



JANUARY 2026

COMPOST HEAP

An Official Publication of Rumson Garden Club



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

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

10:00 a.m. Business Meeting and Refreshments

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

at Bingham Hall

RSVP TO JANUARY MEETING [HERE](#)

Schedule:

8:00 a.m. Passing

9:00 a.m. Judging

10:00 a.m. Business Meeting and Refreshments

11:00 a.m. Lecture

JANUARY SPEAKER

Open Meeting!

Richard McCoy Horticultural Services

Richard A. McCoy is a premier leader in ecological horticultural practices in New Jersey. Committed to organically managed turf systems, he promotes a beautiful, functional, ecologically impactful, and self-sustaining landscape. In an industry that is very slow to embrace change, he is a game changer!



THE RUMSON GARDEN CLUB AND
THE RUMSON ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
PRESENT

Sustainable Landscaping with Richard McCoy, NJ Horticulturist of the Year

About the Event
Richard McCoy will discuss sustainable home gardening practices to promote biodiversity, save money and support the local environment.

You'll Learn About

- Native Plants - Right Plant, Right Place
- Air & Water Pollution Reduction - Less Chemicals, Less Gas Leaf Blower Usage
- Soil Health & Storm Water Management

JANUARY 20 2026 BINGHAM HALL
STARTING AT 11:00 AM 40 BINGHAM AVENUE
RUMSON

ENTRY FEE
FREE

RSVP TO RUMSONGARDENCLUBNJ@GMAIL.COM. SPREAD THE WORD AND BRING A FRIEND!

JANUARY SCHEDULE

STAGING: ULANA JOSLIN, NATASHA HALBOUT

PASSERS:

BOTANICAL ARTS: KATHRYNE SINGLETON, BONNIE TORCIVIA

HORT: BETSY FORD, ELAINE EADON

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAIL VAN WINKLE, MARY BRODSKY

CLERKS:

BOTANICAL ARTS: ULANA JOSLIN, LAURA HAAREN

HORT: LISA ATTALAH, LAURA WALLACH

PHOTOGRAPHY: AMY MCCOOEY, PEEKA TILDESLEY

JUDGES:

BOTANICAL ARTS: TAPHY HARCSAR, JOAN LYNCH

HORT: MAYA SPEELMANS, SUSAN OLSON

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAIL VAN WINKLE, LUCY KALIAN

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: Laura Haaren (lahaaren1118@verizon.net) or Lisa Atallah (lisa3atallah@gmail.com)

JANUARY SCHEDULE

BOTANICAL ARTS

Pressing Flowers – A “Specialty” Design*

“The heart is like a flower; unless it is open, it cannot release its fragrance into the world.” – Unknown

Class 1 **Love in Bloom** - Create a heart-shaped exhibit using flowers pressed between a frame of 2 sheets of plexiglass. Design will be staged flat on a 42” high table covered with a white tablecloth. Viewed and judged from above. **(5) Entries**

Class 2 Novice. Same as above. **(5) Entries**

“All gardening is landscape painting.” – William Kent

Class 3 **Petal Painting** - Create a landscape “painting” using flowers pressed between a frame of 2 sheets of plexiglass. Design will be staged flat on a 42” high table covered with a white tablecloth. Viewed and judged from above. **(5) Entries**

Class 4 Novice. Same as above. **(5) Entries**

Pre-registration is required by Tuesday, January 13.

Class consultant, Bonnie Torcivia, bltorcivia@gmail.com.

Upon registration, the plexiglass frame will be provided to the exhibitor.

Exhibitors may enter one class only.

**Pressed Plant Designs* are an “artistic ‘painting’ or design created from pressed plant material,” and are considered a specialty design for purposes of showing and judging.

FS & JG, Book 2, pgs. 43-45.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

HORTICULTURE

All entries must be properly identified with species and cultivar information.

AMARYLLIS

- Class 1 One amaryllis bulb, grown in the exhibitor's own container. Any variety is acceptable. May be exhibited in water, rocks or soil.
- Class 2 Novice. Same as above.

PINING FOR EVERGREENS

- Class 3 One evergreen branch (with or without berries or cones) not to exceed 24" in length from lip of container to tip of branch. To be displayed in member's own container.
- Class 4 Novice. Same as above.

HOORAY FOR HOUSEPLANTS

- Class 5 A plant grown indoors of either tropical or desert origin, must be owned for at least 6 months. Pot not to exceed 10". Orchids are not permitted.
(This class may be subdivided.)
- Class 6 Novice. Same as above.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Celebrating Our History

- Class 1 A historical artifact, architecture, and/or home at least over 200 years old, in color.
- Class 2 Novice. Same as Class 1.
- Class 3 A historical artifact, architecture, and/or home at least over 200 years old, in black and white.
- Class 4 Novice. Same as Class 3.

