

THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA JOURNAL

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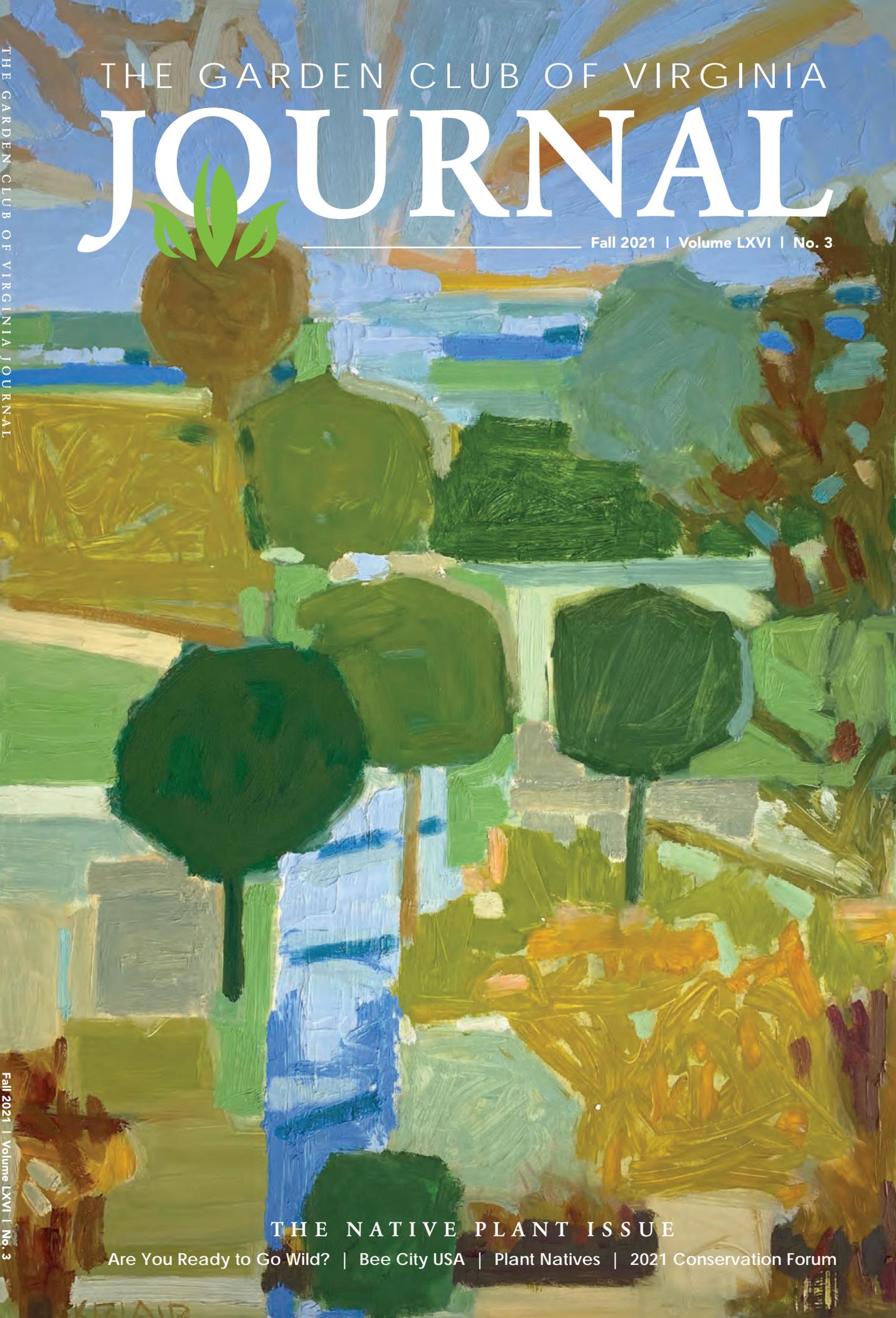


Fall 2021 | Volume LXVI | No. 3

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THE NATIVE PLANT ISSUE

Are You Ready to Go Wild? | Bee City USA | Plant Natives | 2021 Conservation Forum



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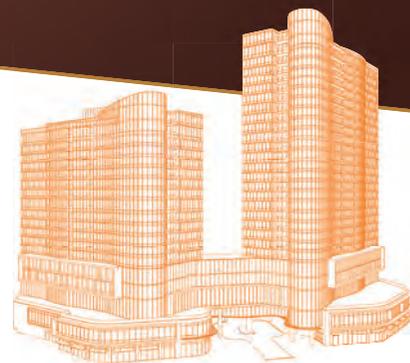
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THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA JOURNAL

FALL 2021 | Volume LXVI | No.3

THE MISSION OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

The Garden Club of Virginia exists to celebrate the beauty of the land, to conserve the gifts of nature and to challenge future generations to build on this heritage.

THE GCV JOURNAL

The Garden Club of Virginia *Journal* is published quarterly and is designed to address the interests and promote the activities of the Garden Club of Virginia and its member clubs. Organized to enhance and strengthen communication within the GCV, the *Journal* focuses on the mission of the organization: conservation and beautification, horticulture, restoration and education. Approximately 3,600 copies of each issue are mailed to members and subscribers.

A PDF version is available online at gcvirginia.org.

SUBMISSIONS

The *Journal* welcomes submissions by GCV committees, clubs and club members, as well as article ideas related to the GCV's mission and its initiatives and events. As a matter of editorial policy, all submissions will be edited for clarity of expression, space, style compliance, grammar, syntax, structure and messaging. Unsolicited material will be considered, but submission does not guarantee publication. For questions, please contact journal@gcvirginia.org.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE & DEADLINES

ISSUE	PUBLISHES IN	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
2021		
Winter	December	October 1
2022		
Winter	February	December 1
Spring	May	March 1
Summer	August	June 1
Fall	November	September 1

ADVERTISING

Advertising inquiries are welcome. Discounts are available to clubs and club members; frequency discounts are also available.

For a rate sheet or more information, visit the GCV website at gcvirginia.org or contact *Journal* Ad Sales Manager at journalads@gcvirginia.org.

The Garden Club of Virginia is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. 12 East Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23219.

The *Journal* is printed by Carter Printing Company (ISSN 0431-0233) and is published four times a year for members by the GCV.

Graphic Design by Whitney Tigani Design

Periodical postage paid (USPS 574-520) in Richmond, Va.



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Table setting from Historic Garden Week Photo courtesy of *The Chatham Garden Club*
Isabella Tree. Photo courtesy of *Isabella Tree Bee*. Photo courtesy of *DerWeg from Pixabay*
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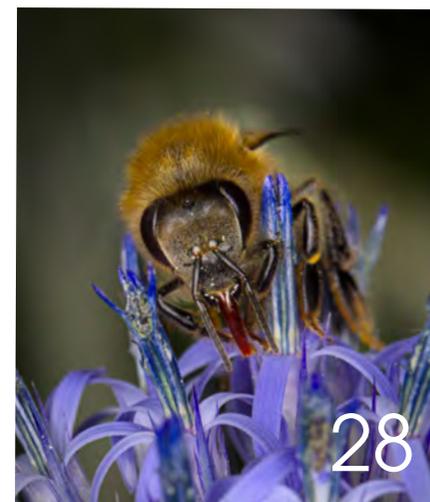
THIS PAGE: Poplar Forest Curtilage Fence, Photo courtesy of *Poplar Forest*

CORRECTIONS

We regret the following errors in the spring/summer *Journal*:

- The photo that appeared with The Augusta Garden Club SNIP article on Page 22 was incorrect.

- The byline attributed to The Little Garden Club of Winchester District 5 SNIP article on Page 24 was misattributed. The correct author is Kaye Smith.



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ON THE COVER: ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

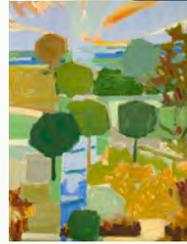
KAREN BLAIR

In *October Sky*, one can almost taste the fresh air as Karen Blair captures the fleeting atmosphere of an autumn afternoon bordering the Blue Ridge.

A longtime Virginian whose soft voice retains the gentle cadence of her North Carolina roots, Karen describes painting sunsets: "It starts with the golden light. This time of year, we have fabulous sunsets, and this golden glow just takes over. It's that heart-stopping moment at the end of the day when you look up and just take a deep breath because you can hardly believe how beautiful the sky is. And it's so beautiful, so poignantly beautiful because it's transient. The Japanese have a word for this: aware. It's the feeling or awareness brought on by ephemeral, fragile beauty, the preciousness of something because it's fleeting. So you're trying to capture that transient moment." Karen compares painting to gardening. "A packet of seeds. A tube of paint. There's so much promise in those two things."

She meditates on the gardens, trees, mountains and sky surrounding her home, evoking a unique moment in time as the Earth circles the sun, and light takes on a precise slant in a place she knows well.

Karen's work is shown in galleries and collected by individuals and corporations across the country.



A member of Albemarle Garden Club, her passion for conservation

has been recognized by the Garden Club of America and abounds in her solar-driven home and organic garden. She has three grown children and lives with her husband, Jimmy Jackson, and their Brittany spaniel, Remi.

—Jeanette McKittrick, *Three Chopt Garden Club, Cover Editor, GCV Journal*

ABOVE: *October Sky*, 24"x18", oil on panel by Karen Blair. Photo courtesy of Karen Blair



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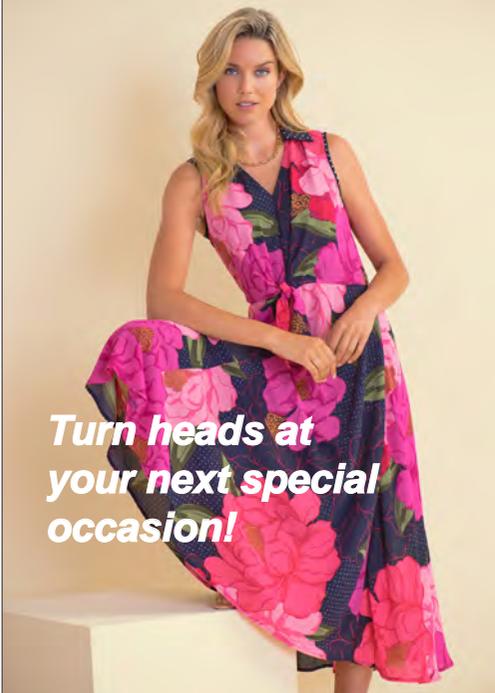
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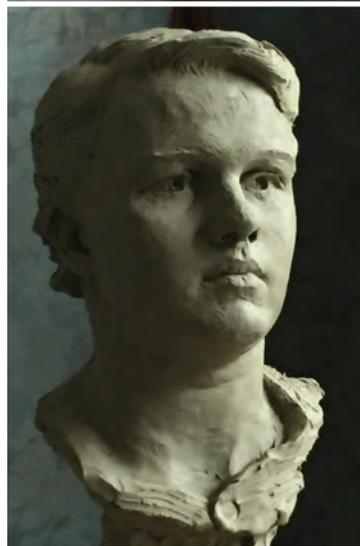
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FALL 2021



Conserve, preserve, restore and protect. Key elements of the mission of the Garden Club of Virginia. You have heard the call. Please heed the call. Think what an impact more than 3,400 members and 48 clubs can make across our Commonwealth if we collectively take action.

A Pollinator Protection Initiative was adopted by the Garden Club of Virginia in July 2019. Read about it on Page 9 and on the home page of the GCV website at Our Work/Conservation.

Discover ways that you can take action to support this important initiative, and learn all about the Bee City USA initiative and how to protect these vital pollinators on Page 28.

ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS TO:

- Plant native plants,
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides,
- Keep your gardens, landscapes, communities and roadsides free of invasive plants.

Providing pollinators with a healthy habitat, rich in a variety of native plants, will increase the amount of native vegetation, provide greater sustainability of our natural resources, enhance wildlife habitat and improve aesthetics and the quality of life.

Invasive plants compete with, overwhelm and destroy Virginia's native plants. Sharing concern that invasive species are being grown and sold by some nurseries to retailers, municipalities and home gardeners, the GCV recently joined a statewide working group to study the sale and use of invasive plant species. Read more about it on Page 10.

