



The Garden Club of NC Shapes the Road Our Garden Club Follows

The many educational and civic activities of The Raleigh Garden Club (RGC) are evidence of the allure of gardening and the energizing fellowship of gardeners. Volunteer gardeners in a garden club can have a tremendous impact on their communities when pursuing the objectives of The Garden Club of North Carolina (GCNC). What RGC accomplished this year makes a great story.

Gardening and Horticulture Are the Name of the Game

Studying the science and the art of gardening is central to GCNC goals, and no one could enjoy it more than the members of The Raleigh Garden Club. The Horticulture Group is dedicated to improving our members' knowledge and enjoyment of gardening with a particular emphasis on the love of plants. The Hort Chair set up 5 activities, in addition to bringing in special speakers from the Master Gardeners to answer gardening questions and teach the value of keeping a garden journal.

This year all activities were again planned for outdoors and social distancing, given the COVID pandemic is still in the background. Over half of our members were able to join one or more of the workshops and outings. All our members could attend the programs thanks to Zoom. As the Horticulture Chair reported: "An excellent RGC turnout was fun-filled, educational, and allowed us to shop for our gardens."



1 – Tour of Juniper Level Botanic Garden (left) and Brie Arthur's Foodscapes Garden

Horticulture activities this year included:

- *February*: Tour of the Winter Garden at JCRA highlighted plantings that bring winter interest to the garden.
- *April*: Big Bloomers Flower Farm, a locally owned nursery that is like walking in a plant museum.
- *May*: Tour by CJ Dykes of his lush, lively garden. CJ is a RGC member and Landscape Supervisor for Wake Public School System.
- *September*: A tour of nationally famed Montrose Gardens.
- *October*: A tour of Juniper Level Botanical Garden by founder Tony Avent, exploring this research, and display garden.
- *November*: A tour of locally owned Homewood Nursery & Garden Center to explore new plants and view the Poinsettia display.

Our Club began a new project aimed at encouraging horticultural excellence among our members. Called *Glorious Gardens and Garden Glories*, each month this project collects pictures and stories of our members' horticultural efforts. These are presented in a 5-minute slide show for the whole club at our meeting and in our newsletter.



Vicki Corporon, Past President: *Glorious Gardens & Garden Glories*

Bird Visitors and Residents



This spring and summer I had the good fortune to spot a male cardinal in my gardens and woods and managed to get several photos. To visit the website for the North Carolina Bird Club (ncbirds.carolinabirdclub.org) and found this site to be a very good information on each breed listed, the website includes interactive links by county, a breeding season map, and a link to the website. With our RGC focus on appreciating our gardens over the seasons, I will be sharing variations in bird visitors and residents.

2 - Past President Vicki Corporon presents *Glorious Gardens and Garden Glories* to our members each month.

Gardening and Plant Sales are a Match Made in Nature

A love of plants is invariably a catalyst for plant propagation, and the Club holds fall and spring plant sales to share the bounty with the public. The Horticulture Group are ringleaders in the propagation work, dividing and potting up their own. Because each member must price and label their plants, it encourages a flurry of study between members about plant botanical names and cultivation!

The bulk of the plants for sale come from locally owned Campbell Road Nursery. The planning for the sale begins months ahead, working on a list of

plants to order. The nursery grows the requested plants in greenhouses for the sale. The sale has three goals: 1) opportunities to mentor both new members and the general public on what grows well in the area, 2) Expanding our educational outreach with our vendor partners like The Mushroom Guy, who taught about organic gardening, and 3) raising money for the Community Donations fund. This year the spring plant sale raised \$1418 and the fall plant sale raised \$1328.



3 - Working the Plant Sale

The study of gardening is furthered by working in other gardens from one's own, and RGC supports and maintains six public gardens: The Charlotte Hilton Green Park, a pollinator garden at Dix Park, A Sanctuary Garden at the Transitions LifeCare Hospice, the Winter Garden at the JCRA, the Rosey Girls Vegetable Garden at the Boys and Girls Club, and the Martha Franck Fragrance Garden which is a GCNC Legacy garden located in Raleigh.

