

# The Clod-Hopper



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Gardeners of Wake County, Inc. — Raleigh, NC

September 2019

## State Fair + Money for Our Club—It's a Win/Win

*by Christine Elliott, Friendship Chair*



The State Fair needs temporary workers and our Club can use the money earned to support Club functions and scholarships. We've signed a contract with the Fair that will allow us to earn \$8.75 for every hour our members work at the Fair. And we can enjoy the Fair for free at the same time!

The job is simple and easy—circulate, talk with visitors, and monitor exhibits. If we see any problems, we reach out to Fair staff. Most of our members would probably choose to work in the Flower Show area, but if you contact John Buettner at [John.Buettner@ncagr.gov](mailto:John.Buettner@ncagr.gov) with your interests and availability he may be

able to place you in other areas of the Fair (like the pickle exhibit where my husband is hoping to get sent).

The GWC has signed up for the full day on Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thank you to all who volunteered for times at the August meeting. I have forwarded your names to John and he will contact us in early October with specifics.



Hours needed during the day are from 9 am to 6 pm. They'd prefer people sign up for the whole day shift or at least 6 hours during the day (9-3, 12-6), but they will accommodate 3 hour shifts (9-12, 12-3, 3-6). Most of the day shifts are already full, so consider evenings where many slots still are available. Evening shifts, 6-9 are completely open at

## Club Meetings

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

This month at the GWC September meeting, Rich Woynicz (pronounced woy-nich), a certified Wake County Extension Master Gardener, will get us on the right track for a thriving winter garden. Putting new plants in the ground may be the last thing home gardeners have in mind after the heat and humidity of August and at a time when our summer gardens still may be going quite strong. Making space for both still-active summer gardens and for winter ones can be a challenge. Rich will teach us how it's done.

Learn how to make a flourishing garden for 12 months of every year. Don't miss this great presentation at the Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup>, GWC monthly meeting at the JC Raulston Arboretum.

See you there!

*continued on page 2*

## Club Officers and Committees

### Board members

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

### Committees

Activities Chairs: Will Farmer, Reed & Christine Elliott (seed swap), Renee Engates (refreshments), Mark Boone (picnic), Ginny Parker (awards banquet)  
Audit: Charles Gilliam, Sharon LaRusch, Reed Elliott, Donna Farmer  
Azalea Sale: Charlie Leverett  
Beautification Awards: Laine Thomas  
Club Awards: Jim Moore  
Endowment Investment: Charles Gilliam  
Friendship: Chris Elliott  
Historical: Donna Farmer  
Membership, Barbara Brown  
Newsletter Editor: Reed Elliott  
Nominating: TBA  
Programs: TBA  
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/>

## State Fair + GWC = Win/Win

*(continued from page 1)*

this time. For those who work in the evening, you can come early and enjoy the Fair in the afternoon and then work that evening.

All workers will get a gate ticket that will allow them into the fairgrounds free. People who work in the Flower Show or Horticulture Department get to park in the Flower Show parking lot through Gate 6. People working in other areas should use Lot C, the employee parking lot on Trinity Road and get a free shuttle to Gate 12 or Gate 2. Carpooling is encouraged. Tickets and parking passes will be mailed out two weeks before the Fair starts.



They are finalizing the schedule as we speak. It's a "first come" situation, so contact John Buettner soon if you want to work. Email John at [John.Buettner@ncarg.gov](mailto:John.Buettner@ncarg.gov)

Volunteers can ask for shifts via email and will receive an update as the schedule builds daily. All workers will get a gate ticket that will allow them into the fairgrounds free.

The sooner you sign up, the better chance there is for getting the times that work best for you. Sign up with friends and make an evening of it—have an early dinner before your shift and enjoy the fireworks while you work.

# Winter Gardening—Now's the Time to Start

by Sharon LaRusch



Rich Woynicz (pronounced woy-nich) is our September GWC speaker, has been gardening since he was 5 years old. He says he started his life as a gardener by picking up rocks in his dad's garden in New Jersey. "I've got a picture of myself in what looks like diapers and overalls with a shovel in my hands," he recalls.

Rich is a certified Wake County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer (EMG). He has led and volunteered at the Kirk Community Garden and the Food Bank Community. He also helps numerous other community and school gardens in the Raleigh area. He has a 1/4 acre garden of his own at home that he has been working in since he moved to North Carolina in 1991. Outside of "playing in the dirt" in the evenings and on weekends, Rich works in the IT technology field where he designs complex voice and data computer networks for Federal and commercial customers.

