



## **TAG TALK**

### **February, 2023**

#### *President's Message.....Carol Sevelowitz*

Today, February 14th, we'll be showing the *love* to our newest members at a long-delayed new member Welcome luncheon at the home of long time member, Dede Bethke. "New " members from the last two years, along with their mentors will attend and members of the Board will contribute their yummy covered dishes for lunch.

As the weather finally starts to warm up, you'll surely be itching to get back to *loving* your gardens. Again. But before you do, be sure to check out the article on page 6 from Clemson Cooperative Extension on getting ready for the new gardening season. And part of getting things ready includes giving some *love* to your garden tools. See, also, the notation on page 2 about how to get your tools sharpened this very week, thanks to member, George Westerfield.

If you're really anxious to get out there to remove all those unsightly plants that were damaged by the recent freezing weather, don't be in too much of a hurry . Many of those plants will come back, albeit slowly. They just need some extended sunny warm weather to coax the *lovely* green back. I'm already seeing signs of rejuvenation in my own yard. And don't forget to attend Friday's meeting on container gardening, where we're hoping you'll *love* the tips our expert from The Green Thumb. (details next page).

Hope you have a truly *lovely* week!



# February's Meeting

2/17/23

9:30 am

Spring Lake Pavilion

## Container Gardening

A designer from the Green Thumb Home & Garden Center will demonstrate the key elements in creating stunning containers for sun and shade. She may bring plants for sale, so come prepared with cash or checks.



*Hostesses for this meeting: Claudia Hawn, Didi DeAngelis, Jane Johnson, Melissa Olson, Liz Van Alstyne*

**\*\***Extra Program note: Our very own George Westerfield has made us a wonderful offer.

He has the tools and the ability to sharpen garden tools! And he has generously offered his talents to us! If you bring your large-bladed implements — i.e. large shovels, hoes, hand held spades, hedge clippers — to this Friday's meeting, he will gather them up, take them home to sharpen, and hopefully return them at meeting's end. Be sure to label them with your name. He is not able to do smaller, hand held tools such as small clippers and nippers that would need to be taken apart to be sharpened.

***The Board is soliciting Programming ideas for next year. What are your primary areas of interest? Would you like more emphasis on floral design? Horticulture? Container gardening? Field trips? If you haven't already done this, when you sign in for this Friday's meeting, please complete an index card on which we ask you to list your ideas. Be as specific as possible. We want to bring the programs you want to see and hear.***

## *Horticulture.....Ann Clayton*

Time to spend dreaming of our Gardens and what we may want to change this year, especially after the freeze in January. The flower of the month has to be Camellia Sasanqua Japonica. This shrub comes in numerous shades of pink, red and white, with shiny dark green leaves. Even though camellias are thought of as a Southern plant they actually came originally from China. They came into the United States via Europe before the Civil War. They were not that popular with Southerners until the flowering Japonica varieties were cultivated in hot houses in the northeast and made their way



from Hoboken, N.J. down the coast until they reached climates warm enough to allow them to survive in outdoor gardens. Water is key to their success, especially when first planted and the shrub is adjusting to new location. Keep them well watered prior to and during bloom time. Mulch with pine needles and oak leaves, both of which provide acid which camellias love... Camellias require little or no pruning. The greatest threat to Camellias is scale mite which can be dealt with using oil-based insecticides. Be sure to cover under the leaves as well as on top. If you have numerous small buds close together pinch off one or

two to encourage larger flowers. Be sure to pick up or rake the spent blossoms to prevent petal blight. A disease that causes the petals to turn brown.

Whilst on the subject of bushes - the end of the month is a good time to start planting or transplanting other shrubs and trees. They should be planted during the dormant season, which is from the time they shed their leaves until new growth appears. Water as you backfill the hole with soil, to help settle air pockets. Mulch with organic matter. Do not mulch directly next to the tree trunk. Remember the right tree for the right place. Research - shade or sunlight, water, and important, drainage. Think of "Native plants".

Feed using tree or shrub spikes, which release the nutrients right where they need them the most at the roots or use liquid fertilizer. Keep fertilization light when first planting. Pay attention to the ultimate height of the tree. Keep the number of plants in an area to a minimum. With fewer plants there will be more room for roots to develop and less competition for moisture. Air circulation will help prevent fungal diseases.

Remember to keep your houseplants clean. Dust filters sunlight before it reaches the plant, reducing the amount of photosynthesis the plant can make. Dust and grime harbor spider mites and other pests. Spray with lukewarm water or add a few drops of mild dishwashing liquid to the water. Never use a feather duster; it can easily transfer small insects or eggs.

On closing..... a quick reminder: Be sure to look for the signs to the Daffodil fields on Pinckney Colony Road in Bluffton, off 278. For members new to the area this is a wonderful afternoon out, what fun picking daffodils to take home and enjoy in your own home.

**HAPPY GARDENING** - Ann C.



In December, TAG purchased from the Garden Club of South Carolina two sets of three beautiful childrens' books related to gardening and nature, for presentation to the libraries at HH Elementary and the HH School for the Creative Arts. In January, they were presented to Beth Minton, the HH Elementary School librarian and to Zakerie Smith, media specialist and Assistant Principal Ms. Singleton at Creative Arts (shown below).