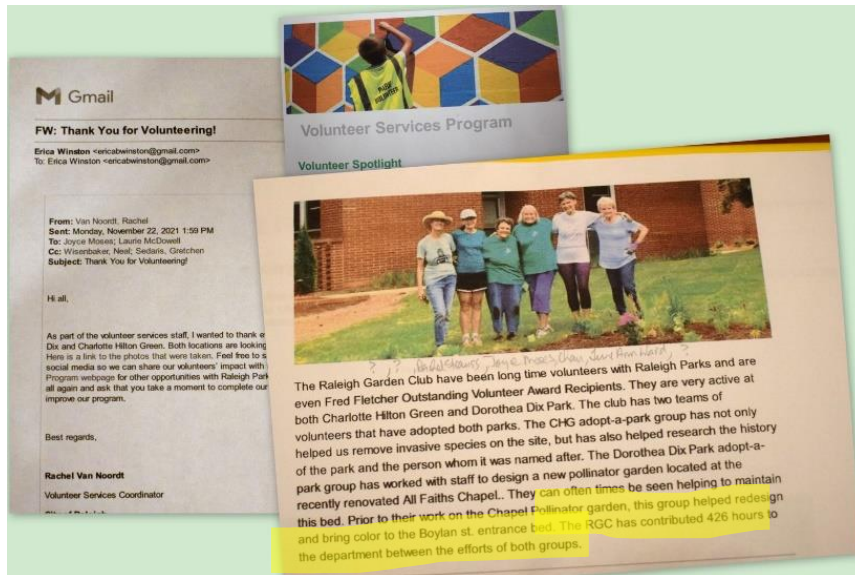


4 - The 6 public gardens RGC maintains, in order as listed above.

The Garden Community: Cooperating with Other Agencies

Gardening in North Carolina's lush Piedmont is a far cry from a desert! Our zone 7 supports one of the widest palettes of plants in the country. And the study of horticulture flourishes just as lushly here in the Triangle with many agencies, gardens and clubs cooperating to further the greening of our world. Five of our key relationships are described and show how RGC meets the GCNC objective of cooperating with these members of our gardening world.

RGC has partnered with the City of Raleigh Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (Parks Dept.) since it was founded in 1925. The partnership continued this year with two Adopt-A-Park projects. Our Memorial Tree Planting for Arbor Day added improvements to a third park in the city. A chair for each project organizes the workdays with the Parks Dept. and calls for volunteers at the general meeting. Our work earned us a “shout out” in the Parks Volunteer Newsletter. They noted that we have contributed 426 hours to the Parks Dept. this year !



5- The Parks Dept recognizes RGC's volunteer work to improve 3 parks

We also have a close relationship with the JC Raulston Arboretum. In addition to a club membership, we donate \$1000. each year toward the Summer Intern Program. This past year we donated over \$2000 to complete the funding for the GCNC President’s Project to add an accessible path to the Finley-Nottingham Rose Garden. We have also had the responsibility of maintaining the Winter Garden for the Arboretum for the past 13 years. A chair organizes the work activities with the Arboretum staff and a core group works every second Friday to keep the garden looking its best.

Our good relationship with NC State University’s Dept. of Horticulture, is supported by the Raleigh Garden Club annual scholarship. Speakers from the Dept. of Horticulture keep our members abreast of studies in the science. This past year Prof. Julieta Sherk spoke on residential landscape design to the full house, with over 90% of our members attending. Our monthly meetings are held at the NC State University Club, giving us a lovely venue.

As members of GCNC and District 10, our club coordinates activities with other garden clubs. We have invited our district 10 members to our

programs. We also cooperate in maintaining the Martha Franck Fragrance Garden, which is a GCNC Legacy garden. RGC chairs this effort and coordinates the workdays to share the labor between clubs.

We are strong supporters of our locally owned nurseries and garden-oriented businesses. Tours to their places of business, as well as bringing them in as educational speakers, are key to building loyalty among our members. Big Bloomers, Campbell Road Nursery, Lasting Impressions, Brie Arthur's Foodscapes Garden, Juniper Level Botanical Garden, and more were engaged with RGC in 2022.

