

Sow and Tell

VOLUME 60 ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2020

A Publication of The Five Hills Garden Club
Member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region, District III

President: Julia Smith, 703-385-2883, jsmith5227@mac.com
Editor: Brigitte Hartke, 703-585-5504, brigitt Hartke@gmail.com fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is February, but it certainly doesn't seem like we've had a winter season yet. Daffodil leaves are almost 8 inches high in some places in my yard and I've seen glimpses of the bulbs emerging in the church preschool garden. Whether you love snow or dread it, there has been no need to review the Inclement Weather policy in our yearbooks that would affect our meetings! Several news articles about the 10 year anniversary of Snowmageddon have been published, but the thought of getting that much snow seems almost mythical at this point. But who knows! Late February and March have thrown some unpredictable, wet and heavy snows on our area, so it's too soon to think we won't feel winter weather. Many garden bloggers write about being snowed in at this time of year, looking over tantalizing gardening catalogs and making plans for the spring.

A recent article on planning Inside Out Gardens for winter interest caught my eye. We are often focused on the curb appeal from the street rather than the view we can enjoy from our own indoors, particularly in winter. Rather than summarize the article, it will be included near the end of this newsletter

Winter does supply some downtime from the outdoor activity of gardening in the other seasons. Our February speaker, "The Soulful Gardener" is perfectly timed to speak to quiet reflection and nurturing ourselves through our gardens. I hope to see you on February 18; there's no snow in the forecast to keep us at home! ~ Julia

Editor's note: See the article on Inside Out Gardens on page 8.

WHAT'S INSIDE

President's Message	1
Upcoming Program & Hort Suggestion ...	2
Communications	3
Horticulture	4-5
Conservation	6-7
Article, Inside Out Gardens	8
Membership Form	9

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2020

We will meet at 9:30 am in the lower level of
Vienna Presbyterian Church

PROGRAM



February Program ~ Heather Zindash

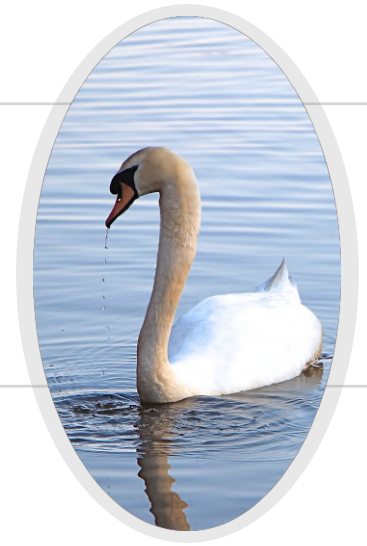
“The Soulful Gardener”

Heather Zindash will show us how gardening brings people, plants, and horticulture together to enhance our overall health and well-being. Learn to view our gardens as therapeutic, restorative and meditative — places to relax and connect to ourselves and the rest of the world.

SEASONAL THOUGHTS

“February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lake again.”

~ Sarah Coleridge



“Swan at Lake Royal”, Fairfax. B. Hartke



For this month's hort table ~

HORTICULTURE: Bring a cutting from a plant or shrub that brings you joy at this dreary time of year.

DESIGN: Create a design using herbs, vegetables or fruits. Flowers may be added if you desire.

Garden Therapy

Monday, February 24th is our second-to-last garden therapy for the wonderful residents at Braddock Glen. We appreciate our volunteers this month who are **Nancy Walker, Muriel Turner, Valerie Warriner, Darla Anderson and Anne Nelson**. The theme will be St. Patrick's Day, and our session begins at 9:15 at Braddock Glen Assisted Living Center at 4027 Olley Lane in Fairfax. Feel free to bring clippers and we welcome anyone else who would care to join us. Thank you! **Gail Gile and Janet Kremer**

Honoring Margaret Fleegal



Our generous friend, **Margaret Fleegal**, owner of Metro Flower Market, has for many years donated beautiful fresh flowers to our Garden Therapy civic work. Residents at Braddock Glen have enjoyed using the flowers that Gail and Janet would bring to the events so that residents would have the pleasure of arranging

floral designs. To honor Margaret, we are asking members to bring cards and notes of thanks and appreciation to the March meeting, should they wish to thank her for all that she has done for our Club and Braddock Glen for so many years. We will have a basket for the cards, and we will be presenting her with them, along with a small certificate of appreciation and a group photo of those of us who attended the February meeting. For those of you who would like to visit Margaret's spectacular shop at the new location, here is her address: Metro Flower Market, 4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Chantilly, VA
<https://www.metroflowermarket.com>

