Sow and Tell

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



President's Message

Greetings, My Friends!
I cannot believe it is already October! We are beginning to see the changes of fall in the weather, our plants and trees, and the pumpkins and gourds appearing on porches.

I find this time of year perfect for getting outside, taking walks, moving plants for next year, and enjoying a cup of hot or cold apple cider. We all have our favorite seasons, and fall is mine! One of my goals this month was to become more familiar with our website. I have encountered a few challenges along the way, but GoDaddy has been available to help. I have made a few changes, but it is a work in progress. As they say, Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is a perfect website!

October is another busy month for Five Hills, with several events and projects taking place before our general meeting on October 20th. Anne Nelson led our Garden Therapy activities for the residents of Chesterbrook on October 6th. As always, thank you to all the wonderful members who volunteer their time and help Anne make these activities enjoyable for the residents.

Lura Marshall has worked hard coordinating our first field trip to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond on October 8th. We will have the opportunity to see how floral designers from across the state interpret paintings and sculptures through their beautiful floral arrangements. What a wonderful way to find inspiration for our own creative designs!

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A Little Reminder for Our October 20th Meeting
There is a change to our usual entrance procedure at Vienna Presbyterian Church. The church has implemented a new security policy requiring an access code for entry. Unfortunately, we will not have access to that code. *Continued next page ->*

Knock, Knock!
Who's there?
Apple!
Apple who?
Apple-solutely love Fall!!



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President's Message continued

We will need a few volunteers to serve as our friendly Five Hills Gatekeepers! Volunteers can wait by the parking-lot side entrance to let members into the church. Members may also enter through the front entrance, where the office staff will buzz them in. If you are able to help, please arrive by 9:15 a.m. Our hospitality committee is usually already busy setting up for the meeting, so an extra helping hand will be appreciated. Please consider volunteering.

Also, please review the Horticulture and Design requests in our yearbook before the meeting. We had a phenomenal turnout last month, and I hope we can keep that enthusiasm going. Sharing your garden treasures and floral creativity is one of the many ways we learn from and inspire one another.

Finally, I want to send a big round of kudos to Carolyn, Anne, and Val for organizing our wonderful September tea fundraiser! It was obvious how much time, thought, and planning went into making the event such a success. Thank you for all your hard work and for creating such a delightful day for everyone!

Don't forget our White Elephant table! Please bring gently used items that are still in good condition but no longer needed in your home. These treasures may be just what another member is looking for! Remember, if your item does not sell, please take it home with you.

As the leaves turn and the days grow cooler, I hope you find time to enjoy the beauty of the season, share a little laughter with friends, and discover new inspiration in your gardens. I look forward to seeing everyone at our October meeting!

Happy Fall, Everyone!
Valerie

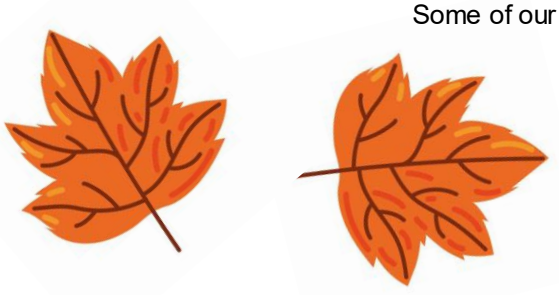
Calendar of Events



October 6	Garden Therapy
October 8	Field Trip, VA Museum of Fine Arts
October 13	Board Meeting, In Person
October 20	General Meeting
October 19-21	CAR-SGC Conference, Cambridge, MA
October 27	Glyndon Garden workday



Some of our members enjoying the tea at Anne's house.



Hospitality

Thank you to Arezu Ingle, Rosemarie Jaksetic, Karen Thompson and Noreen Linnemann for providing a delicious lunch for the September garden meeting. And thank you again to Noreen for sharing her floral arrangement.

For future meetings, please refer to your yearbook for the month you will be providing lunch. If there are questions, please email RocheSteph2008@gmail.com.

