



JANUARY 2024



# COMPOST HEAP

An Official Publication of Rumson Garden Club



**Another Successful Christmas Greens!!**

***DON'T STOP READING UNTIL YOU GET THIS MONTH'S MEMBER TIPS!***

**We look forward to seeing you at our  
January Membership meeting!**

**Evening Cocktails at 5:30pm, THURSDAY January 18, 2024  
at RCC Riverhouse**

**[RSVP TO JANUARY MEETING HERE](#)**

**Schedule:**

- 4:00pm** Passing for Floral arrangements and Hort Amaryllis bulbs
- 5:00pm** Judging
- 5:30 - 8:00pm** Evening Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres (\*\$20 per person\*)
- 6:00pm** Brief Business Meeting
- 6:30pm** Speaker, Susan Van Tassel

# JANUARY SPEAKER

“What are the Photography Judges Looking For?”

Susan Van Tassel



Susan Van Tassel, a member of the Short Hills Garden Club, is chair of the GCA's National Photography Committee and a photography judge in the Judging Program.

## JANUARY SCHEDULE

### PASSERS:

FLORAL DESIGN: ELAINE EADON & SUSAN OLSON

HORT: MISSY FALKENBERG & ALEXANDRA SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY: LINDSAY WALLS & LIZ DUSKO

BOTANICAL ARTS: MARY JANE O'HARE

### CLERKS:

FLORAL DESIGN: JUDIE OPPENHEIM & STEPHANIE HOITT

HORT: KATHLEEN O'NEAL & LISA BITTERLY

PHOTOGRAPHY: BONNIE TORCIVIA & SHEILA EHRENBERG

BOTANICAL ARTS: ROBBYN O'NEILL & CASEY KEGELMAN

### JUDGES:

FLORAL DESIGN: CHRISTIANE MCNAMARA & CYNTHIA LABRECQUE

HORT: MANDY HINTELMANN & BETSY FORD

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUSAN VAN TASSEL (GCA JUDGE AND SPEAKER)

BOTANICAL ARTS: SARAH FLEMING & CATHY SMITH

*Please take a moment to download, print, and fill out your entry cards prior to dropping off your entries. If you need entry cards or have questions, contact our Staging Chairs: Wendy Wilt ([wendytwilt@gmail.com](mailto:wendytwilt@gmail.com)) or Mary Brodsky ([mary.brodsky@foxroach.com](mailto:mary.brodsky@foxroach.com))*

## ***FLORAL DESIGN***

### **TUSSY MUSSY**

“I hide myself within my flower  
That wearing on your breast  
You unsuspecting, wear me too –  
And angels know the rest.” – Emily Dickinson

**Class 1** Tussy Mussy is a quaint endearing term from the early 1400’s, for a small bouquet of herbs and flowers or just flowers – held under the nose to ward off bad odors, “a nose gay” from top of flower to the end of stem not to exceed 10 inches to be displayed in a small vase – taken out of vase to be judged.

**Class 2** Novice. Same as above.

Please email or call to register entry:  
[ssorokolit@gmail.com](mailto:ssorokolit@gmail.com) or 732-842-9529  
[taphy.harcsar@gmail.com](mailto:taphy.harcsar@gmail.com) or 732-842-8570.

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## ***HORTICULTURE***

### **HIPPEASTRUM (AMARYLLIS)**

**Class 1** One beautiful flowering bulb to be displayed in a container of your choice. May be displayed in soil, water or rocks.

**Class 2** Novice. Same as above.

***Reminder: For the Container Garden Challenge coming up in May, the plants must be owned for at least 3 months prior to entering (February 21, 2024).***

## *PHOTOGRAPHY*

### **GREY GARDENS**

**Class 1** The Great Estate. Color Photograph. Take a photograph of a well-maintained estate.

**Class 2** The Grande Estate Deteriorates. Black and white photograph. Take a photograph of something abandoned, its beauty forgotten.

