

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA JOURNAL

Fall 2025 | Volume LXX | No. 3



INSIDE

Celebrating 180 Years of The Kent-Valentine House



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

TOURS STATEWIDE

April 18-25, 2026

*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 GCVirginia.org/historic-garden-week



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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

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Fall	November	September 8	August 8
Winter	February	December 8	November 8

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.

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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.

Sarah Blackburn, Interim *Journal* Editor c/o Garden Club of Virginia (GCV)
12 East Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23219

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10/25/2025

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.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CORRECTION TO THE SUMMER 2025 ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL:

On pages 30-31, the "Undergraduate" and "Graduate" status of the Conservation and Environmental Studies Research Fellowship titles were transposed. Geneva Waynick, studying "Do nectar microbes impact plant reproduction," is GCV's 2024 *Graduate* Research Fellow. Jordan Goodrich, studying "How invasive is chamberbitter?," is our 2024 *Undergraduate* Research Fellow.

GCV JOURNAL 2025 COMMITTEE

The Garden Club of Virginia *Journal* is produced by a broad group of individuals, including several contributing writers. Their names are included in the article bylines throughout this publication. The editing and advertising team consists of the following:

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ABOVE LEFT
*An arrangement at the
Kent-Valentine House*

ABOVE RIGHT
One of Meg Turner's Gardens

COVER ART:
The Kent-Valentine House
by Beth Marchant



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TOP
*One of the historic southern magnolias
at the Kent-Valentine House*

ABOVE
*Pollinator friendly native plants will be
featured in tour gardens this spring*



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- Reimagining the Kent-Valentine House Garden:** Strengthening GCV's vision for the next 180 years
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- GCV Calendar:** Important dates to remember

BETH MARCHANT

Friend of GCV

You may not recognize Beth Marchant's name immediately, but you will certainly recognize the gifts of art she has bestowed on GCV for the past 22 years! Beth began her partnership with GCV in 1997 when Suzanne Munson was at the helm of Historic Garden Week. As Suzanne sought a new illustrator for the *Guidebook*, she found Beth, who specialized in architectural renderings. That year Beth created 25 small pen and ink drawings of tour homes for the HGW *Guidebook*. Beth continued to produce those drawings under the HGW leadership of Karen Ellsworth until 2012, when the renderings of properties switched to 4" x 5" lyrical watercolor paintings that carried through until 2019. Then, in 2020, GCV commissioned Beth for an oil painting of the Kent-Valentine House in commemoration of the Centennial. Beth said, "I think in the years as an artist for HGW, I did almost 500 homes!"

Beth is a self-taught artist whose 45-year career has resulted in hundreds of commissioned works that include "portraits of homes."



But well beyond homes, Beth has painted people, animals, and historic landmarks. She creates paintings for galleries and art competitions, as well as commission work in watercolor, oils, and pencils. No longer just pen and ink.

Beth has read about and studied the works of many artists she admires and attended many workshops with some great teachers in her adult life. Many of her paintings are landscapes, but those landscapes usually have an architectural component. What inspires Beth to paint or draw? "When I see something where light hits a subject just right, I'm inspired to recreate that light." That inspirational light has manifested itself in paintings of the Commonwealth Club, the



ABOVE: Beth Marchant

LEFT: *Kent-Valentine House* by Beth Marchant

Bolling Haxall House, University Chapel at Washington and Lee University, Agecroft Hall, the Rotunda at UVA, and Virginia House. GCV is privileged to own a piece of Beth's portfolio with the portrait of the Kent-Valentine House.

A Richmond native educated at Salem College, Beth has immortalized much of Richmond's history in her paintings. She has a great studio in her home and sometimes does plein air painting. Beth says she hopes to continue her art until she can't hold a brush anymore! You can go to bethmarchant.com to see more of her work. 🌿

— **Laura Francis,**
GCV Second Vice President,
The Hunting Creek Garden Club

"PROTECTION AND GOOD INTENTIONS" GIVE TO THE GCV ANNUAL FUND

As autumn brings a season of harvest, gratitude and renewal, I'm reminded of the native American beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*. With its sudden burst of color, this showstopping horticultural treasure is a reminder of nature's surprise and resilience. A symbol of protection and good intentions, it perfectly captures the spirit of the moment for the GCV. We are entering an exciting new era of environmental stewardship at our historic headquarters, the Kent-Valentine House to reflect GCV's deep commitment to conserving nature — a value that has defined our legacy more than a century. This transformational work across the commonwealth is only possible because of you. Your generosity sustains our mission and ensures that we continue to protect and celebrate Virginia's natural beauty for generations to come. — **Kris Carbone, GCV President 2024-2026**

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"Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
fluttering from the autumn tree."

— EMILY BRONTË



Nestled in the heart of Richmond, the Kent-Valentine House stands as an enduring symbol of southern heritage. The house itself is a marvel with strong architectural refinement. The interior is furnished with antiques and beautiful artwork

providing an atmosphere of timeless elegance. Serving as the headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia, this distinguished mansion is more than a building — it is a gathering place where progress is nurtured and our mission is celebrated.

Preserving the Kent-Valentine House has been a labor of love. There have been numerous projects to maintain the historic structure while providing for the needs of an evolving club. Most recently, the second-floor renovations have been completed under the direction of the Kent-Valentine House Committee. The grounds have been re-envisioned with an upcoming project planned by the Restoration Committee providing a botanical meeting ground celebrating natural flora.

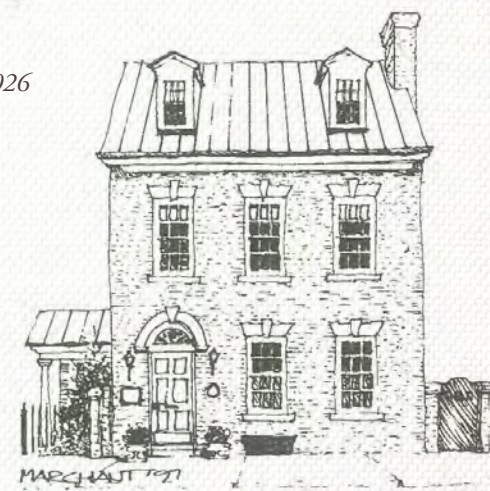
The Kent-Valentine House is a place of inspiration and advocacy. Within its rooms, the GCV orchestrates a wide array of activities, from educational initiatives and conservation programs, to Historic Garden Week. Members and staff strategize ways to preserve historic landscapes, champion native plantings, and foster a spirit of camaraderie amongst our members including our conservationists, horticulturalists, artistic design enthusiasts, and photographers.

In this edition of the *Journal*, we are celebrating the 180th anniversary of Kent-Valentine House. It remains a beacon of tradition as we reflect on the past and envision the future. I invite you to visit your house.

My very best,

Kris Carbone

Kris Carbone
GCV President, 2024-2026



ABOVE: Beth Marchant's illustration from a 1998
Historic Garden Week *Guidebook*

Horticulture Tips: Planting under a Southern Magnolia

One of the distinguishing features of the landscape at the Kent-Valentine House is the stunning old-growth southern magnolia trees (*Magnolia grandiflora*) bordering the eastern edge of the property. As GCV's landscape architects began the landscape design for our historic headquarters, they acknowledged the challenge of planting under these impressive beauties.

If you are planning, installing, or struggling with a shade garden under a magnolia tree at home, here are some tips and plants to consider. It is important to find an area without too many large structural roots as they will be in the way and take all the moisture. Magnolia roots are shallow, about six inches deep and run to the dripline of the tree.

Dig a few trial holes in areas where you have planned the bed and adjust your planting "pockets" in the V shape between the roots. In my own garden, I have added a few inches of fine mulch each year and have built up the surface around the tree with organic material to make room for the roots of the new plants. Similar conditions could be achieved by adding several inches of compost before planting and finishing with an additional layer of mulch. A drip hose on a timer is essential for plants during summer months due to the magnolia's shallow roots competing for moisture.

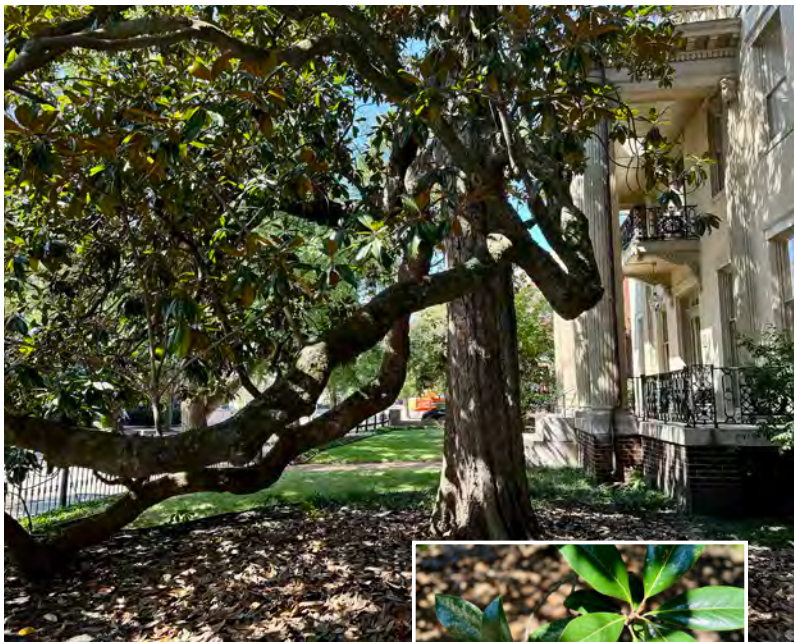
THE FOLLOWING ARE PLANT CHOICES I HAVE FOUND SUCCESSFUL IN THIS AREA (PICTURED TO THE RIGHT):

- 1 *Aucuba japonica* – tolerates any soil, sun or shade
- 2 *Camellia japonica* – neutral to slightly acidic soil, part shade
- 3 *Kerria japonica* – neutral to slightly acidic, bright to full shade
- 4 *Edgeworthia chrysantha* – neutral to slightly acidic, partial shade
- 5 *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Goshiki' – Alkaline to acid, partial shade
- 6 *Azaleas* – deciduous and evergreen, slightly acidic, sun to partial shade
- 7 *Brunnera macrophylla* – neutral to slightly acidic, partial to full shade
- 8 *Euphorbia amygdaloides* – neutral to slightly acidic, partial shade
- 9 *Hellebores* – neutral, will tolerate slightly acidic, partial shade
- 10 *Phlox divaricata* – slightly acidic, partial shade
- 11 *Lilium martagon* – neutral to slightly acidic, partial shade

These selections are all happy with partial shade, neutral to slightly acidic soil and, as a bonus, are deer resistant with the exception of the martagon lily and the woodland phlox.

