

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

July 2020

Build It and They Will Come

Paul Hoffman, Immediate Past President



I want to tell you about our own “build it and they will come” experience. The original line is actually “build it and he will come” from one of my favorite movies, “Field Of Dreams”, a gentle fantasy where an Iowa farmer feels led to construct a baseball field in the middle of his corn crop and is rewarded when major leaguers from the past show up throw the corn and start playing.

Our own experience started when I and my son Joe and Judy’s dad paid a visit to Johnny and Sherrill’s backyard tropical paradise in Garner.

It’s not well known but Joe has an ability to

communicate with animals that rivals Dr. Dolittle’s. He took the opportunity to impress Sherrill’s granddaughter by quietly walking up to a bull frog sitting by the pond and stroking the frog’s back.

The visit inspired us to think about whether it would be fun to have a pond with living things in it in our own backyard. Never one to hurry into anything, I thought about the project for several years. A Christmas present from my daughter got me off the dime. It was a British gardening book from the BBC with pictures and instructions on about 40 different garden projects including a plan for a small backyard pond.



I began visualizing where a pond like the pictures in the book might fit in our yard. Our lot sits on a slope down from the front. The kids had an old redwood swing set sitting across a natural drainage in the woods out back. I could widen the drainage

Club Meetings

In “normal” months, meetings are held at the JC Raulston Arboretum every 3rd Tuesday. Due to the Coronavirus, our July meeting will again be held remotely using Zoom. Zoom links will be sent to members by email.

Our presenter for July is Jeremy Schmidt, a multi-talented, entrepreneur, landscape designer, garden planner and so much more. Jeremy is the Research and Grounds Supervisor at Plant Delights Nursery/Juniper Level Botanic Garden since 2008. Jeremy also loves rocks. In fact, Jeremy designed and installed a 400 foot long crevice garden at Plant Delights that is among the largest contiguous crevice gardens in the world! It contains nearly 3,000 different kinds of plants. By incorporating stone in the garden, Jeremy promotes the marriage of living art and botanical diversity. Join Jeremy and your fellow GWC members on Tuesday, July 21st at 7:30 PM. Perhaps you can pick up a few tricks on crevice gardens for your own yard.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Virginia (Ginny) Parker
Vice President: Kathleen Thompson
Secretary: Jim Moore
Treasurer: Mac Williamson
Immediate Past President: Paul Hoffman
At-large board members: Leslie Cohen, Christine Elliott, Rich Engates, Eddie Robinson

Committee members

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)
Audit: Charles Gilliam, Sharon LaRusch, Donna Farmer, Reed Elliott
Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett
Beautification Awards: Laine Thomas
Club Awards: Jim Moore
Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam
Friendship: Donna Farmer
Historical: Donna Farmer
Membership, Barbara Brown
Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott
Nominating: TBA
Programs: Kathleen Thompson
Projects: Sharon LaRusch, Lynn Swanson
Publicity: Charles Gilliam
Scholarship: Joanne Boone
Telephone: Johnny and Sherrill Johnson
Webmaster: Reed Elliott
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Contact Us

For additional information email our Club at 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/>

Build It and They Will Come (continued from page 1)

area and reuse the frame of the swing set as a dam at the low end. The book said you should line your pond with a rubber liner to hold the water. Judy found one 20' by 30' online for about \$200. Actual construction took about twenty hours. "I love it when a plan comes together" - that's another quote from one of Joe's favorite TV shows, the A-Team.



The big day came. We turned on the hose. The pond basin, complete with a few plants from Logan's sitting in cut-off plastic pots on the bottom, slowly began to fill throughout the afternoon. We added some Comet gold fish from the pet store, but wondered where to get the other living things the book said we would enjoy in our pond.

But no need to worry! Build it and they will come! I was shocked to go out the next morning and find that the frogs had already moved in and made the pond their own. And ever since, they've continued entertaining us now for over two years. I went out this morning and several consented to have their pictures taken, thinking they might persuade some of you to build another pond as a home for their many relatives.



Don't Cry If You Have Rocks in Your Garden -

Our July Speaker Says "Embrace Them and Go Get More!"

by Kathleen Thompson, Vice President



Our GWC Guest Speaker for July is Jeremy Schmidt, a multi-talented, entrepreneur, landscape designer, garden planner and so much more. He grew up in Peoria, Illinois, influenced by his Father and Grandfather, gardening was a big part of his youth. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Landscape Horticulture from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, then gained curatorial and research experience at Longwood Gardens shortly after his graduation. His extensive hands on experience has led him to innovate radical techniques for organically amending soil and creating garden spaces. Now here's the radical part – fighting compaction with compaction!!! Have you ever heard of such a thing? Read on to learn more.

