

# The Clod-Hopper



Volume 3, digital edition 1

Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

February 2019

## A Gardener's Tale

by Kalli Shevzov, Vice-President

Every year I am amazed at how early spring comes in North Carolina! I love seeing pansies bloom all winter. The other day I smelled flowers while I was out walking my dog in the middle of January, and I have seen crocus and jonquils already. My sense of gardening time is still stuck in New England, where Memorial Day weekend was a good time to put your tomato plants out, and one should be prepared to cover anything tender after Labor Day.

My hometown is in the Berkshire Hills of northwest Connecticut. About 500 people lived in Warren, in the 1960s; many of our neighbors were dairy farmers. My parents owned eight acres of land. A small section of state forest bordered us on one side; a privately owned hunting camp bordered the rear of our property. The woods were quiet and smelled of shaded earth, and I spent many hours there by myself, walking, looking, observing. There were boulders scattered through the woods, the largest one about the size of a VW bus, and as a child I thought that being able to climb up on "The Big Rock" was the activity that would make me an adult.

My father bought the land in 1933, and harvested and sold wood from the property to clear an area for a homestead. My parents' first home there was a log cabin with a sleeping loft. There was electricity in the cabin, but no water or plumbing. By the time I was born, my folks had built a small but sturdy frame home with a basement and a root cellar, surrounded by about two acres of gardens. The root cellar had a wall that was a rock ledge, the gardens were all built on rock ledge, and the yard was dotted with wedge-shaped sections of ledge that jutted out above the thin layer of soil. I am sure my parents started gardening because they needed to feed five children on a limited budget; I am equally sure my mother vowed to defeat the rocks and underlying ledge and make something grow.

Both my parents were avid readers, and one of my mother's favorite gardening authors was Ruth Stout. Ruth Stout advocated the use of thick mulch, preferably straw, to reduce weeding, protect and nourish the soil, and keep roots cool and moist. My mother could not afford to buy straw, but she found ample supplies of free soil amendments in the form of horse bedding and manure, and chicken and cow manure from local farms. She also found the neighbors were willing to pay her to rake and carry away their leaves in the fall. By the time I was old enough to help with the garden, we had a pickup truck with plywood cut to make the truck bed into a cab-high box. We raked and brought home leaves from several large yards. My favorite part of the job was stomping down the leaves, compacting them so more would fit in the truck. My second favorite part was fluffing the leaves and pushing them off the pickup into a huge pile. We had enough yard space that we could have a huge leaf pile, an aged manure pile, and a hot manure pile. All compostable waste went into a compost pile. These piles were given some time to break down, and then transported with a wheelbarrow to amend the thin layer of sandy clay soil. There were areas of garden that had been amended for many years, and other areas where nothing had been added to the soil. The soil in the amended areas was dark and moist and full of worms. In the unamended areas the soil was sandy and much lighter in color, and had no worms at all.

## Club Meetings

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

At our next meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>, NC gardening icon Bryce Lane will discuss "Art: Using Ornament to Accent Your Garden." Bryce produced and hosted a three-time Emmy award-winning public television gardening show that ran for 11 seasons. Whether a novice grower or seasoned gardener, everyone should plan to attend the next GWC meeting. Bryce's enthusiasm, understanding of horticulture, and pleasing personality have captivated audiences for years and are sure to score again at the next GWC 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](mailto:gardener@gardenersofwakecounty.org)

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

## A Gardener's Tale

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My first garden was about ten by ten feet, and I was about eight years old. I dug it up, added compost, leaf mold, aged manure, lime, dug it in carefully and planted pole beans and carrots and some other things, which I watered diligently. I eventually raised a few beans and carrots, but soon decided I was better off planting some in the big garden where the soil did not require as much watering!

My father worked in the state parks in Connecticut. He loved native plants, and we used to take rides to check on stands of native plants, especially in spring. I remember riding out to check on areas for pink and yellow lady's slipper, Joe Pye weed, jewelweed, and visiting an elm tree that had not succumbed to Dutch elm disease. My father said it was the last standing American elm he knew of.

