

The Clod-Hopper



Volume 7 digital edition 1

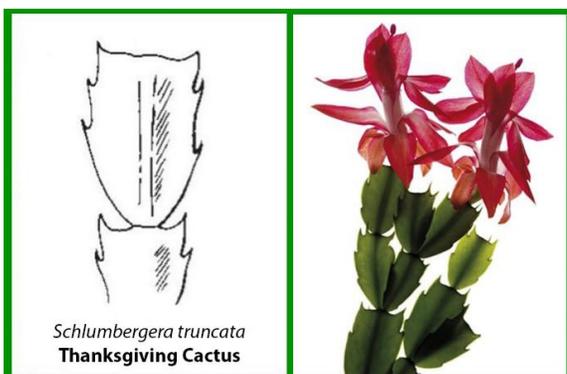
Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

January 2023

Christmas Cactus Dilemma

by Kathleen Thompson, Immediate Past President

Do you think you have a Christmas cacti? That's what most everyone calls them. But what are they really? Researching this plant reveals there are actually three species of similar tropical cacti, each blooming at a different time. One blooms in the fall, one in winter and one in spring, and they're named after the corresponding holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Although challenging, you can tell the difference by the shape of the leaves/stems.

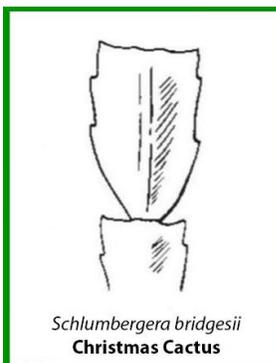


Schlumbergera truncata
Thanksgiving Cactus

The Thanksgiving cactus is the most common one sold. What look like leaves are actually stems, serrated with jagged points at the tips.

They flower in many colors from peach, and pale pink to purple with yellow pollen-bearing anthers. These cacti will bloom between November and the New Year. The flowers appear as if a flower within a flower, very much tube-like. It can be tricked into bloom with cool temperatures and darkness for about 6 weeks.

Christmas cacti bloom December through March. The stems or leaves are more rounded and the tip is curved, the blooms are usually pink or white. One difference is the pollen bearing anthers are pink to purplish-brown. The cooler temperature and darkness are also important here.



Schlumbergera bridgesii
Christmas Cactus



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 Seed Exchange Master of Ceremonies Will Farmer once described the Annual Seed Exchange slated for the January 17th meeting. For those who attend, this month's meeting comes with the winter-time expectation that something marvelous will happen in the spring. Best of all, the plants and seeds are free. GWC's annual Seed Exchange has been one of the most popular activities on the yearly Club calendar since it began in 2014. Be there—and bring your favorite seeds to share.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

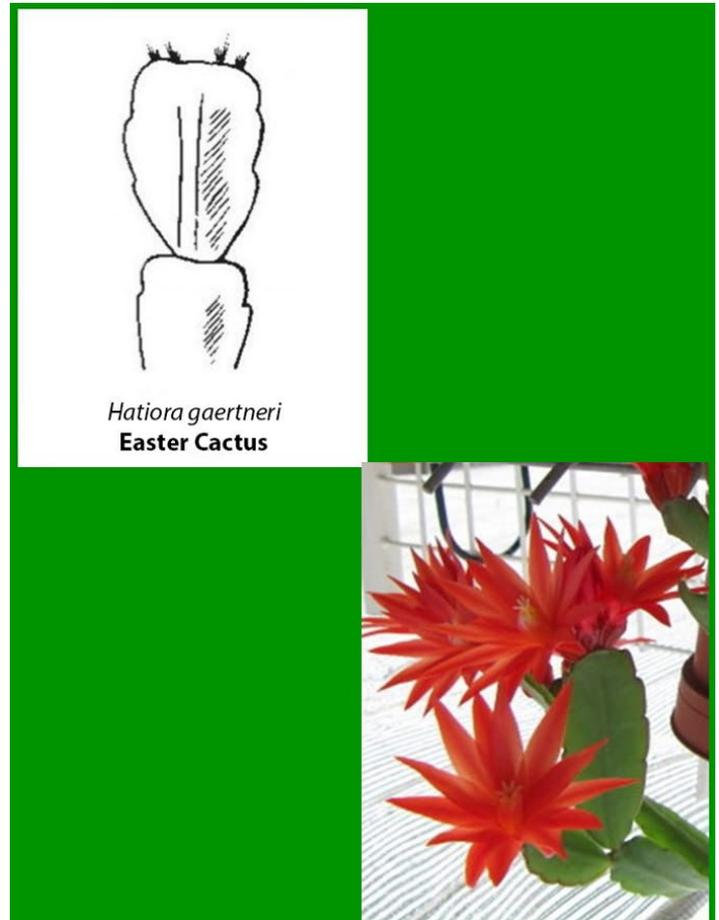
President: Tom Packer
Vice President: Kate Bartos
Secretary: Joanne Boone
Treasurer: Charlie Leverett
Immediate Past President: Kathleen Thompson
At-large board members: Shay Campbell, Rob Bartos, Gail Posey, Nell Joslin