Jeremy is the Research and Grounds Supervisor at Plant Delights Nursery/ Juniper Level Botanic Garden since 2008. He is the owner of a small business, HORTCO, The Horticulture Company that he founded in 1998. For more than two decades, he has studied plant populations throughout their natural and introduced ranges, especially the genus Trillium.

So, Jeremy loves rocks, here's the proof: remember the boulder mound on the roof garden at the JC Raulston Arboretum? Jeremy built that. At JLBG, Jeremy designed and installed a crevice garden, starting in 2017, this garden is along the eastern exit drive and is built using leftover concrete from on sight demolition as a home for alkaline-loving, dry land plants. This crevice garden ended up about 400 feet long---it is among the largest contiguous crevice gardens in the world!!! It contains nearly 3,000 different kinds of plants, many of which had previously been ungrowable in this area.

By incorporating stone in the garden, Jeremy promotes the marriage of living art and botanical diversity in the landscape. In the past 3 years, he has stacked over 1 million pounds of stone in specialized rock garden beds. (Side note: my back hurts already). So when the arboretum is open again, check out Jeremy's work on the roof. When you see how amazing that is, you'll want to take a drive and visit JLBG to admire the crevice garden on their next open garden days. Jeremy's business, HORTCO, offers many gardening options including consultations, maintenance, even weeding! He can be reached via e-mail at crataegus_82@yahoo.com or 309-657-6290. If no immediate response, he's most likely in his boat fishing!



Join Jeremy on Tuesday, July 21 at 7:30 PM on *Zoom* for his discussion on rock and crevice gardens to understand how to accomplish this feat. Perhaps you can pick up a few tricks on crevice gardens to have one in your yard. *Zoom* links will be sent to members who can see the presentation live and ask questions. Later, a recording of the session will be posted on the Club website for those who missed it or have the misfortune not to be a GWC member. That can be easily corrected, of course. Just contact our membership chair, Barbara Brown, at 517 Wyndham Drive, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526-7706 to line up, sign up and reenlist in the GWC!

Eaten Alive in the Green Swamp

Mark Boone, Past President



The trail goes through a pocosin bog before opening up to a long leaf pine savanna

The first week in June is blooming time for a multitude of meat-eating plants in North Carolina. The Green Swamp Preserve in Brunswick County is a fantastic place to see at least 14 of the 36 different carnivorous plants native to North Carolina. One of them, the Venus Flytrap only occurs naturally in the Carolinas. Fortunately, the plants don't eat people, but they can absolutely make you feel as if you have been transported to an alien planet.

I decided to make the 2 ½ hour drive down to the 15,000-acre Nature Conservancy preserve on June 3rd. It was a spectacular clear day. The preserve is located 5 miles from Supply, NC just off NC Highway 211. At the end of

the sand parking lot there is a 1.3-mile trail which leads into a long leaf pine savanna interspaced with pocosin bogs. As its name implies it is a swamp, so the trail is muddy in a lot of places. I was thankful for my waterproof hiking boots. Trees are spaced widely as a result of periodic burns. Fire and the plants living in the savanna made peace with each other long ago. The long leaf pines rather enjoy the occasional hot flames and use the fire as a trigger to release their seeds which require bare soil to germinate. The carnivorous plants have roots which are not affected by the flames and often start putting out new growth within 3 days after a fire.

In addition to the meat eating plants there are lovely native orchids, Orange Milkworts, White Bracted Sedges, Yellow Meadow Beauties, Colic Root and some amazing iris. But it was the carnivores I had come to see. Four of the five strategies plants employ to eat insects were on display. These were:



The Red Sundew uses a flypaper strategy to catch bugs

- Pitfall traps - Pitcher plants trap prey in a rolled leaf that contains a pool of digestive enzymes. Some have inward facing hairs which prevent their prey from escaping.



The hairs on the Red Pitcher plant prevent insects from escaping

- Flypaper traps - Sundews use a sticky mucilage which contains an anesthetic to put the prey to sleep before they are eaten.

- Snap traps - Venus flytraps have a two lobed trap that will snap shut in less than a second when the preferred prey enters.
- Bladder traps – Bladderworts suck in prey with a bladder that generates an internal vacuum.



