

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA JOURNAL

Fall/Winter 2024 | Volume LXIX | No. 3 & 4



INSIDE

Conservation Forum 2024 | GCV Awards | Fresh Produce

flor

ELIZABETH LOCKE
JEWELS



The Other Elizabeth
17 EAST MAIN STREET, BOYCE, VA
540-837-3088 or www.elizabethlockejewels.com

LIFESTYLE LECTURE SERIES
Featuring Jon Carloftis
Presented by the Garden Club of Norfolk

Elevate your morning with an uplifting and entertaining presentation from renowned landscape designer Jon Carloftis titled "Inspirational Transformations." Jon Carloftis, author of the book "Jon Carloftis Fine Gardens," adds charisma and enthusiasm to each project he composes. His talent fosters welcoming landscapes ranging anywhere from New York City rooftop gardens to home state Kentucky farms and distilleries.

FEBRUARY 4, 2025 IN NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

LECTURE 11:00AM | NORFOLK YACHT & COUNTRY CLUB | EVENT TICKET \$65
Vendor shopping from 9:30 am - 2:30pm (Complimentary coffee and nibbles) | Pre-order book purchases for \$55 are also available.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit
www.thegardenclubofnorfolk.org
The Garden Club of Norfolk is a Non-Profit 501c3 Organization.

Thank you to our sponsors.

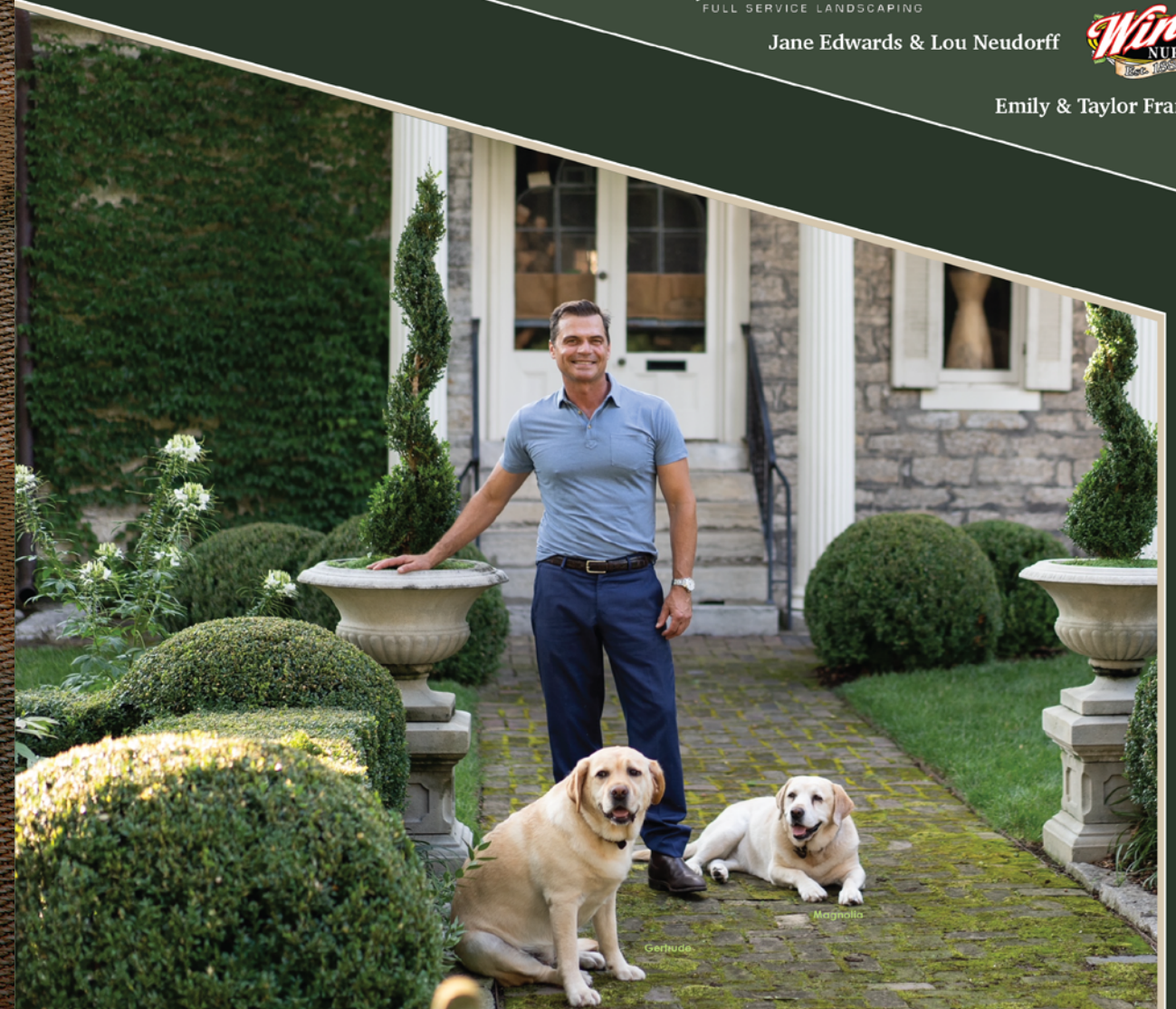
TOWN SCAPES
FULL SERVICE LANDSCAPING

Robin & Bill Ingram

Jane Edwards & Lou Neudorff



Emily & Taylor Franklin



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 3,500 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

ISSUES	PUBLISHES IN	SUBMISSION DEADLINE	RESERVE DEADLINE
Winter	December	October 15	October 1
Spring	March	January 15	January 1
Summer	June	April 15	April 1
Fall	September	July 15	July 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.

♻️ The Garden Club of Virginia supports recycling. Please recycle this publication.

THE MISSION OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA:

To conserve the gifts of nature, to restore and preserve historic landscapes of the commonwealth, to cultivate the knowledge and love of gardening and to lead future generations to build on this heritage.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

The ownership, management and circulation of the Garden Club of Virginia's *Journal*, published four times a year in Richmond, Virginia, is hereby stated.

The name and address of the publisher is: Garden Club of Virginia, 12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. The name and address of the editor is: Madeline Mayhood, 12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. The owner is: the Garden Club of Virginia, 12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. There are no bond holders, mortgages or security holders.

The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal Income Tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months.

The total number of copies published nearest the filing date is 3,600. The average number of copies published in the preceding 12 months is 3,600. There are no sales through dealers, etc. Paid subscriptions average 3,500; the number nearest the filing date is 3,467. Other mailed copies average 12. Free distribution averages 0. The average number of copies not distributed for the preceding year is 200. The average number of copies not distributed nearest the filing date is 250.

The *Journal* Editor requests permission to mail Garden Club of Virginia's *Journal* at the phased postal rates presently authorized on form 3526 for USPS #574-520 (ISSN 0431-0233). I certify that the statements made here are correct and complete as listed in the Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation.

Madeline Mayhood, *Journal* Editor
c/o Garden Club of Virginia
12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Postmaster, please send address changes to:
Garden Club of Virginia
12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23219
11/30/2024



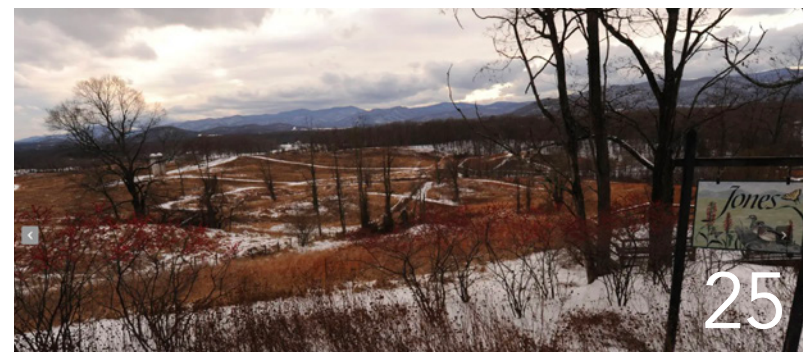
ABOVE LEFT
Ali Simanson's Honey Bees

ABOVE RIGHT
The Jones Nature Preserve; Bruce and Susan Jones—the 2024 recipients of the Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Service in Conservation.

COVER ART:
Winter Rose, by Bonnie Flax, The Little Garden Club of Winchester Oil on canvas, 12"x16"



CONSERVATION FORUM
Bill Portlock, a featured speaker at the GCV's Conservation Forum in Martinsville, is an acclaimed naturalist educator, conservation photographer, and 2016 winner of the GCV Dugdale Award. His presentation featured his photographs of birds along with the story of his motivation and determination to sustain their habitats and population levels. Photo courtesy of Bill Portlock



Contents

Fall/Winter 2024 *Journal*

ESSENTIALS

- 4 **Cover Art Spotlight:** Meet Bonnie Flax, The Little Garden Club of Winchester (and her Doodle, Cooper!)
- 5 **President's Message**
- 7 **Editor's Letter**
- 8 **Fresh Produce & News You Can Use:** Bartlett Tree Experts on maples, GCV Speakers Bureau, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden turns 40, GCV Honorary Membership, Booming Bee Cities, and more.

FEATURES

- 16 **"Restoring our Ecological Foundation: How to Save Earth's Essential Birds and Insects"**—GCV's 66th Annual Conservation Forum: Highlights + Keynote Speaker Heather Holm and photos galore!
- 22 **Awards and Accolades:** Conservation Educator Award, the Helen & Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award, Dugdale Conservation Award
- 26 **Historic Garden Week:**
 - Digital Archives Project Update
 - Letter of Understanding Revealed
- 30 **All About Invasives**
- 34 **Board of Governors Meeting**—Norfolk's Harborfront Garden Club shows off Mermaid City in style

SNIPS

- 36 **Seven GCV clubs in all six districts share their news and photos!** Submit your club's news on the GCV website by selecting "Submit Stories."

END NOTES

- 42 **Meet the Member:** Get to know the dynamic Ali Simanson, Garden Club of Fairfax President
- 44 **Gifts for Gardeners...** On time for the holidays
- 46 **In Memoriam:** Remembering Ellen Godwin, GCV President, 1986-1988
- 47 **Final Thought:** Leave the Leaves!
- 49 **GCV Calendar:** Save the Dates

READ ABOUT GCV AWARDS STARTING ON PAGE 22



WELCOME
TONY!

We are excited to share that **Tony James** recently joined our team as the part-time steward for the Kent-Valentine House. Tony gained hospitality and food service experience from his time at The Cleveland Museum of Art and with restaurants in Richmond. He is currently an undergraduate studying game development. Tony enjoys engaging with the arts, games, and organizing practically everything. Please join us in welcoming Tony!



BONNIE FLAX

The Little Garden Club of Winchester

Bonnie Flax is a self-taught artist from Winchester and a member of the Little Garden Club of Winchester. She has always collected art from her travels and as her family moved around the country.

In 2005 she took her first oil painting class from a local artist in Winchester and was hooked. Her instructor was highly encouraging, and Bonnie continued taking classes and workshops over the years.

She paints mostly still-lives and landscapes inspired by the beautiful Shenandoah Valley as well as her own garden. She also has done plein air paintings in Maine and throughout Virginia. Other inspirations come from her travels.

While oil is her main medium, Bonnie has worked with acrylic

and collages as well. Her paintings have hung in The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and as banners on the Winchester downtown walking mall. She has sold her work at the Waterford Festival Art Show as well as the juried art show Art at the Mill in Millwood.

Bonnie's portrait of Cooper, her beloved labradoodle, was selected as one of the art banners for Art Scape, a community event in Winchester. Cooper's banner was sponsored by the Linden Animal Hospital. "I have been lucky to have had multiple pieces chosen for the banner program since it started in 2009," she says of the Shenandoah Arts Council fundraiser. It's a fun thing in a small town where my family and friends can see my work."



ABOVE:
Bonnie Flax
& Cooper,
The Little
Garden Club
of Winchester,
Winchester

RIGHT:
Winter Rose
Oil on canvas,
9"x12"

"Cooper and I are attached at the hip," she reports. "He follows me to every room in the house. We walk two to three miles every morning." Doodles are a family affair: "One of my daughters, my sister, and niece all have doodles, and most came from Clarke County."

