

Sow and Tell

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President's Message

"Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit still and watch the leaves turn."

— Elizabeth Lawrence

It doesn't quite feel like autumn yet, and it's been hard to "sit still and watch the leaves turn" as a member of Five Hills! Since our September meeting and by the end of October, we will have had opportunities to attend two field trips, two NCAGC educational schools, a Meadowlark Workday, District III and NCAGC meetings as well as our own meeting next week. We need to remind ourselves to slow down and enjoy quiet time in our gardens as we dig plants for the Plant Sale next April and tend to our garden tasks for the Fall. In perfect timing, "Preparing Our Gardens for Winter" is the topic of our October program. I'll see you on Tuesday, October 16th.

~ Julia

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General Meeting:
Tuesday, October 16

October Program: “Winterizing Your Garden” with Sharon Stickell

Sharon Stickell, a landscape specialist from Merrifield Garden Center, will share her gardening expertise, developing a winter checklist to ensure that our gardens produce colorful flowers in the spring.

“With a landscape architecture degree and over forty years of gardening experience, Sharon enjoys her love of creating garden spaces with customers and co-workers. Her spare time is filled by teaching Tai Chi, designing jewelry, crafts and dancing.”

(photo credit: Merrifield G.C.)



Be on the lookout for Jack-o-lantern mushrooms — at night they are bioluminescent! They can be found growing on the roots of decaying oak trees.



*National Chrysanthemum Society Show
Reston, VA Sat. Oct. 27 - Sun. Oct. 28*

Designer Opportunity

The Old Dominion and Potomac Chrysanthemum Societies are hosting the National Chrysanthemum Society Show at the Sheraton Reston on Oct. 27-28.

Horticulture and Design Division entries from the Mid-Atlantic Region and from around the country will be accepted on Friday, Oct. 26th. Judging will be on Saturday morning and the show will be FREE and open to the public from 1 - 5 pm on Saturday, Oct. 27th and 10 am - 3 pm on Sunday, Oct. 28th.

The Design Schedule is available at www.mums.org. Designers interested in entering should contact the Design Chairman, Dorrie McDonald at dorrie.mcdonald@mums.org as soon as possible to secure a spot.

CALENDAR

Tues, Oct. 2	Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers
Wed, Oct. 3	Field Trip to Montpelier
Thurs, Oct. 4, 5	Garden Studies School #1, Merrifield, Fair Oaks
Mon, Oct. 22	Field Trip to Rosemont Manor, Berryville, VA
Mon, Oct. 29,30	Landscape Design School #3, Merrifield, Fair Oaks

Fall Prep for Spring Plant Sale

by Kathy Nebhut

- Who?** Five Hills Garden Club — All members needed on board!
- What?** Our major fun fundraiser!
- Where?** The Freeman Store Lawn, Vienna
- When?** Saturday, May (to be determined), 2019, 7 am - 1 pm
- Why?** Raise funds for our club's activities and expenses

Fall Focus for Members: Take a walk around your yard, and consider what you would like to contribute to the sale. Donate and/or divide some plants. Place them in plastic pots. Mix in compost or Leafgro, an organic compost available at Home Depot or Lowe's for \$5 a bag. (They may have extra pots, too.) The compost will provide a boost to the plants and make them look their best for April.

Place pots in a sheltered spot under a pile of leaves or in a shallow trough dug in the ground. This will insulate the plants through the winter. If you have extra pots, bring them to a meeting.

Goal: 10 plants/member!
Make a cheat sheet with the plant name and description of its pot so you can be sure of what is what come spring! At the same time, you could

document each plant's height, flower color, light/water needs, native or not, deer resistant or not, growth habit (spreading, fast grower...)

Team Digs: Do you need help digging up your plants? Would you like to help with a team dig? (Helping is a good way to contribute, if you have no plants.)

Email Kathy Nebhut at Nebhutfamily@verizon.net for help or to volunteer, and she will coordinate a dig. Thanks to everyone for this necessary advance prep!

(pictured, views from an earlier FH Plant Sale)

Our Pass-It-On Table

In the past, one could find a free treasure on this table and take it home. Starting this October, there will be a collection can for money to help support our club. Consider this like a yard sale table where one would pay yard sale prices. If you are donating a higher quality item and would like to price it, bright round sticky dots will be provided for you. Otherwise, one may pay what one thinks is a fair yard sale amount. Ways and Means will report how much money is collected each month, of course. Remember to take your leftover items home with you, or they may be donated to Pennywise.



