

# DIGGERS DIRT

The Dirt being dished this month...

## General Meetings

10:30 Program  
(Unless otherwise noted)  
12:00 noon Meeting &  
Brown Bag Lunch

### Wednesday, February 6th

Joint Club Meeting  
Dr Ari Novy  
Huntington Library  
Rothenberg Hall



### ...Look ahead...

### Wednesday, March 6th

Tomato Talk  
with Sue Anderson



Gretl Mulder's home  
1150 Laurel Street  
Pasadena



## From The President

If it's February it must be...

- Time to treat your Valentine!
- Founders Fund Finalists (Every club votes)
- Flowering bulb season
- Heirloom Seed catalogue searches (F1 Hybrid vs Heirloom/Open Pollinated)
- Dormant Oil spraying month
- NAL; What is it, where is it, why? (Reading Position Papers)
- And, if you are a dedicated Digger, Auction Pot preparation!

For information on all of the above, read on ➤

❁ See you in the garden ❁

*Cathy*

## February Meeting

(A Joint Meeting of Three Clubs)

### **Board Meetings**

Monday before the  
General Meeting  
10:30am.

Please let Cathy know if you  
would like to attend.

### **Old Mill Workdays**

Tues., Feb. 5, 9-10:30am  
Mon., Feb.11, 9-10:30am  
Fri., Feb 22, 9-10:30am  
Tues., Feb. 26, 9-10:30am

### **Mark Your Calendar**

#### **Upcoming Club Meetings**

April 1-2 (Set-up days)  
Apr 3 (Auction)  
May 8 (\*Note Change)  
June 5

#### **Upcoming GCA Dates**

[www.gcamerica.org](http://www.gcamerica.org)

#### **NAL Conservation Conference**

Washington, DC  
Feb 24-28, 2019

#### **GCA 2019 Annual Meeting**

Boston, MA  
May 16, -19, 2019

#### **Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference**

Denver Botanic Gardens  
Denver, CO  
Sept. 10-12, 2019

On a bright, crisp, sunny February morning the Diggers hosted a joint meeting of the Hancock Park, Pasadena and Diggers garden clubs at the Huntington Library. Our guest speaker Dr. Ari Novy, current President and CEO of the San Diego Botanic Garden, spoke on the topic of "Agriculture in the Botanic Garden; Something Old Made New Again." Diggers VP Mary Blodgett, ran the meeting beautifully in lieu of absent Diggers President, Cathy, who was home with the flu.

Dr. Novy's relationship with the GCA began in 2007 when he became the recipient of the Caroline Thorn Kissell Sumer

Environmental  
Studies  
Scholarship. He  
has continued to  
support the GCA  
by serving on the  
selection panel for  
Summer  
Scholarships in  
Field Botany, and



Dr Novy & Diggers VP Mary Blodgett

spoke for Scholarship at the GCA 2017 Annual Meeting in Baltimore. Dr. Novy has been a former Executive Director of the US Botanic Garden in Washington, DC, and has served on many advisory panels, including the White House Council for Environmental Quality, The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization and the Scientific Advisory Panel of Botanic Garden Conservation International.

Zone XII Director Pam Green, and Zone Chairman Liza Lilley were also our very special guests at the talk and stayed for the

buffet luncheon afterward. It was a wonderful opportunity for club members to meet our Zone Officers, who work tirelessly to connect us all with the greater GCA organization.

Heartfelt thanks to Mary for her leadership in the face of changeable plans, to executive board members Liz, Yvonne and Carlin for their invaluable help and support, to Angela and Athena for beautiful centerpieces, and to Sara, who created custom name tags for the event.



Liza Lilley, Annette Serrurier & Pam Green

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## Founders Fund Finalists

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### *2019 Founders Fund Finalists Proposal Summaries*

The Founders Fund Committee is pleased to present this year's finalists! The first Founders Fund award was granted in 1936 in the amount of \$700. Today, the winning proposal receives \$30,000 and both runners up receive \$10,000. This grant is special because it is the only GCA award that is voted on by each and every club member throughout the GCA.

*Please carefully review the complete descriptions of these three projects in the Winter Bulletin (summaries below) so that you are familiar with them and ready to cast your vote at our March meeting. Our choice must be submitted by April 1.*

#### **Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve: Restoring a Calcareous Muck Fen**



Calcareous muck fens are important because their limestone bedrock creates a distinctive water chemistry where they harbor rare or endangered plants.

Scientists suggest that calcareous fens are the rarest of North American wetland types. Abrams Creek Wetlands Preserve, one of these habitats, contains over 300 plant species, 20 state-rare and 2 found nowhere else in Virginia. Stopping invading trees from extinguishing this natural treasure and providing visitor education will restore this fen for future generations.