All entries must be submitted by January 4th to Gail Van Winkle's home. Follow rules in By-Laws. Four entries per class. Please contact Gail Van Winkle at gailfyw@gmail.com.

Happy 2026!

I'm excited for a new year and all of the good things happening in garden club.

Christmas Greens celebrated its 95th year and Cynthia and Theresa deserve a huge thank you for all of their efforts to bring holiday cheer to our community. The festivities continued with a trip to NYC led by Robbyn to the GCA headquarters for their Holiday Tea.

January finds us leafing through seed catalogs and dreaming of our plans for the spring. Perfect timing for our open meeting this month! Our speaker will hopefully inspire us all to create healthier yards with less pollution and more biodiversity. Please spread the word and bring a friend.

Perhaps this list of [New Year's Resolutions for Nature and Wildlife from the Xerces Society](#) will inspire you as well - [click here](#).

**Keep growing,
Heather**



RGC ladies enjoy some holiday cheer at
GCA Headquarters



Festive greenery from my trip to London

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Jan. 20, 11am, "Sustainable Landscaping" Bingham Hall (January Open Meeting)
- Jan. 21, 2pm, "Demystifying the Judging Program" (Virtual / Register through GCA website) (Judging)
- Jan. 22, 7pm, Native Seed Sowing Workshop with Rumson Environmental Commission, Oceanic Library
- Jan. 22, 11am-12:30pm, NJ Garden Club's virtual Photography workshop with Nevada Wier (Photography)
- Feb. 5, 11am-5pm, GCA Photography Conference (Virtual / Register through GCA website)
- Feb. 10, 11am-4pm, GCA Floral Conference (Virtual / Register through GCA website)
- Feb. 11, 12pm, New Members luncheon, home of Taphy Harcsar (New Members)
- Apr. 7&8, 10am-4pm, Zone IV Meeting, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton Township, NJ

FLORAL DESIGN:

Happy New Year flower friends!

Chilly January is the perfect time to cuddle up inside and get crafty. For our January 20th show we have two fun options to create dried flower art. Using flowers that you have dried yourself or purchased, create either a heart-shaped design, (the perfect Valentine’s Day gift), or a landscape “painting” using flowers pressed between 2 sheets of a plexiglass frame. These frames were provided at the October workshop and are still available along with special glue.

Please follow the floral schedule printed in the 2026 handbook. In addition, if a designer prefers a dark background placed under their pressed flower design, 5” x 5” black paper squares will be available at the show for your use.

Please contact Bonnie Torcivia at (908) 812-6416 or BLTorcivia@gmail.com for supplies and to enter.

AND... Don’t forget to....



Join us for the 2026 Virtual Conference,
proudly presented by the GCA Floral Design Committee.
This conference includes skilled professionals and talented GCA club members
who will inspire creativity and enhance your passion for Blooms & Beyond!

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Virtual attendance is free of charge. Advanced registration is required.
A registration email will be sent to all GCA club members in January.



HORTICULTURE:

Worth repeating!

"Horties" are taking a back seat for the next few months. However that doesn't mean we aren't dreaming of spring and quietly propagating. There are a few things we can be doing now:

- Plant bulbs for April and May shows. Daffodils and Alliums are easy, deer proof and will do well in containers.
- Do some winter sowing of native seeds. A milk jug with some soil and seeds can be left outside until Spring.
- Cuttings of houseplants can be propagated in water near a bright window. The cuttings can be used for the Kokedama workshop at 1663 Market at Sickles Farm on February 17th at 11:00 am.

Please contact Heather Robinson heatheramyrobinson@gmail.com or Maya Speelmans mayaelisabeth@gmail.com if you have any native plants from the June propagation workshop, or have propagated a plant that would qualify for entrance into the Plant Exchange at the Zone IV show on April 8th. Please refer to the schedule [HERE](#).