## ***Recruiting Members for the Jr. Garden Club at HHI School for the Creative Arts***

Jane Johnson and I are trying to re-establish the Jr. Garden Club after school program at the HHI School for the Creative Arts. The program has been in existence for over 10 years with a hiatus of 2 years during the Covid Pandemic. The Korosi Educational Vegetable & Herb Garden was named for our long time member, now honorary, Nadine Korosi. About 10-12 students in grades 2-5 work closely with our members, a parent volunteer and a teacher-assigned in the courtyard garden. They learn by expert guidance and by hands-on experiences how to tend to a vegetable garden, all the while, developing a love of gardening. The garden has won numerous State and West Lowcountry Awards over the years. However, before we can re-initiate the program this coming fall semester, we are in the process of recruiting volunteers to help clean out the vegetable beds. Please sign up for one or both afternoons, Tuesday, Feb. 21 and/or Wednesday, Feb. 22 from 3-5 pm. If interested, please go online to complete a background clearance application at [applicantinquiry@bib.com](mailto:applicantinquiry@bib.com) or

Looking forward to see-  
next week. We wel-  
tions? Please don't hes-  
calling my cell: #842-



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298-1036. Thanks. Sandy Stern

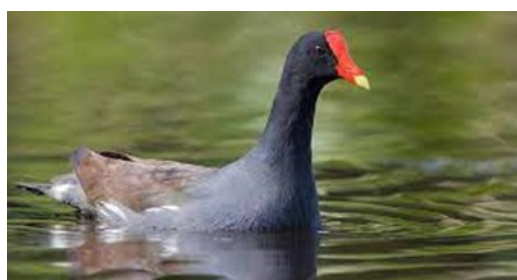
*Birding.....Beth Hommes*



When I first relocated to South Carolina I was puzzled by the red beaked birds in the lagoons. They resemble large ducks but I had never seen a duck with a red beak. These are not ducks but are *North American common gallinules*. The common gallinule used to be classified as a moorhen but they were renamed in 2011.

They are black with some white stripes on the flanks and have yellow legs. Their big feet help them to balance on water plants and walk in mud when hunting for food. They are good swimmers. Their distinctive beak is modified into a red shield which extends to the top of their heads. Their babies are browner and do not have the red shields.

North American gallinules live in freshwater marshes, canals, lakes, and wetlands around the US and Canada. When the northern temperatures cause their habitats to freeze, they migrate south. They build basket-shaped nests of cattails, reeds and other plant material in dense vegetation in or around a water source. Their nests are often accompanied by ramps to the water and additional platforms. They lay eggs in broods of up to thirteen between March and May in temperate areas. Both males and females incubate the eggs which hatch in three weeks. Their parents feed them for the first few weeks. They become independent from their parents and can fly within two months after hatching. Females will sometimes lay a second, smaller set of eggs in the same nest later in the season. Gallinules feed on water plants, fruits, and berries and some small water dwelling animals like worms, snails, insects, and mollusks. They will defend their territory. They communicate through calls and they warn off danger by aggressively hissing. Unlike more elusive rail species, like the clapper rail and the king rail, they are commonly seen. Though it's habitat is threatened in many areas, these birds are plentiful.



# GETTING YOUR MIND RIGHT FOR GARDENING SEASON

Feb 9, 2023

*Winter weather and rising food prices can make folks eager to get started in their gardens. Some gardeners even want to rush to “correct” last year’s mistakes. Great coaches in sports often talk about “doing the little things right, so the big problems take care of themselves” Now is the time to reflect on some things before you start turning soil or planting. We have provided a checklist for starting the gardening season off.*

**Get a soil test if you haven’t done one!** Yes, Clemson is known for saying this on a loop, but there is a reason. Many issues arise with plants, and gardeners often guess what nutrients plants need.

**Make a list of what you want to grow.** This sounds simple, but the time to decide is not when you go to the garden center. Instead, start now by looking through seed catalogs and determining what specific varieties and cultivars you want to grow.

1. **Think about what problems you had last year and reflect.** Even if you are unsure what specific issue(s) you had, you can research factsheets on HGIC to determine how to properly care for and manage the plants. Also, keep a journal of what is going on in your garden this year. Often, we see plant problems at only certain times of the year, and this simple practice can help you get a step ahead in the game. A side note – many professional growers use their phones and make recorded notes that can be listened to later.

**Get your tools and equipment serviced and prepped.** If you haven’t cleaned and sharpened your pruners, shovels, and other tools well, now would be an excellent time to get that done. Many frustrated gardeners have been excited to till up the soil and get planting, only to find out that the tiller does not start and needs a part that four stores currently do not have in stock.

**Follow the HGIC blogs and factsheets.** These can get you ahead of the game and keep you doing what you intended, enjoying your garden!

*If this document didn’t answer your questions, please contact HGIC at [hgic@clemson.edu](mailto:hgic@clemson.edu) or 1-888-656-9988.*

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*Plant It Pink*

*Rob and Janina Cushman*

The P.I.P. garden was very negatively impacted by the extreme weather we had this winter, so we are putting a plan together to revitalize it. We have met with the Maintenance Manager of the hospital as well as the customer relations manager of the Greenery who has a contract for upkeep of all the lawns and gardens at the hospital. Everyone is interested in improving the overall view of the grounds. We are putting together a plan to repaint the pots, chose plantings for the garden as soon as we are sure what is living or dead, grind out the stump by the road and replant it, add lighting to the sign as well as how we might all work together in improving the overall aesthetics of the general area.

## March's Meeting

March 17 9:30 am Spring Lake Pavilion

### Proper Watering, Fertilizers and Soil Amendments

Lauren, from Taylors Quality Landscape Supply and Nursery, will discuss obtaining benefits for your garden from proper watering, fertilizing and soil amendments.

*Save the Date: May 20, 2023*

*All Saints Garden Tour*



### Happy February birthday wishes to:

Janina Cushman

Olivia Ford

Deborah Meeks

Helen Rizzo

Pam Schofield

Carol Sevelowitz

Christine Thumm  
thumms@aol.com



Carol Sevelowitz  
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**Deadline for submitting articles for this newsletter is the second Sunday of the month.**