

The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

October 2018

Cone Manor on the Blue Ridge

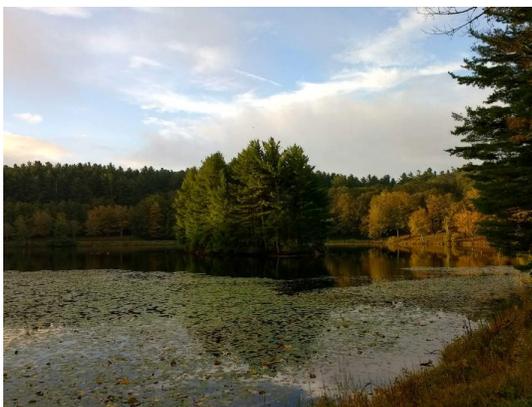
by Paul Hoffman, President



Judy and I needed to cancel a long-awaited trip to Italy when Florence paid an unexpected visit a few weeks ago. To make up for it, we were able to spend a few days this week in Blowing Rock, a garden of a town on the Blue Ridge an hour or so west of Winston-Salem. A highlight of the visit for me was spending a

few hours early in the morning walking the carriage trails in Moses H. Cone Memorial Park.

Cone Manor was the summer estate laid out 120 years ago by denim textile magnate Moses Cone on 3600 acres above the town. Cone was the son of European immigrants and the estate reminds me of an old European park with lakes, orchards, old growth forest, and 25 miles of carriage roads lined by rows of trees. The 25 room white frame mansion sits near the summit of Flat Top Mountain, sparkling in the sun as seen from various points in the park.



Moses Cone was as generous with his park as he was in the rest of his life. From the beginning, the trails and roads and lakes were open to those in the village below for walking, riding, and fishing. Moses himself died young at age 51 in 1908, but his wife Bertha lived on in the manor house until 1947. At her death, the estate went in trust to Cone Memorial Hospital which in turned deeded the property to the US Government in 1950 to be preserved and enjoyed as a park sitting astride the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Club Meetings

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

Industrial agriculture has made many crops less genetically diverse to the point that they are potentially more susceptible to disease, blight, and pests. Worldwide, biodiversity is diminishing at an unprecedented rate which has far-reaching consequences. The varied gene pool preserved by seed banks can help mitigate those consequences. In fact, GWC's October speaker, Dr. Janice Swab says that, "When it comes to crops and plant varieties, seed banks may be all that stand between us and disaster." On Tuesday, October 16, we'll hear Dr. Swab tell what has and is being done through global seed banks to insure the gardens and farms of the future. That's a topic every gardener will be interested in knowing more about.

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Club Officers and Committees

Board members

President: Paul Hoffman

Vice President: Don Strickland

Secretary: Jim Moore

Treasurer: Mac Williamson

Immediate Past President: Sherrill Johnson

At-large board members: Barbara Brown, Ginny Parker, Ed Ponek, Gail Posey

Committee members

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)

Audit: Rose Cotton, Charles Gilliam, Kathy Moore

Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett

Beautification Awards: Josephine Tayao

Club Awards: Jim Moore

Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam

Friendship: Reed and Chris Elliott

Historical: Donna Farmer,

Membership: Barbara Brown

Newsletter Editors: Laine Thomas, Reed Elliott

Nominating: TBA

Programs: Don Strickland

Projects: Sharon LaRusch

Publicity: Charles Gilliam

Refreshments: Renee Engates

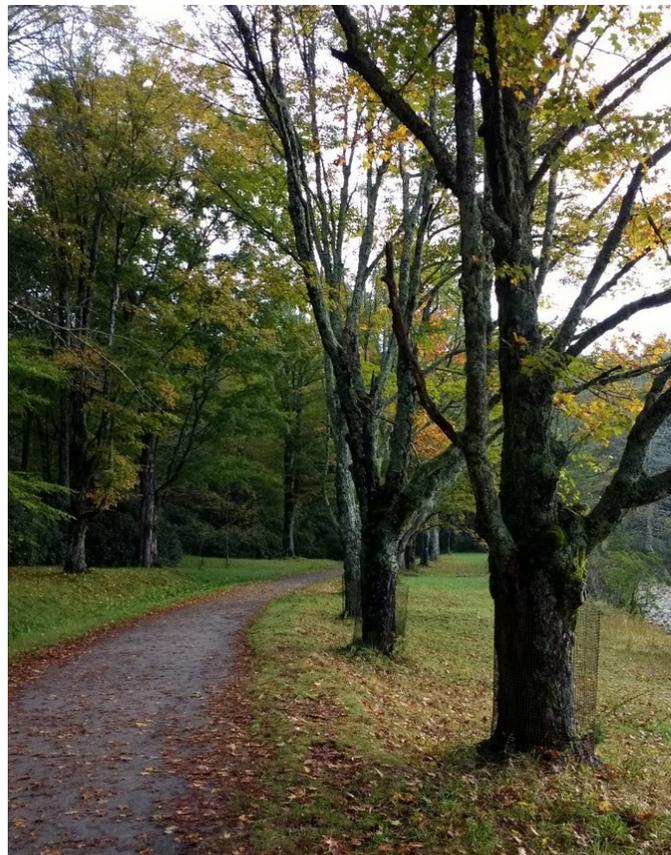
Scholarship: Joanne Boone

Telephone: Johnny Johnson

Webmaster: Reed Elliott

Cone Manor on the Blue Ridge *(continued from page 1)*

The park is a garden on a grand scale. The outstanding plants are the trees, oak, maple, hickory, hemlock and pine, with a great supporting cast in the under story, moss, wildflowers, swaths of ferns, and great masses of decades old Catawba and rose-bay rhododendrons.