Let's all do our part to be good stewards of the environment in our home gardens and in our communities.

Missy Buckingham
GCV President, 2020-2022



GO NATIVE



If enhancing your garden is on your fall to-do list, consider a focus on natives. They significantly benefit birds and insects and other wildlife and, thankfully, are increasingly available in the nursery trade. Exotic plants, on the other hand, are from other places. Their presence introduces something wholly unfamiliar—and often unpalatable, undigestible and inedible—to the pollinators and other critters that depend on the plants in our gardens as a steady food source.

In these pages of the *Journal*, join us as we celebrate native plants. Read about going wild in the garden, turning your city into a Bee City, and choosing native plants for your landscape. We cover the GCV's participation in a statewide working group addressing natives and invasives and the Pollinator Protection Initiative that encourages clubs and members to go native.

And what conversation about native plants would be complete without Doug Tallamy in the mix? He is exercising his significant platform and gardening star power to encourage incorporating native plants into your garden plans. Doug's latest book, *The Nature of Oaks*, is in praise of nature's most essential tree. Don't miss our review on Page 32.

We in the GCV are a collection of forward-thinking change-makers with a common mission that includes celebrating the beauty of the land and conserving the gifts of nature. We are motivated and informed, and individually and collectively we can make a real difference.

As always, we'd love to hear from you. Write us at journal@gcvirginia.org. In the meantime, happy gardening!

Madeline Mayhood

Madeline Mayhood
GCV Journal Editor
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GCV's Pollinator Protection Initiative

In 2019, the Garden Club of Virginia Board of Directors passed a resolution to launch the Pollinator Protection Initiative. In essence, it's a resolution that acknowledges the critical role pollinators play in our ecosystems. Equally important, it also acknowledges pollinators' alarming decline due to habitat loss, toxic chemicals and climate change. The real value of this resolution, however, demonstrates what the GCV is especially good at: providing a blueprint to clubs and members to help solve a problem. Mobilizing more than 3,400 members in 48 clubs throughout the state has enormous potential—in this case to marshal all that energy and drive and



Go native and plant lots of purple coneflower (*Echinacea*) to attract pollinators to your garden. Photo by Gary Stearman from Pixabay

commitment to the GCV's mission in order to make a difference. And in this case, that means creating a statewide pollinator network.

The full Pollinator Protection Initiative Resolution can be found on the GCV website in the Conservation/Our Work section. It outlines myriad ways in which the GCV supports its membership in efforts to protect and assist pollinators, encouraging members and clubs to:

- Initiate pollinator protection programs in their communities by planting pollinator-friendly gardens, trees, shrubs and other native species in concert with their local city governments or through their own programs;
- Work with their local government to become a Bee City USA, an initiative of the Xerces Society (see accompanying article on Page 28);
- Plant their own pollinator-friendly gardens and consider joining the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge, part of the National Pollinator Garden Network;
- Utilize their local native plant list, which can be found on the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Plant Virginia Natives websites;
- Use pesticides, herbicides and fungicides only when no other method is feasible or effective, and encourage others in their communities to do the same;
- Purchase the VDOT Protect Pollinators license plate to fund efforts to plant pollinator beds along Virginia highways;
- Engage in individual and collective efforts that support pollinators.

VOTE NOW!

Common Wealth Award Winner

BALLOT DEADLINE: POSTMARKED BY SEPTEMBER 30

The time is now to vote for the winner of the Common Wealth Award, the GCV award designed to promote projects in the interest of conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation and education. The two 2021 finalists (listed below) demonstrate the best of the Garden Club of Virginia, as well as the depth and breadth of GCV clubs in action. Information about their projects was detailed in the spring/summer *Journal* and can also be found in the June edition of *Membership News* and on the GCV website. Member clubs must vote on the finalists in September and the 2021 recipient will be announced at the October Board of Governors meeting. Club ballots, supplied by the GCV, must be postmarked by September 30.

A TRAIL TO THE RIVER AT FORT CHRISTANNA, LAWRENCEVILLE
Proposing club: *The Brunswick Garden Club*

JILL'S GARDEN—UNION MISSION WOMEN & CHILDREN'S SHELTER, NORFOLK
Proposing club: *Harborfront Garden Club*

GCV Joins Working Group to Promote Native Plants and Address Invasives

As Garden Club of Virginia President Missy Buckingham reported in the August issue of *Membership News*, Virginia House Joint Resolution 527 was unanimously approved earlier in the year. It calls for a study that will explore options for phasing out the sale and use of invasive plants in Virginia's horticultural industry and promote the sale and use of native plants. The GCV will participate in the study and has joined a statewide working group to further the dialogue. The study group, led jointly by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, includes representatives from the nursery and landscaping industry, other state agencies and environmental groups, such as the GCV, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Department of Forestry, the Nature Conservancy, Blue Ridge



The aggressive invader Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*), considered one of the most damaging invasive species, forms dense, spreading mats, which eventually grow into a monoculture, threatening native plants. The working group will address pervasive invasives that are challenging to eradicate. Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff from Wikimedia Commons

PRISM and Audubon. The group will meet monthly through November to discuss constructive ways to address the problem of invasive plants in Virginia's landscape, culminating in a formal advisory recommendation. Measures, such as signage, promotion of native plants, public education and funding for remediation of damage to

native landscapes caused by invasive species like kudzu, Japanese stilt grass and autumn olive, will be considered. Conservationists will work with landscape and nursery professionals to limit commonly used invasive landscape plants, such as Japanese barberry and Bradford pear. The study group will produce a report of its recommendations and findings. The Conservation and Beautification Committee has created a native plant protection subcommittee to oversee participation in the working group. In addition, the subcommittee is charged with drafting an official Garden Club of Virginia policy that protects native plants in Virginia, which will be presented to the Board of Directors in October.

—Carla Passarello, GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee, Dolley Madison Garden Club



AWARD DEADLINE!

Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 1

The Massie Medal is the Garden Club of Virginia's oldest and most prestigious award. Inaugurated by Susanne Williams Massie during her presidency in 1928, the medal was given by her until her death in 1952. Since then, it has been presented by the GCV in her memory. The recipient of the Massie Medal may be an individual member or member club who has served the Garden Club of Virginia with unusual dedication and distinction. The recipient must have been effective in promoting the betterment of the GCV and demonstrated excellence in horticulture, restoration, preservation or conservation of the commonwealth's natural resources. Proposals and endorsements from member clubs must be submitted to Anne Baldwin, Massie Medal chairman, by December 1, 2021. Guidelines can be found at GCVirginia.org.



Susanne Massie, Albemarle Garden Club, GCV President 1926-28.



In the garden with Leslie and her top assistant, Ginny. Photo courtesy of Leslie Harris

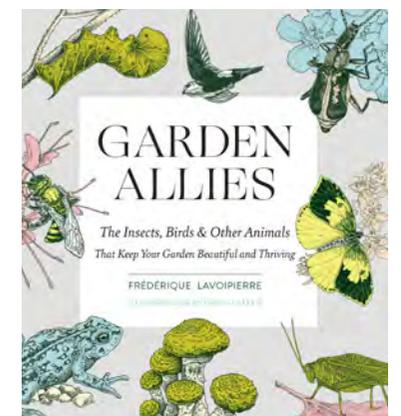
Into the Garden with Leslie Harris

With more people staying home, garden podcasts are flourishing. Consider Leslie Harris, longtime horticulturist, garden designer and member of Albemarle Garden Club. In addition to her busy garden business, her latest venture is "Into the Garden with Leslie," an informative, accessible and funny weekly podcast in which she dives deep into what we in garden clubs all love: gardens and plants. She interviews an industry expert in her "Guest" column (from Doug Tallamy to Maine's Chicken Lady, but sometimes her own musings are just as fun to listen to), and she also highlights a plant in "Plant of the Week." Her "Playlist"

includes garden tasks to tackle and tips. A winner is: "If you spy poison ivy in your garden, protect your hand with a big hosta leaf and pull." Leslie wraps things up with "Listen," her personal recommendations, which might include other podcasts, or, she suggests, "maybe just listen to the birds and buzzing this week." A favorite, which just might be yours too: "Sweet Virginia Breeze" by Steve Bassett and Robbin Thompson—for those of you who remember way back when. Check out "Into the Garden with Leslie" on most podcast apps. It's also available via her website: lhgardens.com.

Garden Allies

To sharpen your focus on native plants, check out *Garden Allies* (Timber Press, 2021), a little gem of a book every gardener should own. Subtitled "the insects, birds and other animals that keep your garden beautiful and thriving," you'll learn how the birds, mammals, reptiles and insects keep ecology in a dynamic balance. Written by biologist and lifelong garden educator Frederique Lavoipierre, who for many years wrote *Pacific Horticulture's* "Garden Allies" column, has a serious horticulture pedigree. She encourages us to



look at gardens—the plants and soil and all the creatures that inhabit them—as a harmonious whole. Accompanying illustrations by Craig Latker.

EXPLORE AND LEARN AT

Oak Spring



Garden at Oak Spring. Photo courtesy of Oak Spring Garden Foundation

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2021 State Tree of the Year

The pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) was selected by the State Arboretum of Virginia as the official Tree of the Year. After extensive deliberation, a panel of Bland's arborists, representatives of the Virginia Department of Forestry and Arboretum Curator T'ai Roulston chose the pawpaw for its value as a native fruit tree, a butterfly host plant to the spectacular zebra swallowtail and its lush foliage. It follows the Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and the sassafras (*S. albidum*), the trees of the years for 2019 and 2020. Its hand-sized edible fruit, which falls in September, is prized for its mango-like taste and banana consistency and is often used in ice cream, other desserts and cocktails. It's also prized by wildlife.

—Nancy Inman, Albemarle Garden Club

Photo by Agnieszka Kwiecień from Wikimedia Commons

AWARD DEADLINE!

Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1

This monetary award, made possible by Bessie Bocock Carter's family in her memory, funds the implementation of a conservation project within the state that will serve as a catalyst for community action. The award is presented annually to a GCV member club or in association with another conservation organization for either natural resource conservation or environmental protection. Proposals by members or member clubs must be submitted to the Conservation Awards Chairman, Jane Edwards, by November 1, 2021. Guidelines can be found on the GCV website. The recipient(s) of the award will be announced at the GCV Annual Meeting in May.



ABOVE: Bessie Carter, GCV President 1998-2000, for whom the Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award is named.



PLANT NOW FOR BEAUTIFUL SPRING BLOOMS

Ideas for Beautifying Your Garden and Getting Ready for Historic Garden Week

By Karen Cauthen Ellsworth, Director of Historic Garden Week

ABOVE: Hellebores are prolific and long-blooming perennials that are fabulous Garden Week performers. *Photo by Jan Haerer from Pixabay*

BELOW: A spring border at Eyre Hall on the Eastern Shore. *Photo by Diane Ginsburg*

BELOW RIGHT: This Garden Week basket arrangement, in purples, greens and whites, is the focal point of an outside terrace. *Photo courtesy of The Ashland Garden Club*

One of the unique aspects of Historic Garden Week is the blue ribbon-worthy arrangements created by talented GCV members to decorate showcased properties. We estimate nearly 2,000 floral designs will be created especially for the 2022 April tour season.

Unfortunately, the expense of purchased flowers and supplies by clubs over the past decade has more than doubled, with the cumulative cost exceeding \$25,000 annually. "While individual tour expenses don't seem all that large, collectively they're significant," says Tricia Garner, HGW state chairman. "We need to be mindful that every dollar saved is money that would greatly benefit a restoration project."

IF ONLY A FRACTION OF THE GCV'S MEMBERS ADDED A NEW PERENNIAL, A FEW BULBS OR EVEN A SPRINKLING OF SEEDS TO HIS OR HER OWN GARDEN THIS FALL, THE EXPONENTIAL EFFORT WOULD CREATE MANY OPTIONS FOR HGW ARRANGERS COME SPRINGTIME.

