



March 2024

FLOWER POWER

The Avondale Estates Garden Club
Member of the National Garden Club &
The Garden Club of Georgia

Volume X Issue II

THE NATIVE NUDGE

Schizachyrium 'scoparium'
Little Bluestem



An easy care ornamental grass, this Bluestem grows from 1-4' tall in full sun. It clumps and is ideal to plant among your sun perennials. Not good for a boggy area, it prefers soil a bit dry. It copes well with heat and humidity and doesn't require much if any fertilizer. The less the better as it will keep the stems shorter and stouter. Two natives are Blaze and The Blues.

• **'Blaze'**: Good for winter interest. Deep red fall foliage fades to shades of pink. It also copes better in clay soils than the main species. **'The Blues'**: The blue tones in the foliage are pronounced in this cultivar, and the purplish and maroon fall shades are eye-catching. It can grow to around 3 feet tall.



Spring is Almost Upon Us - Hurray!

March 20 ushers in the yearned for Spring. It feels like it's been a long time coming this year and we are in need of warmer sunny days. We are spoiled here in the South. The expression "Spring comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" hardly describes our experience. We have already had days in the 70's. Nonetheless, we are more than ready for Spring. We are itching to dig in our gardens and watch daily for new sprouts to pop up. We are weeping already for the things that didn't make it through the brutal cold snaps of winter. Be of good cheer and give them a bit more time to recover before you yank them out of the ground, they may surprise you.

As adults, we still experience the joy of a child watching a butterfly alight on a flower. We are fascinated by the life cycle of these lovely creatures as it reveals itself right in our own backyards. We are surprised and delighted when we run across a chrysalis in our gardens. To increase the chances of that happening in our own gardens we need to understand which plants will attract those butterflies.

Our program for Friday, March 15 addresses that very thing. Tracey Ussery of Autumn Hill Nursery will be the speaker. Her topic is Bring On the Butterflies and will inform us how to best plant a pollinator garden to attract and feed those beautiful critters along with attracting other helpful insects as well.



Native Plant Presentation for Community

It was a dark and stormy night. But, despite the weather, we had a pretty good turnout to hear horticulturist, Ben Ackersly, hold forth on native plants. He is a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker and those in attendance certainly learned a lot. The photos of his subject were lovely and many attendees were taking notes and snapping pictures of the slides used to illustrate his talk.

Thanks to the Environmental Responsibility Committee (the committee with the longest name) for presenting this informative and well presented program. The public was invited as well as our membership.

AEGC MISSION STATEMENT

The Avondale Estates Garden Club offers education and service opportunities to inspire the appreciation of the various horticulture arts and to promote the awareness of environmental responsibility.

WHAT WE DID IN FEBRUARY: HONORING LIFE MEMBERS AT FEDERATION and ARBOR DAY 2024 IN WILLIS PARK

Each year member clubs of DeKalb Federation honor one or two members of their respective clubs. A biography is written and at the Federation meeting, read to the membership. It is always inspiring to hear how accomplished are so many garden club members. This year AECG nominated Sandy Sirmans and Helen Dorroh for Life Membership. As Helen was unable to attend in February, we look forward to presenting her at the next Federation meeting she can attend.



Arbor Day is a pretty big occasion around the world. Most countries observe this opportunity to call attention to the duty we have to the planet. We are reminded of what trees do for us and how we need to care for them and continue to plant new trees.

Arbor Day began in Nebraska . Pioneers from the verdant east had come to the prairie and were astonished at the dearth of trees. A campaign was begun and in 1872 resulted in citizens of the state planting a million trees that year.

The US-based Arbor Day Foundation has helped grow **500 million** trees in the past 50 years. In Avondale Estates we are doing our part.

Hummingbirds are Returning

Those tiny little birds who choose to travel thousands of miles for their winter vacations in Central and South America are returning north for their mating season. Some arrive a bit early for the warmer weather and find themselves without the usual flowers that provide their food. They are resourceful though and have found (as we have) that tree sap provides the sugar they need to survive. We like our tree sap in the form of maple syrup, hummingbirds are not so picky.

