



## A letter from the President—by Pat Jessup

A letter from the President

I've refrained from writing a "Letter from the President" in past issues of the Grapevine, mostly because I couldn't think of anything to say that was all that interesting, but Marie asked me to write one for this final issue of my "Presidency", and I said "yes". After all, how could I refuse "she who has done so many jobs" in and for OGC".

Symbolism of the Daffodil

"Thank You"!! Thank you to everyone who volunteered for a myriad of assignments and tasks these last two years, from small to large. Thank you for your friendship. The "joie de vivre" that defines our club is one of the best things about being part of OGC. We like and respect each other, we learn, and we have FUN! What could be better than that!!

Horticulture Report

Earlier this month we watched a video on the history of the formal French garden. A while after the meeting I started thinking about my trip to the Dordogne region of France last May. While the focus of the trip was seeing the cave art of Lascaux and Rouffignac, and visiting medieval villages near Sarlat, we did tour a beautiful French manor & garden. It was chilly that day with rain that started as a light mist and progressed to a downpour, but we intrepid tourists did our best to appreciate and enjoy the sights even though it was not the best day to be in the great outdoors. I wish I had I seen that documentary film beforehand as I would have appreciated so much more the Gardens of Eyrignac. These gardens were laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and transformed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with influences from both English and Italian styles. Despite these other cultural influences, the formality of the French style is very much in evidence, and plantings were laid out in varying height to create vistas across the terrain that give the appearance of perfect symmetry. I also learned about a tree previously unfamiliar to me which is commonly used to create topiaries, the hornbeam, a member of the birch family. There is a small staff of full-time gardeners who attend Eyrignac and all the topiaries are trimmed by hand. Still privately owned, it is open for tours and events and definitely worth a visit. I hope to someday see it again in better weather. Here are a couple of photos from the internet

Perennial Plant of 2019

Christmas Party

Lunch Bunch

Change is Coming"

A Vision of Beauty Calendar Update



Go Big Peonys Envy

Flower Show School Information

Adkins

I've appreciated the opportunity to be President of OGC and I plan to remain active in the club and with Master Gardeners. However, it's time to pass the baton and spend more time traveling and exploring fabulous gardens around the world. There are just so many to see, and being married to a Brit, there's also the Chelsea Flower Show to be visited! Maybe May 2020? As Monet said, "I must have flowers, always and always". Thank you again, for your friendship and support.

Programs

Adkins

## Symbolism of the Daffodil Flower—from the internet

Mowing Obsession

The daffodil has similar uplifting meanings across cultures, probably because this bright flower appears as the cold, dark days of winter wane and the warm rays of spring appear.

Wildlife Friendly Property

**China:** The daffodil symbolizes good fortune in the Chinese culture. In fact, it is so esteemed for its ability to bring forth positive things that it is the official symbol of the Chinese New year.

**Japan:** To the Japanese people, the daffodil means mirth and joyousness.

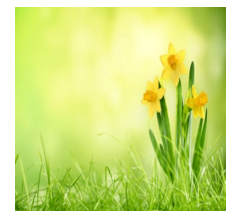
**France:** In France, the daffodil is a sign of hope.

**Wales:** A Welsh legend claims that the person to find the first daffodil bloom will be blessed with more gold than silver in the upcoming year.

**Arabian Countries:** The Arabians believe the daffodil flower was an aphrodisiac and cure for baldness.

**Medieval Europe:** The medieval Europeans believed that if your gaze caused a daffodil to droop it was an omen of impending death.

**United States:** In the United States, the daffodil is the official symbol for the American Cancer Association, symbolizing hope for a cure. It is also the flower for the month of March and the symbol of the 10th wedding anniversary.



Books at Oxford Library

New Addition

Meeting Reminders

## Horticulture Report – by Sue Betz (excerpted from Talbot Guide February 2019 issue)

The Maryland Big Tree Program has recognized Five Champion Trees at Londonderry. Champion trees are recognized at the County and State level as being the largest identified members of their species. They are measured and scored based on their circumferences, height and average crown width.