The GCV's focus on conservation has renewed an interest in growing native plants, with a goal of using and highlighting seasonal flowers and foliage. "The HGW Committee and I encourage each of you to consider this simple contribution," says Tricia.



GREEN ARROW SOCIETY Support the GCV with Planned Giving



Thanks to our generous members and supporters, the GCV has been able to honor its mission for 100 years. We have the distinction of successfully entering our second century in large part because of donors who understand that ensuring the organization's strength for the benefit of future generations means building adequate financial resources today.

Many of those donors have chosen planned or "legacy" giving, which distinguishes them as steadfast supporters of the GCV.

"Planned giving is so important to the future of the GCV," says former GCV President Cabell West, who is a member of the Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton. "A bequest to the Garden Club of Virginia is a powerful way to continue your support of this important organization."

The Green Arrow Society is named for one of GCV's most enduring and familiar symbols. Just as the GCV's green arrow has directed hundreds of thousands of visitors along Historic Garden Week's tours for nearly 90 years, members of the Green Arrow Society are helping point the way to a bright and sustainable future for the GCV.



For more information on planned giving and the Green Arrow Society, contact GCV Executive Director Andrea Butler at 804-643-4137 or email director@gcvirginia.org



LEFT: Early blooming peonies make equally bold statements in the garden and in an arrangement. ABOVE: A riot of spring color packs a punch in this charming arrangement. All photos by Tori Brock

JUST AS WE SHOP LOCALLY AND SEASONALLY FOR FOOD, KNOWING THAT IT IS HEALTHIER FOR OUR BODIES AND BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, I HOPE THAT WE CAN AVOID FLOWERS THAT HAVE BEEN SHIPPED HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD IN HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK ARRANGEMENTS. FAVOR VIRGINIA'S OWN BACKYARD BOUNTY.

And here's a creative idea for top-notch arrangers. Jennifer Kelley, chairman of next year's symposium and a member of The Garden Club of Alexandria, suggests approaching arranging for HGW as if it were a "challenge class." Rather than envisioning specific flowers and ordering from wholesalers, reverse the inspiration. Let the flowers and foliage that are seasonal, local and available be your guide.

WHILE MAINTAINING A CUTTING GARDEN IS A CENTURIES-OLD PASTIME, MOST OF US DON'T HAVE THE SPACE TO GROW AN ABUNDANCE OF BLOOMS FOR ARRANGING. I reached out to Horticulture Committee Chairman Heidi James and Artistic Design Committee Chairman Meredith Lauter for help compiling a list of plants that are useful for their foliage or are reliable cut-flower options. Conservation and Beautification Committee Chairman Allison Clock got involved and before I knew it, a comprehensive list was compiled. It includes much more than what to plant for HGW. "We have combined lists from Artistic Design and Horticulture to assist growers and arrangers. From the Artistic Design perspective, we've

included the GCV Principles & Elements of Design and grouped floral materials in functional categories," Meredith explains. "From a Horticulture and Conservation standpoint, we've designated those preferred by pollinators. Growing in your garden or on your balcony, these beneficial plants will bring you beauty and satisfaction, feed our pollinators and, ultimately, strengthen and renew our entire planet." The full six-page list is available at vagardenweek.org; on the following page is a primer of 20 tried and true plants that are exceptional HGW performers.

WE'VE POSTED A "NATIVE POLLINATOR PLANT GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS AND BEES," an information-packed flyer created by the City of Lynchburg Bee City Working Committee and Blue Ridge Conservation, a partnership of the Lynchburg Garden Club, and Hillside Garden Club, on conservation issues as further inspiration and education. It's also at vagardenweek.org.

IN THE COURSE OF WORKING ON THIS PROJECT, GCV'S WORKING COMMITTEE ON INVASIVE PLANTS REFERRED ME TO THE VIRGINIA INVASIVE PLANT LIST AVAILABLE FROM THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION. "I'm so proud to be part of this thoughtful and responsible group," shares Carla Passarello of the Dolley Madison Garden Club. "During HGW season, we should try to consider our environmental impact when creating arrangements for featured properties. This includes avoiding the use of floral foam and seeking alternatives, when possible."



Fashioned in an iron armillary, this arrangement showcases a collection of the best of spring's blooming beauties.

20 IDEAS FOR HGW PLANTING

NOW IS THE IDEAL TIME TO PLANT FOR CUTTING FOR HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK. IF YOUR SPACE IS SMALL, YOUR GARDEN ALREADY OVERFLOWING OR IF YOU ONLY HAVE THE TIME AND ENERGY TO ADD A FEW PLANTERS ON YOUR PATIO, WE HOPE THESE 20 TRIED-AND-TRUE FAVORITES INSPIRE YOU.

By Karen Cauthen Ellsworth, Director of Historic Garden Week

1. HYDRANGEA — if you're lucky enough to have these exuberant flowers blooming during HGW, they require special conditioning so they don't unceremoniously droop.

2. ALLIUM — these gigantic globes on tall stems are part of the onion family. They add drama to both garden beds and arrangements.

3. ASTILBE — this shade-loving plant has fabulous feathery flowers and foliage.

4. WILLOW AMSONIA, OR 'BLUE STAR' — features clusters of pale blue, star-shaped flowers. It is clay tolerant, disease and insect resistant, and an eastern U.S. native.

5. CORAL BELLS OR HEUCHERA — are great in containers because their tidy mounds provide year-round interest, and they don't mind being confined.

6. DIANTHUS OR SWEET WILLIAM (instead of floral shop carnations) — are dainty fillers in borders and vases. 'Firewitch' is my pick and a great border plant beloved by bees and butterflies.

7. WILD BLUE PHLOX — a Virginia wildflower that blooms well before traditional garden phlox.

8. EUPHORBIA — incredibly showy, durable and easy to grow, most euphorbias are deer resistant and enjoy heat. My favorite is 'Ascot Rainbow.'

9. BAPTISTA, OR FALSE BLUE INDIGO — these perennials are the host plant for the larvae of several butterfly species.

10. IRIS — now is the perfect time to add this floral stunner to your landscape or to divide clumps that are overcrowded. Dwarf crested iris is an early spring bloomer and a vigorous spreader.

11. LENTEN ROSES OR HELLEBORE — are among the earliest perennial flowers to bloom, welcoming spring with their rose-like blossoms. Their foliage remains attractive into the summer, making them an ideal choice for splashy, mass plantings.

12. TULIPS — the best time to plant tulip bulbs is in October and November. One of the most foolproof ways to protect them from ravenous squirrels is to cover bulbs with chicken wire.

13. FLOWERING BRANCHES like cherry blossom, azalea and lilac add structure and an unmistakable ooh-ah factor to any arrangement, especially a large one. Smash ends of cut branches with a small hammer and place stems in warm water for several hours before using.

14. SOLOMON'S SEAL — this shade loving plant adds an architectural component to garden beds as well as arrangements, thanks to its arching stems. This is the first plant I added to my own garden after seeing it used so often in HGW arrangements.

15. PEONIES — a spring charmer, choose an early blooming variety like 'Coral Charm' or 'Claire de Lune' to ensure it can be used for HGW. Tree peonies add extra glamour and bloom earliest of all.

16. LILY OF THE VALLEY — this old-fashioned woodland flower can be an aggressive spreader and is poisonous, so don't plant where your pets might get into it. Despite these flaws, its intoxicating scent and diminutive beauty make it a must-have in a cottage-style border.

17. HOSTA LEAVES — are long lasting and offer endless variation in texture, shape and color. Arum is a great substitute and a native plant. Hostas are one of the best shade garden performers and make beautiful additions to arrangements.



18. VIBURNUM — with more than 150 species available, there is a variety for any setting. 'Snowball' is a showstopper. 'Mapleleaf' is a native pollinator.

19. COLUMBINE — requires a period of cold dormancy to germinate, so add seeds to your garden now so they will come up this spring. These dainty bell-shaped flowers prefer partial shade.

20. HERBS — use their leaves as an aromatic backdrop for showier blooms and enjoy their flowers as delicate accents later in the summer. I especially like using Italian parsley, oregano, Nepeta (catmint) and rosemary in arrangements.

BELOW: Lilac is incredibly fragrant and a wonderful addition to a spring landscape and to flower arrangements. Photo by Catriona Tudor Erler



Iris in bloom at Edgewood in Stanleytown. Photo courtesy of The Martinsville Garden Club



FALL 2021 FEATURES 16

By Heidi James, The Lynchburg Garden Club, GCV Horticulture Committee Chairman

By now, most of us are familiar with Piet Oudolf and the New Perennial Movement, which has swept the world and resulted in magnificent gardens highlighting native plants, naturalistic designs and year-round appeal. Oudolf is one of the best-known and earliest practitioners of the movement. Not only are his gardens beautiful, but they also address problems associated with climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

ARE YOU READY TO GO WILD?



This photo and on previous page, top: Olympic Meadows, designed by Nigel Dunnett for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. Dunnett's Pictorial Meadows is growing wildflower sod the way we grow grass sod. The result is an instant mat of flowers. Plus, it saves time and trouble that often accompanies getting meadows established.

Photos courtesy of Nigel Dunnett



Piet Oudolf. Photo courtesy of Piet Oudolf

Two of Oudolf's most notable gardens in the U.S. are the High Line in New York City and the Lurie Garden in Chicago.

His popularity is surging and millions worldwide watched a free streaming of his documentary, *Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf*.

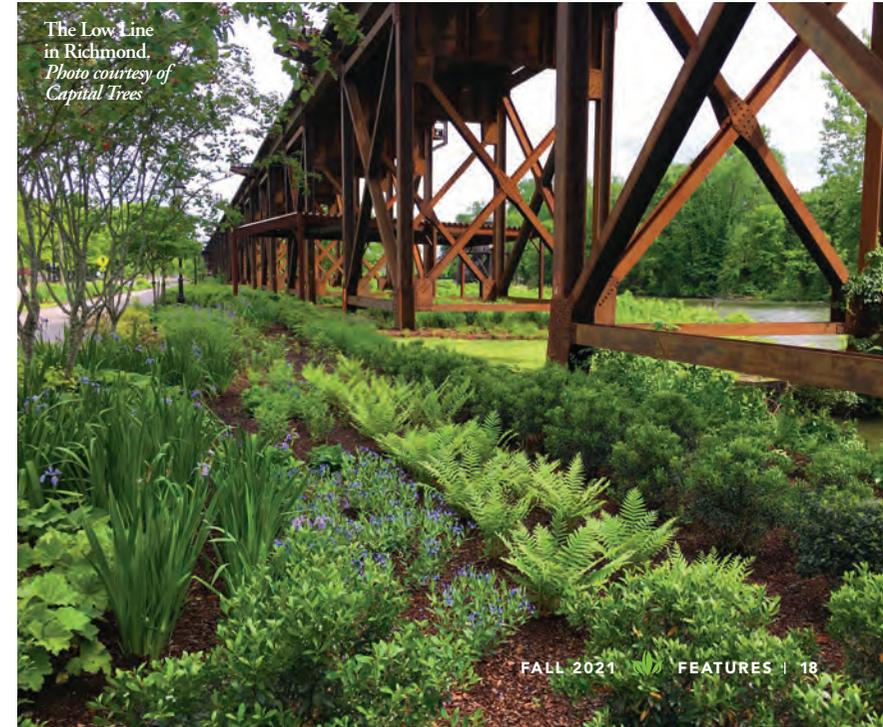
The Capital Trees project in Richmond emulated Oudolf's New Perennial concepts in plantings along the Low Line. "We definitely looked to Oudolf and his design of the High Line in New York as inspiration," says The James River Garden Club member Meg Turner, one of the founders

of Capital Trees and its current chairman. Whereas the High Line transformed decommissioned elevated train tracks into a linear greenway and rail trail in Manhattan, the Low Line, in contrast, capitalized on once-neglected land below active train trestles in downtown Richmond to create a vibrant, urban park. "Our top drivers were native plants and biodiversity in terms of what drove our planting decisions," she notes, "but we also had to consider issues such as maintenance and how the area would be used."

