



The Seattle Garden Club

eNEWS

Member of The Garden Club of America

December 2018

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'Tis the season!



November heralds mixed emotions as Thanksgiving and Christmas appear on the horizon. However, our December auction and luncheon consume many of us, preparing to fund worthy projects throughout the Seattle area. I say mixed emotions as the brilliant colors of autumn mark the end of one season and the beginning of another, that cold, damp, dark time of year when a crackling fire and hot cup of tea help take the edge off winter. Dried hydrangeas throughout the house remind me of that brief moment when the crescendo of color peaks. Wasn't that just yesterday?

The holiday auction raises dollars we need to spread our endorsement of worthy garden projects throughout the community, i.e., landscaping plans and plants, botanical books, and our own needs at the Center for Urban Horticulture. We just dedicated a long-awaited rose arbor in October in our Fragrance Garden at CUH with funds from Community Projects, our grant committee. We are truly grateful to all who generously support these worthwhile projects. Recently, I read an excerpt from The Winds of Change, a GCA chronicle of each club's achievements, about the Seattle Garden Club's contributions to the city from 1968-1988. "The club's special concern is the University of Washington Arboretum, commissioned by the Olmstead brothers to design Azalea Way; the Center for Urban Horticulture; the Lake Washington Ship Canal; to provide teachers' summer environmental workshops, with the distribution of GCA environmental packets to grade schools in the city; to encourage wilderness preservation, bird sanctuaries and to urge recycling practices at the Seattle Transfer Station." These endeavors represent GCA's and SGC's mission: "...to stimulate the love of gardening, to aid in the protection of the quality of the environment, to encourage and assist in civic beautification..." We take these words to heart and continue to support projects that meet our criteria.

November also reminds us of our many blessings and how thankful I am to those who invest the time and energy to carry out this mission. With the help of all those who support our auction, dedicating countless hours of service to improve our community and to club committee planning, I am truly grateful. We couldn't accomplish these efforts without everyone's participation.

We look forward to more stimulating speakers, Provisional talks and of course, our flower show in the New Year. If 2019 is any indication of 2018, the sand in the hourglass will fall even faster...as we prepare for "Nature's Poetry" in late May.

In the meantime, I send my warmest wishes to each member for a joyous season ahead!

Catherine Allan, Seattle Garden Club President

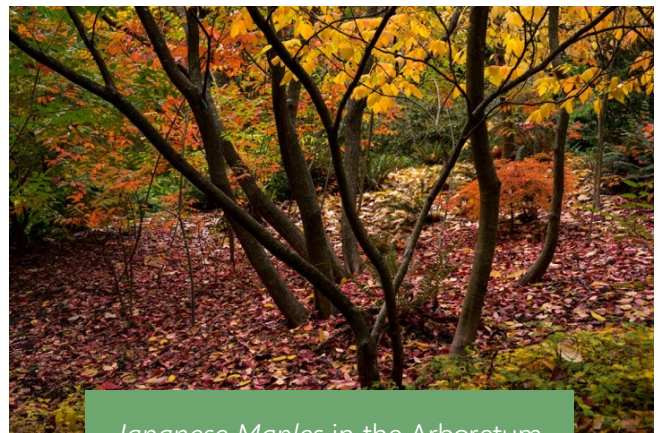
Events

For calendar details, please go to seattlegardenclub.org, then select Members, then select CALENDAR.

Seattle Garden Club Event Calendar November 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 10:00AM - 11:30AM SGC Board Meeting	2	3
4	5 8:30AM - 9:30AM Provisional Meeting 9:15AM - 11:30AM Hort Share/Provisional talks @CUH 11:30AM - 1:00PM Ways & Means Committee meeting at CUH - Isaacson Boardroom 11:30AM - 2PM Conservation Committee CUH NHS Hall A	6	7	8 2:00PM - 3:30PM Preview Party Mtg	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 9:25AM - 12:00PM SGC General Meeting: Botanical Jewelry, Anne Scott	16 10:30AM - 11:30AM Ways & Means Committee meeting at Charlee's	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

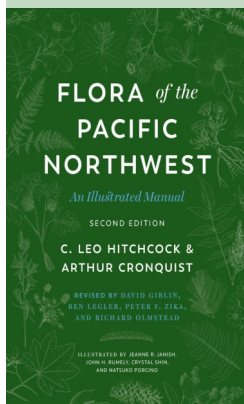


Liriodendron tulipifera
(Tulip Tree) in the Arboretum



Japanese Maples in the Arboretum

Flora of the Pacific Northwest, *An Illustrated Manual*



The "Flora of the Pacific Northwest - Second Edition" was recently published and is now available for sale through the University of Washington Press. The book covers all of Washington, the northern half of Oregon, Idaho north of the Snake River Plain, the mountainous portion of western Montana, and the southern portion of British Columbia.