The trees were identified as Londonderry was taking care of routine forestry work around its campus and were nominated for recognition by Agnes Kedmenecz of the University of MD Extension Service. The trees were later measured by members of the Londonderry Community, University of MD Extension Service, and the MD Big Tree Program which is a volunteer-coordinated effort sponsored by MD Association of Forest Conservancy District Boards and the MD Department of Natural Resources' Forest Service.

The five trees are in various areas of the campus with several near the Manor which was constructed at the close of the American Civil War. The five trees are:

**Japanese Maple** (*Acer palmatum*) measured 5' 8" in circumference; 33' high, 44.5' average crown width.

**Bitternut Hickory** (*Carya cordiformis*) measured 9' 8" in circumference, 144' high, and 68.6' average crown width.

**Nordmann Fir** (*Abies nordmaniana*) measured 7' 8" in circumference, 73' high, and 34.5' average crown width.

**American Beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*) measured 12' 4" in circumference, 104' high, and 107.5' average crown width.

**Southern Red Oak** (*Quercus falcata*) measured 20' 3" in circumference, 107' high, and 107.5 average crown width.

Londonderry CEO, Irma Toce, stated "Our community is beyond thrilled to have five champion trees on our campus. These trees are a part of our rich history and it is wonderful that they can now be recognized by our residents and neighbors throughout Talbot County. I'd like thank our community members who worked so hard on this project".

Londonderry on the Tred Avon was originally part of a 600-acre land grant known as Westmoreland which was granted to Irish Quaker immigrant Francis Armstrong in 1667. A portion of the land grant was sold to Talbot County upon which the first Talbot County Court House was built. As the property changed hands over the next 100 years, it became known as London Derry, and eventually Londonderry, as it is called today.

Londonderry on the Tred Avon is now an intimate residential cooperative community for adults ages 62 and over, offering a variety of housing options from convenient apartments to spacious cottages among its' 29 acres which includes 1500 feet of waterfront shoreline.

## Perennial Plant of the Year 2019 – by Sue Betz (from the internet)



Stachys monieri 'Hummelo

A cousin to the familiar Lamb's-Ears, but not at all similar. This is a clump-forming perennial, forming a low mound of crisp green foliage. In early summer the upright spikes of bright-purple flowers appear, which attract bees to the nectar. Removing faded flowers will encourage more buds to form for weeks on end. An interesting and unusual perennial for near the front of the border, or in containers. Plants may be clipped back hard immediately after blooming, to tidy up the clumps for the rest of the season. Easily divided in early spring. Prefers a sunny location and is hardy to zone 4. The Perennial Plant of the Year is selected by the Perennial Plant Association.

The following criterion are used in selecting the winner:

- Suitable for a wide range of climatic condition
- Low maintenance
- Pest and disease resistant
- Readily available in the year of release
- Multiple season interest or excellent foliage

Easily propagated by asexual (division or cuttings) or seed propagation.

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour Christmas Party – by Terry Holman



Our annual Christmas Party had some unexpected turns of events this year. Literally 11 hours before the Christmas party was to be held at Carole Abruzzese's home, a severe medical emergency took Carole's husband, John, via ambulance, to a medical facility. Our President, Pat, found herself watching them ride off just as she was delivering the Christmas libation for the party. Pat gave me a quick call inquiring if I could host the party in the next 11 hours.

As luck would have it, I found myself in a rare position of having the house decorated for the holiday with my lasagna already prepared in the fridge. I accepted the challenge with help from my hubby, Rick and in a series of small miracles, the house was made ready. Sandy graciously arrived early giving me the confidence to carry on with last minute preparations.

Somehow a single venue change email found its way to our entire garden club and everyone arrived full of the Christmas Spirit! I had my husband hide in our upstairs office with the dog, promising to bring him a plate of food. It was a nice party and my kudos to the chairmen who identified a very reasonable and finite Italian menu that was brought by 8-10 members. We had excellent appetizers, lasagnas, and salads (sans Romain lettuce due to an *E. coli* outbreak) with lovely desserts, with my favorite being Susie Dial's Bundt cake in the shape of a winter cottage, sprinkled with powder-sugar-snow and recycled holly from a neighbor's cuttings.