"If I could have a giraffe I would. I have loved giraffes since I was young," says this animal lover. "I feed them wherever there is a zoo that allows it! I even fed April and her baby in Binghamton, NY, after her live birth went viral on social media." She reports that an over-the-top experience was seeing giraffes in Africa. 🌿



GCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2026

President: Kris Carbone,
The Garden Club of Danville

1st Vice President: Jennifer Kelley,
The Garden Club of Alexandria,
The Garden Club of Norfolk

2nd Vice President: Laura Francis,
The Hunting Creek Garden Club

Corresponding Secretary: Mary Byrd
Denham, The Lynchburg Garden Club

Recording Secretary: Frances Carden,
Albemarle Garden Club

Treasurer: Kelly Johnson,
The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club

Parliamentarian: Allison Clock,
The Hampton Roads Garden Club

Artistic Design: Renee Gardner,
The Tuckahoe Garden Club of
Westhampton

Conservation & Beautification: Diane
Thomas, The Garden Club of Alexandria

Development: Wendy Walker,
The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore

Finance: Mary Bacon,
The James River Garden Club

Historic Garden Week: Virginia Gillock,
The Augusta Garden Club

Horticulture: Patsy Smith,
Winchester-Clarke Garden Club

Restoration: Deneen Brannock,
The Augusta Garden Club

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

District 1 (2024-2026): Kit Sullivan,
The Boxwood Garden Club

District 2 (2023-2025): Michelle
Jennings, Rivanna Garden Club

District 3 (2024-2026): Mary (Rennie)
McDaniel, The Rappahannock Valley
Garden Club

District 4 (2024-2026): Martha
Anderson, Mill Mountain Garden Club

District 5 (2023-2025): Suzi Worsham,
Leesburg Garden Club, The Garden
Club of Fairfax

District 6 (2023-2025): Stephanie
Broadwater, The Nansemond River
Garden Club

Executive Director: Andrea Butler

A MESSAGE FROM GCV'S 53RD PRESIDENT



The Garden Club of Virginia is in full swing as we celebrate the holidays and head toward the New Year. I have already visited a handful of member clubs who have been so welcoming. Their local efforts are such an inspiration, reminding me of how impactful our organization continues to be. Our efforts truly support our communities and are a gift to the Commonwealth. In addition to club efforts, many members also serve on our dynamic GCV committees. The committees are hard at work planning the future of the GCV while staying true to our mission. I am so grateful for the dedication of our members.

Our second season of Cultivating Conversations kicked off with resounding success. You can find the recordings of past sessions on the GCV website. Harborfront Garden Club hosted a fabulous Board of Governors meeting, where, among other presentations, the Directors at Large shined, performing their skit about the website. The Conservation Forum was hosted in Martinsville and was an energizing event on the topic of "Restoring our Ecological Foundation: How to Save Earth's Essential Birds and Insects." The speakers were wonderful, it was well attended, and participants left galvanized to make change in their communities and across the commonwealth. Please enjoy the recap of these and other fall events and activities in this edition of the *Journal*.

Looking forward, we have a number of exciting opportunities for members to get involved, learn, and support the GCV mission, including Legislative Day, History Blooms, Daffodil Day, and Horticulture Field Day. They're events and activities designed with GCV members in mind, and I encourage you to participate. Consider placing them on your calendar. I look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes for a joyful holiday season,

Kris Carbone

Kris Carbone
GCV President, 2024-2026



THE Fashion Gallery

111 LEE HWY, VERONA
MON-SAT 10-5
540-248-4292
FASHIONGALLERYVA.COM

Best of Virginia

Hilldrup

Hilldrup and the McDaniel family proudly support the mission of the Garden Club of Virginia and Historic Garden Week.

Moving, Storage, Relocation & Logistics

Locations in
Fredericksburg,
Richmond and D.C.
hilldrup.com | 844.877.3438

Daffodil Day

WINDMILLS & DAFFODILS

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

MARCH 26, 2025

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | GCVIRGINIA.ORG

JANE P. BATTEN STUDENT CENTER, 5817 WESLEYAN DRIVE, VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, VIRGINIA BEACH

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

SHARING AND GIVING THANKS



Welcome to this special, double edition of the *Journal*, where we've merged fall and winter into one super-sized issue. There's so much to share this season, so sit back, relax, and savor each page.

You'll find that we expanded Fresh Produce to include much more, including a Bee City update, an exhibition at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, and the scoop on GCV Honorary Memberships. Our conservation feature covers the 66th GCV Conservation Forum,

held in Martinsville last month; the recipients of the GCV's prestigious conservation awards; and a spotlight on keynote speaker Heather Holm, who lives to spread the word about the importance of pollinators and native plants.

Karen Ellsworth shares news about Historic Garden Week, including the roll-out of the Letter of Understanding for homeowners and the new digital archives project. Anna Aquino gets real about invasives and the James River Invasive Plant Task Force, whose network is committed to tackling these blights on the landscape. We spotlight the dynamic Ali Simanson, president of The Garden Club of Fairfax, who brings light and energy to her club and the world around her. If you don't already follow her on Instagram (@fourstairsfarm), you're missing out. And six GCV clubs share their programs and milestones in our Snips section. Finally, we pay homage to Ellen Godwin, who served as GCV president from 1986-1988.

The fall season is nearly behind us, and winter is almost here. As we look toward a new year, I am reminded to be thankful for life's many blessings. Family, friendship, and community top my list.

Enjoy the season.

Madeline Mayhood

Madeline Mayhood, GCV Journal Editor
Journal@GCVirginia.org
The James River Garden Club

GCV JOURNAL 2024 COMMITTEE

Madeline Mayhood, Editor
The James River Garden Club

Louise Freeman,
Three Chopt Garden Club

Nancy Inman,
Albemarle Garden Club

Katherine Knopf,
Roanoke Valley Garden Club

GCV PRESIDENT

Kris Carbone,
The Garden Club of Danville

GCV RECORDING SECRETARY/JOURNAL LIAISON TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laura Francis,
The Hunting Creek Garden Club

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Terri Lowman,
journalads@gcvirginia.org

GCV EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Andrea Butler

GCV COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Sarah Blackburn

GCV COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Ann Heller





Such Beauty at the MSV

Floral portraits at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

Now featured in the drawing room of Glen Burnie House at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester, this special exhibition, *Such Beauty*, highlights the delicate allure of flowers. Showcasing 15 floral portraits by Shenandoah Valley artist Lynn Mocarski Maurer, the display includes vibrant oil paintings on copper, canvas, and board, as well as intricately detailed graphite works. Be sure to visit the Pop-Up Shop in the gardens, where you can find prints and notecards featuring Maurer's artwork. "Such Beauty: Floral Portraits" by Lynn Mocarski Maurer will be on view at the MSV until Dec. 31. 🌿

Above: Fresh Buds-Tiny Creatures (mosaic), by Lynn Mocarski Maurer

Right: Reaching for the Sky, by Lynn Mocarski Maurer



Stellar Speakers Help the GCV Speakers Bureau Grow

One of the key tenets of the Garden Club of Virginia is education. And it's front and center to most GCV club missions. So it stands to reason that club programs contain a significant educational component.

As the GCV builds its speakers bureau, consider sharing the green industry professionals—whether in conservation, floral design, or horticulture—whom your club featured in a program. That way, you'll provide inspiration and sources for other clubs. Individuals can be GCV members or outside of the GCV.

The list is in the fledgling stages now and depends on your participation to make it into a robust resource for all GCV clubs and members.

Access the link by scanning the QR code and add to the list to help the GCV speakers bureau grow.



Above: Lisa Elliott of The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton was a guest speaker at a Garden Club of the Northern Neck meeting, where she demonstrated creative container gardening. Lisa is on the GCV speakers bureau. Photo courtesy of The Garden Club of the Northern Neck.



FLOURISH, LGBG!

You've come a long way Baby!

If you make your way to Richmond between now and the end of the year, stop by Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden with happy birthday wishes. One of the country's top botanical gardens continues to celebrate a major milestone as 2024 marks its 40th anniversary. It celebrated throughout the year with *Flourish: 40 Years and Growing* that included lectures, installations, exhibits, and more.

The garden has emerged as one of the country's leading public gardens thanks to visionary stewards who saw the potential in what was known as Bloemendaal, the name Grace Arents gave the property she purchased in 1913 from the estate of her uncle, Lewis Ginter. Bloemendaal means "valley

of flowers" in Dutch and was named for the family's ancestral town in Holland.

The garden today is a far cry from what its first visitors experienced. Once the Garden Club of Virginia stepped up in 1990 to restore the Grace Arents Garden, momentum to embrace the property's potential took off. The completion of GCV's project provided the catalyst the community needed to support what would become one of the state's prized destinations, with subsequent gardens and gifts following in the ensuing decades.

Four decades later and now LGBG has secured itself as a world class public garden, with an education complex, a robust schedule of classes and workshops, a visitors center,



Archival photo of Grace Arents Garden circa 1915.

50 acres of landscaped gardens, and a stunning conservatory. It continues to attract professionals at the top of their field including Brian Trader, president and CEO, who was appointed in 2021.

As we face unprecedented climate challenges, population growth, and shrinking natural resources, LGBG's mission—connecting people to plants by inspiring communities to explore and conserve nature—remains paramount. LewisGinter.org 🌿

Adjacent to historic Bloemendaal House, the Grace Arents Garden is an elegant Victorian-style garden with year-round beauty. Lewis Ginter's niece, Grace Arents, first tended the garden here in the early 1900s. The Garden Club of Virginia restored the garden in 1990, based on its original early-1900s design.



LGBG BY THE NUMBERS

450,000	Guests in a typical year
17,000	School children in a typical year
14,000	Household memberships
70	Staff members
~700	Volunteers
82	Total acreage
~50	Acreage under cultivation
15	Themed gardens
11	Major buildings
5,700	Unique taxa of plants





Cultivating Place

A gardening podcast worth a listen.

Gardens are more than just collections of plants; they are dynamic spaces where gardening intersects with broader issues and drives positive change. "Cultivating Place: Conversations on Natural History and the Human Impulse to Garden" is a weekly public radio program and podcast that delves into the deeper meaning of gardening. Through engaging discussions with growers, gardeners, naturalists, scientists, artists, and thinkers, "Cultivating Place," hosted by gardener, garden writer, and gardening educator and advocate Jennifer Jewell, explores how gardens contribute to our natural and cultural understanding. These conversations highlight how gardens support the environments we care for, nourish our bodies, and uplift our spirits, ultimately making a positive impact on the world. Tune in and discover how gardening can change the world for the better. New episodes drop weekly every Thursday. Recent episodes include "Something in the Woods Loves You," with Jarrod Anderson, "The Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum," with Shaun Spencer-Hester, and "The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year," with Margaret Renkl. Take a listen on your favorite podcast host, including Spotify and Apple.



Award Nominations Deadlines

MARCH 1, 2025

**Common Wealth Award
de Lacy Gray Memorial
Medal for Conservation**

**Horticulture Award
of Merit**

JUNE 1, 2025

**Conservation
Educator Award**

**Dugdale Award for
Meritorious Achievement
in Conservation**

**The Helen and Tayloe
Murphy Conservation
Leadership in
Government Award**

*For award descriptions, nomination
details and forms, past recipients,
and additional information,
visit GCVirginia.org*

FOCUS: Sugar Maple

(*Acer saccharum*)

From its delicious syrup to its kaleidoscopic fall color, consider the majestic sugar maple.

History

Sugar maple has been valued for syrup production since the first European settlers observed indigenous people tapping trees in the 1600s. Maple syrup continues to be an important industry and hobby in Maine and eastern Canada. The wood of sugar maple is used in cabinetry, general construction, flooring and furniture as well as woodenware and in the production of baseball bats. The high density of the wood makes it a popular fuel for home heating. Sugar maple is a popular ornamental tree because of its large size at maturity, spreading form, and brilliant autumn foliage.

Culture

- Typically grows in moist, well-drained soils with pH of 5.5 to 7.3.
- Can survive in many soil types and conditions, but grows best in soils rich with organic matter.
- Shade tolerant, but grows well in full sun.

Concerns

- Prone to girdling roots when planted too deep or over-mulched.
- Structural defects due to co-dominant stems can develop if not corrected when trees are young.
- Sensitive to drought and will show symptoms of leaf scorch.
- Very sensitive to high levels of sodium in the soil, typically from application of road salt.



Photo by Kristine Paulus, Wikimedia Commons.

