

# Sow and Tell

March 2024  
Volume 63, Issue 7

A Publication of The Five Hills Garden Club  
Member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region, District III  
President: Andy Bothwell, 703-850-6177  
Editor: Kathy Snead, 571-216-6391, [kathymsnead@gmail.com](mailto:kathymsnead@gmail.com)  
[fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is starting! I notice the trees in the park are shooting out little green leaves and the big trees across the street are already dropping their little red buds on the ground. My daffodils, hellebores, and crocuses are blooming as well.

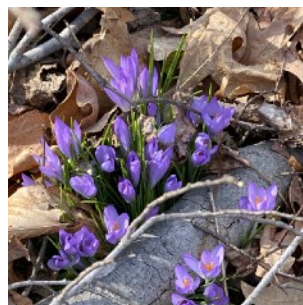
After our program on Bluebirds at last month's meeting, Val Plisko, Valerie Gaffney, and I went over to Glyndon Park to select a spot to place the Bluebird house. I also arranged to buy a complete birdhouse, through Valerie from the Bluebird Society that includes the house, pole, and snake guard. I will be contacting Jeremy Edwards, the Park maintenance supervisor for Vienna to arrange for someone on their staff to put it up.

We will be voting this month to accept the changes to our bylaws. Also our nominating committee will be announcing our slate of new officers. Voting will take place on Monday, April 15th (the setup day for our Flower Show) by paper ballot.

I hope everyone is practicing for the flower show. Trader Joe's is a great place to purchase inexpensive flowers to play around with for your display. And don't forget to order one of the Five Hills Garden Club shirts that Anne Nelson has arranged to be custom made for us and wear it at the flower show.

Finally, District III is having their Spring meeting at Meadowlark Garden on the 28th of March. They are also hosting a flower show on April 28th, all are invited to participate. They are also looking for volunteers to help organize and run their show so if you are interested please let Kate Abrahams at [cnabythesea@gmail.com](mailto:cnabythesea@gmail.com) know.

Andy



## WHAT'S INSIDE

President's Message .....	1
Calendar & Upcoming Events .....	2
Programs .....	2-3
Membership .....	3
Horticulture & Design .....	4
Conservation.....	5
Hospitality .....	8
Civics .....	8
Garden Therapy .....	9
Membership Application .....	10

## Calendar and Upcoming Events

- March 19      General Meeting: Preparing for a Successful Flower Show—Ready, Set, Go  
March 28      District III is having their Spring meeting at Meadowlark Garden, 9:30 am  
April 9        Board Meeting, 10 am  
April 16      Five Hills Flower Show: For the Love of Nature  
May 14        Board Meeting, 10 am  
May 21        General Meeting: Member Plant Exchange  
April 28      Historic Vienna event: Walk on the Hill at Windover Heights, 2-5 p.m.  
April 27-28   District III Flower Show at Green Hedges School, Vienna VA”

### Program for March 19, 2024

**Deneen Wilson**

#### **Preparing for a Successful Flower Show--Ready, Set, Go**



Our own Deneen Wilson will devote the March program to present on how we are going to bring a successful flower show to fruition. She will begin by outlining the responsibilities of the chairs and all our members and then go into detail about what judges expect in horticulture and design. For horticulture, she will go over the requirements including selection, staging and placement. For design, she will describe practice, transport, and placement. After her presentation we will all be better prepared for putting on a beautiful April flower show.

### **March 25—Special Joint Program with Ayr Hill Garden Club, Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

We have a special joint program with Ayr Hill on Monday, March 25 at 1 pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church (2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna VA 22181). The presenter is **Ellen Seagraves** on **Catching Trends in Floral Design Globally**. Ellen Seagraves is both a leader as president of the Independent Floral Designers Association and a follower, an Instagram viewer of over 1000 floral designers to see what is trending daily. A floral designer for 25 years, Ellen has an avid curiosity about all aspects of floral design—from its history to the latest design styles worldwide, as well as the mechanical intricacies of putting arrangements together. She will share with us her current favorites: Asian designers who are designing in the “western Constance Spry garden style” and at the other side of the globe, European and American designers who are making structures and decorating them with flowers. She will highlight the designers she is following and demonstrate her own work of both garden and structural style. While these avant-garde trends have yet to enter the lexicon of flower show requirements, they may spark some creative applications to your own work. Join Ayr Hill at 12:30pm for socializing; the program runs from 1 to 2 pm. Please let Val Plisko know at [plisko@msn.com](mailto:plisko@msn.com) if you plan to attend, as Ayr Hill needs a headcount for its hospitality committee. Five Hills will reciprocate in the fall at its September meeting.

