



TAG Talk
May, 2020

President's Message.....Olivia Ford

Dear fellow TAG members,

I hope that you are all healthy and staying well!!

I'm "keeping my fingers crossed" that we can have our June 19th *Couples Picnic* at Dolphin Head and our *Cookie Bake Sale* on July 4th. (See pg. 3 for details). I am in frequent touch with the POA and will keep you informed as soon as they let me know we can proceed.

We still need two volunteers : for a Historian (who is in charge of keeping our scrapbook), and a Hospitality co-chairman for refreshments.

Please consider becoming more involved in our club. Anxious to see y'all soon - from a distance, of course!



Horticulture Notes.....Ann Clayton

Who would have thought the world could change so dramatically since my last Horticultural notes in March. However, as a gardener I feel a new enthusiasm and interest in Mother Nature and what we can still do as we go about our gardening tasks, to quote a recent expression "as the norm". Studies have proven that gardening is the best way to exercise, relax and enjoy some peace within our beautiful earth. A sure proof prescription for good health. We are indeed privileged to be able to include it as one of our special hobbies.

It is now time for new perennial plantings, the warmer weather is here and feeding and watering become of great importance. Dead head older perennials and cut back leggy plants; they will repay you with a bushier plant and more blossoms. Always prune back herbs to keep them from going to seed. Remember to cover the roots of your clematis to keep the ground cool in the hot sun!!! Water regularly and adequately preference is early in the day so the leaves can dry before nightfall. Never put a plant to bed with wet feet. Moisture and warm nights produce growth of fungus. Give daylilies a light application of fertilizer as the buds begin to appear. Remove seed pods when daylilies are finished flowering, unless you want to dry the pods for arrangements. Remove spent blooms from roses and any leaves with black spot or rust. Especially clean out from the soil under the plant. Time to plant caladiums. Later when the caladiums produce their white Calla-like flowers be sure to remove the flower to encourage the plant to make more leaves. Cut the blooms at the base of the stalk. Spider plants make an excellent border plant that contrasts nicely with the caladiums, wax begonias and hostas. (Good for shade gardens) Love butterflies ??? Welcome them to your garden with Black-eyed Suzies (*Rudbeckia*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*), Lantana: purple cone-flower (*Echinacea purpurea*) Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*), Verbena; Zinnias; Pineapple Sage; Asters; Salvia -Indian Spire and many, many more varieties.

Finally, my favorite Angel Trumpet (*Brugmansia*) tree, I've had it for years and it never fails me. Stunning flowers all summer. Photo attached just started to flower on the bottom branch. (Thai plant in back-ground.)

Stay safe. HAPPY GARDENING





Birding.....Dick Phillips



Eastern Bluebirds

The eastern bluebird is a member in the genus *Sialia* for the thrush family. It is one of the few thrush genera in the Americas. Bluebirds are about 6 to 8 inches long, and have a wingspan of 9 to 12 inches. They display very vibrant colors, with the male being a bright blue on top, with a reddish-orange throat and breast, and a white belly. The female has the same coloring as the male, although her wings look more black than blue, and her throat and breast are the same colors as the male, but not nearly as bright. Bluebirds are territorial, and build nests in cavities to protect their young (similar to woodpeckers). The female bluebird will lay 3 to 8 pale blue eggs at one time and then incubate them alone. During the incubation period, the male has responsibility for gathering and bringing food to the female. The eggs hatch after about 2 weeks, and the chicks (nestlings) will open their eyes in 4 or 5 days. The babies are ready to fledge (leave the nest) in 18 or 19 days. Bluebirds generally produce 2 to 4 broods during the spring and summer, and typically at our home here on HHI where we installed a bluebird house 8 years ago, we see 3 broods.