Bartlett Management Practices

- Typically requires structural pruning when young to produce a strong, central leader, or cabling if multiple leaders develop.
- Root collars should always be exposed. 🌿

—The pros at Bartlett Tree Experts, Bartlett.com

GREEN ARROW SOCIETY

The GCV's Green Arrow Society encompasses loyal members and friends who support the GCV's future with planned gifts. Much like the iconic green arrows that point the way along Historic Garden Week tour routes, members of the Green Arrow Society help point the way to a bright and sustainable future for the GCV. We are grateful to the members for their support.

Kathryn Angus	Janet Jackson Dennis+	Mary "Rennie" McDaniel
Margaret Bemiss+	Clarkie and Tom Eppes	Tricia McDaniel
Barbara Backus	Ann Gordon Evans	Katherine T. Mears+
Anne Beals	Mary Carter Frackelton	Helen Turner Murphy+
Samantha Bishop	Jean E. R. Gilpin	Nina Mustard
Gail Braxton	Robert Henkel	Mary Jane O'Neill
Peggy Talman Brockenbrough	Kelly Johnson	Betsy Sale
Missy Buckingham	Jennifer Kelley	Lisa Soltis
Sally Guy Brown	AnnHall Kendall	Katie Spencer
Deedy Bumgardner	Meg Laughon	Kitty Lee Waffle
Beverly and Wirt Christian, Jr.+	Patricia Reid Webb Leggett+	Wendy Walker
Jeanette Cadwallender	Debbie Lewis	Susan Ware
Allison Clock	Ingrid Hinckley Lindsay	Cabell West
Lee Stuart Cochran+	Rebecca Mahon	Susan B. Wight
Mary Hart Darden	Mary Wynn Richmond McDaniel	Mina W. Wood

For information on the Green Arrow Society, contact the GCV Development Committee at Development@GCVirginia.org



+ deceased



Photo by Cephas, Wikimedia Commons.

What's the BUZZZZZZZZZZ?

The Scoop on Bee Cities

How many bee species do you think call the U.S. home? The number might surprise you, and if you guessed 3,600 you're right. Native pollinators, including bumblebees, leafcutter bees, sweat bees, mason bees, longhorn bees, and mining bees are particularly important because they evolved in tandem with native plants. In many cases, they are the most effective pollinators—and in a few cases, the only pollinators.

Pollinators are keystone species in essentially every terrestrial ecosystem on earth, assisting in plant reproduction and supporting other species of wildlife. Pollinators touch our lives in numerous ways each day, including being responsible for approximately one third of the food and drink we consume. The value of crop pollination has been estimated between \$18 and \$27 billion annually in the U.S.

Research has shown significant declines in native pollinator population sizes and ranges globally. In fact, up to 40 percent of pollinator species on earth may be at risk of extinction in the coming years as a result of habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change.

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 habitat that is rich in a variety of native plants, provides nest sites, and is protected from pesticides. As the name suggests, the focus of Bee City USA is bees, and primarily our native species.

The steps that affiliates take to conserve our native bees, including creating safe habitats and hosting community events, will also help other pollinators including butterflies and moths as well as the non-native honeybee. One of

the most impactful actions any affiliate can take is to encourage others to think beyond the honeybee and recognize the true diversity of bees that sustain our communities.

For more information on how you can encourage your city, county, town, or local university to become an official Bee City, visit BeeCityUSA.org or the XercesSociety.org

—Bee City USA & The Xerces Society



Buzzing bee. Photo by NIL-foto, Pixabay.



BEE CITIES BY THE NUMBERS

- 222 Number of Bee City USA Affiliates
- 419 Total Number of Bee City & Campus Affiliates
- 47 Number of Bee City States, plus DC and Puerto Rico
- 21 Total number of Bee City Affiliates in Virginia
- 45 Total number of Bee City Affiliates in North Carolina (just sayin')



BEE CITY STORY The Buzz About Phyllis Stiles

In the early 2000s, Asheville native Phyllis Stiles became increasingly alarmed as she noticed a profound pollinator decline in the area she called home. A dozen years later, she threw herself into creating a program to help communities come together to help reverse pollinator declines by engaging as many communities as possible in pollinator conservation. Her passion was profound as she enthusiastically gave presentations and spread awareness about pollinators and the program she had started. Bee City was officially launched, and in 2014 the program gained its second affiliate when Talent, Ore., applied.

As Bee City USA spread across the country, growing in affiliates and expanding to include Bee City Campus USA, more and more communities began to learn about pollinator declines and became energized to participate in conserving these essential species.

With the program's expansion, Phyllis was keen to seek a home for Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA. She knew that it needed to be connected to an organization that could support them and continue to expand their reach and impact.

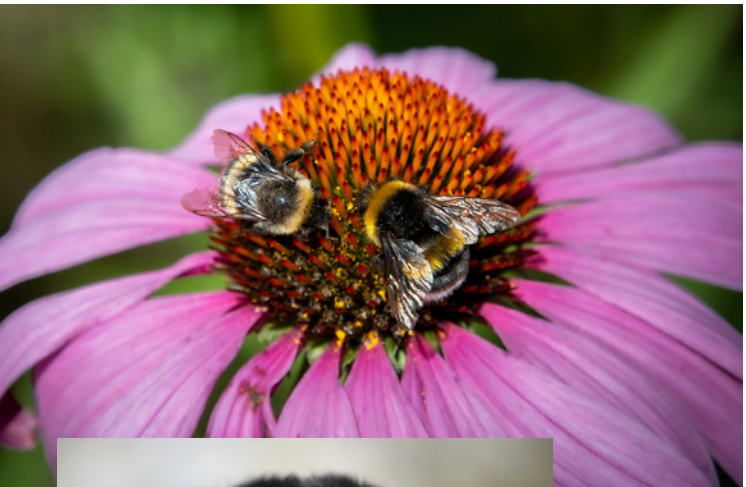
In 2018, the programs became initiatives of The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Established in 1971, Xerces is at the forefront of invertebrate protection, harnessing the knowledge of scientists and enthusiasm of citizens to implement conservation programs worldwide. Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA align with Xerces' strategy of using advocacy, education, and applied research to promote invertebrate conservation.



Photo by Joye Ardyn Durham, courtesy of The Laurel of Asheville.

VIRGINIA'S BEE CITY AND CAMPUS INITIATIVES

- Ashland
- Fauquier County
- Fredericksburg
- Gloucester County
- Hampton
- Manassas
- Martinsville
- Newport News
- Richmond
- Roanoke
- Scottsville
- Vienna
- Virginia Beach
- Winchester
- Woodstock
- University of Richmond
- Virginia Tech
- Randolph College
- University of Virginia
- James Madison University
- Virginia Western Community College



LEFT: Macro bumblebee. Photo by Claudia Wollesen, Pixabay.

ABOVE: Bee pollinating a purple coneflower. Photo by dendoktoor, Pixabay.



RIGHT: Leafcutter bee. Photo by JRxpo (CC BY-SA 2.0), Florida Wildflower Foundation.



Light up our Future

SUPPORT THE GCV ANNUAL FUND



Native maples reflect the majesty of our commonwealth. Their early blooms are an important resource for pollinators, and their showy autumn leaves herald the splendor of fall. The maple is also believed to represent **strength, endurance, wisdom, and prosperity**. Our members light up GCV like the mighty red maple lights up the cloudy skies of fall. As we work together to beautify historic properties, our communities, and our own homes, we are building the way forward to move the Garden Club of Virginia into a successful new century!

PLEASE MAKE YOUR GIFT TO THE ANNUAL FUND
AT GCVIRGINIA.ORG

Send a Note

RESTORATION COMMITTEE NOTE CARDS MAKE A LOVELY GESTURE

Since 1929, the GCV has preserved and restored more than 50 public historic landscapes and gardens throughout Virginia. This important work is possible due to the efforts of GCV members who produce Historic Garden Week tours in their communities.

This first set in a series represents a selection of the GCV's restoration sites through photos taken by GCV members and friends. The photos have been digitally converted to a lovely watercolor effect.

\$20 per set of 10 (\$3 shipping).

Available on the GCV website, at the Kent-Valentine House, and at select GCV events. Cards and gift-ready packaging are environmentally friendly.

—Courtesy of the GCV Restoration Committee



GCV Honorary Members & Partners

Enhancing the GCV Mission

Honorary members are individuals who do not carry membership in a local club, but whose accomplishments and contributions have served to enhance the mission and support the values of the Garden Club of Virginia in a notable way. Honorary members are nominated and endorsed by GCV member clubs and standing committees, and no more than one honorary membership is granted in a single calendar year. Clubs are encouraged to consider individuals for GCV Honorary Membership.

- Mr. H. Furlong Baldwin, Cheriton
- Mr. Gordon W. Chappell, Williamsburg
- Ms. Peggy Cornett, Charlottesville
- Mr. Peter J. Hatch, Charlottesville
- Ms. Nancy Ross Hugo, Howardsville
- Mr. Calder Loth, Richmond
- Mr. Charles G. McDaniel, Fredericksburg
- Mr. J. Dean Norton, Mount Vernon
- Mr. William D. Rieley, Charlottesville
- Mr. Frank Robinson, Richmond
- Ms. Molly Ward, Hampton

Partnerships & Memberships

Over the years, the Garden Club of Virginia has joined forces with a select group of organizations to help broaden our impact and amplify our mission. GCV is proud to be a partner with, or member of, the following organizations:

- American Daffodil Society
- Bartlett Tree Experts
- Hilldrup Moving and Storage
- Historic Richmond
- Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects
- North American Lily Society
- Oak Spring Garden Foundation
- Virginia Conservation Network
- Virginia Green Travel Alliance

Where & What?

What's the significance of this building? Charles Gillette, who practiced landscape architecture in the Upper South, is known for establishing a regional style of landscape design known as the "Virginia Garden" and the creation of grounds supporting Colonial Revival architecture, particularly in Richmond. He was active from about 1915 into the '60s and is associated with the restoration and re-creation of historic gardens including those at Kenmore, Agecroft, and the Virginia House.

This Federal townhouse, at 105 East Cary Street in Richmond, was Gillette's office, which was located on its second floor. The building still functions as an office building.



Charles Gillette Garden at "York Hall," Captain George Preston Blow house, Route 1005 and Main Street, Yorktown, York County, Virginia. Guest house in Memory Garden. Johnston, Frances Benjamin, 1864-1952, photographer. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



66TH ANNUAL
CONSERVATION
FORUM

Restoring our Ecological Foundation:
HOW TO SAVE EARTH'S ESSENTIAL BIRDS & INSECTS

By Diane Thomas, Conservation & Beautification Chairman, The Garden Club of Alexandria

In early November, GCV members and friends were treated to unparalleled hospitality in Martinsville for the 66th Annual Conservation Forum. Festivities began on Wednesday evening with delightful tours and dinner in the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Everyone enjoyed this impressive facility, the thoughtful work of its director, Dr. Joe Keiper, delicious local barbecue, and joyful fellowship. Thursday morning participants reconvened at the New College Institute to hear from

an impressive group of speakers on the topic of *Restoring our Ecological Foundation: How to Save Earth's Essential Birds & Insects*.

The Forum began by recognizing and awarding the GCV Conservation Educator Award to Robin Blake and the Dugdale Award to Bruce and Susan Jones and Marjorie Mayfield Johnson. The first Helen and Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award was presented to the City of Staunton. This inaugural presentation was made all the more memorable by the presence of Anne Brumley, Helen and Tayloe Murphy's daughter.

Fortified by the inspiration from our award recipients, the educational portion of the Forum began with a presentation by Heather Holm, noted author and expert on attracting bees and beneficial insects with native plants. Heather delighted the audience with many tips for attracting and appreciating the beneficial insects in our gardens as well as fascinating stories of symbiotic relationships in the natural world. Participants were particularly inspired to look at the wasps in their gardens with an expanded, more positive view.

Next, Dr. Kari Benson from the University of Lynchburg lead an informative and inspiring survey

This year's forum featured a number of inspirational speakers. Among other speakers, Dr. John Styrsky, from the University of Lynchburg, gave us an update on the "Insect Apocalypse" and how we can act locally to support our needed insect populations.



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

66TH ANNUAL
CONSERVATION
FORUM

of the impact light pollution has on absolutely everything and easy changes we can make to enjoy the multitude of benefits from “dark skies.” Dr. John Styrsky, also from the University of Lynchburg, gave us an update on the “Insect Apocalypse” and how we can act locally to support our needed insect populations. Finally, Bill Portlock, an acclaimed naturalist, educator, conservation photographer, and 2016 winner of the GCV Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation shared his magnificent photographs of birds along with the story of his motivation and determination to sustain their habitats and population levels.

