

Sow and Tell

November 2023
Volume 63, Issue 3

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

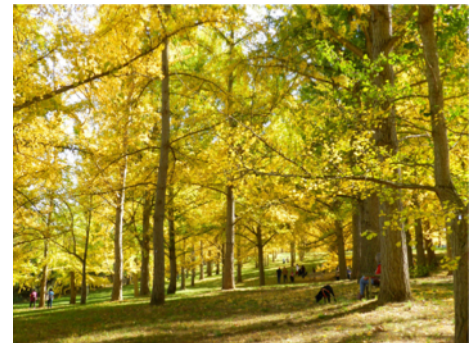
Editor: Kathy Snead, 571-216-6391, kathysnead@gmail.com
_fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy Thanksgiving

I always think of Thanksgiving as the middle of the holiday season, between Halloween and Christmas. Many of you may find Thanksgiving to be your favorite of the three as it is a time for families and friends to be together, to count our blessings, and enjoy each other with good food.

Most of the leaves on our trees are down or will be by the end of November. I have to say with all the early talk about how our leaves wouldn't have as much color this year due to lack of water, I think they were wrong. Those of you that traveled out to see the Ginkgo trees or just took a drive in the country would probably agree with me that the fall colors are gorgeous. It makes me appreciate that we live in an area with different seasons. Now, if only there was some way to make all the leaves disappear so we didn't have to clean them up.



I hope some of you made it to the Chrysanthemum flower show or the Morning of Design program. There were beautiful arrangements at both. The Chrysanthemum show included arrangements by two of our members - Trish Phillips and Lucia Bacon. The Morning of Design show had people, including Five Hills member Deneen Wilson, demonstrating how to make different flower arrangements. Both events were very informative and I recommend going to any other flower demonstration or show you can to acquaint you with what our spring flower show will be like.

Thank you everyone for signing up to make a wreath or swag at our Greens workshop, all the slots are now filled. Even if you weren't able to sign up for one of the wreaths, you should still come to our meeting on December 5th, especially any of our new members. There are always ways for you to help.

I won't be at the November meeting, I'll be in California for Thanksgiving but I want to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Andy Bothwell

WHAT'S INSIDE

President's Message	1
Programs	2
Calendar & Upcoming Events	2
Horticulture & Design	3
Civics	4
Garden Therapy	5
Floral Design Inspiration	6
Bits and Pieces.....	7
Conservation	8

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Nov. 10 Board Meeting, 10am
- Nov. 21 Five Hills General Meeting, VPC Choir Room, 10 am
- Dec. 5 Holiday Greens & Wreath Workshop VPC Choir Room, 10 am

Historic Vienna Community Activities

- Nov. 27 Church Street Stroll with Town tree lighting, Santa visit and musical performances, 6 pm
- Dec. 3 & 10 Santa visits Freeman Store, 12-2 pm
- Dec. 9 & 10 Richmond Fan District Association's Holiday House Tour 12-5 pm

Program For November 21st Meeting Dan Schwartz Reciprocating with the Soil

Program Chair—Val Plisko

Dan Schwartz with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District will speak about why and how we can encourage healthy soil in our gardens and communities. His presentation will include tips on improving the biology of your soil, how this can allow us to garden without the need for supplemental chemicals, and how healthy soil benefits not just the gardener but the entire community. In particular, he will talk about recent and not-so-recent research on deriving medicines from the soil.

Field trip photos of Blandy Experimental Farm



Horticulture and Design

Chair—Jane Schriedekamp

Committee members: Helen Mertz, Anita Parke, Margaret Bain

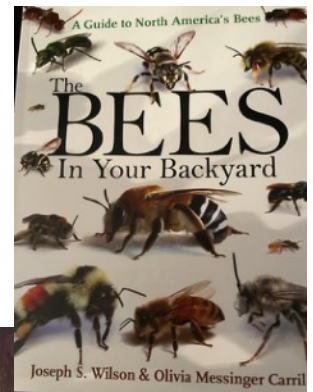
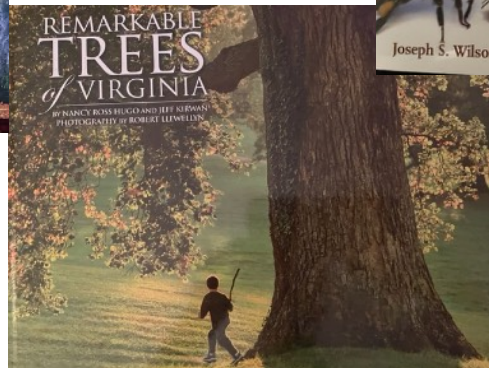
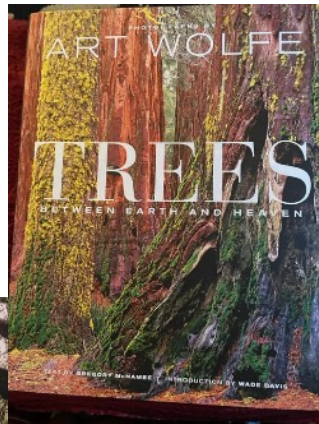
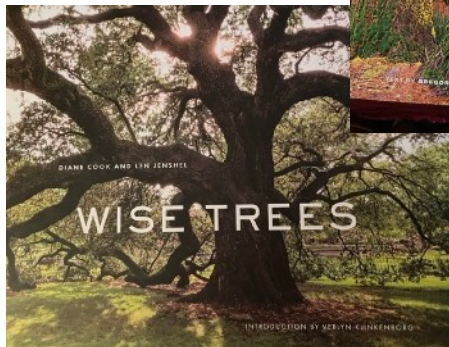
Horticulture: Bring in for display, any fall vegetables grown in your yard.