During winter, bluebirds migrate to the southeastern US or to Mexico. Bluebirds have a lifespan of 5 to 10 years in the wild. Their nests are primarily made of pine needles, with touches of animal hair and bits of cloth the bluebird may find. Bluebirds are great at cleaning up insects around your yard, and are very fond of mealworms, which you can buy at places like Wild Birds Unlimited.

At our house this year, the bluebirds started building their nest in the BB house on March 20. The first egg was laid on March 30, and then one more egg on each of the next 3 days. The first hatchling occurred on April 16, and then all 4 young bluebirds fledged on May 4. The first attached picture below shows the momma BB at the opening to the house encouraging the fledglings to "fledge", i.e., strike out on their own. In the second picture you can see one of the fledglings peering out the house opening, and the third picture shows one of the fledglings who had flown about 20 feet up in a loblolly pine tree that is about 50 feet from the BB house. The poppa BB flew to the fledgling, and then together they flew off to other trees. It was fun to watch all 4 BB youngsters leave the nest to start their new life on Hilton Head Island!!





Jr. Gardeners

February Program

Sandy Stern

The Junior Gardeners and TAG volunteers were treated to a Bird Program by Lois Lewis of The Hilton Head Island AUDUBON SOCIETY on February 19, 2020. Lois came prepared with a Power Point presentation to introduce the students to the familiar sounds and behaviors of many birds common to the Lowcountry. She engaged the children by discussing the natural environment found on the island that provides shelter, food, water and nesting habitats for a wide variety of birds.

Lois taught the students how to identify birds by showing them photos and pointing out the differences in their sizes, shapes of bills/beaks, colors, feet, tails, etc. She also spoke about the different diets of birds that determine where they are found (i.e. along the shoreline, at beaches, in ponds, lagoons, and lakes, high in trees, low in shrubs, in forests, etc.) She explained that some birds are solitary and others fly in flocks. Lois finally encouraged the kids to continue with their backyard and school yard birding.

Students had an opportunity to ask questions at the end and tell of their experiences in birding. They all enjoyed this very informative lesson. (Pictures below)





Jr. Gardeners March Program

Sandy Stern

The Jr. Gardeners have been composting decomposed leaves, vegetable scraps and the plant debris from their vegetable garden in the large composter in the school courtyard for years. The TAG volunteers thought it was time for them to learn more about the decomposition process and the creation of nutrient-rich soil, so in early March they decided to have the students create their own mini-compositing units.

They assembled large soda containers, stones, sand, soil, banana peels, worms, and water and had the children layer the ingredients to create individual containers/composters. They were covered with black construction paper and then placed in the greenhouse to be checked on daily. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SC schools were closed in mid-March and the students could not follow-up with their experiment. Hopefully, they will get another chance next year.





PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS, STUFFED

6 large Portobello mushrooms (or 8 depending on size)

STUFFING

6 ounces Pepperidge Farm cornbread stuffing

2/3 cup diced onion

2/3 cup diced celery

3/4 cup diced apple

1/2 cup golden raisins

1/2 cup corn

2 cups chicken broth (use "Better Than Bouillon no chicken," to make vegan)

Portobello mushrooms, remove stem and gills. Brush both sides with teriyaki sauce. Place in baking dish sprayed with PAM

For stuffing, saute celery and onion in a small amount of butter (or veg. broth to make vegan) until tender crisp in a 4 quart saucepan over med to high heat

Add apple, corn, and golden raisins. Add broth and heat to a boil. Remove saucepan from heat and add stuffing, mix lightly. Stuff mushrooms





Happily, many of you responded to my request about how you've whiled away the last two months. Here is a sampling of the responses.....

I had an interesting experience concerning some cardinals and Carolina Wrens. I was sitting in the sunroom when about 6 cardinals and a couple wrens were dive bombing an area in my bushes outside. I thought it strange since it involved so many birds it wasn't a courting scene. I got up to look and saw a head pop up, not a baby bird but a snake. I also saw part of the snake on the top of the rim of the nest. The snake, I guess, was eating the eggs and the birds were trying to get the snake out of the nest. He finally left but by that time the damage was done and the nest was empty. The reason I found this so interesting was how the other birds came to the help of the distraught parents.

