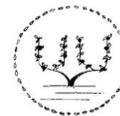


THE GARDENZETTE



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 Club, Inc., District III; and Southern Atlantic Region, Virginia Federated Garden Clubs, Inc., Piedmont District



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PRESIDENT

Cheryl Atkinson

VICE PRESIDENT

Maryam Zolecki

SECRETARY

Chris Day

TREASURER

Joan Hession

GARDENZETTE EDITOR

Pat Getz

General Meeting
March 19, 2026 – 10:00 am
Little Falls Presbyterian Church
Lower Level Friendship Hall
6025 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22207

Native Gardening in the Landscape Design

Maureen Robinson and Lynley Ogilvie will enlighten us on strategies for incorporating native plants in our yards. We rely on pollinators to foster the plants that beautify our surroundings, but habitat that sustains them becomes more limited with construction and use of pesticides.

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President's Message
By Cheryl Atkinson

The warm days earlier this week have finally melted the mountains of dirty snow piled up around town and plants are emerging from the winter. My hellebores and a few early daffodils are blooming; the forsythia and camellias are showing a little color. I know there'll be more freezing nights and maybe even sleet or snow before spring really arrives, but having this brief preview of spring has been such a treat.

I'm excited that we will be returning to our redecorated meeting space in Friendship Hall next week! I'm looking forward to seeing the changes to the Hall but looking forward even more to being able to have design and horticulture exhibits again. Missing design and horticulture in January and February has been a huge disappointment. We were hoping to hone our design and horticulture skills in the monthly meetings leading up to the Flower Show in May, but that has not been possible in the space available to us. I encourage you all to make up for lost time by bringing designs and horticulture specimens to the meeting next week. See you there!



Note: Due to receiving late notice on the re-opening Friendship Hall, we will have a snack table rather than a full lunch at the March meeting.

<p>Year to Date Budget Report</p> <p>Beginning Balance: \$21,767.79</p> <p>Revenue: \$638.59</p> <p>Expenses: \$922.55</p> <p>Net: (\$283.96)</p> <p>Ending Balance: \$21,483.83</p>

<p>Next Board Meeting</p> <p>Thursday April 2, 2026</p> <p>at 4:30 pm</p> <p>Hosted by Joan Hession</p>
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Design of the Month:

By Kate Abrahams

Creative Illuminary

This month's floral design challenge is a creative "Illuminary" design. Along with the Cascade, Parallel, and three petite design types, this will be one of the six design classes in our May 21st Flower Show. The NGC Handbook for Flower Shows defines a creative illuminary design as "A Creative Design incorporating light(s) for special effect and as an integral part of the design." (HB p. 74). Incorporating a battery-powered string of miniature lights, tea lights, rope lights, fairy lights, globes or other light emitting component into the design is needed. You don't want to place a light separate from the design that looks like a spotlight shining on it. The light must be inside or "integrated" into the design as one of the components. The usual creative design characteristics apply: sparse plant material, plenty of open space, non-traditional placement and type of plant materials. Manipulation or abstraction of plant material is desirable, depth, creating rhythm by following a line through through the design elements, balancing the visual weight of the components.



Youth Activities By Mary Garnett

Youth Activities January program making pinecone birdfeeders at Tuckahoe Elementary School was postponed to February because of January's infamous snow-crete storm. Each month four second graders are selected by their teachers from each of Tuckahoe's three second grade classrooms to work with us on a garden project. This month's students were each supplied with a pinecone, a small cup of Crisco, and a stick to coat the pinecone with Crisco. They then rolled their pinecones in a container of bird seed to coat each cone with seeds so they could then take them home to hang outside for the birds to eat. When the children finished this messy but fun project they had the special treat of watching four baby chicks, only a few days old, in an incubator in the classroom. Committee members who participated were Debbie Czarniecki, Joyce Fall, Mary Garnett, Pat Getz, Lynda Martin, and Lea Alice Parker.



