November, 2024 Volume 64, Issue 3

Sow and Tell

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is November, and Mother Nature is showing off! The fall colors remind me of how much I love Virginia and the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah scenery. I never tire of getting out of the suburbs and into the countryside, especially in the fall.

Long walks in the woods this time of year allow us to reflect on our many blessings. I, for one, am incredibly grateful for this lovely club. This past month, we shared our gardening tips and tools; some of us visited Oak Springs Garden Foundation – thank you, Candace, for this fantastic field trip; some worked together at the Glyndon Gardens; a group of members went to Richmond for the Fine Arts and Flowers exhibition at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; and many of you attended our first fundraiser on November 2 – a Day of the Dead Chili Cook-off. Thank you, Carolyn and Roberta, for organizing this wonderful event for our club.

With the holiday season approaching, many of us are busy planning the family gatherings we will attend and host over the next two months. Please mark your

calendar for our upcoming Wreath Workshop on December 3. This is always a fun event, and I hope everyone can attend! Remember to bring LOTS of greens. We will take a hospitality break this month and order pizza for the working crowd! Finally, the District III Holiday Tea and Silent Auction is coming up on December 3. The flyer included in the Newsletter provides more information about this event.

Happy Thanksgiving to each of you. I hope you are surrounded by those you love this holiday season

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 12	Board Meeting
Nov 15-16	NCA Flower Show, National Arboretum
Nov 19	General Meeting**
Dec 3	Five Hills Garden Club Holiday Greens and Wreath Workshop
Dec 3	District III Holiday Tea and Silent Auction

NOTE: All general meetings will be held in the Fellowship Hall of Vienna Presbyterian Church **EXCEPT on December 3, when we will meet in the **Choir room** on the basement level for our Wreath Workshop.

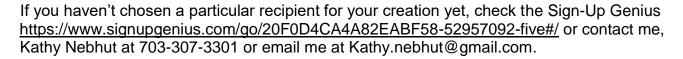
HOLIDAY GREENS AND WREATH WORKSHOP DECEMBER 3

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

Five Hills supplies: wreath forms, bows, pins, wire and cards

Please bring:

Fresh cuttings of evergreens, boxwood, inkberry, magnolia... (No berries or holly though!)
Clippers and work gloves



Kathy Nebhut

NOVEMBER 19, 2024 PROGRAM - GROWING LESS GRASS

Master Gardener Aimee Martin affiliated with Green Spring Gardens will present a program on growing less grass to support environmental health and biodiversity. Ms. Martin will begin by briefly explaining why traditional turf lawns are not optimal. Drawing from her own family's experience and that of others, she will offer practical advice on options to reduce and replace nonnative grasses.

Val Plisko



DISTRICT III SILENT AUCTION

This is a reminder that Five Hills is responsible for donating a gift basket to the District III Silent Auction. As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, I am donating a very nice bird feeder to put in the basket and am looking for additional items to go along with the theme of birds. Bird seed, books on birds or a decorated bird house



are some ideas, so use your imagination. (I know Lucia Bacon is donating a bottle of wine that has a bird on it.) Please let me know at bothwellandy@gmail.com if you have something to donate so I can coordinate what goes into the basket.

Please bring all donations to the November general meeting.

Andy Bothwell

Tried and True Gardening Tools!

Our October program was so much fun! At our meeting in October, Five Hills members shared their favorite garden tools. Here's a picture and a list in case you didn't take notes!

Nancy Walker - Dandelion Punch

Ann Balch - Deluxe Stainless Steel Hori Hori knife & Hari Hari Knife from AM Leonard.,

and Okatsune 7744ai Trimming Shears, type 60, short handle from Amazon.

Joy Salpini - Spear Head Spade

Nancy Peters - Gardener's Supply 8" folding saw

Lucia Bacon - Farmer Sleeves -- modeled by Candace Dibblee

Kathy Nebhut - Joyce Chen snippers

Valerie Warriner - Hand-held three-prong pitchfork and

Noreen Linnemann - Bamboo Saw

Not Pictured:

Carolyn Staska - Gardening Tip - tie unused dryer sheets together and wear as a necklace to keep away gnats & other bugs

Margaret Bain - Plant ID App - Picture This is accurate and easy.

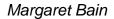
Joy Salpini



CIVIC

The Civic Committee volunteers met at Glyndon Park on the fourth Tuesday of last month, October 22. We spent time cutting back dead stalks, weeding, and generally doing a fall cleanup. The weather was lovely, and we were able to enjoy the beautiful Sugar Maple (Acer saccharum) pictured on the right.

