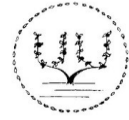


THE GARDENZETTE



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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OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Maryam Zolecki

VICE PRESIDENT

Tina Foutz

SECRETARY

Cheryl Atkinson

TREASURER

Jo Ella Samp

GARDENZETTE EDITOR

Pat Getz

General Meeting

March 20, 2025 – 10:00 am

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

Lower Level Friendship Hall

6025 Little Falls Road

Arlington, VA 22207

Spring Ephemerals

Carol Allen, Agent Associate at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland, returns to talk about spring ephemerals – those lovely plants that flower on forest floors in early spring before the trees leaf, and then disappear and the season moves along.

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President's Message

By Maryam Zolecki

When we next see each other at our March meeting, it will be the first day of spring (officially a little bit later in the day but nonetheless). The arrival of spring signifies a time of renewal and new beginnings, with nature coming back to life after winter, marked by blooming flowers, returning birds, and warmer weather. For me, it also brings the celebrations of the Persian New Year and with it all the millennia-old traditions symbolizing a fresh start and a sense of hope for the coming year. It's essentially a celebration of the natural cycle of rebirth and growth with the festivities beginning on the eve of the last Wednesday before the new year with bonfires and fire jumping, and culminates on the thirteenth day after the first day of spring with picnics to wish away the bad luck and negativity, build community ties, and welcome the new season. And speaking of renewals, it's that time of year for our garden club as well, and I hope that every current member is able to join us next year and please submit your renewal forms as soon as possible. Here is the link to complete the form online (which I highly recommend and it's super easy to do): [Renewal Form-Click Here](#). We also will be voting on the new club officers at our March meeting, and with that transition, a new set of folks will continue leading us through the affairs of the club. The officer nominees are: Cheryl Atkinson for President, Maryam Zolecki for Vice President, Joan Hession for Treasurer, and Chris Day for Secretary. I'm looking forward to celebrating and welcoming this new season for our club!

Ways and Means

By Margi Melnick

The Ways and Means table will hold a plant sale this month. Any extra plants you have transplanted can be brought to the table for the sale. Of course, the regular items will also be available.

February 2025 Budget Report

Beginning Balance: \$20,352.78

Revenue: \$70.00

Expenses: (\$810.31)

Net: \$(740.31)

Ending Balance: \$19,612.47

Next Board Meeting

Thursday April 3, 2025 at 4:30 pm

Attendance options are in-person at
Jo Ella Samp's home

Or via Zoom

Membership Renewal

By Tina Foutz

As mentioned at the February general meeting, the renewal form is ready for the 2025-26 club year. I know everyone is looking forward to another exciting year and the officers and executive board welcome your participation and ideas! Here is the online form. [Renewal Form-Click Here](#). Zeffy the credit card payment option is available again this year – remember when you check out on this generous platform, the default setting will ask you to cover the cost, so they do not charge us for the processing of your donation. You can select “Other” from the drop down menu to remove the fee recovery, but consider contributing to this great nonprofit resource.

Club dues are as follows:

Active Membership Dues \$65

Sustaining Membership Dues \$65

Emeritus Membership Dues \$0

PDF renewal form link is below, if you prefer paper – and I will bring some copies to the March general meeting.



Renewal Application.pdf (Command Line)

If you prefer to pay membership dues with a check, please bring it to the March meeting or mail to me.

Again this year, I will bring my computer to the March general meeting to provide onsite electronic renewals – I’ll arrive by 9:15 am.

Please also remember that RSGC is a 501 (c)(3) organization, and all donations are tax deductible. Consider adding a little extra to your renewal because every cent will go toward our wonderful programs and committees.

**Design of the Month:
A Creative Design Inspired by an Art Object
by Kate Abrahams**

This month's assignment will use your ability to find colors, lines, space, shapes, forms, textures, patterns, and movement in a chosen work of art. Your design will not be judged, and you can use anything you like as your inspiration. The only limitation is that the art object or a copy of it should be displayed with your creative design. You can use 2-dimensional images such as a copy of a painting or three-dimensional objects. Please list the plant materials used on a 3 x 5 card and put your name and date on the back. For those who have not made a design so far, please give it a try and earn a credit.