I hope we can return next June when the rhododendrons are decked out in purple, pink, and white. October would be a great, though crowded, time to visit, as well, with the maples adorned in yellow, orange, and red.

New Members

The Gardeners of Wake County welcomes anyone and everyone who loves gardens and gardening. This month we're happy to welcome Anne Fry of Cary. Be sure to say, "Hi and welcome" if you see her at this month's meeting.

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 <https://gardenersofwakecounty.weebly.com/>

October's Guest Speaker Stresses the Importance of Seed Banks

by Don Strickland, Vice President



“When it comes to crops and plant varieties, seed banks may be all that stand between us and disaster,” declares Meredith College Biology Professor Emerita Dr. Janice Swab. She’ll explain that statement and discuss the value of seed banks in her October 16 Gardeners of Wake County guest speaker presentation.

Because industrial agriculture has made many crops less genetically diverse, they are potentially more susceptible to disease, blight, and pests. Worldwide, biodiversity is diminishing at an unprecedented rate which has far-reaching consequences, especially for the poorest communities. The varied gene pool preserved by seed banks can help mitigate those consequences.

“Many people misunderstand the idea of seed banks, or gene banks as they’re sometimes called,” says Dr. Swab. “Unlike a monetary bank where you leave cash indefinitely until you need to take some out, seeds are living entities and need to be occasionally removed, planted, and refreshed. There are seeds that have lived for hundreds or thousands of years, but that’s not the norm.” She emphasizes that seeds must be stored in a very cold, dry environment. “If they get warm or wet,” she says, “they’ll rot or begin to grow.”

Dr. Swab’s interest in biology and botany goes back to her childhood in Lenoir, North Carolina, and was enhanced while earning a bachelor’s degree in science from Appalachian State University and master’s and doctorate degrees in biology at the University of South Carolina.

Dr. Swab also travels extensively visiting Egypt, Sudan, Zambia, and India on Fulbright grants; spending four semesters teaching in China; doing research in the former Soviet Union; and traveling in the footsteps of Charles Darwin studying plants all over the world.

There are more than 1,700 gene banks around the world but all are at risk from wars, natural disasters, equipment malfunctions, and other catastrophes. One of the most advanced is located above the Arctic Circle in Norway. It’s called the *Svalbard Global Seed Vault*, built in 2008 at a cost of nine million dollars by digging nearly 500 feet into the side of a mountain.

Dr. Swab plans to end her GWC talk with more information on what she calls “the most important seed bank in the world” and offer details about her two trips to Svalbard.



Past, Present and Future at Longview

(continued from page 4)

As we enter the time for dividing perennials and other yard tasks, I thought I would list the plants on our proposed design as well as Dr. Poe's original design. As you peruse the list, follow it with a relaxing walk in your own yard. When you do, ask yourself, "Do I have room to foster some plants that would eventually be a permanent addition at The Garden Walk at Longview?" and/or "Do I have any of the plants on the list that I could donate and host until it is time to plant them in the future?" If you answer yes to either of those questions, let us know by emailing TheGarden-WalkAtLongview@gmail.com. Let us know what your walk revealed and we will provide more information on how to get involved. We would love to continue thinking future and sharing progress in the coming months!

Perennials on the 1925 Plan That Could be Replanted

Aquilegia canadensis – Columbine
Aster divaricatus (eurybia divaricatus)- White Wood Aster
Dianthus gratianopolitanus – Cheddar Pinks (groundcover)
Dianthus barbatus – Sweet William
Paeonia hybrids- Peony
Phlox stolonifera (groundcover phlox) - Creeping Phlox

Perennials on our Current Plan

Acorus gramineus 'Ogon' – Golden Sweet Flag
Ajuga 'Chocolate Chip' - Bugleweed
Carex pensylvanica - Oak sedge, Pennsylvania Sedge, Rush, Sedge
Cimicifuga americana– American bugbane, Black Snakeroot
Chrysogonum virginianum– Green and Gold
Narcissus spp. – Daffodil, Jonquil
Eupatorium rugosum 'Chocolate' – Joe Pye Weed
Dryopteris erythrosora 'Brilliance' - Autumn Fern

Helleborus ballardiae 'Pink Frost'

Heuchera 'Palace Purple' - Palace Purple Alumroot, Purple Palace Coral Bells
Panicum spp.– Switch Grass

Other Perennials That Might be Used

Ceratostigma plumbaginoides - Dwarf plumbago, Leadwort
Galium odoratum – Sweet Woodruff, Sweet scented Bed Straw
Hypericum spp. – St. John's Wort

Common names for plants can vary so here's a useful database from NC State and JCRA.