A few of these shrubs will eventually outgrow their space and require pruning or relocation to another needed area in the garden. I love the look of lush fullness and also plant to have material for my home bouquets as well as garden beauty.

—Patsy Smith, GCV Horticulture Committee Chairman, Winchester-Clarke Garden Club



Preserving Maymont's Historic Elm Allée

Bartlett Tree Experts & the GCV Restoration Committee

Over the past few years, GCV's Restoration Committee joined our partners at Bartlett Tree Experts to provide intensive care for the allée of Princeton elm trees at Maymont that GCV planted in 2006, as some of the trees were showing signs of poor health.

Maymont, a GCV restoration site since 1996, is a 100-acre public green space in Richmond that includes beautiful curated gardens and landscapes, a nature center, and a Gilded Age mansion.

The allée GCV planted – with funds generated by Historic Garden Week proceeds – replaced an older allée that had suffered from Dutch elm disease with specimens that had been cultivated to be disease-resistant. The trees flank the entrance driveway to the mansion, signaling to visitors that nature and beauty are in store.

Bartlett's experts examined and documented the status of all 62 trees and developed individual care plans based on each tree's specific needs.

"Bartlett's plan is an incredible road map that stems from their expertise and commitment to science-based tree care," said Deneen Brannock, chairman of GCV's Restoration Committee. "Combined with the deep commitment from our members to host Historic Garden Week tours to fund ongoing work, the restoration pillar of our mission is strong and impactful," added Deneen.



Dear Friends of the Garden Club of Virginia,
Thanks to your generosity, the historic elm allée at Maymont—comprising 62 Princeton elm trees—has received the emergency care it needed to ensure its health and longevity. This preservation effort, made possible by your support and the care of the Bartlett Tree Experts, reflects a shared commitment to safeguarding a living piece of American landscape history.

The elm allée is not only a defining feature of Maymont but also a testament to the Dooleys' vision of elegance around the turn of the 20th century. Avenues of elms, with their gracefully arching branches, symbolized a uniquely American refinement. GCV recognized the significance of this feature in the early 2000s when it helped plant more than 60 new elm trees along the allée. We are grateful that your recent investment will continue that legacy.

Over the past year, Bartlett Tree Experts conducted emergency remediation to address structural issues inherent in the elm variety. More than 20 trees were fitted with brace rods to reduce the risk of failure under wind stress—a crucial step that has already proven effective, as no damage has occurred during this year's storms.

In addition to structural support, all 62 trees were professionally pruned to correct defects and reduce canopy stress. This initial pruning was carefully timed in winter 2025 to prevent infestation by the pests that carry Dutch elm disease. Maymont's horticulture team is now committed to ongoing maintenance pruning to ensure the long-term viability of these trees. Each tree also received fertilizer injections to support overall health, with excellent response and growth helped by favorable rainfall.

On behalf of Maymont and the 1,000,000+ people who explore our gardens and grounds and enjoy the shade of these historic trees every year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the entire membership of the Garden Club of Virginia. Thanks to your support, the elm allée will continue to serve not only as a cultural treasure, but also as a vibrant green space in the heart of our city—made stronger and healthier through your generosity.

Thank you!

The Kent-Valentine House: A Center for Garden Club Tradition and Creativity

The Kent-Valentine House, a stately 19th-century mansion in the heart of Richmond, serves as the proud headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia. Beyond its elegant architecture and historic significance, the house stands as a symbol of the club's long-standing dedication to conservation, horticulture, and the art of floral design. Each week, from September through May, its rooms are brightened and refreshed by the work of Richmond-area garden clubs, which dedicate their time and talents to creating new floral arrangements.

This tradition is a showcase of artistry, talents, discipline, and teamwork. Members carefully plan seasonal designs, drawing inspiration from Virginia's gardens



and landscapes, while also ensuring that the arrangements reflect creativity and respect for the historic interiors. The process requires behind-the-scenes effort, from selecting the freshest flowers and greenery to refining balance, color, and scale so that each arrangement complements the character of the house. The arranging teams arrive with buckets of freshly cut greenery and seasonal flowers to get to work beautifying our wonderful headquarters.

Each stunning transformation of the KVH demonstrates not only the volunteers' skills but also their love for sharing beauty with the community. Visitors, staff, and guests are greeted by living displays that honor Virginia's horticultural heritage and embody GCV's mission of preservation and



education. In this way, the KVH is not simply a headquarters; it is a living canvas where tradition and creativity meet, sustained by the dedication of garden club members.

Special thanks are extended to these clubs whose members devote their time and artistry: The Ashland Garden Club, The Boxwood Garden Club, The James River Garden Club, The Petersburg Garden Club, Three Chopt Garden Club, Three Rivers Garden Club, The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton, and The Williamsburg Garden Club. Their arranging talents bring the Kent-Valentine House to life month after month. 🌿

—Hyde Loupassi, Kent-Valentine House Committee Flower Teams Chairman, Three Chopt Garden Club



Congratulations to Meghan Britton and Austin Chinn — GCV's 2025 Conservation and Environmental Studies Fellows

Meghan Britton

The 2025 Garden Club of Virginia Graduate Research Fellow in Conservation and Environmental Studies

Meghan returned to graduate school after spending several years as a middle school science teacher. She is currently in her third year, pursuing a doctorate in Ecological Sciences at Old Dominion University. Meghan's dissertation research focuses on urban ecology of the monarch-milkweed relationship, and her fellowship project is entitled Urban Garden Habitat Quality and Connectivity for Monarch Butterflies. Meghan's goal is to understand the dynamics between habitat patches containing milkweeds and nectar flowers that cater to monarch butterflies in public urban settings. She will

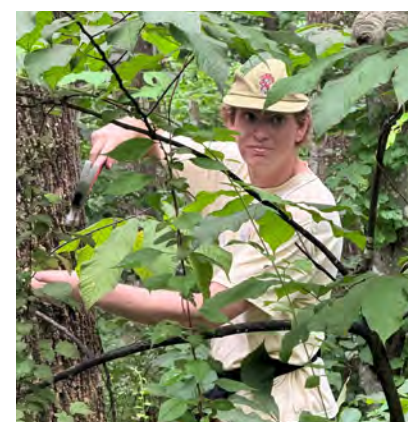
create models describing the current situation, as well as predicting the habitat variables that lead to higher monarch abundance in these patches. Moreover, Meghan's research will enable better targeting of support and resources for habitat restoration locations in Hampton Roads.

Meghan plans to spend the summer completing fieldwork, which includes mapping pollinator gardens in the public parks of Hampton Roads, measuring the milkweeds present by species, and observing the monarch abundance by life stage in each location. Meghan's research will have practical implications for

gardeners in Hampton Roads as she identifies which factors have the highest degree of influence on monarch abundance. Identifying gaps that exist in the landscape will enable targeting the best locations for implementing a garden. 🌿



Meghan Britton, Graduate Research Fellow in Conservation and Environmental Studies



Austin Chinn, Undergraduate Research Fellow in Conservation and Environmental Studies



of Virginia's Piedmont Forests Using Remote Sensing, Austin's proposal required him to survey and measure individual trees on 45 forest sampling plots created over the forested mountain at UVA's Morven Sustainability Lab. After gathering this "ground truth biomass data," Austin's plans include the use of aerial images taken by drones to supplement satellite imagery and test vegetation indices to determine which is the best algorithm for biomass prediction.

Ultimately, Austin's research aims to create an interactive map which will allow a range of opportunities for education, forest remediation, and extended research on the property. Austin's research will obtain the data needed and create a unique tool for researching a range of forest health issues, such as controlling invasive species and sparking controlled burns. 🌿

—Diane Thomas, GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee Chairman, The Garden Club of Alexandria

Austin Chinn

The 2025 Garden Club of Virginia Undergraduate Research Fellow in Conservation and Environmental Studies

A rising fourth-year student at the University of Virginia, Austin was

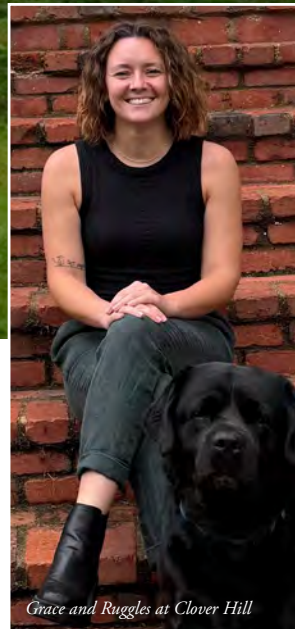
highly recommended by his advisor in UVA's Department of Environmental Science, Manuel Lerdau. Austin's research is a creative and exciting use of technology to help survey and study Virginia's forests and aims to establish an algorithm that will allow the use of publicly available satellite data to evaluate forest health. Titled High-Resolution Biomass Estimation

The 2025 William D. Rieley Historic Landscape Research Fellowship

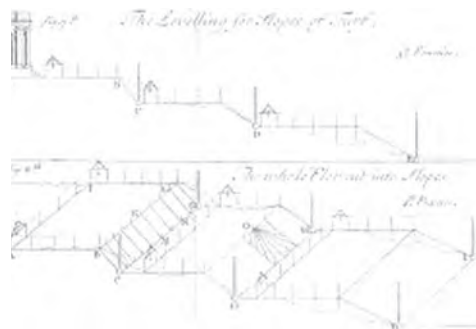
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TERRACED LANDFORMS IN THE CHESAPEAKE REGION

Over the past summer, I devoted my research to a unique feature of Virginia's Colonial landscapes: the terraced "falling gardens" that descend dramatically toward the James River. These historic landforms, carved directly into the bluffs below grand houses, offered sweeping views of both sky and water, an aesthetic that blended human ambition with the natural topography. While each site has its own distinct history, together they form a powerful narrative of how early Virginians shaped their environment to reflect wealth, status, and cultural ideals.

The goal of my project was to compare these terraced gardens across three sites in Surry County – Cedar Fields, Pleasant Point, and Four Mile Tree – investigating their historic design and contemporary significance. This comparative study required careful archival research, site visits, and conversations with historians, archaeologists, and local residents. In studying these layered landscapes, I came to see the falling gardens not only as remnants of the past but also as active participants in how we remember Colonial history today. They reveal how design once mirrored social hierarchies and how, over centuries, erosion, maintenance, and adaptation have altered their form.



Grace and Ruggles at Clover Hill



Grace Donnelly with GCV members and current and former members of the Restoration and Fellowship Committees.
Photo courtesy of Claire Mellinger.