Between sessions, participants found further inspiration at tables manned by Blue Ridge Conservation and Bee Cities. Special thanks goes to long time Conservation Forum sponsor, Pinnacle Associates. George McVey from Pinnacle shared the story of the Garden Club of Virginia’s work to protect the view sheds in Goshen Pass and continued efforts to minimize the impact of large power lines within that nature preserve. Additional thanks to Debbie Lewis for organizing the dinner at Virginia Museum of Natural History, The Martinsville Garden Club and The Garden Study Club for spoiling participants with homemade desserts Wednesday night and breakfast treats during the forum on Thursday, and everyone who made the trip to Martinsville. 🌿

— By Diane Thomas,
Conservation & Beautification
Committee Chairman



Speaker Bill Portlock, an acclaimed naturalist, educator, conservation photographer, and 2016 winner of the GCV Dugdale Award for Meritorious Service in Conservation shared his magnificent photographs of birds along with the story of his motivation and determination to sustain their habitats and population levels.

Photo here and below courtesy of Bill Portlock





Heather Holm

Acclaimed Pollinator Conservationist & Native Plant Champion was Featured Speaker at GCV's Conservation Forum



Heather Holm was the keynote speaker for the GCV's 66th annual Conservation Forum held in November in Martinsville. This dynamic pollinator conservationist and native plant champion is an award-winning author of four books: *Pollinators of Native Plants* (2014), *Bees* (2017), *Wasps* (2021), and *Common Native Bees of the Eastern United States* (2022). In addition, her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and more. An accomplished photographer, her pollinator photos are frequently showcased in print and electronic publications.

Holm's presentation at the Conservation Forum focused on the relationship and interactions between native pollinators and native plants, as well as the natural history and biology of native bees

and predatory wasps. She is considered a leading expert in these fields.

Holm is a National Honorary Director of Wild Ones a nationwide organization that promotes native landscapes through education, advocacy, and collaborative action. There are 92 Wild Ones chapters in 36 U.S. states; four are in Virginia: NoVa, Richmond, Roanoke, and Shenandoah Valley. She also serves on the boards of other nonprofits, including Friends of Cullen Nature Preserve and Bird Sanctuary and Friends of Minnetonka Parks.

In her spare time, Holm is an active community supporter, writing grants, and coordinating and participating in volunteer ecological landscape restoration projects. The latest is a 13-acre oak savanna restoration that will

provide thriving habitats for pollinators, birds, mammals, and passive, nature-based opportunities for people. Currently in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest, oak savannas—landscapes characterized by widely spaced oak trees and a prairie-like ground layer vegetation—are an extremely rare plant community with less than 0.5% remaining. Globally, oak savannas in northern latitudes (temperate zone) are one of the world's most endangered ecosystems.

A native of Canada, Holms grew up on her family's small farm north of Toronto where she spent her childhood exploring the nearby woods and meadows. Armed with degrees in horticulture and entomology, she landed in Maryland where she worked as a web developer and designer and as a city horticulturist.



After marrying her husband, a Wisconsin native, the pair returned to his Midwestern roots, buying a small plot in Minnetonka, a suburb about 10 miles west of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul. There, Holm embarked on a landscape overhaul, after which only about 10 percent of the lawn was left on their 3/4-acre property. Features include a restored woodland and two rain gardens that filter runoff from the house and driveway, plus a prairie in a sun-filled section. Naturally, mostly native plants fill the landscape.

PollinatorsNativePlants.com

— By Madeline Mayhood

Top: Heather Holm in action.

Above: *Augochlorella* (female), aka metallic green sweat bee. Photo by Heather Holm.

Left: A pollen-laden female *Andrena distans* on a geranium (*G. maculatum*). This species of miner bee is found throughout the U.S. Photo by Heather Holm.

Conservation Educator Award

The GCV announced that Robin Blake, a middle school science teacher at Chesapeake Academy in Irvington, has been named the recipient of the 2024 Conservation Educator Award. This award recognizes Blake’s exceptional dedication to environmental education and conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay region. Blake was nominated by The Garden Club of The Northern Neck.

Nearly a decade ago, Blake introduced oyster gardening into her curriculum, aiming to engage her students in practical conservation efforts for the Chesapeake Bay. What began as a modest oyster garden in Irvington has grown to include two areas of Carter’s Creek, a tributary of the Rappahannock River. Blake and her seventh-grade students meticulously raise oysters from infancy to adulthood, eventually planting them on a Virginia sanctuary reef to aid in the restoration of the wild oyster population. The students regularly test water quality, gaining practical insights into the health of their local ecosystem.



Robin Blake

Blake’s commitment to experiential learning is further exemplified through the Tybee Island Field Study, an annual program for her 8th-grade students. Each student specializes in a specific area of marine biology, becoming an expert and presenting their

findings to peers, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for marine science. Beyond her work with oyster gardening, Blake has been instrumental in creating an outdoor classroom, nature trail, native species garden, and a designated wildlife sanctuary on the Chesapeake Academy campus. These initiatives provide educational benefits for all students, from Pre-K through eighth grade.

In 2021 Blake was named Educator of the Year by the Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR), a nonprofit organization focused on protecting the Rappahannock River and its tributaries. Her advocacy has helped FOR connect with the local community, including organizing a tree giveaway in Irvington.

Trip Cogburn, former head of school at Chesapeake Academy, praises Blake as a worthy candidate for the award, citing her marine science place-based education approach. Blake’s work, which involves collaboration with community experts and practical learning applications, benefits both Chesapeake Academy students and the broader community. Graduates often reflect on these experiences as being foundational to their understanding of the complex issues facing the Chesapeake Bay and its watersheds.

Robin Blake’s passion for conservation and her ability to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards align perfectly with the mission of the GCV. The Garden Club of Virginia is proud to recognize her with the 2024 Conservation Educator Award.

—Marie Thomas, The Augusta Garden Club



Oyster Gardening
Helping students understand the health of their local ecosystem



Conservation Leadership in Government Award

The Garden Club of Virginia is proud to announce that the inaugural recipient of the Helen and Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award for 2024 is the City of Staunton. This prestigious award recognizes Staunton’s exceptional leadership and dedication to conservation and the wise development of natural resources within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The City of Staunton’s efforts reflect the core values of the Garden Club of Virginia’s conservation mission.

Like many Virginia cities, Staunton faces significant challenges related to stormwater management. Increased development has led to more impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, driveways, roads, sidewalks, and parking lots. Runoff from these areas is often pollutant-laden and can flow rapidly, causing damage to local streams and tributaries, flooding properties and businesses, and degrading water quality. To combat these issues, Staunton’s Environmental Programs Division has implemented a comprehensive Stormwater Management Program aimed at protecting water quality within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The City of Staunton’s Stormwater Management Program is a citywide initiative that involves collaboration across all city departments. A key initiative demonstrating Staunton’s conservation leadership is the Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration Project, which targets the restoration of Peyton Creek—a spring-fed stream flowing through the city’s central park. Like many urban streams, Peyton Creek has been



Staunton’s Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration
Protecting Water Quality within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

adversely affected by stormwater runoff, leading to significant erosion and sedimentation that harm the local ecosystem.

The Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration Project addresses these issues by repairing the damaged channels of Peyton Creek and enhancing the park’s ecological health. This project showcases visionary leadership and a commitment to environmental stewardship. Stream bank stabilization will reduce erosion and prevent sediment from entering the water. Water quality improvement will enhance aquatic habitats and overall water quality.

“Daylighting” parts of the stream to slow water flow during heavy rains will reduce flood risks. Creating deeper pools and ponds for spawning areas and planting native vegetation will enhance habitat. Protecting historical trees



will maintain the park’s cultural and ecological value.

The Garden Club of Virginia is honored to recognize the City of Staunton with the Helen and Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award for 2024. Staunton’s commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement sets a high standard for other municipalities to follow, ensuring a healthier and more resilient natural environment for future generations.

—Marie Thomas, The Augusta Garden Club

Dugdale Conservation Award

Prestigious GCV Conservation Award goes to **Marjorie Mayfield Jackson** and **Jones Nature Preserve**

In 1991, Marjorie Mayfield Jackson experienced a pivotal moment observing wildlife by her home on the Elizabeth River's Scott's Creek in Portsmouth. After reading a disheartening newspaper article declaring the Elizabeth River dead, she refused to accept this grim fate, and embarked on a mission to revive the river. She left her job as a journalist and dedicated herself to this cause, working tirelessly to gather support from government, business, and community leaders.

In 1993, Jackson formally established the Elizabeth River Project (ERP) and became its executive director. Under her leadership, ERP forged partnerships with private citizens, businesses, organizations, and governments to rejuvenate the Elizabeth River and its branches. Over the past 31 years, her efforts have led to remarkable improvements in water quality and biodiversity. Today, the river teems with fish, shrimp, seahorses, oysters, and river otters, symbolizing the success of this monumental environmental effort.

The Elizabeth River Garden Club (ERGC) has been a steadfast supporter of ERP, beginning with a generous donation in 2002 during their 75th anniversary celebration. Jackson's relentless dedication and ability to inspire community collaboration have made her a deserving recipient of the Dugdale Award.

She was nominated by The Elizabeth River Garden Club and seconded by The Garden Club of Norfolk and Harborfront Garden Club.

—Marie Thomas, The Augusta Garden Club

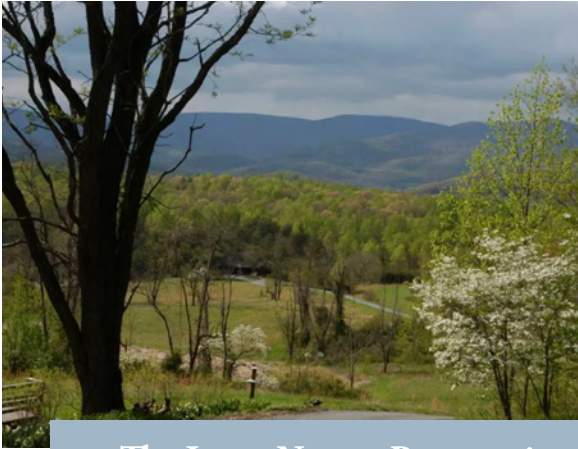


Marjorie Mayfield Jackson
Reviving the Elizabeth River



Judy Perry of the Elizabeth River Garden Club and Susan Smith, director of development of the Elizabeth River Project, accepting the Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation on behalf of Marjorie Mayfield Jackson.

The Garden Club of Virginia is proud to announce the 2024 recipients of the Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Service in Conservation: Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, Executive Director of the Elizabeth River Project, and the Jones Nature Preserve, founded by Bruce and Susan Jones. These two recipients have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to conservation and ecological restoration, making significant impacts in their respective communities and beyond.



The Jones Nature Preserve in Rappahannock County
A Haven for Biodiversity



Bruce and Susan Jones of the Jones Nature Preserve, a 2024 recipient of the Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Service in Conservation.

Bruce and Susan Jones established the Jones Nature Preserve in 1983, purchasing 75 acres of land in Rappahannock County, Virginia. Over four decades, the preserve has expanded to 175 acres, transforming former cattle pastures and wetlands into a thriving nature preserve featuring diverse habitats, including grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands. Native grasses, flowers, trees, and shrubs have been planted to create a vibrant ecosystem that supports a wide variety of wildlife, including birds, pollinators, reptiles, and amphibians.

The preserve is protected by an eight-foot deer fence, safeguarding gardens and woodland ephemerals. Additional efforts spearheaded by the Joneses have included the installation of nest boxes for birds, the creation of wetland ponds for reptiles and amphibians, and then management of invasive species. They implemented riparian borders along wetlands and established native meadows. They have also supported numerous conservation initiatives, such as the reprinting of *The Virginia Naturalist*, the Flora of Virginia project, and the relocation of pink lady slippers to their preserve.

Jones Nature Preserve hosts educational walks and bird-watching events, inviting organizations and community members to learn about and appreciate nature. The preserve is an outstanding example of best practices for restoring native habitats and fostering environmental education and makes the preserve an exemplary recipient of the Dugdale Award.