**Class 3** Same as Class 1. Novice.

**\*See Committee Reports for important deadline submission information.\***

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## *BOTANICAL ARTS*

\*All plant material used must be dried – that includes flowers, foliage, seeds, pods, nuts (in or out of shells), vegetables, twigs, vines, reeds, etc. Only plant material, mechanics, and their surface treatments (i.e. paints, nail polishes, varnishes, waxes, etc.) are permitted. Artificial, endangered, and locally invasive plant material may not be used. Non-plant material (i.e. cardboard, metal, twine, string, etc.) may be used only for construction and must not show. Botanical Arts is open to all members.\*

### **BEJEWELED JANUARY**

**Class 1** It is a great time to honor and celebrate wonderful artists in the field of Botanical Arts such as GCA's Sarah Boynton. Sarah's talent is her ability to make Botanical Arts jewelry look like estate jewelry (her masterpieces can be viewed on her website [SarahBoynton.net](http://SarahBoynton.net)). We will be doing the same! Make a wonderful pair of earrings using the Botanical Arts guidelines listed above. You should be able to wear them! The earring posts will be provided by RGC.

**Class 2** Novice. Same as above.

**\*See Committee Reports for important deadline submission information.\***



Happy 2024! Hope you all had a wonderful holiday filled with family and cheer. It's time to put all that **RED** and **GREEN** away now and embrace the start of the new year! We have our first **Evening Cocktail Meeting and Show coming up on Thursday, January 18th**. Look forward to toasting the new year with all of you in person!

We have a little bit of everything in this January Show -- two Floral challenges with the Tussy Mussy arrangements and Botanical Arts earrings, an Amaryllis Challenge for Hort, and a dreamy assignment for Photography based on the Grey Gardens Film theme. Something for everyone! So, if you have not entered anything in a Show yet, this is an excellent time to do it. Start the year reaching out of your comfort zone. If you have any questions about entering, please feel free to contact me for help at [tyandsusanolson@mac.com](mailto:tyandsusanolson@mac.com).

We have a fabulous Speaker this month -- Susan Van Tassel, a member of the Short Hills Garden Club as well as Chair of the GCA's National Photography Committee and a GCA Photography Judge. She is going to share her photography expertise and guidance with us as well as judge our entries. It will be informative and fun!

Hope to see you all on Thursday, the 16th!

Warm wishes,  
Susan



## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

(See Committee Reports for full details)

Tues., Jan. 9th, 12:30pm - Garden Club of Princeton Conservation Panel

Wed., Jan. 10th - Deadline for Photography submissions

Fri., Jan. 12th - Deadline for Botanical Arts submissions

Tues., Jan. 23rd, 7pm - NJ Audubon Garden for Wildlife webinar begins (Member Tips!)

Tues., Jan. 23rd, 7pm - Doug Tallamy@ Monmouth University (Conservation)

Wed., Jan. 24th, 5pm - Movie night @ Robbyn O'Neill's home (Conservation)

Mon., Jan. 29th, 5pm - April Native Plant workshop @ Robbyn O'Neill's (Conservation)

Fri., Feb. 23rd - Register for the 7th Annual Watershed Conference (Conservation)

## CHRISTMAS GREENS:

Thanks to everyone for another successful year of Christmas Greens! In early December, members decorated and assembled 46 wreaths and 29 arrangements for local non-profits, schools and first responders. Selecting from a generous assortment of donated clippings - Japanese cedar and skimmia to variegated euonymus and everything in between - along with updated baubles and beautiful bows, this year's creations most certainly brought holiday cheer to the community. New recipients included the Community YMCA of Red Bank and JBJ Soul Kitchen along with Deane-Porter, Forrestdale and RFH. An extra special thank you to Barbara Spinelli for creating our spectacular bows!



Three generations of Christmas Greens!



More pictures from Christmas Greens!



## FLORAL DESIGN:

**Tussy Mussy.** This is an easy arrangement, good for the first-time novice members or the Pros. Just a small (10 inches) bouquet. Add herbs if you like, and add a ribbon to help hold the bouquet. You may bring the arrangement in a vase with water, but it will be judged out of water. A little something pretty to look at on a cold January evening!

Bring your arrangement to the Riverhouse on the 18th for passing at 4:00pm. Please let us know if you are entering. Contact Susan Sorokolit - 732-842-9520.



Beautiful Fall "BYOV" arrangements from November.

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## HORTICULTURE:

The holidays are over, but hopefully your amaryllis has just started to bloom and will be ready to star in our January Hippeastrum class!

We will also announce the location of our February 20th Container Garden workshop to help you prepare for the May Container Garden award.