My current garden is in containers. Last summer I moved to a home with less outdoor space, and I put some of my perennials in buckets. I have a comfrey plant and a hosta from my mother's garden. I like to buy roots in the produce section, stick them in the ground and see what happens. I have enjoyed success planting horseradish, ginger, and turmeric this way. I have a Malanga growing in a jar of water; it's a pretty elephant-ear-looking plant with an edible tuber. I will put it in a pot and see if it grows once it warms up a little. I am looking forward to some greens in a bucket very soon. At the Seed Exchange I picked up some Malabar spinach seeds, and I will try those in a bucket.

I miss some things about gardening in a cooler climate. I really like rhubarb, and have had no real success with it here. Some people say it's too hot for it here; other people say oh, pshaw, we had a ton of it behind the barn in Johnston County. I very much enjoy the warmer temperatures here in winter, and the amazing growing season. The red clay here responds nicely to my mother's soil amendment strategies.



When I walk my dog, I actually have caught myself saying, "No, no, not there; that's someone's aquilegia."



# Bryce Lane Is the GWC February Guest Speaker

*by Kalli Shevzov, Vice-President*



North Carolina gardening icon Bryce Lane returns as guest speaker to the Gardeners of Wake County monthly meeting February 19<sup>th</sup> with a presentation he calls "Garden Art: Using Ornament to Accent Your Garden." Lane notes, "Gardens aren't just for plants anymore. You can use just about any kind of 'non-plant' piece to decorate and enhance the landscape, and the more unusual and unexpected the better!"

No stranger to the Raulston Arboretum lectern, Lane is GWC's 2016 "Dogwood" award winner for his willingness to address the membership and for his assistance with the club's scholarship awards.

Gardening enthusiasts who've lived awhile in the Tar Heel State look upon Bryce Lane as a familiar old friend, the kind who's always welcome to drop by and join the family in a glass of sweet tea. That's largely due to his affable nature which most area residents have come to recognize through his success in broadcasting. He produced and hosted a three-time Emmy award winning public television show called "In the Garden With Bryce Lane" which ran regularly for 11 seasons and still airs on North Carolina Public television. The program focused on the "how-to" of gardening...with an educational twist.

Like many of us, Bryce came to North Carolina from somewhere else. Growing up in Western Massachusetts, he discovered his horticulture passion while working seven years at the Hadley garden center during the time he attended high school and college.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Plant Science from the University of Massachusetts in 1979 and a Master's in Horticulture from Ohio State in 1981, he became a lecturer in North Carolina State University's Department of Horticultural Science, teaching in both the two and four year programs. In 1987 he was named Undergraduate Coordinator and taught both large and small courses for majors and non-majors. Over a 36-year academic career, Bryce was instructor to more than 20,000 students. Retired from NC State since 2014, he now does gardening, teaching, leadership, and public speaking seminars all over the country...while teaching part time at State and at the Raulston Arboretum.



Married for over 40 years to his high school sweetheart, Sue, he has two married daughters and six grandchildren. Bryce has cultivated the same Raleigh property for more than 30 years and always gave his students three simple rules to becoming successful gardeners:

1. Understand the science of how things grow; "you'll raise better plants, you won't kill as many, and more plants will thrive."
2. Take a class to learn the basics of gardening.
3. Plant something; "the worst that can happen is the plant will die...but this is one of those hobbies where you need to start doing. In my case, I got the practical knowledge first and the book knowledge later."

Whether a novice grower or seasoned gardener, everyone should plan to attend the next GWC meeting. Bryce Lane's enthusiasm, understanding of horticulture, and pleasing personality have captivated audiences for years and are sure to score again on Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.

# Seed Swap Squash

by Paul Hoffman, Immediate Past-President



I enjoy participating in the Will Farmer Seed Swap at the Garden Club each January – Will’s stories are the best part – but I have to confess that I have not been very successful at getting plants to grow from the seeds I bring home. The one notable exception is the squash seeds. They seem to sprout quickly, transplant readily, and, after a slow start, grow vigorously by the end of the summer.

