



Sandhills
Horticultural Gardens

The Bloomin' News

Sandhills Community College

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Spring 2020

*The Sandhills Horticultural Society - dedicated to the support of the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens since 1987.
Please help the Gardens grow by becoming a Society member.*

Garden Spotlights

Jim Westmen

The Margaret H. Ambrose Japanese Garden is a garden to enjoy all year long.

This garden is a little deeper into the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens and is positioned on a slight hillside with borrowed views of the upper of two ponds. It is well worth the journey to spend some time and experience this beautiful garden.



The Ambrose Japanese Garden is designed with many different evergreens and deciduous trees and shrubs. Most plants are very subtle in their colors of both foliage and blooms. This Garden is very tranquil and relaxing in nature.

Several structures such as the "Azumaya", which is a viewing shelter, offers a quiet place to sit and listen to the sounds around you. Here you can see glimpses of the upper pond and watch many birds and other native critters move about their lives. The pileated woodpeckers and our local fox squirrels are among the routine visitors in this garden. The Azumaya also is a place of shelter, especially if caught during a rain event. The wonderfully relaxing sounds of the rain falling on the roof can be enjoyed.

Another classical feature of our Japanese garden is the "Karesansui", a dry garden. Many people would refer to this garden as a "Zen Garden". This raked gravel garden typically represents the Japanese islands and the sea surrounding them. Our Students, as part of their hands-on learning are tasked with working in and maintaining this garden along with many others. They

pick up the fallen debris, clean and rake the patterns in the gravel and make the garden fresh for the visiting public. Traditional patterns as well as spontaneous nontraditional ones like circles and even a checkerboard display, have been interesting and thoughtful moments for the students to create. I'm pleased that they can be creative and become somewhat lost in the moment, that "Zen" moment.

An arched bridge over the dry creek bed is positioned as your entry from the lower side of the Ebersole Holly Garden. On the upper main entrance a Japanese style gate marks the path into the Garden. This dry creek bed follows a natural water path that was existing and meanders through much of the garden from top to bottom.

The strategic placement of boulders and stones along the dry creek bed and the walking path help create the look and feeling of this garden. The walkway is surfaced with a beige colored gravel material called Chapel Hill Grit. This fine surface gravel gives the pathway a very natural look and feel.

The garden was really "born from the site" so to speak. It is not a copy of another garden just plopped into the Sandhills, but rather the consideration of place and embracing the uniqueness of our location. The site's original topography along with the many existing native trees and plants strongly influenced the design. All these wonderful attributes were noted, considered and incorporated into the final design. A canopy of longleaf pines, dogwoods and other native plants anchor this garden to the Sandhills region. Please come and spend some time and experience the beauty and serenity of the Ambrose Japanese Garden.



As always, any contributions to the Sandhills Horticultural Gardens will help us with these upgrades and continued improvement of the Gardens.

Thank you for your support.

New Sandhills Horticultural Society Board Members

Cynthia Birdsall

A native Texan and now a resident of Southern Pines, Cynthia and her husband Bruce live in Knollwood Heights. As former residents of San Antonio, they designed, planted, and maintained a formal Italian garden that was featured in books and home tours. Cynthia holds an MBA in International Finance and retired as a Senior Vice President at USAA. She enjoys visits from her two grown children and their families, and is now learning to garden in the Sandhills on their 2.5 acre property.

Laurie Deleot

Laurie has lived in Southern Pines since 2002. After over thirty years with United Airlines, she and her husband Charles, (a retired Navy Captain) moved here from Honolulu, Hawaii. She describes herself as an avid gardener and a creator of art. Her garden has been featured on the Weymouth Garden tour and visited by local garden clubs. She has been an art student at Sandhills, in addition to other colleges, and her interest in the visual arts has informed her sense of design and color in her garden and home which was featured in the Fall 2014 issue of PineStraw Magazine. Her studio was one of five art studios featured in the 2016 Summer issue of the PineStraw.

William F. (Bill) Hamel

Although he was born in Vermont, Bill Hamel grew up in Southern Pines, attended college in Tennessee, served his country in the Infantry, and returned to North Carolina to practice law in Charlotte. There, he and his wife Linda raised three children while he maintained a varied and successful law practice for fifty years. His resume shows his first job at Pine Needles, and his lifelong love of golf is only matched by his love of justice.

