

THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA



VOL LXIV, NO. 4, DECEMBER 2019

Journal



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.

FROM THE EDITOR

In our Centennial year, Garden Club of Virginia committees are offering innovative ways to celebrate. The horticulture, conservation and beautification and Virginia State Parks committees collaborated on a dynamic and informative Back to Nature two-day event at Natural Bridge State Park this fall. In the spring, Daffodil Day will encourage members to exhibit varieties from the first 1930 test collection. Historic Garden Week 2020 will feature many of the GCV restoration projects, including Point of Honor's new north lawn and the recently renovated Kent-Valentine House.

In this issue the GCV honors its past, including a pioneer horticulturalist member, and looks to the future with the Pollinator Protection and Refuse to Use initiatives. The Lynchburg garden clubs challenge other GCV member clubs in joining them as a Bee City. Founders Day speaker Thomas Woltz promises to inspire us with landscape architectural designs to create and enhance beauty while honoring nature, and Paula Pryke will dazzle us with her cutting-edge floral design.

Make your reservations to be in Richmond May 13-14, 2020, for the GCV's 100th birthday celebration.

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The Garden Club of Virginia *Journal*

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ON THE COVER...

Our evergreen, ever beautiful, native magnolia grandiflora is a traditional holiday decoration in Virginia, especially in Williamsburg, where Marcia Long, a member of the Williamsburg Garden Club, lives and creates beautiful botanical paintings, such as this one, in watercolor.

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OTHER REFERENCES...

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In Memoriam

Helen Turner Murphy, GCV President 1992-94

*by Jeanette Cadwallender, GCV Past President
The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club*

The Garden Club of Virginia mourns the death of former president Helen Turner Murphy (March 29, 1934 – October 17, 2019). She was a constant participant at GCV events for the past half-century. Her dazzling blue eyes and mischievous smile were a welcoming window to an intelligent, passionate woman whose lifework was promoting environmental stewardship and historic preservation.

A founding member of the Garden Club of the Northern Neck, Helen had only recently left active membership and become a sustainer. She was her club's president in 1980 and subsequently began her faithful involvement with the statewide organization. She served the GCV as historian and custodian of records, parliamentarian and editor of the register, recording secretary, second vice president and first vice president. She took office as the 37th president of the GCV in 1992.

Helen will be fondly remembered for her passion for growing and showing lilies. In 2016, the GCNN honored her 50 years of membership in their club with a silver trophy given to the GCV for the blue ribbon winner in the Interclub collection at the Lily Show. The trophy was first awarded to Helen's club. At the most recent Lily Show, she received the Eugenia Diller Award for the best oriental/trumpet hybrid lily and the Gertrude Cody Minter Memorial Award for the best lily stem in the show. The altar flowers at her funeral service were lilies, given by the GCV.

She prided herself on never missing a Board of Governors or Annual Meeting. She was a cheerleader for the GCV, encouraging new members to be involved. A careful from the Northern Neck made road trips to statewide events. These fun outings with Helen at the helm made the miles from Westmoreland County to Richmond and afar diminish. Self-described as a networker, she supplied much of the fabric of our organization for a half-century with her enthusiasm, humor, interest and genuine joy for the mission of the Garden Club of Virginia. She was as comfortable in the halls of the State Capitol as in her kayak on the "rivah."

To her sister, Katty Turner Mears (GCV President, 1984-86); her husband, The Honorable W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr. (GCV Honorary Member); her daughter, Anne Brumley, and her grandchildren, thank you for sharing Helen with us. We are all better for having known her. ❁



Common Wealth Award

The Boxwood Garden Club won the Common Wealth Award for the Peter Paul Development Center and Playground Enhancement. Common Wealth Award Chairman Karla MacKimmie (Warrenton) presented the award.

In 2018, Boxwood's membership voted unanimously to partner with Peter Paul Development Center to transform a vacant lot adjacent to the center into a cherished spot where children and families can interact with a simple and beautiful green space. Boxwood plans to plant trees for shade and native plants along the property border and throughout the green space and playground. The addition of synthetic turf inside the playground will aid in conservation by reducing use of water and chemicals.