Dr. Doug Tallamy's Lecture & Book Signing

For those of you who might have wanted to attend this lecture in Manassas on February 23, but did not register, it is now full, unfortunately, and there is a long waiting list. I would not want anyone making the 30-minute drive, only to be turned away. The designer of the flyer, which was included in last month's newsletter, did not anticipate the popularity of this speaker nor the interest it has sparked. I'll let you know if I learn of a future venue hosting this excellent speaker and scientist.



VNPS "Wildflower of the Year"

Virginia Native Plant Society announced this year's pick for Wildflower of the Year:

Wild Geranium,
 Geranium maculatum!

Luncheon is Served!

Our luncheon teams always 'hit it out of the ballpark' when providing us with delicious lunches, and they rarely get any newsletter mention — well, possibly never. I think we all appreciate the efforts put into making the luncheons extra-special, and everyone seems to enjoy a themed lunch. I heard many positive comments expressed on Tuesday about our Taste of Morocco.

I asked team leader **Lura Marshall** a few questions, and this is what I learned from her. Lura visited Morocco in 2018; years earlier her daughter had studied there and met her husband. Lura fell in love with the regional foods.

Lura sent an email to her team with her Morocco-themed lunch idea, offering recipes if they needed them, and all went with it! Lura has made the chicken tagine many times, and **Cary Fictner-Vu** used her own recipe for our couscous. Others on the team were **Valerie Warriner, Muriel Turner, Lisa Adelman, and Carey Williams**. Lura said she would send recipes to Jill Hecht to be uploaded to our club's website on which we have a recipe section.
<https://fivehillsgardenclub.org/recipes>



End of Winter/Early Spring Rose Pruning

by Willow Prall

As Valentine's Day draws near and I see more and more roses for sale in the supermarket, I am reminded that it will soon be time to prune the roses in my garden. As a general rule of thumb, I perform this task in February or March after Valentine's Day when the rose plants are just beginning to "wake up" (or about to do so) after a period of dormancy. Pruning them at this time of year helps to promote healthy growth in the season ahead.

Below are some tips for End of Winter/Early Spring rose pruning.

- (1) **Proper Equipment.** Make sure that you have the proper equipment. This includes a pair of long, puncture-resistant gardening gloves, a set of bypass pruners, a lopper, and, if desired, a pruning sealant or glue.
- (2) **Clean and Sharp Tools.** To prevent the spread of disease and the introduction of disease or pests, make sure that your bypass pruners and loppers are clean and sharp. One way of cleaning these tools is to use a disinfectant, such as Lysol or alcohol. (Be careful as to what type of disinfectant you use, as some may corrode your tools.)
- (3) **Pruning Steps.**
 - Begin by removing any dead, damaged or shriveled up canes. These canes can be cut back to the base. If there is a cane that is partially dead or damaged, cut until you get to the healthy tissue.
 - Remove very small canes (generally less than pencil width), as these will take energy from other canes on the plant and are unlikely to support and sustain a rose.
 - Look for and cut back canes that are crisscrossed. This helps to open up the plant and ensure proper growth.
 - If there are areas of the plant that are rubbing against each other or are too close to each other, prune to open up the plant so that there is adequate air circulation. Take a careful look at the plant from several directions as you are pruning to make sure that you are evenly pruning the plant.

Note: Some types of roses may benefit from a more severe pruning. For example, some recommend that hybrid teas, grandifloras, floribundas and miniatures be pruned back to 3 -5 stems.

