Garden Clippings

Norristown Garden Club Newsletter

April 2023 – Volume 44, No. 2

Upcoming Events

NGC General Meeting and Luncheon
April 12, 2023
Cedarbrook Country Club
Blue Bell, PA

Horticulture Workshop
April 19, 2023
Wissahickon Valley Public Library, Blue Bell

Horticultural Therapy
April 20, 2023
Providence Place
Collegeville, PA

Flower Design Workshop
April 26, 2023
Wissahickon Valley Public Library, Blue Bell

NGC General Meeting
May 10, 2023
Fairview Village Church
Eagleville, PA

Horticulture Workshop
May 17, 2023
Wissahickon Valley Public Library, Blue Bell

Plant Exchange and Covered Dish Social
Arlene Reagan-Harris, Hostess
May 18, 2023
2905 Township Line Road
Eagleville (Worcester), PA

A Message from our President

Happy Spring! We've already had some gloriously warm and sunny days that have caused the forsythia to bloom and native pear trees to blossom. I hope that you've all had an opportunity to get out in your gardens and enjoy them!

The rebirth of Spring in my garden is so meaningful to me because I'm reminded of friends and relatives who have shared their garden treasures with me. My garden is a way to remember those I care about. When we moved into our house 30 years ago, I planted my mother's lilacs, her pink lily of the valley, Hosta, and tiger lilies. Over the years, additions to my garden have included Iris rhizomes from a dear friend, an American holly tree from my aunt, an apple tree that was chosen by my son, then a toddler, daffodils from another aunt, and mahonia from a cousin. These are just a few examples of my cherished specimens from others.

This is the last *Garden Clippings* Newsletter of my term as the NGC President, and I can't say enough about how much I have enjoyed my tenure and how much I have appreciated ***everyone*** who has made and continues to make Norristown Garden Club the active and vibrant club that it is! As for me, I look forward to my continued participation in the NGC, to working with all the wonderful club members on future club activities, and to enjoying the NGC plants I adopted from our "Adopt a Plant" program or picked from our annual "Plant Exchange and Covered Dish Social" that are now growing in my yard!

In closing, all of you have my best wishes for a wonderful and productive 2023 gardening season!

Anita Lehman, President

Upcoming Events, Continued

NGC General Meeting
June 14, 2023
Fairview Village Church
Eagleville, PA

Ronald McDonald House Flowers
June 5, 2023

Norristown Garden Contest Judging
June 28, 2023

Gardens on the Go
Date To Be Announced

January "Show of the Month" First Place Winners.

NGC members at Providence Place.

NGC General Meeting

January 11, 2023

At the January meeting, members enjoyed a slide presentation of photographs from the Club's 72nd Holiday House Tour. How wonderful it was to revisit all the beautiful designs created by members. Although most members probably participated in the tour and viewed the arrangements for themselves, it is always so inspiring to take a "retrospective virtual tour" of the decorated homes and to be able to see, once again, all the beautiful and creative designs. Congratulations to all members who participated in the tour and to Anita Lehman for creating the slide presentation! We look forward to next year's tour and to everyone's participation in its planning!

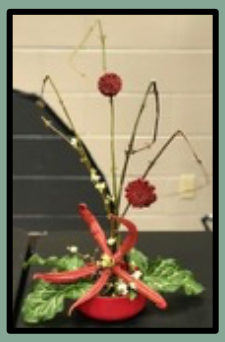
Following the slide show, Anita Lehman, Rosemarie Hardy, Ginger Hunsicker, Patti O'Brien, Marge Eberz, Diane Powell, Barbara Stoebenau, Portia Potts, Barbara Andon, and Nancy Adelman described and demonstrated how they made some of the creative ornaments and designs used at their holiday houses.

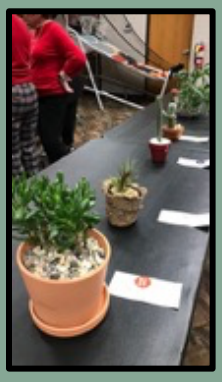
Also at the January meeting, selected members participated in the show of the month entitled, "Winter Wonder". The horticulture requirement for the show was the entry of a berried holly or another berried branch while the design requirement was an arrangment done in an Asian manner. The "Blue Ribbon" winners were Karen Nemeth for her design and Caren Puschak for a berried branch. Photos are by B. Andon.