I’ve heard that other gardeners in the Club have trouble with pests attacking their squash. I don’t know why my plants haven’t been bothered – it certainly isn’t due to the intelligence or planning of the gardener. Maybe it’s related to the fact that I don’t have a vegetable patch and am growing the squash not to get something to eat, but only because Will’s show n’ tell made the results look so interesting and unexpected.



Brie Arthur, well-known plant grower, propagator, author and previous GWC speaker, talks about thinking of vegetables as beautiful plants that are quite happy intermingled with ornamentals were an inspiration to me. My squash plants are plugged into the garden among other plants in areas that would get a little more sun and also where the competition would be somewhat dormant in late summer. Then they are pretty much ignored through the early summer, but start to take off about the middle of August. By then the squash begin to fulfill my definition of an “interesting plant” - that is, you know, a plant is interesting when people walk by, stop and stare, and then ask, “What in the world is that thing?” The reason the squash are show-stoppers is that the patterned leaves are a foot across. The vines are up to 30 feet long surrounding or covering whatever is in their path, and the yellow flowers stand out like bright lights midst the green of the vines.



The final surprise comes around the end of September. The flowers don’t seem to set fruit until the weather gets a little cooler, but when they do set the fruits seem to expand overnight into a large object weighing several pounds, with the exact shape and color often a source of admiration or amusement. Take a look at the picture of the squash pile from this last October – they are all “Seed Swap” squash except for the pumpkin at the bottom of the stack.

## GWC 2019 Schedule of Guest Speakers

<u>Date</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1/15/2019	<b>Will Farmer</b> Gardeners of Wake County	Seed Exchange
2/19/2019	<b>Bryce Lane</b> Teacher, Speaker, Horticulturist	Garden Art: Using Ornament to Accent Your Garden
3/19/2019	<b>Pam Beck</b> Freelance garden writer, lecturer and photographer	Change How You Garden
4/16/2019	<b>Helen Yoest</b> Engineer, science/technical, and creative writer	Urban Sustainable Gardening
5/21/2019	No speaker	Club Picnic and Plant Exchange
6/18/2019	<b>Mark Boone</b> Past President, GWC	The Camino de Santiago: 500 Miles Amid Spain's Plants
7/16/2019	<b>Cindy Chappell</b> Wake County Extension Master Gardener	Four Seasons of Fragrance in the Garden
8/20/2019	<b>Dr. Will Hooker</b> NCSU	Organic Gardening: The Principles of Permaculture
9/17/2019	<b>TBA</b>	
10/15/2019	<b>Jeana Myers</b> NCSU Extension Agent Horticulture-Agriculture	Community Gardens
11/19/2019	<b>Tony Avent</b> Horticulturist, plantsman, owner Plant Delights Nursery	Native trillium in your Garden
12/10/2019	No speaker	(Awards Banquet)

# Longview—Our Second Year Begins

by Sharon LaRusch

I love how the end of a year blends the nostalgia of reflecting on the good times of the year ending and the excitement and promise of adventures in the year ahead! Our last workday of 2018 was exactly that for me! One of our volunteers even mentioned how the previous January had snow on the ground. This coming year is going to be one of some major changes and progress at Longview. Most importantly, let's get the workdays on your calendar so you can come see it! That said, here's next year's calendar.

2019	GWC Meeting	Longview Project Workday
Jan	15	19
Feb	19	23
Mar	19	23
Apr	16	20
May	21	25
Jun	18	22
Jul	16	20
Aug	20	24
Sep	17	21
Oct	15	19
Nov	19	<b>16</b>
Dec	17	<b>14</b>



When we arrived for our first workday in 2019, the WakeMed's facilities crews had already been out to clear one side of the garden for us. Our selected remaining plants greeted us including beautiful camellias in bloom! Our enthusiastic volunteers worked to establish grids for the future landscape design,

tidy up cleared portions and confirm tagging of the remaining area to be cleared. We welcomed new volunteers and it was great to have **over twenty folks** kick 2019 off!