Meg, a landscape designer in Richmond, says they strived for

a naturalistic landscape that supports wildlife but also one that had aesthetic appeal for park visitors to enjoy. The city's response has been tremendous. "We are so proud of the Low Line," says Meg. "The area was quite literally an industrial wasteland, but with public and private support, it's now an urban destination. It's helped revitalize downtown Richmond."

So, how is the New Perennial Movement evolving? It seems that across the globe, people are taking steps to modify their controlled landscapes, in public and private spaces alike, by adding features that support



The Low Line in Richmond. Photo courtesy of Capital Trees

Isabella Tree. Photo by Francesco Guidicini

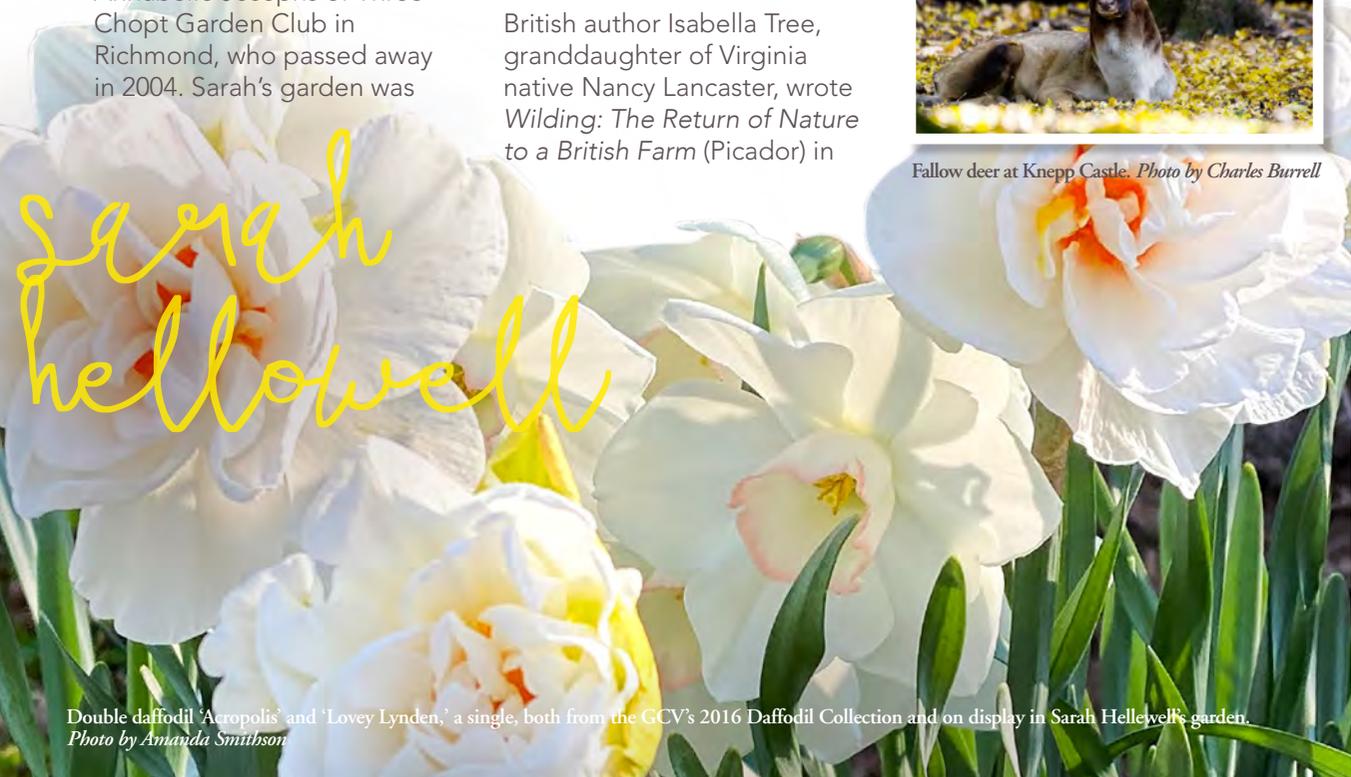
isabella tree



biodiversity. As this movement has gained ground, it is becoming more intentional and is now often referred to as “rewilding” or “wildscaping,” terminology which refers to a focus on returning land to natural habitat that provides food, shelter and water to support wildlife. People are realizing the importance of helping and enjoying wildlife instead of trying to find ways to work against it—and in some cases eradicate it altogether.

Take Sarah Hellewell in Lynchburg. Sarah is the past president of Hillside Garden Club and is the daughter of Annabelle Josephs of Three Chopt Garden Club in Richmond, who passed away in 2004. Sarah’s garden was

sarah hellewell



Double daffodil ‘Acropolis’ and ‘Lovey Lynden,’ a single, both from the GCV’s 2016 Daffodil Collection and on display in Sarah Hellewell’s garden. Photo by Amanda Smithson

open for Historic Garden Week this year. She has not used pesticides or herbicides in 10 years and instead focuses on sustainability and biodiversity in her design. She chooses native plants for pollinators and birds, has a fenced compost pile for enriching her beds and borders and grows her own vegetables. She and her husband, Tim, actively reduce areas of manicured lawn to support pollinators and wildlife. They recently installed 33 solar panels on the rear roof of their house, which provide all of their energy for much of the year. This interest in sustainability and ecologically responsible gardening is taking hold.

British author Isabella Tree, granddaughter of Virginia native Nancy Lancaster, wrote *Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm* (Picador) in

2018, which documents her journey to return her 3,500-acre farm, Knepp Castle in West Sussex, to a wild state, allowing nature to take the lead. She and her husband, conservationist Charles Burrell, stopped using chemicals and heavy machinery in 2001, and the result has been astounding and an eye-opener for conservationists around the world. Many species of wildlife have returned to their property, and their presence supports this now-thriving ecosystem. Even some severely



Fallow deer at Knepp Castle. Photo by Charles Burrell

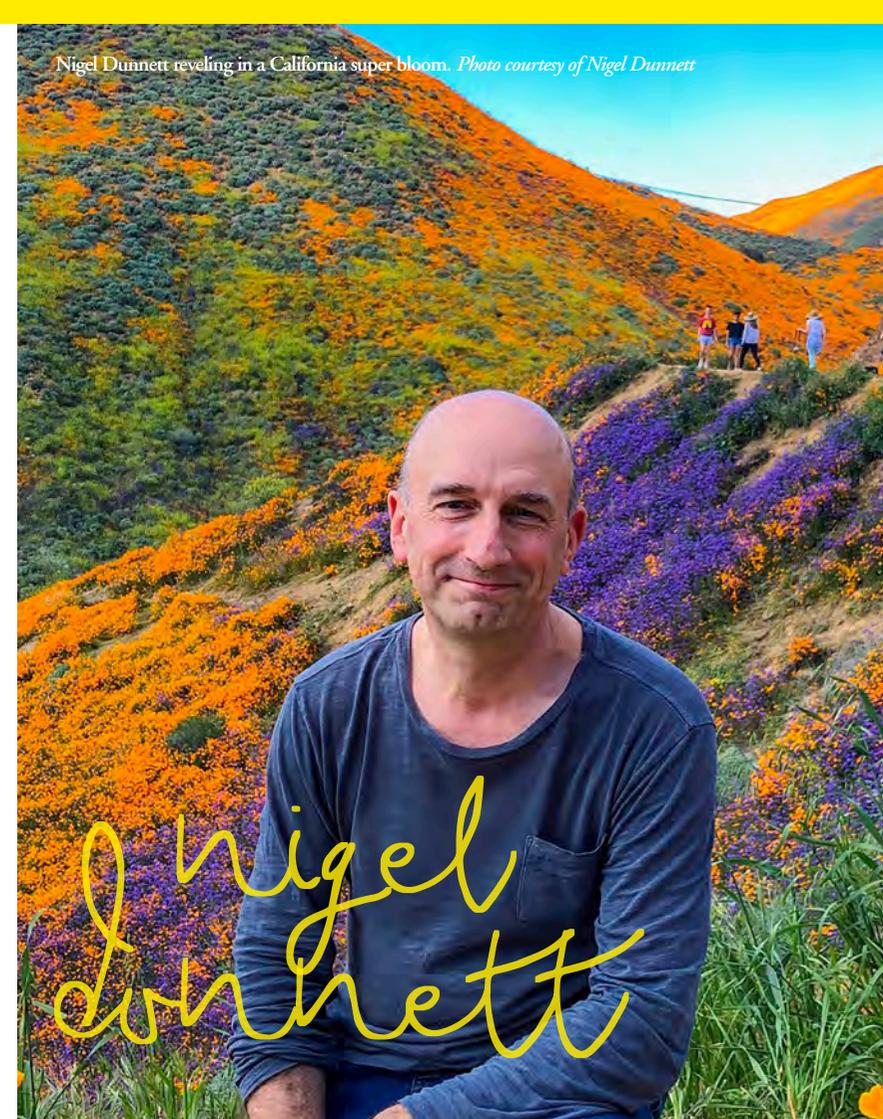
Porcine companion roaming the grounds at Knepp Castle. Photo by Charles Burrell



endangered species, such as the turtle dove, are making a comeback. Because of the success of this experiment, Tree believes it might not be too late to stop the catastrophic decline of biodiversity. She gives lectures to spread the news, and her recently published children’s book, *When We Went Wild* (Ivy Press), was released in February. Tree maintains that even city dwellers can rewild—just stop using chemicals and start gardening for wildlife instead of against it. She believes our mindset about how we garden and what gardens look like must shift.

Nigel Dunnett, also from the U.K., is working to spread the same message. This innovative voice—plantsman, designer, pioneer of the new ecological approach to gardens and public

Nigel Dunnett reveling in a California super bloom. Photo courtesy of Nigel Dunnett

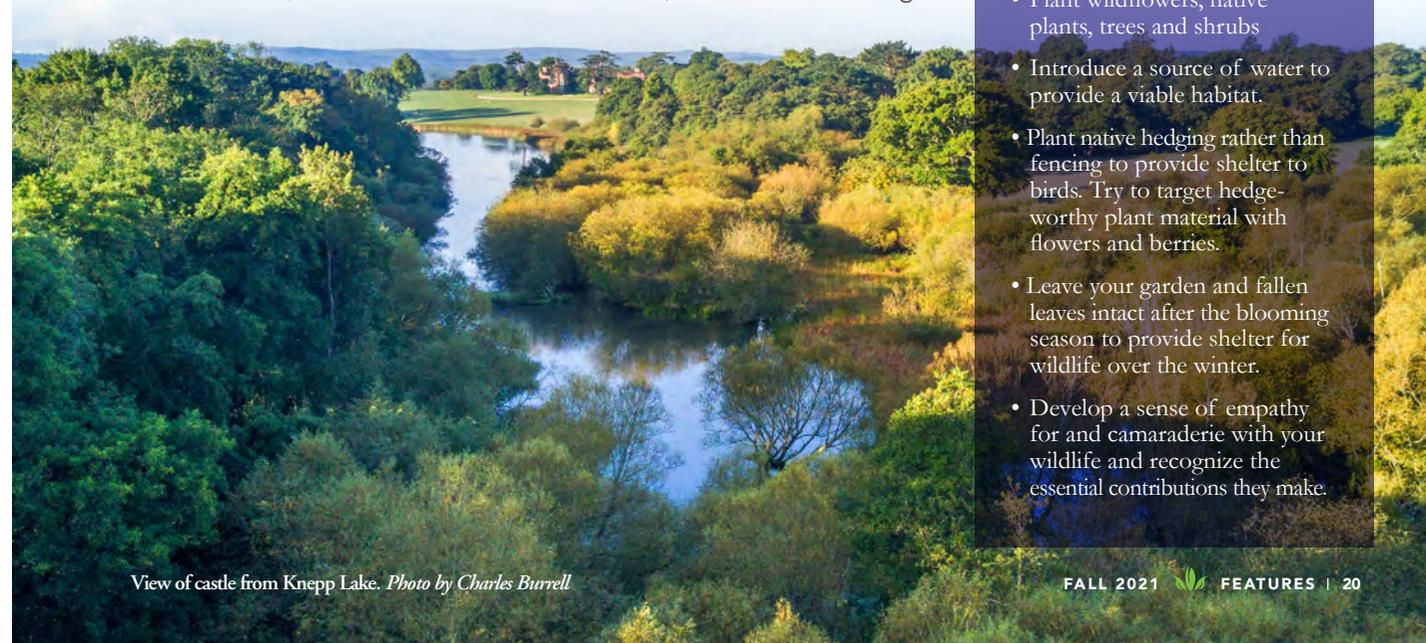


nigel dunnett

spaces, and professor of planting design and urban horticulture at the University of Sheffield—integrates ecology and horticulture to achieve low-input, high-impact landscapes that are dynamic, diverse and tuned to nature. His book, *Naturalistic Planting*

How can you rewild your own garden? There are some simple steps that each of us can take to make a difference:

- Discontinue using chemicals and feed your soil with organic compost.
- Plant wildflowers, native plants, trees and shrubs
- Introduce a source of water to provide a viable habitat.
- Plant native hedging rather than fencing to provide shelter to birds. Try to target hedge-worthy plant material with flowers and berries.
- Leave your garden and fallen leaves intact after the blooming season to provide shelter for wildlife over the winter.
- Develop a sense of empathy for and camaraderie with your wildlife and recognize the essential contributions they make.



