



January 2025 News



Last year's Tropical Storm Helene was hard on all of us! Yet, I feel grateful for our community and how our Tryon Garden Club members and Pearson's Falls advocates have rallied to move forward through adversity. There's bright hope for Pearson's Falls in 2025; it will be a new Pearson's Falls and Glen experience. The Restoration Team has put in many hours of planning and work. Thank you to our team, club members, Andy, Janice, and our volunteers who are working to restore our Pearson's Falls trails.

The TGC Board is operating shorthanded as we start the new year. Both a Treasurer and Depot Garden Chair are needed. Unfortunately, John Ryan needed to step back due to his health, and Jane Herman has resigned as Depot Garden Chair.

It is my hope that 2025 will be a good year for us all and our community.

Beth Rounds

Upcoming Events

General Meeting: Wednesday, January 15, social time with snacks at 1:30 pm and program at 2 pm at FENCE.

Come Hear Nancy Basket's Story Wednesday, January 15, at FENCE.

For the last 15 years, Nancy Basket has researched and shared her basketry and storytelling skills at Primitive Skills gatherings, Powwows, through the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), and to library, social, and educational groups. She knows traditional and contemporary baskets!



In the state of Washington, Nancy learned basketry making. She tried to buy Mr. Lee's pine needle basket collection. Mr. Lee, a Cherokee man, told her that her

job was to make them. Many well-known museums have purchased her baskets because they represent American indigenous cultures. Two movie companies commissioned her basketry skills in the TV series: Young Indiana Jones, where Nancy made a hot air balloon basket out of cattail leaves, and The Last of the Mohicans, where she made cattail leaf mats, bark baskets, and corn husk masks. She is also skilled in the art of kudzu leaf paper art.

Nancy loves to tell her Native American stories and educate people about being patient and letting their dream reveal itself.

She settled in Union, South Carolina, where she scavenged the Sandhills for Long Leaf Pine needles and learned to make natural Cherokee dyes. She has a shop, Kudzu Dabin Design on Main Street, Walhalla, but she says call before coming, 864-718-8864, because she may be out harvesting kudzu.

Thank you to the PCCF!

The Tryon Garden Club owes an enormous thank you to the Polk County Community Foundation (PCCF) for their assistance to TGC, Pearson's Falls, and to the broader community for their support of the cleanup efforts in Polk County following Tropical Storm Helene.

Holiday Merrymaking



The Depot Garden holiday decorations were festive this year with bright red bows and sparkling balls hanging from the evergreens.



Thanks to Lewis R, Barb O, Ellen R, Sue B, and Ann W for making the garden sparkle. The Depot Lamppost photo is at the top of page 1.

On Thursday, December 12, Tryon Garden Club members and significant others enjoyed delicious holiday food and merriment at the Tryon Country Club. It was a gala affair. Thank you, to Bob R and his efficient committee!



Club Business

President's Report: Terry and Cher Brown of Keva Creative provided the TGC board with a proposal to create a documentary capturing the Pearson's Falls and Glen's Helene storm damage through full restoration. The board much appreciates that Corrie W identified this talented couple (www.kevacreative.com) who live in Tryon and are Pearson's Falls annual pass holders. The board approved their proposal in December and two members, including member Carrie B, have contributed funds towards the production.

Corrie W, Beth R, and Rae Ann W. will be the core team working with the Browns. Drone footage has already been captured, along with many photos.

Beth Rounds

Financials: The club's finances and the recovery efforts at Pearson's Falls and Glen are interwoven. It's been a busy quarter. Treasurer and Vice President, John James has reported that the club is not in financial crisis. We have prepared over the years for a disaster at the falls—just not as big as Tropical Storm Helene. Please read John's Restoration Team reports for details about how the club is moving toward Pearson's Falls future reopening.

Restoration Team: John James, Team Leader, reports that the Restoration Fund has received \$23,500 in donations! Most of these funds have come from friends of the falls who are not members, including a significant donation from the granddaughter of our first President. An enormous thank you goes out to the TGC board members, club members, and all who have donated to the Restoration Fund. If you have not yet donated, please keep an eye out for news from the Fundraising Team on how to support rebuilding Pearson's Falls trails in the coming weeks.

The Tryon Garden Club has applied for and received a \$25,000 disaster grant from PCCF for debris cleanup and tree removal. Thank you to PCCF!