Darlene Yates

Here's what I've been doing in isolation:

- got reacquainted with poison ivy (from fingertips to elbows, including ankles)
- Figured out how and where to store 80 rolls of toilet paper which we ordered from Amazon
- Learned more about Zoom than I ever wanted to know
- Binge watched mediocre TV series that I chose to ignore when they first came out.
- Overeating
- Reading non-literary (meaning "trashy") suspense novels
- Waiting for supplies to arrive to sew masks for VIM so we can get back to business.
- Did I mention overeating?

So far, no symptoms. My sense of smell is all too good, which may account for some of the eating! Stay safe and see you soon, I hope.

Chris Thumm

Continued next page.....



Well I don't know that this would qualify as a funny anecdote unless you consider the fact that I must have been insane to do this! Basically, my husband and I removed all the stones in the area between the garage and the sidewalk, laid down weed barrier fabric and then put the stones back. It was a 3 1/2 day project of back-breaking work. I did it because I didn't want to be spraying weed killer anymore. I have since set out some nice flower pots to brighten up the space.

Sue Blake



I have been home since the end of February, only venturing out 4 times (2 field trips to Brunos and 2 trips to the doctor's for surprise surgery on a torn retina, which is healing nicely). I've included 2 photos...one is my deck, where I have focused my gardening attention...something old, something new, something borrowed (the giant staghorn, adopted from Sharon Jaunsem) and a bit of blue.

We are lucky to have such a gorgeous place to "Stay at Home". Our island teems with Nature's bounty...flora, fauna and sea. We're homebound in Spring and we love to garden, so we have plenty to do Gardeners know patience which, hopefully, will serve us well, as we figure out what our new normal shall be.

Stay safe.....Caroline Alderman



Well, I had a pretty good view of butt cracks when the workers were installing our concrete deck. I witnessed one who lost his pants while hauling out old material in a wheel barrel. It was worth a good laugh!

Jane Alexander



Avid Gardeners, I'm using my time to get a remodel
job, mostly undercover! Nadine Korosi



Have been feeding my birds and plants during all this downtime. Planted one passionflower years ago and they are now covering all the bushes by the driveway. If anyone wants one, let me know. The shoots are coming up around the yard. Usually I just pull them up and throw them away.
Sally Price



MEMBERSHIPCarol Sevelowitz

It's not too early to be thinking about next year. Membership dues (\$35, payable to TAG) for the 2020-2021 year will be due by June 15. You can bring your check to the June gathering at Dolphin Head and give to me or Treasurer Lori Schmidt, or mail to either of us (address available in Member Directory).





FUNDRAISING

LIZ VAN ALSTYNE

The Fundraising Committee wants to let the Membership know that we have been working with the POA to participate in the Plantation's 4th of July Celebration. We are now going to add "Cookie Sale" Ladies to the many hats we all wear.

In order to make this successful, we are asking ALL members to bake a dozen chocolate chip cookies that we can sell at the event. Of course all this is predicated on the Plantation having the Celebration.

As things move forward and the Celebration is confirmed the Committee will provide the membership with all the information needed to have a successful Cookie Sale fundraiser.

Please save the date (Saturday, 7/4) and, if for some reason you are not going to be available to help, a Financial donation would be greatly appreciated.

In Memorium

Over the course of the past several months, donations were made to TAG for the purpose of creating a memorial for long-time member, Diane Middleton, who passed last year. The donations came from TAG members, as well as family and friends of Diane. A memorial bench and camellia plant have been placed in the Seabrook farm plots area of the Plantation, where Diane lovingly spent so much of her time. The bench was installed and a pink camellia was planted near it. Many thanks to Krissy Kristian and David Mills for their assistance.