Jones Nature Preserve was nominated by Beth DeBergh, member of Garden Club of Warren County, and Carol Hunter, member of Albemarle Garden Club. A number of notable conservationists, environmentalists, and land stewards wrote letters of support highlighting the Joneses' unwavering commitment to conservation and their role in inspiring others to undertake similar efforts. They include Douglas W. Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*; Neil Diboll, president of Prairie Nursery; Chris Miller, president of the Piedmont Environmental Council; Amy Johnson, Ph.D., conservation scientist and director of Smithsonian's Virginia Working Landscapes; Rick Kohler, president of the Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection; Ian Topolsky of *eBird—the Virginia Breeding Atlas*; Reverend Arthur Miller Hunter of Charlottesville; and C. Colston Burrell, garden designer, author, and lecturer.

—Marie Thomas, The Augusta Garden Club

GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

DIGITAL ARCHIVE PROJECT UPDATE

A Tool for Procuring Tour Properties

By Virginia Gillock, HGW Chairman 2024-2026, The Augusta Garden Club, &
Bre Vassar, HGW State Committee, Roanoke Valley Garden Club

Since the start of Historic Garden Week (HGW) in 1929, it is estimated that at least 4,000 exceptional private properties have participated in tours across the state. Unfortunately, most tours did not keep records of the featured properties, and over the years, chairmen have lamented that a list would be helpful as they planned their upcoming tours.

With this goal in mind, the HGW Digital Archive Project was born. The Spring 2024 *Journal* included an article about this project and an interview with an intern from Hollins University, who worked full-time on the project during January. We wanted to update you on the progress and give instructions on how to access both the database and the archive of *HGW Guidebooks* that exist digitally.

The database is a simple Google Sheets (Excel in the Cloud)

file-sharing method with tabs for each HGW tour. While some tours shared their own curated lists from over the years to help in the creation of the master database, most of the information was gleaned from volunteer hours spent copying data into new spreadsheets using the past issues of *Guidebooks* as reference. To date, all tours have data from their 2012-2024 tours available in the database.

Using the database as an index to deeper research in the corresponding *Guidebooks*, tour chairmen can find more details like whether a property featured interiors or gardens that year or if the property had been previously featured. The

long-term goal is to have all *Guidebooks*, going back to the very first printed list in 1929, scanned and available online for viewing.

Currently, the most recent *Guidebooks* are available online to the procurement teams—the years 2011–2024. Once the next batch of scanning is complete, those *Guidebooks*, from 1990–2010, will be uploaded, and GCV members will have access to 34 years' worth of tour information. Once the 2025 *Guidebook* is added in February, clubs and procurement committees will have access to 35 years of information.

The Historic Garden Week State Committee and HGW staff have long recognized that procuring properties is vital to the success of every HGW tour. We are committed to providing best practices and the tools needed to help streamline and assist in this very important process.

The HGW Digital Archive Project is a shining example of how combining archival material with the digital tools available currently can make a difference to a tour chair or procurement committee in the throes of procuring properties for the next tour cycle. In addition, the HGW committee offered a Zoom training session focusing on this important aspect of Historic Garden Week, producing its first "Procurement 101" session in 2023.

Multiple speakers presented topics including "Best Practices: The Fundamentals of Success," "KISS: Keep It Simple and Sustainable," "Transportation: Why It's So Important," "The Homeowner's Letter of Understanding," and the "HGW Digital Database." Recently, "Procurement 101" was presented again by members of



By using the database tour chairmen can find more details like whether a property featured interiors or gardens that year or if the property had been previously featured. The long-term goal is to have all Guidebooks, going back to the very first printed list in 1929, scanned and available online for viewing.

the HGW committee and was geared towards clubs working on procuring properties for HGW 2026 and 2027.

This recording can be found on GCVirginia.org under Historic Garden Week Tour Resources in the Procurement section. In addition, the Insider's Guide provides best practices on everything a tour chair and a procurement committee need for the procurement process. This also is available to all GCV members via the member section of the website.

We recognize that a procurement "packet" would be helpful when speaking with prospective homeowners. Our suggestions of what to put in an initial packet to a prospective homeowner include a copy of the previous year's *Guidebook* and local brochure, the Restoration Committee's brochure, "The Restored Historic Gardens of Virginia," a timeline of what the homeowner might expect during the year leading up to their tour, and the Letter of Understanding, a requirement

for homeowners starting with HGW 2025 (it was piloted during HGW 2024).

Digital copies of these suggestions are available on GCVirginia.org in the Member Resources section under Historic Garden Week. We are working hard to produce a physical package that we hope to distribute at the spring HGW region meetings in March, with the goal of providing consistent materials to tour teams across the state.

The HGW Chairman, State Committee, and HGW staff are available to help with the Procurement process. Please reach out with any questions. Most importantly, enjoy putting together a tour.

The procurement process is not always easy, and you may have setbacks, but the result culminates in a beautiful tour that brings joy to over 24,000 visitors from all over the globe. The Garden Club of Virginia thanks you! 🌿

Please contact the HGW Digital Archive team with any questions or suggestions: info@vagardenweek.org.

HOW TO ACCESS HGW DIGITAL ARCHIVES

The database (GoogleSheet) of past properties for all tours is easily accessible to all GCV members.

As its name suggests, all HGW tours are included in the Google Sheet named "HGW Properties Database.all.tours." While some tours have kept meticulous files over the years with their list of properties on their past tours, others have little information. However, all tours currently have data for the years 2012–2024 listed.

TO ACCESS ALL PROPERTIES FILE:

- The file can only be accessed by GCV members once they have signed into member resources with their password on GCVirginia.org.
- After signing into the website's "Member Resources" section, go to the Historic Garden Week menu.
- Choose "Tour Resources" to go to the shared resources files.
- There you will find HGW Properties Database.all.tours.xlsx.

FOR TOURS WISHING TO UPDATE THEIR LIST:

- All tours are listed at the bottom of the Google Sheet.
- Find your tour's tab.
- Add any new information in the corresponding fields.
- No need to "save" changes to the document. Google Sheets auto-saves changes in real time.

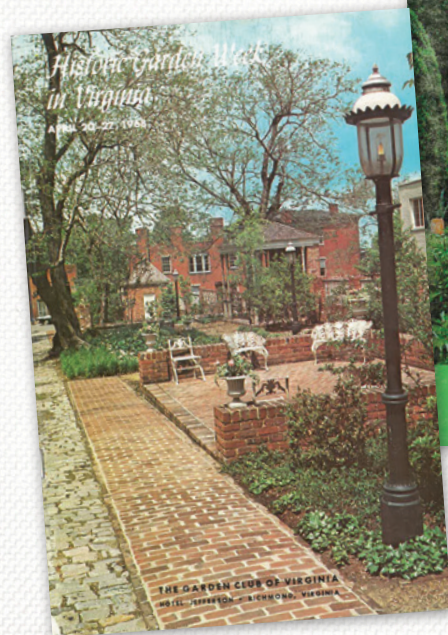
TO DOWNLOAD AND PRINT YOUR TOUR'S DATA:

- Mac and PC users: go to FILE (top left of screen)
- Choose DOWNLOAD and choose your format (PDF works well)
- Find the document in your computer's DOWNLOAD folder.

Currently, the digital archive of HGW Guidebooks contains Guidebooks 2012-2024. The database of past HGW Guidebooks is easily accessible by any GCV website viewer:

TO ACCESS PAST GUIDEBOOKS (PDF):

- The digital archive of HGW Guidebooks is accessible to anyone who is on the GCV website. It does not need a password.
- Go to the Historic Garden Week menu.
- Choose "Tour Guidebook"
- There you will find the Guidebook Archives link to the 2024-2012 guidebooks. As more are digitized and saved as PDF documents, they will be uploaded to this location.



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING

New era ushers in new procurement procedure for HGW

by Virginia Gillock, HGW State Chairman, and Karen Ellsworth, HGW Director

You might have heard the term LOU, an acronym for “Letter of Understanding,” or you might have no idea what this means. The “Letter of Understanding” was designed to be a single source of guidelines and requirements for homeowners participating in Historic Garden Week, and it is a project the HGW committee has been working on for nearly three years.

The world has changed a lot since 1929, when Historic Garden Week offered tickets for 50 cents per garden, opened 72 properties, and was born as the nation’s only statewide house and garden tour. After 92 years of a “handshake” agreement between the Garden Club of Virginia and homeowners participating in its signature event, leadership at the Garden Club of Virginia realized our impeccable history of avoiding legal issues could be in jeopardy.

At their July 2022 meeting, GCV’s Board of Directors decided it would be “prudent to formalize our partnerships with homeowners to ensure that they have reviewed and intend to abide by our guidelines.” The idea of a written agreement between GCV and homeowners participating in its signature event, Historic Garden Week, is not new and has been recommended by its insurance advisors for years.

The goal was to set guidelines and expectations for all 29 tours in writing to protect the GCV, the hosting clubs, and the homeowners who make the event possible. Approaching homeowners to open their private homes and gardens to the public often starts two years or more before the tours occur. Considering the time and other resources involved with all parties,



Photo courtesy of The Garden Club of Alexandria

it made sense to formalize this agreement and ensure that the document was consistent for all tours statewide.

During the second half of 2022, the HGW State Committee developed an initial Letter of Understanding based on the Tour Guidelines that appear at the front of every *Guidebook*, the insurance information shared with tour chairs and homeowners in previous years, and guidelines regarding ADA rules and regulations that date to 2016. This Pilot was reviewed by GCV’s attorney and GCV’s insurance advisors and approved by GCV’s Board.

The LOU was presented by Andrea Butler, GCV’s executive director, at Boot Camp in June of 2023. Additionally, the initial LOU was included in the Insider’s Guide distributed at this important Historic Garden Week kick-off meeting attended by incoming chairmen and co-chairmen, as well as club presidents. The Letter of Understanding was presented again at the Fall Region meetings, which took place in September of 2023.

The Letter of Understanding was part of HGW’s Procurement Zoom, led by Virginia Gillock, then co-chairman of HGW, in October 2023. This was geared towards HGW 2025 teams so that procurement teams would have advance notice of this new tool. The committee opted for a non-compulsory pilot program for HGW 2024, with participation and signatures required for HGW 2025.

Approximately a half dozen tours successfully implemented the LOU supporting HGW 2024, and all 120 HGW 2025 homeowners signed it. The LOU is practical and comprises best practices for the homeowners participating in HGW each spring so that expectations are clear on both sides.

GCV suggests that the LOU be presented and reviewed in person with homeowners at the beginning of the procurement process. The deadline for submitting the Letter of Understanding in support of HGW 2025 was Sept. 30, and we expect a similar deadline for HGW 2026. HGW implemented DocuSign to facilitate this process, which worked very well.

As part of its efforts to educate GCV members and, most importantly, Historic Garden Week tour teams about this important new resource, the LOU was again part of the HGW Fall Region meetings, which took place in September, as well as the Procurement Zoom, which took place in October. If you have any questions or comments regarding this topic, please contact Virginia Gillock, state Chairman, at statechairman@VAGardenWeek.org.



Photo courtesy of Ben Greenberg



Photo courtesy of Ben Greenberg



Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, 1920s Archives of American Gardens, Garden Club of America Collection



Photo courtesy of Georgiana Watt and Missy Jones



Photo courtesy of Lockwood McLaughlin



Right: Laura Wheelwright (left), The James River Garden Club, GCV President 1922-24 and 1938-40
Above: Photo courtesy of Ben Greenberg



THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD

Invasive Plant Task Force Tackles an Alien Invasion

BY ANNA AQUINO,
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECT,
INVASIVE PLANT
TASK FORCE
MEMBER, BOXWOOD
GARDEN CLUB

No board, no bylaws, no *Robert's Rules of Order*. Instead, it's passion and hope that guide the James River Park System's Invasive Plant Task Force.

Its origin story is part inevitable, part luck. In most places, be it Richmond or Rochester, a community of naturalists is at the ready, driven to clean up at different spots throughout communities. In Richmond's James River Park, these guerilla gardeners and native naturalists eventually found each other, establishing a task force with a common goal.

