



Nancy Hargroves Delivers!



Nancy Hargroves, National Garden Clubs, Inc. President-Elect for 2017, presented an awe-inspiring program on October 13th. Touted as “over the top”, Nancy did not disappoint!! She shared creative container gardening ideas for the fall and winter seasons. It was a true honor to have Nancy as our speaker in October. After the program, Jenny Boyenga commented “From exaggerated kissing balls looking like pumpkins or Christmas, to planters that could be changed to match the season or holiday by simply switching out accessories, each of us took away ideas to complement the outside of our yards throughout the seasons. Nancy’s engaging manner and ease in



presentation made everyone feel welcomed.” At least 29 guests were in attendance.

Between ticket, raffle, and Root Cellar “Holiday Happening” sales, RGC netted approximately \$1,600.

October Hostesses Serve Up a Tasty Oktoberfest for Members and Guests



October hostesses prepared a delicious luncheon for RGC members and guests.

From homemade sauerkraut to a variety of sausages and german potato salad, these ladies put on a feast! Pictured from left are Robin Perks, Mary Huyta, Carol Clark and Sharon Timm (not pictured: Bonnie Schaschek, Jenny Boyenga, Judy Ripley and Margie Redlin)

Workshop Scheduled for November



Entering the Holiday Season always stirs memories of holidays past. Members are invited to bring their favorite Thanksgiving or Christmas display or perhaps a favorite ornament, whatever the item may be. Share your item and your story with us. Should it be a container, plan to create it during our workshop. Jenny Boyenga will be demonstrating swags and centerpiece designs that are quick and inexpensive. All items will be raffled. Come and enjoy the fun and fellowship and perhaps create a new memory. What To Bring:

1. Container with wet Oasis. Make certain the Oasis is at least 1 inch above the rim of the container. The container may be ceramic, a basket, metal, tin whatever!
2. A paper grocery bag filled with different greens.
3. A few flowers.
4. Large black plastic bag.
5. Your garden snips or scissors.

Chrissy Ketner Receives Honorary Membership



Chrissy Ketner, a 5th grader at Lancaster Middle School, has been attending club meetings as a guest of member Jenny Boyenga. Chrissy received an honorary membership as the

RGC Youth Liaison. Plans are beginning for a youth club in 2017. Nancy Hargroves was on hand to officially congratulate Chrissy with this special recognition. Nancy commented "Without responsible youth involvement, we have no future. They are the next generation of gardeners."



Chrissy is 10 years old in 5th grade at Lancaster Middle School with a 4.0 average. A bright and gifted child, Chrissy's interests are many; cooking,

dancing, environmental research, growing plants from seed and cultivating her own vegetable and flower garden, a love she shares with her father. She also enjoys spending time with her family and friends. Her request to join RGC as an Honorary member and youth liaison to the community was entirely supported by her family and school teachers. Her desire is to become RGC's Most Valuable Gardener and becoming president one day!

RGC Members Travel to Piedmont District Meeting



This may be a record! On Monday, October 10th, ten RGC Members travelled to

Richmond to attend the Fall Piedmont District Meeting. RGC was asked to sell opportunity tickets to all those present. This was indeed an honor! Thanks to Deborah Brooks, those RGC members selling tickets donned a festive Halloween hat which made our jobs much easier as those in attendance found us easy to spot! The program was presented by Jenn Pineau from Nature Composed. Jenn has been featured in magazines such as *Martha Stewart Weddings*, *Style Me Pretty*, and *Washingtonian*. Martha Stewart named her one of the "62 Floral Designer's To Book for your Wedding".



Jenn has a studio and farm in Rochelle, VA and a store in Middleburg. Her approach to floral design is of a natural nature using locally grown materials. She has an art degree

from VCU as well as a certificate in Permaculture from GMU. Permaculture is a growing trend to work ecologically within the landscape system to bond food, energy, shelter and water. She keeps all of this in mind as a designer and cuts waste by



composting, capturing rainwater, and using locally grown products therefore cutting down on packaging. Her program was titled "Getting Back to the Roots of Floral Design". She showed us ways to design without using Oasis; rather, using all locally grown materials -- some from her

own farm. RGC members are strongly encouraged to attend Piedmont District Meetings. You receive a very a nice lunch and listen to two very good speakers; one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Shopping opportunities abound as well! The Spring Piedmont District meeting is scheduled for March 13th 2017. Mark your calendars and make a fun day trip to this event.

