

All the Dirt, and More

Volume 5, Issue 2

Summer 2026

Newsletter of the Hillsborough Garden Club

Sneak Peek at the 2026-27 Garden Club Season

Friends, before we don our sunhats and sturdy gloves for the joys of summer gardening, we are excited to share a sneak peek at the programs we are planning for next year. We hope that both novice gardeners and those of you who've been planting and pruning for years will find something to delight and inform you in the upcoming Garden Club season!

Our programs will include: a hands-on flower arranging morning, learning to design outdoor garden rooms, demystifying common horti-

cultural myths: what is fiction and what is fact, caring for and enjoying magnificent mums, tips for gardening as we age, and expert advice on gardening in extreme heat.

We will be watching an eco-printing demonstrating using common plants found in our gardens, and we will have the chance to sharpen our gardening tools (along with a 'show-and-tell' time with a favorite tool!) We will learn more about Hillsborough's historic Moorefields and its 70 acres of gardens and woodlands.



And, of course, we will have plenty of time to meet new friends, share informal conversation, and learn about Garden Club's many volunteer activities that support Hillsborough and Orange County! Join us and enjoy!

Calendar of Events

Social Time at 9:30 am, Meeting at 10 am
Location at Hillsborough UMC unless otherwise stated

Thursday, June 11

Program: Share the Bounty with Friends:
Food and Flowers

Presenter: HGC Members

Let's celebrate the end of another successful club year with a scrumptious potluck. Bring a dish of your choice to share. Also, bring a plant to share. Gardeners love to show off their talents. And we will have a special recognition for our members that have lead the way with over 20 years of membership in the club.

Thursdays this Summer
Share the Blooms

Pick and Make flower arrangements at Firefly Flower Farm

June 25	August 13
July 9	August 27
July 23	September 17 or 24

Garden Therapy at Soltys Place

Join us at 10 am to share with the participants and spread some joy.

June 18
July 16
August 20

2026 Andrea Lewis Scholarship Winners

The Andrea Lewis Scholarship is given to three high school seniors each year. The students plan to major in horticulture or environmental science. This year's group is impressive.

Wren Hash, a graduate of Orange High School, plans to attend UNC Chapel Hill and major in Environmental Science. In Wren's words, "It is easy to take our beautiful world for granted, but without real steps to control the impact of people on our ecosystems and protect what we do have, the world in which we have grown up may be difficult to recognize in the years to come."

Wren secured an internship this past fall at an environmental consulting company conducting site assessments on stream and wetland delineation. It was great experience for his future goals. He attended the UNC Cleantech Summit recently with representatives from the EU, Estonia, Germany, and the UK, as well as corporate leaders.

Wren sounds like a remarkable young man who gives hopes for the future.

Macie McPaek, a graduate of Eno River Academy, plans to attend UNC or Coastal Carolina University and major in Marine Science. She has spent her summers at the beach. In high school, she realized that many of her peers never experienced life by the sea so she started a marine conservation club. They hosted educational events, modeled sustainable habits and helped the students "see themselves as stewards of ecosystems far beyond our schoolyard."

In college, Macie hopes to explore coral reefs and to study sharks. "By combining research and outreach, I aim to share the wonders of the ocean while promoting sustainable practices that protect it." She is well on her way to doing that.

Laci Sykes, a graduate of Cedar Ridge High School, will further her studies at East Carolina University to study nursing. The agriculture teacher at Cedar Ridge

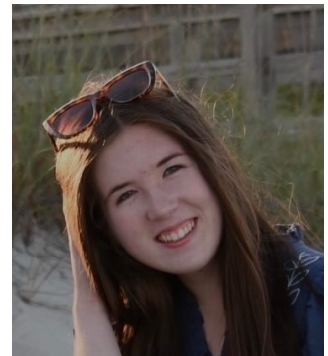
says that Laci worked tirelessly as the President of the school's FFA and helped to develop and grow the program. Laci has a love for those who work the land and hopes to study how the environment and the many chemicals that farmers use affect their health. She believes that farmers face unique health and environmental challenges from their work.

Using her nursing skills, Laci hopes to help rural areas. "Farmers play a major role in our communities, but they often face risks related to weather, chemicals and injury. I want to use my nursing experience to support and promote safer farming practices for agricultural workers."