Putting new plants in the ground may be the last thing home gardeners have in mind after the heat and humidity of August, particularly with summer crops like tomatoes and okra still in full swing. Yet if you want thriving winter produce like carrots, spinach, kale or broccoli, Rich says now is the time to start planning and planting.

Because summer plants often are still going quite strong, having space for both a summer garden and a winter one can be a challenge. Rich will teach us how to start cold weather crops in planters. "Things like cabbage, broccoli, kale, winter squash – things that might do well in terms of transplant can be started earlier indoors," he says. "Let them grow into thriving seedlings and then plant them mid-August to September." If there's space to put seeds directly in the garden, Rich recommends doing so with the awareness that some of these cool-weather plants don't handle direct summer sun very well. Rich will advise us about when to plant and when to wait. And don't worry too much about freezing winter blasts. Yes, frost season in our part of North Carolina lasts from late October until mid-April. Even so, Rich says, "Just because we get frost doesn't mean we stop growing. Lettuces, chard and other winter crops can handle the cold and even the level of freezing weather we get here."



What GWC gardener doesn't want a thriving vegetable garden year round? To learn about some ways to make a flourishing garden year-round in North Carolina, don't miss this great presentation at the Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup>, GWC monthly meeting at the JC Raulston Arboretum – the fun begins at 7:30. See you there!

# Cooler Weather Arrives—Time for Longview

by Sharon LaRusch

Hope everyone has appreciated the hiatus from the Longview Project during the sweltering summer weather. Fall's almost upon us and I wanted to give a quick update and touch on a couple of things.

WakeMed continues to review our submission and 'plant us' in next year's budget (hahaha). That process, like most budgeting tasks, takes time, approvals and planning, so I will keep everyone posted as we near our September workday date (28<sup>th</sup>). In the meantime, there's a [complete list of the plants on our submitted plans for The Garden Walk at Longview](#) on the [Club website](#).



Starting soon, Lynn has graciously agreed to introduce a plant from the design each month, but, for the moment, I would like to highlight one that's on our list—

*Lagerstroemia*. Most of us know the common name although the spelling can differ... Crepe Myrtle, Crape Myrtle, or even Crapemyrtle. Dr. Clarence Poe was known to favor this one. In fact, the median of New Bern Ave as it leads downtown is lined with Crape Myrtles that were planted by Dr. Poe himself. Of the few remaining original plants that we found surviving at Longview, Crape Myrtles are common in this area because of the beauty of their varicolored bark, versatility in all types of soil, explosive plumage and long-lived flowers. Cultivars have increased the range of colors. As those who fought to clear the Longview jungle

know well, they obviously can survive adversity – even being covered in wisteria. Now that the jungle is cleared, the Longview Crape Myrtles will have beautiful friends once again! Here's a link for those who want to know more about this great plant: [https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/find\\_a\\_plant/?q=crape+myrtle](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/find_a_plant/?q=crape+myrtle)

**Interested in being a donor?** In addition to the Crape Myrtles, you can find a complete list of the plants on our submitted plans for The Garden Walk at Longview on the GWC website. WakeMed will be helping provide the larger plants on this list but I am leaving them unmarked for now. If you have a plant on the list that you would like to re-home from your yard or have in overabundance, please email [thegardenwalkatlongview@gmail.com](mailto:thegardenwalkatlongview@gmail.com) with the details. If you are visual like me and want to see pictures of any of those on the list, our very own NC State has an incredible database. You can copy and paste the names into the search box of this link at [https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/find\\_a\\_plant/](https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/find_a_plant/)

**To our foster parents for the plants we had earlier in the year.** Lynn and I want to mention that many of the fosters won't be showing their beautiful side right now, so if your plant has gone dormant, no worries. We have both seen this in our own fosters, too. That said, if you feel that your foster plant is more ready for the compost bin than the garden- NO WORRIES! Lynn and I purchased these plants on clearance at Campbell Nursery hoping to get the majority potted and grown for use later. Fostering is a way for more members to participate who might not be able to make it to Longview Project Saturday workdays. In the spring we will probably reach out to get a count for what we have and we fully expect our numbers to change.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the September GWC meeting!