Committee members

Activities Chair: Jim and Rita Shaloiko (seed swap), Christine Elliott and Marion Flint (refreshments), Joanne Boone (picnic), Kathleen Thompson (awards banquet)
Audit: Charles Gilliam, Mac Williams, Reed Elliott
Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett
Beautification Awards: Laine Thomas
Club Awards: Paul Hoffman
Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam, Mark Boone, Mac Williamson
Friendship: Donna Farmer
Historical: Donna Farmer
Membership, Barbara Brown
Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott
Nominating: Jim Moore
Programs: Kate Bartos
Projects: Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson
Publicity: Charles Gilliam
Scholarship: Christine Elliott
Telephone: Will Callem
Webmaster: Reed Elliott

Christmas Cactus Dilemma (continued from page 1)

The Easter cactus is more sensitive than the other two species to over or under-watering, and more challenging to grow. They enjoy cooler temperatures, but darkness if not an issue to obtain blooms. Their leaves are rounded with small bristles and a thick ridge on one side, the flowers, usually pink flowers are more star shaped.



Contact Us

For additional information email our Club at GardenersofWakeCountyNC@gmail.com

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

To best care for your cacti, use loose organic matter such as an African violet mix. Do not use a cactus mix even though they are called cacti, as they need moist soil, a light fertilizer in summer, and bright light, but not full sun. Hold water when forcing them into bloom, then start watering again when buds begin to form. They are from South America and grow on trees, so bright indirect light is best. When repotting, move up only one pot size only when crowded, as they like being pot bound.

The Seed Exchange—All NEW for 2023!

by Kate Bartos, Vice President



Happy New Year and what a way to start this year. This month is our much anticipated seed exchange! **The meeting starts** as usual **at 7:30 PM** at the Ruby McSwain Education Center, JC Raulston Arboretum, on **Tuesday, January 17th**. Refreshments and social time begin at 7:00 PM. Visitors and prospective new members are always welcome!

Our new President, Tom Packer, will open the meeting with remarks about the upcoming year and some general seed growing information and resources for our use.

Additionally, each seed table will have a QR code to link you via your phone to the NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox which would list helpful characteristics of plant seeds that you may select such as light, moisture, height, width, toxicity, growth rate, landscape use, etc.

Please use this valuable resource to ensure that your seed selection is appropriate for your needs and environment while starting inside or outside and maintaining it in your garden. If you would like to have the url bookmarked now so you can be ready to do look-ups, it is:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>



This year's format for the seed exchange also will offer new opportunities to exchange ideas on various topics. We will have four discussion groups set up for some lively conversation including, (1) Growing Blueberries, (2) Critter Control, (3) Seed Planting and (4) Environmentally Safer Pesticides. There will be facilitator for each discussion group and your questions, thoughts, issues, and solutions will be most welcomed for this exchange.

We thank Jim and Rita Shaloiko for their ideas, time, and effort in hosting the seed exchange. Be sure to let them know your appreciation.

So, please join us. It will be a fun-filled evening of seeds, talk, and refreshments. Flowers and produce will be available, and seeds for both ornament and food crops are welcome.



Seeds

by Mark Boone, Past-President



The mystery begins. What will grow from the seeds I get at the GWC Seed Exchange this month? Although I kind of know what pepper seeds look like, unless the seeds are marked, I have no way of knowing whether the seeds will turn into a Carolina Reaper or a yellow bell pepper.