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/>
<https://jcra.ncsu.edu/horticulture/our-plants/index.php>

Our next Longview workday is Saturday, October 20th. Hope to see you there!

Where the Weeds Are Welcome

by Laine Thomas, Editor

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that a weed is just “a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.” The virtues of the weed are being discovered from Berlin to New York to Raleigh. In the *New York Times Style Magazine* a recent story covered the trend:

“It’s the story of the intrepid underdog,” says Emily Thompson, a floral designer in New York who builds her arrangements like narratives, out of unlikely encounters and occasionally belligerent characters: nettles, burdock, milkweed, wild grapes and cattails. “What a weed gives a floral arrangement is a sense of authenticity. This really had a life somewhere that wasn’t on purpose and hasn’t had a human intervention,” Thompson says. There now—weeds are not only welcome but guests of honor, proliferating with our blessing across front yards and formal gardens, shacking up with more “respectable” flowers in grand floral arrangements and shaggy bouquets.

Berlin-based florist Ruby Barber created some of her signature cloud arrangements with once-neglected weeds. Below is a composite of individual arrangements: from left, of weeping amaranth and fresh and dried wild grasses; an abundant gathering of the once-humble smoke bush, now a fashionable challenger to traditional hothouse flowers; and Queen Anne’s lace.



This trend is evident in the Raleigh flower shop embedded within Brewery Bhavana on Moore Square. This eclectic restaurant was named one of the top 10 best new restaurants in America in 2017, by *Bon Appetit Magazine*, with an enthusiastic nod to their flower shop. Creator Diana Nguyen stocks exotic flowers along with local, seasonal shrubs and weeds.

My mom and I tried to replicate this for ourselves. We walked our yards looking for whatever was blooming or structurally interesting. We picked stalks of sweet olive to bring the fragrance inside, red basil for contrast, goldenrod stems, and orange canna for dramatic color. For something edgy we clipped a weedy clematis that pours out of our neighbors’ yard and into the sidewalk. It flowered last month, but the expired flowers left behind lacy puffs.

My dining table will always be decorated when pruning and weeding lead to formal bouquets.



My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor

I don't get to give a "headline" to my articles, but I told my wife, Chris, that if I could give this month's thoughts a title it would be, "You're in the Army Now." So, how do armies and gardens have anything in common? Think worms—army worms, that is. This month my own yard and several of my neighbors' have been decimated by this nasty pest. My lawn maintenance company tells me they're "not too common" in Raleigh but that "this has been a bad year." I'll say. I can't do better than reproduce what the esteemed editors of *Southern Living* have to say in this month's issue.

People are always yapping about needing smaller lawns. Now that can happen and they won't need to lift a finger. In fact, they can wake up in the morning to find their lawns completely gone -- thanks to the infamous fall armyworm. Fall armyworms are the larvae of a small brownish-gray moth. They plague a number of agricultural crops ... but when the pickings get slim due to hot, dry weather, the moths and caterpillars head for greener pastures -- like your lawn.

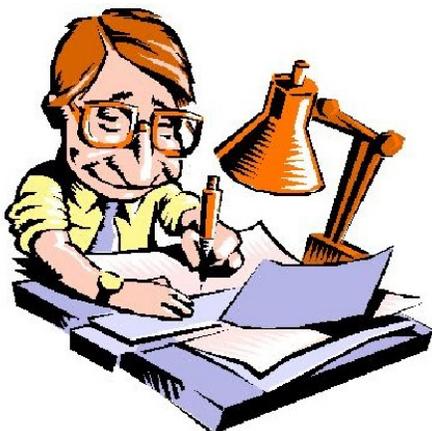
You'll never see them coming. Female moths will lay up to 2,000 tiny eggs right on the grass blades. The eggs hatch a few days later. At first, the tiny caterpillars are green with a black head, but as they devour the grass over a course of 14 days or so, they change to brown with white lines on the side and a reddish-brown head. They grow to more than an inch long. If you see this gobbling your grass, your lawn is in trouble.



Fall armyworms get their name because thousands of them literally march across a lawn like an army, eating as they go. These caterpillars are sneaky assassins, moving only at night and crawling into silk-lined burrows in the day. You may first notice their presence as a brown patch of lawn that gets bigger every day. Or you may walk out one morning to find nothing but dirt where a lawn was just the night before.

I have good news and bad news. If you have a Zoysia grass lawn, you're in the clear. Fall armyworms don't like Zoysia. The bad news is that they love Bermuda grass, St. Augustine, Kentucky bluegrass, and tall fescue. The first two usually survive the onslaught and come back. The latter two often die.

*The key to defeating fall armyworms is spotting them early. If you catch them while the caterpillars are a half-inch long or smaller, you can take the natural route and spray your grass with a harmless bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that kills only caterpillars. Bt won't work on mature caterpillars, though. For them, you'll need garden insecticide labeled for armyworms that you can attach to the end of a hose. This makes spraying the lawn quick and easy. Granular lawn insecticides don't work well.*



If your fescue lawn looks anything like this, you're in the army now!