Candy Crosby, Historic Landscape Research Fellowship Chairman and Grace Donnelly

With the support of the Garden Club of Virginia fellowship and the guidance of my mentor team at Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, I was able to pursue immersive fieldwork and gain a clearer understanding of these landscapes. What I found most valuable, however, was the opportunity to think critically about landscape as both artifact and living system, one that continues to evolve and provoke new questions. As a graduate student in landscape architecture, this project deepened my understanding of how historic landscapes can inform contemporary practice, challenging us to balance preservation with interpretation. The lessons of these gardens extend beyond their slopes, offering insight into how we might approach preservation, design, and interpretation in landscapes yet to come. 🌿



Richard and Jeanne Emmerson of Cedar Fields with Grace Donnelly

—Grace Donnelly, graduate student in landscape architecture at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Historic Landscape Research Fellow 2025



Award Nominations Deadlines

NOVEMBER 1

Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award

DECEMBER 1

Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement

MARCH 1

Common Wealth Award
de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation

Horticulture Award of Merit

JUNE 1

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 award information visit GCVirginia.org/awards.

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CELEBRATING THE 180TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENT-VALENTINE HOUSE

From its origins as the home of a Connecticut gentleman and his family, to the headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia, 12 East Franklin Street has some stories to tell in celebration of its 180th anniversary.



1845

A native of Suffield, Connecticut, Horace Leavitt Kent (1804-1872) and his wife, Frances Elizabeth Baldwin, whose portraits hang in the east parlor, chose Isaiah Rogers, a Massachusetts native, to build their house at the northwest corner of First and Franklin Streets in 1845. Rogers was the Supervising Architect of the United States for two years and renowned for his design of hotels, courthouses, and other major buildings. The two lots were purchased from Thomas Rutherford. This three-bay Italianate row house, inspired by the brownstones of Gramercy Park in New York City, was skirted by an intricate cast-iron veranda, perhaps the oldest ironwork in Richmond. The double parlor, on the west side, was decorated in the Gothic Revival style. The Kents raised their 13 children here.

Kent's granddaughter described the residence as follows: "The house and grounds at first covered half the square and was very attractive, with broad verandas and a fine garden. I remember the flowers quite distinctly. There were huge magnolia trees, flowering pomegranites [sic] and sweet shrubs, all rarities in those days, with numbers of violets, narcissas [sic], and peonies and so forth."

Kent was an interesting character—a rags-to-riches story. After the death of his father and his mother's remarriage to a "most uncongenial and unpleasant" stepfather, Kent booked passage, at age



Photos courtesy The Valentine

19, on the schooner "Pilot" bound for Richmond. Upon arrival, Kent had "between 30-40 dollars, a scant wardrobe, a good constitution and nothing else." Beginning as a salesman in a dry goods store, he went on to start the first New York-style department store in Richmond and became the largest importer in the city, as well as the benefactor and promoter of the city's foreign trade. He was a director of First National Bank and a trustee of Hollywood Cemetery, where he and his family are buried. He remained loyal to the Union after secession at great peril to himself and his family. When Richmond was

taken by Union forces and his business seized to produce uniforms and to later serve as a war hospital, he reported a financial loss of over half a million dollars (nearly \$10 million in today's dollars) after his warehouse burned.

1870

In the 1870s, the Kents' house was sold to Charles Talbott (1813-1881) and his wife, Caroline Moore Benson. A Baltimore native and manufacturer, Talbott, along with his brothers Samuel and James, formed Talbott Brothers to operate the Shockoe Manufacturing Works. They built steam and locomotive engines, as well as sawmills. During the Civil War, their facilities were at the disposal of the Confederate Army.

Armistead Churchill Young III, Charles Talbott's grandson, gave the beautiful iron urns in front and a large cut-glass punch bowl and silver ladle, original to the house. Talbott's granddaughter, Elizabeth Talbott Gwathmey Jeffress, gave the tall case clock in the foyer. An interesting note: Mrs. Jeffress was instrumental in providing funds to restore some of the small gardens within the serpentine walls of the University of Virginia, where her brother was on the faculty.

The house was briefly rented to the E. L. Bemiss family during the construction of their new home at Second and Grace Streets.



Photos courtesy The Valentine

KENT'S GRANDDAUGHTER DESCRIBED THE RESIDENCE AS FOLLOWS:

"The house and grounds at first covered half the square and was very attractive, with broad verandas and a fine garden. I remember the flowers quite distinctly. There were huge magnolia trees, flowering pomegranites [sic] and sweet shrubs, all rarities in those days, with numbers of violets, narcissas [sic], and peonies and so forth."

1904

In 1904, the house was sold to Granville Gray Valentine (1860-1943), the great-nephew of James Madison, and his wife, Elise Calvin Bragg. Valentine's father, Mann Satterwhite Valentine II, created Valentine's Meat Juice, a health drink to save his wife from a serious illness. This popular beefy multivitamin in a bottle accompanied journalist-adventurer Harry de Windt through Africa and Asia, helped German doctors combat cholera, and protected against typhoid in England. At Richmond's Commonwealth Club, the meat juice was the secret ingredient for their famous Bloody Marys. Mann Valentine II provided the original bequest for the Valentine Museum, leaving his personal collection of art and artifacts. His brother, Edward V. Valentine, was a renowned sculptor. Granville and Elise Valentine were ardent preservationists in Richmond—they were instrumental in enlarging the Valentine Museum and purchased the Old Stone House, currently the Poe Museum, to save it from demolition, giving it to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (now Preservation Virginia).

The Valentines made extensive renovations over the years at 12 East Franklin Street, replacing the cast-iron veranda with a tall portico over the front door and adding a two-story wing on the east side of the house. The original cast-iron railings were repurposed between the Ionic colossal columns of the portico. The three-story bay was expanded to five bays. The interior was altered to the Colonial Revival taste, except for the Gothic Revival west double parlor, and the central hall which boasted a triple flight of stairs. Thus the northern-inspired house was transformed into a gracious southern mansion.

1969

The Kent-Valentine House was added to the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1969, and was also listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register on Nov. 5, 1968, and designated a National Historic Landmark on Nov. 11, 1971. In addition,

Granville Gray Valentine, Jr., and his sisters secured the first preservation easement in the city of Richmond just prior to selling the home to the Garden Club of Virginia.

1972

In 1972, the Garden Club of Virginia purchased 12 East Franklin Street from the Valentine family. For the backstory, see page 20-21 on Mary Ross Scott Reed: "Godmother" of the Kent-Valentine House.

GCV members from across the commonwealth generously donated antique furnishings for the house. The KVH has had many devoted champions over the years, notably:

- **Mary Frances Flowers**, The Boxwood Garden Club, who was the GCV president (1970-1972) at the time of the purchase of the house and spearheaded the "Shall There Be a Garden Club of Virginia Headquarters?" campaign
- **Christine Hale Martin**, The Garden Club of Gloucester, a former GCV president (1962-1964), author of Follow the Green Arrow: The History of the Garden Club of Virginia 1920-1970, who donated a large portion of her estate to furnish the house, including the addition of the sun porch and wrought iron furniture
- **Robert Talley**, a GCV honorary member, who donated his valuable collection of original Mark Catesby prints, now located on the third floor. Catesby's work predates Audubon by 100 years; his prints were studied by Thomas Jefferson, as well as by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

1993

In 1993, the Garden Club of Virginia Board of Directors and membership at the Annual Meeting approved the master plan to redress the structural, electrical, and mechanical problems at the KVH, including the addition of an elevator/stair tower to make the house handicap accessible. The plan called for the restoration of the architectural integrity of the interior, as well as opening the second

floor for Historic Garden Week office space, a library, a board room, and an office for the GCV President. The previously unusable third floor was transformed into a large meeting room.

2020

In preparation for the 2020 GCV Centennial, many improvements were made to the Kent-Valentine House, including the conservation of six gold-gilded mirrors, refreshment of fabrics on the first floor, repair of furniture and lamps, painting of the interior and exterior of the house, as well as structural repairs. Following generous donations from the Elisabeth Reed Charitable Trust and the Mezzanotte Foundation in 2022, cosmetic and other improvements added new carpeting, re-framed the photos of former GCV presidents, created more office space for staff and the GCV president, and updated the second floor conference room. As part of an archival storage project funded by foundations and individuals, HVAC was added to dehumidify the basement, which was also cleaned and painted.

2025

This old house continues to host the 48 GCV member clubs with nearly 3,400 members from across the commonwealth. In addition to being the working headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia, the Kent-Valentine House is a place for celebrations—from baby showers to wedding receptions. She's an old lady, requiring constant maintenance but, just like her chandeliers, she continues to sparkle! 🌿

— **Julie Grover, GCV Membership News Committee Chairman, The Blue Ridge Garden Club**

Reimagining the Kent-Valentine House Garden: STRENGTHENING GCV'S VISION FOR THE NEXT 180 YEARS

The Kent-Valentine house garden is uniquely situated at the place where people, flora, and ecologies from across Virginia meet. The design of the garden at GCV's headquarters will reflect, represent, and respond to this landscape of meeting and mixing.

For more than a century, the Garden Club of Virginia has been bringing people together to restore and protect historic landscapes, conserve precious ecological and horticultural resources, and educate community members – young and old alike – about the environmental, physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of horticulture. And, since 1971, the GCV has coordinated the accomplishments of its members through its headquarters at the historic Kent-Valentine House in



GETTING STARTED

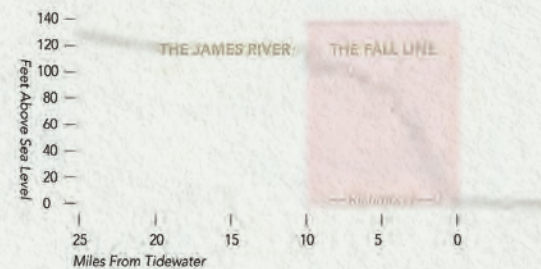
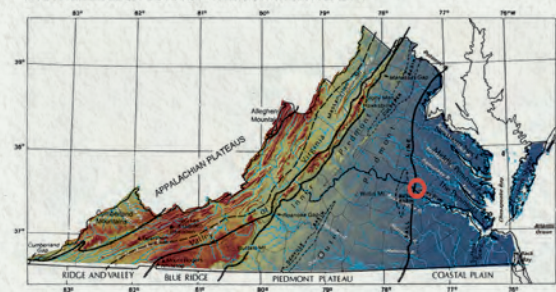
GCV and NBW started this process by studying and documenting invasive plants and their negative impact on the garden in order to develop design and management ideas to remove and mitigate invasive pressure on this historic landscape. Subsequently, GCV and the design team recognized that a comprehensive review of the garden would be most effective in ensuring the long-term vibrancy and resiliency of the landscape. Accordingly, the team analyzed the KVH landscape's existing conditions, what's working and what isn't, what plant and tree species are there and how are they thriving together (or not), and by what means can people of various abilities traverse through and enjoy the garden. Next, the design team dove deeper into the history of the land to gain a greater understanding of not only the property's past since its construction 180 years ago, but also of the deep geologic, ecological, and social history of this region along the James River.

downtown Richmond. While the GCV has made numerous enhancements to the Kent-Valentine House garden over the years with its distinguished landscape architects, the new design will reflect and embody the multifaceted goals and programs of the Garden Club of Virginia. To sustain and advance its mission for the next 50 years and beyond, GCV has partnered with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects (NBW) to reimagine and redesign the garden at its headquarters and central gathering space.

