

THE PETAL PUSHER

NEWSLETTER OF THE LANDINGS GARDEN CLUB



*Beautification,
Conservation, Education*

February 2015

Dear Fellow Garden Club Members,

It may still be too cool outside to do garden work so we have the opportunity to do other things related to gardening and our environment. Of main concern is the legislation being drafted right now in Atlanta regarding the Erosion and Sedimentation Act. There are actions being taken, finally, but they may not be in the best interests of our marshes. A bill will be drafted and at that point we will have to strongly encourage our legislators to change any language exempting interests such as golf courses and man-made ponds. Our legislative committee encourages every member to contact legislators. If you want to help, please contact me for names and numbers.

Since the State Convention is on Jekyll Island you might want to consider going down for one of the day's activities. It should be interesting to witness the processes involved in a State Convention as well as attending an informative workshop or interesting tour. I will have a schedule of events at the February meeting.



Leslee

Remember to return your garden club membership form. Please carefully consider what commitment you will make to our Club. Active members are expected to actively participate on the committee of their choice and to take on the Chairmanship if called upon by the President.

Our speaker this month is Diana Churchill, noted Savannah birder and columnist. Invite a friend to hear her program!

WEBSITE

Please continue supporting green projects through the Landings Garden Club website. (www.thelandingsgardenclub.com)



DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb. 23rd, Monday Meeting

9 AM Board Meeting, 9:30 Coffee, 10 General meeting, 10:45 Program

Feb. 28th, Learn How to Wax

Camellias, Coastal GA Botanical Gardens

Mar. 2nd, Causeway Pickup

Meet at Smith's parking lot at 8 AM

Mar. 10th, Deadline for Petal Pusher

Mar. 23rd, Monday Meeting

April 13th, Special Event, Trip to Bethesda

Apr. 17-18, NOGS Tour

Apr. 15-17, GCG Convention at Jekyll Island

A Reminder. To be more litter conscious bring your



own coffee cup to our meetings.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

When LGC members aren't gardening we travel! About 14 pounds of toiletries from hotels/motels have recently been delivered to Georgia Regional Hospital. These are most appreciated by the patients. Please continue to bring your donations, including clothing, to our meetings.

Mary Stewart and Edwina Walker, Community Service Co-chairs

**Pull and Save Tabs for Ronald
McDonald House**

Please bring your tabs to our meetings



Ronald McDonald Houses are "Homes away from Home" for many families that have seriously ill or injured children receiving treatment in a nearby hospital. These homes provide beds, food, a place to do laundry, rest and the ability to be with other families in a similar situation. But most importantly parents can be near their child. All tabs are taken to the Ronald McDonald Houses or recycle center in each district. Money collected is used toward items needed to make guests comfortable.

How to Force Bulbs Into Bloom

From *Real Simple* magazine, written by *Judy Glattstein*

Paperwhites

Pungently fragrant paperwhite narcissus are easy to force. You can start them from October through January—enough time for several batches of blooms if you plant bulbs every few weeks (always store unused bulbs in a paper bag at room temperature). There are a number of popular varieties, such as Ziva (shown), Galilee, and Ariel.

How to plant: A tall glass or ceramic container with no drainage holes is best. Pour in two inches of pebbles that have been rinsed free of dust.

Add a tablespoon or two of rinsed aquarium charcoal (so the water won't smell "off"), then more pebbles. Place three bulbs, root-side down and almost touching one another, on top. Add enough tepid water to reach just below the bottoms of the bulbs. Replenish when the level falls by a quarter inch.



You'll see blooms: In four to six weeks. Once the blossoms die, toss the bulbs; they won't flower again. Reuse the pebbles for the next batch.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SPARROW FIELD?

The data are in and the findings are not good. In her newly published research paper Dara Satterfield, PhD student at UGA found that Monarchs are infected with the OE (*Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*) parasite at a rate 5-9 times higher when they interrupt their migration compared to Monarchs who continue on their journey. <http://m.rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/282/1801/20141734>. The thinking is that non-native tropical milkweed growing all winter encourages the Monarchs to halt their migration to breed and overwinter. Migration is beneficial to the butterfly population because it weeds out weak and sick individuals and also removes them from the infected habitat.