I hope you will enjoy your focus on a work of art to translate what you see into a flower design. You may use fresh or dried flowers, unusual containers, and other manmade elements. Dried plant materials may be painted. Fresh plant materials may be manipulated by trimming, weaving, wiring, etc. You don't need to match every feature of the object but find the prominent things you notice about it and the feeling it conveys. I'm sure we will enjoy seeing everyone's unique designs!

The Frame of Reference or total allotted area for the design on the display table will be a 25-inch square space. A 20-inch-high backboard will be provided.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Photos below show some previous RSGC member designs. Some additional examples, from this year's Philadelphia Flower Show, are shown in the Photo Gallery at the end of the newsletter. Have fun!

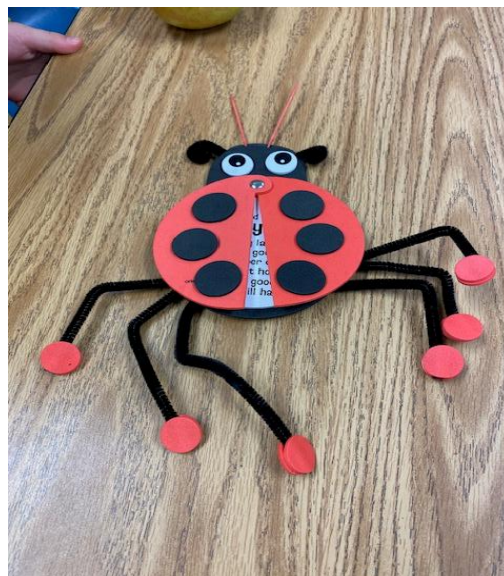


Youth Activities

By Anita Brown

On Tuesday, February 25, Lynda Martin, Joyce Fall, Pat Getz, Liddy Schwartz, and Anita Brown of the Youth Activities Committee met with eight second graders at Tuckahoe Elementary School. The Committee usually meets with twelve students from three different second grade classes, but one of the classes let the students out for recess ahead of our visit to the classroom. In light of the children's interest and fun last year in learning about ladybugs, Anita decided to repeat this program again this year. Lynda began the program and peaked the students' attention with the book: It's a Good Thing

There Are Ladybugs. The book provided several scientific details about the anatomy and life of ladybugs and their predator habits. The students were inquisitive and asked and answered several questions about ladybugs. Then they were presented with a kit to construct a ladybug of their own. They all engaged in the project eagerly and were able to design their ladybugs quickly with the help of the "garden ladies." To conclude, Anita asked the students if someone would say what he/she learned about ladybugs. One boy raised his hand and said he knew one thing ladybugs were not allowed to do - enter a boy's bathroom! It was obvious he enjoyed the joke from the book Lynda read.



HORTICULTURE

By Christine Wegman

Fothergilla

Fothergilla has long been one of my favorite shrubs. The beautiful blue-green foliage is its particular attraction for me, but that is only the beginning of its garden merits. *Fothergilla* is a pest-free, low-maintenance native shrub that is a good size for small gardens and looks well through the seasons. It is named after Dr. John Fothergill, an English physician who was John Bartram's patron.



Fothergilla's common name is witch alder. It is a member of the witch-hazel family and is related to our native witch-hazel. You can tell by the similarity of its leaves, and the zig-zag shape of its branches. There are four species of *Fothergilla*, two of which are in cultivation. These are *F. major*, found in the mountains of the southeastern United States, and *F. gardenii*, found in roughly the same region, but at lower elevations, especially around streams. Both are similar in appearance.

Fothergilla is a low, dense, slow growing but long-lived plant (up to 60 years). Attractive to butterflies, it blooms in mid-April on bare stems. The white, bottle-brush shaped blooms are showy and cover the plant as the leaves emerge. Unlike azaleas, for example, they don't leave a dried-out presence after they fade.



Flowers are replaced by the beautiful blue-green foliage that lasts until fall. When the weather turns cold, the plant turns on its spectacular show of red, orange, and yellow. After the leaves fall, the winter structure remains attractive, and not unlike that of the witch hazel. *Fothergillas* expand by suckering, but not aggressively so. It is a simple matter to control the size of the plant by pruning off the suckers in the spring. *Fothergilla* will grow in full sun to part shade, needs acid

soil, and does not like wet feet. It is pest free and somewhat drought tolerant when established. I have grown it in shade and part sun, and its color is better in more sun.