To help our tiny feathered friends we can put out hummingbird feeders even now for the precocious ones arriving any day now. We probably don't need to knit a feeder cozy, but do think about getting that feeder out and stocking it with whatever yummy treat you provide for your summer hummers. Some are skeptical about the value of sugar water in the feeder but it provides a lifeline for the birds who have traveled great distances.

In the fall many take down their feeders believing that to leave the food would interfere with the migration instinct of the hummers. "But according to researchers at Cornell Lab of Ornithology, food supplies make little difference. The greatest trigger for hummingbird migration is the shortening day length. "

Check out this website. It includes dated sightings of many birds, butterflies, flowers, and even maple tree sap. Thanks to Helen Dorroh for the tip about this website. <https://maps.journeynorth.org/maps>



Information for this article from wildbirdscoop.com

Leaning into the Native

How does a passion begin? A remembered fragrance, the beauty of a symphony of color and form...the responsibility to be a good neighbor?

Wait a minute....did you think this article was going somewhere else until you saw the word responsibility? Well, here we go, melding these three things into one by combining beauty and gardening with a purpose.

It was after being well into my 50's ...and after building and adding to a garden with whatever looked pretty at the big box stores, when I found myself in a house in the country with property that hadn't been cultivated for many years. Most of the growing things I had not seen before, and a simple curiosity about what they were and what they did was engendered. That was how my passion for native plants began and turned into what is now over 20 years of delightful discovery.

I learned that a certain beautiful butterfly depends on specific plants to reproduce, and those plants happen to be ones they evolved with over eons, otherwise known as "native" plants (not the petunias in my window box). That discovery sent me headlong into returning to motherhood through my garden.



A purpose, a new learning experience has revealed itself to be without end, and a new appreciation for the wonderful connectedness of life and how our gardens contribute to that, is a daily gift. Our gardens can do more and support their true purpose with us as steward, parent, and caregiver. We add to its recipe only the ingredients that bring health and kindness to nature's creatures who make this life so remarkable!

Pictured here is a stunning, extremely fragrant native Calycanthus floridus or as we know it in the Southeast, Sweetshrub.



Beth Langhorst

~Beth Langhorst

WALTER SAYS . . .

Prune boxwood – but not with shears. Use a hand pruner to make foliage “holes” in the greenery so light can penetrate to the trunk. Now is the time to prune giant holly shrubs back to a manageable size. Don’t be shy – you can cut them to eighteen inches tall and they will come back . . . Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains plenty of organic matter and which has been thoroughly tilled . . . Divide overgrown clumps of hosta now that you can see the leaves unfurling aboveground.

. . . Remove spent camellia blooms from the bush and from the ground. You’ll prevent camellia petal blight. . . Last chance to prune bush roses to approximately one half their present size . . . Repot houseplants you plan to move outdoors. Their roots will need more room as they grow rapidly in the sun. . . Hold off on planting gladiolus, canna and caladium bulbs until mid-April – they all need warm soil in which to grow.



Avondale Estates Garden Club is proud to be a Member of National Garden Club, Inc., Deep South Garden Club, Inc., The Garden Club of Georgia, Red Bud District and The DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.



Mountain Mums Garden Club Celebrates 20th Anniversary

On November 14, 2023, the Mountain Mums Garden Club in Stone Mountain celebrated its 20th anniversary at the beautiful “Waterfall House” owned by Susan and Joel Gilbert. More than 60 current and former members, spouses, and guests attended the lovely cocktail buffet.

Mountain Mums Garden Club was a spin-off of Smoke Rise Morning Glories Garden Club 20 years ago when a group of young moms (mums!) formed its own club to meet during hours accommodating their busy family schedules. Mountain Mums currently has 35 active members and meets monthly during the calendar year. They are an active member of The DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, and the Redbud District of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.



GCG State Convention Coming in April

You have a great opportunity to attend the Annual Convention this year. It is being held in Peachtree City which is only an hour or less from Avondale. You can go for the day if you wish or plan to spend the night.

The convention always features excellent speakers and breakout or workshop presentations as well. It is an opportunity for fun, education and meeting other garden club members from all around the state. It is a chance to see and hear what other clubs are doing.

Registration ends March 31. Several of our members are going. Think about joining them. We always have a great experience at Convention. It is April 16 & 17 this year.



