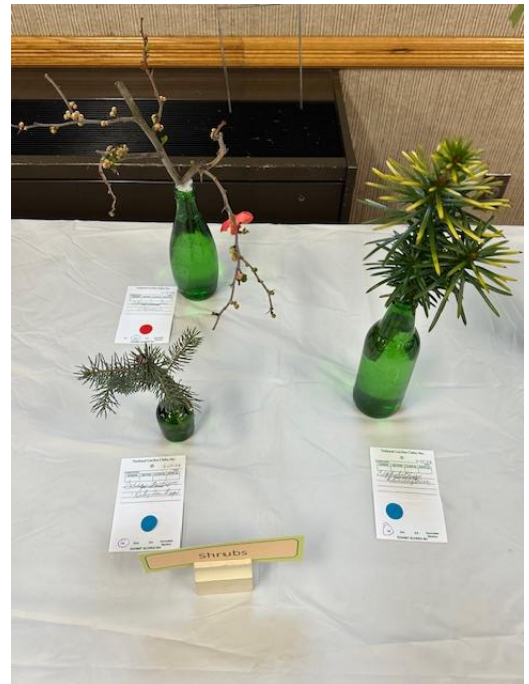






Horticulture Specimens





**From Renee Bayes Garden: Early bloomers
and a scary visitor**



Galanthus (Snowdrops)



Hellebores (Lenten Roses)



Liaison Report by Tina Foutz

March 10 - April 13, 2024

Hyperlinks in blue will take you to the Event Link

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10	11 Environmental School Course 2	12 Environmental School Course 2	13 Landscape Design School 4 (Zoom)	14 Landscape Design School 4 (Zoom) How to Select Rain Garden Plants Webinar with Melina Myers	15 Seed Starting 101: Starting Your Veggie Garden Onsite Orchid Repotting Workshop - Hillwood Introduction to Vegetable Gardening, Part 2	16 Floral Design: Celebrating Orchids, Hillwood Rose Care: Know and Grow Merrifield Ikebana Demonstration and Luncheon, Belle Haven Country Club, Alexandria The Great Grow Along: Virtual Garden Festival
17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> The Great Grow Along: Virtual Garden Festival	18 SAR Convention Greenville SC Environmental School Course 1 (Zoom Afternoons)	19 SAR Convention Greenville SC Environmental School Course 1 (Zoom Afternoons)	20 Expert is in: Orchid Care, Kogod Courtyard in the Portrait Gallery Environmental	21 Environmental School Course 1 (Zoom Afternoons)	22	23 Virginia Daffodil Society Show, LGBG Piedmont Design 101

	Piedmont District Meeting • Richmond -See P. 2 Deadline to Register: 37th Annual Lahr Native Plants Symposium,, U.S. National Arboretum	NCAGC Board Meeting Seasonal Gardens: Spring Class Merrifield	School Course 1 (Zoom Afternoons) NCAGC Judges' Counsel Meeting Native Plants of the M Atlantic: Medicinal and Food Applications, virtual Webinar: Maximize the Beauty and Your Enjoyment in any Small Space with Melinda Myers			Merrifield 37th Annual Lahr Native Plants Symposium,, U.S. National Arboretum The Great Grow Along: Virtual Garden Festival
24	Virginia Daffodil Society Show, LGBG	Flower Show School Course 2 Norfolk Landscape Design School 1 (Zoom) NCAGC Spring Meeting	Flower Show School Course 2 Norfolk Landscape Design School 1 (Zoom)	Flower Show School Course 2 Norfolk NCAGC District III Meeting	29	The Great Grow Along: Virtual Garden Festival
31	Easter	1 2 Landscape Design School 3 (Zoom)	3 Landscape Design School 3 (Zoom)	4 acht Haven NGC Small	5	6 Ball-Sellers House: Sights &

The Great Grow Along: Virtual Garden Festival		Sourcing Native Plants and Seeds: A Homeowner's Guide Virtual	Salon Nights: Grow Your Own Herb Garden Capital Jewish Museum, DC	Standard Flower Show Alexandria		Sounds of a Colonial Farmhouse
7 Multiple Refresher Lancaster, PA	8 Multiple Refresher Lancaster, PA	9 Multiple Refresher Lancaster, PA	10 The American Daffodil Society National Convention and Flower Show Hyatt Regency Dulles NCAGC Landscape Design Council Meeting	11 The American Daffodil Society National Convention and Flower Show Hyatt Regency Dulles	12 The American Daffodil Society National Convention and Flower Show Hyatt Regency Dulles Haymarket Town & Country Garden Club Fashion Show	13

Upcoming Events - Time to Register

Hyperlinks in blue will take you to Registration Form or Link

4/20 - 27/2024 [Historic Garden Week](#)

4/21/2024 Appomattox Garden Club Spring Tea, 3pm to 5pm, Weston Manor Hopewell, VA - Tickets \$15, Contact: Marilyn Brown (804)678-9040

4/24/2024 ["Spring Splendor" Thomas Jefferson Garden Club](#), NGC Small Standard Flower Show, Trinity Lutheran Church, Richmond

4/28/2024 [NCAGC District III Flower Show](#) Vienna

5/1/2024 NCAGC club dues deadline

5/1/2024 VFGC Piedmont Deadline: Summer Issue Footprints and Old Dominion Gardner

5/5/2024 VFGC Board Meeting

5/8 - 9/2024 [Gardening School Course 4](#), DoubleTree by Hilton, 5485 Twin Knolls Road, Columbia, MD 21045

5/21 - 22/2024 [VFGC Annual Convention](#) • Boar's Head Inn, Charlottesville - see Page 6, Hotel reservation deadline: 4/19/2024; Deadline to register: 5/8/2024

5/31/2024 VFGC club dues deadline

6/2 -8/2024 [NGC National Garden Week](#)

6/2 -5/2024 [NGC Annual Convention](#), Denver

6/10/2024 ["How Fair is the Garden" Richmond Designers' Guild](#), NGC Horticulture Specialty Show, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Education Building, Richmond - see P. 7

11/11 -12/2024 [VFGC NGC Symposium](#) - Design and Horticulture, Roanoke