At the 2018 Seed Exchange I got some seeds mixed up. Instead of squash, the plant that sprouted grew and grew with hundreds of yellow flowers. When fruit started setting the produce looked like fat cucumbers but were kind of squishy inside. It turned out it was a loofa vine.

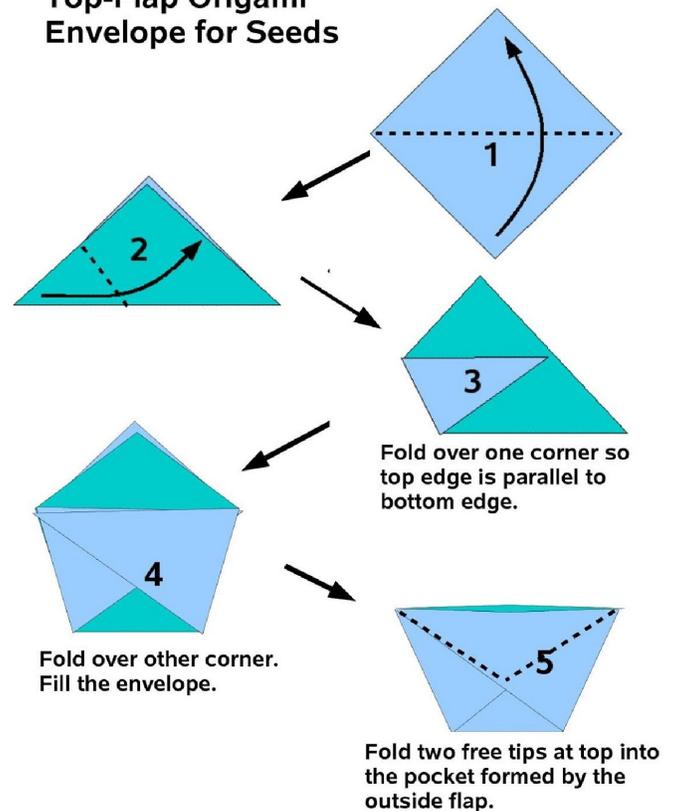
My aunt Gladys taught second grade in Hyattsville Maryland just outside Washington DC for 43 years. Early in each school year she would bring in a carton of eggs and ask the students how many of them had seen an egg tree loaded with ripe eggs ready to be picked. Most of her students had seen egg trees and some of them had even picked eggs off the trees. She didn't get into it, but I would assume different varieties must produce white eggs and brown eggs. Geneticists must have created the blue egg trees. If she had asked me if I had ever caught a swimming loofa I would have raised my hand. I thought loofas grew in the ocean and were harvested by snorkelers who brought up baskets of the creatures and let them dry in the sun.

To make sure I know which seed is which, I've taken to making folded paper envelopes for different kinds of seeds. When I was a boy, I checked out a book on origami so many times the librarian told me I could not check it out again because other people wanted to read it.

Making seed envelopes is simple origami. There are many ways to fold them. One simple method is pictured here.

Make some packets in advance before this year's Seed Exchange so you won't later get loofas when you thought you planted bell peppers.

Top-Flap Origami Envelope for Seeds



Help Wanted

by Tom Packer, President



Is your New Year's resolution to do something positive that will change the world and be of lasting benefit to all humankind? Are you stumped trying to figure out what that positive "something" could be? Well, have we got an opportunity for you! Two important GWC committee positions have just opened up. Jump in now and volunteer before the line of applicants stretches around the block. No experience necessary. Opportunities – boundless. Pay – infinite (gratitude). To get more information, or to sign up for one of these positions, contact GWC Club President, Tom Packer, at GardenersofWakeCountyNC@gmail.com (or feel free to buttonhole Tom at the next GWC meeting on January 17th).

Membership Committee Vice-chair

Job Description: Under the tutelage of long-time, tried and true Membership Committee Chair Barbara Brown, the successful candidate will assist while learning how to create the annual Club membership directory and oversee intake of new members. At the end of each month, you'll have the pleasure of reporting new members to our suave, courtly and debonair *Clod-Hopper* editor, Reed Elliott. In 2024, you'll take over as Chair of the Membership Committee. Most activity in this position occurs early in the year when the directory is developed. Subsequent time demands are said to be minimal. This is an important, and much appreciated, role to help support our Club.