APRIL FEDERATION AWARDS LUNCHEON

If you have never attended this event, this would be a good time to join your fellow AEGC members. It is a celebration of successes of sister clubs in DeKalb County as well as our own. Let Patricia know if you are interested in going and fill out the forms in this newsletter. We'll have our usual carpool from the club.



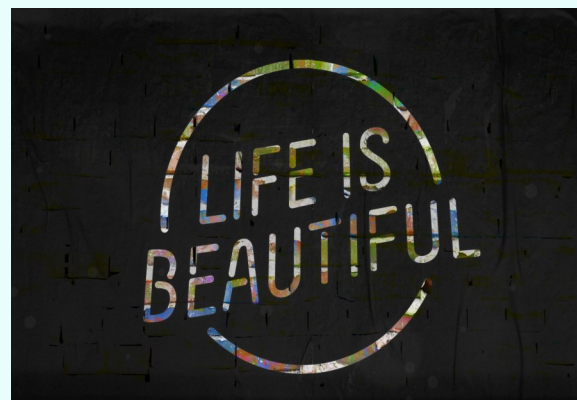
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Life Members Celebrated at DeKalb Federation Meeting

Garden clubs across DeKalb County celebrated the new Life Members of Federation. Members were nominated from the individual clubs and honored at the February meeting. Each had a biographical sketch read by a member of their club and received a Life Member pin. The event was followed by a buffet luncheon. Hearing what these members have accomplished in their lives was inspiring. Our Life member this year is Sandy Sirmans, who lived in Avondale Estates as a teen ager and married her prom date, who also lived in Avondale Estates. Sandy has been a wonderful member of our club, one would volunteer whenever we needed someone. She was an outstanding committee chair and looked after her committee members. We are fortunate to have such outstanding women (and men) in our club.

Our second nominee for Life Member is Helen Dorroh. Helen was unable to attend and will be honored at the next meeting. She is another exceptional member of AEGC.



State Botanical Garden at UGA debuts 2024 Pollinator Plants of the Year

February 22, 2024



The [Georgia Pollinator Plants of the Year](#) program, hosted by the State Botanical Garden of Georgia at the University of Georgia, identifies four species each year that make wonderful additions to any garden. Begun in 2020 by the State Botanical Garden, Extension at UGA, and green industry partners, the Georgia Pollinator Plants of the Year program celebrates the benefits of pollinator plants and encourages home gardeners to incorporate these plants into their landscapes. A committee selects the four plant species from a pool of nominations from gardeners, horticulturists, entomologists, ecologists and green industry professionals throughout Georgia. The committee announces the plants a year in advance, giving growers time to increase the supply of the plants for the public to acquire.

The pollinator plants of the year are chosen in each of the following categories: spring bloomer, summer bloomer, fall bloomer and Georgia native. Emily Laske, assistant conservation horticulturist at the State Botanical Garden states, "Each of these species explodes into a show of blooms that delight people and pollinators alike."

The four plants chosen for 2024 are:

Spring Bloomer: Robin's Fleabane *Erigeron pulchellus* "Lynnhaven Carpet"

A perennial with 6- to 12-inch flowering stems that provide an evergreen, carpet-like ground cover. The textured foliage bursts into bloom in the spring with small white to light purple daisy-like flowers. **Conservation value:** Supports many native pollinators such as bees, butterflies and songbirds.



Summer Bloomer : Spotted Horsemint *Monarda punctata*. A biennial, it grows up



to 3 feet tall and blooms into beautifully complex, yellow-spotted flowers with pink bracts during the summer months. **Conservation value:** Supports many native pollinators such as bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds.

Fall Bloomer: White Wood Aster *Eurybia divaricata*

A perennial in the aster family it typically grows up to 3 feet tall. It has attractive heart-shaped leaves and small showy white flowers in late summer through fall. The center of the flowers turns from yellow to red after being pol-



linated, providing more color and intrigue in the garden. **Conservation value:** Supports many native pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

Georgia Native: American Witchhazel *Hamamelis virginiana*

A shrub or small tree, it averages 15 feet tall but can get up to 35 feet. It explodes into a display of bright yellow, firework-like flowers in mid-fall to early winter. **Conservation value:** Supports many native pollinators such as moths, bees and small flies.



