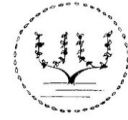


THE GARDENZETTE



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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Cheryl Atkinson

VICE PRESIDENT

Maryam Zolecki

SECRETARY

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TREASURER

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GARDENZETTE EDITOR

Pat Getz

Field Trip

April 16, 2026

Oatlands Historic House and Gardens

20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane

Leesburg, VA

Oatlands encompasses 360 acres in scenic easements and features a Greek Revival mansion and a four-acre English terraced garden. We will have a guided tour of the garden at 10:45 am. The drive from Arlington to Oatlands is about 45 minutes. Those willing to drive and those desiring a ride should meet at Little Falls Presbyterian Church at 9:30 to form carpools for the trip. Whether you carpool or drive independently, please plan to arrive by 10:30. Admission fees for the tour are being paid by the club; therefore an accurate count is needed. *If you would like to go but have not yet signed up, please email or phone Connie Richards.* If you have signed up but will not be able to come, please notify Connie.

We will meet for lunch afterward at Tuscarora Mill Restaurant, 203 Harrison Street SE in Leesburg, Virginia at 12:30; each person will buy their own lunch. Please bring cash; it will make settling the bill much quicker.

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President's Message

By Cheryl Atkinson

It appears that Spring has truly arrived. I've been walking around my garden marveling at how fast things like Hosta and Astilbe are coming up. I planted some Allium last fall, and they are about a foot high already. My old-fashioned bleeding hearts (which I love) are in full bloom. I wish the blooms lasted longer, but maybe their being ephemeral makes us appreciate them more. The Camellias are just about finished, and the Dogwoods are coming out. It's an exciting time of year for us gardeners!

And it's a busy time for the Rock Spring Garden Club. We have a field trip to Oatlands coming up this month—if you haven't already let Connie Richards know that you plan to go, please do that soon. In May our big event, the Chorus for the Country Flower Show, will be held. Space is available in the Design and Botanical Arts/Photography divisions for additional entries. If you haven't already registered to exhibit, please think about where you might like to participate and get in touch with the respective division chair. Charlotte Benjamin chairs the Design division, and Kate Abrahams chairs the Botanical Arts/Photography division. You need not register in advance for entries in the Horticulture division. For more information, refer to the Flower Show Schedule which was distributed earlier.

To wrap up our 2025-2026 Club Year, our End of Year event will be a visit to the spectacular Hillwood Estate in Washington, DC. Plans for that event are described in a separate article in this month's *Gardenzette*. You don't want to miss it—so be sure to put it on your calendar right away.

Year to Date Budget Report

Beginning Balance: \$21,483.83

Revenue: \$1,699.57

Expenses: (\$537.73)

Net: \$1,161.84

Ending Balance: \$22,645.67

Next Board Meeting

Thursday May 7, 2026

at 4:30 pm

Hosted by Jo Ella Samp

Senior Outreach

By Helen McMahan

Valentine's Day was the theme of the February 18 program at Mary Marshall. Our leader, Joan Hession, shared the history of Valentine's Day dating back to the 3rd Century, and the modern day holiday back to the 17th Century. Helen McMahan described the meaning of the flowers we provided—red carnations, variegated red/white carnations, and baby's breath. The flowers symbolized true love, purity, friendship; the color red--the heart. Imelda Rowe added greenery from the Mary Marshall Garden which was planted by the Garden Club. Jody Goulden, Debra Hollander, and Laurie Grant joined in giving each of the 11 participating residents a container and flowers which they used to create their own arrangements. Each resident takes great pride in their arrangement. Added to the arrangements

were heart stickers with a variety of sayings provided by Mary Marshall, red heart-shaped cookies, and conversation heart candies. We exchanged "Will you be my Valentine?" with great enthusiasm. The garden club members find this program heartwarming in jointly sharing with the residents an upbeat meaningful activity.



