

# Sow and Tell

November, 2025  
Volume 65, Issue 3

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

President: Joy Salpini, 703-945-3487  
Editor: Ann Carter 703-346-3663, [annccarter@verizon.net](mailto:annccarter@verizon.net)  
[fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:fivehillsgardenclub@gmail.com)

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



Dear Garden Club Members,

As I reflect on this glorious season, I can't help but wonder again, "What happened to the first ten months of this year?" How does time pass so quickly and seem to move at warp speed during the fall? One day it's Labor Day, then Halloween, Thanksgiving, and suddenly the December holidays are here. As we settle into November with its crisp air and shorter days, and our gardens begin their autumn rest, I encourage you to take time to savor the last blooms, admire the changing leaves, and gather with friends and family to celebrate Thanksgiving and the season's beauty.

A heartfelt thank you to Valerie Warriner and Val Plisko for their efforts in organizing and executing our participation in the Vienna Halloween Parade. Valerie not only provided the wagon and the tomato cage to transport Audrey II but also offered her home for decorating signs and adding the finishing touches to Audrey II for the parade. Val Plisko created Audrey II and designed our amazing signs and decorations for the truck. Your creativity and energy brought joy to the community and helped promote our club's name! Thanks to everyone who dedicated their time and skills—your teamwork made it

all possible. We had a wonderful time marching down Maple, waving to spectators. What a night!

We also thank Candace for organizing our field trip to Birdsong Pleasure Garden. The peaceful setting and thoughtful planning made it a memorable day. And thank you to Lura for arranging our winery visit last month—what a great way to relax and connect with fellow members.

I'd also like to thank everyone who has been bringing in horticulture and designs to our monthly meetings. Your contributions are inspiring and educational, and they're helping all of us prepare for our upcoming flower show in April. Keep them coming!

We have two major civic events coming up. We agreed earlier this year to decorate the Vienna Caboose for the holidays, and that will be on Saturday, November 29. Then, on

### W H A T ' S   I N S I D E

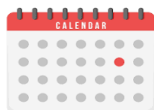
Calendar .....	2
Program .....	2
Horticulture .....	3
Civic - Special Project .....	3
Membership .....	4-5
Wreath Workshop .....	5
Vienna Halloween Parade .....	6
Ways and Means .....	7
Conservation .....	7-9

December 2, we'll have our festive wreath-making meeting, which is always a favorite tradition. We're excited to see the beautiful creations you'll bring to life.

We have many reasons to be thankful, and I appreciate all of you and the countless ways you support our club and each other. Wishing you all a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Warmly,  
*Joy*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

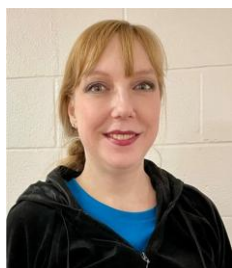


November 11 Board Meeting  
November 18 General Meeting\*  
November 29 Decorating the Vienna Caboose  
December 2 Holiday Greens and Wreath Workshop\*\*

**NOTE:** \*All general meetings at Vienna Presbyterian Church will be held in the Fellowship Hall on the first floor.

**\*\*Wreath Workshop** will be held in the Choir Room on the basement level of the church.

## NOVEMBER 18, 2025 PROGRAM - REDUCING STRESS AND RESTORING THE BODY FOR GARDENING



Heidi Himmelberg, a Vienna Yoga/Pilates instructor with BodyMoves, will guide a program of gentle chair yoga for gardeners toward keeping the body in good shape for an active life. The focus will be on preventing several types of repetitive stress/overuse injuries specific to gardening, as well as reducing slips and falls due to uneven terrain. The goal is to help club members safely optimize their time in the garden, so they can continue to enjoy the peace fostered there when they step back to life outside the garden gate. Participating does not require special equipment or garments (wear something comfortable and enjoy).

*Val Plisko*

## HORTICULTURE

**Horticulture** – Display a cutting from an evergreen plant from your yard other than a pine or conifer. Some examples are azalea, especially rebloomers, or one you especially enjoy. Camellia, Pieris, laurel, holly, & boxwood



are some other examples. Place your sample in a green bottle with foam wedging. Wedging will be available at the meeting. Assistance filling out horticulture cards will also be available.

Please share your evergreens with the club so others might have an opportunity to learn about plants that they might like to try in their garden.

**Design** – Create a design or arrangement using a fall theme and fall colors. In addition to flowers, you can add wood, dried or colored leaves, grasses, vines or anything that says fall is here. List your materials on a 3X5 card.