Metro Flower Market Grand Opening Event!

Many Five Hills members have met and come to know Margaret Fleegal over many years of guided tours, great workshops, and inspiring holiday open houses. Known for her dedication and contributions to civic causes like our Garden Therapy programs, Margaret and Twinbrook Florist have been supplying the flowers used for them for years, and her generosity has benefitted and brightened the lives of the residents of Braddock Glen who regularly take part in the floral arranging sessions. (see photos at right for confirmation!)

Margaret and Company have moved to a new location, and will be holding a grand opening on Wednesday, October 24, from 12 to 5 pm. Her new address is 4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 110, Chantilly, VA 20151. As well as a tour of the new facility, the public will be treated to "hors d'oeuvres, complimentary flowers, floral design demonstrations, and sample gifts".

"It is with great pride and excitement that we welcome everyone to join us for the official grand opening celebration of our new DIY wholesale division, Metro Flower Market. Both Twinbrook Floral Design and Metro Flower Market share common goals of providing top-quality product, superior customer service, and community engagement," said Margaret Fleegal, President and CEO of Metro Flower Market and Twinbrook Floral Design, and Society of American Florist member.

Metro Flower Market business hours are Monday through Saturday from 7 am to 4 pm and Sunday from 7 am to 2 pm. For more info about the open house: <https://twinbrookfloraldesign.com/blog/metro-flower-market-grand-opening-event-5476/>
Phone: 703 978-0773

Garden Therapy Request:

Tuna can supply, used as floral containers at Braddock Glen Assisted Living facility, is running low.

Please bring any clean (label removed) medium size tuna cans to the FHGC meeting. Cat food cans are too small. Your help is appreciated. If you could hear the joy and see the smiles on the residents faces after they've made their arrangements (with FH members help), you'd smile too.

Many thanks!
Gail and Janet





This Month's Horticultural Challenge:

"Autumn Leaves": Make an arrangement using autumn leaves.

The Colors of Fall

From Kerry Mendez' *Perennially Yours* Newsletter — some excellent and impressive red color alternatives to Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) which is now banned in many states as an invasive:

1. Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)
2. Bottlebrush (*Fothergilla*)
3. Highbush and Lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum* and *angustifolium*)

4. Chokeberry (*Aronia*) Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)
Tall Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

5. Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)

6. Arrowwood *Viburnum* (*Viburnum dentatum*),
Smooth Wintherod and Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)

*Photos: Top row shows # 1, 2 and 3.
Bottom row shows # 3, 4 and 5.*



“October Conservation Thoughts” by Elizabeth Huebner

This is the time of year we think about lime and fertilizer for our yards and gardens. We are always advised to test our soil before we apply additives, and usually experts advise testing about once every three years. Some of us do it, and in my case, I know that my soil is very acid due to many leaves; so adding fertilizer to my soil is not going to help my plants if I don't first add lime to my soil so the plants can use the nutrients that are already present in the soil.

Soil testing is important for several reasons: to optimize plant production, to protect the environment from contamination by runoff and leaching of excess fertilizers, to aid in the diagnosis of plant culture problems, to improve the nutritional balance of the growing media and to save money and conserve energy by applying only the amount of fertilizer needed. Fertilizing responsibly is important for the health of our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

Should you decide to do soil testing, here are some thoughts:

Select the basic test offered by the lab that you choose. This typically includes pH (a measure of the alkalinity or acidity of your soil), phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. The chemical symbols for these four nutrients are P, K, Ca, and Mg, respectively. These are important nutrients required by plants in large quantities. The basic soil test will probably also include other nutrients- sulfur (S), manganese (Mn), zinc (Zn), copper (Cu), iron (Fe), and boron (B), and some include a textural analysis (e.g. silty clay loam), % of organic matter, and cation exchange capacity (CEC).

Soil pH is one of the most important measurements. It plays a big role in the availability of nutrients to plant roots, nutrient run-off and leaching, and microbial efficiency. Don't pay for extra tests, such

as soluble salts, or specific micronutrients unless you have a very good reason.