Thankfully, the club's financial position has not changed significantly since the hurricane. Previous Boards have set aside an Operating Reserve Fund at PCCF which we have tapped to cover overhead and ongoing payroll expenses, such as keeping Andy

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employed to oversee the physical restoration that is of paramount importance to the club. The restoration will be funded partially by club funds available from operating reserves (made possible by visitors to Pearson's Falls during the pandemic) and partially by fundraising, which you will hear more about in the coming weeks,

The Restoration Team has met often and at length over the last few months. Fortunately, the majority of our trails are recoverable, but significant portions need complete rebuilding or recovery. Our goal is to design, restore, and rebuild a safe trail to the basin of Pearson's Falls while preserving the glen and not interfering with the new flow of Colt Creek. To that end, the team has talked with several trail builders. We have explained that the new trail will only replace the trail portions that were destroyed. The work must be done without clearing a way through the property with heavy equipment that would cause excessive disruption to land and plants.

I am pleased to say that a local NC trail builder has been found and the board has approved the team's proposal. We are in the process of contracting with the company. The team and board will update the membership with further details after they have been engaged and work is ready to commence.

The Restoration Team expects Pearson's Falls to be ready to be open on or before September 27, 2025 (Helene's anniversary). In the meantime, the team has a significant amount of work to do to prepare for that opening. However, the completion and safety of local roads and bridges are less certain. There needs to be safe access to the falls before the club can officially re-open the gates.

So, in the meantime, Pearson's Falls continues to be closed to everyone except those working on restoration and those documenting the restoration. We ask for and appreciate your continued support to keep everyone safe, especially those working to restore this treasure.

Finally, an enormous thank you to our Restoration Team members: Andy Ruff, our dedicated keeper of the glen; Janice Fishman, our new gatekeeper turned volunteer coordinator; former Pearson's Falls Chair Bob Tobey; and current Pearson's Falls Chair Rae Ann Wessel. Their commitment is extraordinary.

Thanks to all our members for their patience, while the team and the board have been putting together a plan to rebuild and restore the trails at Pearson's Falls. We are confident that the wait will be worth the hard efforts of everyone involved in reopening Pearson's Falls to the public. Please reach out with questions to either Beth or me.

Marketing/Publicity: Beth Rounds states, "There is not much to report at this time." TGC will continue to sponsor Saluda Lifestyles and the Tryon Daily Bulletin annual almanac.

On the pearsonsfalls.org website, a restoration update section has been created, and there now is a "donate" button to help finance the renovations.

Hospitality: Bob Rossier reports that the annual holiday party was held on December 12 at the charming Tryon Country Club and was a great success, with approximately 55 people attending. Thanks go to Denny, Cindy, Lewis, Barb, and Jane for the preliminary decorations, which the Country Club used for their party.

Before the TGC party, Eldred and Bob worked on additional decorations and arranged the tables and chairs. Tablecloths were rented, and Clark was hired to bartend, which was a great help. Once again, Chef Sharone did the catering, and there was a wide assortment of delicious food, culminating in a lavish Croquebouche (cream puff Christmas tree) for dessert. At the party's end, several members helped clean up. Next morning, Bob and Eldred returned to finish cleaning. Leftover wine and other beverages are being stored for future events.

Upcoming meetings have been announced by MailChimp. Hospitality committee members have been assigned to each event. The next planned TGC meeting is January 15th at FENCE with speaker Nancy Basket.

Programs: Beth Rounds reports that TGC programming is set through March. January through March, the meetings will be held at FENCE, starting at 1:30 pm with a social time before the 2 pm program. In April, we will offer 3-4 different tours/experiences for our members to enjoy.

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If you have ideas for next year's programming, contact Beth Rounds or Bob Rossier.

Civic Beautification: Beth Rounds reports that Corrie Woods has volunteered to oversee the Depot Garden through February. Would you be willing to take up your garden gloves and lead the Depot Garden Team?

Welcome New Member - Ron Pankey



Ron and his wife, Tryon Garden Club member Margie, have been proud residents of the area for over 15 years. Recently Margie inspired him to join the club. Together they have been involved in many community organizations. Ron first became active with the "Always Tryon" group, serving as a sounding board for residents and city leaders.

Later, he joined the Lanier Library Board of Directors, where he served for four years. Then for eight years, he was on the Tryon Fine Arts Center Board, including five years as secretary. Welcome, Ron!