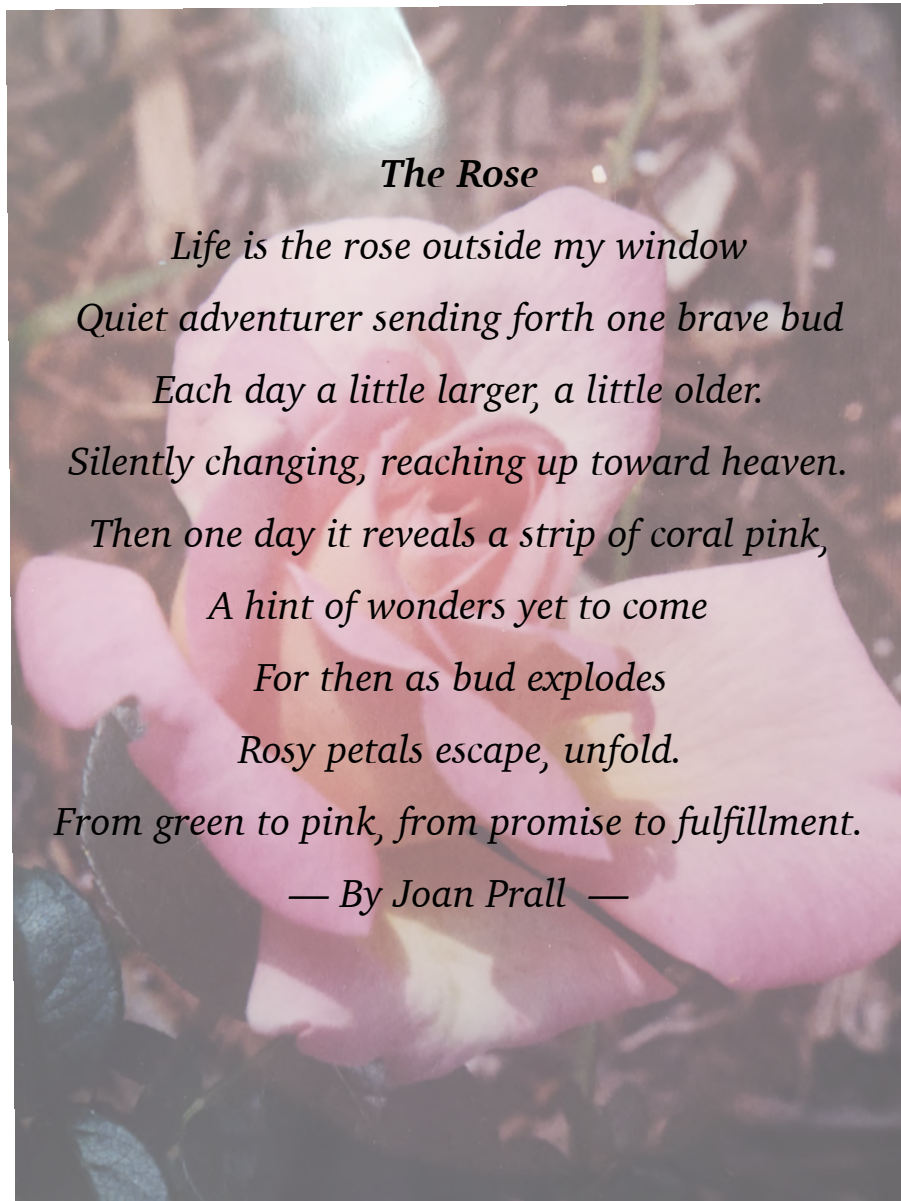
 - Cut back the remaining canes to an appropriate length. This will help to foster growth and restore the proper shape of the plant. How far back you will want to cut the remaining canes will depend on numerous factors, including the type of rose, the age of the plant, the preferred size of the plant, and whether or not the roses were already cut back. In general, no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the overall growth should be cut back.
- (4) **Slanted Cuts.** Cuts should be slanted. If possible, cut the stems at a 45 degree angle about a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above an outward facing bud (or bud eye). This encourages outward growth. The cut should slant away from the bud.

- (5) **Sealant.** You may wish to apply a sealant to the tip of the cane after pruning to prevent the entry of insects, especially if you have had a problem with borers in the past. A special pruning sealant or wood glue, such as Elmer's glue, can be used.
- (6) **Clean Up.** Clean up debris under your roses, including old leaves and cut canes.

After you have completed the pruning, take time to relax and think of the beautiful roses to come!

Below is a poem written by my mother, who for many years grew and loved roses. Behind the poem is a photo of a rose that my mother grew in her garden.

~ Willow



'Drivers of change': beavers released on National Trust land to ease flooding risk in England.

by Elizabeth Huebner

Project managers aim to use a pair of nature's engineers to manage a site for wildlife and boost diversity.