SGC's Community Projects funded the second edition with two gifts, first in 2014 to fund 100 hand-drawn illustrations, and again in 2017 to assist with the printing. Seattle Garden Club is acknowledged as a major donor to the project. Two copies of the book were presented to SGC, one which will be stamped with the SGC logo and kept in the office at CUH; the other has been sent to the Garden Club of America Library which is housed at the New York Botanical Garden.

The volume is available to SGC members for purchase with a 30% discount. To order, call Hopkins Fulfillment Services - 1-800-537-5487 and use the promo code: WST30.

Events

October General Meeting



Carolyn Kitchell, Julianne Ubigau
and Catherine Allan



November Hort Meeting



Charlee Reed and
Catherine Mueller

First Place & Botanical Arts Best in Show
Anne Scott, Jupiter Island GC, Zone VIII



Judges Comment: "A distinctive design with exceptional pattern and proportion embracing the Kaleidoscope theme."

Citation: "You have fascinated us with your multifaceted work of art."

November General Meeting!

The November 15th General Meeting will feature Anne Scott, a garden club member in Michigan and Florida speaking on "Botanical Jewelry". Anne has over 20 ribbons for Botanical Art. She is an attorney with over 20 years of public service. Anne belongs to 3 garden clubs, has 7 children and 9 grandchildren!



Events

The Seattle Garden Club Holiday Luncheon & Auction

Thursday, December 6th

Sunset Club

10:30 am Auction & Social

12:00 pm Luncheon

Invite your friends and consider bringing a prospective member!
Valet Parking Available - Carpooling Strongly Encouraged

Angel Donations are very much appreciated – make your donations on line by clicking here [Greater Giving Angel Donation](#) or make check payable to SGC and mail to: Barbara Feasey, 2701 NE 94th St. - Seattle, WA 98115

Our Auction is fast approaching! This is our main fundraiser which supports our efforts to raise funds for our Community Projects. Here is a preview of some of the wonderful items in store for you:

- Seahawks vs Cardinals game **Dec. 30, 2018** – Two Delta Sky360⁰ Club tickets and parking pass
- Hawaii cozy 4 bedroom home on the big island – value \$10,000. Located in Kohanaiki, a new development north of Kailua-Kona - Valid 2019
- Butchart Garden day trip May 16th – fly in, tour the gardens, have lunch and fly home the same afternoon
 - Mah Jong class to learn and play this ancient game – 2 night event Feb 7th and Feb 13th – dinner is included at Burnley's house
 - Guest house for two for 4 nights in Santa Fe – mutually agreeable date between July 5th and Sept 15th, 2019 – two dinners and breakfasts are included
 - A wonderful selection of plants from Allison Andrews' garden and the Miller Garden
 - Tour the Chinese Garden when the peonies are blooming and enjoy lunch on May 8th. Prepared by Catherine Allan, Diana Neely, Sue Blethen and BJ Anderson
 - Crabbing on Whidbey Island with Carol Eland on her boat - lunch at Iris Wagner's cabin
 - New World vs. Old World Wine Tasting Event

Make your lunch reservations no later than **November 27th**. For guests and members not subscribing to Meeting Arrangements, the cost is \$45. If you prefer to pay by check, please contact Wade Garretson at wadegarretson@comcast.net or (206) 271-8858.

To RSVP for the luncheon click here [RSVP](#) or go to the SGC website.

Please contact us with any questions or ideas.
Charlee Reed charleereed@gmail.com 206.818.7585
Catherine Mueller cathmueller@gmail.com 206.679.0902

Reports

Chocolate: A Gift that Keeps on Giving

Laboring in the hot, humid environment of the Ivory Coast and Ghana, workers wield their machetes against the large pods grown on the *Theobroma cacao* tree. Between 40-50 million farmers from small family farms grow and harvest 90% of the world's cocoa beans. One tree produces only 1 kilo (2.1/2 pounds) of cocoa beans. Not only that, but the cocoa bean is a delicate crop, susceptible to disease and pests.