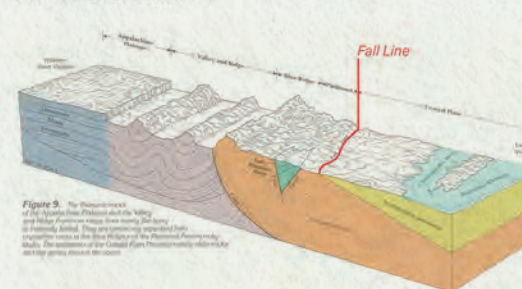


INTERPRETIVE INTENT

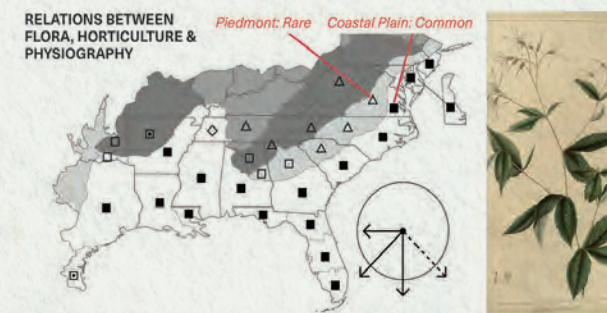
THE FALL LINE & FLORA OF THE COMMONWEALTH



PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES



RELATIONS BETWEEN FLORA, HORTICULTURE & PHYSIOGRAPHY



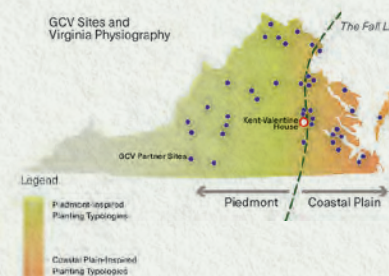
By following this process prior to design, GCV and NBW were able to better reflect on and relate GCV's history with that of the garden's, directly informing and inspiring the design vision and narrative for the reimagined garden: The Kent-Valentine House represents layers of convergence. It is the headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia.

It is located near the State Capitol, the meeting place of elected representatives from across the commonwealth. The house and garden are only several blocks north of the James River as it falls on its way to Tidewater from its origins in the Appalachian Mountains. At a regional landscape scale, the KVH garden is located where different elevations, geologies, and soils meet as the ecological character of the land transitions from the mountain highlands and Piedmont of the west to the Coastal Plain of the east.

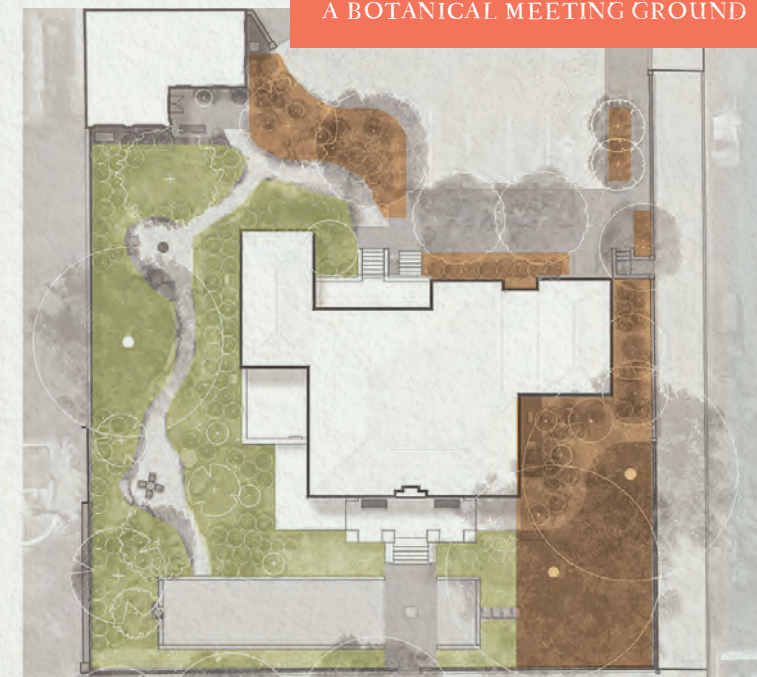
Cumulatively, these factors create a distinct meeting place where flora representing the different physiographic (i.e. geology + ecology) provinces of Virginia uniquely coexist. The garden's function as a teaching ground for native plant ecologies that celebrate the diversity of Virginia perfectly mirrors the mission and broad reach of the GCV.

The garden interprets the flora of the fall line, where mountains and foothills drastically meet the coastal plain, by incorporating native species that can be found across the state and are stewarded by GCV member clubs.

Building on this vision, NBW, in close collaboration with site stewards from GCV, has designed a renewed Kent-Valentine House garden that reflects and converges the native ecologies, plant species, and horticultural practices of the physiographic regions of Virginia. The garden interprets the flora of the fall line, where mountains and foothills drastically meet the Coastal Plain, by incorporating native species that can be found across the commonwealth and are stewarded by GCV member clubs.

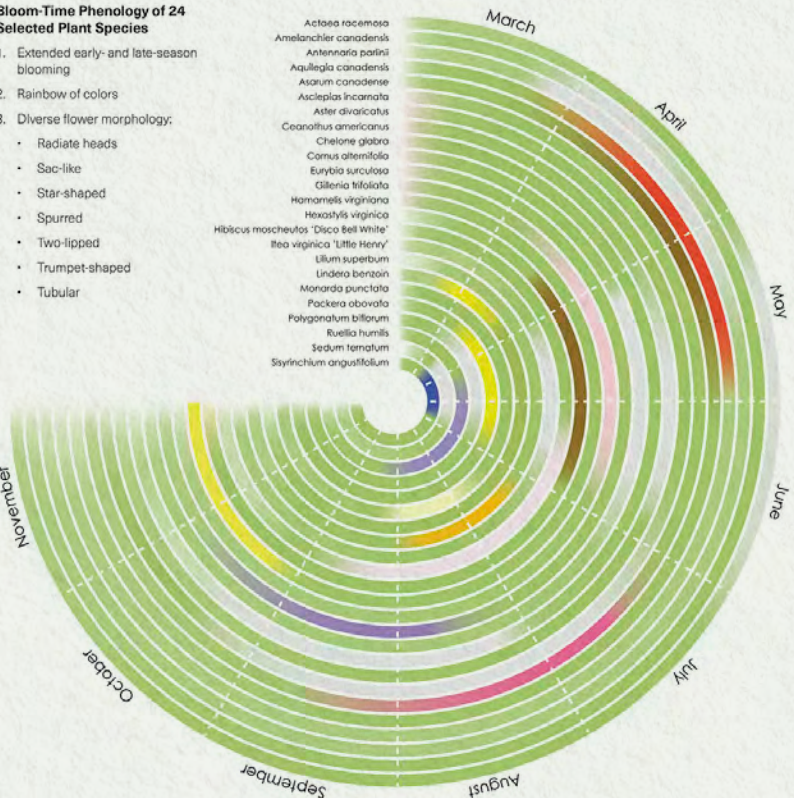


A BOTANICAL MEETING GROUND

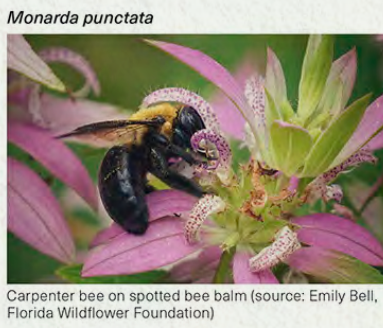


OVERALL PLANTING PLAN AND URBAN ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Bloom-Time Phenology of 24 Selected Plant Species



Plant-Pollinator Relationships: Case Studies



NBW's planting plan has been informed through in-depth research into hardy and resilient plant species appropriate for the fall line region that can also provide much needed pollinator habitat in urban central Richmond. In alignment with GCV's mission to educate, interpretive features and amenities placed throughout the garden will inform club members, school groups, guided tours, and public visitors with how these specific horticultural selections relate to the physiography and ecology of Virginia, while imparting lessons for how pollinator gardens can be started successfully across the city, region, and state.

A particular focus of the garden redesign was to ensure accessibility to and through the landscape. To allow for club members and visitors of all ages and mobilities to explore and enjoy the garden; vehicular parking and pedestrian entries to the garden and KVH have been detailed to be universally accessible to the latest Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Likewise, paths that meander and move you through the garden are also accessible while maintaining materials and surfaces that do not negatively impact the intimate setting of the garden.

Garden Typology Precedents



Specialty Plantings



Coastal Plain Rain Garden



Piedmont Forest Garden



Formal Lawn Panel



- LEGEND**
- Piedmont Forest plantings
 - Coastal Plain Rain garden plantings
 - Specialty plantings
 - Magnolia infill planting
 - Durable edge
 - Part shade plantings
 - Durable edge
 - Full sun plantings
 - Lawn panel

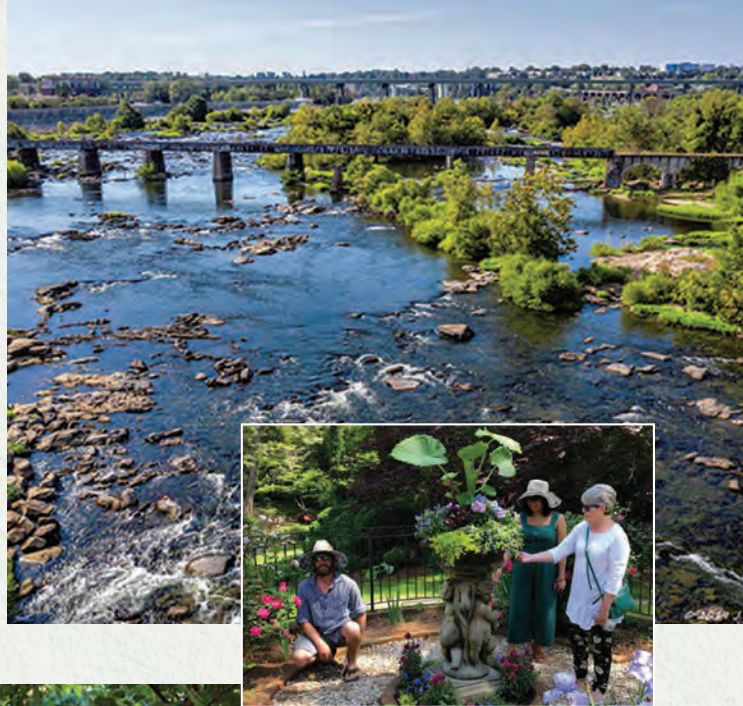
NBW's planting plan has been informed through in-depth research into hardy and resilient plant species appropriate for the fall line region that can also provide much needed pollinator habitat in urban central Richmond.



