Happy Holidays! As we approach this busy season, may you find time to smell the pine and spruce along the way. What a beautiful time of year to celebrate all that we have here in the Carolina Foothills. I am looking forward to seeing many of you, whether we are decorating the Depot Garden, beautifying the Tryon Country Club, or socializing at the Holiday Party on the 13th.

Beth Rounds, President

Upcoming Events

**December’s Annual Holiday Party**
December 13, 2023, 5 pm
Tryon Country Club

Don’t forget to RSVP to the invitation that was sent via email.

**January General Meeting:** Wednesday, January 17
**Place:** The Depot Meeting Room
**Social time:** 1 pm
**Program:** 1:30 pm
Everyone is welcome!

**Speaker:** Sarah Coury, Garden Manager, Botanical Gardens at Asheville, and co-owner of Saturnia Farm in Weaverville.

**Topic:** Creating a Multi-purpose Native Garden
Native plants are beautiful, low maintenance, ecologically beneficial, and bestow a distinct sense of place to cultivated landscapes. This one-hour presentation will guide participants in planning a native garden to serve multiple purposes, including great native species for ornamental value, edible gardens, pollinator conservation, and more!

Sarah brings a background in wildlife conservation with a passion for creating artistic and multi-use garden spaces that provide high habitat value for flora, fauna, and humans!

**Club Business**

**President’s Report:** During October and November, both Pearson’s Falls and club activities have continued to hum along – thank you! Our fall programs have been very well received. Many members sent me emails saying how much they enjoyed the recent farm tour.

Beth Rounds

**Financials:** Treasurer John James reports that as of October 31, our income and expenses were spot on budget. Curiously, our PF admissions income through October 2023 was $20 more than October 2022. The Polk County Community Foundation Kirby Grants for the PF and for the Depot Garden have been gratefully received. Both October and November were good financial months.

**Marketing/Publicity Report:** In November, Beth Rounds reported that Facebook and Google mentions about Pearson’s Falls continue to be excellent. The winter hours have been publicized.

TGC has renewed its annual website contract. In January, Beth is preparing to refresh the website. It will include a content review.

PF was voted Foothills 2023 “Best Hike.” The emblem has been added to our website and the Foothills
magazine ads. PF advertising in the Tryon Daily Bulletin has been suspended until March.

Beth has contacted a local graphic artist, a recent college grad, to mock-up PF postcard designs that will be fashioned after the National Parks vintage posters. She also indicated that it would be nice to have a new poster created for 2024; she will need some help from a member to make this happen.

The Hendersonville Lions Club chapter has asked someone from the TGC to speak to their group in March, followed by a PF tour later in the month.

TGC has donated an individual annual pass to the Tryon Arts and Crafts annual holiday auction. The pass will be combined with a food basket from Manzolina’s Eatery.

TGC will support the March Gardening for Life Celebration with a sponsorship and volunteer labor. The club has offered our members as ushers. Ten volunteers and a coordinator are needed. More information will be available in January. There will be no TGC table this year.

The Saluda Lifestyles sponsorship will be renewed for 2024.

Programs: Beth Rounds reports that the January through March programs are in place. Beth is working on April’s program, pursuing the idea of public garden tours. Winghaven (Charlotte, NC), Serenity Moss Garden (Hendersonville, NC), and Bullington Gardens (Hendersonville, NC) have been suggested.

Hospitality/Events Committee: Bob Rossier reports that on Wednesday, November 1, TGC’s general meeting was a wonderful trip to Rafael Bravo’s farm. Though chilly, it was very sunny, and attendees were also warmed by hot spiced punch. Lewis R and Nell L did a fabulous job of hosting, providing homemade cheese crackers, gingerbread, other cookies, and sweet treats. Twenty plus attendees were entertained and informed by Rafael. We visited his sheep, the cow, chickens and turkeys, the dogs, and the outstanding vegetable garden. We learned about why it’s important to rotate grazing pastures and crops. Beth provided gifts of honey from the farm for those who had recent birthdays. Thank you, Beth, for arranging this great visit to a local treasure!