View of castle from Knepp Lake. Photo by Charles Burrell

“GREY TO GREEN”

These before and after photos of Nigel Dunnett’s “Gray to Green” project in Sheffield, England, illustrate transformative urban greening. *Photos courtesy of Nigel Dunnett*



Design: The Essential Guide (Filbert Press), just won first place in the 2021 European Garden Book Awards, a not-so-subtle signal that the movement is catching on. Dunnett has designed naturalistic gardens and landscapes throughout the U.K. and abroad: his “Gray to Green” project in Sheffield is the U.K.’s largest green street. Before and after photos are stunning. Lush plant material juxtaposed against a busy city street, wildflowers enlivening otherwise drab, urban sidewalks and undulating grasses waving in the wake of city buses trundling by all illustrate that, indeed, inner city dwellers need not settle for concrete jungles. In another project, Dunnett’s Olympic Meadows was a major feature of the Olympic Park in London for the 2012 games. The high-impact, strongly colored flower field needed to bloom from July through September, which was achieved through carefully balancing species, colors and successional layering. Dunnett says his gardens

feature exciting and novel uses of plants, planting design and application of ecological ideas to achieve ecologically-tuned urban landscapes. His motto is, simply and aptly, “Inspired by Nature. Design for People.” Dunnett’s philosophy is popping up all over. Pictorial Meadows, a seed company he launched with colleague James Hitchmough, caters to city governments, housing developments and private citizens with a goal of turning vacant lots and roadsides into beautiful flower fields to benefit people, places and pollinators. The resulting, spectacular meadows are transforming landscapes and roadways across the U.K., with blankets of flowers as far as the eye can see.

Closer to home we find Claudia West and Thomas Rainer, owners of Phyto Studio in Arlington, Virginia. Their book, *Planting in a Post-Wild World: Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes* (Timber Press), is,

quite literally, a blueprint on how to sustainably garden—“a masterful accomplishment,” gushes Doug Tallamy, friend of the GCV and the current king of sustainability here at home. “We are huge fans of Piet and Nigel’s work,” West explains. “All of us are part of an international group of planting designers and land managers who are passionate about bridging the gap between horticulture and ecology through our work. We believe ecological design can be formal and neat. People are

part of the solution and planting must have beauty and emotional content. Our work covers the entire spectrum from formal to more natural planting design. But all of our plantings have rich ecological and functional value.”

The lesson to remember is that ways to create naturalistic spaces and garden sustainably isn’t about ripping up your landscape and dropping a hefty fortune on 25,000 all-native plants. It may be a possible for some, but it’s completely unrealistic for most of us mere mortals. It’s about doing what you can. Take baby steps if that’s all you can wrap your head around—and don’t beat yourself up because that’s all you can manage. The next time you’re at a nursery, for example, make a pledge to only buy native plants. Get to know your local nursery staff, and look into where they’re sourcing their plants (you’d be surprised, and sometimes not in a good way). Take an inventory of your garden shed and discard (responsibly of course) toxic chemicals that might make your roses bloom for 12 straight months, but they’ll kill anything else within miles. Visit the Great Healthy Yard Project’s website and take its Healthy Yard Pledge, in which you



Claudia West. *Photo by Rob Cardillo*

promise to improve habitats for native plants and wildlife by omitting the use of synthetic pesticides in your garden. It’s a good way to keep yourself in check. Try to resist the urge to have the greenest, most luscious and immaculate lawn in your neighborhood. Go a little crazy and give some clovers and dandelions a little room to grow. Look for ways to coexist with pollinators and wildlife in your garden, not ways to conquer them. Each of us can make a difference if we go a little wild.

Learn More — Resources abound in the preceding article.

Check out the websites of Nigel Dunnett, Isabella Tree, Doug Tallamy, Claudia West and Thomas Rainer (at Phyto Studio) and Capital Trees—they’re all terrific sources of information.

Meg Turner’s website, mturnerlandscapes.com, and her blog, *The Well-Dressed Garden* (thewelldressedgarden.com), as well as the *New Perennialist* blog (thenewperennialist.com), are also packed with insights and information.

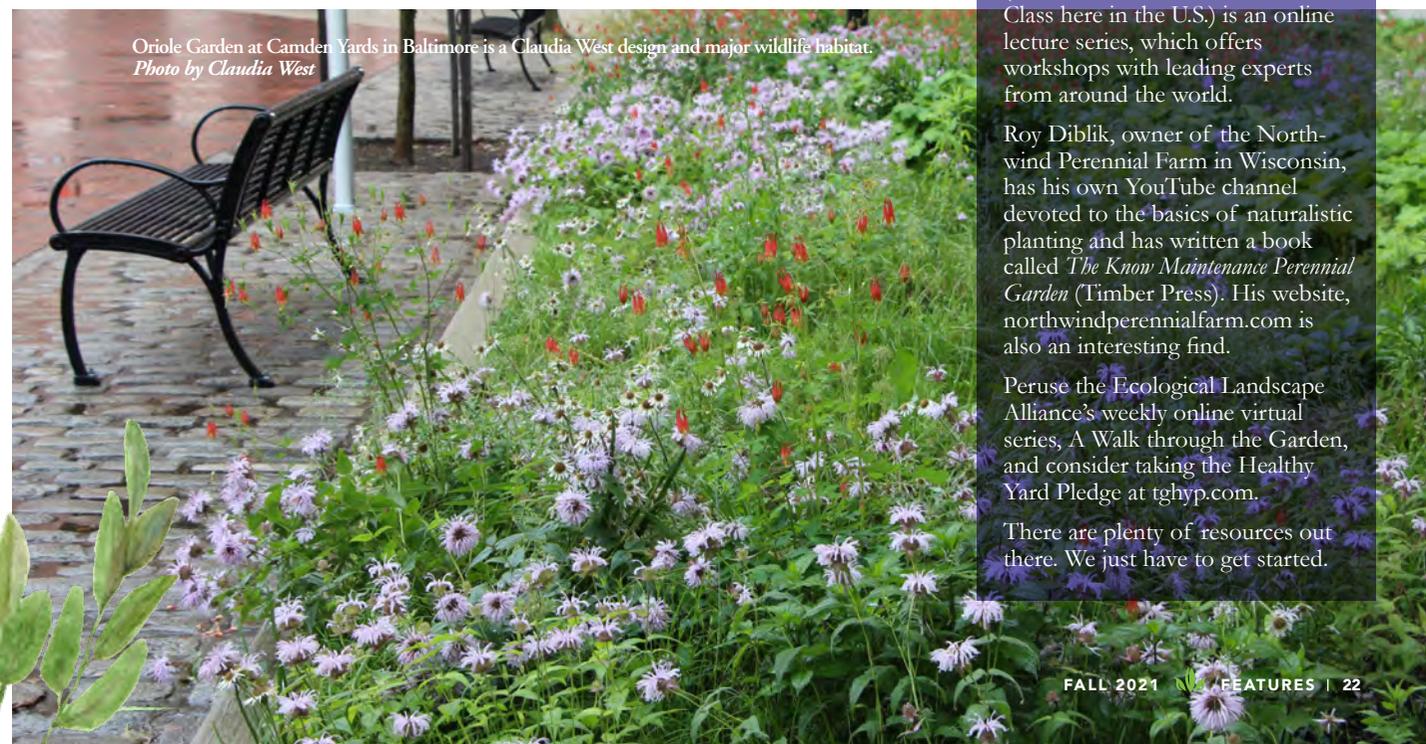
Garden Masterclass in the U.K. (not to be confused with Master Class here in the U.S.) is an online lecture series, which offers workshops with leading experts from around the world.

Roy Diblik, owner of the Northwind Perennial Farm in Wisconsin, has his own YouTube channel devoted to the basics of naturalistic planting and has written a book called *The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden* (Timber Press). His website, northwindperennialfarm.com is also an interesting find.

Peruse the Ecological Landscape Alliance’s weekly online virtual series, *A Walk through the Garden*, and consider taking the Healthy Yard Pledge at tghyp.com.

There are plenty of resources out there. We just have to get started.

Oriole Garden at Camden Yards in Baltimore is a Claudia West design and major wildlife habitat. *Photo by Claudia West*





DISCOVER YOUR LOCAL ROOTS

PLANT NATIVES THIS FALL

By Katherine Fulghum Knopf,
Roanoke Valley Garden Club

Native plants perform better without excessive care; they need less watering because they cultivate in the surroundings that support them. The soil, temperatures, companion plants, topography and rainfall meet their needs.

Plant a couple of natives in your yard this fall—birds, bees and insects flock to native plants which offer the shelter and food they need to survive and flourish. Native plants offer plenty of color and variety. It is simply a matter of planning and a little research to design your own mini-ecosystem in your backyard. Here are tips to find the best local roots for your area of Virginia.

• Lawns, ornamental and tropical plants adapt into our urban landscapes, but these additions have cost our wildlife their habitat and require more oversight. Native plants bring back energy; notice the butterflies and bees flocking to a garden planted with native flowers and trees. There are plenty of wonderful choices at your local nursery to incorporate natives in your garden when you select new plants. As Heidi James, GCV horticulture committee chairman and Lynchburg Garden Club member says, "It's not that you can't have non-natives in your garden. Add a couple natives each season and see the results." Bees and birds will come, but plant multiples of one type together so they notice the flowers rather than one of several different varieties.

• "Make the effort to find out your growers," Heidi suggests. They provide healthy plants and good advice for gardening. Try to avoid native plants that contain neonicotinoids (often referred to as "neonics"). These plants came from seeds that have been contaminated with neuro-active insecticides. When these plants flower, the pollen is carried back to the bee's nest: they feed the hive with this altered pollen and lay eggs that produce offspring affected by these chemicals. Many European countries have banned these products due to their impact on wildlife. Studies have linked neonicotinoids to colony collapse disorder in honeybees.

• When out walking or hiking, "pay attention to what is growing on either side of the path and in the woods. Note the soil conditions and the size of the mature plants,"



suggests Becky Balzer, community projects and conservation co-chairman for Roanoke Valley Garden Club. This gives you ideas for plants to choose and shows how they perform in a natural setting. "Select some plants that provide food for insects and others that offer habitat," Becky says. "Flat daisies provide nectar; dill attracts swallowtails to lay their eggs; evergreens tender shelter. Plants must offer what insects need in all stages of their life cycle."

• Assess your plot. "Knowing your site is important," Becky says. "Is it wet or dry, hot or shady, how is the light that the plants will receive?" Identify your space so the plants have room to grow. If you have limited space, plant herbs in containers. Create an herb garden in a large planter.

MAJESTIC MONARCHS

Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on the leaves of milkweed (*Asclepias*), the only host plant for this iconic butterfly species. As such, it is critical for the monarchs' survival; without it they cannot complete their life cycle and their populations decline. Milkweed's abundant flowers also provide high-quality nectar to other pollinators, and they make beautiful additions to any landscape. Planting milkweed is easy, although they are sometimes difficult to find. Make sure to source *Asclepias* that have not been treated with neonics or other pesticides. *A. tuberosa* (butterfly milkweed), *A. syriaca* (common milkweed) and *A. incarnata* (swamp milkweed) are typically the milkweeds that are seen in Virginia.