Please try to exhibit at least one design this year. If you want some assistance, contact Noreen Linnemann.



*Noreen Linnemann*

## CIVIC – SPECIAL PROJECT

🎄 Help Us Deck the Vienna Caboose for the Holidays! 🚂

The holiday season is upon us, and what better way to kick it off than by transforming the caboose into a festive wonderland for the Vienna Holiday Stroll! We're inviting all garden club members to join us for a joyful decorating session on Saturday, November 29, from 2–4 PM.

This year, we're thrilled to partner with the Optimists Club, who will generously provide fresh wreaths and garland to help bring our vision to life. With your creativity and their greenery, the caboose is sure to shine with holiday spirit!

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow members, share a few laughs, and contribute to a cherished community tradition.

🎁 Sign up to help here: [Caboose Decorating Sign-Up Genius](#)

*Joy Salpini*

## MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to our two new members of Five Hills Garden Club! Enjoy getting to know them by reading their bios below and be sure and give them a hearty welcome to our club when you see them at our meetings.

*Valerie Warriner*



My name is Lisa Church and I am currently living in the Mantua community. I attribute my becoming a member to Five Hills Garden Club to Gail Giles. Gail's enthusiasm and excitement about Five Hills is the reason for my attendance. I am excited about joining a community of fellow plant lovers.

I grew up and lived in Arlington County for 22 years. My early love of nature began with my dad who had a love affair with azaleas. He planted them everywhere in our yard. Not so much a lover of digging in the dirt, my mom loved designing floral arrangements using flowers from our own yard, such as Lilacs, Forsythia, etc.

I graduated from Virginia Tech and started a teaching career in Fairfax County. Since my marriage in 1979, I have planted vegetable gardens and flower gardens around our home. We are a family of four with seven grandchildren. Additionally, we are also raising seven chickens.

I look forward to new plant experiences and working on Five Hills Community projects. At my first meeting, I saw members who were learning through sharing and connecting with each other which is a perfect environment for a garden lover.



I'm Mary Ann Troyano and I am excited to join the Five Hills Garden Club and am looking forward to the interesting programs coming up this year. While a novice gardener at best, I enjoy being out in my garden even if it's just weeding.

I originally come from the Garden State of New Jersey and, yes, you will hear my Jersey accent come out from time to time. Currently I live in Annandale with my husband. I guess you could say my interest of gardening developed after growing my (cont'd)



three children. Now I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren and volunteering at The Lamb Center and my church.

Before retiring I worked at the World Trade Center Washington DC as I am a conference/event planner. My favorite job though, was working at a garden center where I was outside with all the beautiful plants and flowers. While it was hard work at times, I learned so much back then and now I am happy to be learning even more as a garden club member.



Five Hills is happy to have you as new members!

**AND COMING UP . . . .**

**HOLIDAY GREENS AND WREATH WORKSHOP**

**DECEMBER 2**

This event is always a morning of good cheer as we gather to assemble fresh wreaths and swags for 28 locations in and around the Town of Vienna.

Five Hills will supply: wreath forms, bows, pins, wire and cards.

Members need to bring clippers and garden gloves AND,

**\*Most importantly**, members need to bring fresh cuttings of evergreens, boxwood, inkberry, magnolia... (No berries or holly though!) for this event. Only with a generous donation of greens can we create our beautiful wreaths and swags for the community. Start looking in your yard now to see what you may be able to cut for our December workshop and also remember that you can check at Christmas tree lots for clippings they have left over from trimming the bottom branches of trees they sell.

We will also need some trash bags and brooms for cleanup.

Look for the sign-up genius or sign up at the November general meeting. The club needs everyone's participation!



*Kathy Nebhut*



## VIENNA HALLOWEEN PARADE

Five Hills members came out to showcase our club in the Vienna Halloween Parade with our Broadway-themed entry, Little Shop of Horrors. In our group there were not only lovely flowers and a gardener, but also an impressive “Audrey”, a bumblebee and a pumpkin! Thanks to all who participated and for helping to introduce our club to the community and prospective members!



Joy Salpini, Nancy Walker, Karen Thompson, Noreen Linnemann, Barbara Tozzi, Anne Nelson, Candace Dibblee, Val Plisko, Elizabeth Huebner, and Shelia Creswell



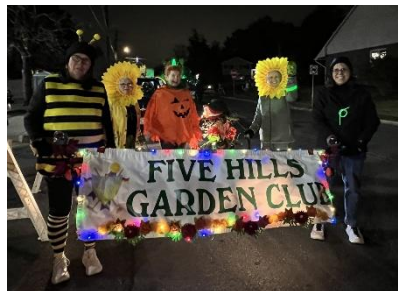
A trio of our lovely flowers:  
Val Plisko, Karen Thompson,  
and Anne Nelson.