Telephone Committee Chair

Job Description: Contact friendly, helpful, courteous, knowledgeable, cooperative GWC members to assist with projects such as the annual azalea sale and other gala events, as well as occasionally assisting the overworked membership committee by contacting members to update membership directory information.

2023—Bigger and Better!

by Sharon LaRusch and Lynn Swanson, Projects Chairs



We indeed finished the year strong as our last workday of 2022 out at Joslin accomplished everything on our list with time to spare! Thank you to all those that came out on a chilly morning! We knocked out planting nine wax myrtles, two dogwoods, one American Beautyberry and a Flame Thrower Redbud. In addition, there was weeding of smilax and ivy, spiffing *Jeu de Paume* and relocating a large Joe Pye weed cluster to a better spot. We finished ahead of schedule and had plenty of time left in our day to spread our Christmas cheer!

This coming year will be so delightful as we see the design continue to come to life! The City of Raleigh will be putting a new roof on the gazebo. There should be a bench to assemble and place as well as lots of other collaborative efforts. We would be remiss if we didn't give a big thank you to the folks at Joslin. We have so enjoyed working with them and the support, communication and enthusiasm for our Club's efforts has been felt all year! It's exciting to imagine the coming months with this partnership.

For those that haven't been out to Joslin, it is a public park so you can visit anytime. We would **love** to see you on one of the scheduled workdays (see 2023 calendar here and on the website). Come to work if you like **or** one of the crew would love to **just show you around** and share about the garden and the progress of *Jeu de Paume*.

Directions: The address is below or [click here for a map](#). Parking along the street is ample and there also are a few spots up the driveway.

2431 W Lake Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27609

Our next workday is January 21st. If you want to get on the distribution list for Projects info, email sharonlarusch@gmail.com

Thanks to all for your support and enthusiasm,
Sharon & Lynn

Joslin Gardens Calendar

2023

Jan	21 st
Feb	25 th
Mar	18 th (Saturday BEFORE monthly meeting)
Apr	22 nd
May	20 th
June	24 th
July	22 nd
Aug	19 th
Sept	23 rd
Oct	28 th (Saturday TWO weeks AFTER monthly meeting)
Nov	18 th (Saturday BEFORE monthly meeting)
Dec	16 th (Saturday AFTER Banquet)

All workdays are on Saturdays
between 8:30 and 11:00

2023—Schedule of Guest Speakers

by Kate Bartos, Vice-President

Date	Presenter	Topic
1/17/2023	GWC Committee	Seed Exchange
2/21/2023	Will Dudley, Leaf & Limb	How Trees Can Save the World
3/21/2023	Rich Woynicz, Extension Master Gardener, Wake County	Edible Landscaping
4/18/2023	Dr Grady Miller, Professor & Extension Specialist, Turfgrass Management	Lawn Maintenance
5/16/2023	No Speaker	Picnic
6/20/2023	Philip Brindle, VP Triangle Orchid Society	Why Grow Orchids
7/18/2023	Helen Yoest, Author, Founder Bee Better Naturally	Native Fruits
8/15/2023	Courtney Lockemer, Piedmont Fibershed, Founder	Fabric Dying with Plants
9/19/2023	Irene & Shay Campbell, GWC Members, Featured in Walter Magazine	Yard Art, Adding Dimension to Your Garden
10/10/2023		
NOTE: 2nd Tuesday	Amy MacIntosh, Co-Chair Triangle Chapter, Native Plant Society	Margaret Reid Garden
11/21/2023	TBA	TBA
12/12/2023	No Speaker	Holiday Awards Banquet

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. Does that describe you? If so, c'mon down and join the Club. Download a Membership Application form at <https://gardenersofwakecounty.weebly.com/>, or, for more information contact our Club at Gardenersof-WakeCountyNC@gmail.com.