OVERALL PLANTING PLAN AND URBAN PURPOSE

As a green respite within bustling central Richmond, the garden design also incorporates well shaded areas to rest and reflect. A nature-inspired reflecting fountain, carved from locally sourced granite, acts as a focal point in the garden for solitary enjoyment or small gatherings. And on that note, a priority for the redesign was to consider how different member club gatherings and events could be hosted within the garden. Accordingly, lawn panels have been accommodated within the garden to allow for flexible use and an open entry into the garden from the public-facing Franklin Street, with smaller, arcing spaces allocated off of the main garden path amongst plantings, providing more intimate spaces for meeting, socializing, and conversation.

NBW and their team of experts, including Timmons Civil Engineering



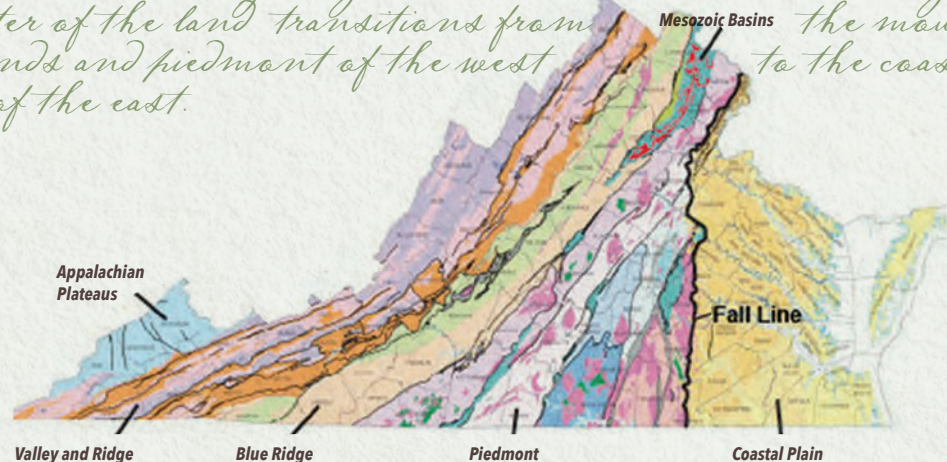
and Gropen interpretive fabricators, is currently completing design drawings to inform construction.

The Restoration Committee aims to start construction in February 2026, pending permit approvals and coordination with the contractor, J.W. Townsend Landscapes. We look forward to welcoming you to the reimagined Kent-Valentine House garden upon its completion, projected by the end of 2026!

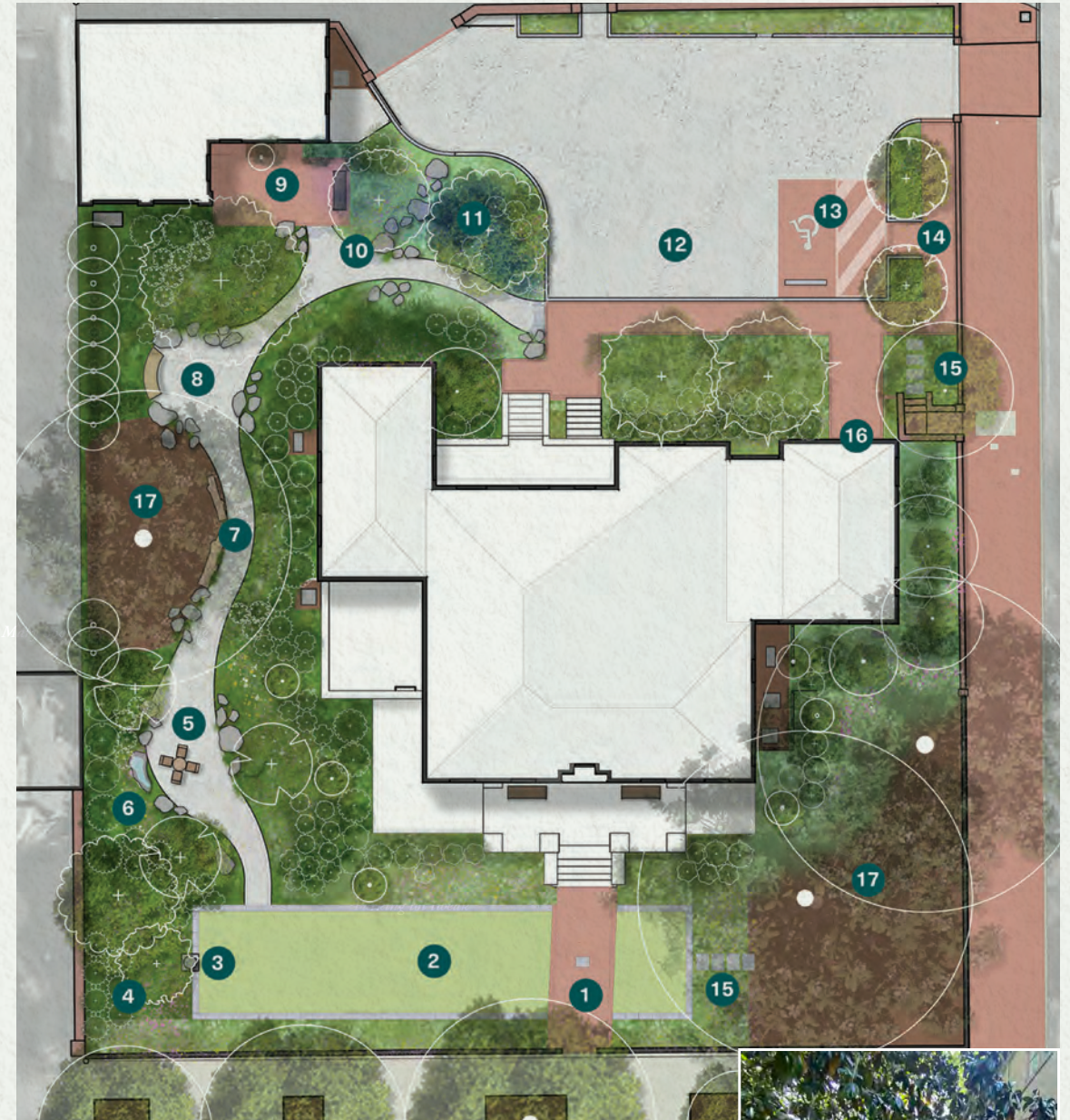
Please watch for more communications from the Restoration Committee for updates on the garden as construction progresses.



At a regional landscape scale, the KVH garden is located where different elevations, geologies, and soils meet as the ecological character of the land transitions from the mountain highlands and piedmont of the west to the coastal plain of the east.



As a green respite within bustling central Richmond, the garden design also incorporates well shaded areas to rest and reflect.



Legend

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Brick entry path with engraved paver | 10. Stepping stones |
| 2. Lawn panel | 11. Rain garden |
| 3. Garden art | 12. Gravel Parking |
| 4. Margaret Bemiss Dogwood | 13. ADA Spot |
| 5. Seating area | 14. ADA Pedestrian ramp |
| 6. Fountain | 15. Bluestone pavers |
| 7. Accessible 'river' path | 16. ADA entrance with elevator access |
| 8. Interpretive area, casual seating | 17. Protected historic magnolias |
| 9. Brick patio | |



CELEBRATING MARY ROSS SCOTT REED, "GODMOTHER" OF THE KENT-VALENTINE HOUSE

By Julie Grover, GCV Membership News Committee Chairman, The Blue Ridge Garden Club

Mary Ross Scott Reed (1906-1991), a member of The James River Garden Club, had historic preservation in her blood. Along with her sister Elisabeth Strother Scott Bocock, the mother of Former GCV President Bessie Bocock Carter, Mrs. Reed was one of the founders of the Historic Richmond Foundation. Her cousin, Mary Wingfield Scott, was a historic preservationist who documented Richmond neighborhoods and advocated for preservation over demolition. These ladies "combined their resources, social connections, love of history, and passion for preservation to save many of Richmond's historic buildings."

How lucky for the Garden Club of Virginia!

Prior to the purchase of 12 East Franklin Street, Garden Club of Virginia meetings were held at members' homes, and files were stored in closets and under beds. The Historic Garden Week office rented space at the Jefferson Hotel. According to *Follow the Green Arrow II*, "After fifty years of moving files and information from one place to another, [GCV President] Mrs. [Alice] Flowers echoed [GCV Past President] Mrs. [Dorothy] Kellam's belief that The Garden Club of Virginia needed a 'home' of its own."

In May 1971, at the Annual Meeting in Charlottesville, the membership voted to purchase a

historic house in Richmond to serve as GCV headquarters. Lewis F. Powell, Jr., the GCV's attorney and later Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, advised that the proper usage of Historic Garden Week income would be to purchase, restore, and preserve an old house. Powell also helped the GCV amend its constitution and bylaws to become a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization.

The home of the Granville Valentine family at 12 East Franklin Street in Richmond's Monroe Ward district was on the market; historic homes in the neighborhood were threatened with demolition. Mrs. Reed generously offered to lend the GCV the funds to purchase the Valentine house and agreed that the loan be

repaid, without interest, over the course of six years. The Valentine siblings offered to sell only to the Garden Club of Virginia at a reduced price of \$150,000 with a historic easement attached. The Valentines graciously donated all of the beautiful pier and over-the-mantel mirrors in the house, as well as rugs and furniture. In January 1972, the deed to the property, later known as the Kent-Valentine House, was transferred to the Garden Club of Virginia – "an act of faith in historic preservation and the future of the GCV."