Growing is hard manual labor requiring year -round diligence. A pod will begin to ripen 5-6 months after it flowers. The large pods are cut by hand; they yield 20-30 seeds in a sweet white pulp. Once the pod is opened, workers remove the beans for fermentation, drying, cleaning and packaging into sacks for sale and processing. They are crushed, shells removed, roasted and ground up into cocoa liquor. The liquor is used to manufacture chocolate, cocoa butter and powder.

The origin of the word, 'chocolat' was from the Aztec. 'xocoatl', meaning, "bitter drink." The Latin, *Theobroma cacao* tree translated to "Food of the gods." In fact, cocoa beans were so valuable that they were used as currency: 1 bean= 1 tamale, 100 beans= 1 turkey. The Mayans believed that cacao had magical or divine powers and used the beans in their rituals.



In 17th century Europe, chocolate was a fashionable drink and thought to have medicinal, nutritious and aphrodisiac properties. During the American Revolution, chocolate was so valued that it was included in a soldiers' rations, sometimes in lieu of wages. As the popularity of chocolate grew, powdered cocoas and affordable treats became more available.



Could such a delectable food be healthy? Studies concur that dark chocolate has anti-oxidants (flavonoids) which could lower cholesterol, could help prevent memory decline, and increase blood flow. In the *Journal of International Society of Sports Nutrition*, a study suggested that a little dark chocolate might boost oxygen availability during fitness training. A U.K. study found that during cycling trials, after eating dark chocolate, the riders used less oxygen when cycling at a moderate pace, covered more distance in a two- minute flat-out time trial.

Not just for tasty treats, cocoa butter is also found in skin care products and spa treatments, utilizing the butter's antioxidant properties. In a Hershey Hotel Spa, a guest may indulge in cocoa- rich treatments: from chocolate milk baths and cocoa bean polishes to chocolate fondue wraps. Chocolatiers have created

hand-made, creative and exotic temptations for the chocolate lover. Hanging high from its habitat in the trees of the rich rainforests, the cacao pod and its harvester, unleash extraordinary value and enjoyment to the world's candy lovers, not just for holiday gifts and treats, but for every day pleasure.

Visiting Gardens

We are in the planning stages of a trip for Seattle Garden Club Members next April 29- May 4 (approximately) to visit some of the outstanding gardens of Virginia during their Garden Week with a special day at Mt. Vernon. If you are interested, please contact:

Laurie Riley laurieariley@gmail.com or Burnley Snyder lottie7@aol.com

Space will be limited.



Reports

Membership Committee

Proposals for Candidates for Membership Due by December 15th!

As we near the December 15, 2018 deadline to propose candidates for Provisional Membership to the Seattle Garden Club, the Membership Committee members want to remind you of the process as stated in our yearbook on page P-9:

II. Proposal for Provisional Membership

1. Candidates for Provisional membership shall be proposed and seconded by Active, Sustaining or Non-Resident Members, none of whom shall be members of the Membership Committee, relatives, or relatives by marriage.
2. Proposal for membership shall be made to the Membership Chair on forms furnished by the Chair. Forms must be postmarked no later than midnight December 15.
3. Candidates shall be personally known by two members of the Governing Board and/or Membership Committee and at least four Active and/or Sustaining Members of SGC.
4. An Active or Sustaining Member may propose or second only one candidate each year.
5. A Candidate who fails two times to pass the Membership Committee or the Governing Board may not be proposed again.

We want to encourage you to propose candidates who not only have an interest in one or more of our disciplines (floral design, horticulture, photography & conservation) but also have the time be hands-on active members.

Thank you,
Marilee Ahalt, Membership Committee Chairperson

Floral Design Committee

Carol Henderson and Sue Ashmun traveled to Denver for the fall GCA FASG (Floral Arrangers Study Group) workshop last month. International designer Daniel Santamaria, from Barcelona Spain, led the exciting three day workshop teaching innovative armature techniques and floral design. The next International FASG workshop will take place in February in Genoa Italy.