**April 16, 2024**  
**Five Hills Flower Show (For the Love of Nature)**

It's showtime at last! Now that we have prepped and primed, it's time for our long-awaited biennial flower show of floral design and horticulture. All members participate in this officially judged show; indeed, there are novice awards for newbies. Members will deliver their floral design and/or horticulture entries the afternoon of April 15th or morning of the 16th. Entries for the Photography Section are to be delivered to the venue on April 15, between 1:00 and 4:00 pm. (See page 4 of the flower show schedule, Show Events Schedule.) The show will be judged the morning of the 16th.

The flower show will take place at the Church of the Holy Comforter (543 Beulah Rd NE 22180) in Vienna and the public is invited open to attend on April 16 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM., so please tell your friends.

**Membership**

Membership Chair—Joy Salpini

Spring is right around the corner, and that means it is time to review and update your contact details, and pay dues.

**Membership Dues for 2024-25 - Due March 31, 2024**

Active Members - \$70.00

Associate Members - \$75.00

Please check your listing in the current directory. If there are **no** changes, simply email me ([jlsalpini@gmail.com](mailto:jlsalpini@gmail.com)) indicating there are no changes. If there **are** changes to your details, complete the Registration form attached to this newsletter and either scan and email it to me ([jlsalpini@gmail.com](mailto:jlsalpini@gmail.com)), mail it to me (9321 Tovito Drive, Fairfax, VA 22031), or give it to me at our meeting in March.

Checks can be mailed to me at the address above, or given to me at the March general meeting. If you have any questions or need any help please feel free to contact me.

**February Photos of Garden Therapy**

Valentine's Day Theme: Pink & Red Silk Roses and Valentine's cards

Photos courtesy of Willow Prall Martin and Anne Nelson



## Horticulture and Design

Horticulture and Design Chair—Jane Schmiedekamp

Committee members: Helen Mertz, Anita Parke, Margaret Bain

If you are looking for a gift or just want to indulge your interest in great trees, checkout [Remarkable Trees of Virginia](#) by Hugo and Kirwan. The only tree pictured from Fairfax County is a White Ash and is 130 feet tall and 17 feet in circumference. The tree, germinated around 1819, is located on a pathway at Mount Vernon.

White ash trees are commercially popular and used for baseball bats and hockey sticks.

Mount Vernon is also home to a chestnut oak tree that predates the birth of George Washington by 49 years.



American witch hazel is a member of the Witch-hazel family. The genus name *Hamamelis* is Latin from the Greek meaning a kind of medlar or service tree. The species name *virginiana* refers to being from Virginia.

One of 5 species of witch hazel....this one is native to North America. Witch hazel is a small shrubby woodland tree, notable for flowering in autumn and winter while the branches are otherwise bare. Witch hazel blooms from yellow to red with highly scented blossoms. The shoots and stems were boiled and used by native Americans for medicine and the practice was adopted by early settlers. Witch hazel produces an astringent which can be used for skin rashes.



*Hamamelis virginiana*

Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service, ([fs.usda.gov](https://fs.usda.gov))

### REMINDER: Place your order for New Club Shirts

Please go to [southlakes@customink.com](mailto:southlakes@customink.com) to view online the 6 shirt styles we have selected: Cotton T-shirt, crew neck, short sleeve, long sleeve; Cotton Polo\* with collar, short sleeve; Athletic scoop neck, long sleeve, Athletic v-neck, short sleeve, long sleeve. Any questions, please call Anne @703-403-0244.

## Conservation

Conservation Chair—Elizabeth Huebner

### The Facts about Mosquito Spraying.

In the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s trucks would drive through the city streets spraying the pesticide DDT, leaving a thick fog behind. EPA issued a cancellation order in 1972 for DDT based on its adverse environmental effects to wildlife, as well as its potential human health risks. Results of research based on animal studies show a *potential* relationship between DDT exposure and reproductive effects in humans.

And yet yards and communities continue being sprayed for mosquitos. They could be poisoning yards and wildlife, with little reduction of the mosquito populations. Before deciding to employ sprays to reduce mosquitoes, people need to know the facts. Spraying can harm them, their children, pets, and neighbors. The chemicals can also harm birds and insects that help eat mosquitos and pollinate your yard.

