



## TAG TALK JANUARY, 2025

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

Happy New Year!

New year, new beginnings...for TAG that means it's time to renew your membership for 2025. And it's time to get more involved in club activities. For our new members, the best way to get to know other club members is to volunteer to be on a committee. The Butterfly Bunch (Jr. gardeners), the holiday sign committee, hostessing and the nominating committee all need help. Upcoming community projects at the local Memory Matters (details at Friday's meeting) and the Gullah Museum will need your help as well. When we pass around signup sheets, please sign up! We will also be electing new officer positions soon, If you have any special talents or interests in bookkeeping (Treasurer), people skills (Membership VP), or general leadership (President), now is the time to step up.

Hope to see you Friday.....

### **January Meeting**

1/17/25

9:30am

Spring Lake Pavilion

### **Gullah Museum Project**

Dr. Simpson-Cohen will speak about the mission and history of the Gullah Museum. We will discuss how TAG can enhance the museum area with native island plants.

No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow." – Anonymous



# The Butterfly Bunch

Jane Johnson, Sandy Stern,  
Melissa Olsen



With many thanks to The Greenery, Greengoods Nursery in Ridgewood, and the efforts of Tim Drake, one of our favorite speakers, the school garden is now a beautiful oasis! Their very generous donation of plants, soil, fertilizer, fruit trees and shrubs, along with the labor to plant them, has created a true garden of Eden, where the students can learn about plants, gardening, conservation and beautification, The committee is eagerly looking forward to the day the children will enjoy the bounty they will harvest from fruit trees and vegetables.

If you would like to join the team at the garden, please contact Melissa or Sandy.

Coming next month.....

Friday, 2/21/25

9:30am

Spring Lake Pavilion

What does it mean to be a federated garden club? Representatives from the Garden Club of South Carolina, David Stoudenmire and Tara Ranson will be on hand to discuss the benefits of being a SC federated club.

## MEMBERSHIP

CHRISTINE THUMM

A new year has begun which means 2024 memberships have ended and it's time to renew. Please bring your 2025 dues to the next meeting, this Friday, January 17. Checks should be made out to The Avid Gardeners in the amount of \$35. Alternatively, you can either mail your check or drop it off at Chris's house at 12 White Tail Deer Lane and leave it in the folder at the front door.

Renewals will entitle you to an extra door prize coupon (a very small incentive, I know, but you were going to renew anyway, right?)

Please don't let your membership lapse... we'd miss you !

See you at the meeting Friday and thank you for your renewal.

### IT'S THAT TIME.....

The beginning of the year means it's time to start thinking about a new slate of officers for the year ahead. Positions which will be replaced this year are President, Treasurer, and 2nd Vice President (Membership). A nominating committee of three members is needed to choose candidates for election in March. One member from the current Board and two from the general membership are required. Sandy Stern has volunteered to represent the Board, but we will need two more. This is a job that will require little time, but is of great importance to the club.



**January Birthday wishes to**

Rob Cushman

Wendy Dickes

Barbara DiRusso

Mary Ann Snyder



## Gardening in January

Baby it's **COLD** outside, so I thought I would share some Indoor plant ideas with you. (If you are looking for outdoor gardening advice, please refer to the 2023 TAG newsletter, on the website).

### *Cymbidiums*

Most people think orchids are difficult to grow, especially Cymbidiums, but my Cymbidium orchid blooms reliably every winter, and getting bigger every year! Cymbidiums are ideal for growing in our sub-tropical climate, where they can spend the majority of time outdoors. Here are the keys to re-blooming success:

#### **Keys to Success:**

I recently learned that Cymbidiums, like several other blooming plant species, need what are called 'chill hours' (a cold spell) in order to bloom! Who knew? So if orchids do not bloom for you, you just might be 'over-parenting' them. They need some 'tough love': here is how you do it:

#### **Temperature**

Cymbidiums are tougher than they look and can withstand temperatures of 27 to 100°F, but most importantly, they require periods of cooling in order to bloom. Indoor conditions (without cooling off at night below 55°F in winter) are not suited for getting blooming Cymbidiums.

The way to get your Cymbidiums to rebloom is to bring them outside in the summer. Our climate is ideal for that in that it is warm and humid in the summer. This is what Cymbidiums like. Flower-spikes are initiated in Autumn, and the plant will bloom indoors in the winter. During cold spells, cymbidiums can take 32°F but should be given some protection in case the temperature drops further, therefore bring your Cymbidium indoors after Thanksgiving.

#### **Light**

Light an important factor to success. Cymbidiums can not take full sun. Cymbidiums are epiphytes, which means that, in their natural habitat, they grow on trees, so this is the best place to put them for their 'summer vacation.' Place them under trees that provide filtered light or moderate shade. You should avoid placing them in dense shade or next to walls that block light. I prefer to hang mine. It keeps insects at bay and ensures good drainage. Orchids hate wet feet!