We were much less exuberant with our traditional shenanigans from the gift exchange, all of us being worried for Carole and John offering them both prayers during our meal blessing. Then, I suddenly found myself alone, with all garbage taken out, glass containers recycled and literally every surface wiped and vacuumed with the dishwasher running. My husband came down, looked around and worriedly asked, "Nobody Came?" This is why I feel that the Oxford Garden Club is the best garden club around. We have the best members. It restored my soul to see how we literally pulled together at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour for this party. The best miracle of all was to learn that John survived his ordeal and that Carole's home was also clean and ready for the Christmas holiday.



There is much fun in hosting the Christmas Party and also the annual OGC garden party. If you would like to offer your home or garden for these events please let the Program Chairs know of your interest. There is lots of help available both for preparation and clean up associated with these events.

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle" – Luther Burbank

## Lunch Bunch Flower Arrangement Group – by Dorothy Williams

Several Church members from The Church of The Holy Trinity meet every Wednesday to prepare lunches that are delivered on trays, for area individuals too sick to leave their homes.

For many years, members of OGC have gathered in the Church kitchen to put together flower arrangements to go along with the lunch trays. Making these holiday arrangements five times a year is a joy, lots of fun and is truly a feel-good thing to do for ill and shut in friends. Arrangements are made for Valentine's Day, Easter, 4<sup>th</sup> July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.



The Valentine's Day group - Meryl Nolan, Kay Ruark, Susan Fitzgerald, Annie LeConte, Trish Reynolds (took the photo), Linda Wilson, and Dorothy Williams.

Annie LeConte a new member in 2018, has agreed to take over the coordination of the Lunch Bunch flower arranging and can be reached at [aldleconte@earthlink.net](mailto:aldleconte@earthlink.net). So please get in touch with Annie if you would like to join in the next flower arranging group. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:30 a.m. to prepare Easter arrangements.

## Change is coming – by Dorothy Williams

The new OGC officers will be installed at the April 2019 regular meeting. They are:

President – Dorothy Williams  
Vice President – Sandy Wrightson  
Treasurer – Susan Fitzgerald  
Secretary – Ginny Wagner

Many thanks to those who have stepped up to the plate to take leadership roles for the Garden Club. All OGC members, active and associate, are expected to participate on committees and/or projects and events that OGC participates in. There are many opportunities for members to find something that resonates with either their abilities that they can share, or in something that they would like to learn more about. If you have not yet found something that appeals to you, please take a look at the new year book when it is distributed and check out the many committees that can use your help. It takes a lot to keep up with everything the Club is involved with, so please become an active part of the organization. We always manage to make what we do a fun experience.

## “A Vision of Beauty Calendar” - by Joy Ericson, NGC Vision of Beauty Promotion's Chairman

Brenda Bingham and the Vision of Beauty Calendar Committee thank you for the overwhelming response to the survey sent out in the fall. The survey asked for your input on the Calendar, what you liked, what changes you would like to see and how you purchase the Calendar. A more detailed response to the survey is forthcoming. The Calendar Committee continues to strive to produce a publication reflecting the mission and goals of NGC. As we plan our Flower Shows for the upcoming spring, the Committee looks forward to receiving submittals for the 2021 edition. We welcome photos of creative and traditional designs, collections and displays, including new design types from the revised NGC Handbook. Photos from members own gardens and garden features are always welcome. All entries are evaluated using the Elements and Principals of Design.

A few suggestions for photographing: Do not include ribbons or entry cards. Backgrounds and underlays should be free of wrinkles. Tri-fold panels are often helpful, when photographing at shows. “Photo shopping” often distorts color and is discouraged. While images taken by professionals are usually better, cell phone photos can also work. Good lighting helps produce a good photo.

The 2020 edition of Vision of Beauty will be available in May. To purchase on line, contact Member services at [www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org). Type Board Member and password “sprout”. Go to “Shop on Line”, scroll down to VOB and order copies for your garden club.