Springtime in Arlington

Youth Activities

By Pat Getz

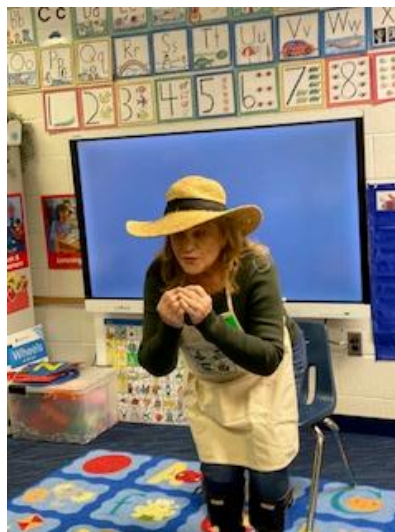
The March Youth Activities program with the Tuckahoe Elementary School second-graders was all about ladybugs. Participating committee members included Ginger Ackerman, Debbie Czarniecki, Joyce Fall, Pat Getz, and Lynda Martin. Debbie read a book about ladybugs which focused on their lifecycle from egg to larva to pupa to adult ladybug. The book also featured a few ladybug jokes, which the students enjoyed. We passed around a model of the different ladybug life stages for the children to examine while Debbie read to them. Then we gave each child a ladybug craft kit to make their own foam-material ladybug to take home. The children enjoyed the book and the craft and several commented on how much they liked real life ladybugs. A bonus for us and the children was that several chicks that had hatched in the classroom incubator last month were still there and now much larger and more active, and had even established a pecking order. The chicks were scheduled to be sent to a farm when spring break started.



Garden Therapy

By Pat Getz

The Garden Therapy committee met with our regular group of preschoolers for the March program; the theme was spring planting. Mary Sliwa read a story to the children that explained how and why seeds are planted in the spring for many different types of flowers, vegetables, and fruits. Next, Joyce McKenzie led the children in a rousing song about planting and growing that was sung to the tune of The Farmer in the Dell; they participated enthusiastically! Our hands-on project this month was planting nasturtium seeds in small plastic jars that the children decorated themselves with stickers. Thanks to Susan Scotti for supplying the potting soil and tiny gloves for the children to wear, and to Kate Abrahams for supplying the nasturtium seeds. The students enjoyed filling the jars with pebbles for drainage, potting soil, and the seeds. We sent the children home with their seed jars and an information sheet for their parents on how to care for the seed jars to encourage sprouting. We also distributed coloring sheets which featured different types of flowers for them to complete at school or at home as time permitted. A good time was had by all!



End of Year Event - June 11, 2026 Hillwood Estate Museum and Gardens

By Cheryl Atkinson

As discussed briefly at the March meeting, our End of Year event this year will be a visit to Hillwood Estate Museum and Gardens located at 4155 Linnean Ave., NW, Washington, DC. No group lunch is planned, but the Merriweather Café is handy for those who wish to have lunch there after their visit to the estate. Full service, counter service, and To-Go options are available, and you may picnic on the grounds. More information about menus, exhibits, and directions is available on the Hillwood website: [Hillwood Estate](#). Several RSGC members, who are also members of Hillwood, have enough passes to ensure free entry for us. Those willing to drive and those who would like a ride should plan to meet at the Little Falls Presbyterian Church at 9:15 to form carpools, leave by 9:30, and arrive at Hillwood when it opens at 10:00. A Board member will be at the church to

hand out passes as carpools are being formed. Feel free to form your own carpools with other members who are your friends/neighbors. If you plan to drive there directly from home, look for an RSGC member near the visitor center entry who will have passes available. Visitors are directed to parking at the entrance gate, and complimentary parking near the visitor center is generally available. We would like to have an idea about the number of members who will be going. Please let Dianne Simmons know by phone or email that you plan to go.



RSGC Flower Show

By Maryam Zolecki

As many of you are aware, our flower show is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 2026 (in lieu of our meeting that month), and the flower show committee is working hard in this final stretch to ensure a fun, educational, and vibrant event. We very much appreciate everyone's enthusiasm and participation so far, and if you have not had a chance to do so already, it is not too late to be a participant, so please do reach out to either Connie Richards (Education Chair), Kate Abrahams (Photography Chair), and/or Charlotte Benjamin (Design Chair) to

enter an exhibit. 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 (or the folks mentioned above). Flower shows are such great learning experiences, and the best way to grow in this area is to take the plunge and enter an exhibit. Regardless of the outcome, it is a wonderful way to grow as a garden club member!

PHOTO GALLERY

From the March General Meeting

Illumination Designs





Horticulture



