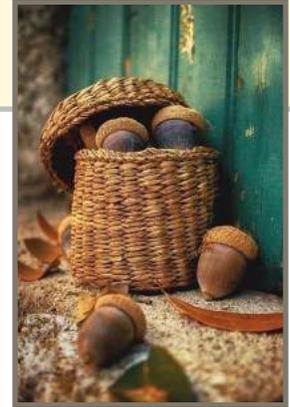


# Sow and Tell

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Member of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region, District III

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## President's Message

*October is the opal month of the year. It is the month of glory, of ripeness. It is the picture-month. ~ Henry Ward Beecher*

October is a spectacular month. The temperatures are pleasant and everything is in glorious color. It seems we are now as much into Halloween decorating as we are for Christmas and other holidays. For us gardeners, there are more opportunities to display colorful plants with our decorations. My fall decorations include ornamental peppers, asters and a variety of mums. Gourds and pumpkins of all shapes and colors make fall decorating exciting.

There are still many interesting plants in the garden. The orange, yellow, purple and red flowers have taken the place of the pastels. The birds are busy eating the seeds from the rudbeckia and sun flowers. I love the leaves as they turn crimson, red and yellow, although raking them off the grass is not my favorite chore.

Our garden club is also busy with October events. Some of us attended the very informative lecture by Thomas Rainer that was sponsored by the Falls Church Garden Club on the layered garden. It was a beautiful day when we volunteered at Meadowlark Gardens. The Ikebana exhibit at the US National Arboretum had many wonderful creations. Some were from our Five Hills members. We also have a field trip scheduled to Adkins Arboretum on October 27.

My theme as president is "Learning, Design, Friendship". We get an A+ in friendship. Our gardens have beautiful designs and I know we will have some fabulous floral designs at our flower show. I am delighted to see many of you going to lectures and enrolling in the NCAGC schools. There are two school opportunities this fall. Landscape Design School is on Monday October 23-24. Environmental Studies is on Thursday, November 9-10. Consider going; you will learn so much, and it will make gardening much more enjoyable. Enjoy the beauty of October.

Noreen

*October is a symphony of permanence and change. ~ Bonaro W. Overstreet*

### General Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 9:30 am

Tuesday, October 3	Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers, 9:30 am
Monday, October 9	Braddock Glen Garden Therapy
Sun, Oct.15-20	NCG - Hudson River Valley Trip
Mon, Oct 23 - 24	Landscape Design School, Merrifield, F.O.
Friday, October 27	Adkins Arboretum Field Trip, Eastern Shore
Tuesday, October 31	Glendon Park Clean Up, 9:30 am
Tuesday, November 7	Meadowlark Gardens Volunteers, 9:30
Thur, November 9-10	Environmental Studies School

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## Upcoming Events

### October 17 — This month's program:

#### Back by Popular Demand — Members' Fall Floral Design Workshop



There were so many requests to repeat last year's "make-and-take" workshop, so that's what we will be doing at this month's general meeting. Members are asked to bring their own containers (a vase, small pumpkin, gourd or other container), and Five Hills will provide the flowers. Please have your oasis ready to go, or pin holder if you are using one.

Bring clippers, and any leaves or branches you can gather to add interest to your design, and to share. Again, we will have our Judges on hand to help and answer questions, if asked. It is really fun to see all the different arrangements we "make" with the same flowers. We'll all have a good time designing, and you get to "take" your creations home with you!

Monday Oct 16, 6:30-8:00, National Building Museum - Mr. Laurie Olin

Mr. Laurie Olin, FASLA, founder of the Philadelphia-based Architecture firm OLIN receives the Vincent Scully Prize. He will present a talk about his most noteworthy projects and has a conversation with landscape architect, Mr. James Corner.

Founding principal of the Philadelphia-based OLIN studio and esteemed professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Olin has created award-winning, people-centric landscapes in cities around the world, including the grounds of the Washington Monument and the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., and Bryant Park in New York City. For more information visit, <https://www.nbm.org/laurie-olin-fasla-named-17th-laureate-vincent-scully-prize/>. Thank to Barbara Tozzi for this information.