Read the complete description at gcvirginia.org. 🌱

*The Boxwood Garden Club
President Nella Timmons,
GCV President Jean Gilpin
and GCV First Vice President
Missy Buckingham
(The Boxwood Garden Club)*



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January 13, 2020

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Become a Bee City

by Heidi James, GCV Conservation Awards Committee Chairman
The Lynchburg Garden Club



In July, the Garden Club of Virginia approved a Pollinator Protection Resolution, mobilizing its members to protect local pollinators. Accordingly, the Lynchburg and Hillside garden clubs have worked with their local government to address community conservation issues, forming the Blue Ridge Conservation task force. Impressed by the Bee City USA program initiated in 2012 by Phyllis Stiles of the Xerces Society, we helped Lynchburg become one of the 96 Bee Cities in the nation. Becoming a Bee City connects the local community to a national movement and provides it access to all the resources of the Xerces Society. We encourage your garden club to work with your local government to make your city the next Bee City in Virginia.



First fill out an online application and pay a fee based on the size of the local population. Then, when approved by the Xerces Society, your city council must formally adopt a resolution and make the following commitments:

1. Form a working committee to handle the duties of being a Bee City. (Several members of our Blue Ridge Conservation group serve alongside representatives from other organizations that share our mission.)
2. Display signage declaring that the city is a Bee City.
3. Develop outreach to educate the community about threats to pollinators.
4. Provide citizens with a list of native plants and recommended suppliers. The Parks and Recreation Department of Lynchburg is creating a Bee City webpage with this information. The city pledges to integrate native plants into future public plantings and to reduce use of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.
5. File an annual report and pay a renewal fee.



Encouraging your city to make these commitments ensures that city officials will be conscious of how to landscape public spaces more responsibly and perhaps include educational beds in parks or along roadsides. Adding educational signage identifying flowers, indicating no-mow zones and explaining the benefit of bees for the environment is tremendously influential. It is easy to commit to educational outreach because Historic Garden Week handily qualifies as a Bee City event. Showcasing issues of conservation, horticulture and restoration encourages us to create a healthy ecosystem, happily merging the priorities of the GCV. Bee City USA offers a platform for an organized, statewide effort that combines many of the missions of the Garden Club of Virginia. The more we spread the concept of the Bee City, the broader our influence and coverage across the state will be. 🌱



Daffodil Notes

New for the 2020 GCV Daffodil Day

by Janet G. Hickman, GCV Daffodil Committee Chairman
Hillside Garden Club

There will be several additions to the daffodil horticulture show schedule for the 2020 Garden Club of Virginia Daffodil Day on March 31 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. New to the 2020 show are a perpetual trophy, a one-time trophy and a whole new section of classes.

Harborfront Garden Club has generously offered to establish a new perpetual trophy in memory of their member Katherine Beale. Katherine was well known for her love of both lilies and daffodils. In particular, she was recognized regionally and nationally for her knowledge of miniature daffodils and her skill in exhibiting them. Harborfront and the GCV daffodil committee will establish a new class in the show's Section A (GCV members only) for a collection of five different miniature daffodils. The winner of this class will be awarded the Katherine Beale perpetual trophy and will also be eligible for the American Daffodil Society Lavender Ribbon for the best collection of five miniatures in the show.

The Centennial Challenge Class will be unique to the 2020 show. Daffodils and the GCV have a long history. In fact, the former GCV Daffodil Chairman Mrs. J. Robert Walker of the Martinsville Garden Club was one of five people at the very first meeting in 1954 when the American Daffodil Society was created. The GCV test collections started in 1930. It was called a "test collection" because club daffodil chairmen were to plant and observe the bulbs, then report how well they performed in their area. The first test collection included 55 varieties. The list is on the GCV website in the daffodil resources. There will be a challenge class in the 2020 show to exhibit as many of the varieties in that first test collection as possible. Many are no longer known, but some are still available commercially or may be in members' gardens. The class at the show will be open to everyone. The trophy will be awarded based not only on the quality of the blooms but also on the number in each exhibitor's entry.

A new section for 2020 will be for daffodils grown and exhibited in containers. Separate classes will be available for single varieties of standard, miniature and species daffodils.

