

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 2, digital edition 1

Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

January 2018

Tulip Time

by Paul Hoffman, President

Judy likes to decorate for Christmas using poinsettias from Homewood Nursery in North Raleigh. She induces me to go along with this by willing me her Homewood “Blooming Bucks”, good for 50% off any item in the nursery in the week before Christmas, even the leftover bulbs which are already marked down 50% by the end of December. This year I didn’t get back out until December 23, but still managed to come back with over a hundred tulip and daffodil



bulbs plus a pretty coralberry ardisia as a bonus.

I’m a little partial to tulips due to childhood memories from our yearly family visit to “Tulip Time” in the small town of Holland on the shore of the “big lake” in West Michigan. As you might guess, Holland was founded by immigrants from the Netherlands. The tulip festival held each spring features klompen (wooden shoe) dancing, tours of the De Zwann (the swan) windmill - imported piece by piece from the old country - and over five million tulip bulbs bursting forth at the same time.

My most vivid memory is of the fields of the tulip nursery where there were row upon row of 10 by 15 foot beds, each bed planted with about 1000 tulips of a single variety, but with a different variety in each bed. At seven or eight years old, I wasn’t standing much taller than the tulips themselves. I was surrounded by colors as far as my eyes could see.

Club Meetings

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

“Sharing seeds, knowledge, and tricks of the trade” - that’s how longtime GWC Clubmember Will Farmer describes the *Annual Seed Exchange* slated for the January 16th meeting. For those who attend, all this comes with the wintertime expectation that something marvelous will happen in the spring. Best of all, the plants and seeds are free. GWC’s annual event began in 2014 and continues to be one of the most popular activities on the yearly club calendar. Be there—and bring your favorite seeds to share.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Paul Hoffman

Vice President: Don Strickland

Secretary: Donna Farmer

Treasurer: Norman LaRusch

Immediate Past President: Sherrill Johnson

At-large board members: Paula Hoffmann,
Jim Moore, Ed Ponek, Gail Posey

Committee members

Activities Chair: Open

Audit: Open

Awards Banquet: Ginny Parker

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: Don Strickland,
Josephine Tayao

Club Awards: Jim Moore

Endowment Investment: Open

Friendship: Reed and Chris Elliott

Historical: Donna Farmer, Dick Lankford

Membership, Barbara Brown

Newsletter Editors: Laine Thomas, Reed Elliott

Nominating: Leslie Cohen, Mark Duerst

Programs: Don Strickland

Projects: Open

Publicity: Charles Gilliam

Refreshments: Sharon LaRusch

Scholarship: Joanne Boone

Seed Swap: Will Farmer

Telephone: Johnny Johnson

Webmaster: Charles Gilliam

Tulip Time

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My own hopeful experiments with tulips in North Carolina are pretty tame by comparison. I don't think these Dutch bulbs appreciate either our clay soil or our summer heat very much. They also appear to be tasty to the little rodents tunneling under the ground. I'm happy to get one year of blooms which trigger memories of the past, but don't compare in glory. The daffodils do a little better, but with diminishing returns each year.



I've heard a rumor that some of you actually have some varieties of daffodils which come back every year and indeed even multiply. I would be very happy if you would like to share some with me along with details about the conditions in which they are growing – sun/shade, moisture, division, and so on. Perhaps your answers might make a good response for a “question of the month.”

Final note: the tulip photos with this article are public domain stock images. I usually provide my own pictures, but I didn't have a camera when I was eight.

Contact Us

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

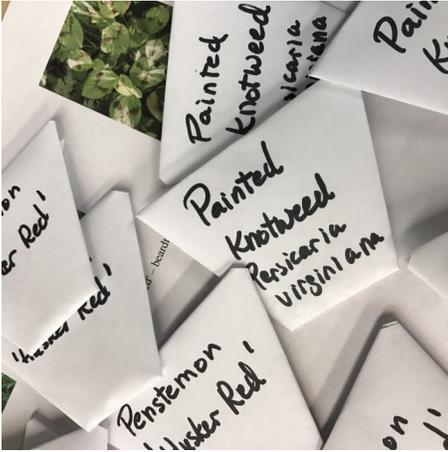
Contact Paul Hoffman, President, by phone at home: 919-781-0785 or by cell: 919-559-5495

Our Club webpage is available at <http://www.gardenersofwakecounty.org/index.html>

Will Farmer's 2018 GWC Seed Exchange

by Don Strickland, Vice President

"Sharing seeds, knowledge, and tricks of the trade" - that's how longtime clubmember Will Farmer describes the GWC Annual *Seed Exchange* slated for the January 16th meeting. For those who attend, all this comes with the wintertime expectation that something marvelous will happen in the spring. Best of all, the plants and seeds are free.



An outgrowth of seed swaps first done for TAGaH (Triangle Area Gardeners & Homesteaders), GWC's annual event began in 2014 and continues to be one of the most popular activities on the yearly club calendar.

Farmer is quick to point out that saving and trading seeds is nothing new. "It's as old as agriculture itself," he says. "Plant ovules and nuts have been found in many prehistoric site excavations and even in the Egyptian pyramids."

Will started developing his green thumb at an early age. At first, he just helped with his father's garden, but, by age 15, he was working his own patch - and canning much of the produce (Will and wife Donna still preserve the results of their home plot, putting up about 200 jars each summer).