# Plums, Plums, Plumbing

by Mark Boone, Past President

It's true, plums do lubricate our internal plumbing. But more importantly they taste good - fresh and preserved. We've had a plum tree for over ten years which was lovely to look at with its pink blooms each spring but rarely set fruit. Two years ago, I bought a second plum tree and planted it by the big one. Like magic, this spring when the blooming finished, both trees were covered in fruit. I don't know why I never learned fruit trees like cross pollination, but now with more than 200 pounds of harvested plums, the expression "It takes two to tango" makes a lot of sense. Bird and bees and all. Bees first with the little girls carrying the pollen from flower to flower, then birds pecking away as soon as a plum ripened. I learned if I picked the plums a couple of days before they were perfectly ripe, I could get them before the birds pecked big holes which oozed juice and invited the bees back for another round of feasting and stinging if I accidentally picked a plum they were enjoying.



After exhausting what I could think of to do with plums: preserves, jelly, dried, fermented to make brandy and juiced to make wine; I turned to the Internet and found a recipe for Japanese Salted Plums. This turned out to be labor intensive and took 8 weeks of work. After seven weeks of salt curing and agitation along with three days of placing the desiccated plums in the sun to dry, the instructions said the plums would last indefinitely. They were going to be our survivalist food source for the coming earthquake/hurricane/tornado where we would otherwise have to scrounge for arrowroot in the woods. Turns out indefinitely was three weeks in the pantry before they started growing mold. It's just as well because they were too salty to eat. The wine and the brandy disappeared quickly because they were all too easy to consume. The jelly and preserves are adding to my girth while the dried plums, which like grapes to raisins are now prunes, keep my plumbing in good order.

# My Corner of the Garden

by Reed Elliott, Editor



Let's face it, one of the best reasons to be a gardener is to grow your own produce! Even the State Farmer's Market can't compete with a home-grown tomato! And that said, Renee Engates sent me some great thoughts about "What's Cooking? Tomato/Tomahto."

*On a cold day in February, Rich started our tomato seeds. They were planted with love and care. He tended to them like a momma bird with her babies. They grew into strong beautiful plants. Black brandywine, Ivan, pink brandywine, Mexican midgets, and fred were the varieties that we planted*

*in the garden. Fast forward to summer and we have so many tomatoes that we have to decide how we are going to use them. It is a delightful dilemma to have. The best way to enjoy your tomato harvest is to eat them fresh. I like them sliced with a sprinkle of salt and pepper, a tomato sandwich with mayonnaise and white bread, diced and placed on top of scrambled eggs and tossed into salads. Sometimes I make a simple and elegant Italian classic, Bruschetta, which is made with freshly harvested garden tomatoes. Bruschetta is served with fresh mozzarella, on top of grilled chicken, and as a topping on crusty French Bread with a drizzle of balsamic glaze. Stuffed tomatoes are great for larger tomatoes. Tomatoes stuffed with chicken salad or tuna salad is beautiful way to show off big, plump tomatoes. I make baked stuffed tomatoes which is a delicious and hearty entree that is great for entertaining. Tomato and Jalapeño Jam, Roasted Tomato Soup, and Salsa are my go to recipes for preserving our tomato harvest so that we enjoy it all year. I use water bath processing for the Tomato and Jalapeno Jam and for the salsa. I freeze the roasted tomato soup. The Jalapeno and Tomato Jam is great served with a hot buttered biscuit, alongside a charcuterie and cheese plate, or as a spread on a pimento cheese sandwich or a grilled cheeseburger. The Roasted Tomato Soup is delicious with parmesan shavings and a thick slice of toasted French bread or with a grilled cheese sandwich. The salsa does not last long at our house. We enjoy it with tortilla chips, on a taco salad, and in a Bloody Mary. These recipes will bring back a little taste of summer on a cold winter's day. If you want to enjoy your summer tomato harvest, here are links to the recipes. If these don't tickle your fancy, look around on Pinterest and you are sure to find a delicious way to use your hard earned tomato harvest!*

**Stuffed Tomatoes** <https://comfortablefood.com/recipe/italian-stuffed-tomatoes/>

**Bruschetta** <https://www.italianbellavita.com/2014/08/classic-bruschetta-tomatoes-basil-garli/>

**Bruschetta Chicken** <https://www.lifeloveandsugar.com/easy-bruschetta-chicken/>

**Tomato and Jalapeno Jam** [http://thecreeksidecook.com/tomato-jalapeno-jam/#\\_a5y\\_p=2328779](http://thecreeksidecook.com/tomato-jalapeno-jam/#_a5y_p=2328779)

**Roasted Tomato Soup** <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2012/12/tomato-soup/>

**Salsa** <https://anoregoncottage.com/my-favorite-salsa-for-canning/2/>



## New Members

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