## Go Big – by Marie Davis (excerpted from Peony Envy website)

Many of us in Garden Club world have been fortunate to hear lectures and buy bulbs from Peonys Envy Flower Farm owner, Kathleen Gagan.

Sometimes you want it all. giant flowers, with terrific fragrance, that have very strong stems. These four knock it out of the park. These and many other varieties are available from [peonysenvy.com](http://peonysenvy.com).



“Command Performance”

American Peony Society Grand Champion in 1998. “Command Performance” is a double hybrid - a cross between Good Cheer (*officinalis* x *lobata*) and a *lactiflora* peony - bringing together the best of 3 peony species. Massive flowers can grow up to eight inches diameter. Flowers are so big that they need some support in the garden, they excel when cut. Stems occasionally have slight bend in them but this doesn't influence the plants outstanding presentation. Dense fragrance. One flower per stem.



“Miss America”

Color blush to white, bloom time early, height 3', hybridizer Mmann-Van Steen 1936, strong stems, APS Gold Medal 1956, fragrant. This cultivar is award winning - just like her namesake. Recipient of the American Peony Society Gold Medal in 1956. Strong stems and prolific blooms make this an exceptional landscape plant.



“Mother’s Choice”

Color cream white, bloom time mid-late, height 3' Strong stems hold picture perfect creamy white flowers. Adored by peony enthusiasts as one of the best whites. The perfect bridal flower



“Red Charm”

Crimson red, bomb flower form, blooms early mid, plant height 2.5', hybridizer Glasscock 1944, fragrant. *Hybrid - Paeonia officinalis* x *P. lactiflora* “One of our favorite cultivars”. A 1956 American Peony Society Gold Medal Winner - huge scarlet red blossoms stand tall on strong vibrant green stems. Flowers have a wonderful rose-like fragrance. Tolerant of heat, strong stems, no side buds.

Peonys Envy gardens are located in Bernardsville, NJ. A visit to the Farm would make a wonderful road trip, don't you think!!!!

## Grow and Bloom at Flower Show School- by Terry Holman

Our Garden Club promotes National Garden Club Standard Flower Shows frequently. We all have been called upon to enter horticulture or create a floral design. It is always an educational experience as we learn something new, discover new plants to grow in your gardens and we can learn to be better stewards of our environment. This year, the Judges Council of the FGCMD, Inc. is offering Flower Show School. It's been several years since they have offered a full 4 course curriculum. Recent changes to the New *Handbook for Flower Show, Revised 2007*, states that if you want to attend these courses, you MUST begin with course I. It is fortunate that the new Flower Show School is under the direction of Susie Middleton and Judy Slaughter, both from the Dorchester Garden Club. Both are avid Flower Show Judges and they have scheduled 4 different courses that can all be completed by October 1, 2020.

If you ever wanted to learn more about flower shows, flower show schedules, floral design types and horticulture, this is your time! No experience is necessary. Never have I seen all four courses scheduled so tightly together and so efficiently!

Here are the scheduled Flower Show School Dates:

Flower Show School 1: 4/30/19-5/1/19  
Flower Show School 2: 9/23/19-9/25/19  
Flower Show School 3: 4/28/20-4/30/20  
Flower Show School 4: 9/29/20-10/1/20

Typically, each of the four Maryland Flower Show School Courses are taught by different National Garden Club Horticulture and Design Instructors at the Comfort Inn Conference Center at 4500 Crane Highway in Bowie, MD. For information on other schools visit The Federated Garden Clubs of MD website, fgcmd.org.

For more information on other Federated Garden Clubs of MD sponsored schools, go to [www.fgcmd.org](http://www.fgcmd.org)

## Programs and events — by Ingrid Blanton and Marybeth Guerrieri

**March 14** - "Wild and Neat: Bridging the Gap Between Great Garden Design and Ecology" presented by Claudia West. At the Oxford Community Center beginning at 2:00 p.m. Open to the public.

**April 4** - Climate Change and its Affects on the Landscape presented by Dr. Sara Via. At the Oxford Community Center beginning at 2:00 p.m. Club members only.