Lin Hilton

Lin Hilton has already shown her dedication to Sandhills Community College, having served two terms on the College's Foundation Board. She has also been involved with the College's Culinary Department, working closely with the faculty on three auction events. Currently,



Left to Right: Randy Saunders, Marilyn Neely, William (Bill) Hamel, Cynthia Birdsall, Lin Hilton Not pictured: Laurie Deleot

she is assisting the department with its 2020 fundraiser, scheduled for this spring,

Marilyn Neely

A familiar face around Sandhills Community College, Marilyn Neely retired from her position as Director of the College's Small Business Center for over fifteen years. Prior to that position, she was the Office Administrator in the Landscape Gardening Program for a decade. Marilyn holds a Masters Degree in Organizational Leadership and Management. She comes from an established background in horticulture, as she and her husband Harry operated Brighthampton Greenhouses in Southern Pines.

Randy Saunders

A resident of Whispering Pines since 1998, Randy Saunders and his wife Jill have four children, ages 14-22. Mr. Saunders is the owner of the Southern Pines and Seven Lakes Ace Hardware locations, as well as a wholesale business that has sold to garden centers for over twenty years. His public service career includes seven years on the Whispering Pines town council and four years as a Moore County Commissioner.

Let The Wildflowers In

Hilarie Blevins

In today's society many topics are "all or nothing". Landscape topics are not exempt. A few quickly come to mind - natives vs exotics, the RoundUp debate, the fate of pollinators. On a much smaller scale I'm asking for a little moderation in the Sandhills landscape in favor of some native wildflowers.

Many Sandhills landscapes, mine included, are large areas of maintained pine needles. Most often these areas are pretty sterile. They consist of a canopy of Longleaf Pine trees, possibly a few understory trees, maybe a sweep of azaleas and a sea of pine needles and no green to be found. Why have we decided that it has to be so sterile?

We all know that the Sandhills is a unique environment. Aside from the showy Asters of autumn, many of our native wildflowers are more diminutive in size and showiness.

Trailing Arbutus, *Epigaea repens*, is a six inch or less sub shrub that forms drifts under the longleaf canopy. It is often one of the first to bloom in spring with small white to pale pink fragrant flowers. This evergreen is host to the Hoary Elfin larvae. Unfortunately, this native does not tolerate disturbance.

My great grandmother had clumps of Tradescantia that moved around her garden. Most of us know its pesky weedy nature. I was delighted when we bought our house to find its tiny cousin, Slender Roseling, *Tradescantia rosea var. graminea*, gracing our road shoulder slop. This six inch perennial has grass like foliage with tiny rose colored flowers in late spring to early summer.

My all time favorite is the Sandhills Lupine, *Lupinus diffuses*. This biennial has beautiful silvery foliage and glorious blue flower spikes. Being biennial, it is important to understand its lifecycle. In its first growing season there will only be foliage. After winter dormancy, in its second growing season it will bear flowers along with its striking foliage. After flowering it will set seed and perish. This plant thrives in full sun, dry sites. While not rare, I do not see Sandhills Lupine as often as I once did in Moore County.

In the spirit of moderation, please consider allowing some of your natural areas to actually be natural. Let the wildflowers in.

Horticultural Society Events & Workshops

Tracy Reiland

The breezy, cold weather in mid-November prevented the festivities of our 2nd Santa in the Gardens event from taking place outside in the Hoard Children's Garden. However, smiles and holiday cheer prevailed inside the Ball Visitors Center as about 120 children and their parents enjoyed a warm, intimate atmosphere to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. They also participated in face painting, making reindeer food, writing letters to Santa, and eating Christmas cookies.

In early December the always popular Maggie Smith demonstrated how to make wreaths and table centerpieces from a variety of fresh greenery. Eighteen attendees took home lovely creations to adorn their homes for the holidays.

In January, 42 people attended the annual pruning talk and workshop given by Taylor Williams, Moore County's Agricultural Extension Agent. Taylor discussed the science of why pruning is necessary to keep plants healthy and aesthetically pleasing and then demonstrated proper pruning techniques out in the Gardens.