... "an act of faith in historic preservation and the future of the Garden Club of Virginia"

Rossie Fisher, the youngest of Mrs. Reed's daughters, remembers her mother's commitment to make her community stronger. In order to preserve historic homes, Mrs. Reed purchased many houses in Richmond, particularly on Church Hill. She was a "powerhouse," a philanthropist who preferred to work behind the scenes. "Her interests, vision, and energy knew no boundaries."

In addition to her interest in historic preservation, Mrs. Reed was passionate about trees, gardens, and conservation. In the 1930s, she and her husband, William Thomas Reed, Jr., built a Georgian-style house, Sabot Hill, in Goochland County outside of Richmond with formal gardens featuring boxwood, roses, foxglove, and dahlias – a wonderful home for their five children. Her love of preservation, horticulture, and conservation was passed down to her three daughters, Elisabeth Reed Carter, Alice Reed McGuire, and Mary Ross Reed Fisher, all members of The James River Garden Club, as well as to her grandchildren.

Recent gifts from the Elisabeth Reed Carter Charitable Lead Trust have made it possible to renovate the second floor of the Kent-Valentine House, as well as make repairs and improvements to the house. 🌿

VALENTINE GRANDSON'S REMINISCE

The two oldest surviving grandchildren of Granville Gray Valentine and Elise Calvin Bragg Valentine recently accepted an invitation to revisit the Kent-Valentine House, home of their grandparents. Ted Curtis, son of Maria Gray Valentine Curtis, and Granville Valentine III, son of Granville Valentine, Jr., enjoyed a walk down memory lane, along with Ted's wife, Margaret.

The Valentine cousins do not remember their grandfather, who was born in 1860, married in 1904, and died in 1943. In a family history, Ted's father described him as follows, "Mr. Valentine wore a batwing collar with cravat on all occasions. He was tall, thin, with eyes that sparkled when his wife, 16 years his junior, focused on him as the butt of her outrageous jokes." In a humorous letter to his wife dated 1912, Mr. Valentine questioned the future of his residence:

"We will talk about the zoological Garden at 12 E. Franklin on your return....The little girl [Elizabeth Lee Valentine] can have her gardens, and in winter we can on the third floor fix up a little flower plot for her, shall the cats, pigeons, guinea pigs, dog, squirrel, birds, fox & monkey all have cages, or are they to be turned loose on the 3rd floor [?]. Uncle Joe will keep the pony in the furnace room."

Young Granville Valentine, Jr. would mount the pony, stop by to get his neighbor Billy Hill, and the two boys would ride their ponies to Bon Air – several miles away across the James River.

The cousins have vivid memories, however, of their grandmother, who died in 1970 at the age of 93. Known to her friends as Calvin, Mrs. Valentine "dominated her dinner table with a wit bordering on the hilarious." Instead of installing a servant-call button under the dining table to indicate it was time for the next course, as was the custom of the day, she preferred to hold two live wires together, creating a spark and a loud pop! Her favorite chair was near the Franklin Street window in the east parlor, where she would watch the passersby while indulging in her favorite peanut brittle.

Mrs. Valentine loved having her nine grandchildren come to visit. There was a pool table on the third floor for their amusement. Granville III remembers



Cousins Granville Valentine III (left) and Ted Curtis (right) Photo by Julie Grover

lobbing monkey balls, the fruit from the Osage orange tree in the backyard, across the brick wall onto traffic on First Street, until a policeman halted the fun. Ted remembers lighting dead magnolia leaves on fire in the fireplace, creating a firecracker effect. Mrs. Valentine would ask Ted to come help her with household chores. Once, after Ted had assisted her with a difficult project, he was pleased that his grandmother offered to pay him for his services – deliberately dating the check in the 1800s and therefore unable to be cashed!

The grandchildren remember the parlors being draped in heavy, dark, velvet curtains. Many happy family occasions took place at 12 East Franklin Street, including the wedding reception for Ted's parents, holiday gatherings with real candles on the Christmas tree, and Sunday lunches following services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Mrs. Valentine would walk downtown to her special pew. It was at a family gathering at the house that the Valentines learned of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Twelve East Franklin Street, once the home of the Kent family with their 13 children, later the home of the Talbott family, and finally the home and birthplace of the three children of Granville and Elise Valentine, continues to be a vibrant address as the headquarters of the Garden Club of Virginia and home to nearly 3400 members across the Commonwealth of Virginia. If these walls could talk! 🌿



Photo of Mary Ross Scott Reed from the collection of her granddaughter Alice McGuire Massie

HIGHLIGHTING NATIVE PLANTS

This year's Tour Gardens Embrace Conservation

Members of the GCV aim to make Virginia greener for everyone. As support for environmental conservation grows, these efforts become more important than ever. Keeping in mind the Garden Club of Virginia's mission to conserve the gifts of nature, the Historic Garden Week and Conservation and Beautification committees have recently collaborated in a new and exciting way to highlight these crucial issues.

Since 2013, Historic Garden Week has surveyed tour visitors for feedback on their experiences. Consistently, visitors want to see more gardens, with 43% of the nearly 2,000 people who responded indicating such. Interest in educational opportunities on Historic Garden Week tours increased to 14% this past year, and requests for information about native plants and sustainable gardens emerged as key themes. To respond, our two committees are offering three simple ideas with education at their core. We want to share them to encourage ideas for your tours to embrace and showcase conservation best practices.

Flower Arranging — The GCV strongly discourages the use of non-biodegradable floral foam for flower arranging, a stance we've held for years. Since the stunning arrangements created to decorate tour properties are such a popular highlight of HGW, these creations can also serve as inspiring examples for tour visitors. Arrangers should opt for environmentally friendly mechanics, such as chicken wire, and incorporate native flowers and foliage into arrangements.

Alternatively, consider setting up a horticultural display instead of a traditional arrangement if you have sufficient space. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the Virginia Invasive Species list and consider removing invasive plants from your garden; avoid using them in flower arrangements. Invasive seeds, which are spread by wind and birds, are outcompeting native plants in woodlands, wetlands, and forests. You might be surprised to learn that butterfly bush, nandina, privet, bittersweet, and, of course, English ivy are on the list. Our committees will be



Baptista by Betty Ann Galway



Photo courtesy Terri Lowman

updating the popular "Arranging Tips" information sheet with an emphasis on native plants in time for HGW, too.

Signage and Docents in Featured Gardens — Recognizing and highlighting native plants that homeowners are cultivating in their gardens is a simple way to educate tour visitors. New for HGW 2026, weatherproof signage identifying native plants will be available to all tours, shipped with the standard directional signs and green arrows in March. This 18 x 24-inch sign features a concise but impactful message alongside HGW's logo, "Native plants grow here. The Garden Club of Virginia promotes conservation and pollinator-friendly gardens." Special signage will help draw attention to beneficial plants and the biodiversity they support. Furthermore, if there are enough volunteers, hosts and hostesses can talk about native plants with interested visitors. Many tours partner with Master Gardeners in their areas, who often need to fulfill community

service hours. This partnership is an excellent way for them to share their knowledge and expertise.

Educational displays — Tour teams have already put in a great effort in this area, with many notable examples. 2025 Richmond tour co-chairman Katherine Mitchell (James River GC) saw the tours she and her team led as an opportunity to highlight Virginia native and pollinator plants through educational displays at the tour headquarters. These displays were enjoyed by visitors, who appreciated these learning opportunities while waiting at shuttle stops. They were created and set up by Virginia Wittmer from PlantVirginiaNatives.org and Anna Aquino (Boxwood GC) from Bee City RVA. Blue Ridge Conservation was highlighted at a property during the Lynchburg tour last year, sharing information about native plants, pollinators, and chemical-free yards. The Virginia Native Plant Society had a booth at a tour property on the Gloucester-Mathews tour, with volunteers working to promote the conservation of this priceless heritage.

As representatives from both Historic Garden Week and the Conservation Committees, we strive to continue efforts to educate visitors on the importance of supporting biodiversity and wildlife habitats. We encourage tour chairmen to collaborate with their local Bee Cities and Plant Native organizations and consider incorporating educational exhibits into their tours. HGW is a team effort, and club conservation chairs or horticulture chairs can play a vital role by helping coordinate these informative displays. 🌿

— Eva Clarke, The James River Garden Club, GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee Member, and Virginia Gillock, The Augusta Garden Club, HGW State Chairman



Baptista by Todd Wright



Native wisteria by Ellie Davis



Albemarle County by Roland Hartley



Photo courtesy Donna Moulton

RESOURCES TO ADD NATIVE PLANTS TO YOUR PLANTERS OR GARDEN

PlantVirginiaNatives.org has created regional guidebooks for Virginia, which are available online, and has set up educational displays at past HGW tours.

Wild Ones is a national nonprofit promoting native landscapes through education, advocacy, and collaborative action with several chapters in Virginia. WildOnes.org/chapters/virginia

Bee City USA is a program of the Xerces Society that encourages communities to take steps to sustain their native pollinators. beecityUSA.org

Nature's Best Hope, by Doug Tallamy

The GCV Horticulture Committee has compiled a list of **native plant nurseries** in Virginia. Find it at gcvirginia.org under Member Resources > Horticulture Resources (sign-in required)

Familiarize yourself with the Virginia Invasive Species list and consider eliminating invasive plants from your garden. dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage



Swallowtail butterfly on button bush by Donna Moulton



Rose and monarch by Karen Ellsworth

1 The Boxwood Garden Club

RICHMOND

GCV DISTRICT 1

Congratulations to Anna Aquino, winner of the 2025 Boxwood Garden Club Membership Award of Merit for her dedication to

enhancing the beauty of our community.

Anna, alongside GCV award winner Mary Glen Taylor, was instrumental in the success of the Monument Avenue Median Enhancement Project, which resulted in trees being planted from Roseneath Avenue to Glenside Drive.

Anna has designed and overseen the building of



playgrounds and multiple outdoor spaces in Richmond's East End including at Peter Paul Development Center, a GCV Common Wealth Award winner. Her involvement in Bee City RVA and Capital Trees has been lengthy and meaningful. Anna's generosity leaves beauty in our community.

—Molly Carey



Three Chopt Garden Club

RICHMOND

Alice Goodwin, member of Three Chopt Garden Club, and Victoria Charles Jewelry hosted a luncheon at The Country Club of Virginia on May 14, 2025, featuring Elizabeth Locke. Elizabeth gave a fascinating talk about her life and journey to become the masterful jewelry designer we all know. Elizabeth described her early career in Italy, all her adventures, and how this led her back to Virginia. She regaled the 85 attendees with photographs and illustrious stories of her journeys as a writer and circuitous journey to meet a

goldsmith in Bangkok. In Thailand, Elizabeth discovered the jewelry artisans and wanted to share their talent with the world. This was the beginning of Elizabeth Locke Jewelry known for its unique, bold and neo-Classical designs.