PHOTOGRAPHY:

PHOTOGRAPHY

January 20th Celebrating our history

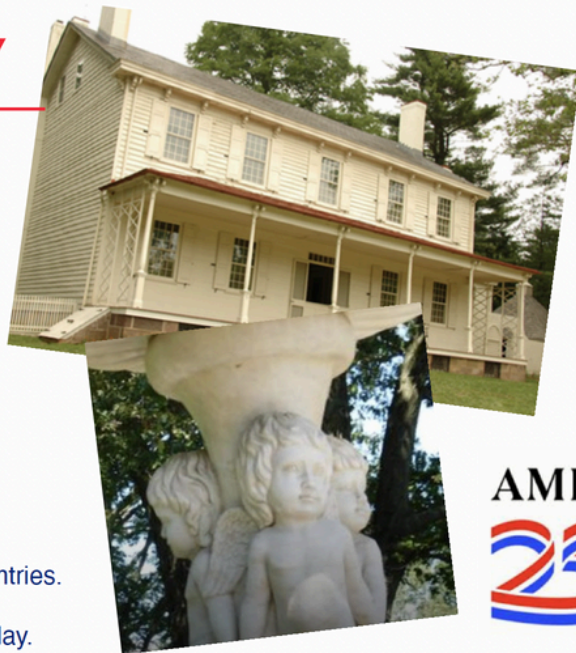
Class 1 A historical artifact, architecture, and/or home at least over 200 years old in **color**.

Class 2 Novice. Same as Class 1.

Class 3 A historical artifact, architecture, and/or home at least over 200 years old in **black and white**.

Class 4 Novice. Same as Class 3.

All entries must be submitted by January 15th to Gail Van Winkle's -51 Lippincott Rd., Little Silver. Follow mounting rules in the By-Laws. Because this is NOT a GCA show we are open to ALL entries. Please keep the photos to 8 x10
Contact Gail at gailfw@gmail.com to reserve a spot today.



➔ All New Jersey Garden Clubs will be participating in a virtual workshop with the renowned photographer **Nevada Wier on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at 11:00 AM-12:30pm**

The workshop will cover:

Color: Most photographers do not understand the importance of color and its role in, not only, conveying mood and emotion, but in basic composition.

Light: Photography means 'write with light'. Nevada will discuss the personality of light at all times of the day, from the harsh daylight to blue hour and into night.

Action: Nevada discusses how to extract the feel of a moment using, not only stop action, but panning and slow shutter speeds.

Pattern: Delve into the power of impeccable framing in the camera for a compelling composition, as well as how repetitive patterns will strengthen the flow in your images.

NOTE: If this date does not work with your schedule...we will have access to the video for 2 weeks after January 22. Please email me gailfw@gmail.com if you are interested in joining in or access to a later date

CONSERVATION:

*Please note that the showing of the documentary *Dark Sacred Sky*, (Office of Sustainability at Princeton University), has been postponed from January 6, 2026. The documentary focuses on the importance of the night sky and the impact of light pollution. The new date will be provided soon.

Upcoming Conservation Committee events include:

JANUARY 20, 2026

**Join Rumson Garden Club and
Rumson Environmental Commission
for a
FREE seminar on
Sustainable Landscaping
with NJ Horticulturalist of the Year,
Richard McCoy.**

January 20, 11:00 a.m. at Bingham Hall

Spread the word and bring a friend!

JANUARY 26, 2026

Watershed management: Green and sustainable infrastructure for stormwater management, Brookdale Community College, January 26, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: Christopher C. Obropta, PhD, PE, Professor in Environmental Sciences, Rutgers University. Dr. Obropta from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program will present “All About Rain Gardens.” Learn how rain gardens help reduce flooding, improve water quality, and beautify communities by capturing and filtering stormwater naturally. Dr. Obropta's specific experience includes watershed restoration, wastewater treatment system design and management, total maximum daily load (TMDL) studies, stormwater management, wetland design, longshore sediment transport, and geographic information systems (GIS).

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

Habitat Conservation for Endangered Species in NJ, Brookdale Community College, February 23, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: William Pitts, Senior Zoologist with NJ DEP Fish & Wildlife’s Endangered & Nongame Species Program. New tools and technologies are being applied to habitat conservation in New Jersey to help endangered species such as the kestrel, (our smallest falcon), the bog turtle, and the tiger salamander. The eDNA project (uses samples collected from the environment to assess the presence of species), GIS modeling of habitat suitability, and other tools are enriching the reach of our state’s wildlife biologists to study and protect the breeding and survivorship of endangered species.



RSVP TO RUMSONGARDENCLUBNJ@GMAIL.COM. SPREAD THE WORD AND BRING A FRIEND!

JUDGING:

Mark your calendars for the GCA Virtual Roundtable,
Demystifying the GCA Judging Program
January 21, 2:00 p.m.

To sign up, click the Conferences and Events block on the GCA home page, scroll down to Virtual Roundtables and Trainings, and then hit the green arrow on the right side to slide over to the January events. By signing up, one will receive the Zoom link for the Roundtable.