ABOVE Monarch butterfly enjoying milkweed in bloom. Photo by Valsimots from Pixabay

BELOW: A monarch caterpillar feeding on milkweed leaves, its only food source. Photo by Daisymom from Pixabay

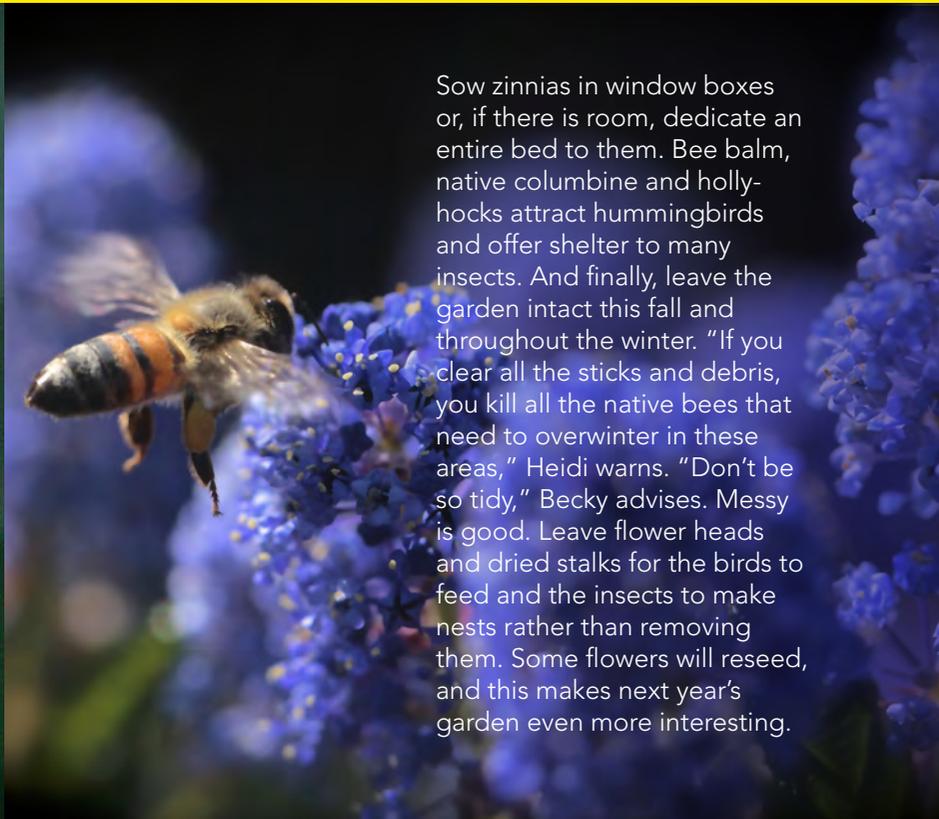


A ruby-throated hummingbird taking advantage of brilliant red salvia. Photo by Mary Lou Barritt

RESOURCES GALORE

Native plant resources on the local, regional and national levels abound—to further the conversation, to educate and to inspire. In addition to programs and workshops offered through your local botanical garden and the nursery around the corner, check out the following resources:

- **National Audubon Society:** Protects birds and their habitats using science, advocacy, education and conservation; website includes extensive, region-specific lists of native plants to support wildlife by zipcode. audubon.org
- **Virginia Native Plant Society:** Regional chapters throughout the state, membership opportunities, a blog and active social media platforms. Native plant sales are listed as well as information on collaborating organizations. vnps.org
- **State Arboretum of Virginia/Blandy Experimental Farm:** Regional center for environmental education. blandy.virginia.edu
- **The Flora of Virginia Project:** Created in 2001 to inspire conservation of Virginia's native flora; comprehensive database is available as a pdf or via their extensive mobile app. floraofvirginia.org
- **Native Plant Society of the United States:** An affiliation of native plant societies with a goal of improving conservation laws and increasing funding for conservation initiatives. plantsocieties.cnps.org
- **Virginia Conservation Network:** Extensive network with a goal of building a powerful and coordinated conservation movement throughout the state. vcnva.org
- **Virginia Natural Heritage Program:** Focuses on science-based conservation to protect Virginia's native plant and animal life and the ecosystems upon which they depend. dcr.virginia.gov
- **Plant Virginia Natives:** Educational webinars throughout the year and a regional native plant campaign. plantvirginiannatives.org



Sow zinnias in window boxes or, if there is room, dedicate an entire bed to them. Bee balm, native columbine and hollyhocks attract hummingbirds and offer shelter to many insects. And finally, leave the garden intact this fall and throughout the winter. "If you clear all the sticks and debris, you kill all the native bees that need to overwinter in these areas," Heidi warns. "Don't be so tidy," Becky advises. Messy is good. Leave flower heads and dried stalks for the birds to feed and the insects to make nests rather than removing them. Some flowers will reseed, and this makes next year's garden even more interesting.



TOP: This bee is buzzing busily amidst a sea of lavender. Photo by Three Miles Per Hour from Pixabay

ABOVE LEFT: Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) is usually grown by the culinary inclined, but it's also an unconventionally attractive host plant to swallowtail butterflies. The adult female butterfly finds dill's feathery, aromatic green leaves irresistible, where she will lay her eggs. Photo by Katharina N from Pixabay

ABOVE RIGHT: A black swallowtail butterfly enjoying nectar from a spicebush in bloom (*Lindera benzoin*). Photo by Mary Lou Barritt

BELOW LEFT: *Echinacea* is a super pollinator attractor. Photo by Mary Lou Barritt

BELOW RIGHT: Monarch feasting on a red zinnia. Photo by Juan D from Pixabay



63rd Annual
Conservation
Forum
LIVE, VIRTUAL FORUM

Something to
tweet about

Bird populations worldwide are plummeting at alarming rates. Since 1970, those in North America have declined by nearly three billion—a loss of more than one in four birds.

These are devastating numbers and not just for those species in trouble. Birds are the creatures we expect to see and hear every day. They are what make our world brighter, happier and livelier, and they're an integral part of our ecosystems. These losses suggest a much more ominous picture, a warning about the planet's overall well-being.

Learn more and find out how you can make a difference. The perfect place to start is to register at gcvirginia.org for the GCV Conservation Forum, *Birds: Feathers, Fields, Forests and Flowers*. Don't miss this live, virtual event on Monday, October 25 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Open to the public, the forum will provide a wonderful opportunity to bring bird lovers, conservationists, and backyard gardeners to the figurative feeder—to feast on important

continued on Page 27

ABOVE: Populations of red-winged blackbirds are in a deep decline. Photo by Daledbet from Pixabay



FORUM SCOOP

GCV CONSERVATION FORUM
**Birds: Feathers, Fields,
Forests and Flowers**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2021
9 a.m. – Noon
A live virtual forum

- This event is open to GCV members and the public.
- Agenda includes Keynote Speaker Jennifer Ackerman, panel discussion and recognition of the recipients of the Conservation Educator Awards and Dugdale Awards for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation.
- \$15 per person
- Register at: GCVirginia.org

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CLARION CALL

Devastating losses have been reported among birds in every biome: forests alone have lost one billion birds, grassland bird populations have declined by 53 percent. And common birds—those we see every day, which come from just 12 families, including sparrows, blackbirds, warblers and finches—have suffered the most devastating losses: their populations are down more than 90 percent. Those we love and are used to hearing have declined catastrophically. Think dark-eyed juncos (down by 168 million), Eastern and Western meadowlarks (down by a total of 139 million), red-winged blackbirds (down by 92 million).

A *New York Times* opinion piece, which ran in September 2019, sounded an urgent clarion call. Cornell Lab of Ornithology Director John Fitzpatrick and Peter Marra, director of the Georgetown Environmental Initiative, based their op-ed on a just-published study from the journal *Science* that stunned even the most illustrious coterie of ornithologists. Birds are an “indicator species, serving as acutely sensitive barometers of environmental health,” attested Fitzpatrick and Marra, “and their mass declines signal that the earth’s biological systems are in trouble.”

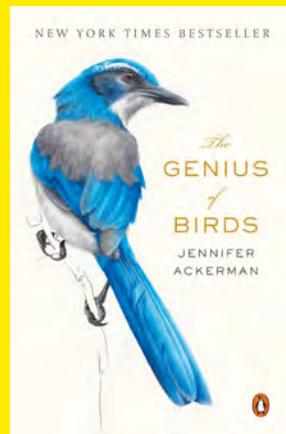
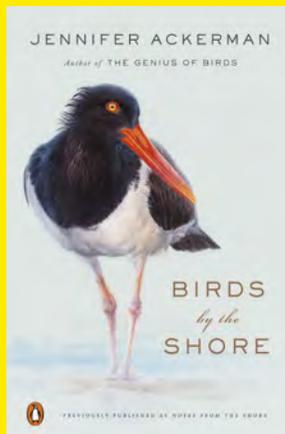
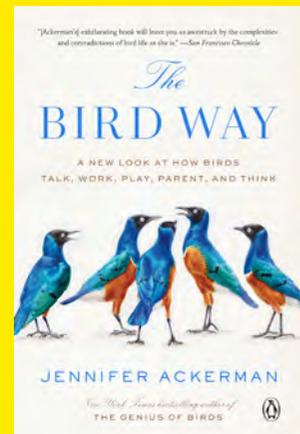
For further information, visit the following sites:

- [nytimes.com/2019/09/19/opinion/crisis-birds-north-america](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/19/opinion/crisis-birds-north-america)
- birds.cornell.edu
- environment.georgetown.edu
- [audubon.com](https://www.audubon.com)
- [jenniferackermanauthor.com](https://www.jenniferackermanauthor.com)
- merlin.allaboutbirds.org (app)

—Madeline Mayhood



Jennifer Ackerman with a bald eagle. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Ackerman



Since 1970, birds in North America have declined by nearly 3 billion—a loss of more than one in four birds.



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data about birds, their habitat, and ways we can help conserve and protect them.

Explore the brilliance of birds and delve into the mysteries of the avian brain with *New York Times* bestselling author and forum keynote speaker Jennifer Ackerman. Experience her adventures firsthand—from the beaches of Barbados to the rainforests of New Caledonia and the woods and fields of Virginia—as she shares stories and stunning photos from her journey to better understand the feathered geniuses all around us. Learn how birds make and use their own tools, teach one another new skills, count, navigate, exercise astonishing feats of memory, create works of art, communicate in ways that resemble language and even pass along cultural traditions. Ackerman is author of the international bestseller, *The Genius of Birds* (2017), as well as *The Bird Way* (2021) and *Birds by the Shore* (2019), all published by Penguin Books.

Following her presentation, Ackerman will be joined by a panel of experts who will address various issues impacting birds and their habitats, as well as constructive ways in which we can all join in the conservation effort. Simple actions start in our own backyards and can yield big results—plant native plants, reduce the size of lawns, add a water feature, eliminate pesticide use and keep cats inside.

—Forrest Moore, Mill Mountain Garden Club and Barbara Walsh, The Blue Ridge Garden Club, Co-chairmen, 2021 Conservation Forum



ABOVE: With their perky crest, blue, white and black plumage and noisy calls, blue jays have a reputation of being rather bossy. But these handsome birds are known for their intelligence, complex social systems and tight family bonds. Photo by Scottslm from Pixabay



MEET JENNIFER ACKERMAN

Jennifer Ackerman has been writing about science, nature and human biology for almost three decades. Her work aims to explain and interpret science for a lay audience and to explore the riddle of humanity’s place in the natural world, blending scientific knowledge with imaginative vision.

A contributor to *Scientific American*, *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, and many other publications, Ackerman is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in Nonfiction, a Bunting Fellowship and a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

She has written on subjects ranging from the microbiome of the human body, the evolutionary origin of birds, the wildlife of Japan, the work of Chuck Close, the sexual habits of dragonflies and the neural nature of dyslexia.