Experts agree: Mosquito treatments, including the alleged “all natural” variety can harm you and your environment, while not actually reducing mosquito populations. To learn more about the problems with mosquito spraying, Deborah Landau , an entomologist and conservation scientist at The Nature Conservancy, and Mary Travaglini, a certified organic land care professional and organic landscape manager at the Montgomery County, MD Department of Environmental Protection were interviewed. Excerpts of the full interview are presented here:



Responses provided by Deborah Landau are highlighted as **DL**; responses by Mary Travaglini are noted with **MT**

#### How effective are mosquito sprays?

**MT:** Published and peer-reviewed research by Professor David Pimentel shows that only 0.1% of the pesticides on average reached the target pests. [Pimentel, Cornell University 1995]. When Pimentel looked specifically at flying insects in the study, like mosquitos, the average was less than 0.0001%, or only one in a million. This is because the droplet size of a pesticide must be small and must float in the air. The droplet size of a mosquito spray must be so small that the chemicals must float in the air, but they also easily drift out of the target area, killing other insects or mingling into the air we breathe.

**DL:** Sprays can only kill mosquitos that are in your yard at the time of spraying. Mosquitos typically fly 1-3 miles, so they can quickly re-populate a yard. A commercial mosquito treatment will be more likely to kill butterflies, bees and ladybugs in the yard at the time of application than the mosquitoes one is trying to get rid of. Mosquitos are most active at dawn and dusk, but mosquito spray companies often come during the day when most pollinators are active. If



the treatments target standing water, beneficial insects that eat mosquitos, like dragonfly larvae, will also be killed. If the spray is focused on wet areas, such as piles of wet leaves, chances are they're killing far more fireflies than mosquitos. Sadly, birds will often pick up insects killed by insecticides, and eat them or feed them to their young.

**What is one getting for the 300 dollars' worth of pesticide spray?**

**MT:** If we turn the .0001% effectiveness into dollars and cents, a millionth of \$300 dollars' worth of spraying is .0003, which is not even

a third of a penny. In fact, we'd have to spend \$10,000 before we even got one cent worth of value! Spend your time and money cleaning gutters, removing standing water, and getting together with the neighbors to do this throughout the neighborhood.

**DL:** Over time, mosquitos become resistant to pyrethroids (the active ingredients in most mosquito treatments) through gene mutation in mosquito populations. Mutations in just this one single gene are enough to make mosquitos in one area resistant to the pesticides very quickly. Companies that spray on a regular schedule will make your mosquito population become resistant even faster. So essentially, they'll be left with a yard and neighborhood full of super skeeters.

**Is there anything I can do to control mosquitos in my yard besides spraying?**

**DL:** If you want more bang for your buck, purchase BTI mosquito dunks; they're cheap, effective, and easy to use (you just place them in areas that hold water). And these are a bacterium that will *only* kill mosquito larvae. You should always remove standing water from your yard, including under flowerpots, inside wheelbarrows, and pretty much on anything

**MT:** There's a reason why Disneyland, in a part of Florida with lots of mosquitos, doesn't use pesticides to control mosquitos. They take an approach that neighborhoods, HOAs, and businesses can all use right here—they ensure water doesn't stay standing long enough for a mosquito to lay its egg and hatch into an adult—which is about 7 days. The BTI dunks are great solutions—in fact one of the best ways to treat mosquitoes is to give them a chance to **breed in a bucket filled with straw and water and a BTI dunk**. The females are attracted to the smell of the wet straw and water and lay their eggs in there, dunk then kills the larvae.

The BTI it's like a trap and will help the whole neighborhood reduce mosquito populations!

### What about the “all natural” alternatives that a company has told me about?

**MT:** Companies might describe that the chemicals used are derived from chrysanthemum flowers, but they are not from plant extracts. Commercial pyrethroids are synthetically produced to mimic the same properties of the pyrethrins in chrysanthemum flowers. Both chemicals paralyze the nervous system of many insects, but synthetic pyrethroids and the undisclosed chemicals they are mixed with are designed to be more lethal. Pyrethroids are neurotoxins in humans, and can cause rashes, respiratory distress, allergic reactions, headache, nausea, convulsions, and more. The additives can cause a host of other reactions. Pyrethroids are also very toxic to fish and other aquatic life and spread easily on the wind to neighboring properties and into streams. The chemicals can persist on surfaces for days, further killing insects that come into contact.



**MT:** I looked up the data from the national poison control centers – over 27,000 calls were placed to poison control in 2018 for pyrethrins and pyrethroids, accounting for over 33% of the pesticide calls to poison control alone! Imagine how many more exposures are unknown.