The container theme is a single color scheme for flowers and foliage, and must include three or more rooted plants. Other plant material may be added, like mosses and alpines, but no artificial props. Container size is limited to 16".

Don't forget that our Homegrown hero - Dr Doug Tallamy will be speaking at Monmouth University Pollack center on January 23rd at 7. Bring a friend and help spread the word about the importance of native plants and supporting our ecosystem!

## PHOTOGRAPHY:

Winter is the perfect season to photograph a “Grey Garden”. Head out and snap a black & white photo of a forgotten garden or a color photograph of well tended grounds!

**\*The Photography deadline for submissions has been extended to Wednesday, January 10th!\*** Please drop off your mounted photographs with filled out entry cards at the home of Lindsay Branin, 237 Oxford Avenue, Fair Haven. She has a bin on her front porch. If you have any questions regarding your submission or formatting, please contact Lindsay by text 917-960-0179 or email [Lbranin@spencerstuart.com](mailto:Lbranin@spencerstuart.com).

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## BOTANICAL ARTS:

It is not too late to get your earring backing and start painting your dried flowers, seeds or nut! Bring your creative juices to the table and start making or finishing your Botanical Art earrings. All earrings due January 12th, 2024. Any questions call Mary Jane O’Hare at 973-945-3855.

**\*The Botanical Arts deadline for submission is Friday, January 12th!\***. Please contact Mary Jane O’Hare by text at 973-945-3855 or email [ohare.maryjane@gmail.com](mailto:ohare.maryjane@gmail.com) to arrange when to drop off your completed BA Earrings with filled out entry cards, as well as key cards (identifying your materials with labeled samples) to Mary Jane’s house, 8 Blossom Road in Rumson.

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**\*BOTH PHOTOGRAPHY AND BOTANICAL ARTS WILL BE CONSIDERED PASSED AFTER BEING RECEIVED AND APPROVED.\***



## CONSERVATION:

RGC Conservation Committee is gearing up for Native Plant Month this April! In our Zone IV, Nell Haughton-Stoneybrook of Princeton, Christina Admunson of Summit, and Robbyn O'Neill of Rumson are guiding all ZIV GCs with plans to encourage Native Plant education and outreach to their municipalities and residents. **Please join our planning session at Robbyn O'Neill's home (935 River Road, Fair Haven) on January 29 at 5PM.**

**NJ Invasive Plant Bill S2186:** The Assembly passed the bill in March and the Senate passed this on December 23. It will be signed by the governor sometime soon this month!

Have you heard? Rep Mikie Sherril (D-NJ), along with Rep Dave Joyce (R-OH), Sen Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Sen Mike Braun (R-IN), introduced the bipartisan "Building Native Habitats at Federal Facilities Act." The Federal government is one of the nation's largest landowners, and federal facilities are ideal proving grounds for scaling best practices in managing our landscapes, prioritizing healthy and resilient native plants. The Act mandates that federal agencies prioritize native plants when engaging in landscaping work and update their agency facility design standards. [Read more here!](#)

**January 9th from 12:30-2:00pm: Join the Garden Club of Princeton in a Panel Discussion of Conservation Efforts at the Princeton Library.** Sophie Glovier (The Watershed Institute) and Pam Mount (Farmer, Terhune Farms) are two of the panelists. Pam runs Terhune Farms in Lawrenceville, a fantastic place to visit. They are known for their fresh apple donuts!

**January 23rd at 7:00pm: Fabulous opportunity at the Pollak Theater at Monmouth University to learn from best-selling author Doug Tallamy** on what you can do in your own yard or balcony to fight climate change, create climate resiliency, and create beauty. [Register here for Fighting Climate Change at Home: Homegrown National Park.](#)

**January 24th at 4:30pm: Movie Night!** We will be gathering at Robbyn's home to enjoy the movie, "Symphony of Soil Movie". All welcome!

**January 29th at 5:00pm: Planning session for April as Native Plant Month.** Robbyn O'Neill's home 935 River Road, Fair Haven, NJ. Please RSVP to Robbyn- 267-304-3101

**February 23: Register for the 7th Annual Watershed Conference on Friday, February 23, 2024.** Hybrid format, fee. The Conference this year will focus on regional collaboration for effective watershed scale planning to help New Jersey communities to build resilience and address flooding and water quality issues like harmful algal blooms. [Register and read more here.](#)

## VISITING GARDENS

We will have a very busy 2024!