This picture of Butterfly Milkweed was taken in the Depot Garden, after it had gone to seed. The graceful pods and fluffy floss are truly works of art. The floss acts as a parachute or sail helping the wind distribute the seeds anywhere from inches to miles from the original plant. This species of milkweed spreads only by seed, whereas other species also spread by rhizomes. Milkweed is the only plant on which Monarch butterflies lay their eggs because it is the sole food for the caterpillars that morph into Monarch butterflies. It is a most important plant, one that has been maligned and destroyed with great enthusiasm. To ensure the Monarch butterfly migration, you should plant some milkweed in your gardens.

In November, Jane Herman reported that in the last month the pergola was painted, including the roof, and pansies were planted near the welcome signs and in

The TGC Annual Christmas Party will be Wednesday, December 13, at the picturesque Tryon Country Club at 5 pm. All garden club members have been invited to help decorate the club house for this event on Friday, December 8, at 4pm.

Jane Herman is overseeing the decorating of the Depot Garden. Thank you, Jane.

Member Records: Jackie Weedon reported that in October there was one new member. That brings the total membership to 73, plus 2 honorary members.

Depot Garden Committee: Jane Herman, Chair of the Depot Garden, asks: Do you know that there are over a hundred different species of milkweed native to the US? And about 16 of them are native to NC.
pots to add a bit of color. Unfortunately, the 
unwelcome critter(s) chewed many of the pansies 
beyond recovery. Then, the town manager asked that 
all sprinkler systems be turned off because of the 
drought. Based on the critter damage and the drought 
conditions, the decision was made that there will be no 
new plantings until conditions improve. As a result, 
the garden is looking bare. 

On the upside, a new person, who does a great job, 
will be blowing leaves off all the paths on a weekly 
basis. Planning has begun for the holiday decorations 
in the garden.

Photos: J Herman
Garden Decorating Complete Saturday, Nov. 25:


Photos: RA Wessel
NC Native Plant for
Your Garden

Wild Geranium
(Geranium maculatum)

Wild geraniums are technically from Europe but have naturalized freely in North America.

They are very low maintenance. They’re not bothered by diseases or pests. Pollinators love them, and small wildlife may nestle in their shade in the heat of summer.

Deadheading the flowers can extend the bloom season. If they start to spread, just dig them up and gently cut back the rhizomes (which can be replanted). Doing this in autumn after they’ve finished blooming will give your plants a tidy but full look the following spring. Some types of wild geraniums contain chemicals that act as a natural insect repellent, particularly against mosquitoes.

Plant Habit: Herb/Forb
Life cycle: Perennial
Sun Requirements: Partial Shade to Full Shade
Water Preferences: Mesic, Dry Mesic
Minimum cold hardiness: Zone 4a -34.4 °C (-30 F) to -31.7 C (-25 °F)
Plant Height: 8-30 inches
Plant Spread: 6-18 inches
Leaves: Deciduous
Fruiting Time: Summer
Flowers: Showy, Other
Flower Color: Pink, Mauve, Purple
Bloom Size: 1"-2"
Flower Time: Late spring or early summer
Uses: Groundcover, will naturalize
Wildlife Attractant: Bees
Resistances: Tolerates dry shade
Pollinators: Bees, Flies, Moths and Butterflies, Hoverflies
Containers: Suitable in 3 gallon or larger, needs excellent drainage in pots.

*Information from the September 23, 2023 - Issue #636 of National Gardening Association enewsletter*

<magpie@nationalgardening.org>
What’s Happening? Andy Ruff reports that October was a warm, dry month and attendance increased from last year. This continued into the first part of November. Attendance stayed above average, thanks to the weather. Now, the leaves are almost gone from the trees. Late in the month, PF finally received some much-needed rain. November ended with freezing cold nights that led to icicles on Lighteners’ Ledge.

Maintenance: The crew continue to work on the trails and raking and blowing leaves. We had a tree fall up near the falls on Wednesday, November 15. We closed at 3:pm and removed the tree. The educational garden has been cleaned.

