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The GRAPEVINE

Volume 15 #2

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A letter from the President—by Dorothy Williams

Spreading the Sun Shine

The call for flowers came early in August from Suzanne Litty, a Holy Trinity Church member and a OGC member. Could the Oxford Garden Club make arrangements for Betty Jo's fundraiser dinner and silent auction. Betty Jo is a young woman whose life became overwhelmed with physical and emotional hurdles. Well known in Holy Trinity and in Oxford, everyone wanted to do something for her. Gardens were suffering with the heat, but our local farmer, "Bill Eason has fields full of Sunflowers," said Pat Jessup. He gave us buckets full of sunflowers. Marie Davis said she had "oodles of canning jars." The email went out for a few good hands to help make 25 arrangements. We met at 2:30 on August 12th and by 3:00 p.m. the arrangements were on the tables under a tent overlooking the Choptank River. According to Suzanne Litty, the fundraiser was very successful.



Buckets of sunflowers donated by Bill Eason



Dorothy Williams, a friend, Susie Dial, Kay Ruark Trish Reynolds, and Phyllis Rambo



Kay Ruark, Trish Reynolds, Susie Dial, and Pat Jessup



Photo at the event

Upcoming Meeting Schedule—by Ingrid Blanton and Marybeth Guerrieri

November 7, 2019—"Layered Bulb Planting" presented by OGC member Trish Reynolds. Trish will instruct attendees on the best way to plant bulbs for succession spring blooms. Participants should bring their own container, cost is \$15.00.

December 5, 2019—"Holiday luncheon" at the home of Trish Reynolds. Don't forget to bring a wrapped gift for the always popular and friendly gift exchange.. Event is from noon to 3:00 p.m.

December 14, 2019 -"Wreaths Across America". Garden Club members and the public join at Hurlock Veterans Cemetery to lay wreaths on over 6,000 veterans graves. This is a very moving experience.

January 9, 2020—"How to Create Backyard Habitat for Creatures Great and Small" will be presented by Nancy Lawson author of "The Humane Gardener".

February 6, 2020—"Phone Camera Photography" presented by George Holzer. We will learn techniques of how to use the camera as our eyes.

March 5, 2020- "Four Designs" presented by Dottie Howatt, Samantha McCall, Boots Michalak, and Susie Middleton. Designs will be created in accordance with the 2017 Flower Show Handbook.

Trip to Delaware Botanic Gardens—by Marie Davis

On a beautiful September 5th, seventeen members of OGC took a road trip to visit the newly created Delaware Botanic Gardens located by Pepper Creek, Dagsboro, DE. Excerpted from their website "Our *mission* is to create a world-class, inspirational, educational, and sustainable public botanic garden in southern Delaware for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Our *values* encompass inspirational gardens, environmental stewardship, community focus, education and research, organizational transparency, financial responsibility, and civility and respect. Building a large public garden must be done in stages, which will take about a decade or so to realize. The Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek aims to be self-supporting, although it will depend heavily on generous help from donors in its early years, as do all other public gardens. Income will be provided by membership dues, admission fees, gift shop and online sales, event rentals, special show admissions, donations, and other forms of revenue. An endowment fund has been set up to build for the future." In 2016 Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf and Delaware's own Rodney Robinson, of RAS Landscape Architects were hired to design the gardens.

All OGC attendees enjoyed the tour and were amazed by the progress made since the property was purchased and the work began. The volunteers and staff are dedicated to the purpose and growth of this ten-year project. The Gardens officially opened on September 19th.

Some photographs taken along the way.....



Of course as is the Club practice we met for lunch at a Porto Pizza and Grill Restaurant following the Tour.

Flower Show School 101 – Pat Jessup

This year flower show judges and Dorchester Garden Club members Susie Middleton and Judy Slaughter teamed up to present Flower Show School for FGCM. The four courses of Flower Show School are the first steps on the road to becoming a flower show judge. They teach horticulture and floral design and how both are scored by judges in a flower show, perfect for those who want to “up their game” in exhibiting, even if they don’t want to become a judge.