In response to these findings Satterfield and her team have developed the next phase of the study. She has asked the volunteers at the Sparrow Field to cut the non-native tropical milkweed (*asclepias curassavica*) down to the ground and keep it cut down until sometime in March. This will prevent the butterflies from stopping to breed and lay eggs on tropical milkweed foliage during the winter. When the butterflies return next spring we will again test for OE parasites to determine whether there is any change in infection rates at the Sparrow Field. The volunteers are working this spring to grow 5 native milkweed species from seed to be planted at the Sparrow Field.

What can **YOU** do in your own garden? The study team has the following suggestions:

- 1) Plant native milkweeds. They naturally die back each fall, and regrow at the time the Monarch returns.
- 2) If you have tropical milkweed cut it down from October to March. And remove any sprouted leaves at the base of the plant.
- 3) Gradually replace your tropical milkweed with native species.
- 4) Learn to identify and protect native milkweeds.
- 5) Ask local growers to produce native milkweeds.

Click here for more discussion and resources: <http://monarchjointventure.org/news-events/news/qa-about-research-related-to-tropical-milkweed-and-monarch-parasites>

While the OE problem may not cause the extinction of Monarchs by itself, it could be a serious detriment to their survival if the population continues to decline as it has in the last several years. Concerned and educated gardeners will be a large part of the solution to the problems faced by our iconic Monarch butterflies. We hope the Monarch will be around to be enjoyed for generations to come.

Sue Hamlet, Sparrow Field Co-chair

Treasurer Request

Please note: The **CHARITABLE GIFT COMMITTEE** will be meeting in late February. Please submit, in writing, any suggestions you might have for recipients of our gifts this year to Kay Osborn at kayosborn@bellsouth.net or 5 Seafarer's Circle (in Oakridge).

Kay Osborn, Treasurer

Landings Garden Club General Meeting Minutes – January 26, 2015

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Collect was read by Nancy Strobel.

The **Treasurer's report** was distributed by Kay Osborn/Treasurer. Suntrust Checking Account balance: \$10,252.27. Sea Island CD Balance: \$4,081.78. Total Funds: \$14,334.05.

President Leslee Bowler welcomed membership and guests and pointed out a poster announcing a number of garden events members could participate in. These included a free lecture hosted by Trustees Garden Club, an opportunity to volunteer on the NOGS tour, as well as joining a group going by bus to Atlanta for Conservation Day.

Committee Reports:

Horticulture – Irene Thornley brought specimens and talked about the Madagascar Kalanchoe. She said it was now time to cut back grasses. The Pink grasses should be cut to within 9 inches of the ground. Only the smallest branches of the Crepe Myrtle trees should be cut back – those the size of your little finger or smaller.

Treasurer – Kay Osborn requested that all dues be paid by February 14th.

Birds/Conservation – Linda Sue Babcock said Valentine's Day is the time to clean out bird houses and trim roses. Last freeze date is St. Patrick's Day.

Causeway Cleanup – Nancy Strobel reported that only 12 people showed up January 5th monthly cleanup and of those only two were Garden Club members! She needs at least 20 or 22 people. This is one of the Club's three big projects and members need to support it.

Membership – Pat Sunshine introduced new member Jan Smart. Watering Can pins were given to our newest 15 members. There were 48 members and 2 guests present. Guests were Peggy Lanahan and Debbie Reddin .

Hospitality – Lynn Barnard, Jean Holland, Judy Maugh, Mary Jane Rainey and Barbie Townsend were thanked for bringing refreshments.

Design – Mary Jane Rainey thanked Ann Gardner for the lovely arrangement she created using a Ray Ellis painting as inspiration. The arrangement was won by Sue Hamlet.

Butterflies – Shirley Brown reported that the Monarch butterfly study has resulted in finding a parasite, OE infects the butterflies that stop here on their way to Mexico. The parasite is in spores on non-native milkweed and multiplies in caterpillars. The group will cut tropical milkweed from October until March so the butterflies will go to Mexico without breeding here during winter. In the meantime they are planting five types of native milkweed which will not interrupt the Monarch migration.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40.

Edith Teifeld introduced Treesa Germany, Manager of the Ray Ellis Gallery in Savannah. Her talk: "Ray Ellis Paints Flowers", is taken from the title of one of his books.

Susan Otter, Recording Secretary For Susan Angers