Beaver number one was in no hurry to exit her safe, straw-lined wooden crate. After a tense six-minute wait, Derek Gow, a wildlife expert, reached a hand into the creature's temporary home, grabbed her gently by the rear end and encouraged her out.

She entered the muddy pond with a gentle plop, clambered back out for a few moments, then began exploring her new home among the hills of Exmore.

The aim of releasing a pair of beavers on to National Trust land at the Holnicote estate in Somerset is to ease flooding and increase biodiversity. "It's an exciting moment," said Ben Eardley, the project manager for the National Trust at Holnicote, as the female beaver found a bramble-covered ledge to hide away in. "The beavers will shake this place up, they're a real driver of change."

In time, Eardley said, the beavers will thin out the trees in their 2.7-hectare home, bringing in more light and with it more flora and fauna – birds, invertebrates, other mammals. Another big hope is that the dams they build will slow the flow of water, easing the risk of flooding downstream.



*One of the two Eurasian beavers released at the National Trust's Holnicote estate in Somerset.
Photograph: Jim Wileman/The Guardian*

An hour later the second Eurasian beaver – they have not been given names – arrived. The same ceremony took place. Four rangers carried the crate to a second muddy pool rather like servants carrying an aristocrat on a sedan chair. This time there was no way Gow was going to help coax out the beaver, a male. "The female was chilled out. This one's a bit more feisty," he said. "I wouldn't go too close." Onlookers were advised to stay still if approached by the male beaver.

Beaver II needed no help but padded out through the mud into the pool, which once fed a water mill. While the female had swum around her pool at a steady pace, as if keen to make sure a gaggle of photographers and film crews got good shots, the male seemed more aggressive, beating his powerful tail against the water and diving into a stream that feeds into the pond.

The hope and expectation is that he will calm quickly, and the two beavers will get together and produce babies – kits. At this time of year, they will feed on tree bark and their diet will be supplemented by a few vegetables. They are herbivores and so will not be preying on fish or other animals.

Beavers were hunted to extinction in the UK 400 years ago for their fur, meat and scent glands. In recent years there has been a series of controlled reintroductions, including one by the government in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, as solutions are sought to tackle flooding. A wild colony also appears to have re-established itself spontaneously in the River Otter in Devon.

The scheme at Holnicote and a second at Black Down on the border of West Sussex and Surrey are the first led by the National Trust and have been approved by Natural England. Holnicote's beavers were transferred from Scotland, where they have been successfully breeding. They should help boost populations of water voles, wildfowl, craneflies, water beetles and dragonflies. These in turn help support breeding fish and insect eating birds such as spotted flycatchers.

A footpath passes close to one of the Holnicote pens, so it may be possible for members of the public to glimpse the animals, though they tend to be active at dawn or dusk and can be shy.

CONSERVATION

But hikers will see their work at first hand. Eardley said: "As ecosystem engineers the beavers will develop wetland habitat, increasing the variety and richness of wildlife in the local landscape. Their presence in our river catchments is a sustainable way to help make our landscape more resilient to climate change and the extremes of weather it will bring.

"The dams the beavers create will slow the flow, holding water in dry periods, which will reduce the impact of drought. They will help to lessen flash-flooding downstream, reducing erosion and improving water quality by holding silt and pollutants.

"This project is all about developing our landscapes of the future, helping us respond to the challenges the landscape and communities now face."

Once settled, the beavers will build a lodge or burrow and then begin to modify the enclosure to suit their needs, allowing them to move around freely through the water and access food.

The releases will be carefully monitored by National Trust staff and volunteers with help from Exeter University and others, to document ecological and hydrological changes to the habitat.



Mark Harold, the director of land and nature at the trust and the person whose job it was to pull back the wire mesh to release the two beavers, said: "We need to work with natural processes in the right places. This is a different way of managing sites for wildlife – a new approach, using a native animal as a tool."

This is thanks to the *Guardian* of London. Thought this was a lovely example of how we have to reinvent what nature gave us that we got rid of in the name of progress. Wonder what the next generation will have to redo that we have destroyed in the name of progress?

