

MAY 2022



Bloomin' Times

www.rakeandhoegc.org



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“Spring Blooms”

Photograph by Joe Da Rold

MEMBER NEWS

FROM THE ARCHIVES

May, 1973

Who was the Mystery “Violet Lady”?

“Our own “Violet Lady” won 7 awards at the Staten Island show, including “Queen of the Show.” She also worked on the Union County Show and was much too modest to tell [us] that she won sweepstakes award for 41 blue ribbons.”

Dreams of Trees

“The Conservation Committee is making contacts to suggest the beginning of a continuing project such as planting flowering trees around the lake in Tamaques Park. We hope other gardens will cooperate.”

“Good Deeds”

“The Junior Gardeners have done their usual good deeds this year and had lots of fun, too. Before Easter they visited Cerebral Palsy Home and took 50 homemade (by them) baskets to handicapped children. One of the patients remarked “I knew you’d come.’ ”

“Kneeling In a Garden”

*“There’s a lot you can do in a garden
Besides getting healthfully tired
As you hoe row on row
Watching everything grow
With kindly thoughts you’re inspired
Like a chapel for deep meditation
On weakness and personal strife
In the garden you feel
As you labor and kneel
Impelled to make more out of life.”*

Anonymous

2020 Judy Kampe Award

Fairy Houses

Bring to the May General Meeting by 12 Noon. The houses must be made from all natural materials (the base structure may be purchased). 15" X 15" maximum.

Judging to be based on:

- * Creative/imaginative use of materials
- * Attention to detail
- * Attention to scale
- * Variety of materials
- * Overall design



Member Birthdays in May

- 1 Diane Genco
- 2 Richard Pelikan
- 8 Nancy Smith
- 15 Beth Siano
- 18 Linda Parker
- 29 Gayle Lechner



Thanks to Our Contributors:

Barbara Mullin, Jeanie Pelikan, Betty Clark,
Sharon Shiraga, Betty Gulino
Editor: Joe Da Rold

RHGC President: Beth Siano

MEMBER NEWS

Flowers for Nursing Homes



From Left:
Jeanie Pelikan,
Richard Pelikan,
Betty Gulino, Joyce
Mullen, Beth Siano,
Maryfran Annese

Not shown:
Inge Bossert and
Joe Da Rold



In February, the RHGC Board approved a proposal by Joe Da Rold to provide flowers to nursing homes and assisted living centers in towns throughout our service area. Led by Joe and Betty Gulino of Community Projects, a steering committee visited *The Chelsea at Fanwood* on March 29th, bringing mini-roses for the twelve dining tables. *Center for Hope* in Scotch Plains will be visited in May. Contacts are being made with facilities in surrounding towns.



Popular Speaker: On March 14th, the Garden Club of Westfield welcomed one of their favorite speakers, RHGC member Barbara Mullin, to present a program on bulbs. Barbara shared some bulbs for the members, including a few canna bulbs, one of her favorite plants. Read Barbara's article on Cannas on page 10 of this issue.



Ed. Note: The roots of the Canna plant are actually rhizomes, but "bulbs" has become accepted usage by gardeners and horticulturists.



CLUB ACTIVITIES

MAY

May 2—Noon
Board Meeting
Home of Beth Hanscom

May 3—10:30 am
Felted Soap Workshop
Home of Tracy Criscitiello

May 11—Noon
General Meeting

May 17—9:00 am
Mini Designs for Mobile Meals
Workshop at Baptist Church

May 18—10:15 am
Community Garden Cleanup
Northside Train Station Cleanup

May 18—3:30 pm
Juniors Meeting
Shadowlawn Park
Planting & Cleanup

May 19—9:00 am
Trip to Chanticleer
Lunch to follow

May 25—9:30 am
Secret Garden Tour



5 Westfield Homes
Meet at Beth Hanscomb's
Lunch to follow

HIGHLIGHTS

May General Meeting

5/11/2022

Garden Gems of the Garden State

Presented by

Mary Jo Sichak



Membership

At the April General Meeting
Sharon Shiraga inducted two
new members:

Betty Estevez Clark
and
Ginny (Virginia) Puskar

Congratulations, Ladies!

* * *

We also welcomed two
prospective members:

Regina Kelley
and
Mabel Woloj

June

70TH Annual Luncheon

Echo Lake Country Club



June 8, 2022
Wednesday, Noon
Tickets: \$42

Also in June...