Guerilla Gardeners

Catherine Farmer's happy place has always been Belle Isle. Despite the many "Private Property" and "Keep Out" signs, she'd bicycle onto the island to explore and botanize. Farmer, now a Richmond Tree Steward, organized a pilot study on a small portion of the 54-acre island to tackle the monstrous evergreen shrubs that were overtaking the island. Reaching 30 feet, Chinese privet, *Ligustrum sinense* (privet derived from the Latin *privatus*, think privy) was introduced as a hedging plant in the early 1800s. It's now exceeded kudzu, a.k.a. "the vine that ate the south," in the acreage it occupies throughout 12 southern states.

In the meantime, Laura Greenleaf frequented Pony Pasture on the James near her home in Stratford Hills. She was consumed with battling the evergreen groundcover *Euonymus fortunei*, a garden escapee with a stranglehold along the ground and up the trees.

And there was Anne Wright, VCU Life Sciences Professor, who was avidly removing invasives from her beloved Buttermilk Trail, known for its magnificent oak and beech trees.



Invasive species choke out natives. Photos courtesy of Friends of James River Parks.



Above: *Hedera helix*, English ivy, is a notorious invasive. Photo by Christian Ferrer, Wikimedia Commons.

Coming Together

By 2015 these guerilla gardeners knew about one another's work. They gathered at Greenleaf's house, along with Louise Seals, head of Richmond Tree Stewards, and Emily Gianfortoni, a Master Naturalist. Greenleaf suggested organizing a task force, a concept Nathan Burrell, who at the time was superintendent James River Parks, gratefully embraced. Burrell gave them access to Park HQ as a meeting space, and with word spreading, the Task Force (TF) attracted the attention of members from most of the city's key environmental agencies and nonprofits.

In collaboration with JRP, Burrell, and VHB, an environmental engineering firm, the TF participated in a project that mapped invasives. Twenty-nine map inventories were produced, as well as prescriptions for best-practice removal. The project gave the TF momentum that propelled field work to remove invasives and to plant natives, which attracted more volunteers who wanted outdoor experience.

Members of the TF and those interested in sound land stewardship and management practices advocate for Richmond to establish a Division of Invasives Management in the city's Parks & Recreation Department, with staff who are trained in invasives removal and park restoration, or a citywide Natural Resource Manager.

The Invasive Threat

With invasive plants everywhere—down every alley, along every roadway, on public and private properties alike—appropriate staffing makes sense. For now, however, in Richmond and in most cities, just about all natural-area invasives removal is handled by trained volunteers—dubbed "people-powered removals"—the proverbial *Little Engine That Could*. The ever-evolving TF is now not only made up of volunteers, but four Invasives Species Specialists, thanks to a Department of Forestry grant, a huge step forward for the TF.

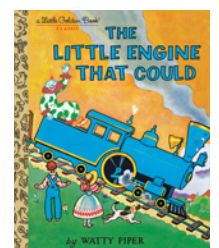
Rock star entomologist Doug Tallamy from University of Delaware spotlights the appalling phenomenon that nurseries still sell invasive plants meant for "beautification" in the landscape that are "whittling away our beleaguered forests. From reducing larvae populations to starving birds, they can literally destroy biodiversity," Tallamy says. "It's like buying a tumor, putting it in your body, and wondering why you get sick."



RVA's Invasive Plant Task Force en masse. Photo courtesy of Friends of James River Parks.



Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinensis*) has overtaken Belle Isle. Photo by Krzysztof Ziarnik, Kenraiz, Wikimedia Commons.



With a work force of enthusiastic volunteers, the Richmond Invasive Plant Task Force is *The Little Engine That Could*.

ARE YOU AWARE
OF EXECUTIVE
ORDER 13112?

On Feb. 3, 1999, President Clinton established the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) to coordinate federal efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species. It also created a coordinating body—the Invasive Species Council, also referred to as the National Invasive Species Council to oversee implementation of the order, encourage proactive planning and action, develop recommendations for international cooperation, and take other steps to improve the federal response to invasive species. It was a long decade before some of the general public caught on, and even today that awareness is not widespread.

Alien Invasion

Many ecologists say this alien plant invasion is globalization at its worst, that there's no turning back. In most cases, our natural areas are past the point of return. Curtis Helms of the Urban Forestry Department in Philadelphia believes that if there is a solution, it will be in the form of "biological control"—finding ways to use other species or organisms to control the invasives. "There is just no way we can keep up at the rate these plants are spreading, just trying to keep them at bay," he says. A common goal of land managers is to work to remove invasives to 20 percent and manage them at this percentage. While it's a difficult goal, it is also realistic. Replenishment comes continually from the seed bank, from flowing water, from wind, from birds, and from people.

Climate change, habitat loss, and invasive plants are the greatest threats to the natural world. Political leaders first recognizing the invasives crisis, then funding invasives management are essential. Kevin Heffernan of DCR-Natural Heritage led the publication of *Virginia 2018 Invasive Species Management Plan*. This year, partial funding was passed by the House and Senate. Other legislation that passed both houses required nurseries to label invasives and suggest alternatives, made selling ivy illegal, along with several other proactive invasives management bills. All of 2024's invasives bills were vetoed.

A Fundamental Hope

The Task Force would fold its tent if we didn't have hope. We know we can't adopt every single shelter dog, but we know the one we do adopt makes a difference. In the James River Park, we can't look away. We have to try. 🌱



MEET CASTOR AND RVA GOATS

Goats from RVA Goats have been known to battle invasives in Richmond's James River Park System. Castor, the Great Pyrenees and herd master, watches over the goats while they're munching. *Photos courtesy of RVA Goats & Honey.*

Are you one of those people
who thinks that the
wall-to-wall white flowering
trees of early spring are one
of Virginia's native delights?

AS A MEMBER OF A GCV CLUB, HOPEFULLY THE ANSWER IS A RESOUNDING "NO!"



To the initiated, these callery pear trees—a.k.a. Bradfords (*Pyrus calleryana*) are invaders of the first order. While their introduction to the U.S. may have been well-intended—they were imported in the early 1900s to combat fire blight in the common pear—their structure is nevertheless weak, making them exceedingly prone to ice and wind damage.

However, it's the callery pear's invasive nature that is most alarming. Seeds are easily disbursed by birds, which allow it to invade open spaces such as pastures, grassland and open woodlands. Its rapid growth quickly fills in these open spaces, converting them to woodlands. Its ability to form dense thickets results in the shading out of native species, causing a rapid change in plant and wildlife communities.

This tree is a significant threat to native grasslands and grassland wildlife, but also invades forested areas.

In a nutshell, invasives supplant native flora, often in a monoculturistic fashion, and the native fauna that coevolved with the native flora is impacted, sometimes to extinction. Belle Isle's privet explosion exemplifies the exploitative strategy of inhabiting the vertical mid layer (shrub layer) that in a healthy temperate forest would be mostly empty. A truly scary result is that this unnaturally dense shrub layer eliminates not only native herbaceous plants, but they do the same to the native tree seedlings so that there is no new forest coming. Add deer pressure to the strikes against native succession trees, the chance of a continued healthy forest is gravely endangered.

Mermaid City Hosts

Norfolk & Harborfront Garden Club Welcome GCV
2024 Meeting



All photos by Latane Avery

The GCV's 105th Board of Governors was hosted by Harborfront Garden Club on Oct. 22-24, 2024, at the Norfolk Sheraton Waterside Hotel. The Elizabeth River sparkled each day and provided the lovely backdrop for sunset at the Unger's home, hosts of the Barbecue and Oyster Roast. Mermaid mules, our signature drink, were served as guests arrived. And an oyster roast in Norfolk isn't complete without handmade cones and ice cream from Doumar's, inventor of the original waffle cone.

Guests in the Mermaid City were treated to tours at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, the Chrysler Museum, and the Ryan Resilience Center, home of the Elizabeth River

Project. To highlight the work of the Elizabeth River Project, horticulture exhibits focused on riparian buffers, one of the easiest and most economical methods of reducing sedimentation and nutrient and toxic chemical pollution in our waterways across the commonwealth.

Guest speakers included Jen Jessup and Jenny Lauer from Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects. Their presentation focused on historical restoration work of the GCV.

Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, Elizabeth River Project executive director, recounted the story of the rebirth of the once-dead Elizabeth River. Jackson was the recipient of the Elizabeth Cabell Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation at the Conservation Forum in Martinsville.

The highlight of the meeting—the Awards Banquet—was held at the Chrysler Museum of Art. Guests were greeted at the door



Board of Governors

of the Porcelain Gallery with a cocktail and music from the Norfolk Public School's Strolling Strings. Dinner was served in Huber Court, where huge centerpieces of different colors adorned the tables.

Harborfront Garden Club members enjoyed working together on hosting the BOG. A true bonding experience for us as we decoupaged oyster shells, planned menus, arranged flowers, and scanned the shores for driftwood, it was an honor to host this important event. We wanted our guests to feel welcomed, and we wanted to showcase our amazing Mermaid City. 🌿

—Debbie Bonnewell,
Harborfront Garden Club





The Boxwood Garden Club

RICHMOND

The Boxwood Garden Club board of directors continued our tradition of hosting a biannual luncheon in honor of our Life and Associate members. This year, on a balmy Halloween day, BGC member Stuart Roberts hosted the event in her home, where club members created seasonal arrangements for the tables and attendees enjoyed a plated meal.

The floral centerpieces were raffled off after the luncheon.

We value the expertise and depth of knowledge that our more experienced members bring to our club, and the luncheon to honor them and acknowledge their devotion is a small gesture of our appreciation. We were lucky to have a beautiful, warm fall day for our event!

—Kit Sullivan



JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT CONVERSATION

Trees with Bartlett Tree Experts

January 17, 2025

10 a.m. · Zoom



Each session features small group discussions and a Q&A session with our subject expert(s) and promises to delight and inspire conversation between fellow nature-lovers.



CULTIVATING CONVERSATIONS

FREE! GCV MEMBERS-ONLY MONTHLY VIRTUAL LEARNING SERIES,
PRESENTED BY MEMBER EXPERTS

Registration is required. Visit [GCVirginia.org](https://www.GCVirginia.org)

Photo courtesy of Bartlett Tree Experts



GCV DISTRICT 1

The James River Garden Club

RICHMOND

James River Garden Club members Lauren Carter and Susan Rhodes participated in VMFA's Fine Arts & Flowers in October, interpreting Theodore Robinson's "In the Sun" through flowers. Using goldenrod, daisies, straw flowers, thistle, hanging amaranthus, and a myriad of foliage, the

talented arrangers drew from the languorous atmosphere Robinson captured in this painting from 1891. He portrays a woman lying in a field of grass, blanched by the summer sun. Her straw hat—mirrored in the arrangement's wicker container—is lazily cast aside. Congratulations to Susan and Lauren, two of our club's most talented floral arrangers, on such a creative interpretation.

Fine Arts & Flowers 2024 featured more than 70 floral interpretations throughout the museum, all inspired by VMFA's permanent collection and designed by members of the Garden Club of Virginia, Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, and Ikebana of Richmond.

—Madeline Mayhood



GCV DISTRICT 2

The Blue Ridge Garden Club

LEXINGTON

Lexington's ConnectionPlus Healthcare and Hospice hosted their 40th Anniversary Gala at Evans Hall on the campus of Washington & Lee University. The event was chaired by Blue Ridge Garden Club member Carol Grigsby, and members of the club provided the flower arrangements for the guest tables. The event, held on the evening of June 8, was attended by more than 200 people who arrived in black tie attire. There



was broad community support for both a silent and live auction, which included high quality donations from local businesses and

artisans. (Thanks to Leila Taylor, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator for her input to this article.)
—by Jane Brooke



GCV DISTRICT 3

The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club

FREDERICKSBURG

The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club, to celebrate its Centennial in 2024, created The Rappahannock Valley Garden Trail as an additional asset for the Fredericksburg region. The goal of the garden trail is to encourage visitors, tourists, and residents to explore the public gardens in the Fredericksburg area. Some of the included gardens are well known, others tucked away. While their styles vary, all are educational. Included are historic properties (four GCV Restoration sites); a Zen garden; one designed by renowned landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman; a garden that provides healthy foods for

local families; and demonstration gardens. In addition, there is a link to The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club's annual Historic Garden Week tour. The trail map and information about The Rappahannock Valley Garden Trail are located on the Fredericksburg Visitors Center website, FXBG.com.

Founded in October 1924, The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club first organized a flower show that benefited five underprivileged children. Since that time, the club has been active in the community through activities such as landscaping at the downtown branch of the library, creating the LOVE

Garden at the Route 3 entrance to the city, donating trees and a fountain for Hurkamp Park, partnering with other community organizations for conservation and beautification projects, and participating annually in Historic Garden Week. The garden trail is the club's centennial project and gift to the city.