Donating funds is a way of expanding our gardening outreach by empowering others. One example is the donation to Central Regional State Hospital, which enabled the Horticulture Therapy program to do a special project with the inmates, helping to promote their wellbeing.

Our Community Donations List includes: Dix Conservancy, NC DOT Roadside Wildflower Program, GCNC Special Project (Rose Garden Path), Interfaith Food Shuttle Farm, NC Botanical Garden, NC Wildlife Federation, SoundRivers, Triangle Land Conservancy.

The many thank you letters attest to the impact of these donations, made possible by our plant sales.



Support of the GCNC objective of studying the art of gardening wouldn't be complete without mentioning that RGC encourages our members to garden at home! Getting a mention in our *Glorious Gardens* program is an incentive to garden better, as is participating in our educational programs and mentoring each other. Senior members mentor newcomers, of course, but there is nothing a gardener likes better than to talk over garden problems and joys with another gardener and we all benefit from each other's expertise. The social time at our meetings and the luncheon after our speakers encourages this support.

Civic Beautification – A Love Affair between Raleigh and RGC

Civic beautification is one aspect of the environmental improvement objective of GCNC. Our club was originally founded with the single mission of beautifying Raleigh by turning it into a “garden with a city in it.” From east

to west, and from north to south, RGC gardens on behalf of our community. New projects undertaken this year :

- We are assisting Raleigh to develop Dix Park, a major city initiative, both in getting our hands in the dirt and creating two gardens there, and by donating funds to the Conservancy.
- Our Civic Improvement project this year was a Memorial Planting at the Claremont Park of a grove of dogwood trees.
- We have restored the neglected Charlotte Hilton Green Park and brought it back to the garden it was, restoring its beauty.
- We organized a garden tour of the National Historic Landmark House and Garden of Isabelle Bowen Henderson for the public.
- We oversee the maintenance of the Martha Franck Fragrance Garden on a bi-weekly basis.
- Each year we beautify the Victorian JJ Polk Home and the Transitions LifeCare Hospice facility to bring the holiday spirit to the community.

RGC also supports a variety of continuing projects

RGC Maintains Six Public Gardens Throughout the City for Civic Beautification

Civic Development and Beautification at Dix Park The newly restored All Faiths Chapel at Dix Park is used now as welcome center. RGC has been working to beautify the landscaping around it. We had already put in a pollinator garden. This year we expanded the garden to cover the full southern side, more than doubling the size. Planting for butterflies and beautifying public spaces dovetails perfectly with the mission of GCNC for environmental improvement. The high traffic location of the garden at the Chapel in Dix Park makes it educational and inspires the public to include these plants in their gardens.

The Parks Dept. removed the sod, and the Club tilled the area and planted perennials, spring bulbs, and seeded in zinnias for the first year as the perennials settled in. We also maintain the garden with regular weeding and mulching. Our goal with the Dix Chapel Garden was to emphasize native plants and support pollinators. By July the garden was bursting with color and lived up to its mission. We spotted several butterfly species – even a Monarch! – and many bees. Reducing the area of turf and improving the soil through natural methods is also a way to protect our natural resources.



6 – The new garden in summer, a hummingbird moth, and prepping the new garden

Tree Planting in Honor of Arbor Day To promote civic beautification of our parks, RGC has a tradition of planting trees for club members who have passed away during the previous year. This year we planted a grove of dogwood trees, *Cornus florida* ‘Cherokee Princess,’ six in all! They were planted in Claremont Park in Raleigh with the cooperation of the Parks Dept. A ceremony dedicating the trees and honoring our members was held on Arbor Day. The family and friends of the honorees were invited to join Club members and a Parks Dept. representative.

The planning of which kind of tree and the location is a team effort between the Parks Dept. and RGC’s Civic Improvement Chair. The actual planting is done by the Parks staff and the Club holds the memorial ceremony on Arbor Day. Each member is honored, and a printed program is given to the family members who attend. The Club donates \$1000 to Raleigh Parks Dept. in support of this project. Planting trees teaches stewardship of our natural resources and caring for the environment for generations to come.