Carol Henderson



Sue Ashmun

Reports

Hort Report

The November Horticulture Meeting was a very full one with two Provisional Talks, a Hort Short and Hort Share. Lee Rolfe presented her talk on the many native plants that survive on her property on Indian Point on Orcas Island. She focused on four different plant zones all of which have rare and interesting plants which would be threatened if it were not for the excellent stewardship of the past and present owners of the property. Cindy Bostwick followed with her very detailed presentation on the Freeman Award Medal-winning plant, *Asclepias tuberosa*, or Butterfly Weed, which looks like it does well just about everywhere else in the United States but here! In its



Roxanne Wiley, Lee Rolfe and Marianne Kitchell



Sue Brickman, Cindy Bostwick and Juliet Romano

appropriate habitat, however, it looks like a plant very worthy of the Freeman Medal. Thank you, Lee and Cindy, for all of your hard work on these stimulating presentations.

The Hort Short which followed presented just a few of the latin epithets which describe markings, leaf shapes, flower shapes and plant shapes. Look for those words on page 10 of this newsletter.

Once again, members brought in colorful and unusual samples from their own gardens for Hort Share. Think ahead to what you might have of interest in your garden for the January Hort Share!

Conservation Report

The Conservation Committee had a well-attended meeting on November 5, after the Hort meeting. We discussed several "event" possibilities for the auction, but after Charlee Reed had said they didn't really need more events, Laurie Riley came up with a perfect solution: offering a rain barrel for the auction. She also volunteered to arrange for it! Members chipped in \$20.00 each to help defray costs of the rain barrels.

We still do not have a date for the site visit to Beaux Arts, to see the extraordinary work they have done in shoreline reclamation. It will be in the spring, with the landscape architect and a BA resident there to tell us all about the project. We are excited about that visit, since so many of our members have either permanent or part time waterfront homes, and might find the information about ideal planting along the shore very helpful in aiding the survival of salmon. Date to be announced as soon we hear from them.

We have a good list of other site visits and will be communicating with the members about those soon.

Margie Allison has agreed to accompany me to the NAL meeting in late February. We will be working with the two delegates from the Tacoma Garden Club, meeting with the Washington Environmental Council in January, and preparing our conservation ideas for meetings with our Senators and Representatives during that visit, guided by the policies of the GCA.

Don't miss this great article: *Scientists Spy On Bees, See Harmful Effects Of Common Insecticide*, click [HERE](#) to read.

Beverly Martin, Conservation Committee Chair

Reports

Garden History and Design Report

This is the second in a series of newsletter entries featuring our past Presidents. The Garden History and Design Committee has previously published four books featuring members and their gardens. These newsletter entries will replace the books. Past President Suzette de Turenne and her garden are featured in this article.

In 1985 Suzette and Leon de Turenne moved with their three young children to their current home in Windermere. This gracious 1948 Rotland Denny Lamping Architect designed home, sits on one and 3/4 acres with dramatic, sweeping views of Lake Washington and Mt. Rainier. In 1986, the de Turenne's added a swimming pool and greenhouse, each in keeping with the original design and rebuilt their dock on Lake Washington. Suzette has since renovated and added a variety of plants and shrubs and maintains an Excel report on most of the 500 additions.



Suzette in her element with roses and camera

Suzette likes to think of her garden as a “free spirit” and represents her eclectic interest in a variety of plantings, with various zones represented, depending on the location. The large, almost vertical drop to the lake, is considered environmentally sensitive and has remained virtually untouched and wild, whereas the perennial garden, along with the semi-shaded side garden, is vastly experimental. Both harbor many of Suzette's favorite additions, which

have ebbed and flowed over the years. A front driveway bank harbors a selection of Grevilleas, a more recent interest – an interest shared with Alison Andrews. Suzette's earliest horticulture interest was orchids, grown mostly in her greenhouse, and then replaced with roses when she undertook the renovation of her severely neglected garden in 1986. The landscape includes approximately 120 rose plants, with only a few duplicates and still includes about ten from the original rose garden. Suzette currently is a member of the Seattle and American Rose societies and exhibits regularly.

Suzette is as gracious with her home as she is with her time. She has opened her home for family members to stay for extended periods of time (years), is always willing to chair a flower show or an annual auction, has served as President of the Seattle Garden Club and willingly accepts just about any other job she is asked to take on. This dynamic grandmother of seven never tires. She is both a Horticulture and Photography judge, winning too many awards to mention here. In her spare time, Suzette enjoys golf, bridge, and always playing with her grandchildren, and might even add some hiking and a return to the tennis court after her most recent knee surgery.