Soil tests should be done every 3 years for lawns and vegetable gardens. Problem sites can be tested more frequently. Fall is a good time to test soil because any soil amendments that you add in fall, like lime and compost, will have time to improve the soil before spring. Use the same lab each time you have your soil tested because there are no set standards followed by all testing labs. They use different chemical extractants to determine nutrient levels which leads to different test results, and they use different units (e.g., lbs./acre vs. ppm) and bases (e.g., P vs. P₂O₅) for expressing those results.

For testing purposes consider: the top four to six inches of your soil contains most of the nutrients available to your plants. That is also the zone of greatest biological activity, where huge populations of soil critters consume organic matter and recycle nutrients. It's also where most plant roots are located.



Excessive amounts of nutrients like phosphorus cannot be physically removed. Plants remove some phosphorus each year through their growth processes. Phosphorus can move into waterways when soil washes off your property. Keeping soil always covered with plants, grass, or mulch is essential.

Nitrogen is needed in relatively large quantities and is often the nutrient that limits or determines maximum plant growth. It is not measured because it moves back and forth between organic (not available for plant uptake) and inorganic forms (available for plant uptake). This is affected by temperature, rainfall, soil texture and structure, biological activity and many other factors. Organic matter provides a slow release of nitrogen during the growing season.

Conservation

The surest way to improve soil quality and plant growth is the regular incorporation of organic matter such as composted yard waste. Organic matter improves soil structure, slowly releases nutrients, increases beneficial microbial activity, and reduces the need for purchased fertilizers.

The following is one place one can send a soil sample:

WAYPOINT ANALYTICAL (formerly A&L Eastern Ag. Labs, Inc.)
804-743-9401
7621 Whitepine Rd., Richmond, VA 23237
<http://www.aleastern.com>

On the homepage look under "resources," click on "submittal forms," and then Waypoint Analytical Virginia Basic Test Includes: pH, P, K, Ca, Mg, CEC, OM (organic matter)

10 Ways to Achieve a Healthy Home Landscape Without Harming the Chesapeake Bay

1. Take a soil test every 3 to 4 years. Fertilize according to soil test recommendations. Use less than the recommended amounts listed on fertilizer packages.

2. Leave grass clippings on your lawn (grass cycling.) They are a source of nitrogen for your lawn and will not contribute to thatch build-up in fescue or bluegrass lawns.

3. Home gardeners tend to over-fertilize flower and vegetable gardens. Reduce or eliminate fertilizer applications in well-established beds if organic matter is being added each year.

4. Don't fertilize trees and shrubs if they appear healthy and are making adequate shoot and leaf growth.

5. Compost plant residues or incorporate them directly into soil. Discard plants with serious disease problems.

6. When appropriate, substitute slow-release fertilizers for those that are highly soluble and substitute locally available organic fertilizers (well-decomposed farmyard manure, backyard compost and municipal leaf compost) for manufactured chemical fertilizers.

7. Keep fertilizers off hard surfaces. Rain water will carry fertilizer salts into storm drains and surface waters and contribute to nutrient pollution of our waterways.

8. Over time, rainfall causes bare soil to erode and become compacted. Keep bare soil covered with a mulch and plant ground covers in areas where turf won't grow. Plant winter cover crops in vegetable gardens - like oats, winter rye and crimson clover.

9. Avoid excessive foot or equipment traffic to prevent soil compaction, especially when the soil is wet. Construct terraces for beds on sloped ground. Keep soil in raised beds framed with solid sides.

10. To melt winter ice, use calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), potassium chloride (KCl), or calcium chloride (CaCl₂). Do not use sodium chloride or chemical fertilizers such as urea, potassium nitrate, or other products containing nitrogen or phosphorous. The salts in these fertilizers may burn the foliage and roots of adjacent plants and wash into and pollute waterways.



Many thanks to the University of Maryland Extension, Home and Garden Information Center, www.extension.umd.edu/hgic

Recent Events and Field Trips



Montpelier Field Trip

The collage, left, consists of photos taken and submitted by Anne Nelson, though altered to fit into the collage. Karen Thompson sent a description of the day:

"The vista from the front porch of MONTPELIER is breathtaking! If you were not able to join us for the trip on October 3rd, I highly recommend you add it to your families' "must do" lists. It recently reopened after an extensive renovation. It has been restored to tell you the story of the Madisons' time and will rekindle your interest in the role these people played writing the history of this country.

Add to that the delicious lunch and lecture on pruning, to enlarge our waist line and gardening skills.

Thank you Julia for planning this excursion for us to enjoy!

