



FLOWER POWER

THE AVONDALE ESTATES GARDEN CLUB

February 2021

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THE NATIVE NUDGE

Cercis canadensis f. alba 'Royal White'

Royal White'
White redbud



Deciduous, often multi-trunked understory tree with a rounded crown that typically matures to 20-30' tall with a slightly larger spread. It is particularly noted for its stunning pea-like white flowers which bloom profusely on bare branches in early spring (March-April) before the foliage emerges.

'Royal White' is a white-flowered cultivar noted for its pure white flowers. 'Royal White' was discovered in 1940 by Royal Oakes of Bluffs, Illinois, as a seedling from a native tree.

'Royal White' is a more compact tree, blooms earlier, is more floriferous and produces larger flowers. 'Royal White' is synonymous with and sometimes called 'Royal'.

AEGC MEETING FRIDAY THE 19TH ON ZOOM

Alice will strike the gavel at 10:00. The business meeting will be fairly short and the program will be on a favorite subject, Monarch butterflies.

The speaker is Lisa Kiely, founder of Monarch Collaborations an organization borne of the desire to bring Georgians of all ages and abilities together to cultivate a healthy environment for Monarch butterflies, by engaging community members in the appreciation, protection, growth, and maintenance of our urban ecosystem, starting with Native Milkweed. Lisa believes in the Power of Milkweed and Monarchs to transform urban and rural communities and cities. She believes in the Power of People to help achieve this needed transformation.



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR

Annual dues are due and payable by the end of March, but our fiscal year ends February 28.

Though under our standing rules March 31 is the deadline, we must meet a February 28 deadline to GCG. We need to send a paid membership roll ready to send to the state organization, Garden Club of Georgia (along with a check for \$10 for each member in good standing i.e. dues paid). It is likely that next year we will remedy this inconvenience and the deadline will be February 28. If you are able, the treasurer would be grateful for your dues check or credit card by the end of the month.





FEBRUARY YARD OF THE MONTH 30 DARTMOUTH AVENUE HOME OF KATHRYN STODDARD

As you gaze up from street level into this attractive yard, you will find both balance and spontaneity. The large crape myrtle on the left casts a large shadow dictating the use of shade tolerant plants in much of the yard. Although Kathryn Stoddard has only lived in this house for two and a half years, she has enhanced her garden with azaleas, Autumn Ferns, and Dwarf Mondo Grass to replace plants that were not thriving. In addition, she has added perennials along the sides of the house. Even in February, this yard stands out, and entices visitors to return in the spring for full bloom. ~ *Jane Howe*

FROM THE HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE:

This is a great time to plant bare root roses. Select a quality plant with at least 3 to 5 strong canes. Prune hybrid tea roses now, removing old canes and lowering plant down to a height of 12-15". Knockout Roses should be pruned 16-18 inches below where you want blooms.

Shelter Committee Needs Boxes

The Committee has lots of toys, but nothing to put them in. Boxes are generally donated by the membership. You can find them at Hobby Lobby and Michael's for about \$3, sometimes they are on sale or you can use a coupon. Some are decorated in a children's theme so anything with a print is favored. The children range in age from infant to teenager, something to keep in mind if all they have one day is space aliens or teddy bears. The committee thanks you for helping out. Pictured here is the last box we have.



AEGC PLANT SALE SATURDAY APRIL 17TH



The lawn in front of the Community Club will be a plant lovers delight on April 17th. The Plant Sale committee is working diligently to bring a great variety of plants to the Avondale Estates market place.. We'll have perennials for the shade and the sun. There will be several types of salvia and iris. There will be natives and pollinators and plants that specialize in butterflies and hummingbirds. There will be woody plants and herbaceous plants. There will be Black Eyed Susans, Iris for the Roof and Iris as ground covers. Daisies and Solomon

Seal and Gooseneck Loostrike and too many more to enumerate. Our gardening members have promised to furnish plants they have already divided or will as soon as they peak their leaves out in a few weeks. Member participation is what will make the sale a success.

Think about volunteering for the sale. It will be a day of fun and we will make it as safe for everyone as is possible. Let Chairman Donna Tanner know if you can help. This promises to be another great event for our club.