Mark your calendars now for a daffodil workshop provided by the GCV daffodil committee, which will be held at the Kent-Valentine House on Monday, March 23, 2020. All club daffodil chairmen and anyone else interested are encouraged to attend to learn tips for successfully entering the Daffodil Day show. 🌱



DAFFODILS THROUGH THE CENTURIES: A REFLECTION

Hosted by the Garden Club of Virginia and the American Daffodil Society

“Reflection is a
flower of the mind,
giving out wholesome
fragrance ...”

— DESIDERIUS ERASMUS



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

DAFFODIL DAY

RICHMOND 2020

LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN

Photo courtesy of Jane Hammond, blue ribbon winner in photography in 2019

Join Garden Club of Virginia members and fellow daffodil enthusiasts for Daffodil Day. This event, our 86th annual show, will feature award winning daffodil specimens, spectacular floral arrangements and eye-catching photography in one of the nation's largest daffodil shows. Nearly 2,000 stems will dazzle attendees as we celebrate the GCV's Centennial.



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Centennial

1920-2020

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA AT 100

This milestone in the club's history features special programs, celebrations and educational opportunities throughout the state.

Open to the public 2 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

Learn more and stay informed with updates at GCVirginia.org/DaffodilDay



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

April 18–25, 2020

www.vagardenweek.org

The 'Green Arrow' daffodil was hybridized in Holland for Brent & Becky's Bulbs in honor of the GCV's Centennial. This white mid season daffodil sports a slight blush of pale green at the base of its funnel-shaped corona. These elegant spring bloomers were photographed last spring for the 2020 HGW state brochure.



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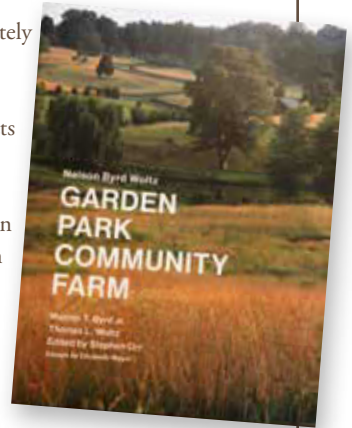
Perusing *Garden, Park, Community, Farm* will definitely whet one's interest in Thomas Woltz's talk at the Garden Club of Virginia's Founders Day on May 13, 2020. The book details examples of landscaping projects by Woltz and his partners, Warren Byrd and Sue Nelson. Stunning photographs show the marriage of architectural geometry with nature's creations, and there is much to learn from the landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz in the informative text. Each project includes a helpful list of primary materials and plants, as well as a rendering of the plan. NBW's work is renowned for being environmentally sensitive and responsive to existing natural features.

The book is divided into four sections reflected by its title. "Garden" shows how NBW creates a dialogue between home and the world using varied examples, from a Manhattan home's small, narrow lot to a contemporary structure tucked into natural rock formations. A Long Island estate reflects both the family's lifestyle needs and the existing natural features.

A similar variety of examples is present in "Park," including the Citygarden in St. Louis and the Asia Trail at the National Zoo. The Flight 93 National Memorial in Shankstown, PA, strikes the perfect note by juxtaposing concrete and black granite with meadows and trees.

"Community" is addressed in the next chapter. University of Virginia's Campbell Hall has landscaping that includes an outdoor classroom and uses stormwater runoff on its way to rain gardens as a visual feature. A stream, once piped underground, resurfaces for natural drama and as stormwater control for 80 nearby acres. It meanders through a sediment forebay into the renovated Dell pond, now surrounded by native plant species. Both wildlife and walkers are drawn to the area.