Regards, Karen Thompson"

The Grand Hotel & Coastal Resort, Mackinac Island, & Five Hills Michigan Group

By all accounts the Mackinac Island Field Trip, undertaken by some members over the summer, was a fabulous experience. Beautiful, ladies!



Pierre- Paul Saunier, and His Connection to Five Hills Garden Club

Pierre-Paul Saunier (1751-1818) was a gardener who worked first at Montbard in the Bourgogne region of eastern France, and then at the Jardin du Roi in Paris where he was a protégé of head gardener Andre Thouin. Born at Saint-Aubin-sur-Gaillon, Eure department in Normandy in northern France, Saunier became an apprentice gardener at the *Jardin du Roi* (later called *Le Jardin des Plantes*) in Paris. In 1785, Thouin selected Saunier to accompany the explorer-botanist André Michaux (1746–1802) to North America where he was to assist in the establishment of a royal garden for the French crown.

Saunier was one of a number of gardener-botanists (see also Félix Delahaye (1767–1829), Anselme Riedlé (1775–1801), Antoine Guichenot (fl. 1801–1817), Jean Nicolas Collignon (1762–?1788), and Antoine Sautier (?–1801)) sent by Thouin from the *Jardin du Roi* on voyages of exploration to procure plants and plant products for the benefit of France and to assist botanists in the collection, transport and preservation of botanical specimens.

Saunier's life story has been assembled by William Robbins and Mary Howson of the New York Botanical Garden and Department of Botany, Columbia University: their account includes lists of seeds and plants sent by Saunier to France in 1788, 1790 and 1791 together with literature and letters relating to his life.



Saunier's Arrival in America and Establishment of Gardens

André Michaux, his son François-André Michaux, Pierre-Paul Saunier, and a domestic, Jacques Renaud, left France on 26 September 1785, when Saunier was 34, arriving at New York on 13 November. Collecting started immediately and, by December, 5 boxes had been shipped to France. Michaux was answerable to comte d'Angiviller (1730–1810) who had been appointed Director of the *Jardin du Roi* on the death of the famous naturalist Buffon (1707–1788). By January 1786, Michaux wrote to comte d'Angiviller that a further shipment of 12 boxes of trees had been sent and that a 29-acre plot had been selected for the royal garden in the vicinity of New York at Maisland in Bergen, New Jersey on the western slope of Hudson Palisades, adjacent to extensive woods where seeds and young trees could be obtained. A house of four rooms was constructed, Michaux purchasing two horses and a cart together with tools, and Saunier was placed in charge. His pay was meagre and requests, including one by Thouin, were made that he be allowed to cultivate parts of the garden for himself, which was granted.

The *Frenchman's Garden*, as it was known, was essentially utilitarian, a temporary storehouse for material on its way to France. It was set out in beds with the plants ready for transplanting. Near the house was a nursery and vegetable garden. Local shrubs were planted in rows, more distant plants in small groups or singly. A large part of the garden was a cedar swamp where there was the Chinquapin and plantings of *Kalmia* and *Magnolia*.

Michaux went south in 1786 to find stock and gain advice but was disappointed by the lack of knowledge and interest in horticulture. He visited George Washington (1732–1799), William Bartram (1739–1823) eminent American botanist and naturalist, the son of John Bartram (1699-1777), who founded the Philadelphia Botanical Garden in 1728, and lumber baron William Hamilton (?-1822). By September 1786 he had selected a site for a second garden of 111 acres in Charleston, Carolina and here he stayed, with occasional visits to Saunier in New York, until departing for France in August 1796. In 1802 Michaux joined, as botanist, the Baudin expedition charged with charting the coast of New Holland, but he quarrelled with Baudin, leaving the ship at Mauritius and dying of a tropical fever while botanising in Madagascar in 1802.

Historical marker for the Michaux garden, known as "The Frenchman's Garden" located off Aviation Ave in the City of North Charleston



Saunier's Family

In the late 1780s or early 1790s Saunier had married Margaret Ackerman from a prominent Dutch-American family in Bergen and Hudson County. They had two sons, Michael (b.1794) and Abraham (b.1797) and two daughters, Angelick and Margaret. Saunier made five land purchases to add to the garden. Horticultural knowledge Saunier had gained at the Jardin des Plantes and in America was willingly passed on to the locals. Saunier died in 1818 aged 67 and after his death son Michael took over the nursery business and farm continuing to purchase land for the estate, the land in 1841 consisting of about 137 acres. However, the estate did not last much beyond the death of Michael in 1844 as it was split into small land holdings. Today the site consist of the Hoboken cemetery, warehouses, railroad and marshes along Cromahill Creek. Nothing marks the spot of the Jersey garden, although Michaux's garden at Charleston has a commemoration plaque. Great-great grandchildren were alive when the account on which this article is based was written.