The Genius of Birds has been translated into more than 20 languages, was named one of the best nonfiction books of 2016 by the *Wall Street Journal* and was long-listed by the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award.

Ackerman is also the author of *Sex Sleep Eat Drink Dream: A Day in the Life of Your Body*; *Ab-Choo: The Uncommon Life of Your Common Cold*; *Chance in the House of Fate: A Natural History of Heredity*; and *Notes from the Shore*.

ABOVE: Jennifer Ackerman with a great gray owl. Photo by Sofia Runarsdotter

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

63rd Annual Conservation Forum

Birds:

Feathers, Fields, Forests and Flowers

MONDAY, OCT. 25, 2021 | LIVE, VIRTUAL FORUM | REGISTER AT [GCVIRGINIA.ORG](https://www.gcvirginia.org)

HELPING PROTECT ESSENTIAL POLLINATORS

BEE CITY USA



Did you know that bees have been declared the most important living being on the planet? There are 20,000 different varieties—and it's not just honeybees that are important. The U.S. is home to more than 4,000 native bee species, which include bumblebees, leafcutter bees, sweat bees, mason



bees, longhorn bees and miner bees. They can be super effective pollinators and, in many cases, bees are a plant's only pollinator. While honeybees tend to get all the attention for living large—their colonies can be home to as many as 80,000 bees, and they produce all that fabulous honey—they're actually an introduced species and have a whole host of beekeepers and researchers supporting them.

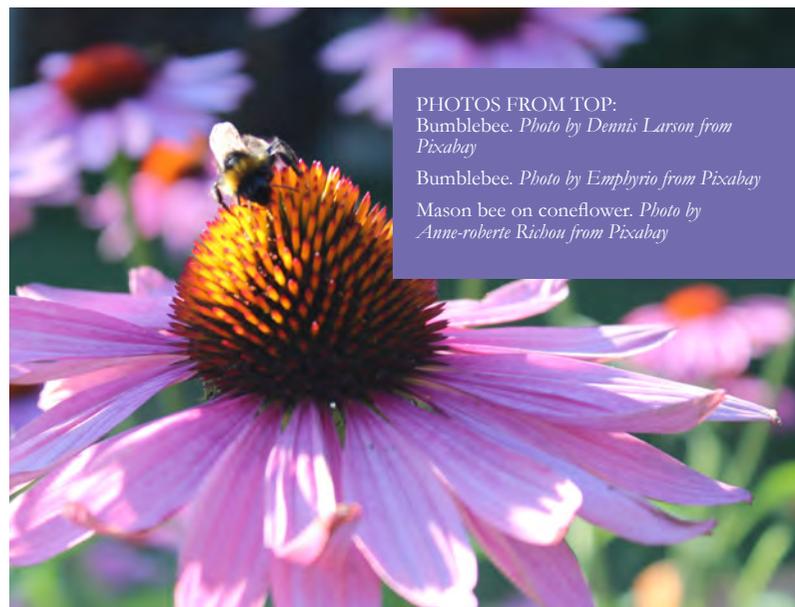
It's native bees, on the other hand, that are in need of our attention. They're often solitary and don't live in giant hives like their honeybee cousins. Alone for most of their lives, they only venture about 300 feet from their nests to forage for food, most of which is strictly native plants. In fact, most native bees have evolved alongside native plants, making them highly effective at

their jobs. The honeybee is a far less discriminate forager and competes with native bees for limited resources. "Native bees are on their own in a world of dwindling native plants, increasing chemical use and shrinking habitats," notes Heidi James, GCV horticulture committee chairman and Lynchburg Garden Club member.

"Pollinators and insects hold the planet together," Heidi says. "They're keystone species, and they're essential in every ecosystem on Earth. They impact our ability to grow crops for food, they help with plant reproduction, and they support other wildlife. Basically, pollinators sustain all life." That's the fascinating news. The more pressing news is that the United Nation's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2016 report asserted that

40 percent of insect pollinator species are at risk of extinction.

Scott Hoffman Black, the internationally renowned conservationist and executive director of the Xerces Society, poses an interesting riddle: We worry about saving the grizzly, for example, but where is the grizzly without the bear that pollinates the berries it eats or the flies that sustain baby salmon? "Where are *we* for that matter?" he asks. Xerces, based in Portland, Oregon, is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. Its key programs are pollinator conservation, endangered species conservation and reducing pesticide use and impacts. One of its initiatives is Bee City USA, which is a highly effective way communities can engage and positively impact pollinator populations.



PHOTOS FROM TOP:
Bumblebee. Photo by Dennis Larson from Pixabay
Bumblebee. Photo by Emphyrio from Pixabay
Mason bee on coneflower. Photo by Anne-roberte Richou from Pixabay

But first, consider the insect-challenged Maoxian Valley in southwestern China. Shortages of insect pollinators—through pesticide use, climate change and habitat loss—have led farmers to hire human workers to replace bees. Each person covers five to 10 trees a day, pollinating apple blossoms by hand at a cost of \$20 per day. With global pollinator populations in a deep decline, think of the Maoxian Valley's model on a world-wide scale. The impact alone would be both economically devastating and logistically preposterous.

Shift gears a little and take a virtual trip to Lynchburg. As Heidi James explains, the two Lynchburg GCV

audience? After significant brainstorming, they landed on Bee City USA, the Xerces Society initiative that illustrates the power of thinking globally and acting locally. Bee City USA provides a framework for communities to come together to conserve native pollinators by providing them with healthy habitats that are rich in a variety of native plants, nesting sites and protection from pesticides.

Through Blue Ridge Conservation, Lynchburg became the 89th Bee City in the U.S. in 2019. "You won't believe how amazing the Bee City movement is for our garden clubs," gushes Heidi, who was the GCV's 2017 recipient of the de Lacy Gray

Bee City USA provides a framework for communities to come together to conserve native pollinators by providing them with healthy habitats that are rich in a variety of native plants, nesting sites and protection from pesticides.

garden clubs, Hillside and Lynchburg, decided to take action after the 2018 GCV Conservation Forum in Charlottesville, so dire was the information they heard. Two club members in attendance, Joy Hilliard from LGC, and Judy Frantz from HGC, en route home, agreed to harness their collective concern and form a partnership between the two clubs to address conservation issues. Blue Ridge Conservation was born and prioritizing pollinator advocacy and protection became its first group project. Members knew several key elements: 1) the plight of pollinators, 2) their importance to ecosystems and 3) the role of native plants in solving the problem. But how could they get that message out to a broader

Award for Conservation. She also initiated the GCV's Pollinator Protection Initiative (see Page 9) and has been a consistent voice in conservation throughout the GCV. "Honestly, it's like a dream come true. It is extremely beneficial to become a Bee City." For example, if a city forms partnerships with organizations like garden clubs and environmental organizations and they participate in conservation and ecologically focused programs, they have enhanced eligibility and access to grants and other funding. After completing an online Bee City application, all it takes is for the city's governing body (e.g. city council) to adopt a Bee City designation as a formal resolution and a pledge to use native plants, reduce pesticides and herbicides,

and provide outreach resources. A Bee City working group, usually comprised of representatives from like-minded organizations, helps fulfill the Bee City commitment.

Flash forward to present day. Bee City USA reports there are 144 Bee Cities in the U.S. in 44 states. Virginia boasts a total of eight Bee Cities: Hampton, Lynchburg, Manassas, Martinsville, Scottsville, Vienna, Virginia Beach and Woodstock. In addition, the University of Virginia, Randolph College, James Madison University and the University of Richmond are Bee City affiliates, called Bee Campuses USA. That's the good news. But consider our neighbor to the south: North Carolina has a total of 26 Bee City designations—16 cities and 10 campuses. Imagine what impact GCV clubs would have on pollinator protection throughout the state if we mobilized collectively and all joined the Bee City USA movement.

—Madeline Mayhood, The James River Garden Club

THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA'S HEALTHY YARD CHALLENGE

- Pollinator Plants
- Organic Lawn and Garden Care
- Integrated Pest Management
- Protecting our Watersheds and Drinking Water

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA



Mason bee. Photo by David Hablutzel from Pixabay.

GCV DISTRICT 1

The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton

RICHMOND

Entering its 20th year, The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton's Spring Plant Sale serves as the club's primary fundraiser and provides funding for gifts and philanthropy to the community each year.

Each year the sale is hosted by the club, held at the home of a member, organized and run by an enthusiastic team and supported by club members, neighbors and community friends and gardeners. A year of planning on the part of a small committee entails working with both local and regional suppliers of annuals, perennials, shrubs and special finds. Unique planters are potted up with perfect plant combinations and certain plant sale favorites—like *Salvia guaranitica*, macho ferns, herbs, and coral honeysuckle—manage to return year after year to please the crowd. A curated group of specialty garden-related artists and vendors make for a fun, one-of-a-kind fundraiser.

The sale is a great way to get younger and newer members involved, help them learn different varieties and what to grow. The process of organizing the plants is educational for the whole club.

Though the venue, funds raised, and specific offerings vary from year to year, one thing stays the same—the spirit of community and love of gardeners coming together to enjoy nature's bounty and each other as we prepare for spring!

—Jennifer Sisk



L-R: It's all green thumbs up for Chris Shands and Patricia Hunter, co-chairmen of TGCV's 2021 Spring Plant Sale. Photo by Jennifer Sisk

snips

NEWS FROM CLUBS & COMMITTEES

GCV DISTRICT 4

Chatham Garden Club

CHATHAM

Chatham Garden Club celebrated its centennial anniversary on June 2, 2021, with lunch at Bannister Bend Farm, home of the 2021 de Lacy Gray Award recipient Betty Davenport. Club members enjoyed a display of historical items—scrapbooks belonging to members, awards and ribbons won throughout the years, cookbooks compiled by garden club members, as well as previous yearbooks and items collected from the past. Mary Jac Meadows served as centennial chairman.

Les Adams, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates for the 16th district, presented the club with a resolution from the General Assembly, commemorating its 100th anniversary. In September 2020, the GCC centennial was kicked off with a groundbreaking ceremony planting a redbud, the club flower, in Gilmer Court. In 1936, the property known then as Judge Gilmer Place was decided to the club.

The Chatham Garden Club was formed in 1921 after discussion at a Daughters of the American Revolution meeting. The club was organized with 20 members and currently has 46 members. In 1922, the club was invited to join the GCV, as the first club after the original eight founding clubs of the GCV. Many talented horticulturists and flower arrangers have grown out of Chatham Garden Club with reputations statewide.

—Kathy Anderson



L-R: Gail Clark, Christopher Spitzmiller, Martha Stewart, Kevin Sharkey and Elizabeth von Hassel, executive director of the National Sporting Library and Museum in Middleburg. Photo courtesy of Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club

GCV DISTRICT 5

Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club

MIDDLEBURG

The world's most amazing domestic diva made her way to Virginia this year for her first-ever glimpse at Historic Garden Week. The one and only Martha Stewart landed in Middleburg, the guest of Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club member Gail Clark. In Martha's entourage was her VP of brands, Kevin Sharkey and Christopher Spitzmiller, who has his own lifestyle brand. In addition to celebratory dinners and luncheons and visits to homes and gardens on the HGW tour, the club organized a community fundraiser in partnership with the Middleburg Community Center. Martha and Kevin were on stage for a lecture, "A Life in Four Gardens," and promoted Martha's new book, *Martha's Flowers*. Gail and Martha are longtime friends and neighbors in Maine. All three guests—Martha, Kevin and Christopher—stayed at Markham Willows, Gail's house in Middleburg. "They were so wonderful to come to Virginia hunt country and stay at our farm," says Gail. "They loved Middleburg and all the Southern hospitality."

