

All the Dirt, and More

Volume 5, Issue 1

Spring 2026

Newsletter of the Hillsborough Garden Club

Rethinking the Traditional Southern Lawn

At our March 12 meeting, Danesha Seth Carley, Associate Professor in Horticultural Science at NCSU and Director



of the Southern Integrated Pest Management Center, will be with us. A dynamic speaker, Denesha has extensively researched and written about sustainable managed landscapes with an emphasis on insect pollinator habitat conservation and how urban landscapes can contribute to pollinator protection.

She will be giving ideas on how to reduce turf grass in your



yard, including the why and how. Tips and tricks will be shared as well. Come and get some inspiration to rethink your Southern lawn!

Calendar of Events

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

Thursday, April 9

Program: Creating Art From Recycled Materials

Presenter: Ann Brownlee Hobgood, artist and designer

As a designer, teacher, decorator, and artist, Ann always had art as a part of her life. After retiring, she began making art using recycled materials, mostly using metal and wood. Let's learn to create some exciting art for our gardens!

Saturday, April 25, 9 am – 2 pm

Spring Plant Sale

Hillsborough Exchange Club
331 Exchange Park Lane

Thursday, May 8

Program: Using the iPhone for Amazing Photos

Presenter: Dennis Szerszen, Art Photographer and Educator

Dennis is a Hillsborough-based fine art photographer who works in both traditional and digital photographic methods. He taught iPhone photography via Duke University's OLLI program. He is also a member of the Orange County Art Guild. Take those amazing photos we will be happy to share.

Thursday, June 11

Program: Share the Bounty with Friends

Presenter: HGC members

Gardeners love to show off their talents, both culinary or horticulture. Bring a dish for the potluck and a plant to share!



Grow something beautiful this season! Join us for our semi-annual plant sale featuring locally grown perennials, native pollinator favorites, vegetable and herb plants and more.

Hillsborough Garden Club Spring Plant Sale

April 25th

9am - 2pm

Hillsborough Exchange Club
331 Exchange Park Lane

www.hillsboroughgardenclubnc.org

Plant Sale

Plant Sale Contacts

Volunteer Sign-up [Click here](#)

**Member Plant
Rodeo Round-up**
Contact Kerri Wahl,
[wahlmaggie8@
gmail.com](mailto:wahlmaggie8@gmail.com) or 919-812-
5941

Bake Sale
Contact Val Bletther,
[valerieblettner@
gmail.com](mailto:valerieblettner@gmail.com)

Plant List
Updated regularly on
the HGC [website](#)

We will have around
2,000 plants for sale,
approximately 70%
native. The others are
vegetable and herb
starts and other
annuals. All are being
grown locally

(Backyard Butterflies,
Mellow Marsh and club
members) as well as
pass along plants from
member gardens. It's
going to be a good
one!!!!

Small sample of plants that will be offered

Natives

Heart leaved aster
Bee Balm, spotted
Cardinal flower
Goldenrod, zig zag
Milkweed, common
and butterfly
Rattlesnake master
Purple coneflower

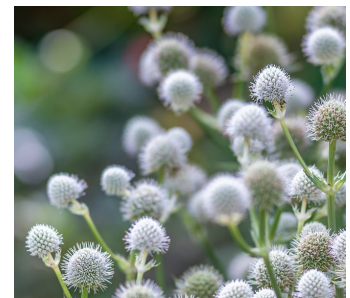
Vegetable and herbs

Lunchbox peppers, red
and orange

Lipstick pepper
Jalepeño
Amy's sugar gem cherry
tomato
German Johnson
Gold nugget
Genovese basil
Bouquet dill
Italian parsley

Annuals and other perennials

Achillea Fruit Bowl
Gomphrena
Celeosia
Rudbeckia, Prairie Sun
Agastache, Heather
Queen
Spanish lavender
Purple speedwell
Goldenrod, Little Lemon



Rattlesnake master



Rudbeckia, Prairie Sun



Classic DIY Suet Recipe

1 cup rendered beef suet
(or beef fat from a butcher)
1 cup crunchy peanut butter
2 cups cornmeal
1 cup mixed bird seed
(black oil sunflower seeds
preferred)
½ cup chopped pecans
½ cup dried fruit
(unsweetened raisins or
cranberries)
½ cup dried mealworms
(excellent protein booster)



The mission of Soltys Place is “to provide a supportive communal daytime setting for adults with special physical, cognitive, emotional, and social needs that fosters and sustains their families” and well-being. Located in the Passmore Senior Center, they have served the community for the 20+ years.

The Garden Therapy Committee is resuming its monthly visits to Soltys Place. These visits focus on sharing garden-inspired activities while spending meaningful time with the participants. This month's featured activity will be creating cheerful paper daffodils. Visits will be on the third Thursday of every month. Contact Ann Sebesan if you have questions at absebesan@gmail.com.

Suet Season in NC



High-energy suet blends are a lifeline for backyard birds from late fall through early spring, when insects are scarce and temperatures drop. Suet attracts many beloved NC species including:

Woodpeckers
Red-bellied Woodpecker
White-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren

Suet mimics the natural and insect protein birds find beneath tree bark and in leaf litter. When paired with native trees — especially oaks — suet feeding becomes part of a powerful habitat combination.

