PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Garden Club Friends,

We are still hanging on!! All Blue Ridge District Garden Clubs have paid dues for the year. It is good news that no clubs have been lost and that we all believe there will be better days ahead. Many garden club meetings have been cancelled but gardening is flourishing. People have experimented with vegetable gardening for the first time. Container gardening is exploding. That is an easy way to grow beautiful flowers and some vegetables in limited space. We have had more time to spend in our gardens where we can appreciate their beauty and refresh our minds. I have never been more thankful for my garden.

The cancellation of our Spring District Meeting was disappointing but we all believed that by the fall we would be back together. As the summer progressed so has the virus. Each day brings more uncertainty as to what the situation will be in the fall. With no promise for safer conditions, the Fall District Meeting is being cancelled. Again, it is disappointing but the safety of our members is our major concern.

Looking forward to better times, a Nominating Committee for the 2019-2021 administration is in place. And, of course, there is always next year when we can be together again.

Happy gardening and please stay safe.

Hazel Vance

AUGUST 2020 ISSUE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2020

Aug. 31 VFGC Board Meeting via ZOOM
Aug 31-Sep 3 Flower Show School-Lynchburg
Sept. 15 VFGC Grants Deadline
October 15 CANCELED - Blue Ridge District Fall Meeting
Nov. 21 Holiday House on Colonial - Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 9 a.m.-noon
Dec. 1 Awards Deadline

TREASURER NOTES

Hello to all you club treasurers! A big THANK YOU for submitting your dues and updated roster in a timely manner. We tried to save money by emailing the form and roster to be updated to all who have email and I would like your feedback on if this worked for you. You may email me at ghopkins13@msn.com. I know it is confusing to have VFGC dues and roster at the same time. The District roster is different because we need your email address to email the Blue Ridge Digest, so it is important to send the correct form.

Hope you are staying safe and have a beautiful fall season.

Glynis Hopkins
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Artwork from public domain websites.

Newsletter Deadlines:
August 1
September 1
November 1
February 1
May 1

send info to:
shirle4858@gmail.com
540-989-3137
($5/yr or $10/2yr if mailed)

WEB SITES

National Garden Clubs Inc.
http://gardenclub.org

Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs Inc.
http://virgniagardenclubs.org/VFGC/

CLUB NEWS

The Belmont Garden Club of Bedford’s Chaplin Virginia Dillion arranged for us to stay connected in spirit. She called each member and suggested we place a candle in a north window and light it every night from 8 pm to 10 pm.

The Fincastle Garden Club recently donated to the health care workers at The Glebe and Carrington Place bags with hand lotion made by the club members, small packages of tissue, lip balm, candy, etc., contributed by the club members. Face masks made by Jackie and Tim Amos and Jean Hatter were donated. Many thanks to all for their contributions and to Steve Powell for the photo. They also thank the rescue squads and fire departments, police, medical workers, front line workers, government workers and all who work to protect the citizens of Botetourt County.

Pictured above left to right are Robin Ward, Glebe Resident Service Director, accepting the bags for the Glebe, Patsy Powell, past club President, Shirley Mullins, President of the club and Barbara Vassar, Chairman of the project. Other members of the club are Donna Grubb, Mary Bosserman, Louise Gilbert, Sharon Smith, Janet Richards, Paige Ware, Joyce Sarver, Lee Minnix and Kathy Wolzhcek.

They will be celebrating their 90th Anniversary this Fall. The club is planning to host a quilt show, “Show Your Stitches” on November 7, 2020 at the Troutville Church of the Brethren. Please contact Shirley Mullins at 540-992-1339 or Lee Minnix at 540-819-6335 for quilt show or membership information.
Members of the Blue Ridge Garden Club created lovely floral designs to present to the First Responders in Bedford during National Garden Week. The members expressed words of gratitude and appreciation to the following First Responders: Bedford Fire Station - Brad Creasy, Fire Chief, and crew; Rescue Squad Station (next door to Fire Station); Town of Bedford Sheriff’s Office - Mike Miller, Sheriff, and deputies; and State Police Station - Officer Armstrong. Hazel Vance, Blue Ridge District President, presented a copy of the National Garden Week Proclamation to each group.

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue, is holding a Fall Plant Sale & Harvest Festival on Saturday September 26th. There will be fall mums, pansies, and lots of fall blooms and surprises.

