



TAG Talk January, 2026

President's Message.....Sandy Stern

Hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season with family and friends. Wishing you all good health and lots to celebrate in the new year.

A quick update on my health. My left shoulder replacement surgery went well and now all I need to do is keep up with my PT schedule and exercises. Before long, I'll be back to some serious gardening.

Our Holiday Luncheon at Frankie Bones was a huge success with 23 members joining in with the fun of our Holiday Trivia games. Congratulations to Lori Schmidt who won the grand poinsettia prize for knowing Christmas trivia better than most.

Just for the record, I have submitted 17 Garden Club of South Carolina and West Lowcountry District award applications for our club's accomplishments this year. Thanks for all who volunteered to make this possible.

We have lots of exciting programs, field trips and community projects planned for this coming year. Make sure to sign up and volunteer in some capacity. In addition, Caroline Alderman will begin hosting our monthly floral arranging workshops this month in preparation for our Arts & Blooms Show in March 2027. Check emails for details.

Our upcoming program on January 16 at 9:30 am at SLP will feature guest speaker, author, and Master Gardener Wendy Hilty, known locally as The Comya Gardener. She will present an overview of South Carolina Lowcountry's unique growing conditions for 'Comya' gardeners. We are fortunate to have Wendy share her years of expertise with our club members. Please join us and bring a friend.

The Annual West Lowcountry District meeting will be held on March 10 in Hampton, SC. If you wish to attend, let me know so we can carpool.

Finally, we also are in need of an editor for our Yearbook. If you are interested in knowing what the job entails, please contact me or Lori Schmidt.

January Meeting January 16 9:30am SLP

The Comya Gardener*—Lowcountry Gardening for Newcomers.

Speaker: Wendy Hilty will present an overview of our area's unique growing conditions to enable a successful garden.

* Comya is Gullah for folks who have come here to live, as opposed to Binya which refers to those who grew up here.



Membership.....Liz Van Alstyne

2026 Dues are due by the end of January. Please bring your \$35 check, made out to TAG, to our January 16 meeting or mail to Liz Van Alstyne, 17 Sentry Oak Lane, Hilton Head, SC, 29926.

FYI, a copy of our TAG Directory is now available on our website, www.theavidgardeners.org, in the Members Only section (password [tag1987](#)). Many thanks to Chris Thumm for making that happen.

Horticulture.....Karen Heaney

Gardening in January.....

To brighten up your garden landscape during these cold months you might consider planting a few winter annuals. There is still time to plant Snapdragons, Pansies & Violas, Dianthus, Ornamental Cabbage varieties, and Kale.

Since our ground does not freeze, January is still a good time to plant or transplant shrubs and trees. This will give them time to become established before the summer heat sets in. Mulching around them will help them retain moisture in the soil. In addition to mulching your new plantings, adding wood, leaf or straw mulch to your existing landscape can help prevent weeds from taking over in the Spring.

When freezing temperatures are predicted it is a good idea to have a plan in place to protect those plants you cannot bring indoors. Push any plants you are able close to your house for some heat. Cover with a sheet (not Plastic) or frost cloth to protect from the cold and wind.

January is a good time to review what you've done in the last year in your garden. You can plan what you might like to change or add to the garden.

If you haven't visited Honey Horn recently now is a good time to plan a day and walk through the Camellia Garden. Many are blooming offering an array of colors! It will lift your spirits during these chilly and sometimes cloudy days!



If you have herbs to use up, try this refreshing **Couscous Tabbouleh Salad**. Recipe from Ina Garten.



- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
 - 2 cups water or vegetable broth
 - 1 cup cherry tomatoes, diced
 - 1/2 English cucumber, diced
 - 3 green onions, finely chopped
 - 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
 - 1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped
 - 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
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- **Boil the quinoa:** In a medium saucepan, bring 2 cups of water or vegetable broth to a boil.
 - **Simmer:** Add the rinsed quinoa, reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook for about 12–15 minutes until the water is absorbed.
 - **Fluff and cool:** Remove from heat, fluff with a fork, and let cool completely.
 - **Chop ingredients:** Dice the cherry tomatoes, cucumber, green onions, parsley, and mint.
 - **Whisk the dressing:** In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, salt, black pepper, and cumin (if using).
 - **Combine ingredients:** In a large mixing bowl, add the cooled quinoa, chopped vegetables, and herbs.
- Add the dressing:** Pour the lemon dressing over the salad and toss gently to coat everything evenly.
- **Chill and serve:** Let the salad sit for 10–15 minutes to allow flavors to meld before serving.

COMING NEXT MONTH

“HERBS AND THEIR POSSIBILITIES”

SPEAKER: Diane Morley-Stewart, Owner of Shady Pines Farms, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist and Certified Beekeeper. She will discuss the many aspects and uses for herbs in our gardens.



Bring a friend!!

Friday, February 20th 9:30am Spring Lake Pavilion

Deadline for submitting articles for this newsletter is the second Sunday of the month. Email your document or pictures to: Carol Sevelowitz, sevelcss@gmail.com

Floral Arrangement Workshops

The first of a series of floral workshops in preparation for the Arts & Blooms Show planned for next year will be held on *Tuesday, January 27*, from 1pm - 4pm at the *Spring Lake Pavilion*. There will be a brief demonstration/presentation of a one-sided arrangement followed by time to create your own arrangement to take home. It will be a great opportunity to socialize with other members while gaining new skills.



Cost of materials is \$10 in cash (no checks please) to cover the cost of flowers and oasis. You should bring: your own container, greens from your garden or your walks, and small pruners or scissors.

Please contact Karen Hardwick before Thursday, Jan. 22nd, to reserve your spot.

(hardwick.karen@gmail.com or 404-808-2334). Once you've RSVP'd you will receive more details before the workshop.

Questions??? Contact Caroline Alderman (carolinealderman@roadrunner.com of 843-298-0701).