ODCS October 2017  
Mum Show Invitation !!

The Old Dominion and Potomac Chrysanthemum Societies will join in hosting an annual spectacular Chrysanthemum show at Merrifield Gardens, featuring hundreds of cut Mum cultivars as well as Mums in hanging baskets, container-grown varieties and sprays, plus Fukusuke exhibits and a special standard and mini-sized Design competition based on this year's special theme - **"Across the Universe"**.

The show will be open to visitors at the **Merrifield Gardens Fair Oaks** location, 12101 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Va. (near Costco Plaza & Fairfax County Pkwy.) on Saturday, October 21st from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Free!! Sign up for door prizes to be awarded at the Show. Winners do not have to be present! Call Jim Dunne, (703-560-8776) for additional information.

### Morning of Design Thursday, October 12

NCAGC Judges Council is sponsoring a Morning of Design - "Seasonal Delights" - hosted by the Garden Clubs of District III on Thursday, October 12, 2017. It is being held at the Little Falls Presbyterian Church, 6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA, 22207 from 10:30 to 12. A \$6 per person donation is suggested.

~ HISTORIC VIENNA ~

Ann Carter

***Vienna's Little Library Celebrates 120 Years!***

***Saturday October 14, 2017, 1:00 to 4:00 PM***

Come and celebrate the Little Library's 120th Anniversary. From 1897 to the 1960s, this one-room building was the public library for the Town of Vienna. Do you know how many books are on the shelves? Actually, Historic Vienna, Inc. was not sure how many books were on the shelves until recently when our researcher compiled the books titles in a spreadsheet. Now we know and we are asking you to guess how many and win a prize. Submit your guess at the Little Library or the Freeman Store.

At 1:30 PM there will be a presentation honoring the Little Library and announcing the winner of the book count contest, followed by homemade ice cream and cake. And at 3:30 PM judging of the best decorated bikes will begin. There will be lots of fun activities for all ages. Inside the library, you will be able to visit with former patrons who will share their memories of their visits to the Little Library. Other activities include:

- Stories and Songs
- Old Fashioned Games and Races
- Photo-Op Corner



.... And listen to Virginia folk and bluegrass music by Hickory Grove throughout the afternoon!

***Tea & Parlor Talks***

If your group of 10 to 18 would like to have tea in the Freeman Store and Museum, please contact ***Patti Bentley or Susan Fay at the store 703-938-5187*** to arrange a date. Historical speakers can be included in the tea if desired.

***British Holiday Tea & Parlor Talk – Friday, December 1, 3 PM and Saturday, December 2, 3 PM***

Enjoy learning about English and Scottish Holiday Traditions while you enjoy some of the treats described. After the short presentation there will be plenty of time for relaxing and visiting with your friends in the beautiful parlor and dining room of the Freeman Store and Museum. The traditional English Holiday tea will include scones, sausage rolls, sandwiches, assorted sweets – including mince pies, and a bottomless cup of tea. The tea costs \$35; space is very limited so make your reservation by contacting ***Patti Bentley or Susan Fay at the store 703-938-5187***.

***The Consummate Citizen-Soldier ~ Charles Russell Lowell, Jr.***



***Thursday, October 26, 2017, 7:30 PM***

Presented by local historian Jim Lewis  
*At the Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E*

Join noted local historian Jim Lewis for a fascinating presentation on Charles Russell Lowell, Jr. Born into a privileged family, he took a different path. Hear how he developed into one of the Union cavalry's finest battlefield commanders, while courting and eventually marrying Josephine Shaw, who was destined to become one of New York City's most prominent citizens. Both were uniquely connected to Vienna, VA.

