

# The Clod-Hopper



Volume 4, digital edition 2

Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

February 2020

## 20/20 Vision

by Mark Boone, Past-President

I used to have 20/20 vision in both eyes. Now I need reading glasses. Glasses or no, we can have 20/20 mental vision for the year 2020. I have a friend who frequently admonishes me to “begin with the end in mind”. He used to run track and his coach would tell him to think about the finish line when he left the starting blocks.



When I started my 500-mile walk to Santiago in Spain I had a pretty good idea of the destination, however, it took daily focus to get there. I know a fellow

who is a professional driver. He says the faster you go the more important it is to keep your eyes on the vanishing point of the road. By keeping his gaze on the distance, he says the road in front of him will take care of itself.

Several years ago, I went clamming at low tide in a tidal creek at the beach. Tidal creeks have lots of tributaries to let the water flow out of the marsh. At low tide the water in the creek is shallow. Clams live in the sand and are pretty easy to find.

I parked my car off the road a few feet from one branch of a creek and walked down to a place near the Intracoastal Waterway where there was a pile of oyster shells. It didn't take long to fill my mud bucket with clams. I had 20/20 vision on a pot of clam chowder. When I started back up the creek to the car, I took what I thought was the fork headed to my car. To my surprise this did not lead me back the same way I had come. The branch I took ended about 100 feet from the car. No problem. It would be easy enough to walk across the marsh. Within three feet of leaving the streambed I was ankle deep in black muck and in another thirty feet I had sunk almost up to my waist. I was going to stay stuck; the tide was going to come in, I would drown, and fiddler crabs would eat me.

## Club Meetings

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

Our February speaker, Joan Matthews, is out to change what we know about chrysanthemums. Many of us grow mums, of course, but Joan wants us to know how easy it is to grow and exhibit those fabulous, super large, jaw-dropping types. Joan's goal is to share these majestic mums before they disappear entirely from home gardens. There is currently only one supplier of these mums now in the United States. Joan and her garden have been featured in local and national publications. At our February meeting, Joan will tell us all about magnificent mums, share inspiration and encouragement, as well as tips and tricks. Learn how you, too, can become a mum enthusiast!

*continued on page 2*

## 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

### Committee members

Activities Chair: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)

Audit: Charles Gilliam, Kathy Moore, Reed Elliott

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: TBA

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)

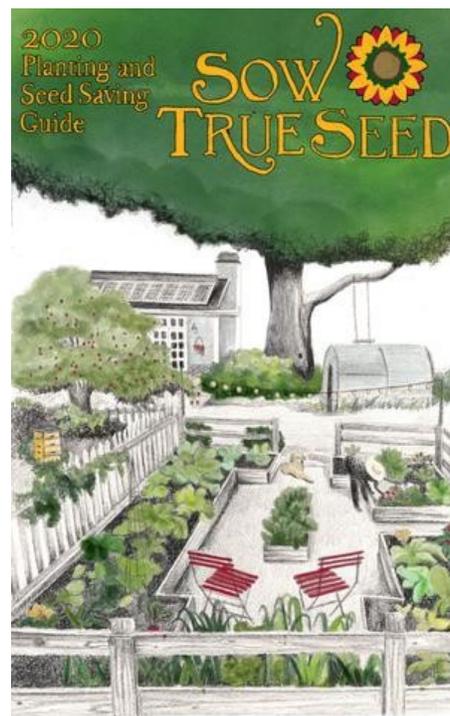
Contact Ginny Parker, President, by phone at home: 919-832-5483 or by cell: 919-880-3233

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

## 20/20 Vision

*(continued from page 1)*

The shortest way was not the firm way. My vision of how to get back was flawed. Fortunately, by using my clam rake and bucket I was able get out of the muck and retrace my steps. I found the right branch and walked on the firm but curvy creek bed back to the car. I think that is often how it is with things we want to get done. There is a natural course of events leading to our goals which is rarely linear. We think like Macbeth. It was foretold he was to be king, but he took it in his own hands with disastrous consequences. Real 20/20 vision requires understanding and wisdom.



When I get suckered in, as inevitably happens, when I get seed and bulb catalogs in the cold of winter I know what I order will never produce fruit and flowers as beautiful as the pictures unless I take the time to prepare the soil, keep out the weeds and in my case put up a deer and ground hog fence to keep out critters. I know what I need to do; I need to be diligent. My hope is this 2020 each of us will use the 20/20 insights we share with each other to accomplish a great vision. Let's stay on the firm path.