Front of House : Progressively blooming rhododendrons and a mixed rockery flank the semi circular driveway



Mt. Rainier viewed through a variety of lilacs, wigelia and an *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree)

Continued on next page

Reports

Garden History and Design Report



Iris path leading to Suzette's greenhouse originally filled with orchids but now houses her rose collection



Azalea everest hedge and *Styrax japonicus* (Japanese Snowbell)



Mt. Rainier viewed through a variety of lilacs, wigelia and an *Arbutus unedo* (strawberry tree)



Lovely view of the de Turenne's pool overlooking Lake Washington

Zig zag boxwoods: The upper backyard is somewhat formal and framed with dwarf boxwoods, *Buxus sempervirens*, in a zig zag pattern; Lily-of-the-Valley shrub, *Pierisjaponica* 'Variegata,' form the background. A Tibetan peony, *Paeonia lutea ludlowii*, with dramatic foliage, is at right. Common geraniums add some summer color



Reports

Latin Refresher from our Hort Meeting

Several members have asked us to publish the Latin words reviewed at the Hort Meetings and here are the October and November words.

Just a few of the many Latin words for colors:

- Black: Niger (black), Nigrescens (black), Nigricans (blackish)
- White: Alba (white), Lacteus (milky white), Nivalis (snow white), Virginalis (virginal white)
- Red: Ruber (red), Roseus (rose pink), Sanguineus (blood red, sanguine)
- Blue: Azureus (sky blue, azure), Lilacinus (lilac), Purpureus (purple)
- Yellow: Aureus (golden), Cupreus (coppery), Luteus (yellowish)
- Green: Glaucus (glaucous green), Sempervirens (always green), Viridis (green)

Several Latin words for Plant Markings:

- Marginata (edged, margined), Pictum (painted), Reticulata (netted, veined), Variegatus (variegated)

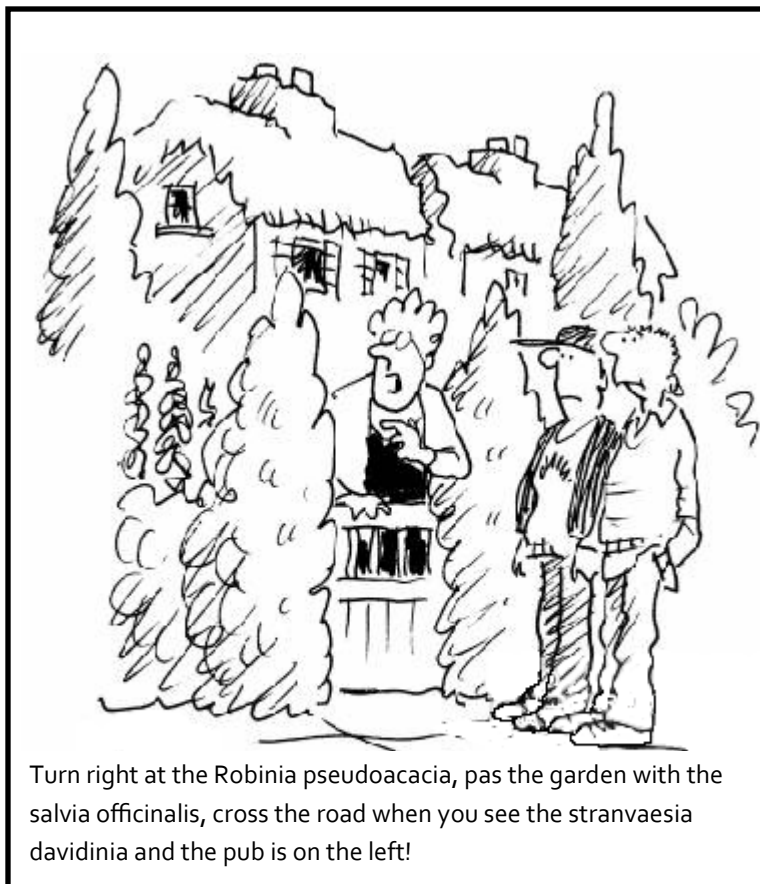
Several Latin Words for Flower-shapes:

- Campanulata (bell-shaped), Flore-Pleno (double-flowered), Plumosus (feathery), Ringens (two-lipped), Stellata (star-shaped)

Several Latin Words for Leaf Shapes::

- Dentata (toothed), Digitalis (fingered, like digits), Grandidentata (big-toothed), Flabellatus (fan-shaped), Incisus (deeply cut), Pungens (pointed)
- Several Latin Words for Plant Shapes:
- Alatus (winged), Deflexus (turned sharply downward or bending outward), Fastigiatus (with upright branches), Reptans (creeping)

Click [HERE](#) for the slide presentation shown at the Hort Meeting to see photos of examples of each of the items described above.



Reports

Photography Committee

On October 19th, members of the Photography Committee met at Kubota Garden for a morning photo shoot. The lingering fog and brilliant autumn colors provided magnificent photo opportunities for all. A Kubota Garden gallery is now on our SGC website.

Registration for the Nature's Poetry flower show has been brisk with our photography classes filling up nicely. There is still space available in Classes 5 and 6. Please note that the Class 5 description has been updated – the haiku can be either be layered on the images or simply included **with** them.

The Winter Solstice on December 21 is a great day to pull out your camera or iPhone. Upload your favorite photo and share it with the SGC on our Winter Solstice Gallery!

Renowned garden photographer David Perry will be speaking at the SGC General Meeting on March 21. His talk on "Picture Perfect Plant Portraits" will be followed up with a 3-hour photography workshop for 15 lucky participants. Details to follow but put this date on your calendar!

For questions, please contact Jolie Roze at jsroze@comcast.net



Nature's Poetry—a GCA Flower Show!

PRE-REGISTER FOR "NATURE'S POETRY" – OUR GCA FLOWER SHOW!

Register before December 15th to guarantee your participation in classes/divisions requiring pre-registration before other GCA garden clubs begin to register. To register, simply email the appropriate division registrar with your desired Class number, title, and your name. She will follow up by confirming your entry, or letting you know if the Class is full.

Following is the schedule of all those with openings as of November 10th requiring early registration. Please refer to the entire schedule and all Guidelines on our SGC web site.

DIVISION I: FLORAL DESIGN DIVISION

Registration: Caroline Goedhart chazard@pointb.com

Class 1: SONNET

Two Openings

A miniature arrangement of fresh plant material. To be staged on a 6" black base, set on a plank 52" above the floor. Viewed from the front. The base and plank will be provided to exhibitors at the show; color and specific information will be shared in advance by the Class Consultant.

Class 3: PASTORAL

Three Openings

A Pot-et-fleur arrangement depicting a pastoral scene, collaboratively designed by two GCA members, one skilled in horticulture and the other in floral design. There are no ownership requirements. Viewed from 3 sides. To be staged on a pedestal 40" in height and 20" square. The pedestal may not be draped or enlarged, and the design may extend no more than 6" on either side or back of the pedestal, and no more than 6" in the front. A key card is required.

HORTICULTURE DIVISION

Registration: Diana Ackerley dianaackerley@gmail.com

Class 8

CADENCE

Baird Boards

**Pre-Registration Required
SGC Members Only
Three-month Ownership**

A collection of five different specimens no higher than 6" above the rim.

Three Openings

A collection of five different specimens no higher than 12" above the rim.

Six Openings

CLASSES 9-11

CONTAINER-GROWN PLANTS

**Pre-Registration Required
Three-month Ownership**

Class 9

EPIC

Hypertufa

Hypertufa container, made by exhibitor and can be carried by exhibitor; may not include ferns. Key card required.

A. A single plant.

Three Openings

B. A multiple of culturally compatible plants.

Two Openings

Class 10

LYRIC

All in the Family

Four Openings

A collection of three or more different rooted species or cultivars from the same family.

The container of exhibitor's choice is not to exceed 14". Key card required.

Nature's Poetry—a GCA Flower Show!, con't

DIVISION III: PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES

Registration: Marianne Kitchell/kitchell3@gmail.com

Class 1 **PANEGYRIC** **Color / Novice Only** **Six Entries**

A timeless landscape that depicts the beauty and essence of a particular season.

Class 2 **ECLOGUE** **Color** **Six Entries**

An image that explores the interaction of humans or wildlife with nature. Depiction of people, if any, must be a subordinate element in the composition.