Horticultural Therapy

January 19, 2023

On January 19, NGC members brought some sunshine to the residents of Providence Place at the Collegeville Inn by making floral arrangements for the residents to enjoy. Thank you ladies for doing such a great community service! Photos by B. Bynon.





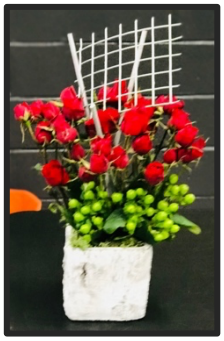
NGC General Meeting

February 8, 2023

In recognition of the Chinese New Year, the NGC hosted guest speaker Doris C. Liu who lectured on the preparation of Chinese Holiday Arrangements using the principles of Ikebana. As part of her lecture, Doris talked about each of the schools of Ikebana, its historical timeline, and the rules of arrangement construction. She then proceeded to prepare multiple designs, all of which were raffled off to meeting attendees. It was truly entertaining to listen to and watch Doris prepare her designs. The NGC thanks Doris for making our February meeting such a pleasure to attend! Photos are by B. Andon and C. Puschak.

At the meeting, Karen Wychock, who was sporting her festive head band, presented an update on the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania's (GCFP) upcoming 2023 and future 2025 conventions. Karen is the 2025 Convention Chair. As such, she encouraged everyone to attend this year's annual convention in Monroeville, PA, and to participate in the planning for the 95th Annual Convention to be held in King of Prussia, PA. A number of NGC members have already volunteered to serve in different capacities to help with the planning of the convention. If you are interested in helping, Karen can be contacted at kwychock@verizon.net or you can speak to Ginger Hunsicker or Diane Pratt, who are Karen's co-chairs for the convention.

What would February be without a Valentine's Day flower arrangement? We can thank Diane Powell, Show of the Month Chair, for arranging this show that required the submission of an angular design using some red flowers and/or a cactus or succulent as a horticulture specimen. Cheryl Crouse won first prize for her angular design, pictured at left. Congratulations! Photos by B. Andon.



Kudos to You

Congratulations to the following club members who entered this year's Philadelphia Flower Show and won awards!

- Cherie Noblil, two blue ribbons.
- Barbara Stoebenau, one red and one yellow ribbon.
- Jayne Price, one yellow ribbon,
- Melissa Bullitt, two blue ribbons.
- Meg Gaibiselis, two yellow ribbons.
- Maria Jacobs, yellow ribbon and the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Medal for Design.

In addition, the club won the Rosemarie P. Vassalluzzo Artistic Sweepstakes Trophy. The NGC is so proud of all of you and appreciates your interest and willingness to compete in the show.

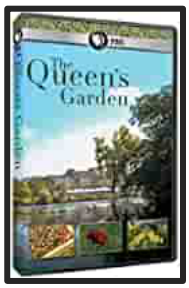
Please see the NGC website to view pictures of each of the submitted designs. https://www.norristowngardenclub.org!

Front of dress designed by Maria Jacobs (and non-member Wendy Fox) that won the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Medal of Design.

Horticulture Workshop

February 15, 2023

At the Horticulture Workshop, Jane Irvin-Klotz, the workshop chair, showed the documentary film entitled, The Queen's Garden. This documentary reveals a year in the Buckingham Palace Gardens, exploring the history and biodiversity of this remarkable, hidden royal treasure in the center of London. The gardens are located on 37 acres, have a man-made lake, and are an urban oasis of wildlife.



After the film, Jane presented slides showing the Queen in various hats and the wreath that was placed on the Queen's coffin. The wreath contained flowers and myrtle that were picked from the royal gardens by the Queen's son, Charles. Jane noted that the myrtle, which was used in the funeral wreath, was rooted from the Queen's wedding bouquet.

At the end of the workshop, five plants and some seed packets were raffled off. Photos of the workshop attendees and plant winners are by J. Irvin-Klotz.

Horticultural Therapy

February 16, 2023

Unfortunately, this workshop was cancelled due to an outbreak of Covid-19 at the Markley Rehab and Health Care Center.