**April 27** – "What's Wrong with This Picture" A hands-on activity involving a map board with Velcro pieces of various animals and plants. Children will play with the board to place plant/animal in the right location. Part of Oxford Day Activities, located in Oxford Town Park.

**May 2** - "Documenting the Restoration of Wye Heights Plantation" presented by Lisa and Timothy Wyman, Owners of Wye Heights Plantation. This is an open program beginning at 2:00 p.m. at the Oxford Community Center.

**June 1** – Oxford Secret Garden Tour and Garden Shed sale. Tour begins in Oxford Town Park. Garden Shed sale 9:00 a.m.-noon and Tour 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Advance tickets are \$15, on the day of the tour \$20. Tickets available for pick up and sale at the Town Park beginning at 9:00 a.m.



### Native plant sale scheduled for:

Friday, April 26, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Sunday, April 28, noon–4 p.m.

## **“The Obsession of Mowing” - by Master Gardener Coordinator, Mikaela Boley**

It is a well-documented fact that Americans love turf grass— it has become the largest “crop” in the United States, surpassing the traditionally farmed corn and soybeans. (1) Approximately 63,000 square miles (roughly the size of Texas) of America is lawn. (2) While there are significant economic impacts to this figure, such as land care industry and employment, there are also environmental consequences. Even in areas without residential turf grass, we have become obsessed with mowing and maintaining spaces like we would with a lawn. Aside from a desire to control nature for human activity, there is no real explanation for this practice. In fact, to establish and maintain a lawn with a contractor (including seeding, fertilizing, mowing, and watering), the homeowner will spend an average of \$5,167 the first year (property size: 1/3 acre). For just a maintenance year, the cost is \$3,500 per year. All combined, a homeowner will spend a whopping \$41,000 for contracted lawn maintenance over the course of 10 years. The cost for a homeowner to maintain their own property is still \$23,300 over 10 years. (3) **Let that sink in.**

There are spaces that necessitate lawn surfaces, such as sports fields and golf courses. But the majority of turf will not be used for human activity. I’m not trying to vilify turf grass, but I encourage everyone to consciously think about how we use and construct our spaces. If they do not offer any benefits to people, how can we provide more sustainable environments to wildlife and habitat? Instead of turf leading up to the water’s edge, a living shoreline offers multiple ecological benefits that will not obstruct the homeowner’s view.

### References:

- 1 Diep, F. 2011. ‘Lawns vs. Crops in the Continental U.S.’ ScienceLine. Retrieved online from: <https://enceline.org/2011/07/--lawns-vs-crops-in-the-continental-u-s/>
- 2 Milesi, C., Elvidge, C.D., Dietz, J.B., Tuttle, B.T., Nemani, R.R. and Running, S.W. 2005. ‘A Strategy for Mapping and Modeling the Ecological Effects of U.S. Lawns’. *Environ Manage.* 36(3): 426-38.
- 3 Zimmerman, Catherine. *Urban & Suburban Meadows: Bringing Meadows to Big and Small Spaces.* Silver Spring:

## **Some ideas to keep your property wildlife and maintenance) friendly by Master Gardener Coordinator, Mikaela Boley**

1. Plant a meadow or trees for reforestation. Take unused lawn out of commission, and plant an ecosystem for wildlife habitat. Identify a grassed location that is not often used, or would be suitable as a buffer.
2. Except for lawns and paths, mow once a year. Unless the area needs invasive species control or becomes a visibility hazard to the road, there is no need to mow so much. Keep your wild spaces, and see what sort of native plants will appear.
3. Mowing is best done when plants are dormant and wildlife are not nesting. Think early March, which is the best time to both mow and cut back any perennials that are spent.
4. Create an unmown edge. An edge of tall grasses, flowers, and shrubs provide an important transition area between lawn and trees. It also can serve as a buffer, wind break, or privacy screen. Wildlife require this type of habitat, particularly bird species.
5. Don’t cut back your perennials or annuals until spring. Like mowing, this is best done in early March. Leave your grasses and seed heads in the winter, which provide food and protection to critters.