We also give a scholarship to an Alamance Community College student, but that selection will be made at the end of the summer. The Scholarship Committee hopes to communicate with these students throughout the year and encourage them in their endeavors.



Wren Hash



Macie McPeak



Laci Sykes

Master Status in the National Garden Clubs Achieved



Catherine Phelps



Congratulations to Hillsborough Garden Club member Catherine Phelps on achieving Master Status in the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Schools program. Catherine is now an NGC Five Star member in Environmental, Flower Show, Garden Study, and Landscape Design. This accomplishment represents nearly ten years of dedication and study. Catherine is also a National Accredited Flower Show Master Judge.

The National Garden Clubs Schools program includes four areas of study: Flower Show,

Environmental, Garden Study and Landscape Design.

To earn Master status, participants complete a series of four courses in each area and then repeat the series for advanced accreditation.

Flower Show School must be completed in person. Since the pandemic, however, the other schools have become available through both Zoom and in-person instruction. This allows students to learn from instructors across the country.

After earning Four Star status, participants

may work toward Five Star status, the highest level possible. To remain accredited, continuing education is necessary, and each school has its own ongoing requirements.

For example, Flower Show School accreditation is maintained through symposium attendance. These in-person symposiums focus on both Design and Horticulture and feature instructors from around the country, some of whom also teach internationally.

<https://gardenclub.org/our-schools>

Soltys Place

After receiving a HGC Philanthropy Grant this past spring, members Ann Sebesan and Amy Ballard have been hard at work creating a new raised bed garden at Soltys Place.

Gardens offer powerful, non-pharmacological therapy for memory care patients by reducing stress, stimulating the senses, and encouraging gentle physical activity. Engaging with nature can

trigger dormant memories, restore sleep cycles, and provide a vital sense of purpose and self-esteem.

The beds can be filled with plants like lavender and rosemary (smell), lamb's ear and succulents (tactile sensory) and dahlias, marigolds, pansies (for color and cheer). We hope that patients, families and caregivers will enjoy the gardens year round.



The Conservation Corner: Drought

Plant species differ in their tolerance to dry conditions. Look where our native plants grow. The natural habitat of the Butterfly Milkweed is dry prairies, fields, and roadsides. Drought-tolerant species evolved in places and soils prone to drought.

The first step in water conservation is reducing the demand for water. As we face water restrictions, we think about plants with water conservation in mind. Periods of drought are becoming more common in the Piedmont, but drought doesn't have to keep us out of our gardens! We just have to do some things a little differently.

By using drought-tolerant plants, we can reduce the water needs of our gardens. Here are some elements of good garden planning and landscape we can adopt:

1. Plant in the spring and fall, giving plants a chance to get established and expand their root systems before the hottest weather and/or drought.

2. Water in the early morning or evening to avoid direct water loss via evaporation.

3. Water slowly and by hand or with a

soaker hose to avoid water interception by plant surfaces. Hand watering allows for closer monitoring of plants and their needs.

4. Water deeply to encourage deep healthy root systems. When plants are watered shallowly, their roots develop near the soil surface. Since this zone dries out more quickly, these plants will require more frequent watering to maintain their health.

5. Apply mulch to help keep roots cool and moist once your plant beds are damp.

6. Use rainwater from rain barrels around your home. Some other sources to explore are air conditioner condensation, water from the dehumidifier, water captured while waiting for the shower to warm, or water collected from hand dishwashing.

In light of the continued and exceptional drought, the NC Botanical Garden at UNC, Chapel Hill, has developed a list of recommended drought-tolerant plants. Listed below are some plants that are known to do well in the Piedmont. These need garden beds that are well-drained; they should do well with little rain and minimal watering.