When Ingrid said “let’s go”, it seemed like a good idea. You know how it goes, the course was several months away and nothing else was looming on the horizon. We signed up and headed off on April 30 for Course #1 where we were joined by OGC members Marilyn Reedy, Carol Abruzzese, and Marie Davis. (You are required to take Course #1 first, but may take the next 3 courses in any sequence). This must have been the first flower show school held in a while because attendance was overwhelming with students coming from neighboring states as well as from all over Maryland.

The first day focused on horticulture, the second on Design, and on the third day, there was an E – X – A – M. Not an “open book” exam like Master Gardeners, noooooooo; this was like the last time you took a ‘sweaty armpits, stomach churning’ final. The good news is that the exam is optional so those who didn’t pay the extra \$5.00 to torture themselves didn’t have to feel the pain. On the other hand, the exam is mandatory to becoming a “judge.” It only makes sense, right? We weren’t sure which direction we were going so we opted to take the exam. Masochists!

On the first day we studied two forms of horticulture, “Prunus” and “Orchids” and learned to identify their unique characteristics and what makes an ideal specimen. After hearing from the expert and working in small groups to analyze specimens provided by the superb ‘hort’ team (Trish Reynolds and Terry Holman), we headed into an adjoining room with a pencil, score sheet, and our best hopes of remembering and applying what we had just studied all morning. We wouldn’t know how well we did till much later and I pitied the instructor who had to read and grade all those papers. The boxes were very small and we all tried to fit ‘War and Peace’ in each section to show off our newly acquired knowledge. Actually, it was in hope that something in our voluminous scribbles would resonate with the instructor, or maybe we figured if she couldn’t read it, we’d get the benefit of the doubt. We “judged” three orchid exhibits and three prunus exhibits. After that we were more than ready for the superb wine and cheese reception sponsored by several judges (including our own Bonnie Stevens) at 6 pm.

Day 2 and now we have some better feel for what to expect. The design instructor was challenged by the size of the class but did an amazing job of keeping everyone’s attention and engaging us in lively session on the principles of design. Later she broke us into smaller groups for discussion and analysis of several design exhibits, including her own. Yep, you know what came next. Off to the room next door with our score sheets to judge designs. Our handwriting and ambition didn’t improve on Day 2. Poor instructor! Final exam day for Ingrid and I came a day later as we headed back to Oxford for the OGC meeting the next day. They were kind enough to let three of us take the exam at the Eastern Shore Hospital Center in Dorchester, proctored by Judy Slaughter on Friday. I won’t lie, it was a tough exam, especially since memorization doesn’t come as easily as it used to, BUT, it wasn’t impossible and we all passed. Hurray! Even better was getting back the judging scoring sheets with comments and learning I did better than expected. Hey, *maybe* I could be a judge?!

Flower Show School is like childbirth. Afterwards you forget about the pain, or at least we did because we signed up for Course #2 and were not the only ones to come back for another round. At least half of the original class returned. Actually it was better having a smaller group for the September 23-25th course. Horticulture focused on Hosta and Thymus and Design on learning about Functional and Exhibition Table Designs and the goals, objectives, and components of Flower Shows. That part was timely, eh? I took the test again. Actually, I think I scored better on this one but time will tell.

Do I want to be a Flower Show Judge? Undecided, but the learning experience was definitely worth the time and effort and I would encourage everyone to go to Flower Show School. You will meet a lot of nice people with similar interests and be educated and entertained by some amazing instructors who are top in their field. Did I mention the cocktail party and shopping???

These are samples of the designs that were created for those taking the test to score.....no easy task.



Oxford Garden Club and Habitat for Humanity Choptank —by Phyllis Rambo

Oxford Garden Club is proud to partner with Habitat for Humanity Choptank. Recently Garden Club members, Phyllis Rambo and Pat Jessup, joined in the celebration of the home dedication of Mr. Harry Seldon at his new home at 233-2 Port Street, Easton, MD.



Wheelbarrow with garden supplies
donated by OGC



Left to right, OGC members Phyllis Rambo,
Pat Jessup and Mr. Seldon

Many members of Garden Clubs in the area join in the building of Habitat for Humanity Choptank activities in Easton, Cambridge, and St. Michaels. There is always something to learn whether you are a skilled user of hammer and nails or not, all are encouraged to join in this rewarding experience. There are also opportunities to volunteer at the Restore located on Commerce Street in Easton. Also, household and other items can be donated to the Restore with a pick-up service if needed.