The final section, "Farm," takes readers from Albemarle County to New Zealand to California. The book's pièce de résistance is a user-friendly workbook of NBW projects featuring water, plants, stone and wood. This book provides inspiration to use natural elements in landscape design. How appropriate that Thomas Woltz is speaking at our Founders Day program. 🌱



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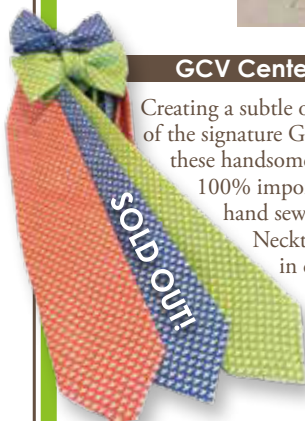
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Not available online

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Creating a subtle overall pattern of the signature GCV leaf logo, these handsome ties are 100% imported silk and hand sewn in the USA. Neckties are offered in coral and grass green; bow ties in blue and green. **\$85***



Waterford Crystal Keepsake

This limited edition Waterford Crystal Disk Keepsake is the perfect way to celebrate and commemorate the GCV Centennial. It also makes a lovely gift. 3.2" x 4" ~~\$75*~~ **\$50**



***\$5 flat rate shipping**



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA
Centennial
1920-2020

Photo courtesy of Warren Faught

CELEBRATE THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA'S CENTENNIAL WITH

Founders Day Festivities

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA | MAY 12-14, 2020

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

- **Evening reception at the Kent-Valentine House**, 5 to 7 p.m. Come see your "home" refurbished and refreshed while visiting with GCV friends from all over the state. Enjoy wine and light refreshments. *Open to GCV members and their guests. No charge.*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020

- **Speaker Thomas L. Woltz** at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Check-in begins at 10 a.m. Program at 10:30 a.m. Garden & Gun calls this rising star "a landscape architect committed to conservation and improving the world we live in." *Open to members, their guests and the general public. \$40 per person.*
- **Luncheon** at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Marble Hall. 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. *Open to members, their guests and the general public. \$35 per person includes wine.*
- **Afternoon includes self-guided tours of GCV restoration sites** and an opportunity to shop or enjoy local attractions.
- **Gala Reception and Grand Opening of the GCV exhibition, *A Landscape Saved: The Garden Club of Virginia at 100***, at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, 6 to 9 p.m. The story of the Garden Club of Virginia is colorful, courageous and impressive. Be the first to see it brought to life. Full bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Cocktail attire. *Open to GCV members and their guests. \$100 per person.*

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2020

- **Flower Arranging Demonstration with Paula Pryke** at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. Check-in begins at 10 a.m. Program at 10:30 a.m. Learn style secrets from this London-based floral designer honored by Queen Elizabeth and sought after by A-list clientele. *Open to members, their guests and the general public. \$75 per person.*

Details and tickets at
GCVirginia.org/Centennial



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Speak Out on Environmental and Conservation Issues



General Assembly Preview

Dec. 7, 2019, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Frontier Project

5005 W. Marshall Street, Richmond

Information on environmental and conservation issues.

Environmental Legislative Day

Jan. 28, 2020, 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

815 E. Grace Street, Richmond

The Virginia Conservation Network partners with the GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee to ensure a strong conservation message is broadcast early in the legislative session. Please join the professional staff of VCN Network Partners to meet with state legislators and encourage them to support environmental policies that are in line with GCV's mission. This is a great opportunity to meet with state Senate and House members to ensure a collective voice is heard on environmental and conservation issues. VCN sets up appointments with representatives.

Go to vcnva.org for more details and to register.



61st Annual Conservation Forum

Trees: Canopy of Conservation

by Becky Balzer, Roanoke Valley Garden Club
and Allison Clock, The Hampton Roads Garden Club
Co-chairmen, GCV Conservation Forum

This year's Conservation Forum, "Trees: Canopy of Conservation," was held at Natural Bridge State Park and Historic Hotel and Conference Center on Sept. 25 in tandem with the Horticulture Show on the 24th. For some, Natural Bridge is a place of happy childhood memories and, for all, it was an escape from busyness, a time to enjoy the outdoors and to catch our breath. Horticulture, conservation and beautification, and Virginia State Parks committees combined to bring this two-day event to our membership for the first time. The happy result was that some attendees came a little earlier and others stayed longer to participate in events outside of their main interest, finding common ground.