When tidying up your gardens and dividing plants, please consider donating plants for the sale. What-nots, vases, etc. are also welcome. They can be dropped off the week of the plant sale Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-Noon.

Members of Sugar Loaf Garden Club provided youth activities at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs’ Pop Up Plant Sale on June 20th.

The National Garden Clubs’ book, “The Frightened Frog - An Environmental Tale,” was read and the illustrations shown. Children and their parents social distanced on lily pads placed six feet apart.

Fun frog facts were shared and two hands-on frog crafts were made by the children.

Handouts were also provided showing the life cycle of a frog. And there were live tadpoles and a frog in a pool thanks to two friends from other clubs. It was a fun, educational experience for all participants!
IN MEMORY

Jean Roberts
Smith Mountain Lake

(Please send death notifications to the BRD Editor)

WESTCHESTER GARDEN CLUB

60th ANNIVERSARY

This year, Westchester Garden celebrates the founding of the club in September 1960 under the sponsorship of Windsor Hills Garden Club. Many of the events planned for the celebration have been postponed for now; but look for future information on a flower show, special program, and reception, all to be open to the public.

Our club president, Patty Smith, has contributed a new feature article to our monthly newsletter entitled "Notes from the Archives" A History Lesson which highlights events from the club’s active 60 years.

We learned that our club name and flower (azalea) were chosen at the second planning meeting and that dues were $2.50. The first club president was Edith Murphy. Meetings were initially held at 8:00 pm in the homes of members; but in 1971, it was decided to have meetings at Fairacres. At present, the club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs’ Garden Center.

The club currently has twenty-four active members including Arlene Poff, a charter member plus two honorary members. Over the last 60 years, club members have served as officers and committee chairmen for Roanoke Council, Blue Ridge District, Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, South Atlantic Region and National Garden Clubs.

Over the years, the club has sponsored a youth club, appeared in 1966 on the local Hayden Huddleston television program, made floral arrangements for nursing homes residents, the Roanoke Blood Bank, the Miss Virginia Pageant held at the Hotel Roanoke and National Garden Week; had an extensive award winning recycling program; completed landscaping projects at Feeding Southwest Virginia and Planned Parenthood; supported NGC’s Penny Pines program, VFGC’s Dogwood Society, Virginia Western Community College Arboretum, Soup for Seniors and Family Service of Roanoke Valley’s Play Therapy Program for young children; and most recently installed a Blue Star Memorial marker atop beautiful Mill Mountain at Star Overlook for which the club won a National Garden Clubs landscaping award. The club continues to have flower shows which have received VFGC awards and three Flower Show Achievement Awards from NGC.

IN MEMORY

Jean Roberts
Smith Mountain Lake

(Westchester Garden Club)

WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS

BIG SPRING GARDEN CLUB
Jane Jones
Kay Lowe

BOONES MILL GARDEN CLUB
Pat Orange

MONETA GARDEN CLUB
Ellen Gaberdiel

NEW CASTLE GARDEN CLUB
Tina Crawford
Joann Hutchison

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE GC
Julie Lambert

SOUTHSIDE GARDEN CLUB
Michele Flanary

THE GARDEN CLUB OF BEDFORD
Catherine Wilkerson

NEW CASTLE GARDEN CLUB
Tina Crawford
Joann Hutchison

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE GC
Julie Lambert

SOUTHSIDE GARDEN CLUB
Michele Flanary

THE GARDEN CLUB OF BEDFORD
Catherine Wilkerson

WESTCHESTER GARDEN CLUB

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IN MEMORY

Jean Roberts
Smith Mountain Lake

(Westchester Garden Club)
We’re looking forward to another 60 years of close friendships made while working on projects to benefit and beautify the Roanoke Valley, Virginia, and our country.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S PROJECTS

In 2018 Brent and Becky’s Bulbs began selling the Narcissus ‘Plant America’ to raise funds for National Garden Clubs’ (NGC) Plant America grants. This is the last year that these beautiful narcissus will be available exclusively to NGC members. Next year, the bulb will be placed on Brent and Becky’s website and in their catalog for sale to the public.

Orders are now being taken for shipment this fall. Please hurry as supplies are limited. The cost of 5 bulbs is $8.00 plus shipping and sales tax. There is a limit of 50 bulbs per person. To order by credit card call 877.661.2852 (toll free). The item number is 01—1135.