Horticulture Report – by Sue Betz

Audubon Magazine Fall 2019 Issue. “FORTIFYING NORTHERN FORESTS”

Green Mountain Audubon Center, Vermont - At the Green Mountain Audubon Center, increasingly intense storms and mild winters - about 4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer and three weeks shorter than in the 1960s—are setting up a showdown with invasive species. Opportunistic plants like honeysuckle are filling voids left by blown-down trees. And standing trees are now in the crosshairs of the aphid-like hemlock woolly adelgid, which, are no longer kept in check by deep winter freezes, has gained a foothold in southern Vermont. Diverse forests slow the spread of insects and provide the mosaic of habitats and food sources that birds like Blue-headed Vireos prefer, so Audubon Vermont removes invasive plants and cuts select trees to promote a variety of species and ages. Audubon staff also work with other landowners to help optimize bird habitat on an additional 300,000 acres of woodlands statewide.



Upcoming Events at the Arboretum

New Private Bird Walks—Groups of up to 15 people can schedule a private walk. The fee is \$10 per person for members and \$12 per person for non-members. Walks are free for children ages 12 and under with an accompanying adult

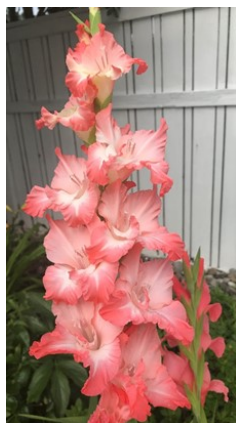
Vision the Choptank—November 6th join visit to three recently restored projects on the Choptank River Watershed.

End-of-season plant sale with 30% off all plants for members and 30% discount for non-members, call to find out what plants are available.

Call 410 634-2847 for more information and to sign up for events.

Glad for “Glads” By Terry Holman

Gardening can often bring great joy and I was super glad when my Gladiolus, planted late last summer as an experiment, decided to become a perennial which offered gorgeous, elegant spikes of orchid like blooms starting this June. These flowers are indeed bold and as pretty in the garden as they are cut in a vase. They bloom from the bottom up sequentially with typically 15-20 florets open at once. The secret for the typical 2 week-long vase life is to cut the flowering scape just as the very first bottom floret begins to open. They were also pollinator friendly as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds enjoyed their pollen and nectar. Since this flower does not close at night, it is available for many night moth pollinators.



All this bold beauty comes at a very cheap price, especially if you take advantage of online bulb sellers who typically offer them up at up to 80% off now. These corms can be planted now through mid-August and can take 10-12 weeks to bloom, offering much needed fall color. It is truly amazing that each corm, the size of a medium sized gum ball, can produce a 4'+ flowering spike. True lovers of this plant often purchase many corms in spring and store them in a cool, dry and dark space in paper sacks, planting them every few weeks to ensure blooms lasting through fall.

These flowering corms are very easy to grow. You will be tickled to know that they grow well equally well in containers and hold their own when planted with Cannas, Elephant ears and other tropicals and are equally gorgeous with a mass planting of all the same or different cultivars. I have heard of folks rotating flowering gladioli in containers into their gardens every few weeks to ensure summer long blooms of bold color. In the vase as a cut flower, their beauty is so great and bold that you might have problems finding other flowers that can compete with their beauty. (Dahlias, Sunflowers and zinnias might be up to the task)

The Romans later gave these plants their current name, Gladiolus, which in Latin means, “sword”. This is the official name of this Genus to this day. There are over 260 species of this Genus in the world with 250 of them hailing from South Africa and the other 10 hailing from Eurasia. Most of the Gladiolus cultivars are derived from just 10 species and which have evolved into many gorgeous floret colors and forms resembling orchid flowers. This plant has been hybridized since the 1800's. You can easily tell that Gladiolus comes from the Iridaceae Family of Iris from their leaves which are very similar. Gladiolus was first brought to America and Europe in 1837. Growers included Monet as he was known to plant hundreds of Gladiolus corms alongside dahlias, often the subjects in many of his paintings.