Welcome New Pearson's Falls Gatekeeper – Janice Fishman

In 2013, Janice moved to Tryon from Baltimore, Maryland. She says her hometown teams will always have a place in her heart.

Until May 2024, Janice worked at the Tryon Equine Hospital as an anesthesia/surgery technician, along with many other roles. She has spent much of her time around horses, mostly thoroughbreds. She graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and has volunteered at various parks doing trail maintenance.



In recent years, she has become interested in native plant gardening and battling invasives. Janice enjoys hiking, kayaking/paddleboarding, attending movies at our local theater, and hanging out with her dog and cats. Janice retired from full-time work last summer and is enjoying her part-time role at Pearson's Falls, where she can use her skills and interests. She had no idea when she said yes to being a part-time gatekeeper how the job was going to evolve, nor the magnitude of what was going to be needed. Thank goodness she enjoys being around people who also find joy in being in such a beautiful place. She is helping the club foster an appreciation for the falls and the surroundings."



Janice's Webster Way Update

While Webster Way was spared severe damage from Tropical Storm Helene, sections of the trail were flooded, leaving behind significant amounts of debris and silt. In addition, the powerful storm waterflow eroded sections along the bank, undercutting a few areas. A small but dedicated crew worked to restore Webster Way. Debris was removed from the entire trail and the areas that surround it, including the picnic area and Kirby's Korner. The next step was to smooth out the trail and spread wood chips. This has been completed, except for the last 40 yards leading up to the picnic area. Before adding wood chips to this section, the silt covering the steps needs to be removed and repairs made. At the opposite end of Webster Way, the bank was undercut; it's no longer stable and was a safety concern. Here the trail has been rerouted with fencing installed to delineate the new trail from the old. Care was taken to limit the disturbance to trees and other flora when building the new path. Next, we will repair the existing fencing and add fencing in sections where the bank is eroded, leaving the trail too close to Colt Creek's edge.

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Other good recovery news is that the crew has spotted several wildflowers and salamanders in areas that had been flooded. Thank you to volunteers Brooks W, Corrie W, Jay L, and Jim W for their help.

Corrie and Janice have been documenting the progress being made on the trails. Future issues will contain more pictures of the progress being made.

Below are Before and After Pictures:



Top: Two pictures are before and after the path leading to the picnic table was repaired.



Bottom: Pictured on the right is where Webster Way's bank was undercut, making it unsafe to walk there. The picture on the right is the new path on solid ground.

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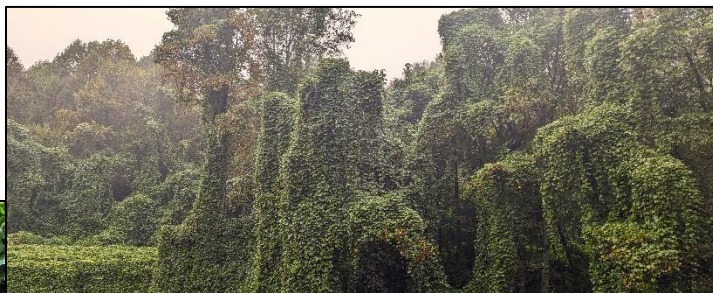
Exploring with Jim Welch

The Kudzu Story

I'm from Vermont and went to colleges in Miami, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. I never saw or thought about Kudzu until I moved to South Carolina. Ceille and I were driving to the Santee Lakes and saw a small



house in the middle of an abandoned



World's Fair Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia where it was proclaimed a great ornamental plant, fast-growing, with sturdy vines and fragrant blossoms.

Kudzu is native to Japan and southeast China and might have remained a front porch ornamental if it had not been for an extensive marketing campaign from the Soil Conservation Service. It was promoted as a major

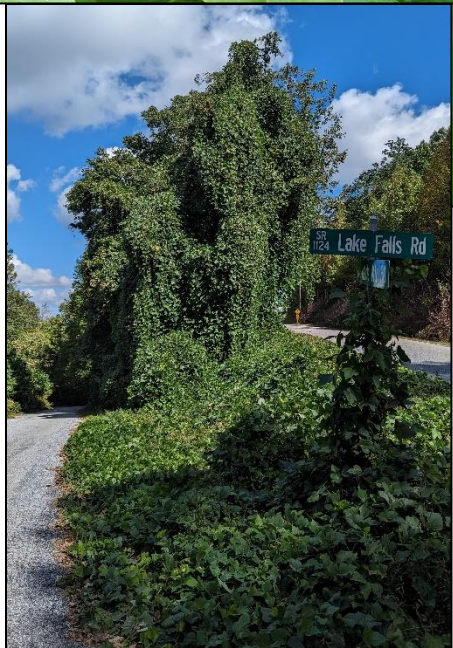
help in controlling soil erosion. In 1935, as dust storms ravaged the prairies, Congress offered as much as \$8 per acre to anyone willing to plant the vine. Railroad and highway construction engineers used Kudzu to slow erosion on their projects.

