

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

April 2019

Our Treasurer—A Treasure

by Christine Elliott, Friendship Chair

Mac Williamson has been a Board Member at large several times, member of various committees, Vice President, President and Immediate Past President for two years each. He served a four year stint as Treasurer and stepped up a second time when asked to do so by immediate Past President, Paul Hoffman.

Mac hails from Cartersville, Georgia, a small town north west of Atlanta. As our March speaker, Pam Beck, mentioned, gardening for lots of families in those days was a matter of growing what you could eat fresh and preserve for winter. Mac remembers his mother could grow anything, and did.



He met Vivian when he was asked to be the “tall” best man at a wedding where Vivian was a bridesmaid. The rest is history. Sounds like a meet-cute movie! After serving his country in the military, he and Vivian moved to Greenville for work, and later they transferred to the Raleigh/Durham.

Mac and Vivian have evolved a natural, unstructured gar-

den around their home over the years. They thoughtfully planted with year-round color in mind. Late winter blooms in their garden include hellebore, iris and Keri japonica. Mac is known to be a knowledgeable and generous gardener with a sense of humor, always willing to share plants and advice

Club Meetings

Monthly meetings are at 7:30 PM at the JC Raulston Arboretum every 3rd Tuesday. Refreshments and socializing begin at 7:00.

In this month’s presentation at the GWC, we’ll learn from an expert about sustainable, organic, and waterwise garden design with a focus on native plants that encourage resident and migrating birds, bees, and butterflies. In a recent interview Helen said, “It’s not just about pollinators, but an entire ecosystem to benefit the soil, air, water, and of course, birds, bees, butterflies. If we gardened more sustainability, we can save more species. We don’t need to keep bees to help the bees—instead, plant the pollen and nectar-rich plants that satisfy their needs. And while it’s wonderful to have beautiful flowers, if you are trying to fully sustain the life-cycle of the butterfly, one needs a diversity of plants.” Since making better gardens is what we’re all about, you won’t want to miss this month’s meeting.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Virginia (Ginny) Parker
Vice President: Kalli Shevzov
Secretary: Jim Moore
Treasurer: Mac Williamson
Immediate Past President: Paul Hoffman
At-large board members: Barbara Brown, Rich Engates, Leslie Cohen, Eddie Robinson

Committees

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)
Audit: Charles Gilliam, Sharon LaRusch, Reed Elliott, Donna Farmer
Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett
Beautification Awards: Laine Thomas
Club Awards: Jim Moore
Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam
Friendship: Chris Elliott
Historical: Donna Farmer
Membership, Barbara Brown
Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott
Nominating: TBA
Programs: Kalli Shevzov
Projects: Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson
Publicity: Charles Gilliam
Scholarship: Joanne Boone
Telephone: Johnny and Sherrill Johnson
Webmaster: Reed Elliott

Contact Us

For additional information email our Club at gardener@gardenersofwakecounty.org

Contact Ginny Parker, President, by phone at home: 919-832-5483 or by cell: 919-880-3233

Our Treasurer—A Treasure

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for those with questions. At our March meeting, Mac invited members in need of hellebore to call him to make an appointment to come dig up some from his yard, he has more than he needs. For those who may still be interested, his contact information is in the Club directory. Having just priced hellebore at the local garden center that is a great offer!



As always, Mac and Vivian will be volunteering at the upcoming GWC Azalea Sale. As treasurer, Mac handles the money side of our sale, but he'd really rather spend time with the gardening public. So come out to the sale, find Mac and ask all those pesky gardening questions you've been wanting to ask of an experienced local gardener. Just look for "the tall guy."