Plus One Membership Campaign

Don't Forget the Plus One Membership Campaign! RGC Can Make a Difference!

*Garden Clubs and members are challenged to promote and increase our membership. It's up to each one of us to invite prospects to join our organization to add more talent, ideas, and **helping hands**.*

Every meeting is a great meeting in which to invite a guest. The November meeting/workshop is no exception. Guests may come to the demonstration and stay for the workshop whether they want to create something or just observe.

Monarch Project Concludes



RGRC Member and Webmaster, Carol Clark, was involved in a very exciting Monarch butterfly project this past

spring/summer. After learning about the plight of the Monarch butterfly at an RGC club meeting in which Donna Cottingham, VFGC State Chairman for Butterflies/Pollinators presented an extremely educational program, Carol started planning her nectar garden and milkweed habitat. Carol learned that the Monarch's milkweed habitat was shrinking primarily due to the use of pesticides and chemicals. Unlike other butterflies, Monarchs lay eggs only on milkweed plants and Monarch caterpillars eat only milkweed. Carol did a lot of research and learned that the Monarch butterfly was nearing extinction so she decided to try raising Monarchs inside her sunroom.

In mid-May Carol was visiting River Birch Nursery in Locust Hill, VA. While walking through the large selection of plants and shrubs at River Birch Nursery, she found a new shipment of tropical milkweed plants. To her delight, she found a multitude of Monarch butterfly caterpillars (known as "cats" in Monarch butterfly lingo) all over these plants. She counted over 33+ cats in various stages

of instar development. Carol spoke with the nursery owners and they eagerly agreed to let her take the cats home. This was the beginning of a summer long project of rearing Monarchs and raising awareness regarding the plight of Monarch butterflies to her friends, neighbors, family and other RGC Members.

Carol has a nice sunny, warm sunroom, ideal for raising Monarchs. She has two portable pop-up mesh hampers and several small critter keepers. She puts the very small monarch eggs and 1st instar cats in clear florist corsage boxes. As they grow into 2nd instar cats, she moves them to her critter keepers. Once they get to the 4th and 5th instar stage, she moves them to the mesh hampers. When the 5th instar cats are ready, they climb to the top of the hamper, form a "J", and then transform into a beautiful emerald green chrysalis. In about 8 – 10 days, a beautiful Monarch butterfly emerges from the chrysalis.

In order to feed the hungry caterpillars, Carol purchased more than 35 milkweed plants throughout the summer season. Milkweed leaves that are fed to the caterpillars are treated with a spray mixture of Clorox & water, which helps to eliminate OE spores and other bacteria and pesticides from the plant surface. This ensures a higher mortality rate for the Monarchs. Carol learned that you should purchase milkweed from trusted sources to ensure the plants are not treated with pesticides or insecticides. Otherwise, the caterpillars will die from eating milkweed treated with toxic chemicals. Monarch eggs, chrysalides, cats, and butterflies are extremely sensitive to chemicals, which is one reason they are nearing extinction. Later in the summer, Carol's flowerbeds were overrun with weeds because her monarch waystation is a "pesticide free zone". Their exterminator came to do his annual inspection and to spray around the house but was sent home. No chemicals around her monarch babies!

Monarch caterpillars devour large quantities of milkweed, especially the larger 4th and 5th instar cats. Over the spring and summer, she visited plant nurseries throughout Virginia and North Carolina in search of more milkweed. According to Carol, "you can never have enough milkweed." She came

close to running out of milkweed several times, so she called on her sister, Cathie Elliott who is also an RGC member, for help. Cathie had planted several annual milkweed plants called *Gomphocarpus physocarpus*, affectionately referred to as Hairy Balls or Family Jewels. In an effort to keep Carol's cats fed, Cathie repotted the healthy Hairy Balls milkweed and took it to Carol to feed her babies. Carol also tried feeding butternut squash to some of her 5th instar baby cats. It has been reported in the monarch community that both 4th and 5th instar caterpillars will eat butternut squash. But, once they start eating this squash, they do not revert back to milkweed. While the cats ate the squash, they clearly preferred milkweed.