June 6—Noon
Board Meeting
Home of Beth Siano

June 15—9:30 am
Clematis Propagation
Workshop
Lesley Parness
Home of Martha Savage

RHGC AWARDS TO SCHOOLS

Dear Rake & Hoe Members:

The Awards Committee is pleased to share the information on what the various schools are doing with their RHGC grant funds of \$100. We received a beautiful, informative letter from Tamaques (see below). As of this writing, the committee has not yet heard from the schools in Mountainside.

Lee Perry, Chair

2021-2022 School Awards

Lincoln Elementary. Spring planting activity with kindergartners.

Franklin. Spring planting.

Wilson. Garden has been integrated into a science unit...they will use \$ for seeds, tools and wildlife mitigation

Jefferson. Spring plantings from classroom to garden.

Washington. Improving their pollinator section of garden

McKinley. Spring planting activity

Tamaques. First Peas on the Table challenge with second grades



Dear Lee,

Thank you for reaching out. We appreciate the Rake and Hoe GC's interest and generous offer to support the Tamaques PTO School Garden. Our main goal has been to introduce the Farm-to-Table concept and foster a love for organic gardening. All of our projects involve the children sowing, nurturing and harvesting various crops with support from teachers and family volunteers.

One of our most renowned annual projects is the second grade **"First Peas to the Table"** Challenge, a friendly competition accompanied by Susan Grigsby's book of the same title and inspired by Thomas Jefferson's friendly neighborhood gardening contest. Mid March, each student grows 2 pea plants from seed and cares for them in the classroom for 2 weeks before transplanting the seedlings into the garden where each class designs their own trellis. The students continue to closely monitor and nurture their plants as there are several awards to be won for each classroom, including first blossom, first mature pea pod, longest pea pod, plant with the most pods, lushest foliage, and more.

Another top project for the students - I guess because it is Principal Duell's favorite crop - is to plant garlic every November and see it appear in early Spring, thus opening our gardening season. Last fall, 5th grade and 1st grade students worked together, measuring the right distance between the cloves to ensure proper growth.

In addition to maintaining our comprehensive herb garden of 12 varieties and our recurring favorite crops of swiss chard, carrots, and broccoli, we strive to try something new each year. In 2021, we introduced the children to growing and cooking okra, and planted yellow summer squash, eliciting many comments and laughter with its bright color and funny shape. For this season, I am considering the Burpee tomato variety "SuperSauce", promising fruits up to 2 lbs each, which I am sure would entertain the kids, plus either some of the multi-colored cauliflower species or bi-colored heirloom sweet corn. Mrs. Kennedy, our school nurse, always reminds the students to eat a rainbow!

Given the many activities the children perform in the Garden, our hand tools, and especially the gardening gloves have seen much wear and tear. Your financial support would enable us to restock the children-sized gloves as well as hand rakes and shovels and make sufficient quantities available in the shed for the classes returning to the Garden in possibly as little as 8 weeks!

Many thanks for your help! Please reach out with any questions or recommendations for our planned activities.

Best regards,

Birgit Kosjek, Tamaques Garden Chair

RHGC JUNIORS

March Meeting

The Juniors met on March 16 to learn about insects in the garden. RHGC member Joan Barna gave a talk about different insects and their importance. Then the girls made a Bug Barn to catch insects, observe and then release them.

Sharon Shiraga



Left to right: Lila Spadaro, Brynn O'Grady, Arline Bound



April Meeting

The Juniors met on April 20 to learn how to make felted soap. They used the wool roving that they had dyed at their September meeting.

Sharon Shiraga



Left to right:

Arabella Morabito, Lila Spadaro, Brynn O'Grady, Hannah Lee

CLUB PHOTOGRAPHERS

CAMELLIAS

One of our members recently visited an arboretum in North Carolina and sent back these gorgeous photos from their camellia gardens.

Camellia Trivia

- ◇ Camellia sinensis is usually called 'tea plant', as it is the most common plant in the world used for making tea. The young leaves can be made into green tea, black tea, white tea, oolong tea and other types of tea.
- ◇ Camellia bushes can live up to 100 to 200 years, but the oldest living camellia was planted in 1347. It can be found in China's Panlong Monastery.
- ◇ Some camellia species, especially sasanqua, can be grown as hedges, topiaries and espaliers.