On the first day, horticulturalists in our group enthusiastically shared with attendees their avoidance of pesticides and promoted specimens of native plants. Some of us, who identify as conservationists, dropped off entries for the show for our horticulture friends. Each committee took pleasure in sharing the stage. Our well-attended tree planting on the grounds of the state park by our Centennial sponsor, Bartlett Tree Experts, brought out local conservationists and school children to help. Local officials and former Virginia State Parks Director Craig Seaver were also on hand. All enjoyed the event next to the recently planted pollinator flower garden and the brand-new interpretive center inside, aptly named Base Camp. With the many hands-on educational displays there, the Garden Club of Virginia can be proud of our state parks grant at Natural Bridge.

On day two, across the road at the George Washington Hall at the Conference Center, we gathered for a continental breakfast sans plastic straws, cups or plates, in keeping with our pledge to avoid single-use plastics. Conservation and Beautification Committee Chairman Carrie Dorsey introduced Capital Trees Director Frazier Armstrong, who spoke on "The Evolution of Capital Trees: Urban Greening and the Benefits to the Greater Community." This landmark project was begun by members from the four Richmond clubs: Boxwood, James River, Three Chopt and Tuckahoe. Their urban Richmond renewal projects celebrate where conservation and horticulture came together. Next, in a dramatic exercise, Dr. Elizabeth Brantley of Bartlett Tree Experts, encouraged us to get on our feet and think like a tree. Together we became a canopy of trees, our limbs and roots interconnected. Our third speaker, Dr. Eric Wiseman, of Virginia Tech's Urban Forestry program, presented "The Virginia Big Tree Program." Our final speaker was Andrew Moore, author of *Pawpaw: in Search of America's Forgotten Fruit*, who spoke about "The Relationship Between Fruit Trees and Plants, Fungi and Bacteria." ❁

If you have a business that needs to be seen, or if you know of one, the Journal is always looking for appropriate advertisers to brighten our pages. Please contact Lea Shuba at journalads@gcvirginia.org with your ideas.

The 2019 Conservation Forum

was generously sponsored by



TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY
SEPT. 24-25, 2019
NATURAL BRIDGE
STATE PARK



Past GCV President and Virginia State Parks Committee Chairman Nina Mustard (Williamsburg), Former Virginia State Parks Director Craig Seaver and GCV President Jean Gilpin with the National Association of State Park Directors Award presented to the Garden Club of Virginia.



Thanks to GCV Horticulture Chairman Wendy Walker (Eastern Shore) and committee members Kim Cory and Fran Carden (Albemarle) for the innovative native plant horticulture show.



Thank you to the Natural Bridge State Park rangers!



Natural Bridge Elementary School students assisted Dylan Kerl of Bartlett Tree Experts in the planting of a serviceberry tree.



GCV members enjoyed getting Back to Nature through tree hikes, geocaching and stargazing that evening.

Beth Brantley, Bartlett Tree Experts, got Forum attendees on their feet and swaying like trees.



Back to Nature was a collaboration between the Garden Club of Virginia's horticulture, conservation and education departments. More great photos

Back to Nature

Horticulture
& Hiking

AND

61st Annual
Conservation Forum

TREES: CANOPY OF
CONSERVATION

Beth DeBergh (Warren County) won a blue ribbon for *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw), which was also featured at the Conservation Forum the following day.



Jane (Boxwood) and Don Cowles, sporting a GCV Centennial tie, at the Creekside Dinner.

Mary Hart Darden (Nansemond River) won Blue in the Picnic in the Park Class.



Pollenizer Plants, such as anemones, the food source for pollinators, were featured in the horticulture show.



DeLane Porter (Dolley Madison) won the Centennial Cup for sunchoke, the best horticulture exhibit in the show.



on and beautification, and Virginia State Parks committees, along with Natural Bridge State Park. at gcvirginia.org

Dugdale Award



President and CEO Elizabeth Taraski accepted the Dugdale Award on behalf of the Nansemond River Preservation Alliance from GCV Conservation Awards Chairman Heidi James. Joining them are Nansemond River Garden Club President Linda Consolvo and Judy Perry (Elizabeth River).

Conservation Educator Award



Natural Bridge State Park Manager Jim Jones received the Conservation Educator Award. With Jim are members of the Blue Ridge Garden Club: President Beth Coleman, Barbara Walsh, Margaret Samdahl, Catherine Marcus and Julie Grover.