NGC General Meeting

March 8, 2023

At the March meeting, Sharee Solow gave a presentation entitled, "New Hot Perennials for 2023". Sharee is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist (PCH). She blends a lifetime of learning and global experience to offer interesting and uniquely sophisticated landscape designs for residential as well as commercial spaces. Her presentation focused on highlighting many new plant introductions and selections that could be used in this year's spring plantings to help create pleasing designs. It was a pleasure to have Sharee educate us about new plants and how to use them, and we thank her for sharing her knowledge with us!

The March "Show of the Month" was entitled, "Tea Time" and required the entry of a variegated house plant and/or a floral design using a tea cup or other beverage container. Ribbon winners in design included: 1st Beth Bynon, 2nd Karen Price, 3rd Rosemarie Hardy. Ribbon winners in horticulture included: 1st Beth Bynon, 2nd Lynn Whelan, 3rd Lynn Whelan. Pictured is B. Bynon's blue-ribbon floral design (to the left below), an additional design entry, and the horticulture entries. Thanks to all the members who submitted entries! You help make the monthly meetings fun!

Flower Design Workshop

March 22, 2023

This month's Flower Design Workshop was very special. Attendees had the opportunity to be tutored by Karen Wychock, who is a nationally known basket weaver and creator of both Shaker basket reproductions and traditional basket designs. At the workshop, Karen taught attendees how to weave and manipulate palms and leaves into various shapes and braids for use in floral designs. Workshop attendees really enjoyed the class, and many commented on how they would like Karen to come back in the future to receive further instruction. The workshop chairs thank Karen for providing a very instructive workshop, and we hope she will return to provide further instruction in the future! Photos are by B. Leiby and other workshop attendees.

Horticultural Therapy

March 16, 2023

This month's horticultural therapy workshop was held at the North Penn Adult Day Services center. A photo of the NGC members that volunteered their time to make floral arrangements for the center's attendees is pictured below. (Also in attendance, but not pictured, was Suzanne Finger.)

Picture of new NGC members attending the March General Meeting. Photo by E. Raieta.

B. Leiby's lovely petite arrangements given to Lunch 'n' Learn attendees.

Garden Quote

The first blooms of spring always make my heart sing.

....S. Brown

Snowdrop photo from Dreamtimes.

Lunch 'n' Learn for New Members

March 29, 2023

This year's new NGC members were invited to attend the club's annual Lunch 'n' Learn that was held at the Wissahickon Library. Nine of the 18 new members attended the event that was chaired by Ana Maria Hartman. Meeting organizers included JoAnne Tornambe, Barbara Stoebenau, Jill Evans, Karin Young, Lynn O'Dowd, Beth Bynon, Olivia Brady, and Ginger Hunsicker.

The Lunch 'n' Learn is designed to educate and increase the new members' knowledge of the club's committees; the club's expectations regarding their participation in club projects; their awareness of the district, state, and national garden club levels; and to encourage their involvement. In addition, presentations were given regarding the club's website, the flower shows, and fund-raising activities. This year new members were encouraged to bring a plant they were growing, and Jill Evans judged each plant in addition to providing comments on each one.

During the presentations, new members were asked questions regarding what had been presented, and prizes were awarded for correct answers! A survey was given to the attendees to let the committee know what was beneficial to them. And, at the completion of the event, each attendee was given a lovely petite floral design created by Barbara Leiby. NGC welcomes all its new members and thanks all those existing club members who made this event possible and such fun!

Garden Poem

All the World's Alive Again

The rabbit hops its gentle step
The lark sings lyric songs
All the worlds alive again
Spring rights the winter wrongs.

Mother hen protects her chicks
White blossoms are in bloom
All the world's alive again
No snowy clouds to loom.

A kitten chirps her tiny mew
The child blinks his eyes
All the world's alive again
A new world crystalized.

….Jennifer Gunner

Photo from FreeArt.

Garden Club

The Norristown Garden Club is a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.; Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs, Inc.; and a Charter Member of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania (GCFP), District XI. NGC is the largest federated garden club in the state of Pennsylvania.