7 - Gathering for the Memorial Tree Dedication on Arbor Day, and the keepsake program.

Transitions LifeCare Sanctuary Garden Members of the Raleigh Garden Club maintain the Sanctuary Garden at Transitions LifeCare. The garden was designed and installed by Club members in 2012. It is a peaceful wildlife habitat featuring native plants designed to attract, feed and protect birds and butterflies. The garden serves as a respite for the families, friends, and volunteers at Transitions LifeCare. It features a soothing water

fountain, benches, a birdhouse and feeder, and plantings that provide seasonal interest all year.

The Martha Franck Fragrance Garden The Garden is located in the heart of the Governor Morehead School for the Blind, across from Pullen Park. The Raleigh Garden Club serves as chair, organizing workdays to maintain the garden of perennials and shrubs selected for their texture and fragrance. The garden serves as an outdoor classroom, as well as being the centerpiece for various school functions including graduation. This garden is one of GCNC's legacy gardens, making it doubly dear to our hearts.

Civic Restoration of Historic Places is a Goal of GCNC

Charlotte Hilton Green Park Our second Adopt-A-Park project with the Parks Dept. was restoring the Charlotte Hilton Green Park. This small, inner-city garden once belonged to famed conservation author and early RGC member Green. She was "the one person in Raleigh most clearly identified with conservation of natural areas." Her neighbors were able to buy and protect a small part of her land from development when Charlotte had to retire to a nursing home, but it had been ignored since the 1980s and was overrun with invasive plants.

Charlotte's garden was educational and famous in her heyday back in the 30's and 40's. It was Raleigh's first wildlife habitat garden, and often visited by botany professors from NC State for research. It has meant a lot to the Club to re-connect with this historic little park and bring it back to its former beauty.

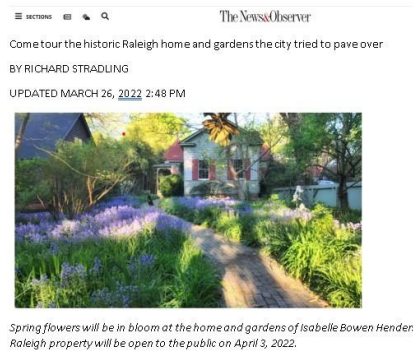
We have worked with the City to remove invasive plants, trim and prune existing shrubs, plant over 400 spring bulbs, and establish new plantings to support the birds Charlotte loved so well. Workdays are planned by the Chair with the Parks Dept. and are announced in our newsletter, with sign-up sheets at the meetings.



8 – Spring daffodils bloom around the park perimeter, and Charlotte Hilton Green in her garden c. 1949.

Tour of Historic Home and Garden The Isabelle Bowen Henderson home and garden is a Williamsburg Revival estate created in the 1930s by Mrs. Henderson, prominent Raleigh artist, horticulturist, and, of course, active member of RGC. The estate is a National Historic Landmark and consists of a main house outlying buildings built around a brick terrace, all within a walled enclosure. Isabelle held many a horticulture workshop there for RGC in the 30's and 40's. The garden is credited with sparking the popularity of the Williamsburg style in Raleigh.

The Club organized a tour of this private garden. The Committee set a date in spring when the Bluebell Walk would be in bloom. Working from old photographs, members planted tulips and early blooming annuals to restore the front garden to its original color scheme. A lot of publicity, including an article in our local newspaper, prepared for the event. Careful organizing of docents and a team of diggers in the back garden for selling the bluebell bulbs made sure the tour proceeded smoothly. Our hard work paid off and the day was wildly successful. Over 600 people toured the garden! Everyone who visited the garden was just wowed. They loved the story member Russ told of the garden and his great aunt Isabelle, and also of the fight her descendants have had to preserve the estate from the city's efforts to put in a new major roadway over the land. We sold \$700 in bulbs and earned \$3240 at the gate in entrance fees.



9 - Touring the front garden, and publicity article from the News & Observer

The Winter Holidays are a Perfect Time for the GCNC Goal of Civic Beautification
Transitions LifeCare Hospice For many years RGC has used simple designs and materials to create a peaceful, pleasing Winter Holiday ambiance for those residing at and visiting Transitions LifeCare.