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TICA SYDNOR

Member of The Lynchburg Garden Club

Elizabeth Rawlinson

Pioneer Horticulturalist and Editor of the Garden Club of Virginia's Garden Gossip

by Clair Bell and Deneen Brannock, *The Augusta Garden Club*

Elizabeth Seymour Rawlinson was a gardener, flower arranger, lecturer, writer and naturalist. In the 1930s, this self-taught horticulturalist was a regular columnist for *The New York Times* and published articles in *House & Garden* and other horticultural journals. She served as new plant material chairman of the Garden Club of Virginia from 1928-1936 and as editor of *Garden Gossip* from 1936 until her death in 1942.

Elizabeth lived with her parents at Herringstone, near Staunton, where she tended a collection of rare shrubs, wildflowers, crocuses and other bulbs. She explored the natural areas in Augusta, Nelson, Highland and Rockingham counties, photographing and writing about the landscape and cataloging native plants. Her will mentions a collection of Kodachrome color slides, plant-collecting equipment and a bequest to a friend of "the black books in which I kept my gardening records." While these items are sadly lost to history, some of her herbarium collection pieces exist in the archives at the Virginia Tech arboretum. These feature dried and mounted wildflowers, including their roots and blossoms, with descriptions of the plant habits as she observed them. Elizabeth's dedication to educating club members and the public about native plants made a lasting contribution to gardening in Virginia.

In 1946, the Augusta Garden Club established a reference library at the Staunton Public Library in memory of Elizabeth Rawlinson. Club member Evelyn Jones Yarbrough designed a bookplate, which is still used, depicting horticultural subjects that were favorites of Elizabeth. Members contributed books of their own or purchased books in honor of others. When *Garden Gossip* ended in 1953, its last editor, Mrs. W. R. Winfree of Lynchburg, gave approximately 100 books used by Elizabeth and others to the Rawlinson Collection in Staunton. When the GCV moved into the Kent-Valentine House in 1973, the Augusta club donated its copies of *Garden Gossip* and rare books to help establish the new GCV library.

This past spring, the club and the Staunton Public Library cosponsored a lecture on Elizabeth Rawlinson. Local historian Nancy Sorrells spoke on her continuing research into Elizabeth's life and work, which she hopes will result in the discovery of missing historic artifacts. The Augusta Garden Club proudly maintains and adds books to its Rawlinson Collection each year to continue this legacy of horticultural research and education. ❁



A SENSE OF PLACE

Photography Retrospective

Open House at the Kent-Valentine House, Richmond

May 12, 2020, 5-7 p.m.

Garden Club of Virginia members and their guests

Celebrate the Centennial with a photographic retrospective of our restoration projects. GCV members captured images of these important restorations. Learn the history of the gardens and properties and how they have become vital to Virginia's splendid landscape.

Retrospective will remain at KVH throughout the summer of 2020.



Garden gate at Montpelier

Welcoming the Kents back to the Kent-Valentine House

Portraits of Elizabeth and Horace Kent, who built the Kent-Valentine House in 1845, returned home this fall thanks to a donation from their great-great grandchildren, J. Kent Brown and Duane G. Brown. Additionally, the Browns gifted GCV with portraits of Elizabeth Kent's mother and brother, Hettie Smith Baldwin and Lt. Russell Baldwin, U.S. Navy.

We are thrilled to have these portraits, which connect us back to the early history of the Kent-Valentine House, and are excited to share them with you on your next visit to Richmond. 🌸



Tips for Better Photography

by Claire Mellinger, Albemarle Garden Club

Photography is about sharing a moment in time, but capturing an image one finds exhilarating can be a different story. Whether using your smart phone or an SLR/DSLR, a few easy techniques can greatly enhance the story you tell.

First and foremost, frame the image to maximum benefit. Vistas, for example, should have a dominant component that gives balance to the image. In addition, fences, rivers or paths create a visual line that carries the eye through the image.

Natural light can be your best friend or worst enemy. With a little practice, you will see the importance light gives your image. The golden hours, those at dusk and dawn, produce brilliant images, creating good contrast and shadow. Move around with the sun behind you, to your side or straight in front of you, and note the effects. Cloudy days are perfect for close-ups of flora. For a good close-up, be on eye level with your subject and try not to zoom your lens in, but instead move closer to the subject. Make sure to clear any unnecessary debris from the subject. It is frustrating to look at a final image on your computer screen and see a distracting twig or branch.