# Joan Matthews Is the GWC February Guest Speaker

by Kathleen Thompson, Vice President



Joan Matthews is out to change what we know about chrysanthemums. A retired school teacher, Joan fell under the spell of special, magical mums several years ago after realizing that many cultivars were disappearing from home gardens. Many of us grow garden mums, of course, but Joan wants us to know how easy it is to grow and exhibit those fabulous, super large, jaw-dropping types. Exhibition-quality mums were once very popular in home gardens and in American culture (remember the “football mum” corsages from years ago? Did you have one?) Joan’s goal is to share these majestic mums before they disappear entirely from

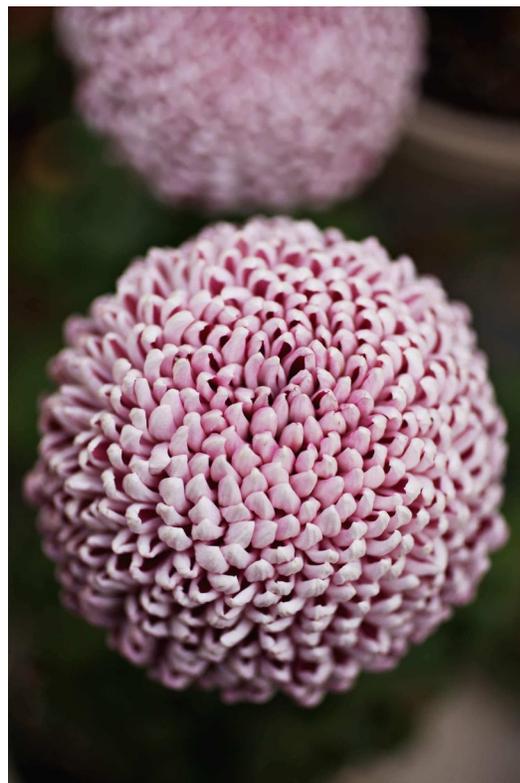
home gardens. The fact that there is currently only one supplier of these mums now in the United States pinpoints how dire the situation is.

In her role as President of the Central Carolina Chrysanthemum Society, Joan was instrumental in the creation of Duke Garden’s Festival of Fabulous Mums, an annual event featuring heirloom chrysanthemums on display in the gardens and an indoor flower show with glorious blooms of every size, shape and color of this amazing botanical beauty.

Her garden has been featured in several local and national publications including the *News and Observer*, *Walter Magazine* and the nationally known magazine, *Country Garden*. You can view her mums at the WRAL Tarheel Traveler link: <http://www.wral.com/news/local/video/15131890/>

Joan is a popular guest lecturer throughout the Triangle and Nationally. She is presently guiding the Central Carolina Chrysanthemum Society in its planning for the National Chrysanthemum Society’s Convention and Flower Show to be hosted in Durham in November 2020.

For a sneak peek at some of these amazing flowers, please visit [www.kingsmums.com](http://www.kingsmums.com). This family run business provides rooted cuttings from over 160 different chrysanthemum cultivars, but production is limited and they do sell out early. Be sure to review the “Customer Showcase” area of their website to see what’s possible. Joan, her two daughters and five grandchildren all enjoy growing mums together. At our February meeting, Joan will tell us all about the mums, share inspiration and encouragement, tips and tricks. Learn how you too can become a mum enthusiast!



# Longview—A Valentine

by Sharon LaRusch and Lynn Swanson, Projects Chairs

The start of each new year brings the wide-eyed anticipation and excitement of what the coming year holds. Longview has been no different.

January at Longview began the transition from clearing wilderness (a lot of our dearly beloved wisteria ,of course) to planting a garden. We've finally begun building a beautiful spot that we can envision serving the community ... giving healthcare workers a break, families an opportunity to connect, prayers to be sent and cares released.

We are happy to be a part of the creation of such a place and think I can say we are putting our GWC heart into Longview.

So, mark your calendars for Saturday, February 22nd when we'll next meet at Longview to continue to develop and fulfill the vision that Lynn has so thoughtfully captured on paper.

More details to come at our Club meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>! Be sure to be there and plan on coming out for a day of garden building this month as Longview.

As always, thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support!



# National Seed Swap Day

*A reminder from Seed Exchange Legend, Will Farmer*

**National Seed Swap Day is the Last Saturday in January**—January 25th was National Seed Swap Day this year. In case you missed it, it's already time to get busy figuring out what to swap next year. This awesome holiday is the perfect time to start planning your garden ideas for the upcoming season. Figure out what you have and what you want to grow. Seed swapping has been going on for centuries, but the actual seed swap holiday just began in 2006 by *Washington Gardener Magazine*. One thing you can do to celebrate the day is to figure out what grows best in your area (if you don't already know), when and how to plant them, and how to save the seeds so you can have extras next year. You may want to grow vegetables and fruits, herbs, flowers, or bushes like roses and lilacs. Whatever it is you are wanting to grow; you may be able to swap for the seeds or seedlings with another gardener. Why pay full price at a gardening store if you can get them for free?

**Find a Group**—Do you have a seed swap group in your area (think, GWC Annual Seed Exchange)? There are seed swap listings where you can look for something near your community. They don't even have to be near you. It does not cost much to send seeds in the mail. If you really want a seed swapping group in your neighborhood though, you can start your own. Gather your friends and neighbors and trade seeds with them. Nobody should mind giving away a few seeds, especially if they get some in return.