The irony of a gardener being named "Farmer" is not lost on the seed exchange organizer. "Everybody laughs about that," he confesses. "Even me." Somewhat reminiscent of the Johnny Cash song *A Boy Named Sue*, Will says "I guess I have to blame my Dad for hanging that moniker on me."

From 1956 until retirement in 1995, cultivation took a back seat to aerospace engineering for Mr. Farmer. He designed aircraft crew stations for industry giants McDonnell-Douglas, Boeing, Lockheed, and Learjet. "I did take a detour in 1960 and 1961," says Will, "when I went to Huntsville, Alabama, to lead the Saturn Booster Engine Design Group for NASA."

Farmer claims he's done his best work after retiring: "Among other projects, I designed and built fixed wing and helicopter flight simulators and a space station module for the Mesa, Arizona, public schools and to date about 100-thousand fifth graders have flown in those simulators."



Will's agenda for January 16th includes a brief demonstration of tomato seed saving, a Calabaza squash discussion, and a cut and share. "I plan to distribute mini-greenhouse samples and seed starter pots," he says, "and hopefully that'll inspire folks to save rotisserie chicken containers because they make great little seed incubators." January's meeting also marks a pivotal juncture in GWC's seed exchange program because Will Farmer is looking to pass the baton. "I'm 82 now and not in the best of health," he declares. "2018 would be a great time for younger GWC members to step up and share the responsibility of organizing this event and keeping the tradition going."

The Longview Project January Update— The Garden Walk

by Jessie Jackson

As you may recall, the Longview Project was introduced last month in the December *Clod-Hopper*. The Project team has been busy and so much has occurred since the December Project introduction! We've identified "The Garden Walk," the debris collection area, the pathway to the work area, the tools needed, where to set up the table for coffee, and set up the sign-in sheets! In fact, we're ready to "break ground" and are pleased to announce the first (of many) scheduled work days: **Saturday, January 20, 9:30 – 12:30.**



At this session, we'll focus on **clearing the path**, which is 8 ft. wide and approximately 350 ft. long. Please bring tools of all types, including, but not limited to, loppers, pruners, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows,. A chainsaw or two will be needed as well, if anyone's

got one to volunteer. Don't forget your work gloves!

Lynn, Sharon, and I will be available during refreshment time at the upcoming January 16th regular Club meeting to answer questions, provide details about the Yahoo share point, and, of course, to offer the signup sheets for the January 20th work session.

"The Garden Walk" project is the type of work that will require various skills throughout the year, and we invite each of you to join the work days as you can! Let's get started!

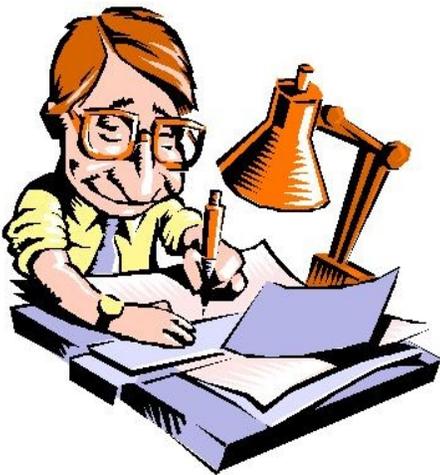
My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

Happy 2018 to all Gardeners of Wake County! We wrapped up 2017, a year of great gardening and great fellowship, in style at the always-popular Christmas Awards Banquet in December. What a feast and what fun!

This year the Club honored eight individuals for their outstanding service to the Club. Honorees were Pam Beck (Dogwood Award for non-members), Eddie Robinson (Green Thumb Award for members with less than two years membership), Reed and Christine Elliott, Anita Kuehne, and Donna Farmer (The Silver Trowel Award for members with more than two years membership), Jim Wilson (Lifetime Achievement Award), and Mac Williamson (Silver Vase Award for exemplary individual service).

In addition, we presented six well-deserved \$2000 scholarships to NCSU agriculture majors including Donovan Battle, Matthew Bell, Emily Culbertson, Amanda DeLucia, John Nix, and Chad Tyson. What a pleasure and inspiration it was to see those young people and hear their personal stories. All of us in the GWC can feel proud of our contribution to those scholarships through participation in the Club's fundraising activities, especially the annual Azalea Sale. In addition, this year, by converting to digital format for the monthly *Clod-Hopper*, our Club saved enough in printing and mailing costs to fund a sixth scholarship. Kudos to the membership for your willingness in making that transition. Bios and ongoing stories of the scholarship recipients will be appearing in the *Clod-Hopper* throughout the coming year to let us all see how our hard-earned Club dollars are being put to work.



As we move into a new year, it's time to bid farewell and offer our heartfelt thanks to several outgoing Club Officers. Thanks go to Norm LaRusch for his work as Treasurer; Donna Farmer, Club Secretary; and Paula Hoffmann and Jim Moore as outgoing Board members. Our Club thrives because of the unselfish work of such wonderful people. All of us say "Thank you!"

And, of course, the New Year brings us a new *Garden Question of the Month*: For January, 2018, Paul Hoffman asks for member feedback about **'What variety of bulbs have naturalized successfully in your garden? What growing conditions do they like?'** Send responses to reed.o.elliott@gmail.com.

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we're happy to have added Nelson White of Raleigh. Be sure to say "Hi and welcome" if you see Nelson at the next meeting.