F. major (fothergilla major) grows 6-10 feet high and wide, and is more adaptable to cold, although both are hardy in our zone 7. *F. gardenii* (dwarf fothergilla) grows 3-4 feet tall and wide, and has the more colorful fall foliage. In the late 1970s renowned plantsman, Michael



or *F. major*.

Dirr, discovered a natural hybrid of the two species at Mt. Airy Arboretum in Cincinnati, Ohio, and named it 'Mt. Airy'. *Fothergilla x intermedia* 'Mt. Airy' has the small size and good fall foliage of *F. gardenii*, and is easy to propagate by cuttings. All in all, it is my favorite of the cultivars. When shopping for *Fothergilla*, it is well to keep in mind that it continues to be the subject of some confusion in the nursery trade. 'Mt. Airy' is often sold as *F. gardenii*

Some of the best cultivars include:

- 'Beaver Creek' -- a cultivar of *F. x intermedia* that grows 2-3 feet high and wide, with a dense rounded form and good fall color;
- 'Blue Mist' – a selection of *F. gardenii* that grows 2-3 feet high and 3-4 feet wide, with very good blue leaf color in summer, but disappointing fall color;
- 'Blue Shadow' – a sport of 'Mt. Airy' (*F. x intermedia*, despite often being labeled as *F. gardenii*), similar to 'Mt. Airy', but with bluer foliage in summer and somewhat less colorful in fall;
- 'Harold Epstein' – a dwarf selection of *F. gardenia*, growing only 12-15 inches tall
- 'Mt. Airy' – the benchmark against which other cultivars are judged, with dense, rounded form, deep blue-green foliage, and consistently vibrant red-orange color in fall.
- 'Suzanne' – a compact cultivar of *F. gardenii*, growing 2.5-3 feet tall, similar in color to 'Mt. Airy' with increased tolerance of dry and shady conditions.



Garden Therapy

By Mary Sliwa

Continuing the precedent of the many wonderful educational fun programs and projects that the Garden Therapy volunteers deliver to the little children at Glebe Elementary School each month, we presented a Valentine's Day party for the month of February. Mary Sliwa spoke about the meaning of Valentine's Day, of love, kindness, and showing thanks, and handed out a card to each of the students from the "garden ladies".



Next, the children gathered around as Mary read the book, "Happy Valentine's Day, Curious George". Then we sang a song: "If you're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands", keeping them guessing with new moves with each chorus.



The children then sat at their tables and made cards to take home, with iridescent paper and a variety of heart-shaped stickers, followed by the main event: making Valentine flower arrangements with beautiful red, pink, and white carnations, and baby's breath. Many thanks to Kate Abrahams for bringing the flowers and to the other volunteers, Mary Garnett, Susan Scotti, and Pat Getz for making the program such a success.



Salad Recipe from the February Meeting

By Joan Hession

During these stormy times it was reassuring to see so many members at the February meeting. Many nice comments on the salad have led me to share the recipe. I found it in Bon Appetit and was so excited when I also found that Trader Joe's carried the beans and corn frozen. It makes preparation very easy.

GREEN BEAN, CHERRY TOMATO, AND GRILLED CORN SALAD

1 pkg Trader Joe's frozen French cut green beans – cooked and sliced into 1-inch pieces

1 pkg Trader Joe's frozen roasted corn – defrosted

1 ½ cup of cherry tomatoes – halved

Combine and add dressing.

DRESSING

1/3 cup basil – fresh – thinly sliced

1 large shallot – chopped

3 Tablespoons white wine vinegar

½ cup olive oil

Mix together. Season with salt and pepper.

White House Garden Tours - were recently announced for this year; they will be held April 5-6, 2025. For more information, click the link below.

<https://www.nps.gov/whho/planyourvisit/white-house-garden-tours.htm>

PHOTO GALLERY

From the February meeting

Creative Tubular Designs





Horticulture





From Kate Abrahams

Interpretation of Art Designs at the Philadelphia Flower Show