Please come and join us on the fourth Tuesday of this month, November 26, as we finish our fall cleanup and tidy up the garden for the winter.







"Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit still and watch the leaves turn."

Elizabeth Lawrence

Veteran's Day Recognition at the Blue Star Memorial



WAYS AND MEANS

Carolyn and Roberta would like to thank all who supported the chili cook-off Fall fundraiser with food and donations. We had a great turnout and a lot of fun. We met spouses and children, and there was plenty of great food. Five chefs made chili—there was vegetarian, beef, chicken and turkey. The judges had a difficult time deciding, but the Winner was Elizabeth Huebner with her yummy vegetarian chili. Please be sure to share your recipes!



Lots of chili . . .



And the winner is . . .



We also want to remind everyone to save items for our yard sale in May.

Carolyn Staska & Roberta Lewis

HORTICULTURE

Is lichen harmful to shrubs?

Algae, lichens and mosses form green, grey, brown or rust-colored growths on the branches and trunks of woody plants. This sometimes causes gardeners to worry about the health of their plants, but these growths are harmless and can add interest and character to trees and shrubs.



For the November meeting:

Horticulture: Bring in cuttings from native

grasses in your yard.

Design: Create a design that includes native trees.



Arkansas Blue Star turns to a grass in the fall.

CONSERVATION

Care for Trees during a Drought

Established trees may need supplemental watering during extended dry periods.

Trees and other plants can display indicators of the need for watering when their leaves wilt. However, wilting can be caused by several things. If you observe wilted leaves, check soil moisture before watering. When a moisture gauge or visual inspection indicates that the top few inches of soil are dry, it is time to water them.

If the soil is not dry, there may be another issue that is causing the plant to wilt. Watering needs for any species will vary based on weather conditions, location, exposure, and time of year.

Proper Watering Practices



- Watering should be in the form of a deep soaking the objective is to refill the deep reservoir, not to just replenish soil moisture at the top.
- Deep soaking can be done in a number of ways, including using a tree gator, 5-gallon bucket with holes, or other watering mechanism.
- Once the growing season has ended, trees do not need to be watered as frequently. However, trees do benefit from a good soak periodically during warmer winter days.

Mulching

Proper mulching is one of the easiest things that can be done to maintain tree health.

Benefits of Mulching

- Helps water to infiltrate.
- Reduces soil temperature and moisture evaporation.
- Suppresses weeds.

- Feeds the soil ecosystem.
- Improves soil structure.
- Aesthetically pleasing.

Mulching Materials

There are a number of products, both organic and inorganic, that are sold as mulch. Ironically, one of the best products is usually free – <u>arborist</u> wood chips fresh off the truck! Note: these wood chips should only be used as a top dressing or surface mulch and not incorporated into the soil because of temporary nitrogen depletion. Other great options are coarse shredded wood mulch and undecomposed leaves.

Finely-shredded <u>bark</u>, dyed, and inorganic mulches should be avoided. Fine mulches can interlock and form mats that will shed water (rather than allow it to infiltrate) and interfere with oxygen exchange with the soil beneath. <u>Bark</u> is full of waxy substances and shed water rather than absorbing it; this means they will tend to float away or reduce infiltration. At best, inorganic mulches will not feed or contribute to the soil beneath it, and shredded rubber can leach heavy metals as it decomposes.

Proper Mulching – Method Matters

Mulch should be applied to as wide an area as possible. Mulch should never touch the base of the tree because it can cause rot. Fresh wood chips should be applied 4 to 6 inches deep, partially-decomposed wood mulch should be 3 to 4 inches deep, and other mulches 2 to 3 inches deep.

What Not to Do – Volcano Mulching

Volcano mulching is an improper mulching technique where the mulch is piled high against the <u>trunk</u> of a tree and may cause the following:

- Disease and decay due to moisture collection on the trunk.
- Failure to develop a normal <u>root flare</u> to help stabilize the tree.
- Insect or rodent damage.
- Girdling roots.
- Creates conditions that can be too damp or too dry for the tree based on the season.

Many thanks to the Virginia Department of Forestry. We have been without rain in Fairfax County for 35 Days and counting. Thanks for caring for your trees, *Elizabeth Huebner*



FIELD TRIP TO OAK SPRINGS GARDEN FOUNDATION









TRIP TO THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS FINE ARTS AND FLOWERS EXHIBIT







For more images of the exhibit, click on the link below for Lura Marshall's video: http://emieng.com/VMFA_2024_Flowers_AND_Fine_Art.m4v