Concluding Elizabeth's entertaining and interesting talk, Becky White of Three Chopt Garden Club presented Elizabeth with a botanical necklace. Becky's colorful botanical incorporated protea as the necklace chain with hydrangea and zinnias as gems.

After the luncheon, Victoria Charles provided unique pieces in Elizabeth Locke's collection for attendees to purchase. Victoria Charles graciously donated a portion of their receipts to Three Chopt Garden Club. Victoria Charles' patronage of Three Chopt Garden Club is very much appreciated. Community outreach programs developed by Three Chopt Garden Club thrive due to the philanthropy of local businesses like Victoria Charles.

—Beth Stallings & Becky White

2 The Lynchburg Garden Club

LYNCHBURG

GCV DISTRICT 2

The Lynchburg Garden Club

LYNCHBURG

Since 1936, The Lynchburg Garden Club has been actively engaged in the care and upkeep of the gardens at the historic Miller-Claytor House. The club is embarking on a project to update the plants and design of the garden as a result of boxwood blight and plant decline, while staying true to the original Charles F. Gillette plan. Recently, club sustainers donated a new sign for the garden, proving their commitment to this important project. Turnout of club members for the annual workday at the garden was outstanding.

—Lisa Richards

The Blue Ridge Garden Club

LEXINGTON

The Blue Ridge Garden Club, founded on Oct. 1, 1925, celebrated its 100th birthday this fall with a commitment to the community and a party at historic Thorn Hill. The club voted to adopt Main Street Lexington's Courthouse Square renovation as our centennial project and pledged \$10,000 towards this effort.

A member of the Garden Club of Virginia since 1930, the Blue Ridge Garden Club strives to be good stewards of the natural beauty of Lexington



and surrounding Rockbridge County. Our community projects have included raising money for the McDowell Burying Ground wall; planting dogwoods and red buds along Route 11 North, and in Oak Grove Cemetery; saving Goshen Pass from development; maintaining the Veterans Memorial Garden on Main Street; and supporting Natural Bridge State Park. Our annual holiday wreath sales support Boxerwood, Friends of the Chessie Trail, Natural Bridge State Park, Nature Camp, Rockbridge Area Conservation

Council, and Roots and Shoots Intergenerational School Garden, as well as Scenic Virginia, Shenandoah Valley Conservancy, and the Garden Club of Virginia.

Our small but mighty club and its members have received three GCV Massie Medals for Distinguished Achievement; three Common Wealth Awards; and four de Lacy Gray Memorial Medals for Conservation. Roots and Shoots Intergenerational Garden at Waddell Elementary School has been a blueprint for school gardens across the commonwealth.

—Julie Grover



The Hampton Roads Garden Club

HAMPTON ROADS

The Huntington Garden Club

NEWPORT NEWS

Calling out "the garden club ladies are here," Drusilla Pair, residence services coordinator for Newport Harbour Apartments in Newport News, introduced members of the Huntington and Hampton Roads garden clubs to 14 eager young residents on one very hot July morning. The six "ladies" jumped right in, and so did the kids. They painted rocks; they put together herb

garden baskets; and they created biodegradable newspaper pots and colored images of plants.

"We have worked with the residents, young and old, of Newport Harbour over the past three years; seven times in all. We have a great experience each time we are here," said Civic Projects Co-Chairman Pam Henifin of The Huntington Garden Club. "It doesn't matter

if we are arranging flowers with the children or decorating wreaths with mothers and grandmothers, we find joy and creativity all around us," added Hampton Roads' Civic Projects Chairman Sherry Maynard.

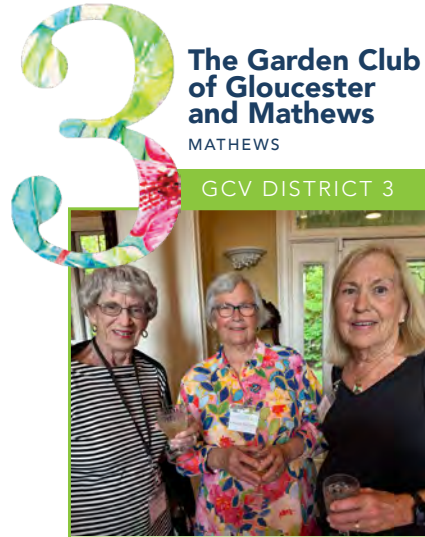
The clubs are already planning for the December holidays and next year's summer activities. The "ladies" can't wait.

—Pam Henifin





GCV DISTRICT 4



The Garden Club of Gloucester and Mathews

GCV DISTRICT 3

The Garden Club of Gloucester and Mathews dedicated benches and legacy trees to Machicomoco State Park in Gloucester on April 16. Members of the Long-Range Planning Committee dedicated our first bench/tree package to Machicomoco State Park in order to give back to the community.

"Our bench/tree packages will be installed in a new location every fall to celebrate the club's upcoming 100th anniversary in 2028. This installation in Machicomoco State Park is the first of many to come," says Long-Range Planning Chairman Leslie Belvin.

On June 11, we held our annual meeting/cocktail party in one of our member's beautiful homes where we celebrated the year's accomplishments and gave out awards. The Presidents Cup (top honor) went to Sarah Finney and Beth Tripp. Sarah Finney is a past president and has been an active member for 55 years. The Community Service Award went to HGW Chairmen Bambi Thompson and Linda Farr for a homeowner's dog wash before the tour!

And on June 18, members of The Garden Club of Gloucester and Mathews attended the GCV Lily Show in the Northern Neck. "It is particularly gratifying to support our fellow member, Ceci Brown, who submitted an arrangement for the show," said GCGM Lily Chairman Lorraine Ingles.

—Lynne Manning



The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula

MIDDLE PENINSULA

The Garden Club of the Middle Peninsula awarded grants to two worthy and exciting local projects in 2025. In May, members of the club and community members gathered at the King and Queen Public Library to "break ground" for one of these projects. The Learning Garden at the King and Queen Public Library was developed by staff and members of Just Harvest, a nonprofit organization based in Essex County. The garden is located on the grounds of the library, near the future site of a Community Outdoor Learning Center. Jay Grebe, of Just Harvest, led the group with

knowledge and enthusiasm. Participants learned about regenerative gardening, developing a garden that is as ecofriendly as possible.

Four semi-raised beds were formed, amended, and planted with vegetables, herbs, companion plants to reduce pest pressure, and native plants to attract pollinators. Jay taught about using a broad fork to open the soil but not destroy it. This was a hands-on community activity with all ages present and participating in the work of preparing and planting the garden. A compost bin and soaker hose irrigation system were also installed.

To celebrate the accomplishments of the day, members of Just Harvest prepared a delicious

plant-based meal for all who attended the event. The recipes honored indigenous people and featured locally grown foods and were enjoyed by all. A young child who participated in all aspects of the garden exclaimed, "This library's the best!" Members of GCMF and Just Harvest were pleased to participate in a joint project that will teach local individuals and families how to grow food and develop an interest in gardening.

To learn more about the Learning Garden, you may call the King and Queen Public Library at 804-785-4425 and for more information about Just Harvest, please visit www.justharvestva.org.

—Michele Nelson



GCV DISTRICT 4

The Garden Club of Danville

DANVILLE

The summer season was all abuzz this year as The Garden Club of Danville celebrated the official Bee



City USA designation alongside the Bee City USA committee with the Gabriella Garden Club, Danville Master Gardener Association, the Dan River Basin Association, and Danville Public Works.

We are overjoyed with all the positive community feedback and walkthroughs at Old Grove Street Cemetery. Constant commitment with beautiful



results is underway: masonry work to repoint the historic gravesites, native plant beds, pamphlet guides that we are happy to frequently replenish, and a safe walking path for all.

We were delighted to have had a full house in the blue



bird nesting box this season, installed in memory of member Vickie Fuquay; we know she would be pleased.

The Perkinson Rose Garden, on the grounds of the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History, is enjoying a full



season of blooms providing a beautiful backdrop for engagement proposals, homecoming commemoratives, and weddings.

—Amanda Griffith





GCV DISTRICT 4

The Garden Study Club

The Martinsville Garden Club

MARTINSVILLE

Native plants, dirty knees, and the joy of doing good work together!

As honored recipients of GCV's Common Wealth Award, The Garden Study Club and The Martinsville Garden Club have been busy at work to establish our new nature garden on the grounds of Smith River Sports



Complex in Martinsville. This joint project is an extension of the clubs' continued work at the Paw Path Pollinator Garden along the Smith River.

Throughout the year, club members met regularly with horticulturist and garden designer Neal Bowman to select native plants and shrubs. Community partners worked with us to prepare our garden space. On the designated day for planting, Mother Nature provided the perfect day! With gloves, trowels, and dedicated gardeners, we placed and planted over 100 plants and shrubs. Visitors to Smith River Sports Complex will have the opportunity to learn about native pollinator plants and wildlife pollinators and will be

inspired to grow gardens that conserve bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and more.

Indeed, butterflies and bees zoomed onto many of the flowers just minutes after we had planted them! We look forward to our continued work nurturing this special garden.

—Debbie Lewis



GCV DISTRICT 5

Leesburg Garden Club

LEESBURG

In July, Leesburg Garden Club happily celebrated the 100th birthday of Eeda Dennis, a member for nearly 50 years. Born and raised in Norway, Eeda married American State Department diplomat Alfred Dennis after the end of WWII. Together they were assigned posts in Italy, Cameroon, and other foreign stations. Eeda has gardened from Iceland to Somalia.

Throughout their international assignments they used Leesburg as their home base. Their property has extensive boxwood gardens, a tapestry/living quilt lawn, and thousands of daffodils on the bluff overlooking the Potomac River, all overseen for decades by Eeda. The community of Ula, Norway, where Eeda returned yearly, has constructed a charming village garden to honor her.

This past summer Teck Russell, a longtime member of Leesburg Garden Club, received the Paul Harris Fellow Award. This honor



GCV DISTRICT 6

The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore

EASTERN SHORE

The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore hosted a new member orientation event at the Barrier Islands Center in Machipongo in August. The club's four newest members learned about the GCV, GCV, and our collective local and statewide projects. The fun and informative event started "at the very beginning" with a comprehensive history of The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore. Everyone had the most fun with the final part of the



recognizes an individual's efforts in promoting goodwill, peace, and understanding through contributions to our community and society in general.