Our own Five Hills president, Julia Saunier Smith, is a direct descendent of Pierre-Paul Saunier. She said, "Pierre Paul Saunier was my great, great, great, great grandfather. My maiden name is Saunier, and my father was also named Pierre Paul Saunier. He also established a garden in Charleston, SC on the land that is now the airport but he, himself, ran the NY garden primarily. . . . I didn't inherit his botanical or gardening skills however — just the interest!"

Julia can claim with some authority (even if she doesn't), that the gardening gene truly does run in her family.

(Credit goes to Wikipedia for the information in this article.) Find more information here: <http://thenorthbergentimemachine.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-frenchmans-garden.html>

(For those with a great interest in genealogy as this editor has, please note that Pierre-Paul, as four times great-grandfather, shares his place with 63 other ancestors at that point in Julia's family tree!)

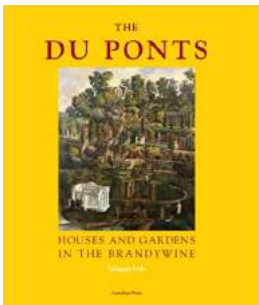
Looking ahead: November can be a rainy, windy, cold month, with not as much to do in the garden. So, throw a log on the fire and curl up with a cappuccino or hot chocolate, and a good garden-related book. Here are two to consider, but there are many more on the topic of early American botanists and their influences. (Unfortunately, the Fairfax County Library system does not carry these two titles.)

“Foreign Trends in American Gardens: A History of Exchange, Adaptation and Reception”, edited by Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto



“This book addresses the influence of foreign, designed landscapes on the development of their American counterparts. Examining the translation, imitation, adaptation, and naturalization of stylistic trends and horticultural specimens into American gardens, the book also dwells on the dialectic of the foreign versus the native. The volume’s contributors consider the experiences of both immigrants, who contributed through their writing, planting, and design efforts to enhance the character of regional gardens, and Americans, who traveled abroad and brought back with them a passion for naturalizing exotics for scientific as well as aesthetic reasons. Including essays from an array of significant scholars in landscape studies, this collection examines topics ranging from the importation of Western and Eastern styles of design and theoretical literature to the adaptation of specific plant types. As the variety of topics and influences discussed demonstrates, the essence of American gardens defies simple definition. Its complexity and its amalgam of historicism and modernity, foreign cultures and local values, is also its most distinctive character.”

*“The Du Ponts: Houses and Gardens in the Brandywine”
by Maggie Lidz*



“No American family dominated a single state longer than the du Ponts of Delaware. French immigrants who arrived in America January 1, 1800, the du Ponts became a dynasty of publicity-shy entrepreneurs, engineers, horticulturists, and collectors. They built neighboring houses, gardens, and farms that spanned miles of rolling hills in the Brandywine Valley and earned the region the sobriquet Chateau Country. With their riches from the DuPont Company, the family pursued many passions, resulting in the exquisite art collections, botanical gardens, and libraries now enjoyed by the American public. The du Ponts: Houses and Gardens in the Brandywine, 1900-1951, features 25 du Pont family houses and farms, including the celebrated Winterthur, Longwood, and Nemours estates. There are unexpected surprises: Bellevue, a replica of James Madison’s Montpelier; Eleutherian Mills, the 19th-century partnership house overlooking the Brandywine Creek, resurrected in the 1920s as a colonial mansion with a garden that was considered one of most successful romantic conceits of the 20th century; and Hod House, the Hodgson system prefabricated residence built as a summer retreat on 550 acres. Winterthur Museum’s estate historian Maggie Lidz captures the life of the du Ponts at home with hundreds of rare period photographs from private archives and family albums and never before published autochromes, diascopes, and Dufay color images. The Crowninshields, the Sharps, the Homseys and the du Ponts - Henry Francis, Pierre Samuel, and Coleman - all come alive as we visit their country manors, horse farms, and spectacular gardens in the bucolic setting of the Brandywine Valley.”