Urban Sustainable Gardening with This Month's GWC Presenter Helen Yoest

by Reed Elliott, Editor

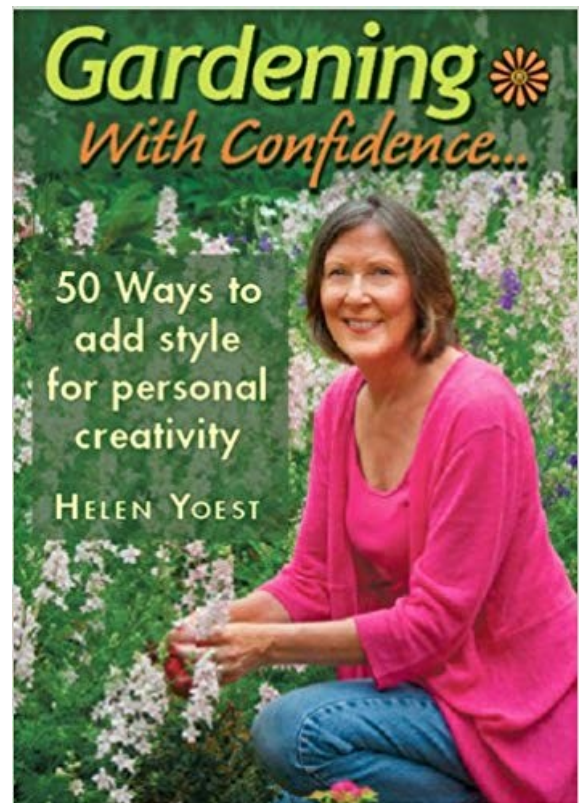


April's GWC speaker, Helen Yoest is a gardener with a capital G. She holds a B.S. and M.S. in environmental science and engineering and is a lifelong nature lover and outdoor enthusiast who has devoted a lifetime to bettering our world's environment. She's the author of three books about gardening: *Gardening with Confidence*, *Plants with Benefits*, and *Good Berry Bad Berry*, is a gardener at Fearington Village in Chapel Hill, a guest columnist for *Country Gardens* magazine, and is the recipient of the 2015 City of Raleigh Sustainability award.

Her professional life began as an air pollution engineer. That work led her to found and direct *Bee Better*, an area nonprofit that focuses on improving the environment through good stewardship. When interviewed recently Helen said, "It's not just about pollinators, but an entire ecosystem to benefit the soil, air, water, and of course, birds, bees, butterflies. Our focus is on the plants. Many homeowners express interest in wanting to help the bee or the monarchs or some other celebrity insects. If we gardened more sustainability, we can save even more species. We don't need to keep bees to help the bees—instead, plant the pollen and nectar-rich plants that satisfy their needs. We help teach homeowners to plant the best flowers for their allowed space that will benefit the European honeybee that are also not invasive. Same with the butterflies. It's wonderful to have beautiful flowers, but if you are trying to fully sustain the life-cycle of the butterfly, one needs a diversity of plants, and most certainly a host plant on which to lay their eggs, so the caterpillar stage can feed."

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Since making better gardens is what we're all about, you won't want to miss the April GWC monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 16th.



A Letter from the Garden Walk at Longview

by Sharon LaRusch



I wanted to reach out to the Gardeners of Wake County and WakeMed to express my thanks and my awe in the changes that you have made over the last year. The one sure thing in life is change but let me tell you... I have had several years of resting and waiting for this moment. That is saying a lot because I began in 1925 as a pencil drawing on paper. Now Clarence Poe, my "creator," never said for sure, but I would imagine that since he was such an industrious visionary, he understood that nature is an impactful place. Can you imagine becoming an editor of The Progressive Farmer at the young age of 16! He certainly put to practice so much of what his magazine communicated. But I was a future dream of the Poe family.

I was to be a place for sweet walks for him and wife Alice Aycock Poe to talk about the future, and to see their children and grandchildren grow up. Weddings and other family events were joyous, family occasions. In 2011, my "family" expanded when WakeMed was gifted the Longview property and later the beautiful Poe home for use by the WakeMed Foundation.



I lay resting for many decades and it seemed as though my time was past. Then, in October of 2017, I saw the first bit of attention in many long years when conversation turned to exploration. When the GWC volunteers of the first workday came out in January 2017, it was a snowy start but smiles and curious explorers broke ground and began to prune my wisteria overcoat. As the months passed I saw dedication, connection and the delicate hand of restoration. As the year ended, WakeMed's involvement began by harvesting some cedar trees for benches and clearing areas of the garden. It was amazing, a vision for a new Garden Walk came to fruition, first, on paper just as I had first begun, and then, as the grounds continue selective clearing and workers visit each month, I am the one that excitedly awaits for paper to convert to plants and planting! I envision my restored Garden Walk as once again a place of connection, healing, laughter and love.

So thank you to my caretakers past, present and future! I promise to care of you in return.