GWC 2022 Awards

*by Paul Hoffman, Past-President and MC of the Awards Ceremony, 2022
(this article adapted from the speaker's notes)*

Dogwood Award

The Dogwood Award is given in appreciation to non-members or groups for their service to the Club. The award for 2022 was presented to two individuals, Chris Heagarty the executive director of the City of Oaks Foundation which has been the steward of Joslin Garden for several years, and to Helen Yoest, the Raleigh Parks Department Program Coordinator for the Joslin garden now that Joslin has been accepted as a City garden. Chris and Helen were recognized for enthusiastically welcoming the GWC's participation in making Joslin a wonderful destination, not only in mulching, weeding, pruning, raking and planting, but also in allowing us to collaborate in dreaming and designing, designating a central section of the garden for us to make as beautiful as we can. And they are more than administrators – they are there on a work days, helping us with tools, showing the most important task, moving the clippings, digging in the dirt.

Green Thumb Award

The Green Thumb Award is given for service to the Club to members who been with the GWC for less than two years. The award for 2022 was presented to two individuals with a strong and close connection to Joslin Garden. In fact they are a brother and sister who grew up on the property and whose last name is Joslin. Nell and James were so pleased to learn about our Club's involvement with the garden that they both independently joined the Club, Nell in 2021, and James and his wife Beth this past summer. Their membership was not just a gesture – they are both happy participants in our work days at the garden. James' wheelbarrow was always piled with more dirt than anyone else's.

Trowel Award

The trowel award is given for service to the Club by a member. The award may be given to as many as three persons per year. The three members recognized for 2022 have served the Club over several years in multiple ways. The first 2022 Trowel Award recipient quietly and graciously served the Club as the chair of the Scholarship Committee for at least six years. She then took on the job of at –large board member for one year and this year has done an excellent job as board secretary. Her most outstanding contribution to the enjoyment of the Club for everyone of us is that she has opened her home deck back yard as hostess for Club picnic for over a decade. She never says much about it but you understand if you entertain at all that there is much unseen effort put forth to set up and clean up when you have 60-80 people come to your home. Therefore, 2022's first Trowel Award was presented in gratitude to Joanne Boone.

The next two recipients of the 2022 Trowel Award are a couple. We considered making these award presentations individually, but it just didn't seem right since these two are pretty much inseparable. Being enthusiastic Club members right from the start, they jointly received the Green Thumb Award for new members 10 years ago today. They've worked hard on the Azalea Sale, opened their amazing backyard tropical garden paradise for Club garden tours, and have run the Telephone Committee for years. In addition to their Club work, they provide advice to fellow GWC members and the public as certified master gardeners. Therefore for all these many services over a long period of time, including more that I've never heard about, we would like to present two trowels of recognition to Johnny and Sherrill Johnson.

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GWC 2022 Awards

(continued from page 8)

I must also mention that Sherrill scheduled the Club speakers while serving as Vice President for two years, led the Club as President for the next two, and gave wise advice as president emeritus on the board for the two years when I was learning how to be president. I want to let you know that Sherrill is a great recruiter of Club talent as well. When I asked Kathleen Thompson to consider running for Club VP, she turned me down. However after Sherrill had a little talk with her, Kathleen couldn't say no, for which I am very grateful. Johnny is always there with Sherrill as the "man behind the woman", served as chair of the Telephone Committee, and has happily shared his own unique musical talents with the Club as Awards Banquet entertainer of the year for the past two banquets. For all these many services over a long period of time, the GWC would like to present two trowels of recognition to Johnny and Sherrill Johnson.