This flower signifies remembrance and expresses infatuation telling the receiver of this flower that he/she has pierced your heart. It also stands for strength of character, faithfulness and honor. It is the official flower for those born in August. Gladiolus has the distinction of being the ONLY flower allowed to have leaves BELOW the water surface when exhibited as a cut specimen in a flower show. This is due to how the leaves grow and overlap each other.

We are fortunate to live in agricultural zone 7 which is the minimum official zone for these flowering plants to be considered as perennials which means that we don't have to dig them up to store and re-plant like everyone else in zones 1-6! Many growers of this corm have noticed that they have not had to dig up their gladiolus corms in zones 5-6 over the past years. That said, ensure where you want to showcase them, especially knowing that they are capable of being true perennials, typically living 3-5 years. Baby cormel, exact duplicates of its parent, can grow off the parent corm and will become a fully grown, capable of flowering in a few years.

There are basically two types of Gladiolus, those that grow tall (up to 6') and those that have been hybridized to be smaller in height growing 12-30" in height. The reason for hybridizing shorter flowering plants is made clear once a gust of wind hits your tall beauties. The newer, shorter cultivars do not require staking and grow terrific in front of garden borders. The Glamini hybrids are a well-known miniature gladiolus which does not require staking and grows 18-30" high in containers or garden soil and does very well in front or in the middle of your garden. These shorter varieties are hardier than their taller cousins.



Tall Gladiolus are often planted in the backs of gardens, near fences but they should NOT be thought of as a “wall flower”. Their flowers are large and striking and can be incredibly bold in the landscape. These tall plants require staking to keep them upright. My best tip is to use a method that I learned from Mel Bartholomew when I was his New Jersey Square Foot Garden Instructor many years ago, horizontal staking. Once your gladiolus corms start to grow, obtain some stakes measuring at least 4' tall. Pound them at least 9-12" into the ground with a hammer and then purchase some nylon netting with 4-6" size squares, which can be found online. Place the netting over 4 stakes, forming a rectangle and set the netting to be about 3' high and very taught. Let these corms grow up into the netting. This method is superior to all other methods which usually require staking, re-staking and more re-staking as the wind blows daily. If you can find green nylon netting, all the better as this netting disappears amongst the leaves!

Glad for Glads (cont'd.)

If you have plants growing in front of them, you would be fine with white nylon netting.



Plant corms 3-4" deep in an area of full to part sun, in the garden soil or in a container. Some Gladiolus Society growers recommend planting 6" deep to help anchor the plants from future windy days. Space the bulbs 5-6" apart and note that these are best when planted en masse. Which end gets planted upward? The pointy end. The flattened corm area houses future roots. Be sure to employ horizontal netting staking technique at the same time and perhaps, leave room for future gladiolus plantings. If you decide to cut the flowering scapes for a floral arrangement, be sure to leave the stem and leaves alone as to fuel up the corm for the next planting season.

I had great luck planting my gladiolus amongst my tulip and daffodil bulbs. The leaves emerged just as the daffodil and tulip leaves were dying for an instant cover-up. They would also be great planted around peonies and other early spring blooming flowers. My personal recommendations for getting Gladiolus corms now are to visit: holandbulbfarms.com and Brecks.com that offer up to 20 corms for \$5. Often they sell corms as a “mix” and you shouldn’t worry what’s in the mix as you can readily identify the gladiolus cultivars online once they bloom. I promise that you won’t be disappointed planting Gladiolus and you’ll be “Glad” you did!

This photograph was taken by Phyllis Gait's sister Caroline in Aiken, S. C. There is a prize for the first person who can identify this creature. E-mail mariethescott75@gmail.com or call 410 770-5258.



The Waterfowl Festival is coming up Friday November 8th through Sunday November 10th and your help is needed to prepare decorations for the various venues around town. To access time slots using Sign-Up Genius, go to www.signupgenius.com/go/5080b49a9ac2aa0fb6-decorations. Although time slots are designated for four hours, you don't have to commit to the entire time-slot, any time you can spare will be greatly appreciated. All you have to do is bring clippers and perhaps gloves and an apron or wear old clothes. When you volunteer you have free access to all the venues Friday through Sunday. Please consider spending at least a few hours helping out. Remember Waterfowl donates funds to conservation which is part of the OGC Objective. Hope to see you at the Armory.