Val Plisko and “Audrey”



Barbara Tozzi and Joy Salpini



Valerie Warriner, Karen Thompson,  
Sheila Creswell, Val Plisko and  
Stephanie Roche



Noreen Linnemann and  
Nancy Walker

## WAYS AND MEANS AT “MORNING OF DESIGN”



Roberta Lewis and Val Plisko

The Morning of Design on November 6 showcased arrangements that were truly feasts for the eyes. Our own (former member) Betty Ann Galway performed her magic with flowers and gave many helpful tips.

Five Hills had a fundraising table of “high end” items generously donated by members for sale. We deemed it successful since it netted \$200+. Those who were unable to attend take heart! The unsold items will be available on our white elephant table at future meetings.



Betty Ann Galway at work creating her beautiful designs.



*Carolyn Staska and Roberta Lewis*



## CONSERVATION

### Why It's Time to Leave the Leaves by Andrew Bunting, PHS VP of Horticulture

In recent years, a movement called "Leave the Leaves" has gained popularity. Traditionally, in the fall, gardeners and homeowners have

worked hard to clear leaves from their lawns and gardens. Often, the leaves are raked to the curb for the city to collect, or they're bagged for removal.

In some cases, people even burn the leaves to get rid of them.

However, instead of raking leaves, simply leaving the leaves is a much more ecological approach to gardening. This also helps avoid using trash bags and prevents leaves from ending up in landfills. While some cities turn collected leaves into compost, this process still uses fossil fuels to gather and shred the leaves. Burning leaves releases greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change. By simply leaving leaves in your garden, you can reduce the need for gas-powered lawnmowers and leaf blowers, further cutting down on pollution. Read on to discover how leaves can be beneficial to your garden!

### **Managing the Leaves in the Fall**

As the leaves begin to drop in the fall you can begin raking them and spread them between your perennials, shrubs, and trees. If you can, leave the leaves whole and allow leaf-eating insects and millipedes to naturally break them down. Some leaves, like those from oak, sycamore, or catalpa trees, may be too large. Raking these larger leaves into the lawn and cutting them into smaller pieces with a lawnmower can make them easier to spread in your garden beds.

### **Leaves Help Boost Your Soil's Health**

Leaving leaves in your garden beds add organic material to the soil, which helps improve soil health. This organic matter reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and supports the micro-organisms that live in the soil. Leaves in your garden beds can also act as a

natural fertilizer. As they decompose, they form a layer that helps retain moisture and prevents weeds from growing in the spring. This is especially useful in vegetable gardens, where you can spread leaves between rows to act as natural mulch and add nutrients. Leaving leaves in place can also help prevent soil erosion.

If you have a lot of trees, there simply might be too many leaves to effectively use as mulch in your garden beds. If this is the case, you can add the extra leaves to your compost pile. Over the fall and into spring, the leaves will break down and turn into leaf compost, which nourishes the soil and can be used to enrich your garden or in containers and planters. A layer of leaves acts as a natural mulch, protecting tree and plant roots from winter cold and summer heat.

### **Leaves are Essential to Creating Habitat**

Leaving leaves in the garden is critical for creating habitat for lizards, birds, turtles, frogs, and snails. Nearly 70 percent of all native bee species nest in the ground, so leaving the leaves undisturbed will create the best habitat for bees and other overwintering pollinators.

In recent years, there has been a decline in fireflies. The larvae of fireflies are carnivorous and need decomposing leaves to attract snails, slugs, and earthworms for them to feed on. Like many other insects, fireflies also overwinter in fallen leaves, so leaving them in your yard can help protect the firefly population!



## Other Approaches to Creating Habitat

Another climate-friendly fall gardening practice is waiting to cut back perennials until the spring. Many overwintering insects take refuge in hollow stems on perennials and grasses. Waiting to cut these plants back until the spring will create additional habitat for native insects.

In addition, consider adding small habitat piles throughout the garden. Any garden debris, including small branches and twigs with leaves can artfully be stacked into piles. These piles will slowly decompose, but additionally will be sites of habitat for birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. These animals in the leaf litter are a food source for other wildlife like birds, frogs, and chipmunks.

*Elizabeth Huebner*



*"How beautifully leaves grow old.  
How full of light and color are  
their last days."*

*John Burroughs*