




President's Message.....Carol Sevelowitz

Happy Valentine's Day!! 

Although none of us has particularly **loved** the recent cold weather, things are looking up for warmer days to come, and it's time to start thinking about putting some **love** into our gardens. We will all be inspired by the **lovely** colors on display at the Honey Horn Camelia gardens when we go there for this month's meeting (details next page). And in March, Laura Lee Rose will teach us to **love** the fact that working with natives will bring us gardens that are naturally prone to survive the weather conditions of the Lowcountry.

For those of you who haven't yet renewed your membership for 2024, let me remind you that since we are transitioning to a different dues payment schedule, your dues for this year are due now. But, since you are already paid up through May, the fee to renew for the balance of 2024 is only \$20 instead of the usual \$35. And, since we have to submit our membership roster to the State by the end of this month, that \$20 is due now. If you have not already done so, please bring your check to February's meeting at Honey Horn and give it to either Chris Thumm or Jane Johnson. If you are a new member this year, your \$35 is now due as well.

If you haven't already had the pleasure, please join me in welcoming our newest members (as of January's meeting), Mary Long and Diane Mills. Please take a moment to say hello to them on Friday. Our membership currently stands at 59 as of today, but our big push for new members will take place in March, when we host a New Member Open House (details next page). Please encourage your friends and neighbors to join us.

See you in the camelia garden!!!



Spring will come, and so will happiness. Hold on. Life will get warmer.....Anita Krizan



PROGRAM UPDATES

FEBRUARY 16: Camelia gardens and lecture Honey Horn 10:15am

Gardeners, prepare to be inspired by the beauty of 135 species of Camellias in a rainbow of colors ranging from the brightest reds , pinks , yellows and snow whites. Learn about the history , diversity and significance of camellias and how to care for them. Our February meeting will meet inside the Honey Horn museum at 10:15am as the tour starts with a presentation by Wendy Dickes, followed by a tour of the camelia gardens. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes for walking.

MARCH 15: Native Plants of the Lowcountry Spring Lake Pavillion 9:30am

Laura Lee Rose has been a Horticultural Agent for Clemson Extension and is currently President of the Southcoast Chapter of the South Carolina Native Plant Society. She will teach us more about using Native Plants in our gardens.

Additionally this month, we are inviting potential new members from our community to join us for an Open House to learn about The Avid Gardeners. We will have display tables, refreshments and native plant door prizes. Please invite your neighbors who may be interested in joining us.

Check this out.....

TAG member Jackie Emery will have a show and sale of her lovely paintings in March,

Where: Hilton Head Library
When: Monday March 4th-Friday March 29, 2024

Her paintings are (mostly) loca! landscapes and wildlife. They are large (24x36") and intended to be the focal point of your living room. They are sold without the frame.

Come and have a look and enjoy (looking is free!). There will be 15+ large paintings on display,

Garden Chores for February

Trees & Shrubs: are best planted now. Remember the planting rules have changed; dig a hole no deeper than the root ball, but twice as wide. Water the plant in. Do not amend the planting hole. Instead, top-dress the planting area if additives are needed, then mulch. Give your 'newcomers' some extra TLC. It takes around 5 years for a tree to get established and an average of 3 years for a perennial to do the same.

Flowering plants & annuals: may be planted as they become available in the stores.

Annuals: I like to use root starting hormone on my annuals. This comes as a powder but is now also available in liquid (concentrate) form. Bonide Root & Grow Plant Starter, which is easier to use, can be used as a pre-planting soak. I also incorporate a systemic deer repellent (Repellex tablets), and some Vermiculite, in the planting hole. Gardening is personal. See what works for you.

Perennials: are an investment. Get to know them. Understand their needs (water/ sun/shade). They will be long-term additions to your garden. Take the time to read up on them and find out about their likes and dislikes.

Tropicals: are best planted this time of year, as opposed to in the fall (their worst enemy is frost, not heat), as soon as the nights stay reliably above 55°F.

Bare-Root Roses: should be planted around Valentine's Day in the South (how appropriate). Don't forget deer deterrents (Roses are 'deer candy').

Prune

Contrary to up North, with its shorter, colder, growing season, pruning in the South is a necessity, not an option. Many gardens shrubs in HHP are lanky and shapeless with sparse flowers at the 8-foot level where they cannot be appreciated! Prune all plants severely later this month, except for spring-flowering plants. They should be pruned after they bloom. Prune out all dead, injured and diseased branches. Remove unsightly shoots and suckers at the base. Also remove long branches on the inside of the plant to increase air circulation and prevent disease, a common problem in our humid climate. (Don't trust that your landscaper knows how and when to prune; done too early and your Azaleas may not bloom this Year!

