

December EDITION OF THE VFGC, INC. NEWSLETTER



ROOTED

Awards Deadline: December 1, 2023

Happy Hanukkah: Begins December 8, 2023

Merry Christmas: December 25, 2023

Kwanza: December 26, 2023

Happy New Year: January 1, 2024

Don't forget!

Hello VFGC Members,

Gray day today, winter is upon us. Yes, Christmas will be here soon, a time to celebrate, see family and enjoy the festivities. A fun, yet busy time of year. And the baking, oh my!

I am sure the district award chairmen are reviewing their respective awards. I hope there will be many to review and with more sent by email, this adds to the challenge to review each one. Thank you for doing this.

Clubs are having fundraisers, making wreaths, garland, bird seed ornaments. I hope each club does well. And I am sure many are having their holiday luncheons, whether catered, pot luck, all are good. Also, there may be "thieves gift exchange" or flower arrangements taken to elderly homes

While visiting the districts during their fall meeting, they were encouraged to have a flower show at their spring meeting. I am so pleased to announce this is starting to occur...keep up the great work.

Sometimes clubs change their officers during different times of the year. If this is so, please keep VFGC notified (Linda Nau, Treasurer and Dianna Busch, Corresponding Secretary).

The new ODG distribution went well, I know some are not pleased. However, the new format/magazine was outstanding (in my humble opinion). Gail, deserves a lot of credit. Can't wait for the next issue.

Continue to visit the NGC and VFGC web sites and your own district site...they are a wealth of information.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and please remember "Every Person Makes a Difference".

Val Story

CLUB NEWS:

Virginia Flower Show Judges Council (VFSJC) had their autumn meeting on Monday, November 5th before the start of symposium at the Double Tree by Hilton in Midlothian, VA. Twenty seven members enjoyed a hearty luncheon followed by a creative pumpkin workshop lead by their newly elected President, Betty Ann Galway. The other officers also elected at this meeting were: Pat Carswell, First Vice President; Brenda McManaway, Second Vice President; Michael Rider, Secretary; Susan Creasy, Treasurer; Julia Kogut, Historian.

We all look forward to a new term with lots of flower shows for Judges to Judge and for all enjoy & grow in their floral design appreciation and knowledge.

Respectfully submitted by Betty Ann Galway, VFSJC President 2023-25



Nelson County Garden Club

It's been a busy fall for the Nelson County Garden Club!

In September, the club gathered for a floral watercolor painting session at the beautiful home of Mary Hopkins, our club VP. Members also participated in an iris and plant swap beforehand.



In October, Bennett Saunders of Saunders Brothers and NewGen Boxwood was our wonderful guest speaker discussing the company's involvement providing boxwood to the White House dating back to President Kennedy's term, as well as being the sole provider of boxwood in the recent renovation of the White House Rose Garden in 2020.



For our November meeting, Tom Saunders of Saunders Brothers and husband of club member, Lyn Saunders, did an amazing demonstration on wreath making and bulb forcing. The club enjoyed lunch ahead of time at the Saunders Brothers Farm Market and everyone was so appreciative of this special opportunity to learn something new.



Our club continues to grow! Since March, we have welcomed 8 new members!
Submitted By Melissa Dickie, Nelson County GC

This Winter is For the Birds!

With long cold days upon us, there is not much opportunity for gardening. In response, many of us have turned to a related pastime -bird watching. Hopefully, we have had the foresight and charity to plan ahead for the needs of the feathered visitors to our gardens. We want to encourage the birds to hang around until spring so that they resume their very important duty and eat up all the bugs that plague us.

- **Food** - Did you plant trees and bushes that produce berries for winter forage? Dogwood is my favorite. I also have lots of Nandina but I have heard that the berries contain cyanide and are therefore toxic. However, in another article I read recently, Nandina is recommended specifically for bird food. Perhaps readers will comment to the editor with their own experience. For my part, I have never seen a bird touch the beautiful and abundant red berries.
- **Shelter** - Do you have shrubbery dense enough for winter shelter and spring nesting? Again, my Nandina is a repeat favorite nesting spot and stays thick and green all winter.
- **Water** - How about a water source? Very important in this freezing weather. After years of replacing expensive pottery/cement/ceramic fixtures that have cracked and shattered, I have finally found the ultimate bird bath. It is cheap, lightweight, uncomplicated and requires no installation. I use a plastic look-alike 'pottery' saucer that is meant for large patio planters. In order to withstand high winds, I place a large rock in the center. The only minor inconvenience is that during freezing weather one must dump it every morning and refill with warm water.