*Co-sponsored by Historic Vienna, Inc. and Patrick Henry Library*

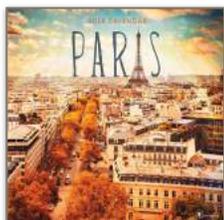
## Garden Therapy at Braddock Glen, Monday October 9

We are starting off a new year at Braddock Glen Assisted Living Center on Monday, October 9th. We will be helping the residents create a fall arrangement using beautiful flowers donated by Margaret Fleegal of Twinbrook Florist. We meet at 4027 Olley Lane in Fairfax at 9:15 and it usually lasts 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Our volunteers this time are Debbie Doody, Brigitte Hartke, Kathy Nebhut, Anne Nelson, and Valerie Warriner. It is really a rewarding experience to work with the lovely people at Braddock Glen, and we welcome anyone else who would like to join us. Thank you, Gail Gile and Janet Kremer



## Club Parking

Please continue to find parking near the Church, but not in the Church parking lot. Thank you all for your continued cooperation.



## Calendars Collection

Please remember to bring in your 2018 calendars which are collected each month for military members in appreciation for their services.

Janet Kremer will deliver them to the Army's Fairfax Family Health Center. Thank you!



Please note: It has been decided to discontinue the collections of boxtops and stamps.

Editor's Note: Most of you are familiar with our unique **Wolf Trap Performing Arts National Park of Vienna**. Some may not be aware of the ongoing efforts to convert many of the Park's open spaces to naturalized gardens and meadows. Join trail volunteers and staff for a free guided hike on the first Sunday of each month at 1 pm for their Sunday Hikes. They start at the Filene Center Main Gate in front of The Dimple, and last about 1 1/2 hours, traditionally following the Wolf Trap Trail loop (2.7 miles). The walks focus on various topics, from history, biodiversity and wild flower and woodland shade gardens to birds and general flora and fauna. Download a PDF map of the Wolf Trap Trail: <https://www.nps.gov/wotr/planyourvisit/upload/WOTR-Trail-Brochure.pdf>



*The trail has beautiful, quiet spaces for reflection, such as the one in a photo I took of the creek near the Theater in the Woods, left. A high school friend of mine, an artist, sent me her pastel rendition of the photo, right.*



## A SURPRISE IN THE SHADOW OF THE BELTWAY *by Karen Lucas*

I have been charged to secure native trees to be planted in Rock Creek Park later this month for another organization. I was led to “Earth Sangha”, a nonprofit organization with a mission of “ecological restoration as a form of socially engaged Buddhism”. They have partnered on many projects with the Fairfax Park Authority and the VA Naturalist and other programs.

I made a visit this morning and met with the leading lights and some of the volunteers working in the nursery. I plan to return often.

I learned that seeds are collected by the managers and volunteers, germinated in their green house and brought to the nursery when ready to plant out. Prices are very reasonable, and the number of natives available are amazing!

I was happy to learn that they use no pesticides. I found myself spotting plants that I had seen about in the woods or roadside and lately in my garden. It was satisfying to find a name to attach to these plants so one could look them up for further information.

I urge you to visit on their “open days”, but first visit the web site [www.earthsangha.org](http://www.earthsangha.org) and be sure to watch the video and meet the friendly people. There is a plant list for you to look over but remember the season is almost gone so they may be out of some plants.

*Editor’s note: Please see page 9 for more information about our local treasure, Earth Sangha Nursery.*

### For the Hort Table ~

*Bring in a horticultural specimen from your garden in a proportional green bottle. Label it correctly. Suggestions include Holly, Fall Blooming Crocus, Mums.*

*Design Theme: Autumn Fantasy*

*Design: Designer’s Choice, or a Stretch (a design composed of two units of unequal size, joined by a prominent stretch component. Length and strength of stretch component (which may extend in any direction) must be appropriate to other components and to its prominent role)*

*photo: Fall Blooming Crocus, Wolf Trap, September 30*



# The Value of Leaves

by Elizabeth Huebner

What's wasted? Pound for pound, the leaves of most trees contain twice the mineral content of manure. Because they're a form of organic roughage, they can dramatically improve drainage and aeration of the soil. And they provide the perfect nutrition for beneficial microbes. In short, they make soil come alive.