Planning begins in the fall and a captain takes charge of each area to be decorated, recruits her team, plans and installs the decorations on the designated day. After the holidays we return to dismantle the decorations.

We heard from two residents and the staff how much they appreciated the holiday décor appearing at the facility. It brought back good memories and a sense of joy in having one more holiday to celebrate. The committee was proud of their work and stood to a round of applause at the December Club meeting when a thank you email from the facility Administrator was read out loud. It was a lot of fun and we succeeded in raising the spirit of the holiday season for all.

L.L. Polk House Decorating the Polk House for the Christmas holidays brings the holiday spirit to a public and historic building in downtown Raleigh for all to enjoy. Christmas walking tours of the downtown are most effective if all the buildings are decorated. This we definitely accomplished with the extensive garlanding of the large porch, the ten-foot-tall tree, and the large planters at each side of the entrance.

Another goal accomplished is educating our members on the Christmas decorating traditions of the Victorian era. The Victorians created Christmas decorating as we know it – from Christmas cards to the decorated tree. They used their imagination and things found in nature to decorate their trees, which inspires us today to re-connect with our natural world and the GCNC goals of conservation and appreciation of Nature.



10 - Decorating Transitions LifeCare Hospice (left), and tidying up the Polk House for Christmas

Conservation and Protection of our Natural Resources

RGC helps in protecting our natural resources through donations to Triangle Land Conservancy and SoundRivers and the NC Wildlife Federation, among others. Conserving our natural resources also requires education, and that is the purpose of RGC's Environmental Group. The Chair set up several programs during the year, including:

- A tour of the Jordan Lake Educational Forest with a talk by a forest ranger on forest health and sustainability
- A tour of the Benson Water Treatment Plant's new facility to reclaim wastewater for agriculture, and more.

Teaching Youth a Love of Gardening

RGC sponsors the Rosey Girls Garden Club. Following GCNC guidelines, the leaders teach basic gardening skills to the girls, grades 3-5, who sign up for the year. Rosey Girls Youth Garden Club seeks to inspire the girls with a lifelong love of gardening and the natural world, not only to improve and maintain our environment, but also to share the sheer fun of "digging in the dirt."

Rosey Girls Club projects include a bird sanctuary, vegetable garden and a pollinator garden. Committee members help the girls plant, maintain, weed, and harvest from the garden and the girls had vegetables to take home. The extra vegetables were donated to the Boys and Girls Club Food Pantry.

Due to COVID 19 safety precautions, we had to meet with the girls outside this year, skipping January and February because of the cold.



11 The Rosey Girls Garden Club planting dish gardens, and harvesting from the vegetable garden.

Grow Your Garden Club, Grow Your Dreams

The Raleigh Garden Club continues to grow. We added 12 new members over the year, and several of them are involved in the Club projects already. Member participation is strong. Most monthly meetings had nearly 80% attendance, some of whom attended via Zoom. Our educational activities were at full capacity, except for one very rainy outing to a nature preserve. Our projects had plenty of helping hands. Club affairs such as table decorations, baking desserts for the meetings, hostesses to greet new members, and such, are always accomplished with a smile. Everyone helps somewhere, as a club member survey showed.

Overall, the Club is lucky to have about 85% active members, with the remaining elderly, infirm, or COVID high risk members still participating via Zoom and monetarily to support the Club through dues and contributions.

By the numbers, the Club raised and distributed \$7185 in Community Donations, completed on 18 environmental and civic improvement projects, presented 24 educational programs to our members, and our sponsored Youth Garden Club girls. But the true benefit of our efforts epitomized the value of garden club: fulfilling the goals set out by GCNC by beautifying our communities, celebrating our garden traditions, and uniting members of our Club in activities that were fun to help grow our gardens and green our community. We are pleased to submit RGC as GCNC Club of the Year for larger Clubs. Thank you for the opportunity to share our story.



12 - A meeting of The Raleigh Garden Club presented by Juniper Level Botanic Garden