Silver Vase Award

The Silver Vase Award may be given as a recognition for exemplary individual service by a Club member. In any well-run organization, there are people who are not "up front", but who work in the nuts and bolts of the organization, getting the little things done behind the scenes, steadily contributing without much recognition in tasks which are necessary, but not always lots of fun. Our 2022 recipient for the Silver Vase Award is like this, working faithfully on Club activities for over ten years. He is a regular worker in the Azalea Sale and at the Flower Show at the State Fair. He served as an at-large-board member and then accepted the position as board secretary for four years before stepping down due to term limits. He organizes the raffle held each year at the Club picnic. During COVID he shared his home garden on the Club virtual garden tour. This year he chaired the nominating committee and has proposed an outstanding slate of officers for 2023. You probably remember him best as the person who stood for the last five years in the spot where I'm standing right now, making memorable comments to honor the recipients of Club awards, In fact, I'm pretty sure that the reason this person has not been recognized before today is that he took on the responsibility for those five years of leading the awards committee. The GWC was happy to be able to present the 2022 Silver Vase Award to Jim Moore.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award is not given every year. As the name implies, it recognizes continuous service to the Club in a variety of ways. Charles Gilliam, our recipient for 2022, joined the Club 15 years ago and soon became involved in leadership. He chaired the Flower Show Committee in 2010 and soon became Vice President and Program Chairmen, then President, and Immediate Past President, serving in these capacities on the board for six years. He's been the publicity point person for the Club and Azalea Sale since 2014, teaching himself how to advertise using online media like Facebook. He served as webmaster in 2017. He co-chaired the first Club garden tour event and shared his garden on the tour. He worked with a community garden project. He served two terms on the endowment committee. He's served on all audit committees for the past several years. For many years he has volunteered at the Azalea Sale on an almost daily basis. He's been the speaker at a least one of the Club meetings, sharing his garden experiences from his tour of Thailand. Finally, calling on his experience as a judge, he has added a note of welcome solemnity each year, presiding over the election and installation of our officers. Charles unfortunately is no longer a gardener in Wake County, having voluntarily relocated to the mountains in his retirement. However, he will always be a member of the Gardeners of Wake County. For his continuous service over many years we would presented Charles Gilliam with the 2022 Gardeners of Wake County Lifetime Achievement Award.

My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

Happy 2023 to all gardeners—and especially to the Gardeners of Wake County! A productive, exciting, thriving (to say nothing of just plain fun) 2022 was wrapped up, as our gardening years always are, by the magnificent GWC December Awards Banquet. If you weren't able to be there, don't miss MC Paul Hoffman's Awards Presentation Speech available elsewhere in this issue. When you see the honorees at future meetings, events and/or service projects be sure to congratulate and thank them. They represent the best of what our Club stands for.

As we move into a new year, it's a time to offer our heartfelt thanks to our incoming Club Officers and Board of Directors. Officers for 2023 include Tom Packer; President, Kate Bartos, Vice President; Joanne Boone, Secretary; and Charlie Leverett, Treasurer. At-large Board members for the coming year are: Shay Campbell, Rob Bartos, Gail Posey, and Nell Joslin. Our Club thrives because of the unselfish work of such wonderful people.

Special thanks are due to our departing Officers and Board members who have given so much of themselves to the function and to the betterment of our Club and all it stands for. In alphabetical order, these include: Renee and Rich Engates, Will Farmer, Charles Gilliam, Paul Hoffman (acting on behalf of Ginny Parker in the role of Immediate Past President), Sherrill and Johnny Johnson, Jim Moore, Ginny Parker, and, the retiring Club President who kept the GWC thriving and well despite COVID, Kathleen Thompson. I'm sure I speak for everyone in our Club when I say, "Thank you. Job well done!"

Finally, the New Year is a great time to take a moment to look ahead to our Club's future. The life of any Club depends first and foremost on one thing—a devoted, active, vibrant, involved, and, especially, a stable, or better yet, a growing membership. Our new President and Vice President bring years of experience and specialized training that promise to usher in some new and exciting ways of bringing awareness of our Club, our Club's accomplishments, and the special gardening opportunities our Club offers to a wider and more diverse audience than we've ever reached before. Many exciting ideas for promoting and growing the 2023 GWC are in the New Year's air. But the best kinds of growing require strong and stable foundations. That's us, the current members of the Gardeners of Wake County.

Which brings up an important question. Have you renewed your GWC membership for 2023? Barbara Brown, our Club's Membership Committee Chair, tells me we've had good success with membership renewals

so far, but there still are some folks who haven't yet got those checks in the mail. So now's the time. You can't make a better New Year's resolution than supporting your Club by continuing your membership and your participation. Membership perks include substantial discounts at Club events like the Spring Picnic and December Banquet. They include free entry and parking at the State Fair for those who assist at the Flower Exhibit. They include monthly access to great presenters and knowledgeable fellow gardeners. They include free seeds and free plants. And they include being a part of an organization that has proudly supported the future of North Carolina gardens through GWC scholarships to horticulture majors at NCSU. If you haven't done so already, send those membership renewal checks to Barbara Brown, Membership Chair, 517 Wyndham Drive Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-7706. Make checks payable to "Gardeners of Wake County."