Excerpted with permission from Harvesting History—by Marie Davis

This year Harvesting History's fall newsletter series is going to focus on spring flowering bulbs that are critter resistant and great plants for nourishing pollinators. In the last six newsletters, we discussed Rock Garden Irises (*Iris reticulatas*), *Chionodoxas* (Glory of the Snow), *Galanthus* (Snowdrops), *Hyacinthoides* (Bluebells), Species Tulips, Native American Bulbs, *Alliums* and Species *Narcissus*. In this newsletter, we are going to discuss three beautiful crocus'. Believe it or not one is actually deer resistant.

I know what some of you are thinking.... "Crocuses, ugh, they are so boring". Yes, they are common, but no they are not boring. Yes, they basically come in 3 colors – white, yellow and purple, but there are hundreds of shades of these three colors and few other spring bulbs produce the intensity of color that crocuses do. Only tulips can compete. Yes, you see them everywhere in the spring, but that is what makes them so special. They are spring!

Crocuses are some of the most versatile of spring bulbs. They can be grown in gardens, rock gardens, containers, forced in pots or forced in water. Only hyacinths and a few narcissus can compete with this versatility.

Crocus are members of the Iris family and are native to the Mediterranean and parts of Asia. They are among the oldest of the cultivated bulbs. The original crocus was a fall blooming type, *Crocus sativus*, grown for its saffron in Palestine during King Solomon's time and used as an important commercial product by various ancient civilizations. Within the first few centuries of the new millennium, the Romans brought crocus to Britain, and by 1330, *C. sativus* was introduced into Essex via a commercial venture that made yellow dyes.

The spring flowering *Crocus* varieties have never been cultivated for non-gardening purposes, but they have enjoyed enormous popularity as garden flowers. In fact, *C. vernus* is one of the bulbs credited with starting Holland's bulb business. Crocus are so much beloved that they were among the first bulbs brought to North America by the earliest settlers. The large flowering crocus also known as "The Wild Crocus of the Alps" were discovered around 1875.

Crocus prefer a light, fertile, alkaline soil and good sunlight. Digging them up and dividing them every three years is highly recommended. They are good naturalizers and good for forcing.

Unfortunately, crocuses are not critter resistant. Some gardeners have reported that squirrels do not eat or "replant" any of the *C. tommasinianus* varieties. Growing the bulbs in containers on a deck or patio is sometimes your only choice these days. If you still have a critter problem, then force them in pots or water.

Crocuses do best when grown in full sun. They can take a little shade, but will not bloom as prolifically. The ideal environment provides the plants with full sun in the spring and well-drained soil that allows the corms to dry out during the summer. *Crocus tommasinianus* which we will discuss below is the only crocus that can tolerate damp areas.

Crocuses should be planted in groups. They show best in groups of 25 bulbs, but a group of ten bulbs will still be a presence in the spring garden. The bulbs should be planted close, no more than 3 inches apart and 5-7 inches deep. Don't forget to add bone meal to the area where you are planting these bulbs.



Crocus Grand Maitre



Crocus flavus Yellow Mmmoth

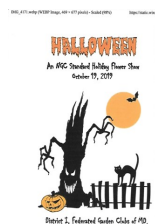


Crocus Tammasinionus Roseus

If interested in ordering crocus bulbs here is the Harvesting History website information:

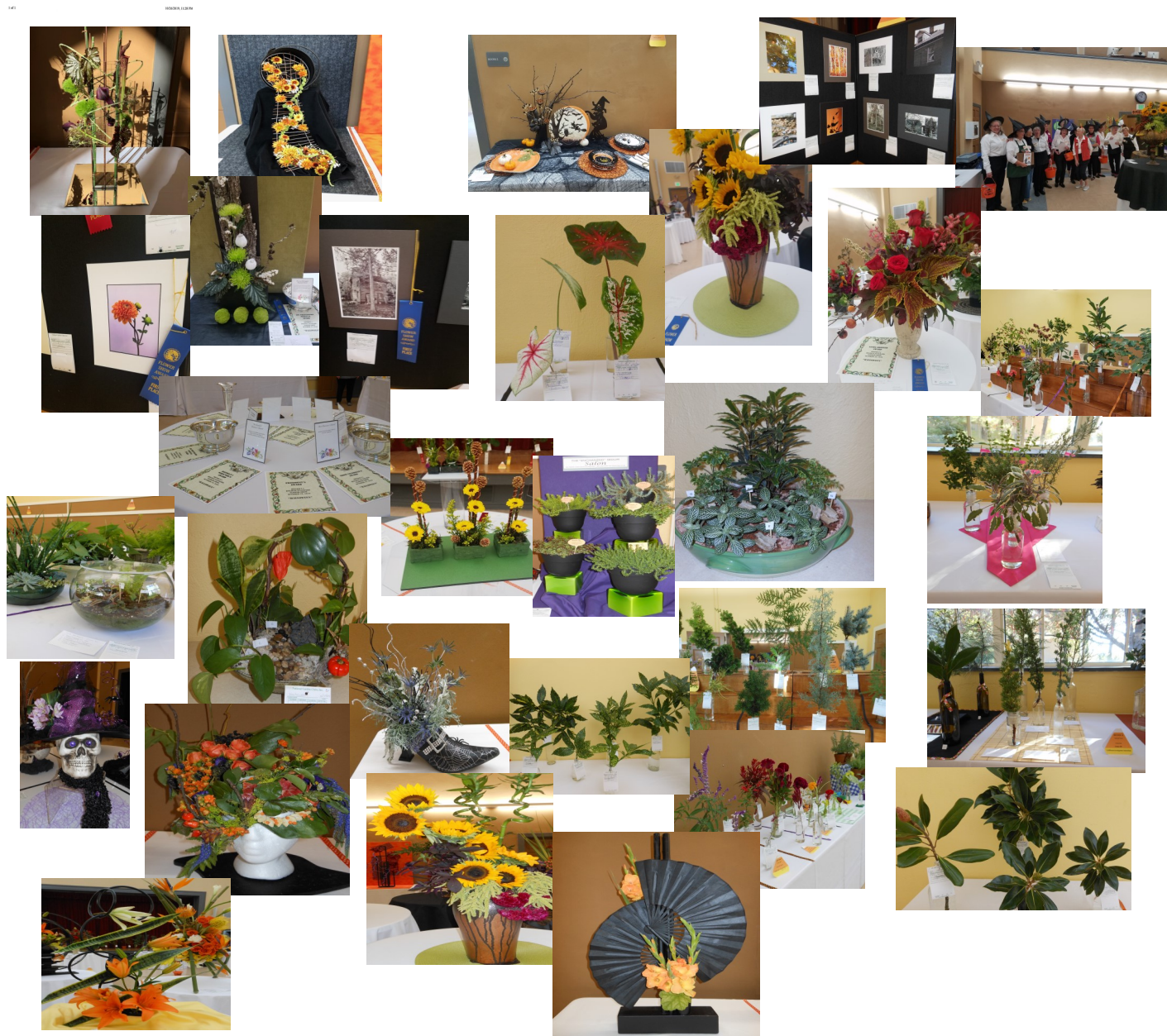
<https://harvesting-history.com/product-category/flower-bulbs-tubers/bulbs-for-fall-planting/tulips/species-tulips/>

Federated Garden Clubs, MD Inc. District I Flower Show, 2019—by Marie Davis



If you close your eyes and imagine the Oxford Community Center being turned into a venue of fabulous flower designs, horticulture specimens, botanical art and photography, that is just what happened on Saturday, October 19, 2019. Although ribbons and awards are given in recognition in all classes, there are no losers at Flower Shows as we all learn something new each time we enter a class or just visit a Show. The rave reviews well richly deserved.

As stated in the NGC Handbook of Flower Shows, “The purposes of an NGC Flower Show is to educate club members and the viewing public, to stimulate interest in horticulture and floral design, to provide an outlet for creative expression, and to communicate NGC goals and objectives.” Looking at these photographs, I believe these objectives were well met.



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Contributors to this issue: Sue Betz, Ingrid Blanton, Cid Collins-Walker, Marie Davis, Marybeth Guerriei, Terry Holman, Pat Jessup, Roberta Maguire, Trish Reynolds, and Dorothy Williams