The Fredericksburg City Council honored The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club with a proclamation during its regular meeting on Tuesday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m. GCV President Kris Carbone attended the presentation with club members.

—Jeanette Cadwallender

The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club

FREDERICKSBURG

We are excited to announce that Fredericksburg has followed in the City of Richmond's footsteps to become a Xerces Society Bee City USA affiliate. Rappahannock Valley Garden Club members Karin Beals and Marian Lamphere worked with the City of Fredericksburg's Parks,

Recreation & Events Department to make this happen. RVGC would like to thank the many city officials who helped make this happen. The RVGC is looking forward to collaborating with the City of Fredericksburg to ensure the following Bee City USA commitments are upheld: increasing native pollinator gardens, decreasing the use of pesticides and herbicides, and educating our residents about

actions we can all take to support pollinators. We look forward to being part of the network of like-minded cities creating native habitats and protecting our native pollinators throughout the commonwealth. Preserving species and our environment is an important part of both the GCV's and RVGC's mission for future generations.

—By Marian Matthews-Lamphere

4

GCV DISTRICT 4

Chatham Garden Club CHATHAM

Susan Bower, member of Chatham Garden Club and owner of Bower House, a lovely B&B in Chatham, has been presented the Alice Overby Award. This award is an honor given by Chatham Hall, a girls boarding school for grades 9-12, at its Lee-Yardley Day celebration held Sept. 24. This event is in remembrance of two remarkable rectors of the school.

The Alice Overby Award is named after a beloved member of the community who served



Chatham Hall for 26 years. It honors individuals who have shown outstanding dedication to the school. At the presentation it was noted Susan has been a warm and welcoming presence in the town of Chatham and the Chatham Hall Community.

Susan shares her talents, time, and enthusiasm with Chatham Garden Club, having held numerous offices, including that of past president.

Congratulations Susan!
—by Joan Walker

Mill Mountain Garden Club ROANOKE

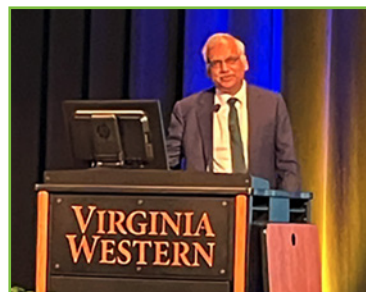
On Oct. 2, Mill Mountain Garden Club celebrated Roanoke City's 2024 Year of the Tree by sponsoring a community-wide event focusing on how trees affect air pollution, sleep, stress and anxiety, blood pressure, and cardio health. Over 240 attendees attended a presentation by Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar, the leader of the Green Heart Louisville health research initiative. After planting



Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar

over 8,000 trees and shrubs in urban areas of Louisville, the initiative began collecting detailed health data from nearly 500 residents in 2018. Dr. Bhatnagar, also a Professor of Medicine and Distinguished University Scholar at the University of Louisville, was a featured speaker at the 2023 World Forum

on Urban Forests and has met with the King of England and the United Nations to share his research. Before hearing his presentation that evening, event attendees were able to visit tables set up by eight nonprofits to learn more about conservation efforts in the region.
—by Pam Moskal

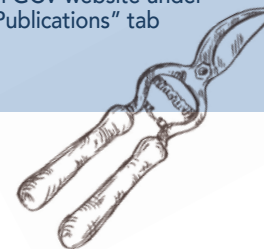


Keep the Snips coming!

Share your club's milestones, latest news, programs, speakers, pop-ups, trips, community projects, and more in the Journal. It's easy to submit—just head to the GCV website, log in, and scroll down to the "Submit Stories" box. It's that simple!

Questions?
Email Journal@GCVirginia.org.

- Photos must be at least 1 MB
- Send document and photos as separate attachments
- Email Journal@GCVirginia.org
- Review submission guidelines on GCV website under "Publications" tab



5

GCV DISTRICT 5

The Hunting Creek Garden Club ALEXANDRIA

Members of The Hunting Creek Garden Club visited F.T. Valley Farm at Mont Medi in Sperryville for their October meeting. It was an amazing day. The orchard was bursting with crisp, juicy apples. Hunting Creek enjoyed an informative program by owner Kathy Penkunias, on the history of the orchard and the current operation, which includes more than 12,000 acres of fruit trees. Hunting Creek members enjoyed the ultimate pick-your-own experience with stunning views of Shenandoah National Park.

—by Claire Edwards



GCV DISTRICT 6

The Elizabeth River Garden Club

PORTSMOUTH

The Elizabeth River Garden Club recognized and honored Judy Perry for her 50 years of active membership at our Oct. 1 meeting. In addition to her many positions within the ERGC and the GCV, Judy was honored with the Massie Medal Award in 2019.

—by The Elizabeth River
Garden Club



Ali Simanson

THE GARDEN CLUB OF FAIRFAX

Meet the dynamic and accomplished Ali Simanson, who brings energy and enthusiasm to her position as president of The Garden Club of Fairfax, its membership, and all who meet her.



Journal:
Tell us about yourself.

Ali Simanson:
I am a true Virginia Girl, born in

Petersburg. We moved to Culpeper when I was young and enjoyed my childhood! I would vanish with my cat, Midnight, for the day in the woods, build elaborate forts, pick endless weed bouquets, and come back covered in mud at the end of the day.

I come from a long line of educators. I got my master's at George Mason University in curriculum and instruction in special education and ESOL, and then taught 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades for Fairfax County Public Schools for 14 years. I was that teacher bringing learning to life, easily spending 12 hours making my classroom a special place for students. I'd arrive when the custodians opened the school and leave when they closed it.

Midway through my teaching career, I met my future husband in D.C. and fell head over heels in love! We got married in Stockbridge, Mass., and settled into life at Four Stairs Farm (c. 1730) in Great Falls.

While pregnant with my second child, I attended cooking school in New York City at the French Culinary Institute, then traveled to ALMA in Colorno, Italy, for formal Italian training and returned to resume my training with Michelin chefs from different regions of Italy.

I had always imagined teaching children how to grow food and cook from scratch, so I started

culinary camps here on our farm when my son was in preschool. I spent the next seven years teaching full time at my children's school and doing culinary camps for a few weeks each summer.

My teaching background, professional culinary training, and the knowledge I've gained from being a member of The Garden Club of Fairfax have all enhanced this fun summer camp tradition. For 12 seasons here on our farm, I have created themed summer culinary camps for children ages 4-12, teaching baking/cooking fundamentals, gardening, and animal care.

J: How long have you been a member of GC of Fairfax and what do you like most about garden club membership?

AS: I joined The Garden Club of Fairfax in 2021 for two reasons. I was going through old papers in a drawer and pulled out a wrinkled brochure with Four Stairs Farm on the front cover, which made me realize it was a Historic Garden Week Brochure from 1971 and that our farm was on the tour.

When we moved to Four Stairs Farm in 2002, we spent the next three years lovingly restoring it from the ground up, placing it into a conservation easement with Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and listing in on the National Register of Historic Places and with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. It is one of only two structures appearing on the original survey for Lord Fairfax's Land Grant.

My goal has always been to add an authentic colonial-period garden back to the farm. I have

also been a beekeeper for over a decade and wanted to build a wildflower meadow, pollinator-friendly areas around our farm, and a true kitchen garden. Being a GCF member has ignited my passion for gardening. I have met knowledgeable floral designers and amazing master gardeners. The opportunities the club offers with engaging speakers and gorgeous venues have taken my interest in gardening to a whole new level.

J: As GCF club president, have you established any goals for your term?

AS: My goals include working with our club to strengthen and grow our active membership, revise our bylaws and standing rules, continue to fine tune our website (which we launched this past year), and, finally, help to create a magical yet meaningful experience to celebrate our 100th year in 2026.

J: What about the GCV and garden club membership speaks to you best?

AS: Everything. I naturally gravitate to conservation and horticulture, but I am learning more about floral design and finally found the courage to design my first "floating" arrangement with Nancy Perkins during HGW.

J: How do you describe your leadership style?

AS: Democratic—which means listening to members, being objective, learning the history of the club, being patient, and working together to find solutions. And I strive to be organized and available.



J: What are three words that come to mind first that best describe you?

AS: Curious, Energetic, Creative

J: Who has been the most influential person in your life?

AS: My husband. He lights up a room. He is confident, positive, and thoughtful, and he seems to thrive in uncomfortable situations. He's an excellent problem solver and is very supportive in all that I do. And, he's worn himself out trying to keep up with me!

J: What's your biggest gardening accomplishment?

AS: After seeing the Ellen Ogden presentation at Mount Vernon in 2022, I immediately took a former goat pen and transformed it into a vegetable, fruit, and flower garden. I used her advice to draw a design first. Then I executed it, and I created a unique space. I absolutely loved her suggestion of always having a designated space to sit in your garden to admire all your hard work.

J: How do you spend your free time/what are your hobbies?

AS: Ha-ha! I wish there were more hours in a day. I watch my



high school senior son's Little Caps AAA ice hockey games most weekends starting in September until March up and down the East Coast, which will then turn into lacrosse season until June. And I just helped my daughter move into Colorado College to start her freshman year. I love swimming, surfing, and biking. Hate running, though, but I do it to even out my moods. I enjoy creating needlepoint belts, find Zen in weeding our garden, and photographing flowers each morning before anyone wakes up. My "hobby" of having chickens and bees has now turned into my full-time job. Presently, we have 11 honeybee colonies/hives, and I just harvested over 750 pounds of honey this season. And that's in addition to caring for our 76 chickens. Our eggs and honey are sold at the Organic Butcher in McLean.

J: If you were to have a dinner party and invite 5 guests (alive

or dead) whom would you invite? What would you serve?

AS: I'd have an eclectic mix. I'd invite Alice Hill (my namesake and great-grandmother whom I never met), Allan Savory, Alice Waters, Calvin Broadus, and Thomas Jefferson. I would serve a 5-course meal: 1. Caponata 2. Caprese 3. My 50-Layer-Lasagna (homemade pasta) 4. Insalata Mista and 5. Tiramisu.

J: Do you have a favorite book (or magazine) and what are you reading now?

AS: My favorite book is the *Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Now I'm reading *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben.

J: Which living person do you most admire?

AS: Marty Whipple! She has been an active member in our GCF club for 46 years. She earned the Massie Medal in 2001. Her wisdom, compassion, humor, energy, advice, and kindness never cease to amaze me. 🌱



Gifts for Gardeners

END NOTES: HOLIDAY GIVING 2024

Finding the perfect gift for the green-thumbbed enthusiast and nature lover in your life can feel as challenging as nurturing a finicky *Daphne odora*. But we've got you covered. From apps to ornaments and books to birds, we've cultivated a selection of thoughtful presents that will delight any gardener, no matter their age or expertise level.

1 Felt Ornaments

If you need holiday inspiration, head to the Little Garden Shed at Sneed's Nursery in Richmond. From top to bottom, it's packed with all manner of décor. These felt ornaments are perfect for the critter-loving-gardenista in your life but represent just a small portion of what's on display. Sunflower with ladybug (\$11), mushroom (\$16), and butterfly (\$15). **Sneed's Nursery, 8756 W. Huguenot Rd., Richmond**

2 Wall Flowers

Artist Jane Martin's lifelong love of gardening is evident in her Wall Flowers collection, one-of-kind ceramic wall flowers she creates in her Richmond studio. These decorative stunners start at \$200. Pictured here, "Tulips & Hyacinth," is \$475 and measures 14"x10". **WallFlowerCeramics.com**

3 Pharsalia

Picturesque Pharsalia is deep in the heart of the Blue Ridge at the foot of duPriest Mountain. The historic property is owned by Foxie Morgan, who operates it as an event venue and the ideal spot for workshops and classes that cater to friend groups and garden clubs—from holiday wreath-making and designing with dried flowers to arranging with fresh flowers from Pharsalia's incredible gardens. Make it an adventure by booking Foxrot, the property's 7-bedroom guest house that can accommodate large groups for overnights. Or stay in one of the charming Airbnbs nearby. Schedule of classes and gift certificates at **PharsaliaEvents.com**

4 Knee Pads

Knee pads are a must in the garden, but the extra-thick variety are game changers. This one comes in a happy array of colors and are \$25 on **Amazon**.