It soon became known as the "mile-a-minute" plant,

and "the vine that ate the South," creeping and climbing over native plants and racing toward the sun to the tops of tall trees. It destroys plants in its path by blocking out the sunlight.

By the early 1950s, Kudzu was out of control. In 1953, the US Department of Agriculture removed the plant from the list of cover plants permissible under the Agricultural Conservation Program. In 1970, the USDA listed Kudzu as a common weed, and in 1997, Congress voted to place Kudzu on the Federal Noxious Weed list, although now only 13 states have it listed. Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) is a destructive, invasive exotic that is banned in North Carolina.

Kudzu leaves, vine tips, flowers, and roots can be eaten, and the purple-colored, grape smelling kudzu blossoms can be used to make jelly. I just tried some on a toasted biscuit and it was quite pleasing.



field. Kudzu had grown over it until all one could see was a small portion of the roof. Kudzu can grow a foot a day. At that rate, in another few weeks, the house would be

totally covered. Its spread is helped by its ability to root wherever a stem is exposed to the soil.

I was told by someone that Kudzu was brought to our country by the railroad companies to prevent erosion along the tracks. And that is what I thought until I researched the plant. Kudzu was introduced at the 1876

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Old World Climbing Fern

From a distance, it sure looks like Kudzu!

Photo credit: Top plants.ces.ncsu.edu. Bottom L & R S Patton

Invasive Plant to Eradicate

Old World Climbing Fern, *Lygodium microphyllum*:

It is also called climbing maidenhair fern, small-leaf climbing fern, and snake fern. This aggressive plant is considered a problem weed in North Carolina; it threatens habitats. The fronds of the fern can climb up to 90 feet by twining around trees, shrubs, and across the ground. The landscape begins to look like kudzu draped on the trees and shrubs. Old world climbing fern kills the understory vegetation by smothering it, then the dead vegetation becomes a fire ladder to the tree canopy, creating crown fires that kill additional trees. It is especially a problem in bottomland swamp forests.

The fronds can cover trees. Groups of leaflets or ‘pinnae’ grow from the frond oppositely arranged and are about 2–5 inches long. The pinnae are further subdivided into several pairs of leaflets that are fringed

with rolled-up leaf tissue which covers the sori, the sporangia on the back of the fern fronds.

Old world climbing fern thrives in low-light, understory environments. It can grow in wet soil or standing water, in sun or shade. It was introduced to the U.S. as a potted plant from South Africa and was found naturalized in 1965. It has both fertile and sterile leaflets. The fertile leaflets are fringed with tiny lobes of enrolled leaf tissue covering the sporangia along the leaf margin. The dark brown wiry rhizomes can form mats. Each plant produces millions of spores that are spread by wind, water, animals, people, equipment, and vehicles.

Information from the NC Invasive Plant Council, nc-ipc.weebly.com, and Plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants.

NC Native Plant for Your Garden

Carolina Jasmine or Carolina Jessamine, *Gelsemium sempervirens*,

is one of the most beautiful vines of the South according to Clemson Cooperative Extension. It was named the state flower of South Carolina in 1924.

However, the sap may cause skin irritation, it is poisonous, extremely flammable, and will cover trees in open woodland. Then why would you plant it?

It puts on a lovely spring



Photo credits: Top K Russ.

Bottom Gurneys Seed & Nursery

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show from February to May with sweetly scented, canary-yellow flowers and glossy evergreen foliage. The foliage generally bronzes in winter. It works well on a trellis in your garden or in a pot on your deck. Deer and rabbits will not eat it. Diseases are rarely a problem. It attracts butterflies

Carolina Jessamine is a member of the family *Gelsemiaceae*. It is evergreen. It is best grown in moist, organically rich, well-drained soils in full sun away from your home. Although it will tolerate light shade, the best flowering and growth occur in the sun. It tolerates wind and is moderately tolerant of salt, wet soil, or short periods of drought. Carolina jessamine has a modest growth rate until well-established. It may grow from 12 to 20 feet as a twining vine trained to an arbor or trellis after three to four growing seasons. If unsupported, it creates a bushy ground cover, making it a good plant along steep banks to help control erosion. Pruning, which is best done soon after it finishes flowering, is generally only needed for shape and training to its support.