Garden Therapy By Mary Sliwa

The Garden Therapy volunteers met with the preschoolers at Glebe school on February 12 for our annual Valentines Day party, led by Mary Sliwa. We talked all about the meaning of the holiday. They came up with good answers, like hearts and love. We talked about kindness to others and how to appreciate those who care for them and how you can thank them. Then we read a Valentine's Day book about Curious George. The song we sang next was lively and our version of an old favorite, " If I like you and you know it, clap your hands", with some new and funny moves. Mary had made Valentine decorated paper headbands and a tiny one inch Valentine card that opened up to a paper string of 6 little hearts and fit into a tiny envelope, from all of us, known as the "garden ladies", to all 14 of them. They then sat down with a special iridescent paper to make their own cards, with heart stickers. We finally got to the beautiful flowers. Many thanks to Kate Abrahams for getting them and preparing the red cups. The children made their own arrangements with red, pink, and white carnations, and babies breath. I think they all had fun. I know I did. Many thanks to my helpers, Mary Garnett, Margi Melnick, Kate, and our new member, Joyce MacKenzie.



Liaison Report

By Maryam Zolecki

Every month, the liaison section of the newsletter will keep you informed about dates and events happening related to garden club activities, as well as some other events related to gardening, floral design, and horticulture. Please email me to share events for publication. Here is what's happening in the new year.

- Save the date for the 39th annual **Lahr Native Plant Symposium**, coming up on **Saturday, March 28, 2026** from **9:00am-4:00pm** held at the **U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC!** This all-day event features a slate of expert speakers who will touch on a variety of topics. To join for an engaging day of presentations and conversation and to delve into the world of native plants, visit the registration [link](#) for the full list of speakers and to secure your seat tickets. Your ticket includes a provided lunch with gluten free and vegan options available. Additionally, the **Friends of the National Arboretum Native Plant Sale** will happen concurrently outside the Symposium from **8:00am-1:00pm!** Come early to the Symposium or leave time during the lunch hour to shop.
- Washington Daffodil Society's annual daffodil show will be on **April 11-12, 2026** at the Alexandria Scottish Rite (1430 West Braddock Road). On display will be hundreds of beautiful daffodils as well as floral designs featuring daffodils. Reach out to show chair, Mary Anne Barton (daffyun100@gmail.com) if you are interested in entering or for more information.
- NCAGC will hold its Spring State Meeting on **Tuesday, April 14, 2026** at the US Arboretum. The meeting will include the Awards Presentation and Paige Canfield of Summer B Designs will be the program focusing on Sustainable Floral Arrangements involving many raffles of designs to kick off NCAGC's 75th Anniversary year of celebration!
- The Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week is **April 18-25, 2026** and this year, it coincides with our nation's 250th anniversary offering many properties linked to early Virginians who helped shape American history. Stunning floral arrangements, created by talented GCV members, focus on flowers and plants native to Virginia, adding another element of inspiration to the showcased sites. Use this link to learn more: [2026 tour schedule](#). Tickets may be purchased beginning 2/16/2026 at 10am using this link: [2026 tour tickets & Little Oak Spring ticket](#).
- District III of National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. will be sponsoring a flower show on **April 25-26, 2026** at Green Hedges School in Vienna, VA. For more information and to exhibit, reach out to General Chair, Kate Abrahams.
- The Arlington VA250 Committee has announced plans for Arlington HistoryFest 250, a free, one-day outdoor festival commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. It will be held on **Saturday, May 9, 2026, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.** at Kenmore Middle School.
- Green Spring Garden's Spring Garden Day and The Big Plant Sale is **Saturday, May 16, 2026** from 9am-3pm. Local garden vendors descend on Green Spring Gardens with beautiful and unusual plants to fill your spring gardening needs. Growers and Extension Master Gardeners

are on hand to help with plant selection and offer gardening advice. Home-baked goods and treats will be available at the bake sale at the Horticulture Center. The plant shop at Green Spring Gardens opens Saturday, April 11, 2026. Check out their website for upcoming programs, such as forest bathing walk, spring vegetable gardening, and foraging for edibles.