—Gail Clark

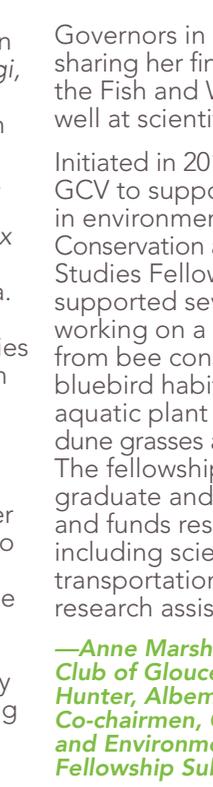
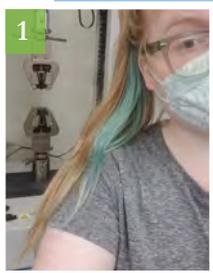


CHATHAM GARDEN CLUB'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION CGC members at their centennial groundbreaking ceremony in which a redbud was planted. Photo courtesy of Chatham Garden Club

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES FELLOW, EMILY RIFFE REPORTS INITIAL FINDINGS ON DUNE GRASSES

Over the past year, the 2020 GCV Fellow, Emily Riffe, a Ph.D. candidate in biology at Virginia Commonwealth University, conducted her study "Native and Invasive Dune Grasses: Importance of Belowground Traits and Biotic Interactions" at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach. This work is important in understanding interactions among species to inform best practices in dune grass restoration. While her research will continue as she works toward her degree, she has some early results that suggest useful information for restoration of coastal dunes.

Back Bay, like other coastal areas on the East Coast, is experiencing growth of invasive species that create a monoculture situation, whereas biodiversity and native species are better for retention of dunes. The dominant invasive species in her study is *Carex kobomugi*, or Asiatic sand sedge, first introduced in New Jersey in the 1920s and expanded widely, including in Virginia. One of the goals of Emily's research is to see how *Carex kobomugi* interacts with native vegetation in Virginia. After a year of complex sampling with different species and testing and observation of roots, it appears that the native species *Ammophila* may be better for erosion control and can withstand more wave action than other species. More work needs to be done that will ultimately inform management of dune grasses in Back Bay and up and down the East Coast. Emily will be presenting a report to the GCV Board of



PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
 1: Emily Riffe in the engineering lab at VCU with the Universal Testing Machine measuring tensile strength of roots
 2: Dunes showing the invasive *Carex kobomugi* in the bright green area
 3: Root system of *Carex kobomugi*
 4: Collecting root cores of *Panicum amarum*
 All photos taken in Back Bay Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach except Emily in the VCU lab. All photos courtesy of Emily Riffe

2021 FELLOW: JORDAN MARTIN

In May, the GCV announced that Jordan Martin, a master's degree student in biology at William & Mary, was chosen as the 2021 GCV Conservation and Environmental Studies fellow to work on her project, "Investigating the Pollinator Promoting Potential of Virginia Solar Facilities." Jordan's study on how ecosystem effects of pollinator-friendly landscaping will be the first such study to focus on the Mid-Atlantic region. Stay tuned for more coverage on Jordan's project in future *Journal* editions. In the meantime, head to the GCV website's conservation page and "Meet the 2021 Fellow" to learn more.

—Anne Marshall, The Garden Club of Gloucester, and Carol Hunter, Albemarle Garden Club, Co-chairmen, Conservation and Environmental Studies Fellowship Subcommittee





The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees

DOUGLAS W. TALLAMY
TIMBER PRESS, 2021, 200 PP.

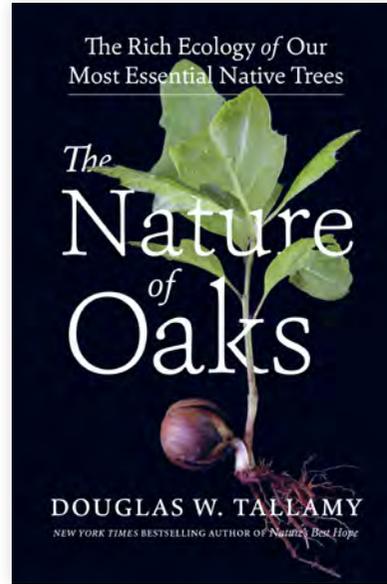
In *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of our Most Essential Native Trees*, Doug Tallamy extols the virtues of the oak tree in a loving paean to this plant species. While the "mighty oak" has long been a symbol of strength due to its towering size and longevity, Tallamy demonstrates instead its outsized capacity to sustain a vast and diverse array of wildlife. He considers the oak to be a "keystone" plant because of the frequency of fruitful interactions within its canopy, bark and root systems. Because the oak sustains so many of the insects that energize the food web, this arboreal "food bank" is the most important tree one can plant. Just as a Roman arch will crumble if the keystone is removed, so also might the food web collapse if productive native plants like the oaks are not preserved in our ecosystem.

A professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of

"The oak, he boasts, can host over 500 species of caterpillars. Most non-native plants, by contrast, host few or none."

Delaware, Tallamy became an influential advocate for conservation in home gardens and on privately owned property with his earlier books, *Bringing Nature Home* and *Nature's Best Hope*. Despite the author's academic background and the wealth of taxonomic information he naturally conveys, *The Nature of Oaks* easily invites laymen into the world he has so delicately observed, much of it in his own yard in Pennsylvania. His enthusiasm and sense of wonder are infectious. Tallamy structures the book into 12 chapters—one per month—to trace what might be happening within, upon and beneath the oak at any given time of the year.

Tallamy describes the growth of the oak, beginning with the distribution of its seeds by birds. The jay, whose esophagus can expand to carry up to five acorns at once while in flight, is a crucial agent as is the acorn woodpecker who stores protein-rich acorns in pockets it has pecked into oak bark. The author investigates the enigmas of masting (periodic overproduction of acorns) and marcescence (holding on to leaves no longer green) and then details the many benefits of oak leaf litter. Tallamy recounts how, on a freezing January day, he observed golden-crowned kinglets in the branches of his oak only to learn that this entirely insectivorous bird is eating dormant, wintering caterpillars—caterpillars whose cells are protected from bursting by glycerin, the same



chemical used in antifreeze. The oak, he boasts, can host more than 500 species of caterpillars. Most non-native plants, by contrast, host few or none.

Much of the book is devoted to detailing and celebrating the many kinds of insects that have co-evolved with the native oak and that the oak sustains—jewel caterpillars, filament bearers, hairstreaks, yellow-vested moths, katydids, spun glass slug moths, hag moths, lacewings and walking sticks. And yes, their lives, their cycles and their adaptations are just as vivid and fascinating as their names. Ninety percent of insect herbivores have evolved a specialized relationship with a plant. Splendid macro photographs show the insects in minute detail while the author's descriptions whet the reader's desire to put down the book, go outside, and observe close-up this incredible world unfolding in backyards everywhere, to take a bug's eye view.

—Louise Gilbert Freeman, *Three Chopt Garden Club*



Photo of Doug Tallamy by Rob Cardillo, courtesy of Timber Press

SAVE THE DATES

- Sept 13-20 | Historic Garden Week regional meetings
- Sept 27, 29, 30 | Photography Webinars
- Sept 30 | Common Wealth Award ballots due
- Oct 2 | Explore & Learn at Oak Spring and Rokeby Farm, Upperville
- Oct 12-14 | Board of Governors Meeting, Lynchburg
- Oct 14 | Poplar Forest Dedication, Forest
- Oct 25 | Conservation Forum, Birds: Feathers, Fields, Forests and Flowers
- Oct 27 | Photography Workshop
- Nov 1 | Photography Workshop
- Nov 1 | Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award deadline
- Nov 8 | Photography Workshop
- Dec 1 | Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement deadline



LOOKING AHEAD: 2022

- March 29 | Daffodil Day, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond
- April 23-30 | Historic Garden Week
- May 10-11 | Annual Meeting, Richmond
- May 12 | Paula Pryke Floral Demonstration: Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond
- May 18-19 | Horticulture Field Day, Alexandria
- June 14 | Lilies in Bloom, Fredericksburg
- Sept 20-21 | GCV Symposium, Science Museum of Virginia, Richmond

The Garden Club of Virginia invites members and friends to celebrate the completion of our 11-year project at Poplar Forest, restoring in exacting detail the front landscape of this national historic landmark to Thomas Jefferson's original designs.



Image courtesy of Poplar Forest

THE DEDICATION OF THE RESTORED LANDSCAPE AT *Jefferson's* POPLAR FOREST



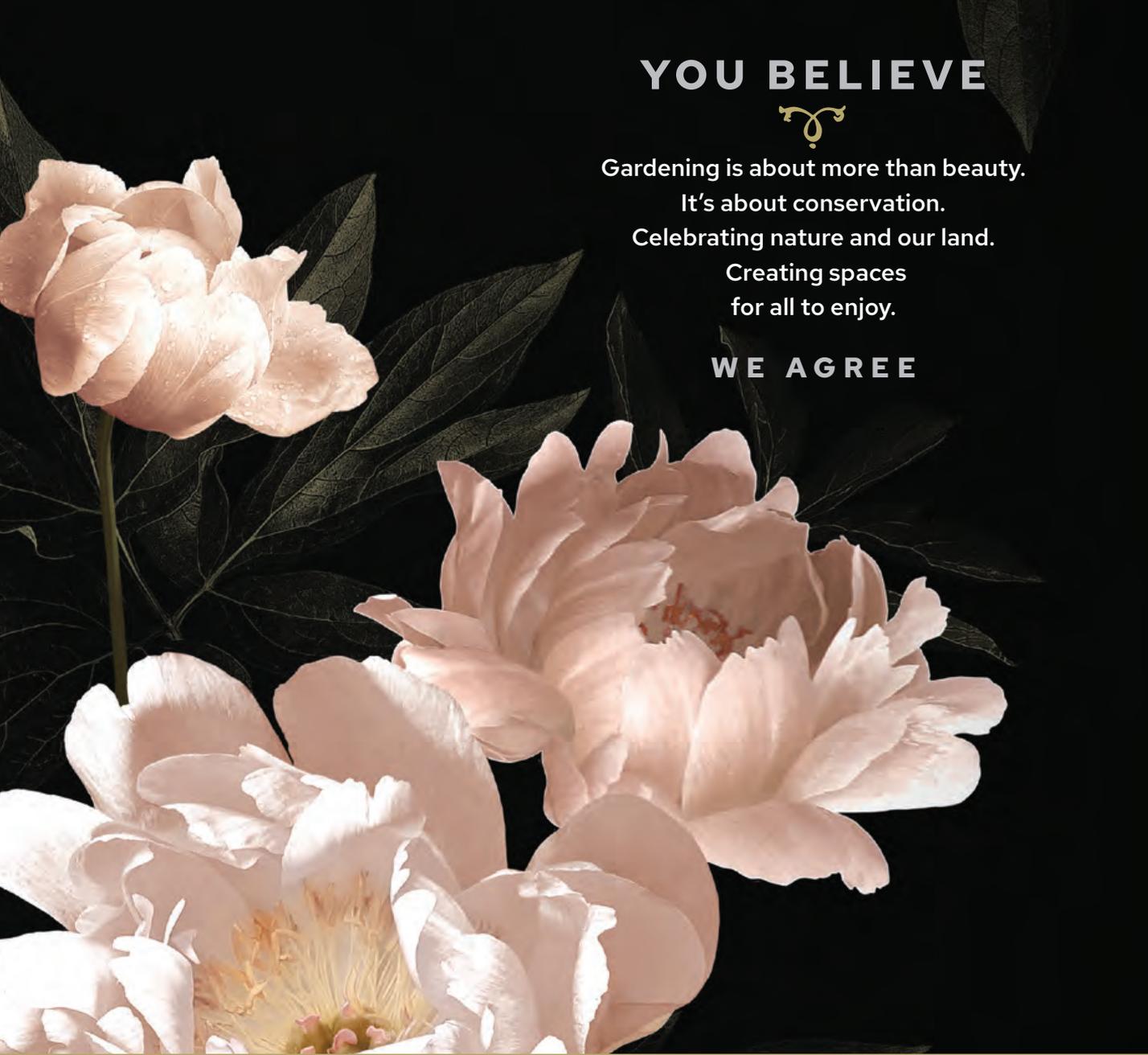
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021
1:00 P.M. | FOREST, VIRGINIA

Details available on the GCV website and in the October edition of *Membership News*

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YOU BELIEVE



Gardening is about more than beauty.
It's about conservation.
Celebrating nature and our land.
Creating spaces
for all to enjoy.

WE AGREE