<https://www.gcamerica.org/members:calendar/eventdetails/id/25842=>



NEW MEMBERS:

Susan Sorokolit and Taphy Harcsar will host a New Members luncheon February 11th at noon at the home of Taphy Harcsar, 10 Osprey Lane, Rumson.

Our guest speaker will be Sarah Fleming, who will be speaking about all aspects of The Garden of Club of America, local, regional and national. Who better, since Sarah has a position on the national board!

RGC ON AMAZON!

RGC's Amazon shop is up and running! Access it through the RGC website, click the product below, or click [here](#) to start shopping! Future shopping suggestions welcome!

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PRODUCT

Give your houseplants some
love over the winter!



RGC ON INSTAGRAM!

Please send Pari photos of any events, workshops, or special plants you encounter, including pictures from your garden or others.

Text Pari Harrison @ 732-915-3051

VISITING GARDENS:

Rumson Garden Club members joined in two adventures this Fall receiving most importantly the lasting gift of bonding friendship and camaraderie resulting from shared laughs, education and experience...



Whitesbog Historic Village at Cranberry Harvest

On a beautiful October morning, RGC members met at the Whitesbog Historic Village nestled in the internationally recognized UNESCO site of the NJ Pinelands for the annual Cranberry Harvest. NJ is the 3rd largest Cranberry producer in the USA.

Meeting point was at the General Store where the group, dressed in boots and outdoor gear, were given the opportunity to experience first hand the layers of this unique ecosystem. They wandered through Cedar and Pine woods with an understory of lowbush blueberry and sphagnum moss, which opened up to the expanse of the Kirkwood Aquifer bog, which provides the habitat for the *Vaccinium sub.Oxycoccus*, the indigenous NJ cranberry. The cranberry is a vine that native bumblebees pollinate in July. The fruit that forms grows heavy and sinks in the bog. In October, the Kirkwood Aquifer is flooded and the red cranberries rise to the top to be scooped in mass for harvest.

The experience provided much to learn! The high bush blueberry was cultivated in Whitesboro in the early 1900s by a female pioneer botanist, Elizabeth Copleman White, who established a new agricultural industry. The discovery of sphagnum moss harvested here and used as a surgical dressing in WWI was a fun fact, BUT most enjoyable was the discovery that our own Nancy Crabbe's husband, Dan Crabbe's family home is historically preserved in Whitesbog, where his grandfather established a successful cedarwood business. Also, it was proved too ironic that member Janet Rotchford had many an interlude inner tubing on rivers directly on Dan's family estate during the summers of the 1970s!

The Annual Holiday Tea at the GCA NYC Headquarters

Adventurers set off on ferry, train and in a private car to meet at AVRA Madison for a festive wine spirited lunch. The private table setting of fresh Greek cuisine waited for the group to gather and exchange stories of their walk to the restaurant through the world renowned sites of Christmas in NYC. Tales were told about the Rock Center Tree, Model display of Coco Chanel's Paris Apartment, Bergdorf Holiday Windows, and the newly renovated Tiffany!

Excitedly, the group advanced to the 3rd floor of 14 E. 60th Street to be the guests of the GCA Annual Holiday Tea, where seasonal floral arrangements overwhelmed, a festive high tea was offered, and trees displayed more than 200 needlepoint ornaments from the twelve GCA zones! Visitors were treated a surprise performance from the Columbia University Kingsmen a cappella singers!

A NOTE FROM THE BIRD LADY:

Remember how happy you were as a little kid playing in mud puddles? Mom not so much.

Pull up a weed from the wet soil of a moisture laden garden and smell the rich life the earthworm has left behind. The microbes that the earth worm excavated in freshly turned soil stimulate serotonin production, working on the human brain the same, sort of, as medically prescribed antidepressants do.

Serotonin controls moods, cognition, rewards, learning, memory, and sleep. Low levels are linked to depression.

So, now you know why gardening is so good for your physical and mental health, and that gardening produces contented people.

Did we ever think that we had to thank microbes and worms for so many things? Creating great soil is a major miracle but also apparently helping our our brains regulate happiness and sometimes euphoria, as well. An unfortunate side effect is that low levels lead to SAD, seasonal affective disorder. They can also depress sexual arousal. Which I won't go into here. Nuff said. Eating fruits, veggies, legumes, and whole grains seems to increase your serotonin levels. Exposure to light, which produces vitamin D, increases this magical ingredient. I am no expert in these matters, so if you are interested, do your research. And look into vermicomposting too, while you're at it...So, spread the word.