**Seed Day Party**—How about a seed day party? Gather everyone you know and bring your favorite seeds or just whatever seeds you have sitting around the house. If you don't have any, I'm pretty sure you can buy them at the store for less than \$1.00. It's best to share your own, though. Anyway, have everyone bring their favorite (or just leftover) seeds that they have. Make sure you label them. It is best to put them in a jar or Ziplock baggie with the name and date on them, so you know what they are and when you put them in there.

**Heirlooms and Hybrids**—Did you know that there are two kinds of seeds? Hybrids and heirlooms. Hybrids are those that are created from cross-pollinating plants together. Heirlooms are those that are never crossed or mixed with others. Hybrids are awesome because you can get different colors and sizes every time. But, if you want the same exact result every time, you want to use heirloom seeds.

**Online Forums** You can also try trading with others online through seed trading forums. There are quite a few on the major sites like the American Horticultural Society and subscribers can access Dave's Garden Seed Trading Discussion Forum. There are thousands of people online who want to get their seeds out there in other people's gardens. It is kind of like showing off your kids. You want everyone else to see them.

**Start Your Seeds Indoors Now**—Did you know you can start some of your seeds in February? Flowers that you can start this month are Delphinium, Heliotrope, Milkweed, Snapdragons, and Violas. And then there are those that you want to keep indoors anyway. You can plant them anytime as long as they will grow well indoors. Make sure they get plenty of sunlight and water wherever you put them.

**Seed Swapping Websites**—There are even seed swap websites like seedswap.com and some from the National Gardening Association. Seed Savers Exchange and GardenWeb also good sites to check out. Whether you have seeds to trade or are just looking for some seeds from other people, you can find something somewhere online. Seeds are pretty amazing. You can even get seeds from an orange or lime you are eating and plant them. Yes, they really will grow. You may not be able to put them outside and get fruit on them if you don't live in the right area, but they will grow inside as cute houseplants. Bring some of those to your seed swap party.

**Talk to Seed Swappers** Maybe you don't have any seeds and have never planted anything. Or you just haven't been able to get anything to grow yet. Seed swaps are a fun place to learn from those who actually can grow things. Those who join seed swap groups are usually the type that likes to share information as well as seeds. So, pick their brains and find out what you should be doing to get your seeds to start growing better. Maybe you need to start them indoors or you may need to test your soil. Talk to some of the experts in the seed swap group and you may get more than just seeds

# My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

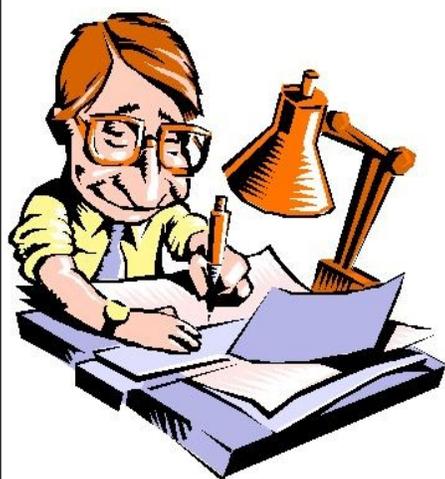
If you haven't had the great pleasure of encountering Monty Don, sometimes called "Britain's Favorite Gardener," you're in for a treat. He's a remarkable personality who comes across to me as a down-to-earth all-around nice guy, and, better yet, he knows his gardens.

Chris and I had the good fortune to discover him a while back one evening as we desperately searched Netflix in hopes of finding something we both could enjoy. Our first outing with Monty was in his amazing series on Italian Gardens. You can't visit Italy with this man and not come away wanting more.

Since then, we've travelled with him to the Great Gardens of France and then on to his cozy, homey, backyard gardening series, Big Dreams, Small Spaces in which Monty actually gets down with shovel and pruners in hand to help small home gardeners create, well, big dreams in small spaces.

Recently, Monty commented, "I was – am – an amateur gardener and a professional writer. My only authority came from a lifetime of gardening and a passion amounting to an obsession for my own garden."

Monty is a keen proponent of organic gardening and the practice of organic techniques often features in his published and broadcast work.



In January, BBC announced that Monty was going to be doing a three-part series devoted to American Gardens. Better yet, all three episodes now are available (for free, no Netflix membership required) to members of the Gardeners of Wake County. Aren't you glad you're a member?

Follow the links below to meet a fellow gardener who will remind you of why it is we love gardening. If you're lucky, maybe he'll take you to Italy or even come dig with you in your own backyard.

[Monty Don's American Gardens Episode 1](#)

[Monty Don's American Gardens Episode 2](#)

[Monty Don's American Gardens Episode 3](#)

## New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. Does that describe you? If you're not already a member, c'mon and join in on the fun! This is a great Club and we'd love to feature your name in this box in next month's *Clod-Hopper*!