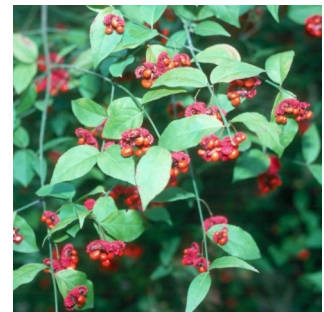
Good Drought-Tolerant NC Wildflowers

Climbing Aster
 Butterfly Milkweed
 Carolina Wild Indigo
 Maryland Golden-aster
 American-dittany
 Purple Coneflower
 Northern Rattlesnake-master
 Heart's-a-bustin'
 Purple-disk Sunflower
 Woodland Sunflower
 Stiff-leaf aster
 Scaly Blazing-star
 Carolina Lily
 Eastern False-aloe
 Southern Sundrops
 Eastern Prickly-pear
 Wild Quinine
 Downy Phlox
 Narrowleaf Silkgrass
 Black-eyed Susan
 Starry Rosinweed
 Anise-scented Golden-rod
 Eastern Silvery American-aster
 Large-flower American-aster
 Hairy-stem Spiderwort
 Adam's Needle

[Gardening for a Drought: North Carolina Native Plants to the Rescue - North Carolina Botanical Garden](#)



American-dittany



Hearts-a-bustin'



Starry Rosinweed



Share the Blooms With Meals on Wheels

The Hillsborough Garden Club is Sharing the Blooms with Meals on Wheels this summer!

Each session, we gather flowers from Firefly Farm and create small floral arrangements that are delivered to Meals on Wheels recipients throughout the summer. This is our fourth summer participating in this special project, and we would love for you to join us.

In late April, Morgan Moylan of West Queen

Studios generously donated flowers and time in her studio so we could create beautiful centerpieces for the Meals on Wheels annual fundraiser held at Union Grove Farm and Vineyard.

Thank you, Morgan, for your generosity and creativity. And thank you to Liz, Stacey, Gretchen, and Lydia for helping to Share the Blooms and make the tables — and their evening — so beautiful.

Dates: June 25, July 9 & 23, August 13 & 27, September 17

Time: 8:50 am meet at the barn. 9-10 am pick flowers, 10-11:30am arrange flowers

Location: Firefly Farm, 4911 Hunt Rd. Hillsborough

Bring: snips or scissors; water bottle

Wear: closed toe shoes, comfortable clothing

Sign-up: [Click here](#)

New Member Mini Garden Tour

The Hillsborough Garden Club recently welcomed new members with a special Mini Garden Tour, offering an opportunity to explore beautiful gardens while getting to know fellow club members.

Guests enjoyed a morning of inspiration, conversation, and community as they toured three gardens and learned more about the club's projects, programs, and volunteer opportunities. The event highlighted the joy of gar-

dening and the friendships that continue to grow through the club.

A heartfelt thank you to the generous hosts, Ann Burton, Frances Moore and Johanna Wilson, who opened their gardens and to Stacey Koval who organized this wonderful welcome event. We are delighted to have so many new members joining us and look forward to growing together in the seasons ahead.



Hillsborough Garden Club

President: Tammy Dorfman
 Vice President: Bonnie Maddux
 Secretary: Adrienne Scurtu
 Treasurer: Kristen Compton
 Newsletter Editor: Lynn Odom

Club Motto: To preserve what is good. To grow what is good. To display what is good.

Conservation Pledge: I pledge to protect and conserve the natural resources of the planet Earth and promise to promote education, so that we may become better caretakers of our air, water, forest, land, and wildlife.

Affiliate of the Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc. and National Garden Club, Inc.



www.hillsboroughgardenclubnc.org

Club Members can access Member Portal: est1925

Plant Sale Wrap Up

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Hillsborough Garden Club Spring Plant Sale such a success! From digging, dividing, potting, and labeling plants to organizing, promoting, setting up, and working the day of the sale, this event truly takes a village. We are so grateful to our dedicated members, volunteers, vendors, and community supporters who gave their time, talents, and enthusiasm.

The sale was filled with beautiful plants, helpful gardening advice, and wonderful fellowship. Most importantly, proceeds from the sale help support our beautification efforts, scholarships, educational programs, and community outreach projects throughout the year.

A special thank you to everyone who donated plants, baked treats, gathered supplies, shared boxes, worked behind the scenes and

helped welcome shoppers throughout the day. We also appreciate our vendor partners, whose expertise and offerings added so much to the event. We are grateful for the continued support of our community and look forward to growing with you again!

Notables:

Approximately 2500 total plants for sale

Sold 92% of plants

Sold out of 34 varieties

Donated left over vegetable plants to the Hillsborough Community Garden

Total Income:
\$18,162.56