#### **Water**

The most frequent reason as to why orchids die is because they are overwatered. Plants should be growing in a well-draining bark medium and should never be left sitting in water, which can lead to

root -rot. As we get copious amounts of rain during the summer months, do not water your orchid during their outdoor stay, and they will thank you for it.

### Fertilizer

I fertilize my orchids with a slow-release fertilizer, such as Osmocote 18-6-12, once I bring them in after Thanksgiving. Usually they already have bloom sprouts at that time, and the fertilizer will support the bloom. So gift yourself a Cymbidium this year, and you will enjoy blooms for many years to come!

### *Amaryllis*

Amaryllis make great holiday house plants. If you did not pot up Amaryllis, or your Amaryllis is not blooming yet, Home Depot sells large blooming pots right now. And don't forget: your Amaryllis bulb can be planted outdoors in our climate, where it is will come back every year and will bloom in the Spring (not Christmas)!

### *Paperwhites*

The paperwhite narcissus is a popular bulb for indoor forcing in the winter months.

A frequent problem with paperwhites is that they often grow too tall and flop over. Recent research conducted by Cornell University has found a simple and effective way to reduce stem and leaf growth of paperwhites. The 'secret' is a practice referred to as "Pickling your Paperwhites": using dilute solutions of alcohol.

### How to do it:

Plant your bulbs in stones or glass beads (red ones are available at Michaels for some extra Holiday color) as usual. Add water as you normally would, then wait about 1 week until roots are growing, the shoot is green and growing about 1-2" above the top of the bulb. At this point, pour off the water and replace it with a solution of 4 to 6% alcohol, made from just about any "hard" liquor. To get a 5% solution from a 40% distilled spirit (e.g., gin, vodka, whiskey, rum, tequila), you add 1 part of the alcohol to 7 parts of water. This is an 8-fold dilution yielding 5% alcohol. Do not use beer or wine, as the sugar in them will cause major problems for the plants. Also, do not use anything stronger, as Paperwhites, like humans, can get the equivalent of a human hang over from alcohol overdoses. So, moderation is key! Simply continue using this solution, instead of water, for further watering of your bulbs. It is as simple as that.

So share some Holiday Cheer with your Paper Whites! The result will be a plant that is shorter, and won't flop, but with flowers just as large, fragrant, and long-lasting as usual. **Cheers!**

### *New Beginnings*

***New Years is the time for new beginnings, and this will be my last newsletter, as I am stepping down as TAG's Horticultural Chair at the end of the year. It is time for some 'fresh blood.' If you are interested in taking over as the TAG horticultural chair, please see Carol.***

*Happy Holidays, and Happy Gardening in 2025!*

*Jacqueline*



## TAG Community Project Holiday Decorations for Dolphin Head

With many thanks to all who participated to make this project a smashing success, the holiday decorations at Dolphin Head are now packed up and tucked away for next year. Both the workshops and the decorating projects, spearheaded by Liz Van Alstyne and the design team of Mary Ann Snyder and Caroline Alderman, were well attended and executed by so many of you in a true collaboration of members. And the luncheon committee, organized by Rita Rivlin and her committee looked after every detail to deliver a tasty and enjoyable meal. We hope to continue this community project for years to come.

### *However...*

After many years at the helm of the holiday sign-decorating team, Barb Holmes has resigned from this important position. Happily, new member Mary Long has picked up the reins and, with Barb's guidance, did an outstanding job this past December. She has even instituted some new organizational systems which will make the process a bit easier. Unfortunately, most of Barb's team have also resigned, so we are in need of some new volunteers to help Mary. This would be a great way for newer members to get acquainted with each other and a valuable contribution to the club. Please consider adding your name to the list when it's passed around at this Friday's meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Plant- it-Pink Update .....Sandy Stern*

*Under the guidance of Janina and Rob Cushman, a group of five TAG volunteers gathered on the morning January 13, 2025 to work at our award winning PIP Garden near the entrance of the Hilton Head Hospital. To our shock and disappointment, the roses, pentas and ruellia plants all seemed on life support, nothing that the hospital staff could treat, and definitely nothing we as gardeners could turn around. After this winter's frosts, we basically lost most of our pink cultivars.*

*So we did what active garden club members would do, we met for coffee and discussed plans on how to revitalize the garden. We brainstormed about what plants would better survive our colder Lowcountry winter temperatures. We came up with new ideas and are ready to put them into action with two work days set up for March 17 and April 4 to bring the garden back to life. We will need helpers. With new plants, volunteers, and hopefully, some donations we are confident our Plant- it-Pink Garden will once again be a showcase garden by this spring.*

\*\*\*\*\*



Christine Thumm  
thumms@aol.com



Carol Sevelowitz  
sevelcss@gmail.com

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