CLUB PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photographs by Jeanie Pelikan



CLUB PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photographs by Betty Clark



Uncanny Canna Lilies

By Barbara Mullin

Growing Canna Lilies and using them in the landscape

Canna Lilies are not Lilies at all but tender perennials with huge roots. After living in the garden for one season, one plant will yield about 4 or 5 or more plantable roots for the next year.

When I was a kid, Canna were used in Municipal and Hospital plantings and planted in big circles. Evidently they were used because they were very hardy and required little attention and still gave a lot of color to the area, Like all fads, etc. Canna fell from the public taste and one didn't see them at all for many years. And like all fads they came back into favor once more. Only years of culture and hybridizing created more variety in both plant and flower. One can see them in planters and gardens as they are so easy to grow and don't need much care.



Nothing I know of eats Canna Lilies. Nothing, not the Deer, the Groundhogs or any bugs. I have a batch of Deer visitors who have enjoyed all my Dahlias, Lilies and Daylilies to the extent that, unless caged, they all get eaten off.



A few years ago someone gave away two huge bags of Canna Lilies at a Fall plant exchange and no one took any. I hated to see such hearty root stock thrown into the garbage and I took all. At that time I was still teaching a Gardening Class and gave all my students as many as they wanted. I kept none for myself. A few years later, one student gave me a couple of roots and I planted them and they were tall and erect and had bright red flowers. These plants bloomed non-stop (with only some deadheading now and then) After two years of planting on the neighbor's driveway side, I had saved the roots and last year I saved five (5) large boxes full. I gave some away, however we were not getting together with plant lovers this Spring, and I wasn't able to give or plant them all. Well, I did plant many to make a break just beyond my new Patios and separate that area from the far back. They did so well that one really can't see much of the things beyond that area. I also discovered that both the flowers and the large long and wide leaves also were usable in floral design, especially nice when not much else was available. A double row of six foot plants with tall red flowers up above looked stunning and continued to look stunning well into Fall.



How to take care of the huge roots:

After the first real frost, dig out the plants and let them dry off. Put them in a cardboard box and store them in your cellar. That is it, no washing or special treatment. Late next Spring, take them out and check for yucky stuff and discard that stuff. These plants are not native to this area and usually are not winter hardy. They also are slow to start growing and will do almost nothing until mid to late June, After that their growth is phenomenal. I start some in water to encourage some early leaf growth and then set them out where I want them. After that, let nature take her course. Except for some watering during dry hot summer, they require little or no care, however dead heading encourages more bloom. I want flowers in my garden and because of those marauding animals, these hearty and hardy plants fill the bill. I'll be trying to grow some from seed just to see what I get from some filched seeds.

GARDEN POTPOURRI

CANNA TRIVIA



Some little-known facts about canna:

- ◇ The seeds are used as beads in jewelry.
- ◇ The seeds are used as part of a musical instrument from Réunion, and in a gourd rattle from Zimbabwe.
- ◇ In remote regions of India, cannas are fermented to make alcohol.
- ◇ The plant yields a fiber that is used as a substitute for jute and is also used in making paper.
- ◇ In Vietnam, canna starch is used to make cellophane noodles known as *mi dong*.
- ◇ In Thailand, cannas are a traditional gift for Father's Day.
- ◇ Cannas attract hummingbirds.

jdr

GARDEN LIMERICKS

A creative young Scot named
Gilmartin

So lovingly tended his garden

He spent untold hours

Crisscrossing his flowers

Producing each year a new tartan.

jdr

Flowering Cherry Trees

BRANCH BROOK PARK



A walk through Branch Brook Park, via Betty Clark's photos on page 9, has whet my appetite to learn more about the park and cherry trees in general.

The park land was created in 1895, but the cherry trees did not arrive until 1927, through a gift. The number of trees has increased over the years, and Branch Brook is now noted for the largest collection of [cherry blossom](#) trees in the United States. It is home to more than 5,200 cherry trees, a greater variety and number than the famous Washington, D.C. display.

There are 14 types of cherry blossoms scattered across the four-mile long park, from the white-pink, single-blossom [Yoshino](#), to the deep-pink, double-blossom [Kwanzan](#). If this does not satisfy your craving, Brooklyn Botanic Garden contains 26 species and cultivars.