Little tricks can add drama to your photos. Bring a spray water bottle to your garden and spritz the subject to give your image a wow factor. If working indoors, a flashlight can provide highlights to a particular part of your flower or arrangement and, with their natural light, window sills are a perfect perch for a still life.

Photography is great fun. With a little practice, you will become an expert in producing memorable floral images. 🌸



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Club Notes

Historic Alexandria House Reaps Renovated Garden

by Betsy Huffman

The Garden Club of Alexandria

Ten years after the first conversations, the Garden Club of Alexandria completed a garden renovation project adjacent to the historic Ramsay House at the Alexandria Visitors Center. The project's culmination and partnerships with the City of Alexandria and others were celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 12.

The historic 18th-century Ramsay House, along with its garden entrance, serves as the city's front door for visitors, residents and guests and is the oldest house in Alexandria. William Ramsay was one of the founding trustees of the city and was married to a cousin of George Washington. The completed garden includes new patios with memorial bricks, an accessible pathway and patio, native and sustainable plants to provide year-round color, a water fountain and the only cell phone-charging station in an Alexandria park.

The collaboration between the city and the club developed to address the garden's overgrown boxwood. A steering committee was formed, and the club raised funds by hosting luncheons, selling memorial bricks and including named benches and border gardens in the design. The Garden Club of America has recognized the renovation's professional team for horticulture, historic preservation and civic improvement.

The project also received support from the city's Parknership program, the Historic Alexandria Foundation, the Virginia Sargeant Reynolds Foundation and individual donations. The Garden Club of Alexandria will continue to be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the garden in partnership with the city. 🌸

Showcasing Your Creativity

by Susie Brown, GCV Horticulture Committee
The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore

It's now December and outdoor containers are either tired or have died. Don't just yank out the annuals and put everything away. As the days grow cooler, create festive arrangements in these empty containers to welcome visitors to the front door or brighten the view of a terrace from indoors.

Late fall and winter foraging in the yard or woods can offer a wealth of materials to deliver seasonal interest to container arrangements. The mid-Atlantic area provides a wonderful variety of conifers and berry-producing plants which can punch things up. Look for berries, peeling bark, evergreen branches or brightly colored stems. Good foliage plants include magnolia, pine, variegated holly, cryptomeria, cedar, arborvitae, spruce and boxwood. For fall arrangements the leaves of fothergilla, Japanese maple and oakleaf hydrangea give wonderful color. Stems of birch, colorful twig dogwoods or corkscrew and fantail willow offer instant pizzazz, but wait until the leaves have dropped before cutting these. Favorite berried plants include beautyberry, juniper, nandina, viburnum species and winterberry.

Cut the material, slit stems and put them immediately in buckets of fresh water. It's best to hydrate everything at least overnight. Evergreens can be sprayed with an antitranspirant like Wilt-Pruf® which will reduce moisture loss and allow stems to stay supple for weeks.

Use buckets, bushel baskets or galvanized containers inside decorative ones, making sure there are drainage holes. Fill the container with soil or a mixture of sand and soil, water well and let it drain. Begin constructing the arrangement by inserting branches and sticks into the soil, always adding substantial elements like magnolia or birch logs first. A shortcut is to lay an evergreen wreath over the top of the container and place material inside. The wreath adds the perfect edge to the arrangement. Try to limit each container to five or six different selections of plant material, varying textures and foliage to add interest.

Once all the materials are in place, water the pot thoroughly. Check the soil after a few weeks and water again to keep the branches fresh. Most will typically last three to four months if kept watered. Placing the containers in a protected area out of direct sun will also help extend the life of arrangements. Refresh the material or completely replace it as each holiday approaches. This is one way to have a garden with something of interest in all seasons. ❁



Mahonias: Winter in Bloom

by Sue Perrin

The Garden Club of Gloucester

When fall camellias fade and winter's drear sets in, mahonia can seem like a trip to the tropics. It begins its golden show in early January and continues through February. Heavy snow is no deterrent for this plucky plant. Blossoms persist until the odd warm day when a buzz and hum stop passersby in their tracks. Mahonia's fragrance has attracted half the hive, and they are busy. The sound evokes the feeling of a lazy, sunny summer day.