Leaves are rich in the trace elements your soil needs. Trees are an effective mineral extractor, putting down deep and intricate root systems that funnel calcium, magnesium, potassium and phosphorus from the soil into their trunks and out to its leaves. 50 to 80 percent of all the nutrients trees extract from the ground end up in the leaves. But all leaves are not created equal.

The leaves of the eastern hemlock have twice as much nitrogen as the leaves of the red maple. White ash leaves are loaded with calcium, hemlock not so much. White ash leaves have a pH of 6.8, sugar maple leaves have a pH of 4.3. Some leaves aren't suitable at all for composting, or should be used very sparingly. The leaves of black walnut trees and eucalyptus trees contain a natural herbicide that may keep your garden seeds from germinating.

To avoid wasting all these valuable nutrients and roughage, it's important to know how to use leaves effectively. Leaves are at their nutrient best shortly after they've fallen from the tree. Soon thereafter, their nutrient value begins to disappear. Leaves left on lawns or in piles over winter lose much of their mineral value to leaching. Leaves composted without shredding and not mixed with a green source of nitrogen may sit for years before decomposing. Without a source of nitrogen, leaves

will not become compost but instead become leaf mold, a valuable soil addition in terms of drainage and water-holding capability, but not as valuable as mineral-rich compost.

**Leaf compost, leaf mold, leaf mulch?** What you intend to make with your leaves will determine the process you use. Many gardeners, especially those with abundant access to leaves, will have use for all three leaf products: compost, mold and mulch. Some will be looking only to make compost to enrich their soil. Gardeners with soil drainage

problems will want to make leaf mold to improve the crumb and friability of their soil. Those with perennial plantings and extensive shrubbery will want leaf mulch to protect their plants and improve the soil's water holding capabilities. Making the decision easier is the fact that any of the products can be used, more or less effectively, for any of these uses. But for the best utilization of leaves' nutrition, make compost.

(pictured: *Ladies Home Journal* cover, Oct 1923)

Leaves break down slowly. A pile of unshredded leaves without added nitrogen sources may sit for years before it will be

completely decomposed. Early-season raking of clipped grass and leaves helps solve this problem by supplying an already mixed source of leaves and grass. As the season moves on, only leaves will be available. To make quality compost, leaf shredding is essential. This can be done by commercial shredders, which are notoriously expensive, noisy and fragile. Or shredding can be done with your home lawn mower. Don't be content to run over your leaves once. Maximum shredding is important for quick breakdown. It's easier if you employ help to pile up the leaves again once you've passed over them with the mower. Several passes will give you a fine, quick-to-decompose product. This is true if you're making compost or leaf mold. In a pinch, a Weed Whacker or other line trimmer can be used to reduce leaves to a more compostable size.



Unshredded leaves left to mold will pack tightly in layers, delaying the molding process sometimes for as much as two or three years. Even in a compost tumbler, unshredded leaves will sit through the season while all other green materials around it decompose.

### **Leaf mold is a step past leaf mulch.**

It's made in much the same way as compost, but with little or no nitrogen added to the leaves.

Leaves left in contact with the earth and its wealth of beneficial microbes will slowly turn to leaf mold. The speed at which this happens depends mainly on the size of the leaves, shredded or not. Just leaving leaves where they fall will eventually result in leaf mold, not a bad thing in wooded areas, but not a good thing on your lawn.



Making leaf mold is similar to making compost. Piling leaves in heaps or in bins and cages is about all that's necessary. Keep the piles uniformly moist. Turning them on occasion is helpful but not necessary. Matting, a problem with leaf-only piles, is minimized by frequent turning. Keeping the pile under a plastic tarp will help conserve heat and moisture. Be sure that the pile has access to air. Even piled in cages, leaves can take three years to reach optimum condition. But if you shred finely, turn the pile and keep it uniformly moist, you'll have usable product in six to 12 months. Leaf mold can also be made in plastic bags by filling lawn bags with shredded leaves, dampening and poking a few holes to let in air.