“So, digging should do it, wouldn't you say?” Photo Jan Glass

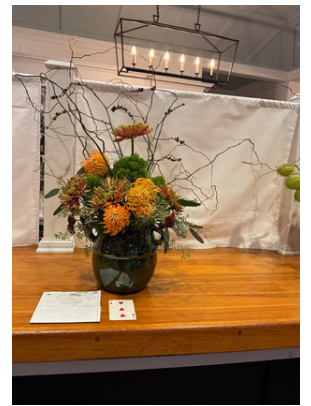
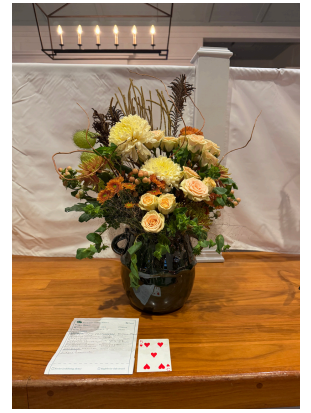
Haiku
Feeling so depressed?
Serotonin in the soil
Makes you feel so good.

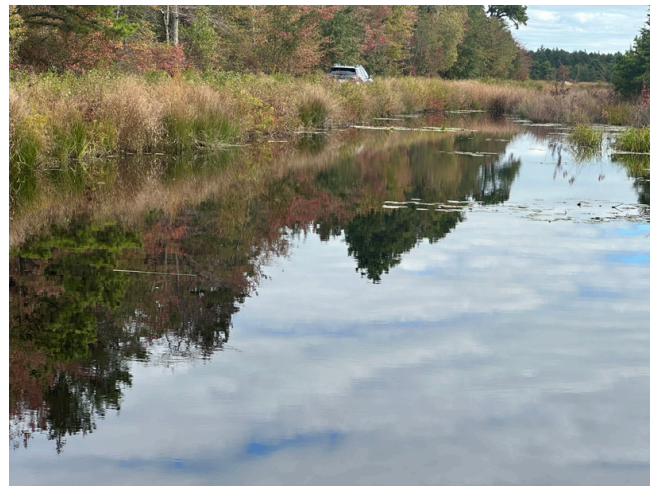
Credits: Cleveland Clinic, Harvard Health, Mayo Clinic, Wikipedia and Facebook.

MG RGC Jan Glass, Bird Lady. December 2025
Janbglass13@gmail.com

46 wreaths and 40 table arrangements for 15 organizations!



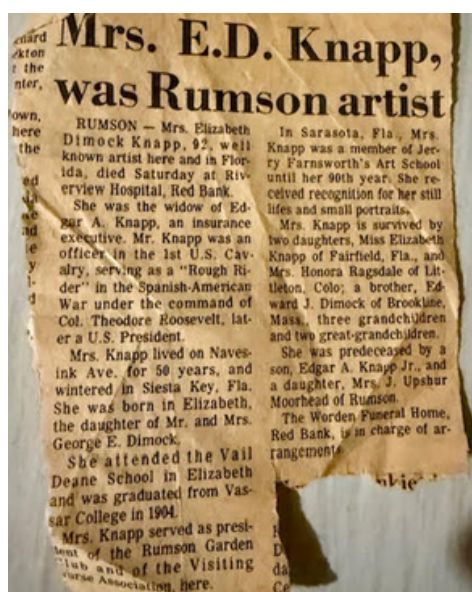




IN MEMORANDUM

Beverly Reiss joined Rumson Garden Club in 1986 and thoroughly enjoyed it, particularly flowers and friendships. She always looked forward to sitting with her dear friend Betsy Bryan at lectures and meetings.

Through the years Beverly won many ribbons and awards for her flower arranging, most notably the Mary Owen Borden bowl, and more recently a 1st place in a floral challenge class, paired up with her daughter-in-law, Anne.



*A BIT OF RUMSON GARDEN CLUB HISTORY SHARED BY
CAROLINE TOMPKINS GARRITY,
BLANCHE TOMPKINS' DAUGHTER!*

*YOU KNOW SHE WAS A RGC PRESIDENT, AND YOU KNOW SHE HAS
AN AWARD NAMED AFTER HER, BUT DID YOU KNOW
ELIZABETH DIMOCK KNAPP
GRADUATED FROM VASSAR IN 1904 AND
WAS STILL PAINTING WHEN SHE WAS 90!
EQUALLY AMAZING WAS HER HUSBAND,
WHO SERVED AS A "ROUGH RIDER" WITH TEDDY ROOSEVELT.!*



*PART 3: ENJOY MORE OF OUR RGC HISTORY!
FROM RGC'S 2014 100TH ANNIVERSARY VIDEO*