Avondale Elementary School Joint AEGC/Avon GC Project



The Project moves forward as members of the Avondale Arts Alliance paint the wonderful “Totem Poles” to be placed at the main entrance of the school in the newly renovated garden area. Who wouldn’t have their spirits lifted as they pass by these happy images? A few will be topped with bird houses for even more interest. River rocks have been primed by volunteers in the neighborhood and are to be painted by the children when they return to school. They only need to see this work to be inspired.

There will also be a Little Free Library filled with garden and nature themed books appropriate for each grade level. There are so many wonderful aspects to this project and so nice to see the community come together to make it happen for the children.

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT IS IN HIGH GEAR



Preparing the soil for transplanting Mexican Petunias were Dianne Nelson, Kathy Delaney, Patricia Calcagno, Kelly Nolan, and hands-on AES Principal Dr. Andrews.

Joan Lass, AEGC Chairman for the project was there too, but in this photo she was behind the camera.

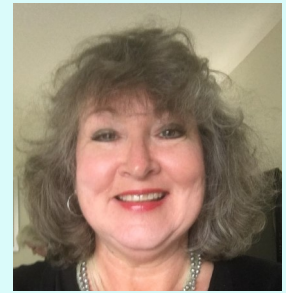
In Avondale Estates everyone is excited about the project. Kelly Nolan, a neighbor of Joan Lass volunteered to come help. She is the owner of Curtis Landscaping. She returned the next day and tilled another area to ready it for planting.



TEAM BOYD CRAFTS VALENTINES FOR VETS



Mother-Daughter team of Faye and Lynn Boyd hand made these delightful Valentines to deliver to the VA hospital in the name of AEGC. Maybe next year when all is “normal” in the world again they would lead a workshop of crafty members and we could send off a trunk load of these special cards.



DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR BRICK PURCHASE

Deadline for purchasing a commemorative brick for the Avondale Elementary School project is February 25th. The price is \$30. Make check out to Avon Garden Club and send to: Mary Bell 82 Sutton Place Avondale Estates, GA 30002. The print can be up to three lines of 16 spaces per line.



GEORGIA POLLINATOR PLANTS OF THE YEAR (2020)



The first annual Georgia Pollinator Plants of the Year chosen by the State Botanical Garden of Georgia are (clockwise from top left) Conradina (*Conradina canescens*), also known as wild rosemary; Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*); Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*); and Downy Goldenrod (*Solidago petiolaris*).

FLY NEST EAT SING

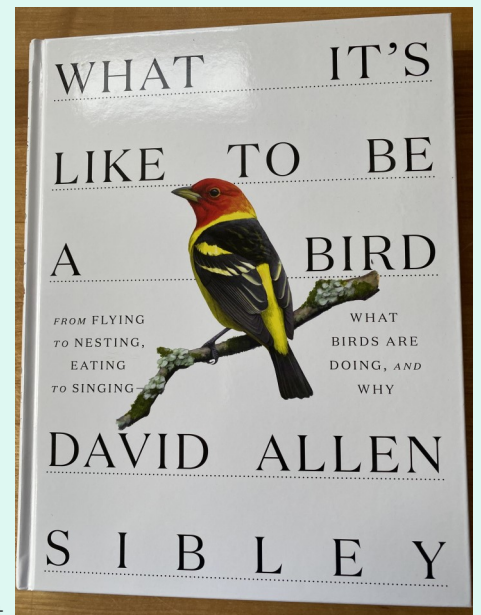
This bird book, published last year, is full of captivating information and gorgeous artwork. It's almost a coffee table book.

Did you know that some birds molt twice a year? Goldfinch do, who knew?

Animals and plants have evolved together with insects. If you saw Doug Tallamy's lecture on Zoom through the Atlanta History Center you are aware. If you missed it, there is a recording you can watch. Here is the link, you may have to copy and paste into a browser. Highly recommend.