N. ‘Plant America’ –
A split corona daffodil -
Color Code:11 W-Y
The yellow perianth segments of this mid-season flower fold back smoothly over its white petals. It has a nice thick substance, which is why its flowers last so long. It has a strong stem and is up-facing. It grows best in full sun to a height of 12”-16”, depending on the richness of the soil.

Janice Clem, Chairman

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

It is hard right now to envision a time when we will all be back to more normal routines, but this “meantime” we’re in might be exactly the right time for your club to start thinking about doing something special to honor someone special with a VFGC Life Membership.

The honoree might be a club president who will be ending her term in office, or a club member who has made a special or significant contribution to your club either this year, or over a span of years. You may already have a club member in mind...or two.

Non-garden club members are also eligible to receive VFGC Life Memberships. Has a nursery owner made special efforts to find your members just the right plants for their gardens, or freely shared gardening insights and advice with your club year after year? How about honoring him or her? Or what about that husband or neighbor or friend who has helped your club with time, energy, and expertise, or just good, old moral support on a particular project? The possibilities are many if you “think outside the box”.

For those special club members who have already been honored with a VFGC Life Membership and now deserve further celebration there are three additional ways in which a club can honor that person: with a Book of Honor nomination, with a SAR Life Membership, or with an NGC Life Membership. Information on those honors is in the VFCG yearbook. If you have questions about any of them, please contact me.

Nominating someone for any of these honors is easy: just e-mail me and ask for an application form. I’ll send one right out to you either by return e-mail or regular mail, whichever you prefer. Fill in the application and send it along with a check for $50.00 to Patsy Cameron, Acting VFGC Life Membership Chair. Her address is on the application form. The application fee of $50 is a tax-deductible donation from your club and goes toward VFCG Scholarships. Honorees receive a life membership pin and card. So think about those special people who have contributed to the success and pleasure of your clubs’ activities, and get nominating!!

Felice Proctor, Chairman
BRD Life Membership: VFGC, SAR, NGC
fproctor1@comcast.net
MONARCH WAYSTATIONS

To offset the loss of milkweeds and nectar sources we need to create, conserve, and protect monarch butterfly habitats. You can help by creating "Monarch Waystations" in home gardens, at schools, businesses, parks, zoos, nature centers, along road sides, and on other unused plots of land. Creating a Monarch Waystation can be as simple as adding milkweeds and nectar sources to existing gardens or maintaining natural habitats with milkweeds. No effort is too small to have a positive impact.

Have you created a habitat for monarchs and other wildlife? If so, help support our conservation efforts by registering your habitat as an official Monarch Waystation today!

https://monarchwatch.org/waystations

A quick online application will register your site and your habitat will be added to the online registry (mapped location will be approximate for privacy). You will receive a certificate bearing your name and your habitat’s ID that can be used to look up its record. You may also choose to purchase a metal sign to display in your habitat to encourage others to get involved in monarch conservation.

As of 24 July 2020, there have been 29,809 Monarch Waystation habitats registered with Monarch Watch! Texas holds the #1 spot with 2,451 habitats and Illinois (2,320), Michigan (2,233), California (1,909), Ohio (1,529), Virginia (1,379), Florida (1,324), Pennsylvania (1,322), Wisconsin (1,304), and Ontario (978) round out the top ten.

You can view the complete listing and a map of approximate locations via https://monarchwatch.org/waystations/registry

[This article is taken from July 2020 Monarch-Watch-Update received by Shirley Edillon who has a registered habitat.]

Monarch Watch (https://monarchwatch.org) is a nonprofit education, conservation, and research program affiliated with the Kansas Biological Survey at the University of Kansas. The program strives to provide the public with information about the biology of monarch butterflies, their spectacular migration, and how to use monarchs to further science education in primary and secondary schools. Monarch Watch engages in research on monarch migration biology and monarch population dynamics to better understand how to conserve the monarch migration and also promotes the protection of monarch habitats throughout North America.  

Shirley Edillon  
Registered Monarch Waystation

BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT AWARDS

Hopefully, you noticed in the last issue of this newsletter the list of awards that clubs within our district won as their applications preceded on to the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs and the South Atlantic Region levels. While the National Garden Clubs conventions, as well as all others were canceled this year, the awards were still presented.

