

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

April 2018

Consider the Lilies of the Field

by Paul Hoffman, President

We emigrated to North Carolina in the fall of 1978 after growing up in Michigan with a long stopover in Maryland just after we were married. I remember well the color shock of our first spring in Raleigh in '79.

Every shrub in our yard, our street, our neighborhood, our entire city, suddenly seemed to be covered completely with a mass of pink, white, red or purple.



The azaleas were in bloom.

The next year I waited in expectation for the annual display to return. I enjoyed finding and visiting gardens where the azaleas covered hillsides in the shade of tall

pinos and oaks, places like the WRAL Azalea Gardens on Western Avenue, Airlie Gardens near Wilmington, which at one time had over 75000 azaleas scattered among lakes and riverside walks, and the azalea tour, part of the NC Azalea festival, also near Wilmington.

And yet as I think about azaleas now, as I think about how gardening in many ways teaches me about life and living, my impression is one of how fleeting these times of wonder are. The azaleas, like the lilies Jesus talked about, are clothed by God with splendor for a very short time - here today, gone before we know it. And worse than that is my own short attention span. Over the years I notice the great spring display less and less. The flash of color has become one more thing not seen in the busy-ness of my life.

Club Meetings

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

North Carolina State University Extension Specialist Rhonda Sherman returns as GWC guest speaker on Tuesday, April 17 with instructions on how to set up a vermicomposting system. "My mission," says Sherman, "is to show how you can recycle food scraps into nutrient-packed worm compost that enriches soil, increases plant growth, and suppresses pests and diseases. Done correctly, this easy, inexpensive and odorless activity turns household kitchen waste into something fantastic for your garden."

Everyone who's looking for a more lush garden, and who isn't, will want to be there at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, April 17th!

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Paul Hoffman

Vice President: Don Strickland

Secretary: Jim Moore

Treasurer: Mac Williamson

Immediate Past President: Sherrill Johnson

At-large board members: Barbara Brown, Ginny Parker, Ed Ponek, Gail Posey

Committee members

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)

Audit: Rose Cotton, Charles Gilliam, Kathy Moore

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: Josephine Tayao

Club Awards: Jim Moore

Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam

Friendship: Reed and Chris Elliott

Historical: Donna Farmer,

Membership: Barbara Brown

Newsletter Editors: Laine Thomas, Reed Elliott

Nominating: TBA

Programs: Don Strickland

Projects: Sharon LaRusch

Publicity: Charles Gilliam

Refreshments: Renee Engates

Scholarship: Joanne Boone

Telephone: Johnny Johnson

Webmaster: Reed Elliott

Consider the Lilies of the Field *(continued from page 1)*

My garden is like that too – 99% of the time spent in work, 1% in appreciation. Yet maybe that's the way God designed it to be. After all God had a job for Adam and Eve in paradise before the fall. He put them in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

So let me encourage you. Appreciate the toil and sweat that comes with turning over the earth. Plant in hope for what may sooner or later grow and multiply. Take time to sit and experience, to appreciate the green and gold and purple of the foliage and the flash of fleeting color of the plant in flower. Watch the insects darting in and out, stopping for a moment to suck nectar from the flower. Listen to birds singing in the early morning.



Contact Us

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

Contact Paul Hoffman, President, by phone at home: 919-781-0785 or by cell: 919-559-5495

Our Club webpage is available at <https://gardenersofwakecounty.weebly.com/>

And appreciate each other too. When you show up to help at the Azalea Sale, use the moments when there is a lull in customer activity to introduce yourself to a member you don't know very well. Learn about where they are from and what interests them. Share a bit of yourself. In a sense, each of us is also a flower in God's garden.

April's Guest Speaker Explains How to Make the Best Compost

by Don Strickland, Vice President



North Carolina State University Extension Specialist Rhonda Sherman returns as GWC guest speaker on Tuesday, April 17 with instructions on how to set up a vermicomposting system. “My mission,” says Sherman, “is to show how you can recycle food scraps into nutrient-packed worm compost that enriches soil, increases plant growth, and suppresses pests and diseases. Done correctly, this easy, inexpensive and odorless activity turns household kitchen waste into something fantastic for your garden.”