Making leaf mold (or compost for that matter) in raised beds can greatly increase the volume of your soil. Filling a raised bed with shredded leaves in the fall and turning them into the soil as soon as possible is one of the most beneficial things you

can do for your contained soil. Covering the bed with plastic over the winter will speed the assimilation process.

Leaf mold absorbs five times its weight in water. Turned into hard and clay soils, it will help make them more friable and root-friendly while maintaining good moisture levels. And any leaf mold not used in your garden makes a great addition to your compost heap.

**Leaf compost.** Should you want to make leaf compost, bins, cages, piles and tumblers will all give satisfactory results though at different speeds. Because leaves are mostly carbon (60 parts carbon to one part nitrogen) more attention must be paid to the carbon-nitrogen balance. Not only will the right ratio of leaves to green material or manure yield a more nutritious product, it will also give you compost more quickly.

Chopping and mixing leaves with other brown and green ingredients will speed decomposition by four times. Five parts leaves to one part manure will get your compost pile up and hot. Using only grass clippings requires five parts leaves to two or three parts clippings. Kitchen waste including coffee grounds and those last trimmings from your garden will also increase the nitrogen content of your pile. But don't overdo it. Too much nitrogen will help make your heap smell or turn anaerobic. Being sure your pile gets enough oxygen will help prevent this problem. To avoid matting, frequent turning of leaf piles is a must. Turning distributes moisture among water-repellent leaves, making for more uniform decomposition.



## Conservation

Because leaves are often available in large quantities, it is impractical to expect your compost tumbler to consume all of them. If you have a bounteous supply of leaves, you'll want to use bins, cages or heaps to begin the compost process. Leaves from the heaps can always be added to your tumbler when a new batch is being started. Again, because of their availability, it's tempting to construct very large piles. But large piles are harder to turn and contain. Two or three manageable piles, all with sufficient nitrogen source added, are much more effective and more easily worked. The classic "[three bin](#)" method of composting is a great way to keep large amounts of leaves organized and progressing through the decay cycle.

Some gardeners have developed shortcuts that help them utilize fall's bounty more efficiently. One method is to rake leaves directly over the remains of your vegetable garden at the end of the season, then rototill the entire plot to break up the leaves and greens and mix them with the soil. The plot can then be covered with plastic if the size of your garden makes it feasible. Adding a little manure or fertilizer will help the carbon to nitrogen balance. A second rototilling a week or so later further breaks down the leaves, integrates them with the soil and aerates it all. Recover for the winter. Spring rototilling should reveal that the leaves have become part of your soil.

One last caution when using your finished leaf compost. Some leaves will yield a more acidic product, especially if pine needles have been included (though it takes large amounts of needles to effectively change the pH). Measuring the pH of your soil after adding compost is a good idea. Supplement to bring soil pH in line with your plants' needs. Or just add a bit of

lime to compost high in pine needles and acidic leaves (oak, maple) before using it.

In my yard with over 100 trees, leaves have been blown over under the trees for 28 years and manage to decompose in about 1.5 years. Yes, some leaves blow back onto the lawn over the winter and get chopped into the lawn with the first mowing. The soil under the trees is now very black and loamy for about a foot down. When I moved here I had heavy red clay everywhere.

For those of you who live in Vienna, the Town chops and mulches the leaves collected in the fall, and town residents can go collect this garden gold for free and add it under trees and bushes instead of buying bags of mulch. It is better for your plants than mulch as it doesn't pack down later in the summer and keep water from reaching their roots.

Thanks go to Planet Natural Research Center.

PS. If you have bags of leaves, call me. I have a use for a few more leaves. Thanks, Elizabeth



"You gave them flowers and a place to nest. You tended your garden and avoided pesticides. Don't carry all of that hard work out to the curb. Simply put, when we treat leaves like trash – we're tossing out the beautiful moths and butterflies that we'll surely miss and work so very hard to attract."