Raising Monarch butterflies inside your house is an extremely time-consuming commitment but a rewarding project as well. Caterpillars must be taken care of around the clock. Outdoor milkweed plants must be monitored daily for new eggs left by "Mother" monarchs. The eggs are usually found on the underside of milkweed leaves. Those eggs along with the leaf is removed and brought inside for caring and rearing. As an aside, in addition to monitoring milkweed for new eggs, Carol went on "aphid patrol" every day identifying these nasty creatures which suck the life out of milkweed stems and leaves by squishing them with her fingers since chemicals could not be used to kill the aphids. This proved to be challenging because eggs were very often closely located to these aphids. So, Carol exercised a lot of care to protect the eggs and at the same time, annihilate the aphids. Milkweed used to feed caterpillars must be sterilized and kept fresh all day and night. Cats' living quarters must be kept clean. Travel opportunities are limited unless you can find someone to care for them. Carol and her husband, Ed, took a couple of side trips this summer. Cathie babysat while Carol was travelling and took care of her cats and chrysalides. She has also inspired Cathie and a few other members to establish their own monarch waystations. In fact, at a recent garden club meeting, another new monarch waystation owner enthusiast, Debbie Burgess, brought a 5th instar cat to Carol to take care of while Debbie was travelling. Carol was not at club that day so Cathie took it home to care for. So, this has become quite a family affair.

Since Carol started this project, she has raised over 200 Monarch butterflies. Her passion, enthusiasm and excitement rubbed off on other club members as well. Carol's Monarch journey has been highlighted in the Rappahannock Garden Club's monthly newsletters. An RGC member survey was developed to explore what club members are growing in their gardens and whether they qualify for monarch waystation certification. We now have a total of 11 club members that have registered their waystations and probably more to come!

One might think that raising and releasing over 200+ monarch butterflies might become monotonous. Not according to Carol. "This has been a very rewarding experience. I love all the phases of Monarch development but especially love the 5th instar cats because they are so fat and sassy. Each one has a unique personality and they respond to voices and noises around the house. Sometimes I think they know who I am – maybe they think I'm their Mama. I feel so connected to God when I watch these little cats turn into beautiful Monarch butterflies. Each time I watch an emerald green chrysalis turn into a stunning Monarch butterfly I feel like I am observing one of God's unique miracles. It is so amazing and beautiful – nature at its most breathtaking and such a blessing from God. I can't wait until next year to start all over again."

In closing, Carol shares her favorite Monarch Butterfly poem:

*Jewel of Nature
Sprinkled with Gold
Wings of a Butterfly
Wait to Unfold*

*Kissed by the Moonlight,
And Warmed by the
Sun, A Magical
Journey
Has Just Begun.*

*Soaring and Gliding
It Travels by Day,
'Cross Thousands of Miles
To a Safe Hideaway!*

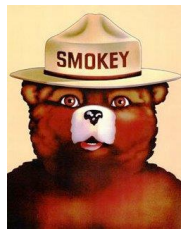


Thank You to our Veterans

On May 21st 2011, RGC dedicated and installed our Blue Star Memorial marker at Lancaster Court House in Lancaster VA. Margie Redlin, chair of the Blue Star Memorial committee, planted annuals, mulched and placed a flag at the foot of the marker in honor of Veteran's Day. Thank you to all of our veterans, past and present, who keep us safe both here and abroad.



RGC to Work With Lancaster Middle School on Smokey Bear Project



On November 28th, Youth Committee Members: Mary Ann McKay, Cathie Elliott, Susan Edmonds, Jenny Boyenga and Pam Lazorchak will read The Smokey Bear Story to the fourth and fifth grades at Lancaster Middle School.

Marilyn Sprouse, the middle school art teacher, will then have the children draw posters for the Smokey Bear poster contest. Marilyn will use this poster to teach figure drawing techniques. These posters will then be submitted by RGC to the State Garden Club contest representative. Each child will receive a certificate for entering the contest.