Orchid Show Competition

March 30, 2023

In March, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Orchid Society contacted Anita Lehman and asked if the Club wanted to participate in a design challenge for their orchid show which was to be held at the Oaks Expo Center from March 31 to April 2, 2023. This competition captured the imagination of M.J. Rees, who gathered up some members and off they went. NGC's participating members each received a vase, branches, greenery, palm, *Pieris japonica*, and some gorgeous orchids to create their designs that are pictured below. Following judging, the winners were: 1st Beth Bynon, 2nd Anita Lehman and Barb Leiby, and 3rd M.J. Rees and Nancy Hannum. Congratulations, ladies, and thank you for participating in this community event and representing the NGC so well! All photos were provided by attending club members.

Adopt a Plant

May to October via Email

The "Adopt a Plant" program, coordinated by Barbara Andon, is gearing up for the 2023 growing season! How does the program work? Well, Barbara solicits a list of plants via email that members want to adopt and those that members would like to have adopted from their gardens or homes. Members' 'haves and wants' are then collated in a list, and the list is circulated from May to October in table format to all NGC members via email. Members contact the person listed in the table for the plants, and the members arrange to finalize their adoption(s). Watch for the Adopt a Plant notice around late April and follow the instructions for submitting your items to Barbara to construct the list for each month. Happy garden planning and planting!

Club Membership

Do you know someone who would like to join the NGC? If you do, please consider inviting them to a meeting as your guest, being their sponsor, or referring them to the club's website at www.norristowngardenclub.org. for more information. Contact the club's New Member Chairperson, Ginger Hunsicker, by email at ginger3131@verizon.net for further details if you are a member or if you are not a member but are interested in joining.

Newsletter Contributions

If you would like to contribute news, photographs, or helpful hints for possible inclusion in the quarterly NGC *Garden Clippings* Newsletter, please contact the editor, Barbara Andon, via email at barbaraandon@verizon.net.

April blooming Virginia Bluebells. Photo by M. Eberz.

Horticulture Tips from Marge

April

CAREFUL planning your outside chores for this month. April's weather can be tricky and unpredictable. Start with the chores listed below:

- Clean out your flower beds; cut back your perennials.
- Pruning: Do not prune anything that blooms before June or you will be removing this year's flowers. Prune only summer bloomers at this time.
- Make sure your pots are clean and your garden tools are clean and sharpened.
- Warm weather brings the urge to start planting. However, remember that a frost is still possible through April. There is a limitation to what can be planted safely. Here are a few suggestions:
  - Lettuce and other leafy vegetables can be started now. If frost is predicted, cover the seeded area with a cloth.
  - Pansies can be set outside in beds also.
  - All of these can be planted in pots with potting soil. If you want to plant in a vegetable or flower bed, test the soil for planting by picking up a clump of soil. If it sticks together, the soil is too wet for planting. If it crumbles in your hand, it has dried out enough to begin planting.
- In mid-April, start putting out the hummingbird feeders. This is when they start coming into our area from the South and they are hungry!

MAY

May is one of the prettiest months of the year; the trees and bulbs are blooming. May 10 is also the "frost free" date for our zone and when annuals and vegetables can be planted.

- Plant annual flowers/vegetables: tomatoes, peppers, and herbs, etc.
- Sow seeds of cucumbers, beans, beets, carrots.
- When setting out annual flowers, incorporate fertilizer in the soil.
- House plants also enjoy the summer weather. Start hardening them off by bringing them out in the daytime and taking them in at night for about a week before putting them outside for the summer.

JUNE

- After spring-blooming trees and shrubs have finished blooming, cut back their blooms and shape them to keep them from getting too big and unmanageable.
- Do not cut back the leaves of daffodils and other spring bulbs until they are yellow and dying. The green leaves are the plant's "solar collectors," and they provide energy to the bulbs for the next year's blooms. Once the leaves are yellow and dying, they can be cut back.
- Keep beds weeded and mulched. Do not put more than three inches of mulch on flower beds or around trees and shrubs.
- Water beds when necessary. Watering should be done in the morning.
- Using a soaker hose in flower and vegetable beds will eliminate getting the leaves wet, thus reducing the potential of disease.
- Planters and hanging baskets need frequent watering depending on the temperature. A weekly liquid fertilizer helps them keep blooming throughout the season. If possible, incorporate a slow-release fertilizer into the soil when potting up the plants.