### **The Jane Colden Native Woodland Garden with Animal Habitats**



The Jane Colden Native Woodland Garden, vital for a redesigned visitor experience, incorporates new plantings around rebuilt native animal exhibits at Trailside Museum and Zoo within Bear Mountain State Park, NY. Self-guided visitors strolling this Appalachian Trail landscaped section can closely view flora and fauna. Native plantings based on the historic Botanical Manuscript of Jane Colden (1724-1760) come alive,

supported by information on Trailside signs and website. This Woodland Garden would complement the educational mission of Trailside Museum and Zoo so visitors may better understand and enjoy nature's offerings.

### **Sniff and Savor Garden: Enriching Community and Revitalizing Landscape**



Sniff and Savor Garden at Pittsburgh Botanic Garden will offer an oasis of fragrant and edible plants enticing visitors to touch, smell and taste. Smart garden design will create a fully inclusive, accessible sensory garden with multigenerational appeal. Part of a remarkable environmental transformation of terrain deeply damaged by coal mining into a world-class botanical destination, Pittsburgh Botanic Garden is using horticulture, environmental

stewardship, education and community enthusiasm to revitalize damaged landscape and enrich lives.



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## Floral Design

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### *(Conditioning Some Bulb Flowers)*



News from [Floral Design](#) on February 05, 2019

Tips to make Tulips last longer:

Buy blooms that have the color developed but are still tightly closed.

Harden off the flowers by wrapping the whole bunch tightly in paper, cut the stem ends on an angle and place in clean, cold water. Let them condition this way in a cool (or cold) spot for a couple of hours before arranging.

Use a tall vase to support the growing stems.

Make sure the vase is absolutely clean.

Use fresh, cold water with no additives. That means do not add pennies, sugar, lemon-lime soda, aspirin or bleach. All tulips need is fresh, cold water, preferably not treated by a water conditioner.

Remove any leaves that fall below the water line. Remember that the tulips will grow taller.

Place your arrangement in a cool spot, away from heat and bright light.



Tips to make Daffodils last longer:

Flowers should be purchased before the flowers unfold between when they are straight up (pencil) to just bending over (gooseneck) stages. The papery spathe covering should be opening and the tips of the petals showing.

Cut the stems of Daffodils at an angle above the white pith and place in cool water. May add bleach to the water (1/4 tsp/quart). Let stand in a cool, dark area for 6 hours. Do not re-cut stems! Stems exude a slimy substance after a fresh cut, which is harmful to other flowers and clogs their stems.

Arrange stems in fresh, cool water. Bulb flowers prefer shallow water; if they are placed in deep water, the stems can get water logged and shrivel up and the petals will get papery.

**It is best not to mix daffodils with other flowers.** But, after conditioning a minimum of 6 hours (24 hours is better) the slimy substance usually stops flowing. Replace with fresh, cool water and other flowers may be mixed in if desired.

Keep daffodils away from drafts, heat & sun for longer lasting arrangements.

And – of course – change the water frequently!

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## Horticulture

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### *(What do Open-Pollinated, Heirloom and F1 Hybrid mean?)*



**Open-pollination** is when pollination occurs by insect, bird, wind, humans, or other natural mechanisms. Because there are no restrictions on the flow of pollen between individuals, open-pollinated plants are more genetically diverse. This can cause a greater amount of variation within plant populations, which allows plants to slowly adapt to local growing conditions and climate year-to-year. As long as pollen is not shared between different varieties within the same species, then the seed produced will remain true-to-type year after year.

**An heirloom** is an open-pollinated plant variety that has a history of being passed down within a family or community for at least 50 years. An heirloom variety must be open-pollinated, but not all open-pollinated plants are heirlooms! Heirloom varieties produce seed that remains true to type under the same conditions as stated above. A wonderful aspect of heirloom seeds is their story. (The Fish Pepper, Fife Creek Cowhorn Okra, Mexican Midget Tomato, Blue Hubbard Squash, Ali Baba Watermelon from Iraq, etc.)

**Hybridization** is a controlled method of pollination. The pollen of two different species or varieties is crossed by human intervention in order to deliberately breed a desired trait into the plant variety. Hybrids may be developed for disease resistance, improved size of fruit, taste, increased flowering, sturdiness for shipping purposes, etc. The first generation of a hybridized plant cross (**called F1**) also tends to grow better and produce higher yields than the parent varieties due to a phenomenon called 'hybrid vigor'. However, any seed produced by F1 plants is genetically unstable and cannot be saved for use in following years. Not only will the plants not be true-to-type, they will be considerably less vigorous. Gardeners who use hybrid plant varieties must purchase new seed every year.