Suet Instructions

Render the fat:
Melt chopped beef fat slowly over low heat. Strain out solids and allow to cool slightly (do not let it solidify).

Stir in peanut butter and blend until smooth.

Add dry ingredients.
Mix in cornmeal, seeds, nuts, mealworms and fruit.

Press into molds.
Standard suet feeder size: 4.5” x 4.5” x 1.5”

Or use an 8.5 x 8.5-inch silicone pan, then cut into four squares.

Refrigerate 2–3 hours until firm.

Store extra cakes in the freezer.

The Conservation Corner

The Hillsborough Garden Club Conservation Pledge

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

What can you do to honor our pledge?

Compost is an essential tool in the organic farmer or gardener's toolkit. Made from organic wastes like kitchen scraps, paper, and yard clippings, compost is an effective way to recycle while

creating a valuable byproduct that feeds plants for healthy growth.

Check out this short video from Brown University.

[Click Here.](#)

3 ways that you can compost:

1. Backyard composting
2. Take food scraps and other compostable materials to your local collection points.

[Drop-Off-Sites Composting](#)

3. Contract with a commercial business like [CompostNow](#)

Steps for Backyard Composting

Determine how you will collect and store your browns and greens.

Set aside space for your compost pile and build or buy a bin.

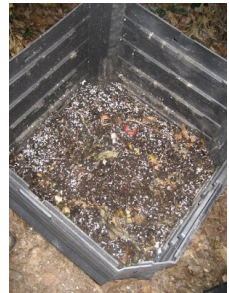
Prepare your ingredients for composting.

How to build your compost pile

Maintain your compost pile.

Harvest your finished compost.

[Home Composting Compost Bins](#)



Above: Home composting

Below: Compost site in Hillsborough



HOW TO COMPOST

1

DECIDE ON A LOCATION THAT HAS:

- Easy access for your convenience.
- Bare soil for microorganisms to enter the compost from beneath.
- Flat ground for good drainage.

2

ORGANIZE INDOORS:

- Collect food scraps in the kitchen in a container with a tight lid to keep fruit flies away/minimize odor — or store in your fridge/freezer.
- Chop up larger items like watermelon and pumpkins.

3

ADD YOUR INGREDIENTS:

- Empty your kitchen container into your compost bin once a week.
- Stir in your new material to the top layer.
- Cover your food scraps with a three-inch layer of leaves, etc.

4

HARVEST:

- Wait six to twelve months and let nature do its work. It's ready when the compost is dark brown and earth-like!

Chapel Hill Garden Tour

**April 25 & 26,
10 am-4 pm**

The 2026 Garden Club Tour offers visitors an opportunity to stroll five private Chapel Hill gardens where unique visions of beauty, preservation, sustainability and design are on full display. Guided by knowledgeable experts, see stunning spring blooms, majestic trees and rock formations. Explore a butterfly sanctuary, a tranquil Japanese garden, and a plant lover's paradise.

Proceeds support ongoing programs at the NC Botanical Garden and the Chapel Hill Garden Club's many community service projects. Since 1931, the Chapel Hill Garden Club has served the community with beautification and educational offerings and championed good stewardship of the environment. The 2026 Tour marks the 15th biennial Springtime gift to our community.

Advance tickets are \$30, available online at chapelhillgardentour.net via Event-

brite. Starting April 1, advance tickets will also be sold at local vendors, including the NC Botanical Garden, Rachel's Natives, Southern States in Carrboro, and Victoria Park Florist in Chapel Hill. Day of tickets will be \$40 and can be purchased at each of the five gardens or at the NC Botanical Gardens.



Email questions to:
chapelhillgardentour@gmail.com

Check out this [beautiful video](#) introducing the gardens on the tour.

Area Garden Tours

Durham Garden Tour

**May 2 & 3
Times 10 am-3 pm**

Keep Durham Beautiful is organizing its third Garden Tour. The 8-10 gardens will be distinctive featuring examples of sustainable and creative design in the heart of Durham.

The urban garden is unique and sometimes problematic. The size and other constraints have to be considered.

The early bird cost of

the tour is \$25 and later the cost is \$30.

KDB also needs volunteers to host at each garden in 2 1/2 hour shifts. Those who volunteer receive a complementary ticket.

For more information [click here](#).

HerbFest Wake Forest

**April 24-26 and
May 1-3**

**Fri. & Sat.:
9 am-6 pm
Sun.: 10 am-4 pm**

With selections of organic herbs, heirloom vegetables, perennials, and native plants, HerbFest is put on by the Graham Johnson Cultural Arts Endowment.

For more information [click here](#).



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

Earth Day Celebration

April 22, 2026 • 5:30-7:30pm

Environmental and family hands-on activities, hikes and vendors!
All designed to educate, inspire and entertain in the spirit of Earth Day!

Rain Barrel Workshop starts at 5:30
with a raffle for a free rain barrel!



Blackwood Farm Park

4215 NC-86, Chapel Hill, NC (919) 245-2416