5 Agave Cutlery

Agave fiber cutlery makes great hostess gifts, while also spreading the word about reusing and recycling. The plant's fibers are strong and durable and reduce the demand for single-use, disposable goods. They're a biodegradable and plant-friendly and send a subtle message to the plastic preferers in your life. \$10 for 36 pieces on **Amazon**.



2



5



3



1



4



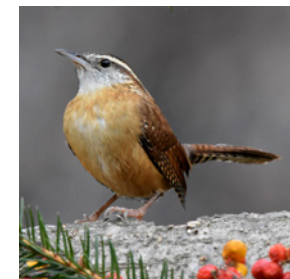
The Land is Full

Hot off the press comes *The Land is Full*, a celebration of parks and public gardens by our friends at Nelson Byrd Woltz, whom we know as one of the most in-demand and respected firms working in landscape architecture today. This collection of 12 projects—from the revitalization of Memorial Park in Houston to the reclamation of the Brooklyn Naval Yard—illustrates the power of design to create vital public realms at the heart of communities. With a forward by Andrea Wulf and essays by noted scholars, ecologists, and cultural historians, *The Land is Full* emphasizes the central role of landscape architecture in reshaping public space to meet challenges of ecological and social resilience. Phaidon, 240 pps., \$64.95.



6

7



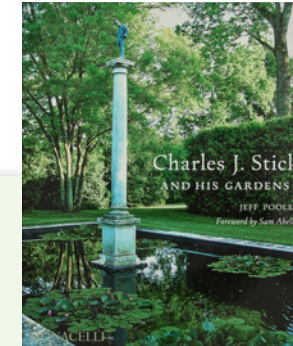
CornellLab Bird Academy



8

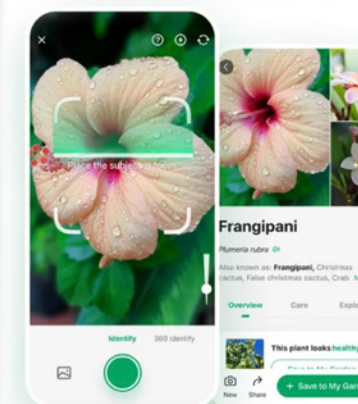


9



Charles Stick & His Gardens

Jeff Poole has written a fascinating biographical monograph of Charles Stick, the Charlottesville-based landscape architect who lives and works in the state's Piedmont region. Its rolling hills and dramatic vistas filled with echoes of the early history of America are what inspires Stick's designs, which refer back to the classical designs of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello and the University of Virginia. Focusing on residential gardens, he draws on the principles of Palladio, Charles A. Platt, and Russell Page to connect the architecture to the land and develop enticing pathways between the formal planting and the landscape beyond. Phaidon, 224 pps., \$59.95.



10

6 Hatteras Bag

There's nothing more useful than a well-designed carry-all, so check out the Hatteras Bag from Manakin-Sabot based Porch & Hound. Perfect for travel, the office, workouts, weekends, and toting a load of flowers, it can carry it all. Made of recycled cotton, it sports bridle leather straps and measures 16" x 14.5" x 7". \$145. **PorchAndHoundCollection.com**

7 Bird Academy

Cornell's Bird Academy is tailor-made for budding ornithologists—or if you simply want to brush up on your own avian aptitude. The academy offers online courses and access to live events from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology—from Nature Journaling & Field Sketching, to Bird Song Basics, The Wonderful World of Woodpeckers (or Hummingbirds or Owls, etc), Hawk & Raptor ID, Gardening for Birds & Nature, Understanding Bird Behavior, and much more. Classes—designed for newbies, kids, and the more experience birder—are self-paced and start at \$40. **Academy.AllAboutBirds.org**

8 Amy Stewart Art

Amy Stewart runs a creative empire online, and in addition to writing seminars, this best-selling author also offers art classes for anyone interested in trying something new. She paints in oils, watercolor, gouache, and ink, finding inspiration from her travels, animals, and color. For those inclined to capture nature, her Mixed Media Landscapes, Fabulous Florals, or Loose & Expressive Flowers & Leaves classes can be taken at your own pace, giving you time to practice a new skill. Classes start at \$50. **AmyStewart.com**

9 Jane Angelhart Ceramics

If you're hunting for a gift that is sure to make someone smile, look no further than Charlottesville potter Jane Angelhart, who creates ceramics to tickle her funny bone—and yours. From critters to veggies, vases to vessels, you can find her work in a handful of galleries around the state including Annie Gould Gallery in Gordonsville. Inquire for pricing. **AnnieGouldGallery.com**

10 Picture This

How many times have you stumbled across a plant that you struggle to ID? For the app-inclined plant person in your life, consider a subscription to Picture This, a botanist in your pocket. With over a million 5-star ratings, it's super easy to use and is (mostly) accurate all over the world. Annual subscriptions start at \$39.99 and are available on all app platforms. **PictureThis.com**



GCV's 32nd President (1986-88)

Dynamic and devoted conservationist, Ellen Gibbs Godwin died June 4, 2024. She was a deLacy Gray medal award winner, Conservation Chairman, Treasurer, Chairman of Finance and Nominations and served as the GCV's 32nd president.

Read on for more about her accomplished life and leadership.

Ellen Gibbs Godwin, GCV's 32nd president, is survived by her husband, the Honorable James Godwin, known to all as Jimmie. A beloved mother, she leaves behind five daughters, seven grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

At her funeral at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Franklin, I learned that among her many talents were playing the accordion. Many of those present at her service recounted the many patriotic parades for July 4th, with Ellen leading the way while playing the accordion.

She loved the outdoors. Whether that was Kill Devil Hills, the Florida Keys, or in Blowing Rock, she was happiest with an outdoor pursuit, especially golf and fishing.

Ellen was a member of The Nansemond River Garden Club. Her tenure as an active member of the GCV began in the late 1970s when she served as a Director at Large. Other leadership roles were as Conservation Chairman, Treasurer, Chairman of Finance, and of Nominations Committee.

As recounted in *Follow the Green Arrow, Vol. 2*, when GCV President Katty Mears passed the gavel to Ellen Godwin at the GCV Annual Meeting in 1986, Mrs. Godwin remarked that "Thin is no longer in. It would be hard to fill Mrs. Mears' shoes and her clothes—impossible!" In closing, her remarks state that she will "try hard to be a lady."

These two former presidents were close friends, and it seems fitting that Ellen Godwin is remembered at this BOG, following the Annual Meeting in May where a tribute to Katty Mears was offered.

Within five days after taking office, this dynamic duo headed to Pittsburgh where the GCV was being recognized by the Garden Club of America with their Historic Preservation Award. The Garden Club of Norfolk had nominated the GCV; the



In 1988, GCV encouraged passage of the Chesapeake Bay Act by the Virginia General Assembly. Most of us can't remember a time without this

At the end of her term as GCV president, her peers described her as exhibiting grace, diligence, faithfulness, humor, intelligence, and charm and that she served as a great lady.

nomination was seconded by The James River Garden Club.

This award was but the first of several accolades during Mrs. Godwin's presidency. Mrs. Etheridge of The Garden Club of Fairfax presented to the GCV the diamond brooch that has continued to be passed from president to president and worn during her term of office. Also, Mr. Robert H. Talley, Jr. donated the collection of 18th-century Mark Catesby Prints, which hang at the Kent-Valentine House.

Ellen's devotion to conservation led to starting an ecology camp on her family farm in 1983. The camp celebrated 40 years in 2023.

important environmental protection. That same year, Ellen was awarded the de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation. The citation on the medal reads: For inspired leadership in conservation, accomplished with humor, intelligence, and vision.

At the end of her term as GCV president, her peers described her as exhibiting grace, diligence, faithfulness, humor, intelligence, and charm and that she served as a great lady. May her memory encourage all that we do for the Garden Club of Virginia. 🌿

—by Jeanette Cadwallender

Leave the Leaves

Give the rake a break!

By Anna Aquino, The Boxwood Garden Club

When the weather gets cold and the bees and butterflies are no longer visiting plants, where do they go?

A small handful of species migrate, but far and away most are relying on habitats provided in your yard for overwintering. Queen bumblebees nestle into the ground about an inch and require leaf litter for insulation and protection. As a matter of fact, 70 percent of our native bees are ground-nesting and can't abide thick layers of bark mulch.

Caterpillars curl up under the margins of leaves. Pupae and eggs are hidden by leaves on the ground. Centipedes and spiders and all the beneficial insects you saw in the summer are depending on earth-wise leaf practices to keep them



Photo by mariya_m from Pixabay.

alive and allow them to prosper next year. Holes in trees, sticks and stems, logs and canes, snags and dead limbs—if we don't keep them around, where will the animals live where it's warm and safe?

Think about a natural area you know—there is no raking or blowing, no tidying up, no cutting back and dead-heading, no fertilizing, no pesticides. All that natural material decays over the winter, providing up to 90 percent of the nutrients that plants and trees need for the next growing season. Moving the leaves around is fine, but reposition them in beds and under trees. Rake or use your quiet and emission-free electric blower, but don't forget that a light layer of leaves on lawn benefits the lawn as these leaves decay and provide organic matter, contributing to the lively soil food web.

We are the stewards who care. When we bag leaves as garbage and throw them away, we are throwing away our highly prized beneficial insects and soil nutrients. 🌿



All sorts of critters call leaf litter home, including this spider and her web. Photo from the National Park Gallery.

It might be tempting, but don't rake! Photo by utroja0 from Pixabay



"Leave the Leaves" sign available from the Xerces Society. Gifts.Xerces.org



Coreopsis lanceolata





GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

TOURS STATEWIDE

April 26-May 3, 2025

Proceeds fund the restoration of Virginia's historic public gardens and a research fellowship program.

  For a complete listing of tours and to purchase tickets, please visit VaGardenWeek.org

GCV CALENDAR

ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK THE GCV CALENDAR ONLINE FOR CURRENT INFORMATION AND UPDATES.

SAVE THE DATES

2025

- January 16** | 2026 *HGW Guidebook* cover art proposal deadline
- January 17** | Cultivating Conversations, *via Zoom*
- January 22** | Legislative Day, *Richmond*
- February 10** | Horticulture Workshop, Kent-Valentine House, *Richmond*
- February 21** | Cultivating Conversations, *via Zoom*
- February 28-March 2** | *History Blooms* at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, *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
- March 21** | Cultivating Conversations, *via Zoom*
- March 26** | Daffodil Day, Virginia Wesleyan University, *Virginia Beach*
- April 26-May 3** | Historic Garden Week
- May 16** | Horticulture Field Day, *Fredericksburg*
- May 19-21** | GCV Annual Meeting, *Lynchburg*
- June 1** | Nomination deadline for Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation
- June 1** | Nomination deadline for Conservation Educator Award
- June 1** | Nomination deadline for the Helen and Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award
- June 18** | *Lilies in Bloom*, hosted by The Garden Club of the Northern Neck, *Irvington*
- June 25** | HGW Boot Camp, *Richmond*
- October 14-15** | Board of Governors, hosted by The Brunswick Garden Club, *South Hill*
- November 1** | Nomination deadline for Bessie Bock Carter Conservation Award
- December 1** | Nomination deadline for Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement

CALLING ALL GCV ARTISTS!

Garden Club of Virginia members are a creative bunch, and featuring the work of GCV artists on the cover of the *Journal* is a much anticipated tradition. Our issues mirror the seasons—spring, summer, fall, winter—and cover art corresponds accordingly. Submit your artwork for cover art consideration. Email high-resolution JPG files to Journal@GCVirginia.org or submit online at GCVirginia.org





<<Mr. John B. Jones
PO Box 1234
City Name, State 12345>>

WE'RE FOR EVERY TREE.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES AND HISTORIC GARDENS FOR 117 YEARS — AND GROWING.

For 117 years, our family-owned company has brought a rare mix of groundbreaking science, outstanding customer service, award-winning safety practices, and global resources to every tree and shrub care task at hand. Discover how our passion is inspiring one beautiful property after another.

Call **877-227-8538** or visit **bartlett.com**

- FERTILIZATION | CABLING & BRACING
- PRUNING | INSECT & DISEASE MANAGEMENT
- TREE INSPECTIONS | STORM DAMAGE
- LIGHTNING PROTECTION | REMOVALS



**BARTLETT
TREE EXPERTS**