### What kills mosquitoes the best naturally?

Crush a few garlic cloves and boil them in water to create a mixture. Then, using a spray bottle, squirt the solution around the room, garage and so on to kill mosquitoes. Garlic-based solutions should instantly kill mosquitoes.

What smell do mosquitoes hate? The pungent smell of sulfur in garlic overwhelms plastic. Mosquitoes are turned off by several natural scents, including citronella, peppermint, cedar, catnip, patchouli, lemongrass, lavender and more.

Here's another tip: If you're looking for a way to reduce the entire population, consider these simple devices called [OviTraps](#)—used by the military around the world effectively to reduce mosquito populations. Don't forget to keep removing standing water from your yard all summer long and remind your neighbors to do the same. Your neighbors, pets, birds, pollinators, fireflies and skin will thank you! A paper published in Nature in 2018 by Brian Johnson and others “Neighbors help neighbors control urban mosquitoes” describes the results of first 2 years of a control program using GATs in University Park, MD. The paper is open access and available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-34161-9>

For other helpful approaches to reducing mosquitoes in your community, go to [MyGreenMontgomery.org](#) and [U.S. EnvironmentalProtectionAgency.gov](#)

## Civic

Civic Chair—Noreen Linnemann

**Calling All Gardeners!** It is Springtime and time to beautify our civic gardens. Please join us on Tuesday, April 2 from 9:30am -10:30 A.M. We will meet at the Glyndon Street Park Garden. Please bring hand cutters, pruners, shovels, hand spades, rakes. Don't forget your gloves and water.

Everyone is invited and all are needed. Join the fun and make a difference!



## Hospitality

Hospitality Chair—Lura Marshall; co-chair—Roberta Lewis

We will celebrate our 70th year as 5HGC this month with a special cake at lunch.

Presently we are in the process of signing up for next year's host duties. We will put them into Sign-Up Genius and you will receive your notice from that site. Board sign up will begin in April. We have developed a letter that will be sent to each month's lead host so that we are clear of expectations when it is your turn to host.

Thank you to those of you that are using your reusable beverage containers. We are still looking for donations of silverware so that we can stop using the plasticware. We received our first donation. Thank you Gail!

We are hoping to finish up with our restaurant choice for our installation lunch in June. Please, if you have any places you would like us to consider drop Lura an email.



## Garden Therapy

Garden Therapy co-chairs—Willow Prall Martin and Anne Nelson

### MARCH GARDEN THERAPY: EARLY BLOOMERS AND BOTANICAL BOOKMARKS



During the garden therapy session held on March 5, 2024, Five Hills club members helped to bring Spring indoors to residents of Iliff nursing home. Members brought in early blooming flowers from their gardens, and Iliff participants were able to look at, smell and touch the flowers. Participants guessed the names of a number of the flowers, and Five Hills members shared some unique facts and characteristics about each of the flowers. The flowers included snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils, primroses and Lenten Roses. Flowering branches from paperbush and winter jasmine plants were also shared. Finally, pussy willow branches were passed around for participants to look at and touch.

The second activity involved making botanical bookmarks with dried, pressed flowers.

Participants chose the color of cardstock paper and the types of pressed flowers that they wished to use. With the assistance of Five Hills members (and plastic tweezers), participants artfully arranged the pressed flowers on the cardstock paper. The bookmarks were then laminated and a hole was punched near the top. Participants then selected a tassel from a wide assortment of colored tassels, and a tassel was tied at the top of each bookmark. The participants really seemed to enjoy arranging the pressed flowers on the paper and selecting a tassel of their choice. They did an amazing job and the bookmarks turned out beautifully!

A total of nine residents participated in this month's garden therapy. Five members volunteered at the session, including Gail Gile, Rosemarie Jaksetic, Janet Kremer, and Co-Chairs Anne Nelson and Willow Prall Martin.

The next garden therapy will be held on Tuesday April 9, 2024 at 2PM. If weather permits, the session will be held outside in the courtyard. If you are interested in volunteering for garden therapy, please contact Anne Nelson or Willow Prall Martin.



**REGISTRATION FOR MEMBERSHIP – FIVE HILLS GARDEN CLUB**

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, 2024

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email or mail this application to:

Joy Salpini, Membership Chair  
9321 Tovito Drive  
Fairfax, VA 22031  
[jlsalpini@gmail.com](mailto:jlsalpini@gmail.com)