A certificate of merit was awarded to Westchester Garden Club for First Place and Overall Winner of Awards L-1(Ai) Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker by NGC for “their installation and garden in the high-profile location knows as the Star Lookout atop Mill Mountain. Plantings provided year-round interest in a cold, windy mountain location.” This certificate was accompanied by a $100 monetary award.

During this downtime I feel sure that many of your clubs have found ways to safely distance as you have continued to carry out your worthwhile projects. So, submit your award winning applications to show off your clubs efforts. The deadline is for me to receive these is December 1.

Patty B. Smith, Chairman  
BRD Awards (2019-2021)
RECYCLE, PLEASE!

Since in-person shopping has decreased dramatically in the last few months, I do hope all those boxes, bags, and containers being delivered are being recycled. Even before the pandemic, it was estimated that each American produces 749 pounds of waste paper each year. Many localities have reduced the types of plastic they accept for recycling making paper the most commonly recycled household item. In the U.S. paper and paperboard account for more than 2/3 of everything that’s recycled.

It is possible that paper from an earlier use was contained in the box you just received via FedEx or UPS. Although reuse of paper products might appear to be a new idea promoted by the green movement, it was a thriving business in New York City in the late 1920’s. In 1929 the Benedetto family, Italian immigrants, purchased three buildings in Lower Manhattan from which to run their paper recycling operation. Early recyclers began as rag-pickers with pushcarts collecting rubbish from apartments and mansions alike. They sorted out even the smallest scraps of paper and fabric for reuse. While the original idea was tied to new thinking about sanitation and trash reform, the idea that paper is a reusable product gained acceptance. Perhaps even some of our country’s founding documents were printed on recycled material. Benjamin Franklin was a customer of Rittenhouse Paper Mill of Philadelphia. William Rittenhouse’s work included turning linen rags woven from flaxseed into paper. As the business grew, customers like Franklin relied on the mill’s recycled paper to print books, pamphlets, and newspapers.

Moving ahead to today, a popular topic during the current pandemic has been toilet paper. Early on folks seemed to be quite concerned about where their next roll of tissue would be found. Since most toilet products are made from recycled paper, perhaps we have a new incentive to recycle our copy paper, envelopes, boxes, magazines and newspapers. It’s easy, clean, and is accepted by most municipalities. So, RECYCLE, PLEASE!

Martha Flora, Chairman

(Information from Paper and Packaging Board, 2020)

SAR DIRECTOR’S PROJECTS

Don’t forget to apply for one of the South Atlantic Region Director’s Special Project Awards. One of the awards is about Improving Our Communities Through Youth Involvement” and the second is “Reclaiming Unusable Spaces.” Both winners will receive a $50 cash award.

SAR 2019-2021 Special Project Awards
#1 $50 Cash Award
This cash award will be presented annually to a garden club for the most outstanding project involving youth. It can be a scout group, youth group, a class at a school, etc. The project must be garden related.

#2 $50 Cash Award
This cash award will be presented annually to the garden club with the most outstanding reclaimed space. It must be an area that has not been used in the past. (ie. an empty lot, an area that has been a ‘dumping ground’...) The project photos must reflect a definite change in the use and look of the space. Locations and details of work done must be included.

The SAR guidelines can be found on their website. The link is:
http://www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org/awards-2/list-and-rules/

Shirley Edillon, Chairman
BYE-BYE DEER

How many times have we brought home a special plant, tired our back planting it and by the next morning found that the deer have enjoyed a meal? Many years ago, a neighbor shared this recipe with me and it keeps the deer from eating my plants. Yes, even Hosta!

In the spring when the Hosta begins to come up, I spray it frequently as the new growth appears. Best of all it is cheap to make.

- 1 gallon of water
- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon dish detergent

I have found that it is best liquefy the egg with some of the water in a blender. Otherwise, if not mixed well, the egg can clog your sprayer. Apply the liquid using a spray bottle. Reapply every couple of weeks and after a heavy rain. Store in a gallon container. It is not recommended for vegetable plants but I have sprayed it around my garden. This has worked better for me than any commercial product and hopefully it will save some of your plants.