The flowers grow from the center of the traps.

Eaten Alive in the Green Swamp (continued from page 4)



The Checkered Beetle is one of 3 pollinators for Venus Flytraps

One thing that amazed me was the strategy the Venus Flytraps employ for pollination. A common pollinator is the checkered beetle. Flytraps don't eat them. Probably a professional courtesy as checkered beetles are also insect predators. Some people think it is because the flowers stick high above the traps. Others think the beetles give off a fragrance which says to the plant, "Hi there, I'm your pollination partner and I'm here to help."

Sometimes it is possible to open up the dried-up stems of last year's pitcher plants and do a forensic analysis of the bugs they have eaten.

Several local nurseries have good supplies of carnivorous plants if you want to make a carnivorous plant bog yourself. It is a felony in North Carolina to collect them from the wild. But feel free to take all the pictures of these strange plants from the Green Swamp you like.

If you take the trip, be sure to take some bugspray. I was feasted upon by mosquitoes but not the plants.



Red Pitcher Plants



Orange Pitcher plant flowers



Rose Orchids and ferns are in abundance

A Longer View

Sharon LaRusch and Lynn Swanson, Projects Chairs

Last month we asked for ideas about continuing our mission to fellowship (within 6 ft.) and serve the community just like we have been with our previous and current projects. So here are a few of the ideas that came forward. So, as you peruse the short list below, keep that thinking cap on and let's add to that list! In addition, if you know of specific opportunities for Lynn or I can investigate further, we'd love to hear about them!



- One day workdays to assist club members that need temporary garden (or other) help
- Assisting at a local community garden
- Pen pals for senior living facilities
- Cedar woodworking



**Garden Volunteers
Needed!**

Please take a moment to let us know what you think and if you would be interested in participating in some way! Reach out to sharonlarusch@gmail.com or 919.656.1717 Lynn and I would love to hear about them!

My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor



Well, summer's finally here and Chris and I are happy to welcome the warm days and abundant garden produce that summer brings, but we also want to wave a fond farewell to one of the most beautiful, mild springs in recent memory. In today's mailbox I got my electric bill for June

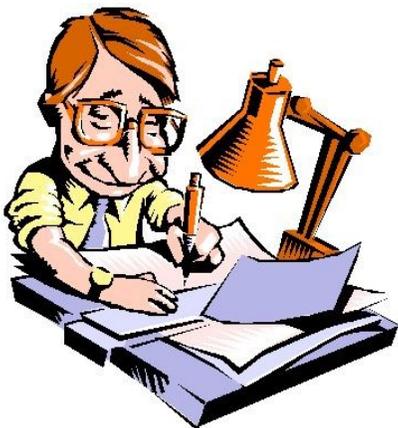
and it was half what it's been in any June since we moved here!

I must admit that, thanks to COVID, Chris and I have had to do a lot more outdoor walking for exercise than we've ever done before. Until I got that electric bill I wasn't sure if springs have always been so gloriously mild and lusciously beautiful here in Raleigh and I've just been missing them, or if this really was a unique and precious year. Although the COVID part has been awful, of course, the silver lining has been the remarkable spring that we found ourselves walking through in the past couple of months.

Our own garden has responded nobly to such tender treatment, too. The produce has been pouring in – a bumper crop of both cherry and full-size tomatoes (so many we're already having trouble finding enough friends and neighbors to give them away to), snow peas and green beans by the bagful day after day, peppers galore (ancho, jalapeno, and bell), onions, carrots, English cucumbers (from which I hope to soon start making some of my legendary quick pickles) – truly, I don't remember ever seeing so much happy produce so soon



from our gardens! So, in this year when we've had to endure what sometimes seems like endless isolation, thank Heaven for the GWC, gardens and gardening – and for a spring to remember!



Speaking of the GWC, gardens, gardening and springs to remember, there are a couple of items I want to call to everyone's attention. First off, there's another GWC Member Garden Tour available on the Club website. [Don't miss Mac and Vivian Williamson's beautiful video](#) they and their daughter put together. Monty Don himself couldn't make a garden look more attractive! And speaking of Monty Don, my and the UK's favorite gardener, if you've been enjoying his amazing series, *A Gardener's World*, two new episodes are available at: <https://hdclump.com/category/gardeners-world-2020/>.

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we're happy to have added Mary Toma McConnell of Raleigh. Be sure to say, "Hi and welcome" when you see her next on *Zoom* or, if we're really lucky, someday at a real meeting!