Remember to bring your own coffee mug!

Co-Chairs, Stephanie Roche and Elvie Germino Hausken

Garden Therapy

Welcome back to Garden Therapy! Please check the yearbook for future dates of our Garden Therapy programs. Try volunteering at any one of our sessions, and discover your own creativity in working with the residents of Chesterbrook in Falls Church, VA.

For out latest session, we combined October and November to create an “Autumn, Harvest, Halloween & Thanksgiving" Theme. Each participant started with one Sugar Pie pumpkin, one soaked piece of Oasis, assorted types and colors of 4” cut mums and spray roses, and a Halloween Ribbon. The residents were instructed to carefully push flower stems into the Oasis, create their own design and add ribbon. The creations last from Halloween through Thanksgiving as the residents change out the style of ribbon.

Rosemarie Jaksetic and I ran the program with 11 residents (2 joined in last 10 mins). The conversations, stories, happy moods were enjoyed by all. Our next session is December 8th. We’ll meet in lobby at 9:45AM, do Prep, Start Program 10:15-11:15, Cleanup, End at 11:30AM.

Anne Nelson







A few photos from the latest Garden Therapy session.

Horticulture and Design

Horticulture
With all the rain we have been getting our gardens are still producing many flowers. Please bring in something from your October garden to share with the club members. Put it in a green bottle and identify your exhibit so we can learn about plants that we might want to acquire.

Design
Let's have some fun this month with a Halloween theme. This is a chance for those of you who are not as confident about making a design to do something crazy! Decorate a pumpkin. Arrange gourds in a basket or a dish. Add a Halloween decoration like a witch, ghost or spider to a flower arrangement. Be creative. Anything goes. Please join the fun.

Noreen Linnemann





Let’s keep up the great participation with horticulture and design!

Civic Projects

Glyndon Park Fall Clean Up

Thanks to all who signed up to help with the October 12th Glyndon Garden cleanup. Due to rain and slippery conditions, we postponed the cleanup and we’ll now meet on Tuesday, 10/27 from 9:30-10:30am. Be on the lookout for an updated Sign-Up Genius.

Lisa Rzepka



Ways and Means

A Fun Tea Party

On September 19th, 17 members and 2 guests gathered at the home of Anne Nelson for an afternoon tea party, our Fall fundraiser. This “Mad Hatter” event featured prizes awarded for most beautiful, creative, funny, and garden-like hats at each of three tables.

Attendees feasted on chicken salad, cucumber sandwiches, pimiento cheese sandwiches, and egg salad sandwiches. Sweets included scones with clotted cream and lemon curd, macarons, lemon squares and cookies. And of course there was tea-- several different kinds.

Many thanks to Anne for hosting and Barbara Tozzi for providing all the prizes. Lucia Bacon, Barbara Tozzi, Cary Fichner-Vu, Anne Nelson, Nancy Walker, Val Plisko, Valerie Warriner, and Carolyn Staska provided the delicious foods. Many hands contributed to clean up with no china broken!

Thanks to those who paid to attend this fundraiser and those who were unable to attend but donated. The event grossed $1050.00 with receipts still needed for reimbursement for food supplies (please provide to Shelia Creswell, so we can compute how much the event netted).



Soliciting for Spring Fund Raising Ideas

The Ways and Means Committee seeks ideas for a Spring event that we can use in lieu of the biennial plant or yard Sale. The Yard sale, while profitable and a great way to clear out homes, takes its toll on members and Noreen’s lawn with hauling items and unpredictable weather.

In years past, the club has raised $1000 to $2000 from the yard sale. The Ways and Means goal for incoming revenue in 2026-27 is $1,500, so the Fall Tea Party event gets us half of the way there. Please help with ideas for Spring activities that are profitable, do not involve costly rental space and materials, and do not compete with other plant sales. Please submit ideas to Carolyn Staska and Val Plisko. Thank you!