Submitted by Hazel Vance

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The Salem Garden Club landscaped their 17th home for HFH this July. It was the first time however, for them to attempt a landscaping project during a pandemic! The home is located at 2310 Staunton Ave. NW Roanoke and the new owner is Maneeka Patterson, a 24-year-old mother with two children. On July 8th, four members of SGC; Liz Bowles, Connie Stone, Ellen Holtman and Carol Buriak planted Japanese and Siberian iris, Aucuba and evergreen Azaleas along the front foundation of the house. We brought masks with us but found we were able to keep more than 6 feet away from each other as we worked outside in the heat so did not feel it necessary to wear them.

Several club members were prepared to donate MANY types of plants for the backyard, but our plans changed when we learned Maneeka wished to install a backyard above-ground pool. We chose to plant Ferns and Solomon seal in a shade bed along the side of the shed. We refrained from planting anything else because a fence would need to be installed due to insurance requirements. We did plant lots of hostas along the shady side of the house, however.

The HFH site coordinator had acquired two large hibiscuses from Home Depot at discount which we planted on either side of the front walkway. Unfortunately, these were the tropical variety so we explained to Maneeka that they would not survive the winter but left instructions if she wished to pot them up this Fall.

Carol Buriak attended the July 17th dedication ceremony which was held outside following coronavirus protocols. All attendees wore masks unless they were speaking from the front porch. Carol presented Maneeka with a booklet of care instructions for her new landscaping and a gift from the Salem Garden Club of a garden hose and nozzle.

Submitted by Carol Buriak
Salem Garden Club HFH Coordinator
VFGC President, Mary Sue Floyd, has selected a Virtual Plant Sale for this year’s fundraiser. From August to November 2020, choose the plants you may want to purchase and donate the cost. The proceeds will go to the VFGC Scholarship Fund. The District will receive 10% of their total donation. Please send your club’s check to Hazel Vance, 210 North Branch Road, Bedford, VA 24523-1240. Include your Club name, donation amount and a list of plants you did not purchase.

Hazel Vance
VFGC President’s Project Chairman

BOOK REVIEW

The NEW Low-Maintenance Garden: How to Have a Beautiful, Productive Garden and the Time to Enjoy It - Valerie Easton

Are you inspired by images of lush cottage or estate-worthy gardens but are suffering from fatigue and diminishing range of motion? Here is yet another tome to guide you towards having a garden that satisfies the soul while not exhausting the body. Add this to your winter-time reading list.

When I began gardening a mere decade ago I expected to still be hard at it well into retirement. (Note: My role model is a local gardener, age 100.) The punishing heat of July has convinced me that I need to modify my ambition. Reading Easton’s book was solace as I hid from the worst heat of those 90+ degree days.

As a recovering plant addict, the author acknowledged the inclination of most gardeners to begin with good intentions but to end up with a maintenance nightmare. Time after time we misjudge the mature dimensions of that oh so pretty plant in its 4” pot and surely there’s enough room to accommodate just one more.

In each chapter she shares her hard-earned knowledge and those of other gardeners while reiterating the good outcomes to be gained from embracing their collective wisdom. Each ends with mail order resources and the names of both hard copy and electronic publications.

My only complaint with this book is its heavy reliance upon garden profiles, references and sources that are decidedly West coast-centric. This is somewhat understandable as the author was a long-time garden columnist for the Seattle Times and now blogs from her home on Whidbey Island.

Overlooking Easton’s bias, readers will find inspiration and ideas that can be adapted to any climate. While some of her proposals—for example, drastically downsizing or totally eliminating the lawn or the number and variety of your beloved perennials—may be anathema now they may become more appealing with the passage of time and your decreasing stamina. The many photographs of well thought out gardens and gorgeous container plantings provide a compelling and convincing argument to embrace or, at least experiment with, her maintenance-lowering recommendations.

Although the sight of my own flowerbeds in glorious bloom makes me hesitant to do so, I am already thinking of ways to incorporate some of Easton’s suggestions into those same beds next spring. I anticipate that making merely one or two changes will result in reducing the efforts expended to maintain my garden while in no way lessening its aesthetic appeal. As I continue to make such changes, I, too, may still be able to garden at age 100.

Lee Greiser, Chairman
Autumnal Equinox
September 22, 2020

Happy Gardening and
Please Stay Safe!

Blue Ridge District
2019-2021 President’s Theme

“Plant today; protect and
preserve for tomorrow.”

Shirley Edillon, Editor
4858 Glenbrook Drive SW
Roanoke, VA 24018-2800