**Save the Date for Zone IV Visiting Gardens program on May 16th!  
"Greenwood, A Garden Path to Nature and the Past" Short Hills, NJ  
RSVP to [robbynoneill@gmail.com](mailto:robbynoneill@gmail.com) to reserve your spot.**

A 28 acre enchanted hideaway astride the unique geologic formation of New Jersey's Watchung Mountains, steps from the burgeoning suburbia of NYC, the early 20th century historic Greenwood Gardens is graced by terraced gardens, woodlands, and unsuspecting romantic paths. Most importantly, the experience for the visitor is that Greenwood is an example of bold acts of conservation that provide one the opportunity of immersion in the natural world in a pastoral setting and to understand how the partnership of landowner Peter Blanchard and the The Garden Conservancy formed the roadmap to conquer the task of warding off unscrupulous and aggressive developers to protect this landscape in the country's most densely populated state, New Jersey, The Garden State.

**Year-at-a-Glance: - Many a la carte offerings will become available in 2024!  
Here are but a few to whet your appetite and get your traveling gear in order!**

- \*"Lunch + Learn at The Farm" Javits Center and The Highline NYC
  - \*Pollinator Pathways "Natives in My Backyard" by Samantha Bean in Hopewell
  - \*Let's Visit a Farm" series including Terhune Farms in Lawrenceville
  - \*Tour of Billy Johnson Mt. Lakes Preserve w/Princeton Open Space
  - \*Tour of The Shakespeare Garden, Cedar Brook Park, Plainfield
  - \*"Gardens of Philadelphia" including Morris Arboretum, Chanticleer and Bartram
  - \*National Audubon Society "Birds of America Page Turning"
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## NEW JERSEY COMMITTEE

Don't forget to support this year's Growing Fund!

Click [here](#) to access the New Jersey Committee website to make your donation!



**RGC members enjoying last November's NJ Committee Luncheon**



**THE BIRD LADY:**

“Fooled yah”

It was a warm lazy day in the quiet backwaters of a rural town in the heart of Jersey. A cat without a tail was stretched out on a warm driveway minding her own business when she suddenly became alert. A bird with a broken wing was hopping up and down in front of her, backwards and forwards it went. Backwards and forwards. If she had a tail she would have switched it fiercely but as it happens all she could do was lift her head and pretend not to see the temptation in front of her.

Slowly she got to her feet and gradually made her way to this delicious morsel. The two of them, hopping and sleuthing, made their way down the driveway until they reached the mailbox. Tentatively the cat crouched low and slowly lifted a paw. The world held its breath. Then, all at once the bird with a cheeky bird like cackle, flew up and away. Up and away towards the nest she was so cleverly protecting.

She and her nestlings survived to live another day. The cat licked her lips and resumed her nap.

Haiku

Lazy dozing cat  
See bird with a broken wing  
Oh No! Fooled again.

Jan Glass. Bird Lady. January 2024

Janbglass13@gmail.com

**Heather Robinson** shares this great opportunity for Gardening Enthusiasts from the New Jersey Audubon:

Garden for Wildlife 8-week webinar series registration is live! Tuesday evenings at 7 pm starting January 30th join NJ Audubon experts as we dive into a new garden topic each week. We'd love for you to join us and also help us spread the word so even more folks across the state focus their gardening efforts on pollinators and songbirds. Attached is a flyer. For more information and for registration:

[Garden for Wildlife Webinar Series 2024 Tickets, Tue, Jan 30, 2024 at 7:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)



**Heather** also recommends this article suggesting “[Bird Friendly plants for Winter Forage](#)”!

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**Betsy Ford** reminds you to turn your houseplants to keep them from getting lopsided.

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And **Maya Speelmans** shares this interesting app trivia: According to a study by the Michigan State University Extension Program, Plant ID apps have seen significant improvements over the years. A study found that the most accurate app was Picture This, with about 67% of searches being correct. Picture This is followed by Plant Net, Plant Story and Leaf Snap, with about 50% accuracy.

*Have a quick tip to share for the February 2024 Heap?*

*Email Anne at [annejdreiss@gmail.com](mailto:annejdreiss@gmail.com)*