CHERRY TREES AND CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Lest we be overwhelmed by the beauty of flowering cherry trees, there are also the ones that make cherry pies possible. Both the cherry trees and the cherry blossom trees are true cherries, with the same botanical genus *Prunus*. Many flowering cherries also bear fruit, but the fruit is too sour for human consumption, though beloved by a wide variety of birds.

One of the most popular of the edible cherries is the Vandalay Cherry, which bears deliciously sweet fruit and is self-pollinating, meaning you can plant one and done. They are recommended for the home garden because they require minimal care, and they provide year-round color with seasonally changing foliage and attractive bark. Another attribute to consider when purchasing: some are fragrant, with a very faint lilac and rose scent, accented with creamy vanilla and soft, almond-like aromas.

If you are a person who has trouble making decisions, beware. There are over 300 species, varieties, and hybrids of Japanese flowering cherry trees. jdr



Branch Brook Park

GARDEN POTPOURRI

Home Remedies For Your Plants

Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂)



Hydrogen Peroxide is not a fertilizer, but it can help boost plant growth, because of the extra oxygen molecule. Oxygen helps plant roots absorb nutrients from the soil.

To give plants an added boost of oxygen or for pest control using the commercial 3% solution, add 1 teaspoon (5 ml.) per cup (240 ml.) of water in a spray bottle and **mist the plant**. Not only is this an environmentally friendly alternative to pesticides, but it has the added benefit of being anti-fungal.

For plants with root rot or fungal infections, use 1 tablespoon (15 ml.) per cup of water. The solution can be made up and stored for future use, but be sure to store it in a cool, dark place as exposure to light diminishes the potency.

Epsom Salt



Epsom salt helps improve flower blooming and enhances a plant's green color. It even helps plants grow bushier. Epsom salt is made up of magnesium and sulfur, both important to healthy plant growth, not to mention a restorative for tired feet.

Magnesium allows plants to better take in valuable nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus. It also helps in the creation of chlorophyll, which is vital for photosynthesis. If the soil becomes depleted of magnesium, adding Epsom salt will help; and since it poses little danger of overuse like most commercial fertilizers, you can use it safely on nearly all your garden plants.

When diluted with water, Epsom salt is easily taken up by plants, especially when applied as a foliar spray. Most plants can be misted with a solution of 2 tablespoons of Epsom salt per gallon of water once a month. For more frequent watering, every other week, cut this back to 1 tablespoon.

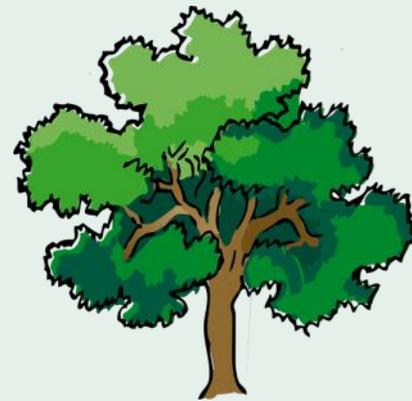
With roses, you can apply a foliar spray of 1 tablespoon per gallon of water for each foot of the shrub's height. Apply in spring as leaves appear and then again after flowering.

Source: www.gardeningknowhow.com

Planting under a Tree

Some good Ground Covers choices

Ajuga
Lungwort
Foamflower
Creeping juniper
Liriope
Periwinkle
Pachysandra
Wild violets
Hosta

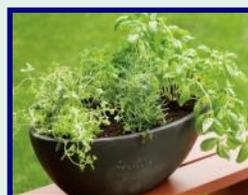


Source: www.gardeningknowhow.com

[Ed. note: I have had good luck with Creeping Jenny under my Birch, although in some years it has died back without explanation.]

Herbs You Can Grow in One Pot

Be sure to choose plants with common irrigation needs when mixing herbs in a pot.



While pretty much all herbs love sun, some need to be watered more often than others.

Mediterranean-based herbs, such as sage, rosemary, thyme, oregano, marjoram, and lavender, share a love of sun and fairly arid soil: **Rosemary, thyme, and sage like it fairly dry**, but tender **basil, tarragon, cilantro and parsley need more consistent moisture**.

Be careful about which mint varieties are grown together. For example, if you plant a lemon mint with spearmint, they might cross pollinate, and the results might be less than palatable.