*Justin Wheeler for the Xerces Society*

## Features



### Ikebana Floral Designers

Noreen Linnemann and Mary Ellen Alden with their displays at the Ikebana exhibit at the US National Arboretum

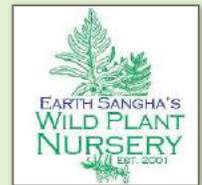


### From their website, more on Earth Sangha's Wild Plant Nursery

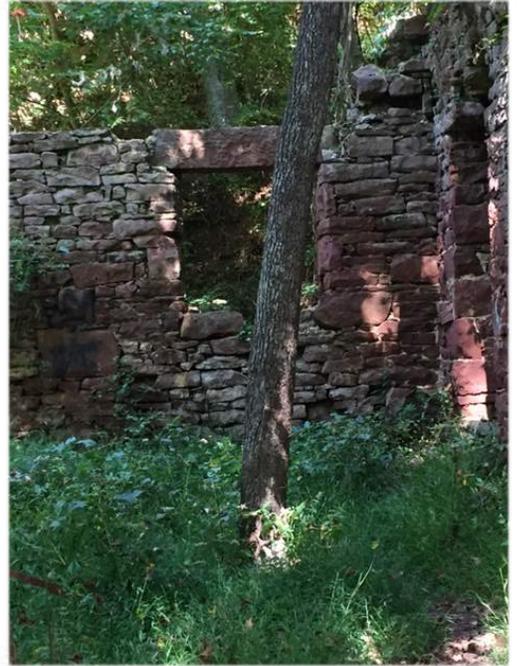


"The Earth Sangha operates a volunteer-based ecological restoration program for the greater Washington, DC, region. The program is designed to conserve and restore the native plant communities that are essential to the region's ecological health. At the heart of the program is our *Wild Plant Nursery*, the region's most comprehensive source of native plants propagated from local, wild seed. In addition to local-ecotype native plant propagation, we help stabilize streams, control invasive alien plants, and restore forests, meadows, and wetlands. Our DC-area restoration work attracts over 600 volunteers annually, and has reached about 50 sites, nearly all of them on public lands."

"The Wild Plant Nursery is a unique resource for ecological restoration in the greater Washington, DC, area. Established in 2001 in Springfield, Virginia, under an agreement with the Fairfax County Park Authority, the nursery is the region's most comprehensive source of local, wild native-plant material ("local ecotypes"). The use of local ecotypes is a standard best practice in ecological restoration because that helps to safeguard genetic diversity and local adaptation in the species planted. The nursery is currently working with about 340 species, some uncommon or rare in the wild in this region. For many of these species, our nursery is the DC area's only source of production – local ecotype or otherwise. All plants are grown from seed (or spores) that we ourselves collect, from over 50 local natural areas. (We collect only with permission.) The nursery serves our own planting programs, as well as those of area governments, schools, businesses, and other conservation nonprofits. We rely on volunteers to run the nursery! To join us, check the Volunteer page for our *Field Schedule*. **Please note that our nursery and office addresses are different.** The Wild Plant Nursery is located in Franconia Park in Springfield. Our office is located in Fairfax, but is not open for plant sales. "



Recent Events and Field Trips



*A cheerful Five Hills group on the September 25  
Field Trip to the*

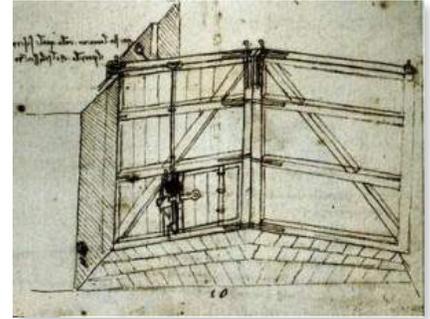
**Historic C & O Canal  
along the Potomac, Maryland**



## In a Nutshell: “The C & O Canal” with Jim Heins *by Brigitte Hartke*

In September Jim Heins spoke about “the Park that almost wasn’t”. Today it is the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park with a trail that follows the old footpath.