Teck has exemplified civic participation in her dedication to the INOVA Hospital Ladies Board, where she served as president from 2002-2004. Through her leadership, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised and returned to the community. Teck has contributed more than 14,000 volunteer hours to the Ladies Board, and she has certainly made our community a better place. —Judy Gerow



GCV DISTRICT 5

The Little Garden Club of Winchester

WINCHESTER

The Little Garden Club of Winchester got creative at their monthly meeting in August to participate in a flower arranging competition. Club members divided into four separate teams and worked together to create

an arrangement in the Early Colonial design. They brought various containers and selected the one that best fit the early Colonial days. From there, they selected flowers and plant material that they had brought from their home gardens to create their design. Each team was allotted 30 minutes to create and then came time for judging. The club

invited guest Aline Day, who is a Garden Club of Virginia artistic design judging coordinator, to assess each arrangement and discuss the pros and cons of each submission. Overall, it was a wonderful learning experience, and the teams had fun with a little friendly competition.

—Sarah Browning



meeting— an opportunity for the new members to create artistic arrangements in tomato cans using wonderful, late-summer flowers sourced from member gardens. Although all four new members said they didn't have much previous experience arranging, they could have fooled us! —Megan Ames

The Art of the Well-Dressed Garden

THE EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE DESIGNER MEG TURNER

In the shadow of ancient live oaks in New Orleans' Audubon Park, a young corporate lawyer found herself captivated by something far removed from legal briefs and depositions. Daily walks through cathedral-like canopies and past the elegant terraces of grand homes sparked an unexpected passion that would eventually transform Meg Turner from a successful attorney into one of Richmond's most thoughtful landscape designers.

Roots in Irish Soil

Meg's path to garden design began not with formal training, but with childhood summers spent alongside her Irish grandmother in Rehoboth Beach. A practical woman who had emigrated from Ireland's farming country, her grandmother was an organic gardener before the term existed—composting coffee grounds under plants and burying banana peels in the soil with the quiet confidence of someone who understood the earth's rhythms.

"She wasn't an ornamental gardener; she was a practical gardener," Meg recalls. "At the time, I helped more out of obligation, but all those lessons came back once I became more interested."

Southern Awakenings

After graduating from UVA School of Law, Meg's legal career took her to two of the South's most enchanting cities. In New Orleans, her afternoon walks through parks and storied streets revealed masterful plantings that seemed to whisper secrets of classical design. Charleston proved equally seductive, where daily strolls down historic Meeting Street led past weathered bluestone sidewalks, aged brick walls draped in cascading wisteria and creeping fig, and window boxes so perfectly composed they stopped her in her tracks.



Meg and KVH Groundskeeper Joe Moss deck the windows at KVH.

While clerking for a judge in Charleston, Meg lived in a charming carriage house near the Battery with her husband, Banks, who was completing his medical residency. Through a fellow clerk, Ted LeClerc, she met the legendary Emily Whaley of Mrs. Whaley and Her Charleston Garden. Mrs. Whaley lived at 58 Church Street and was Ted's grandmother. Meg soon found herself dining at one of the Holy City's most famous gardens.

"We'd go over to Mrs. Whaley's house, make spaghetti dinner, and hang out," Meg remembers. "Ted would come over and poke around in our tiny courtyard garden. I'd watch him deadhead my annuals or tell me about a certain perennial he liked. Even though he was a lawyer, he was so plugged in because of his grandmother."

The Richmond Revelation

The pivotal moment came when Meg and Banks moved to Richmond and planted their first garden together. Though she now cringes at the "monotonous layout" of those early beds, the joy of that first experience remains vivid—the thrill of discovering Solomon's seal breaking through winter mulch, the satisfying exhaustion of battling invasive English ivy, and the tender care she gave to boxwood cuttings rooted by her father-in-law.

Mastering the Craft

Meg's passion for landscape design became irresistible. She soon discovered George Washington University's landscape design program at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and made the decision to trade legal briefs for a drafting table. The program was comprehensive and challenging, and eventually she earned her certificate. She connected with Anna Galusha Aquino, a brilliant landscape architect and member of The Boxwood Garden Club. Anna became Meg's mentor, and it was through her that Meg developed a sophisticated understanding of classical design principles—proper scale, proportion, and balance elevated by quality materials and meticulous attention to detail.

Twenty years ago, Meg embarked on what would become one of her most

cherished projects. Mary Bacon and John Crowder had purchased a 1920s stone cottage on Richmond's Ridgeway Road, one of four similar houses designed by architect Ernest Flagg—the same visionary behind the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

The cottage, though wildly charming, presented formidable challenges: problematic drainage, serious spatial constraints, and overgrown plantings that had virtually swallowed the house whole. But for Meg, these obstacles became opportunities for creative problem-solving. "It was a wonderfully collaborative process," she recalls—her favorite kind of project.

Through patience, partnership, and collective vision, what emerged was a serene oasis of harmony. The transformation perfectly exemplifies Meg's approach to landscape design—turning challenges into

beauty through thoughtful collaboration and unwavering commitment to the process.

Creating Lasting Beauty

Meg's focus on classical design elements inspired her to develop her own line of garden ornaments and furniture. Her custom planters, chairs, tables, and tuteurs are handcrafted by classically trained artisans who share her commitment to creating enduring pieces worthy of well-loved gardens.

Through her blog, *The Well Dressed Garden*, she shares her expertise in design and horticulture while exploring significant private and public gardens and the latest developments in urban greening initiatives.

Preserving Richmond's Garden Legacy

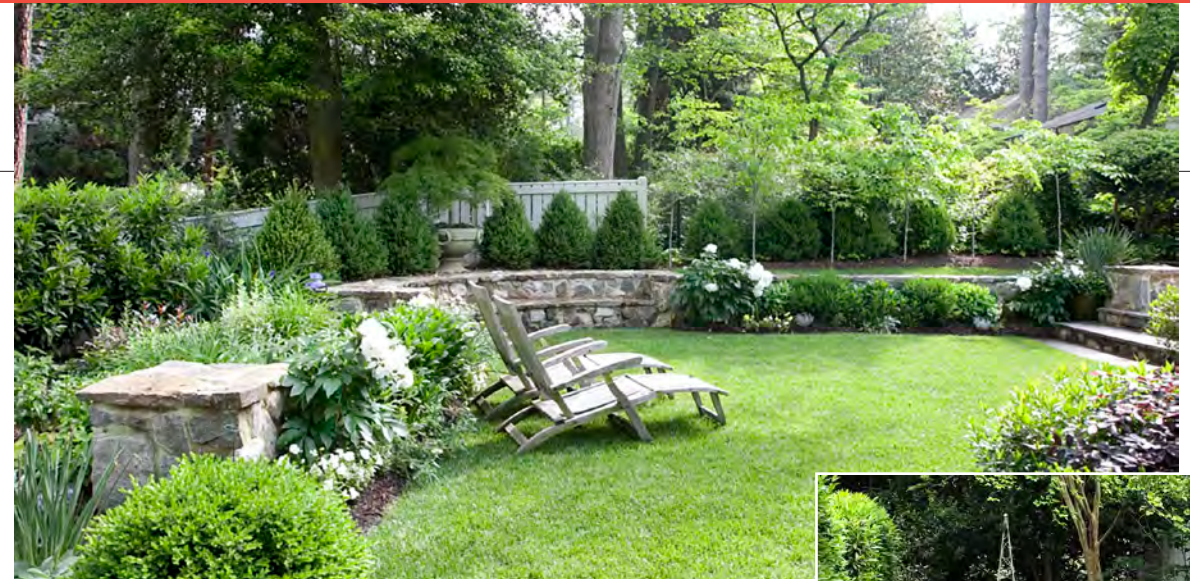
Meg is a longtime member of The James River Garden Club, for which she's held a number of leadership positions. She played



an instrumental role in the formation of Capital Trees and served as board chairman. Today, she is a member of the Garden Club of Virginia's Restoration Committee as a liaison to four historic properties: St. John's Mews, Maymont, Wilton House, and the Kent-Valentine House. She's particularly excited about the GCV's collaboration with Nelson Byrd Woltz, the renowned landscape architecture firm that will contextualize the Kent-Valentine House's landscape using history, geology, and topography to tell its unique story.

From those obligatory childhood hours tending her grandmother's kitchen garden to leading Richmond's most significant landscape preservation efforts, Meg has come full circle. Her journey from corporate lawyer to one of the region's most successful landscape designers proves that sometimes the most meaningful careers bloom from seeds planted long ago—nurtured by curiosity, watered with collaboration, and allowed to flourish through patience and unwavering dedication to beauty that endures.

— Madeline Mayhood, The James River Garden Club



What We’re Listening To

The Garden Mixer:
A delightful podcast
co-hosted by Albemarle
Garden Club member
Leslie Harris

Albemarle Garden Club member Leslie Harris has teamed up with friend and longtime garden writer Marianne Willburn to produce The Garden Mixer, a podcast chock full of practical gardening advice delivered in a fun and engaging format.

From their website:

A garden mixer is traditionally an al fresco cocktail party. You know ... milling around in uncomfortable shoes, meeting old friends, making new ones, enduring small talk in order to spark big talk, networking, laughing, and constantly glancing around for someone offering good nibbles on a platter. All with a great cocktail in hand. Leslie and Marianne have taken the best parts of that and produced a podcast.



Gardening shouldn't be boring. Garden podcasts REALLY shouldn't be boring. We aim to help you find the fun in what you're doing. Find episodes on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts. 🌿



SAVE THE DATES

2025

- November 1 | Nomination Deadline for Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award
- December 1 | Nomination Deadline for Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement
- December 8 | Journal Submission Deadline – Winter Edition

2026

- January 16 | Proposal Deadline for the 2027 HGW Guidebook cover property
- January, TBD | Legislative Day, Richmond
- February 16 | Historic Garden Week tickets go on sale
- February 20-22 | History Blooms, Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Richmond
- March 1 | Award Deadlines: Nominations for de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation
Nominations for Horticulture Award of Merit, Applications for Commonwealth Award
- March 15 | Journal Submission Deadline – Spring Edition
- March 25 | Daffodil Day, Virginia Beach
- April 18-25 | Historic Garden Week
- May 19-21 | Annual Meeting, Roanoke
- June 1 | Award Nomination Deadlines for: Conservation Educator Award, Dugdale Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation, The Helen and Tayloe Murphy Award in Conservation Leadership in Government Award
- June 4 | Member Club Presidents Day, Kent-Valentine House
- June 9-10 | Horticulture Field Day, Charlottesville
- June 15 | Journal Submission Deadline – Summer Edition
- June 17 | Lily Show, Richmond
- June 25 | HGW Boot Camp, Kent-Valentine House

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