Wildlife: During the warm days, there were several snake sightings. The last couple of weeks, there have been an increase in coyote sightings.
Andy and Melissa’s Vacation Pictures: They want to thank everyone who volunteered their time at Pearson’s Falls while they were on vacation.
Visit to Rafael Bravo’s Farm, Wednesday, November 1.
Rudy Mancke, Friend, Teacher, and Naturalist:
When Rudy Mancke passed away on November 7, following a brief illness, the nation lost one of its greatest naturalists, and South Carolina lost a true treasure. Rudy grew up in Spartanburg. He was a graduate of Wofford College and the University of South Carolina. Many, if not all, of our Tryon Garden Club members knew Rudy from the TV series NatureScene, his podcast NatureNotes on ETV Radio, or from one of the thousands of talks he gave throughout the state to garden clubs, civic clubs, schools, and churches. Some of you may have been part of one of his walks in the natural areas of our state and know of his passion for imparting his knowledge of nature to everyone he met.

Rudy was my friend, teacher, and guide as we visited many biotic provinces in all fifty states and around the world. I was blessed to be his co-host on NatureScene for over twenty years. He was a joy and taught me how to love and understand the natural world around us. He left this world a better place than he found it through his constant sharing of the wonderful mysteries of nature. He is with me in my heart and mind as I walk the trails in the Blue Ridge Mountains that I now call home.

NatureScene was produced by the SCETV Network and was broadcast on over 200 Public TV stations from coast to coast. Rudy was an army veteran and taught high school biology and geology. For ten years, he served as the natural history curator for the South Carolina State Museum. Following his retirement from ETV, he became the Naturalist in Residence at the University of South Carolina.

Rudy is survived by his wife of 53 years, Ellen, his children, Will and Mandy, five grandchildren, and his siblings, Cathy, Jim, and Tom.

Pictures - Top L: Rudy Mancke, Banff, Alberta, Canada.
Bottom L: Rudy & Jim, Forth Acre Rock, South Carolina.
Right: Rudy & Jim, Jumping Off Rock, Lake Jocassee, South Carolina.
Photos: From J Welch’s collection.
Historical Note:
The Depot Garden Christmas Decorations were first recorded in the TGC Newsletter, December 10, 2015.
Invasive Plant to Eradicate

**Japanese Stiltgrass (Microstegium vimineum)** is a summer annual grass that generally grows 1-3 feet in a branching, sprawling, mat-like manner. Its pale green leaves alternate along a branched stalk, and it resembles a small bamboo plant. Leaves are narrow and lightly hairy. One feature to notice is the pale stripe of hair along the midrib of the upper leaf surface. Japanese stiltgrass spreads rapidly, and out competes native vegetation in areas of low light.

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To control Japanese stiltgrass, a dense, actively growing turf needs to be maintained through proper mowing, fertilizing, and watering practices. Mow at the proper height for your selected adapted turfgrass. It is best to control this summer annual broadleaf weed in late spring or early summer when it is easier to control.

**Seedhead/flowers:** one or more spike-like raceme  
**Growth season/life cycle:** summer annual weed  
**Leaf blade tip shape:** sharp-pointed; leaves are asymmetrical (midvein does not divide the leaf into two equal parts).

Information from: [https://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds-in-turf/japanese-stiltgrass/](https://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/weeds-in-turf/japanese-stiltgrass/)

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**News You Can Use**

**Corrections:** TGC member Carrie B observed that the November newsletter had two errors, pictures of plants that were incorrectly identified. First on page 3, lower right, the flower was identified as Coreopsis; its correct name is **Sneezeweed-Helenium autumnale**.

On page 5, the second picture on the left was identified as bittersweet. Its correct name is **Strawberry-bush**.

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**Strawberry-bush.** Strawberry bush euonymus is a deciduous plant with a thicket-like habit of around 6 feet (2 m.) tall by 3 to 4 feet (1 m.) wide, found in forested or woodland areas as an understory plant.

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**Quote of the month:**

*ADOPT THE PACE OF NATURE: HER SECRET IS PATIENCE.*  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson  

*The National Gardening Association, garden.org, Nov. 25, 2023, Issue 645.*