We learned that, though canals have been built for thousands of years, they always carried water at the same level – until the 1400s. When Leonardo da Vinci invented a system of lift locks, his idea opened up a world of opportunity for canal builders. Until the 19th Century we did not have cars, trains or planes as means of transportation. The canals allowed for pulling goods by four-legged animals along a towpath – usually mules were used. “Mules are smarter than horses, are stronger, eat less, and have an impressive innate knowledge. They belong to the Mule Union – a six-hour trick.” Mules would pull for six hours and then quit, so all boats had teams that they would alternate.



*Leonardo da Vinci's Canal Lock or Miter Gate design completed in 1497*

There were two kinds of boats in use along the Canal – tourist boats and work, or cargo, boats. Two mules could pull 25 tons of coal, its principal cargo. The boats had three compartments – in the bow were the mules, then a feeding compartment for their food, and in the back, a 12 x 12 foot cabin for the family living on the boat. The boats were run from late March to late November; riding with their families along the canal, the children had only a few months of education each year.

The C & O Canal is fed by the Potomac River. On its 185-mile stretch there are six dams and a pump station, with a 600 foot rise from start to finish. The Canal has 74 locks, so each lock would drop or raise the boats eight feet. Of the mile markers that once existed along the Canal, only three remain of which he is aware.

At one time there were so many boats using the Canal that they installed metal crank mechanisms in an effort to automate them, but this only lasted a short time before new means of hauling goods became available, causing the Canal to become almost obsolete.

The earliest plan was for the Canal to go from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio Valley. Then it was decided to parallel the Potomac River to Cumberland. The first Canal groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 4, 1828. (It operated from 1831 to 1924.) Elsewhere on that date, the first spike of a planned railroad system was being driven into the ground, and eight years later the railroad reached Cumberland. In 1850, the Canal was finished to Cumberland.

Jim Heins' talk on the Canal was a fascinating glimpse into its history. While this synopsis does not completely cover Mr. Heins' more extensive information, more history may be found here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chesapeake\\_and\\_Ohio\\_Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chesapeake_and_Ohio_Canal)

# Floral Design Tips from Krista Salmon

**Be Random.** Turn on some music and let the flowers go where they will. If you focus too much on patterns, it will end up looking like something from FTD.

**Clean Your Stems.** #1 Rule for a compact arrangement. Make sure to pull off all leaves, thorns and excess limbs. Not only will this detract from your arrangement, it will take up extra space not to mention make the water uber-slimy.

**Cut Your Stems As You Go.** You will need to vary the length of your stems with the tallest stems being in the center and gradually shorter stems towards the base of the vase. Cut flowers longer than you think you will need, you can always cut them shorter. You will have the tallest stems in the center of the arrangement.

**Forget the Packets.** Just change the water after two days. Most flower arrangements will last you up to a full week. Put them somewhere you can enjoy them.

**Arrange in Odd Numbers.** While you want your design to look tailored, believe it or not, an odd number of large blooms will create more of a balance.

**Get Creative With Your Fillers.** Steer clear of most of the fillers you get at the store. Think outside the box; fruit, berries, cabbage heads, bear grass and hydrangea leaves are some of my favorites.

**Don't Be Afraid of Carnations Anymore.** (Just be cautious – there are some really tacky carnations out there.) There are many more varieties of carnations these days. They can look quite stunning, and can be a cost-effective alternative to roses. I would not use them for a party in the evening, but they are perfect for a casual, daytime event.

**Open Up Your Flowers.** Roses are the most specific example that I can use here. When you buy them, generally, they are closed up tight. Carefully glide your finger along the perimeter (starting on the outside petals) of the rose and gently open it. Move from one petal to the next like a maze.

**Always Be On The Lookout For Great Containers.** Michaels and Home Goods are great places to find unusual containers. I also love looking around my house and rediscovering something I had forgotten I had.