Class 3 **ELEGY** **Monochrome** **Six Entries**

An image that depicts the transitory cycle of life and the inevitability of decay in nature.

Class 4 **SONNET** **Color** **Six Entries**

A water image that delineates patterns, lines or reflections in nature. Plant material not required.

Class 5 **HAIKU** **Color Close-up** **Six Entries**

A triptych with three close-up images that reflect the unfolding and blossoming of a flower. A written haiku of the entrant's choosing must be included in or layered on the images.

Class 6 **LIMERICK** **Creative Techniques** **Six Entries**

A manipulated or layered image that celebrates humor in nature. Entry must include a 4" x 6" print of the original image(s). Plant material not required.

Looking forward to a great show!

Suzette de Turenne & Jenny Wyatt, Co-chairs

SONNET: THE TIDES, By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I saw the long line of the vacant shore,
The sea-weed and the shells upon the sand,
And the brown rocks left bare on every hand,
As if the ebbing tide would flow no more.
Then heard I, more distinctly than before,
The ocean breathe and its great breast expand,
And hurrying came on the defenseless land
The insurgent waters with tumultuous roar.
All thought and feeling and desire, I said,
Love, laughter, and the exultant joy of song
Have ebbed from me forever! Suddenly o'er me
They swept again from their deep ocean bed,
And in a tumult of delight, and strong
As youth, and beautiful as youth, upbore me.

GCA Tales and Tidbits!

2018 Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference workshops

Were you unable to attend the 2018 Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference? Longwood Gardens has agreed to share handouts from each of the workshops to all GCA members. Click [HERE](#) to access the following topics:

Bonsai Basics and Beyond	Heroines of Horticulture
Composting Systems - Large and Small	Meadow Wreaths
Cultivating Classy Clivias	Moss Madness
Designing with Amazing Annuals	Pest Management
Fine Gardening Meets Fine Dining	Propagating Woodyes
Flower Arranging with Flowers from Garden	Succulents
Gardeners Guide to France	Sustainable Home Gardens
Growing Show-stopping Dahlias	Tool Maintenance
Harnessing Your Horticultural Creativity	Vegetables - Saving Seeds

How to Document a Garden for the Smithsonian AAG

Gardens are part of the American experience, highlighting the region, culture, history and personal tastes that influence them. Documenting gardens provides an important piece of the contextual puzzle of social change, traditions, trends, etc...



The Archives of American Gardens (AAG) was established to provide scholars, researchers, and interested persons with visual documentation of cultural, historic, and vernacular gardens. Its primary mission, in conjunction with The Garden Club of America's Garden History & Design Committee, is to collect, preserve, and provide access to visual resources that document the history of gardens in America. AAG strives to preserve and highlight a meaningful compendium of significant aspects of gardening in the United States for the benefit of researchers and the public today and in the future.

Forget what your Mother said, we want to see your Soil Undies!!

Mom said you should always have white undies and never show them. Turns out she's not ALWAYS right. We think you should have white, completely degraded undies and show them off to the world. But first, you have to plant them!

Using 100% cotton undies, you can take a measure of your soil's biological health by simulating a plant food source—they are chemically similar to the plant compounds. The cellulose content of cotton undies is 90% as compared to 80% cellulose in corn stalks. After two months in the soil, the portion of underwear consumed provides a measure of the size of your biological population. Large populations eat more food; in this challenge, that means undies. So, if you end up with only a waistband, you have very healthy soil! If the undies are intact and stained brown, your soil is leaching and biological activity is low.

How to test your soil:

1. Take a photo of you and the undies at the spot where you plan to bury them. (plant before ground freezes) Dig a hole deep and wide enough to cover undies laying flat. About 6-8 inches deep.
2. Place undies in hole and lay flat to allow the organisms maximum access to the "food". You can leave the waistband sticking out of the soil to remember where you buried them or mark the spot in some other way. **Make sure to mark the spot!!** If you have healthy soil the undies will be hard to find in two months. Cover undies with soil.
3. Mark the date you buried your undies on your calendar and mark the date to dig them up. Dig up the undies two months later and take a photo with you holding the undies.
4. Carefully hand wash to test for whiteness and send photos to: conservation@gcamerica.org and we will post them in the spring.