Design: Make a fall arrangement from vegetables and gourds.

Photos from Morning of Design workshop, shared by Lura Marshall



The holidays are fast approaching and books make wonderful gifts. Here are a few suggestions to consider:



Civic Chair—Noreen Linnemann

Thanks to everyone who helped with fall gardening and bulb planting at Glyndon Park. The bulbs are planted and the final cleanup done. There will be no more work on our gardens until the spring.

Greens Workshop on December 5th



First off, we have filled every wreath-making slot for this event. Thank you for being so responsive to the sign-up notice!

Our greens workshop is Tuesday, December 5 at 10:00 at Vienna Presbyterian Church. This is a long-standing tradition of Five Hills to make and donate wreaths and greenery sprays to local churches and public buildings in the town of Vienna. Thanks to all who have signed up to make a wreath or swag and to those who volunteered to help with set up and clean up. We need everyone to help. Carrying supplies to those working on the wreaths is so helpful and helps things move along faster.

Please plan to bring greens to make our creations. Make sure that the greens are evergreen variety such as conifers, pine, cypress, hemlock and the like. Shrubs such as boxwood or Chinese or Japanese holly are also great choices. Of course, magnolias are wonderful. The greens need to last for about four weeks. Please try to deliver your wreaths on Dec. 6.

Just a reminder, you will need gloves, clippers, and fresh garden greens. Come ready to work and create fresh greenery. This event is guaranteed to put you in the holiday spirit! Here's the link for the sign-up genius for the holiday greens and wreath workshop as a reference point and reminder of what location you signed up to decorate.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4CA4A82EABF58-45508134-five>

Iliff Flower Sign-up

Please note that two slots in December are still available for members to make and deliver floral arrangements for Iliff's reception area.

Below is the sign-up genius for taking flowers to Iliff for fall:

<https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/20F0D4CA4A82EABF58-44456306-iliff>

Garden Therapy

Garden Therapy Chair—Willow Prall; co-chair, Anne Nelson

On Tuesday, November 7th, Garden Therapy presented a 2-part program highlighting an Autumn theme of falling leaves, earthy scents, textures and colors, using 4 of the 5 senses. Reminder, no tasting of any supplies is ever permitted.

We welcomed our four Club Volunteers - Debbie Walker Doody, Gail Gile, Lura Marshall and Pat Thacker, along with 10 Iliff Nursing Home Residents around the table.

Willow led the first activity to create a Jar of Potpourri. Small handfuls of Autumn leaf stickers were given to each resident, and with Volunteers assisting, we decorated outside of each jar. The medley of dried apples, dried oranges, cinnamon sticks, wood shavings, acorns, dried flowers, and tinted barks were placed in separate bowls and volunteers walked around the table so that residents could take small pinches from each bowl to fill their plastic jars. A double square of gold gossamer was used to cover the jar opening and a matching velvet ribbon, double knotted to avoid spillage, gave the project a finished elegant look. We all admired everyone's gorgeous display of Autumn Splendor in a safe and portable jar.



Anne led the second activity using autumn colors of construction paper, cut out shapes of brown trees of foam sheets, glue sticks and a variety of real fallen autumnal leaves. Residents were given a non-toxic glue stick to randomly rub it anywhere on their tree and paper. Next they selected handfuls of the leaves, then ripped, crushed, or used smaller leaves to stick onto each dab of glue. The glue rubbed on as purple and dried clear, so Residents were able to see where they applied glue spots and then

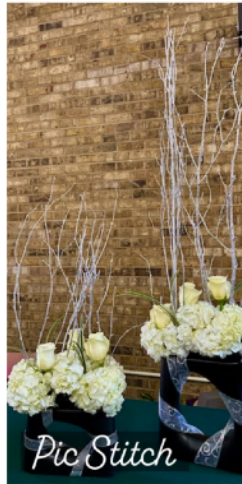
covered most of their bare limbs to resemble all the November trees we are seeing around their Iliff courtyard and in Fairfax County. Each design was unique, and as in Nature, each one beautiful.