Despite known benefits of the rich humus commonly referred to as worm castings, there seems to be precious little information available on the specific origins of vermicomposting or, for that matter, composting in general. Nonetheless, amending farm dirt is a practice that's been around for a long time. Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) outlined the first composting practices in his writings on natural history and Cleopatra declared the worm “sacred” for its essential contribution to Nile delta fertility. Aristotle described worms as “the intestines of the earth” and the ancient Chinese called them “angels of the soil.” Charles Darwin studied worms for nearly 40 years, eventually stating that they could be counted among the most influential animals in world history.

Nearly all of North America's earthworms are non-native, having been introduced from the Old World. Not only have the invasive imports completely displaced the former native species, most North American forests originally had no earthworms. Of the approximately 7,000 different kinds of worms found on Earth, only a few are suitable for composting and, by far, the most common species used is *Eisenia fetida* – the “red wiggler.”

While vermicomposting is certainly catching on in America, it's a practice much more popular in other countries, like Cuba. When the Soviet Union collapsed, it became impossible for Cubans to import commercial fertilizer so vermicompost became the largest single replacement. In India, an estimated 200,000 farmers practice vermicomposting and one network of 10,000 farmers produces 50,000 metric tons every month. Farmers in Australia and the West Coast of the U.S. are starting to use it in greater quantities, furthering development of the vermicomposting industry.



Rhonda Sherman is considered one of the leading authorities on vermicomposting and has received information requests from people in more than 100 countries. She organizes and runs an annual conference on large-scale commercial vermicomposting that draws participants from all over the world. Her April 17 presentation will contain valuable tips for GWC members and guests who've been considering starting their own vermicomposting systems.

We Pass the Three-Month Mark at Longview

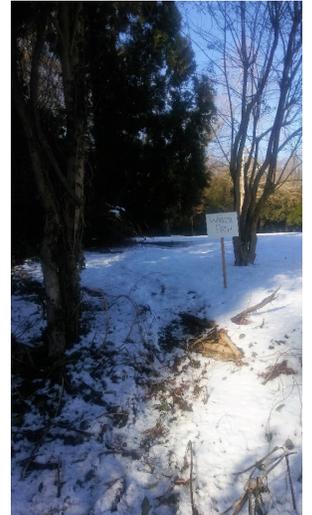
by Sharon LaRusch

We're three months into our Club project at Longview House, so I thought it would be a great opportunity to tell everyone not only about the March workday but also to show how much we have accomplished so far!



Our first workday began with snow on the ground and the bare limbs all looked so similar.

And there were boots covered in snow as we made our way to the almost invisible garden path.



Over the past few weeks, the earth has warmed with more hours of daily sunshine and with generally milder temperatures. We've certainly seen the landscape change as a result! Nandinas instead of snow greeted us at March's workday.

Huge kuddos and thanks to the 10 March volunteers that lopped, dug, raked, pulled, pruned, wheelbarrowed, videoed and photographed. An incredible team of diligent unrelenting folks tackled some formidable roots and vines. A lot of wisteria, but also ligustrum, briars and 'mysteria'?! We had a power team come out earlier in the month so we made **great** headway with clearing from the pathway outward!



Not pictured: Josephine Tayao, Mark Boone, and Lynn Swanson

One of our goals for the March workday was to free a threesome of beautiful unattended camellias in full bloom. Lynn and Leslie were up to the task!

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We Pass the Three-Month Mark at Longview

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As you can see from the pictures, the camellias were eventually freed and are just one of many beautiful highlights within the garden to come! Next month, a gorgeous Magnolia!

The team took on clearing with a surgical eye, working to selectively clear while being mindful of keeping the remaining trees and shrubs healthy.



Yes, we had lofty goals!



The clearing done this month will make measuring and ID work SO much easier as we go into April!