Consult your local Extension office for advice on these projects, or schedule a Bay-Wise visit to get a free consultation on sustainable landscape management 410-822-1244 ext. 1002, or [mboley@umd.edu](mailto:mboley@umd.edu).

## **Oxford Library—by Pat Jessup**

OGC has a shelf in the Oxford Library. There are many reference books including those with beautiful illustrations, of flowers, insects, and birds. Books left on a shelf only collect dust, why not stop by and find something of interest to you to pass the winter blues away. Also, if you have books to donate, please drop them off at the Library.



## A New Addition to OGC Activities – by Dorothy Williams

The Youth Program has the potential to become a sustainable, educational youth program with our association with Jenny Stanley's after school program. From March 25th through April 17th, Garden Club members will provide activities for eleven Oxford boys and girls, ages 7 through 12 on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the OCC from 3:30 to 5:30. Anyone interested in assisting with these projects is very welcome.

The purpose of this alliance is to give our children another reason to feel connected to our community and to learn about the local environment, learn ways to protect the environment and to develop an interest in gardening. These skills can grow as they do and go with them where ever they may live.

**March 27 and 28** - Lawrie Jessup will be reading the children's story, "War Horse," by Michael Morpurgo. This is a story about a young English boy and his horse named Joey during World War I. Joey is sold to the British army and goes off to war. Joey tells us his story. The children will hear about the strong bonds between humans and a horse, the value of being a good friend, and get a glimpse of coping with hardships. The children will also receive a copy of the poem, "In Flanders Field," by Lt. Col. John McCrae, MD, a surgical doctor who wrote the poem to honor the soldiers who died on the war torn battlefields in Belgium over logan fields in full bloom with bright red poppies. November 18, 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1. Wearing red poppies to honor the fallen is still a tradition. The American Legion Disabled Veterans still make the paper red poppies and all sales are for the benefits of the disabled vets and their families.

**April 3 and 4** - Dick Rawlings will work with the children to design a sandwich board with "What's Wrong with the Picture?" printed at the top. There will be scenes of Oxford on both sides of the sandwich board. Children will make pictures of things they will attach to the board using Velcro. One side will be easy, such as putting a crab onto a tree trunk, the other side will be more difficult. The children will help with all aspects of the design of this sandwich board which will become part of Oxford Day in the Park activities. The children will be encouraged to help on Oxford Day from 12 noon to 2 pm. Susan Fitzgerald, Alice Collins and Sandy Wrightson will assist.

**April 10** - Trish Reynolds, Linda Wilson and Dorothy Williams will demonstrate how to make fairy garden terrarium and assist the children in designing their own terrarium. All materials that they will need are provided by the Garden Club. Children will develop an understanding of balance, scale, color contrast and design.

**April 11** - Terry Holman will demonstrate how to make critters and fairies using all plant materials easily found outside or in the kitchen. Children will be introduced to Botanical arts and to miniature design. Marie Davis will assist.

**Mid October** (date to be determined) - Marilyn Reedy, a new Club member and Master Gardener, assisted by Mikaela Boley, Coordinator of the University of Maryland/k Extension Urban Horticulture/ Master Gardener Group and other Master Gardeners will take a field trip to the nearby Conservation Park. The Master Gardeners will help the children select plants to be pressed, labeled and laminated to make placemats to be used during snack time at the After-School programs.

## Meeting date reminders

**March 6<sup>th</sup>** - District I Annual Meeting, at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City, MD sponsored by the Worcester Garden Club.

**March 26<sup>th</sup>** - Annual Meeting, Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. (FGCMD) at Turf Valley Resort & Spa in Ellicott City.

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Talbot County Garden Club Symposium – "Swing Into Spring" at the Milestone in Easton

Also, check the FGCMD web site for up-coming District Flower Shows and other special events taking place during the year.

**The Grapevine is published February, June, and October and is produced by Marie Davis, edited by Pat Jessup**  
**Contributors to this issue: Sue Betz, Mikaela Boley, Ingrid Blanton, Marie Davis, Joy Ericson, Marybeth Guerrieri**  
**Terry Holman, Pat Jessup, and Dorothy Williams**