Your friend always,

The Garden Walk at Longview

Art in Bloom V

by Laine Thomas, Editor-at-large

Between March 21st and March 24th the North Carolina Art Museum celebrated its 5th annual Art in Bloom. The show this year was fabulous. We saw many new floral designers who had not exhibited in the past. All but two came from NC, and about ½ from the Triangle. We learned that the NCMA makes an effort to showcase local artists with diverse training and experience. Among my favorite exhibits were the pink gladiolas reflecting Floridian colors and modern art. Another great example used a window as a frame for bursting flowers to compliment a painting that was neutral, minimalist and highlighted by windows.



During the show we stopped at the NCMA Gift Shop and bought a flower puzzle. It was unique for having curved edges around the shape of a bouquet rather than a square outline. Unfortunately, I forgot the gift bag on the floor. I returned the next day to check if my lost

item was returned. At noon on a Saturday, I had good luck on many fronts. I somehow found parking amidst 4,000 guests. People were beautifully dressed and shopping from a “Food truck” that sold flowers and taking pictures in front of a floral wall. Within the

beautiful chaos the security team quickly confirmed that my puzzle had been found and was waiting. Then they escorted me to it. That brought us down through the tunnels that run beneath the NCMA. I had no idea these even existed! They connect both Museum buildings that are separated above ground.

As soon as we descended I was overwhelmed by the smell of flowers. The tunnels are cool and are used to store all of the flowers that artists use to revitalize the



exhibits over the course of the weekend. The whole tunnel was like a flower show. I enjoyed this detour for the opportunity to see behind the scenes.

As much as the flowers stood out this year, so did the art. New paintings were up in many of the galleries and I was overwhelmed by how lucky we are to have these incredible pieces here in Raleigh. Someone on social media complained that the flowers distract from the seriousness of art. Maybe? The flowers helped me see the art in new and vibrant ways. It was a great show for gardeners and artists of many kinds!

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcome anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we're happy to have added Kim & George Kearney, Julie Moore, and Kala Parker, all of Raleigh, and Karen Fleming, Wake Forest. Be sure to say “Hi and welcome” when you see them at the next meeting.

My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

I'd like to turn over my soapbox this month to Charlie Leverett, our Azalea Sale Chair. Here's what he had to say two years ago about a topic that is very much with us in April, 2019.

From April 8th through the 20th it all comes together. Azaleas. Scholarships. Friendship. Expertise. Beauty. They are not the likeliest of associations. In the case of our 2019 Azalea Sale, the centerpiece of our Sale, the wonderful azalea, unites these five other wonderful parts of life.

An azalea is beautiful, and we connect with it. I have a red one in my back yard that's about 45 years old. It's so beautiful I stare at it when it's in bloom as if in a trance. The beauty of an azalea is soft, sensory, and subtle, but it strongly strikes us all with amazement and wonder just the same. I look forward to seeing the Encores, especially the Encore Autumn Fire, the deciduous azaleas, and a new gardenia, the Jubilation, which has two bloom cycles instead of one.

To maintain and advance that beauty, people study azaleas and other plants at places like the NC State University Department of Horticulture. Horticulture is an absolutely necessary science. Scholarships support students in the study of horticulture who will keep developing and improving azaleas and, of course, many many other types of plants and flowers. For this reason alone, this year's Sale is a great cause. It's service to and for others who will benefit from a scholarship, which will in turn benefit all of us with better horticulture. Through this annual GWC project, azaleas can do all that.

Some gardeners would rather dig a hole and plant an azalea than talk to someone. There is an exception: gardeners like to talk to other gardeners, which is what happens at our Gardeners of Wake County monthly meetings. You volunteers working at this year's Sale will be with other gardeners with whom you share a common interest and purpose. An unfamiliar face will become a friend's face associated with good memories. It's an important part of being a GWC member to volunteer to work at the Sale hosted once again at the [Campbell Road Nursery](#). Helping out at the 2019 Azalea Sale will benefit our community, and can become a source of friendships and personal satisfaction, on many levels. Signing up to help is easy. [Just click here](#).



You'll meet other people who are buying azaleas and who are gardeners with varying levels of skill and experience. Often it's the case that they will need help, and you can share your gardening expertise with them. Most of the time you're asked the same questions every 10 minutes, and you find yourself giving the same instructions in different ways, refining your people and your gardening skills. People are excited about buying azaleas, and your guidance makes it even more exciting for them. They feel your excitement when you explain what you know, whether a little or a lot, and it makes for a wonderful conversation with someone new. You'll find that your skill and knowledge are appreciated and help others, which is a wonderful experience. All because of an azalea.

Isn't it amazing what an azalea can do?!