Gardenias: Most varieties of gardenia set bud on both green and brown wood and, therefore, will bloom regardless of when you prune them. Cutting them back severely now will actually improve bloom performance. Cut the entire plant back by at least half, then shorten the sides even further to get a more natural look.

Oleanders: bloom on new wood. Prune out the old canes. Similarly top the other canes to control size. Remember all parts of Oleander are extremely poisonous, so wear gloves.

Roses: Established roses, except climbers, should be pruned now. Cut canes on a slant. If the winter was severe wait until new growth shows where to cut (below the dead wood).

Evergreens: Evergreens might have suffered winter damage. Do not cut them back. They need their leaves, ugly tips and all, in order to recover. Wait to prune them until after they have sent up fresh replacement leaves (I learned that the hard way last winter).

Horticulture.....continued

Fertilize

The 4Rs of fertilizing are: apply the Right fertilizer, in the Right place, in the Right amount, and at the Right time. If you are new to your garden, get a soil test (see <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/soil-testing/>).

Do not fertilize newly planted shrubs and trees; without an established root system this does more harm than good.

Look at the N-P-K ratio listed on every fertilizer. N stands for Nitrogen, which promotes leafy growth. P stands for Phosphorus, which stimulates fruit, root, and flower production. K stands for Potassium. Potassium improves drought tolerance, disease resistance and general durability.

Fertilize in-sync with your plant's needs. For instance: when new growth starts, support your plant by providing N, when bloom starts, support it by giving P. Before winter sets in, around Thanksgiving, apply K.

Nitrogen fertilizer is best applied as a slow-release fertilizer, or as a spray. Applying too much can burn a plant. Do NOT use nitrogen fertilizer on bulbs or blooming annuals. You will get beautiful leaves, but no, or fewer, flowers. Use a specialized bulb fertilizer instead, or use liquid bloom booster, such as Miracle-Gro garden hose spray (works great on annuals). Be aware that organic fertilizers may smell and attract squirrels and deer.

Blooming in February

Camelia Japonica, Daphne Odora, Flowering Apricot, Flowering Quince, Saucer Magnolia, Mahonia Bealei, Star Magnolia (pictured above), Taiwan Cherry, Tea Olive, Winter Honeysuckle, and Wintersweet.

Daffodils, Hyacinths, Large Calla Lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*), Snap Dragons, Pansies & Violas, Dianthus and Lenten Roses

Do not forget to protect early spring blooms (on Magnolias and Camelias for instance) from browsing deer. They love those tasty blossoms even more than we do ☹!

Happy Gardening!

Jacqueline





Jr. Gardeners

Jane Johnson, Sandy Stern,
Melissa Olsen



The Avid Gardeners will begin spring gardening with the Butterfly Bunch Jr. Garden Club at Hilton Head School for Creative Arts on Feb. 22. The young gardeners will begin by cleaning branches and weeds from the gardens to prepare for spring vegetables and flowers. With many thanks to the Bartlett Tree Experts who spoke at our January meeting, we will be planting a new lime tree in our garden and writing them a "Thank You Letter." Some other activities for this spring will be making a hanging bird feeder, possibly making a terrarium, and making flower arrangements. We have a great group of energetic kids! If you would like to help us in the school gardens, on Thursdays at around 2:15, please contact Jane Johnson, Sandy Stern, or Melissa Olsen.



Remember our very popular and successful Holiday Home Tour of 2022? Well, we're doing it again in 2024 !! Currently, we are in the earliest planning stages, but it promises to be even better than before. Our greatest need at the moment is to identify five beautifully decorated homes whose owners are willing to open them up for the tour on Saturday, December 7. If you or any neighbor residing in Hilton Head Plantation is interested in participating this year, please contact any one of our Fundraising committee members: Liz Van Alstyne, Jane Alexander, Maryanne Sweet or Melissa Olsen.



February Birthday Greetings

Janina Cushman

Olivia Ford

Deborah Meeks

Helen Rizzo

Pam Schofield

Carol Sevelowitz

When Do Hummingbirds Arrive in South Carolina?

According to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, hummingbirds typically begin arriving in the state in [mid-March](#) to early April. However, there is some variation from year to year, and it is not unusual for them to arrive as early as February or as late as May. So, if you've left your feeders out all winter, now would be a good time to take them down and clean them well in preparation for refilling them and rehangng them at the end of this month.



It also depends on the specific species of hummingbird. Some, like the Ruby-throated hummingbird, migrate south in the fall and spend the winter in Central America before returning north in the spring. Others, like the Rufous hummingbird, take a more circui-

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

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