No article would be complete without a personal antidote to amuse and educate: In addition to natural food sources, I feed sunflower seeds all winter. It is not unusual to see 20-30 birds at the feeder and perched in the surrounding trees awaiting their turn. But this winter, I have zero diners; only a lone mockingbird. After weeks of observation, I have named him Leonidas after the Spartan king who, with only 300 soldiers, held off the advance of the invading Persian army for three days at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. Outnumbered by a hundred-to-one, they were defeated but their sacrifice gave the Greek armies time to regroup, eventually defeating the Persians within a year. Their heroics are legendary as is the famous reply to the Persian King who demanded that they lay down their weapons. "*Molon Labe*", answered King Leo; translated as "*Come and get them*"!

My mock-King-bird, Leonidas, stands guard all day over the feeder chasing away all comers. At first it was a single blue jay, half again his size. Then the jay brought friends, two at first then six within the week. Leo prevailed against all odds. Over the ensuing weeks, I've watched him fend off cardinals, sparrows, crows and even a pair of pileated woodpeckers! Now this is truly impressive. And here's the kicker – mockingbirds will not eat from a feeder! Their diet does not

include birdseed; preferring bugs, berries and suet. Leo does frequent the bird bath. Guess he needs a lot of water after all this chasing and fighting.

As evidenced, they are very territorial even dive-bombing humans who approach their nests. I'm hoping that Leo will allow me to share my patio this summer. After all, I'm the one filling up the water in the freezing weather and I do not eat berries or bugs.

Submitted by Maureen Wilcox, **Shenandoah**



Salisbury Garden Club Holiday Tour Highlights





A Gardener's Version of the Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the yard, the branches were bare and the ground frozen hard;

The roses were dormant and mulched all around, to protect them from damage if frost heaves the ground.

The perennials were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of 5-10-5 danced in their heads.
The new-planted shrubs had been soaked by the hose, to settle their roots for the long winter's doze.
And out on the lawn the new-fallen snow, protected the roots of the grasses below.
When what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a truck full of gifts of gardening gear.
Saint Nick was the driver - the jolly old elf, and he winked as he said, "*I'm a gardener myself.*"
I've brought wilt-pruf, rootone, and gibberellin, too. Please try them and see what each of them can do.
To start new plants, a propagating kit. Sparkling new shears, to keep plants looking fit.
To seed your new lawn, I've a patented sower; in case it should grow, here's a new power mower.
For seed-planting days, I've a trowel and a dibble, and a roll of wire mesh if the rabbits should nibble.
For gardening all season, some gadgets to love; plant stakes, a sprinkler, and waterproof gloves;
A chemical agent for the compost pit, and for pH detecting, a soil testing kit.
With these colorful flagstones lay a new garden path, to access the bird feeder and clean out the bath.
And last but not least, some well-rotted manure. A green Christmas year-round, these gifts will ensure.
Then jolly Saint Nick, having emptied his load, started his truck and took to the road.
And I heard him exclaim through the motor's loud hum, "*Merry Christmas to all, and to all a green thumb!*"

Anonymous contributor to the internet

Nathaniel Cawsey Garden Club
Invites you to Save the date ~May 1, 2024
Country Club of Petersburg
“Making Memories – Alfresco Style”
Featuring
Floral Demonstration by
Jennifer Mackintosh

Details to follow

VFGC CLUB FLOWER SHOWS:

Our VFGC President, Val Story, loves Flower Shows! So do club members! So, **if your club is planning a Flower Show open to the public, please send basic information to rootedvfgc@gmail.com** so it can be listed here in future editions of **ROOTED**. There may be club road trips in everyone's future to see your club's Flower Show!

THE IDEA EXCHANGE:

Every VFGC Garden Club strives to sponsor great programs. But where can a club find new program ideas? **Please share information about your club's favorite programs and contact info by sending it to: rootedvfgc@gmail.com for THE IDEA EXCHANGE.**

While the Old Dominion Gardener is published quarterly, **ROOTED** can be sent monthly. So please submit articles or information you want to share before the next ODG is published to rootedvfgc@gmail.com. (ODG deadlines are: August 1, November 1, February 1 and May 1.) For either publication, please submit photos in jpeg format as a separate file. Please submit text in Word format.

**WE WISH YOU VERY HAPPY HOLIDAYS and a
HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!**

Sally Harrison, Editor, **ROOTED**, Email:rootedvfgc@gmail.com