Our next workday is Saturday, April 21st! Mark your calendars and let us know if you can attend! We'll talk about it more at the next Club meeting, Tuesday, April 17th. See you there and come join us at Longview. For information or to confirm you'll be at the next work party, contact: Sharon njoynthejourne@yahoo.com or Lynn chocolategardener@yahoo.com



My Corner of the Garden

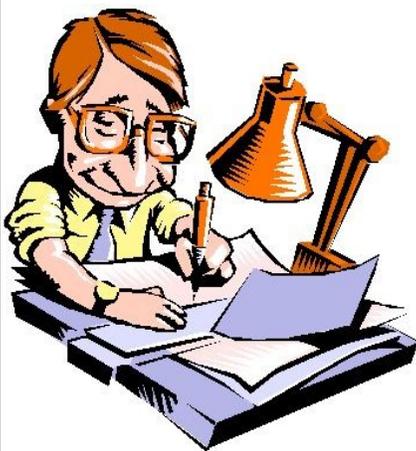
by Reed Elliott, Editor

April is a wonderful month. Spring, of course, started officially on March 20th. Unfortunately, the early spring-like weather we enjoyed so much in February was only a kiss and a promise, and we got many days of light freeze in March - even a couple dustings of snow. This year March seems to have both come in and gone out like a lion! Hopefully that's all behind us now, and we can look forward to spring flowers, spring birds, and spring planting.

From the point of view of being a member of the Gardeners of Wake County, one of the wonderful things about April is that it's a time all us Club members get the opportunity to do something concrete and positive for our Club and our community. April is our Annual Azalea Sale. This is the single most important fundraiser the GWC has. The Azalea Sale not only brings in the dollars that fund our Club's many activities and presentations, more importantly, it brings in the dollars that fund the year's annual scholarships for horticulture majors at North Carolina State University. Historically, the Azalea Sale has raised well over \$10,000 each year. This has happened because our members are great about stepping up and helping. And now's a time when that helping spirit is needed.

Here's our situation; Azalea Sale Chairperson, Charlie Leverett reports, "For the first week of the sale (April 9 – 15), we need about 3 more people, morning and afternoon, every day. So far, we've got 97 of 130 slots filled." He goes on, "The second week (April 16 – 22) would be a forfeit if we were playing baseball. On average we need about 8 people, morning and afternoon, every day. Only 29 of 130 slots are filled." The cry for help has been raised! And we're just the folks to hear, respond, and get this job done and done well!

If you haven't worked an Azalea Sale before perhaps you're thinking, "I can't help because I'm not in a position to give a whole day." Maybe you've got kids in school who have to get dropped off and/or picked up. Maybe you've got a job. Not to worry. There's plenty of flexibility. The first thing to understand is that **it's not necessary to volunteer for an entire day**. Signup slots are for half days. And if you can only come for 2 or 3 hours of a 4 hour slot, no problem. Sign up and just let Charlie Leverett know that you'll be needing to come a little late or leave a little early. Your fellow GWC members will pick up the slack, never fear. Also remember that the busiest times, where the most help is needed, tend to happen on weekends. The good news there is that, for most of us, there are no conflicting demands from school or jobs on weekends. And, you don't need to hire a babysitter. If your kids are old enough, think about bringing them along. Kids like to be helpful. And at the Azalea Sale, they can be.



[Signing up for a slot is easy](#). There are [links on the website](#) that show where the needs are. Take a few moments right now to look for a couple of slots where you can make a difference and push the button that says "[Sign up.](#)"

We all love the many positives our Club provides – opportunities to be with and share with other Carolina gardeners – opportunities to hear expert presenters who expand our knowledge and practical gardening skills – and, hey, free plants and incredible food! Well, now's our chance to give something back.

If you haven't yet signed up to volunteer at the Annual GWC Azalea Sale, [do it now](#). You'll be glad you did. You'll help your Club. You'll help deserving NCSU horticulture majors! And, hey, you'll have fun! I promise!

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we're happy to have added Vickie Dunn and Elaine Quinn of Raleigh, Anita Wharton from Durham and L. A. Tarver of Morrisville. Be sure to say, "Hi and welcome" when you see them at the next meeting.