The trumpet-shaped blooms have 5 lobes, are 1 to 1½ inches long. The shiny evergreen leaves are 1 to 3 inches long on 10 to 20-foot tall vines. It has a thin, wiry, evergreen vine that climbs by twining. The leaves are shiny green, opposite, and lanceolate. Its persistent fruit is a flattened, dehiscent capsule.

Do not overfeed, since excessive fertilizer can reduce flowering.

Five suggested cultivars.

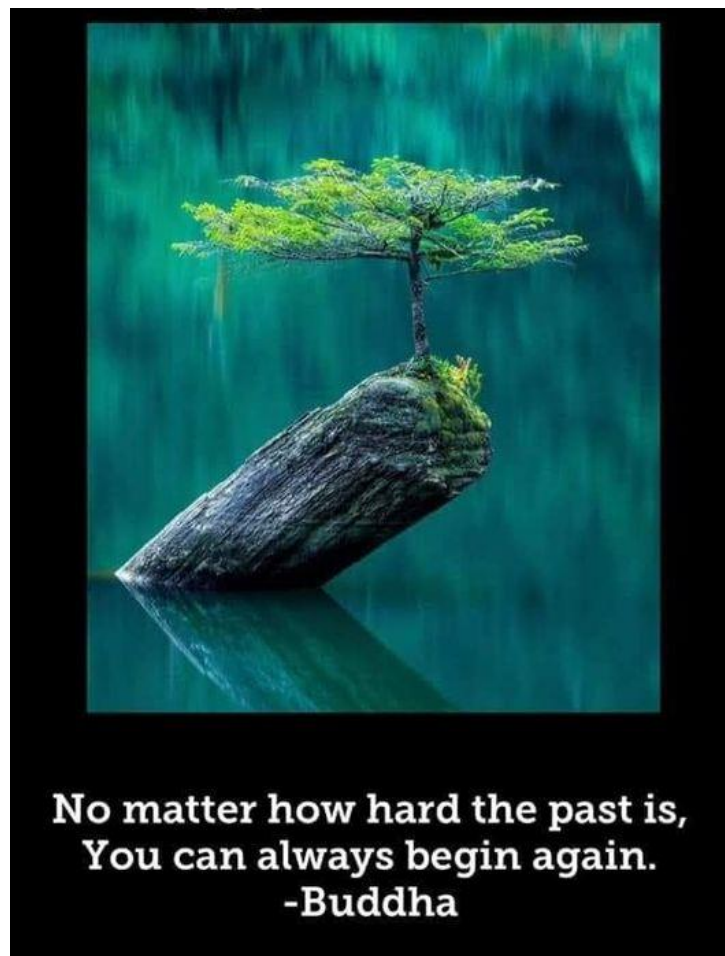
- **Pride of Augusta:** Double-flowering, stays in bloom longer. Flowers look like miniature roses.
- **Margarita:** Slightly larger and more prominent flowers. More cold hardy.
- **Pale Yellow:** Also called Woodlander's Pale or Light Yellow. Flowers are creamy-yellow and large. Less cold hardy than other cultivars.
- **Butterscotch™:** Flowers 2 to 3 weeks later than other species and repeat blooms in the fall.
- **Lemon Drop™ ('Conrop'; PP11956):** More compact with a shrub-like habit and softer yellow flowers.

Information from *Carolina Jessamine Factsheet, HGIC 1103*, <http://clemson.edu/factsheet/Carolina-jessamin>, authored by Karen Russ and Robert Polomski.

Historical Tidbit

August 1, 1997, the Atlanta Journal published an article that brought many guests to Pearson's Falls and Glen, but upset the Tryon Garden Club Board of Directors. After not interviewing anyone at Pearson's Falls, the author described his wonderful PF experience and described children wading and romping in the quieter water downstream from the falls. He did go on to describe PF as a peaceful spot for a picnic, a hike, and to birdwatch. He included a beautiful PF photo that dominated the page.

Quote of the month: Happy New Year 2025!



No matter how hard the past is,
You can always begin again.
-Buddha

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