The State Botanical Garden, a unit of UGA Public Service and Outreach, sells the pollinator plants of the year at its spring and fall plant sales and in the garden's gift shop and works with growers and retailers in Georgia to produce and market the plants.

For more information about the Georgia Pollinator Plants of the Year program and a directory of native plant nurseries, visit t.uga.edu/8sn. For more information about the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, visit botgarden.uga.edu.

Editor's Note: In the past we have offered for sale at the AEGC Plant Sale both Fleabane and White Wood Aster along with many natives and nativars. An excellent place to shop for natives is in our own backyard! Actually, the front yard of the LakeHouse next April 20.

Calendar 2024...

March 15Membership meeting at the LakeHouse at 10:00

19-20.....Deep South Convention in Gatlinburg, TN

21Federation General Meeting Callanwolde 10:30

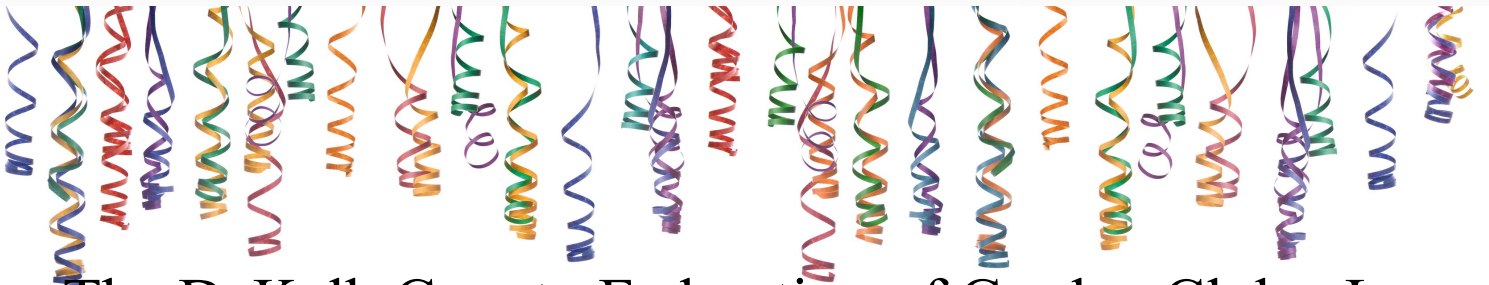
April 16-17.....GCG Annual Convention in Peachtree City organized by Redbud District

19.....Membership meeting at the LakeHouse at 10:00

25.....DeKalb Federation Awards Luncheon at Callanwolde 10:30

25.....Field Trip to the Cottages at Vaugh, Clarkston at 6:00 p.m.





The DeKalb County Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
Celebrates Award Winning Garden Clubs
at the Annual Awards Luncheon
Thursday April 25 in the Courtyard at Callanwolde

A Catered Lunch Will Be Served
\$25.00 Per Person

Please Send Your Reservation **by April 18, 2024****
to Registrar Ann Purr at the address listed on
the Attached Reservation Form

Please do not mail reservations and checks to the Garden Center.

****Final reservations must be given to the caterer on Saturday, April 20,
so please comply with the due date.**



2024 Awards Luncheon Reservation Form

Send Completed Reservation Form and Check for **\$25.00 Per Person**

(payable to DeKalb Federation) **by April 18, 2024** to:

Ann Purr, 6174 Traveler Court, Smoke Rise, GA 30087-1940

a.purr@comcast.net; 770-921-9070

Name:

Phone:

Address:

E-Mail:

Garden Club: Avondale Estates Garden Club

Dietary Restrictions:

Names of additional individuals included with this reservation (attach extra sheet if necessary):





Dunwoody Garden Club's 46th Annual

Swing into Spring!

Card Party, Luncheon, Chico's Fashion Show & Silent Auction

Dunwoody United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

Friday, April 5, 2024

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Ticket Order Form

*Please make checks payable to
Dunwoody Garden Club*

_____ tickets at \$35.00 each \$ _____
Plus Additional donation (optional) \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please pay as a group if you want to sit together.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Will your group need a 4-person card table? Yes / No

Please mail this completed form and your check

Made payable to Dunwoody Garden Club to:

**Dunwoody Garden Club
4983 Lakeland Woods Ct
Dunwoody, GA 30338**

Thank you for your continued support!

DUNWOODY



GARDEN CLUB