Work on the east side of the garden has been limited due to a fenced-in overgrown pool area. Although they had begun some clearing, weather impeded



WakeMed's crews. That has been remedied since our January workday! The fence has been removed and pool is being taken out! Yayyyy!

So what's next you ask?! Well Lynn and I will meet with WakeMed staff next week and confirm project plans for the year. Stay tuned and thank you all again for your continued enthusiasm and support. We'll share more at the next club meeting!

If you need more information or have something to share about the Longview Project please feel free contact me any time at Sharon LaRusch, 919-656-1717, [thegardenwalkatlongview@gmail.com](mailto:thegardenwalkatlongview@gmail.com)



# My Corner of the Garden

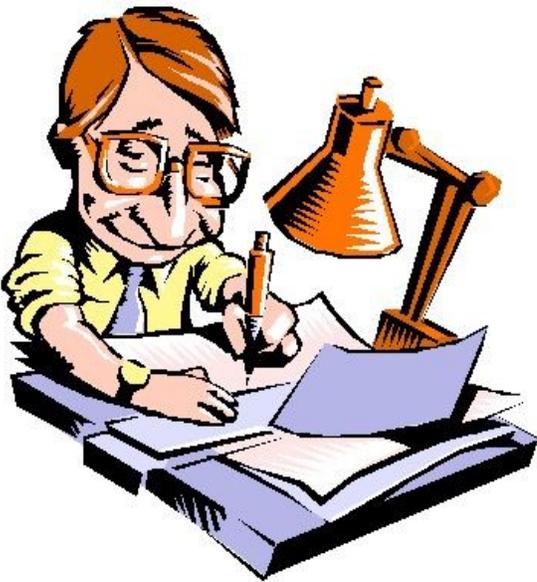
by Reed Elliott, Editor

Well, the big news items this month are a couple of “birthdays.” Let’s get out the balloons and cake!

First, the Longview Service Project has entered its second year with the biggest turnout ever at our recent January workday. Here’s how things looked to me a year ago when we broke ground:

*I have to say that I was properly intimidated by how long 400 feet looks when it’s buried in vines, covered in snow, and looking like the deep dark forest where Little Red Riding Hood had her run in with you-know-who.*

A year later, I can hardly recognize the place. The jungle is entirely cleared. Where there was a “deep, dark forest,” there now is bare earth with an occasional carefully-preserved tree or bush. The brick path “buried in vines” now is cleared for its entire length—hundreds of feet. As the result of a year’s toil, we’ve moved from the brutal work of “clearing new ground,” to the skilled labor of planting a garden. A year from now I hope to see another transformation as startling as the one the GWC produced in 2018. The solid outlines of a magnificent garden “sprung from the ashes” soon will appear. The coming year’s efforts will increasingly need the talents of gardeners rather than the muscles of pioneers. If the past year’s “hard labor” didn’t appeal, it’s a new game in 2019. If you enjoy designing, creating, planting—that’s Longview in 2019. If you’ve been thinking about coming out for a workday—think no more. Now’s the time. Mark your calendars for our Club’s next Longview workday on Saturday, February 23rd.



The second birthday we’re celebrating in February is that of our now one-year-old “new” GWC Website and digital *Clod-Hopper*. Thanks to all of you who’ve uncomplainingly adapted to the many demands occasioned by our transition into the digital age. I especially say “thank you” to the membership for enthusiastically welcoming the change to online publication of the *Clod-Hopper*. I know that for many of you, saying goodbye to the traditional hard-copy editions arriving each month in the mail felt a little like saying goodbye to an old friend. Thanks to everyone’s willingness to adapt, our Club has saved the costs of printing and mailing—and that fully funded an additional scholarship for a deserving NCSU horticulture student in 2018.

So, let’s all wish a hearty “Happy Birthday” to our second year at Longview and our second year in our new online home! The GWC is alive and well thanks to our wonderful members!

## New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcome anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we’re happy to have added Tricia Cage and Cathy Palazzo, both of Raleigh. Be sure to say “Hi and welcome” when you see them at the next meeting.