Photo credit: Pixabay



TROWEL AND ERROR

I'm a little teapot, short and stout

This bright blue teapot repurposed as a bird house was so sweet, it just begged to be included in the newsletter. All birdhouses are subject to raiding for the eggs they may contain, by snakes, raccoons, other birds. Be sure to hang houses in places that cannot be reached by predators. If you use a pole, it should be fitted with a baffle. Contrary to popular belief, birdhouses do not need a perch, as perches often give other birds an advantage when they try to raid the nest.

Inside Out Gardens

(from an article at [Plant NOVA Natives](#))

Before we turn our thoughts to spring, let us take this opportunity to plan for next year's long stretch of cold and gray. Does your landscape give you pleasure in the winter, as you sit inside looking out? Or is it only designed for curb appeal, with the plants crammed up against the foundation so that all you see from your window is the lawn and the street? Or perhaps the shrubs that were installed with the house are now overgrown and blocking your view altogether. A little rearranging can give you both curb appeal and a vibrant vista from your breakfast table or living room.

The first thing to consider is that movement brings a landscape to life. That can be provided by wind bending the grasses but most importantly by birds and other critters that are making use of your yard. A bird feeder can help you obtain that experience, but to actually support the wildlife, you need to provide them with the plants they need for shelter and food for both themselves and their babies. With rare exceptions, baby songbirds cannot eat seeds – they require insects, which themselves require the plants with which they evolved. In other words, to support life, your yard needs native plants.

If you take out any overgrown shrubs and plant new ones fifteen or twenty feet away from the window, from the inside the effect can be as if you added on a room to your house. Native shrubs can be arranged into a living backdrop where birds entertain you as they eat and shelter. Winterberry, Chokeberry and Elderberry are examples of shrubs that provide colorful berries to feed the birds. Multi-stemmed Serviceberries, with their lovely

white flowers followed by berries that are also edible to humans, provide a place for birds to sit while they eat the seeds from your feeder. Native Heucheras and evergreen native ferns and sedges can fill the lower levels, which are also the perfect place to include some small shade-loving species that might get lost in a flower garden bed. Partridgeberry, for example, lies flat on the ground and has adorable red berries from November to January. Not as tiny but still quite small, the spring ephemerals start to emerge just when you need relief from winter.

Spring ephemerals are shade and part-shade plants that emerge and quickly flower in late winter and spring and then fade away once the trees leaf out. If you plant them in the woods, you will be mimicking nature, but you may miss the whole show. How often do you walk in your woods in cold or rainy weather? On the other hand, if you also tuck them under your deciduous shrubs out front where you can spot these treasures from your window or as you walk by on the way to your car, you can enjoy them the same way we appreciate snow drops, crocuses and daffodils as they emerge in succession. One of the earliest harbingers of spring is Round-lobed Hepatica, whose cute three-lobed leaves peek out in March to be followed by pale purple flowers. Another plant with intriguing leaves is Bloodroot, which starts to flower by late March, around the time that the pink and white flowers of Virginia Spring Beauty begin their long bloom period, providing an important source of nectar to bees as they first awaken. The blossoms of Virginia Bluebells may occasionally start to appear that early as well. A whole troop of other ephemerals burst forth in April. You can find details about [spring ephemerals](#) and other native plants on the Plant NOVA Natives website, as well as information about where to buy them.



“What is the name of that plant emerging in the woods?”

Do you recognize these plants? You will have a chance to answer our botany question at the general meeting. Photos: B. Hartke

MEMBERSHIP FORM

"The Membership form for the 2020-2021 is attached. Please print the form, fill it out, and mail it along with your dues check to Shelia Creswell by March 31, 2020. Forms will also be available at the February and March meetings, and you can hand it and your check to me at that time. Thank you, Shelia"

**REGISTRATION FOR MEMBERSHIP - FIVE HILLS GARDEN CLUB
2020 - 2021**

Name _____
Address _____
Home Phone _____
Cell-Phone _____
E-Mail _____
Birthday (Month & Day) _____

ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP: (\$70)

_____ Active Member, continuing
_____ New Member, joining by application

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: (\$75)

_____ Associate Member, continuing
_____ Current Active Member, becoming Associate

I agree to abide by the By-Laws of the Club and to pay the year's dues by **March 31, 2020**.

Signature: _____

Please mail this application, with a check payable to Five Hills Garden Club to:
Shelia Creswell Membership Chair
404 Millwood Ct. SW, Vienna VA 22180
(703) 255-3258