<https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/event/cherokee-garden-library-talk-douglas-w-tallamy/>

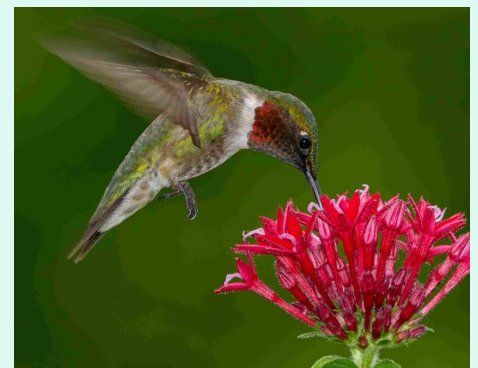
But back to the birds and the fascinating information found in this book. There is a type of finch that hangs around the Canadian arboreal forest (I



had to look that up. It's a forest that stays covered with snow most of the year and is populated by mostly conifers). "The trees' strategy is to produce very few seeds for several years to reduce the population of seed eaters, then produce so many seeds in one year that there is no way they can all be eaten. The Common Redpoll, featured left, is linked to birch trees which produce seeds every other year. With an abundant seed crop more redpolls survive the winter and raise more young, increasing the population, and the following year (when the birches produce few seeds) the redpolls move south in search of food."

Editor's note: One year in Avondale in May I had 12 pair of screaming-yellow goldfinch at the feeder for exactly 30 days. This year in January I had a flock of about 30 goldfinch in Sarasota for exactly seven days. They were dressed in dull winter colors and the males looked like the females. I observed in both flocks that they flew like maniacs, kamikaze-like in their attitude occasionally flying into the windows. But, reading this book I learned that almost all songbirds fly in this up and down manner flapping wings in short bursts then briefly gliding with their wings folded against their bodies—which is mainly falling. "At slower speeds calculations suggest that alternating flapping and falling is not the most efficient mode of travel, but so many birds do it that there must be other, still unknown, advantages." Of course, humans used to walk everywhere. Maybe birds will figure out a different method given enough time. Any manner of flying is still pretty impressive.

Hummingbirds and flowers have evolved together, the flower feeding the hummingbird and in turn being pollinated by the little bird which prefers red or orange tubular flowers. With a lifespan of 5.3 years, the hummer can spot the flower it prefers (a perennial) and will return to that plant year after year. The flower is able to adjust the nectar content to lure the bird increasing the chance for pollination. This tiny bird is migratory and will travel 1000 miles and often flies across the Gulf of Mexico. Wow.



WALTER SAYS....Mid February would be just right for starting sweet pea seed indoors in north Georgia but you should wait until early March to plant seed outdoors. Although the plants can endure frost without much problem, keep some black plastic at hand to cover the little arbor where you've planted them in the garden.

Another idea would be to plant in a container and leave it outdoors except on the coldest nights. Place the seeds an inch deep just inside the rim of the container and use several three foot long slender branches to make a teepee on which the vines can climb.

GARDENING IS A JOURNEY

From Walter's website: Plant a winter daphne (*Daphne odorum*) near your home's entrance or front walkway. The scent will greet you each day when you arrive at your abode this spring.

Walter has had success with most of the eight Daphnes he has in his landscape. The not-so-successful ones struggle because of lack of good soil preparation. He offers us a recipe for a good start for Daphnes and other plants:



SPECIAL SOIL RECIPE: Into a wheelbarrow I dumped a **five gallon bucket of clay**, which I'd shoveled up from the projected planting spot, discarding the rest. To this I added **two buckets of soil conditioner**. On top I poured a **seventy-pound bag of Quikrete All-Purpose Sand** (you can also use Pavestone Paver Leveling Sand). With vigorous huffing and puffing, I mixed the three ingredients together thoroughly, much more thoroughly that I might have done for less-exacting plants. The result? A gritty, organic, fast-draining soil that would be the pride of any plant needing a permanent home. **Knowing that daphnes don't care for acid soil, I added a half-cup of garden lime as I worked.** The *coup de grace* was a **quarter-cup of 0-46-0** to provide phosphorus to the newly elongating roots. The soil looked and smelled good enough to sprinkle over ice cream!

I won't bore you with the rest of the planting process. I untangled roots, set the daphne at the same height at which it had been growing and mulched under it with pine straw afterwards. You already know how to do that. I'm already anticipating an even richer smell from the front of my landscape next year.

PERFECT SOIL? Nope, gardening is never perfect. It's just a journey towards an ideal – whether the perfect plant, the perfect design, the perfect environment or the perfect soil.