Source: gardeningknowhow.com

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Meet the “Megaspider”

A gigantic funnel-web spider (*Arachnida Araneae*) with massive piercing fangs has been donated to an antivenom program in Australia. The arachnid's sheer size – 3 inches tall and nearly one inch long – makes it one of a kind.



The spider, from the Sydney coastal area, will have its fangs milked for venom that can be transformed into antivenom. Michael Tate, of the Australian Reptile Park explained: **"If we can get the public to hand in more spiders like her, it will result in more lives being saved due to the huge amount of venom they can produce."**

The average length of a funnel-web spider's body is one to five centimeters, making this one of the largest of its kind ever seen. The biggest spider ever, the tarantula known as the whistling spider, can grow 2.4" tall and span out to 6.3" long.

Golden Eagles Threatened

In a study covering 38 states, scientists have found that most eagles in the U.S. suffer from lead poisoning. That includes the bald eagle, America's national bird.



Lead has been banned in the United States from use in most consumer goods for decades, but lead is still the material of choice for most ammunition. For birds of prey that scavenge the remains of

animals shot by hunters, lead can be lethal.

This trend is especially concerning for golden eagles, whose populations are at best stable and for whom the one percent annual decline caused by chronic lead poisoning could represent a slow march toward oblivion.

Source: National Geographic

Meet the Invasive Aedes Mosquito

Thinking of visiting California? Think again!



Aedes Mosquito

Identifiable by its distinctive white stripes.

Thought to have made its way from China to California in 2001, the population of the mosquito has grown so rapidly that numerous counties in the state are trying to control the population rather than eradicate it.

What makes these mosquitoes so much more terrifying than others? Their preference for biting humans. Most mosquitoes prefer to feed on birds, but the Aedes mosquitoes have a whole different interest: they prefer to bite people. They'll continuously try and bite you over the course of a few minutes to get a full blood meal. So, when you get five bites in your legs, it could very well be from just one Aedes mosquito.

The differences from other mosquitoes don't end there either. Aedes mosquitoes tend to be more aggressive, they bite during the day and can live outdoors and indoors. They also tend to be more active during the fall, unlike other mosquitoes that typically stop activity by October. The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District even found these mosquitoes living in May this year. The season for this mosquito is getting longer.

Another big danger of Aedes mosquitoes: viruses. West Nile virus is the best-known virus that mosquitoes can carry, but these critters can carry a lot more, such as Zika, yellow fever, dengue and chikungunya, among others.

Source: [Jordan Mendoza](#), USA Today



June Luncheon Photo Contest Categories



1. Entrances highlighting Horticulture, i.e., gates, doors, porches.
2. Elements of Sculpture, including horticulture.
3. Find yellow in the garden.
4. NJ Wildlife - (excluding butterflies, insects, and bees). Highlight your squirrels, chipmunks, ground hogs, deer, fox, etc. that are wandering and munching on your plants.

Contact: Margot

New Members' Tea

Membership Committee Chair Sharon Shiraga hosted a meeting on 3/30/22 to meet our two newest prospective members: Betty Clark and Ginny Puskar. They were inducted at the April general meeting.



Clockwise in the photo (l-r): Betty Gulino, Ginny Puskar, President Beth Siano, Tracy Criscitiello, Kay Cross, Margot Partridge, Betty Clark, and Joe Da Rold.

Photographer: Sharon Shiraga

DECK THE HALLS 2022

Chairs Announced:

House #1

Nancy Smith
Tracy Criscitiello

House #2

Clare Minick
Barbara Spellmeyer

House #3

Kris Luka & Lee Perry

Boutique

Sharon Shiraga, Betsy Chance
and Nina Sylvester.

Have you signed up yet? All members are required to participate in some way.

May 6th, 7th and 8th Rutgers Gardens Annual Spring Flower Fair and Plant Sale

May 19th – 22nd NJ Audubon's 45th Annual Cape May Spring Festival



Decorating the Spring Tree at Jardine Academy

L-R: Mary Lou Nolas, Jeanie Pelikan, Betty Gulino, Maryfran Annese, Dorothy Camilletti, Richard Pelikan, Irene Greenstein.



Bird Count

Each year, members volunteer to keep track of the birds they spot. Sheets will be collected at the upcoming May Meeting. Contact Adah Levin for details.

This year the "Bird of the Year" chosen by the Garden B's Committee was the Indigo Bunting. Did you spot one in your yard?