As the days lengthen, mahonia's flowers mature to abundant sprays of beautiful, blue berries - a food source for the birds. A flock can denude a bush in a day when the berries are perfectly ripe.

Plant mahonias where their thorny foliage will not be too close to a walkway. They are tough in Zone 7b and tolerate a wide variety of soils and coastal conditions. Choose improved hybrids such as Mahonia x media 'Winter Sun,' 'Underway' and 'Charity.' They bloom a rich yellow and can be effective for up to three months.

Individual racemes are beautiful in small arrangements. Large clusters minus foliage are luxurious in a tall vase. In the winter landscape, the foliage is shiny and the flowers warm and welcome. All in all, a spectacular winter wonder. ❁



Photo Credit: Ann Hohenberger

Tool Tune-up Time

by Susan Morris

The Martinsville Garden Club

Gardens have been put to bed and the gardener waits with eager anticipation for the emergence of green shoots that mark the first signs of spring. The depth of winter is an excellent time to service secateurs, shears and trowels.

Start this winter project by first cleaning any residual dirt and rust from garden tools. Brushing the tools with a stiff wire brush will dislodge most of the debris. Next, place the tools in warm, soapy water. A hard toothbrush, while not recommended by the American Dental Association for human dentition, is superb for cleaning small crevices and hinges. Rinse the tools and dry them well. Worn towels and old T-shirts can be recycled and repurposed for this task.

Next, make a quick-clean bucket. Fill a one-gallon bucket with clean play sand until the sand is within four inches of the brim. Stir 3-in-One® or mineral oil into the sand until the sand is moist. This will require approximately 10 ounces of oil. Once the bucket has been prepared, insert tools with blades and cutting edges down into the sand. This bucket is a great way to lightly sharpen and oil-treat tools. Tools can be safely stored in the bucket until ready for use again in the garden. This sand bucket can be used to clean and lightly sharpen tools during the gardening season. Always store the bucket in a dry location.

Enjoy the coming spring with tools well prepared for upcoming chores in the garden. ❁

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Presentation of the Point of Honor North Lawn

by Betsy Worthington, GCV Restoration Committee
The Lynchburg Garden Club

More than 60 representatives of the Garden Club of Virginia and the Lynchburg community met on Thursday, Sept. 19 to celebrate the presentation of the north lawn to the City of Lynchburg and Point of Honor Inc. Anne Baldwin, chairman of the GCV restoration committee, made the presentation of the garden to Director of the Lynchburg Museum System Ted Delaney and President of Point of Honor Inc. Charlotte Fischer.

The Garden Club of Virginia has a long and deep connection to the landscape of Point of Honor, beginning nearly 50 years ago when the house was made a museum. The grounds of the historic mansion have been beautified and improved in four phases over the past half century. In 1978, Meade Palmer designed a historic landscape appropriate to the Federal period. Rudy J. Favretti designed the reception terrace for the carriage house and an apple orchard in 1996. In 2006, William D. Rieley added a new walk and plantings to the carriage house. Mr. Rieley's 2019 north lawn renovation dramatically improves visitors' first glimpse of the grounds as they approach from Cabell Street and will provide a lovely and appropriate setting for the many events held there throughout the year. ❁



Courtesy of Lucham Hunt, City of Lynchburg

GCV President Jean Gilpin, Director of the Lynchburg Museum System Ted Delaney and GCV Restoration Committee Chairman Anne Baldwin (Alexandria)



Photo by William Rieley

Aerial view of the North Lawn



Courtesy of Lucham Hunt, City of Lynchburg

Point of Honor's North Lawn



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- Dec. 7 General Assembly Preview, The Frontier Project, Richmond
- Jan. 15 Deadline for March *Journal* Submissions
- Jan. 28 Environmental Legislative Day, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond
- March 1 Nomination Deadline for Common Wealth Award
- March 1 Nomination Deadline for de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation
- March 1 Nomination Deadline for Horticulture Award of Merit

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