While hybrid plants certainly have a useful place in the garden, by choosing open-pollinated varieties you help to conserve genetic diversity and prevent the loss of unique varieties in the face of dwindling agricultural biodiversity. Check out the wonderful array of heirloom seeds at the following websites:

<http://tatianastomatobase.com>

<https://www.seedsavers.org/>

<https://www.seedsofchange.com/>

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/>

<http://www.growitalian.com/>

<https://www.rareseeds.com/> (Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds)

<https://www.marysheirloomseeds.com/>

### *Horticultural Oil in the Garden & Its Benefits*

While roses and fruit trees are still in relative winter dormancy, now is the time to spray fine horticultural oil to kill off pests such as mites and scale that overwinter in bark crevices. Non-toxic horticultural oils are highly refined petroleum oils combined with an emulsifying agent that work by smothering the insect. They are effective on contact and are best applied in cool weather or when temperatures are under 80° degrees. As the weather warms and roses leaf out, spray again to keep down populations of aphids, caterpillar eggs, leafhoppers, mealybug, mites, scale, spider mites, thrips, and whiteflies. Since aphids also spread viruses while feeding on plants, Hort Oil can be an effective help in virus control. These oils are safe to use when leaves and fruit are present as long as temperatures remain below 80°F. (\*Don't use during high temperatures, if leaves are wet or if temps are freezing as oil on the leaves decreases the rate of evaporation and the leaves could burn.)



(Hort oil is also effective against powdery mildew when mixed with baking soda and foliar sprayed. Many popular recipes may be found on-line.)

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## What is the NAL?

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### *-The National Affairs and Legislation Conference-*



Every February, the GCA hosts the National Affairs and Legislation Conference in Washington, DC, consisting of two days worth of compelling speakers ranging from conservation nonprofits to congressmen and women from both sides of aisle. Presentations focus on important topics from the GCA's Position Papers. Each GCA club sends 2 delegates to this powerful educational conference, which culminates with the delegates having an opportunity to meet with Congressional Representatives and Senators to discuss key legislative issues.

The Diggers GC is pleased to send Mary and Cathy to this year's conference Feb. 24-28, 2019.

### *Conservation*

#### Reading Position Papers

A core tenet of The Garden Club of America's mission is to "restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement."

In fulfilling that purpose, the GCA has developed position papers to articulate broad goals for advocacy efforts in the public policy arena. Legislation today is complex; bills may move quickly through congress while being subject to frequent revision. The Position Papers were created in 1989 in order to clarify and summarize those issues that

are of top priority to The Garden Club of America. They contain specific provisions that the GCA would wish to see embodied in any piece of legislation. They are jointly produced by the GCA's National Affairs & Legislation and Conservation Committees (written and researched by various Committee Vice Chairmen), and approved by GCA's Executive Committee.



The current GCA Position Papers cover the following subject-matter areas:

**Clean Air:** The GCA supports the Clean Air Act and urges a reduction in greenhouse gases through an integrated strategy of regulated emission caps, improved energy efficiency, and greater use of renewable energy sources.

**Clean Water:** The GCA supports policies to protect the quantity and quality of our nation's water resources. This includes preserving ecosystems and reducing water pollution through a vital and broad-based Clean Water Act, as well as protecting coastal waters and the world's oceans through national and global initiatives.

**Climate Change Action:** With an emphasis on encouraging action to preserve biodiversity, the GCA is committed to educating members and communities about the causes of climate change and constructive responses. The GCA supports federal, state and local legislation and regulations, as well as individual initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**National Parks:** Recognizing the national parks as irreplaceable treasures as well as critical habitats for protecting native plant communities and whole ecosystems, the GCA supports making conservation the system's top priority, along with ensuring adequate resource levels to maintain the parks.

**National Public Lands:** Recognizing the ever-increasing pressure for multiple uses of federal lands, the GCA supports strengthening public policy to make resource protection and preservation the first priority in establishing public land policy. This includes full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the use of the federal portion of that fund to purchase and restore public lands.

**Native Plants:** Viewing the Endangered Species Act as one of America's landmark pieces of conservation legislation, the GCA supports measures to protect the nation's rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitat and to create workable science-based recovery programs.



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## Auction Preparation Time!

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Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his burrow around 7:30 a.m. ET on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and did not see his shadow - predicting an early spring. Coincidentally our Diggers Auction is in early spring as well this year! April 3<sup>rd</sup> will be here before you know it.

Time to accelerate those trips to local and specialty nurseries, dust off your rare and collectible pots and unleash that Digger creativity. Each Digger is responsible for 10 perfect pots, and 10 complete accompanying tags listing the plants full binomial name, common name and the cost of plants and pot. Bring your beautifully groomed creations to Cathy's house on Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup> between 2-4pm. You may pull into the front circle drive to unload. (\*Otherwise please note: Parking is on the west side of Oak Grove only.)

If you use a potting soil with perlite, remember to top off with a perlite-free potting medium so the perlite won't "float" when the pot is watered. ("Master Nursery Gold Medal" Organic Potting Soil has no perlite and contains beneficial soil mycorrhizae. Highly recommended.)