- Rock Spring Garden Club's Flower Show, Chorus for Country - Celebrating Early Patriotic Songs, is slated for **May 21, 2026**. Plan to be a part of it both as an exhibitor and a volunteer! The flower show will celebrate America's 250th anniversary, and it should be a wonderful and fun show.
 - Save-the-Date: **June 2, 2026** - NCAGC 75th Anniversary Conference at Congressional Country Club, Potomac, MD, with more information coming January 2026.
 - **NGC Schools** - Visit the link (<https://gardenclub.org/our-schools>) and click on "learn more" and then "find a course" for each of the respective schools: Flower Show, Gardening, Landscape Design, and Environmental. There are a number of virtual options that are convenient and cost effective.
 - **Ayr Hill Garden Club Plant Sale May 9, 2026 8:00 am to 1:00 pm**
131 Church St NE, Vienna VA 22180. Next to Freeman Store and Museum
Order online at: <https://ahgcplantsale.square.site/> and pick up at the May 9 sale; orders March 1 – April 25.
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Signs of Spring from Renee Bayes



Membership

By Maryam Zolecki

Thank you to everyone who has submitted their renewal application and dues to date, and with the due date of March 31, 2026 fast approaching, a reminder to please get your renewals in, if you have not done so already. To ease the renewal process for **Emeritus** members, you will automatically be considered a renewed member, and please let me know if you prefer otherwise or have any changes in information (e.g., address, email, etc.). Thanks to everyone in advance for your timely renewals, and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Outlined below are options for renewal, and if something else works better for you, just let me know. There are two easy ways to submit your renewal application:

1. Complete a **paper** copy and return to Maryam Zolecki either in person, via email, or by mail. Paper copies will be available at the February and March general meetings, in *The Gardenzette* ([click here for renewal form](#)), or via email to me.
2. Complete an **online** copy (very easy and convenient) by clicking on this link: **Renewal Form**.

And, there are three easy ways to submit your dues payment of \$65 with your application:

1. By check made out to Rock Spring Garden Club
2. By cash
3. By credit card (with step-by-step directions below) at this link: [Credit Card Link](#)
 - a. Put your cursor over the above underlined "Credit Card Link" phrase and left click
 - b. Left click on the link that pops up
 - c. Choose an amount (the default amount is already \$65) and click continue
 - d. Enter your email, first name, and last name, and change your state (Virginia is default), if applicable
 - e. Then, under the "summary" section, click on the dropdown box labeled "17.00% (\$11.05)" and click "Other"
 - f. Enter "0" (as in zero dollars) for your choice in the contribution box
 - g. Enter your credit card information and click donate

Flower Show

By Maryam Zolecki

Our flower show is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2026 (in lieu of our meeting that month), and many of you are probably wondering, what the heck is a flower show? While there are many ways to describe one, the simplest description is that it is a display of flowers, nature, and plants in different artistic and educational ways. The four different ways applicable to our flower show are horticulture, design, education, and photography. The schedule ([click here](#)) is the rulebook for how to display in each area, and although it may look daunting, it really is a very helpful document and I encourage everyone to give it a read as it will clarify and answer questions that you may have. If you still have questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me or anyone listed in the schedule. There will be a brief presentation and update on the flower show at the March monthly meeting, so hopefully you can be there to learn even more. I do hope everyone opts to enter in one or more of the four areas, and especially the design division! We are in the process of planning a workshop prior to the flower show to support your floral design entries to make the process as easy as possible!

- Horticulture - cut or potted plant specimens in clear bottles and labeled with the correct botanical name (and don't worry if you do not know how to do this as there will be help when you drop off your specimens). At our monthly meetings, you may have seen the table with all the plants in bottles. This is a horticulture division in a flower show.
- Design - There are different design types, and our flower show will showcase six of them: parallel, illuminary, cascade, petite multi-rhythmic, petite reflective, and petite mass. The size restrictions for each design are in the schedule. Basically, you create floral designs using the



Reflective Design by
Anita Brown

guidelines for each type of design (parallel requires three or more parallel lines, cascade design flows downward, reflective includes components giving light back to the viewer, etc.), and the description in the schedule along with the theme and name of each class will give

ideas on how to design. Check out pictures of past designs by our

- members, and take a look at previous article by Show Chair Kate Abrahams with very detailed description of the guidelines for each design type showcased in the flower show.
- Education – a display (think science fair style displays) related to the topic in the schedule.
- Photography – a display of pictures with the requirements for the pictures outlined in the schedule.



Parallel Design by
Renee Bayes



Petite Mass Design by
Charlotte Benjamin

Photo Gallery

**From Pat Getz
Ringling Museum and Gardens, Sarasota, Florida**



Signs of Spring
From Arlington Forest neighbor
Christos Liacouris