Thank you to our volunteers for being so helpful in preparation, presentation, and cleanup. We appreciate your efforts, as always. The next Garden Therapy session is tentatively set December 12th, time TBD.



Floral Design Inspiration

Design ideas and shared pictures from recent local events—the Chrysanthemum flower show and Morning of Design program. Two of the designers at the Morning of Design event were Deneen Wilson and Betty Ann Galway.



Membership News

Joy Salpini—Membership Chair

Five Hills Garden Club is full of members who are outgoing and active in numerous community organizations and projects, who are also looking for ways to give back to their communities, make new friends, share a passion...in this case, Gardening! If you have a friend in your neighborhood, church, exercise class, or another group who might enjoy our garden club and all we have to offer, invite them to one of our general meetings. We'd love to introduce them to everything we do at Five Hills and encourage them to share our passion for gardening, the community and the environment.

Meet our newest member, Sarah Ha...

Since her retirement from the World Bank in 2020, Sarah dedicates her time to writing and environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. One of her essays about environmental issues can be read in a published anthology "[Stories Relating To The Environment](#)" or her YouTube channel [Minerva@MyKoreanAmericanLife](#).

Ways and Means

Valerie Warriner—Ways and Means Chair

Let's Deck the Halls! At our December Greens workshop, we will transform our "white elephant" table into a Holiday Decorators' Delight. As you begin pulling out your seasonal decorations, please consider donating holiday items for a club raffle. Items can range from tableware, tree decorations, home decor, holiday planters, cards for the holiday, etc. A raffle is planned for members to select treasures from fellow members to enjoy during the holidays. There may even be a few swags or center pieces that will be raffled at the workshop.

Hospitality

Lura Marshall and Roberta Lewis—Hospitality Co-chairs

While we will always provide cold and hot cups for members to use for beverages at our General Meetings, we would like to encourage members to bring their own reusable drink containers to use for meetings. We are trying to be more environmentally friendly and make a conscious choice to use less disposable items.



Want more butterflies? Planting milkweed pods is certainly one way to attract butterflies. Jane Schriedekamp picked this one up at the Virginia arboretum.

What Makes Leaves Change Color Every Fall?

The short answer is the amount of sun light—reds and oranges of fall leaves show up when there's less sunlight on the trees. Deciduous leaves have four pigments year-round: green, yellow, orange and red. In fall, when days become shorter and with less sunlight, chlorophyll becomes less important, and the leaves make less of it. The other colors get their chance to glow and shine. When it happens depends on how cold it gets. Trees will change their colors in cooler weather. When it gets really cold, the leaves simply fall off the trees.

Why you should 'leave the leaves' in your yard and garden

According to a report from Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension, leaves are rich with minerals like potassium, nitrogen and phosphorous. I know all of us have heard this about our leaves. I took it to heart about 35 years ago and haven't raked since then. Every leaf from over 100 trees in my yard has stayed in my yard under my trees. Over the years, I have mowed the leaves that fall on my grass (some grass and other green plants), so the area is free of most leaves through the winter. My lawn guys start mowing in the middle as leaves fall and as they mow out the leaves are shredded, and most are blown under the tree border. After 35 years, the top 12 or more inches of soil is black under the trees and bushes. The soil under my grass is mostly clay, fortunately the moles like to burrow under it for grubs.

I provide water for the birds year-round with a heated bird bath in winter. Birds and squirrels come throughout the day to drink and some bathe. Many go digging in the leaves for food. They are fun to watch when they find food. Hence, I suggest that we think about keeping most of the leaves, form beds under trees and bushes and blow/rake leaves under them.

David Mizejewski, a naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation, said removing leaves from your yard or garden deprives the area of nutrients while simultaneously destroying a wildlife habitat. "Fallen leaves offer a double benefit," Mizejewski said in a post on the [organization's website](#). "Leaves form a natural mulch that helps suppress weeds and fertilizes the soil as it breaks down. Why spend money on mulch and fertilizer when you can make your own?" Removing the leaves also takes away an important habitat for animals ranging from turtles to butterflies.

Leaving the leaves isn't just adding to the vitality of your yard and garden — it's helping the whole environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said leaves and other yard debris make up more than 13% of the nation's solid waste, which comes out to 33 million tons a year. Instead of raking them, shred your leaves to use as mulch in garden beds or combine them with grass clippings and other greenery to make compost, the post said.

"The less time you spend raking leaves," Mizejewski said, "the more time you'll have to enjoy the gorgeous fall weather and the wildlife that visits your garden."