Programs

Our invited speaker, Nicki Bellezza, serves as the Watershed Protection Specialist at Fairfax Water. She has 27 years of experience in the water profession, having started her career on a boat teaching students about the water quality of Pittsburgh's rivers. Nicki has been an Extension Educator with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Reston Association's Watershed Manager for 13 years and now with Fairfax Water for over 7 years. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental science and management. She is in the source water planning and protection department with Fairfax Water and gets to interact with the landowners around the Occoquan Reservoir.

Editor's Note

I wanted to give a shout out to Willow Prall for her hard work and dedication as the Invasive Management Area (IMA) site leader at Oakton Community Park. Willow was recently honored for her efforts at the 5th Anniversary Celebration at Oakton Community Park. She provided volunteers and neighbors with a tour of the park, illustrating how much progress has been made at removing invasive species and restoring the native habitat.





Celebration / tour at Oakton Community Park

Field Trips

Members recently enjoyed a lovely field trip to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts for Fine Arts & Flowers. Check out some pictures of the trip.







Field trip fun in Richmond, VA

Conservation

Information / Awareness Regarding Illnesses Spread via Ticks

Acute Treatment vs. Long-Term Outlook for Alpha-gal

Professor Sonja Swiger, a Texas A&M AgriLife entomologist, said tick-borne illnesses haven't been in the public eye as much as those caused by mosquitoes, which are controlled with insecticides to protect public health. But tick-borne diseases have increased more dramatically than mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile and dengue fever. "One of the harder parts is to get people to be more conscientious and aware of tick-borne pathogens because we don't have citywide or community-wide tick control."

For example, one scholarly paper argues the lone star tick, which is spreading northward, is simply reclaiming territory it held in the 18th and 19th centuries before it largely died out in the region after deforestation. The three ticks responsible for transmitting most diseases to people are the dog, blacklegged, and lone star ticks. They can cause illnesses such as Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease, and alpha-gal, respectively. Pathogens transmitted to humans from insects are complex. Animals may live with pathogens without incident, unlike humans. Or the pathogen may change, allowing it to be passed on to humans. People may not even realize they've been bitten, especially if they encounter tiny nymph-stage ticks, (about the size of a poppy seed) making diagnosis difficult. "The fact that people are talking about it will definitely lead to further research and hopefully come up with some answers."

Early treatment is key, and [tick-borne illness] is something that is affecting more people. After taking a magnesium supplement that triggered a reaction, one person found out the hard way that some supplements use animal derived coatings that can be dangerous for alpha-gal sufferers.
To diagnose alpha-gal syndrome, a healthcare professional asks about your symptoms and your medical history and does an exam. A blood test can confirm that there are alpha-gal antibodies in your blood and measure the amount. But it's possible to have alpha-gal antibodies without having alpha-gal syndrome.

Early medical attention cannot cure or reverse alpha-gal syndrome (AGS), but it can effectively mediate and manage acute allergic reactions when they happen. (Mayo clinic)

Continued next page ->



Conservation continued

Acute Treatment vs. Long-Term Outlook for Alpha-gal

Immediate mediation: If you experience an allergic reaction, doctors use standard treatments like antihistamines for mild symptoms or **epinephrine** for severe, systemic reactions and anaphylaxis. (MD school of medicine)
No reversal: Early diagnosis and treatment after a tick bite do not stop the immune system from developing or keeping the alpha-gal IgE allergy.
Natural reduction: Over time, sensitivity may decrease on its own, but only if you avoid new tick bites and further allergen exposure.(NY state health dept)

Management Steps

Avoid triggers: Eliminate red meat (beef, pork, lamb), mammalian fat, and sometimes dairy or gelatin-based products.
Prevent tick bites: Use insect repellents with DEET or picaridin and wear treated clothing to stop new sensitizing bites.
Carry rescue medication: Work with an allergist to get an emergency epinephrine autoinjector if you are at risk for severe reactions.(Centers for Disease Control)

Many thanks to Epoch News and others noted in the article.

Elizabeth Huebner