Two more events, an Abstract Art-Fluid Acrylic Pouring Method class and a talk on beneficial Insects by Taylor Williams will round out our winter programs.

Carol Lucas, my co-chair, and I have been working hard to bring you an exciting lineup of talks and workshops for spring. We think you will find something for everyone in the variety of offerings we have scheduled.

Upcoming Events... March, April, May

Registration required for all events. Please email landscapegardening@sandhills.edu or call 910-695-3882.

Lunch & Learn – Essential Oils

March 12 (Thursday) 11AM to 12:30PM – Ball Visitors Center - Helen Gibbons, an Essential Oils Specialist, will present Unraveling the Mysteries of Essential Oils. Learn how plants manufacture essential oils, methods of extraction oils and hydrosols, safety concerns and what to look for in quality oils. Participants will have the opportunity to enjoy various essential oils and hydrosols aromatically. Essential oil inhalers will be available to purchase for \$5.00.

Lunch & Learn

March 23 (Monday) Noon to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center - Free
Ellen Ashley, Educator, Plantscape Consultant and Master Gardener will present **Creating Your Own Cut Flower Garden and a Zero to Gorgeous Garden in 90 days.** Her mission is to inspire confident and fearless gardeners who go home to transform their own landscapes into a paradise of their own. Learn more about Ellen at www.LearnToGarden.com.

Growing Plants in Containers

March 27 (Friday) 1PM – Ball Visitors Center
Hilarie Blevins presents the latest talk in the Sandhills Horticultural Lecture Series. Whether you grow all your plants in containers or only one or two special plants, you'll learn new ideas and techniques. This FREE program is sponsored by the Sandhills Horticultural Society and Sandhills Council of Garden Clubs.

Sandhills Horticultural Society Spring Plant Sale

April 4 (Saturday) 8AM to Noon – Steed Hall
Perennials, woody plants and bulbs will be for sale. For information or to pre-order call 910-695-3882. Horticultural Society members receive 5% off orders of \$100 or more.

Lecture and Photo Walk

April 9 (Thursday) 10AM to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center
Mary Louise Ravese, owner of Bella Vista Photography in Raleigh, will talk on Mastering the Sharp Photograph. She will discuss equipment and techniques for getting sharp images. This knowledge will be put into practice in the Gardens with hands-on photography and guidance. This session is suitable for a variety of cameras from traditional DSLR and mirrorless to point-n-shoot and smart phones. Space is limited to

12 so register early to save your space. Horticultural Society members \$30, non-members \$40. Rain date is Thursday, April 30.

Decorative Toad House

April 20 (Monday) 10AM to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center
Christine Jepsen of ARTworks Vass will lead you step by step to build a custom, one of a kind creation. She will demonstrate the use of wood, cement, organic items and adorable miniatures to create your work of art. All supplies included and participants are welcome to bring their own special or sentimental pebbles, botanicals and other treasures. No experience is necessary. Horticultural Society members \$39, non-members \$44.

Annual Bedding Plant Sale – Benefits Student's Field Trip

April 24 (Friday) 1PM to 5PM and April 25 (Saturday) 9AM to Noon – Steed Hall
Annuals, herbs, tomato and pepper plants are available. Pre-orders are recommended. Deadline for pre-orders is Friday, April 10. Order forms are available at Ball Visitors Center and Steed Hall. Call 910-692-3882 for more information.

Stained Glass Bird

May 5 (Tuesday) 10AM to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center
Diane Flanagan from ARTworks Vass returns to help you make a whimsical Stained Glass Bird. You can expect to learn the fundamentals of design, safe tool usage, glass cutting, foiling, and more as you complete a Bird in the color palette of your choice. All materials are included. No experience is necessary. Space is limited to 12 so register early to save your seat in class. Horticultural Society members \$39, non-members \$44.

Lunch & Learn

May 19 (Tuesday) Noon to 1PM – Ball Visitors Center - Free
Author, horticulturist and speaker, Brie Author, will be giving a talk based on her latest book, **Gardening with Grains.** Brie will discuss how to cultivate grains alongside your favorite ornamental and edible plants. She will explain how to design a space that can provide nourishment for your family and your favorite birds year-round. With more than a decade of experience as a grower and propagator she shares her expertise as an advocate for consumer horticulture and home gardening.



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Growing Plants in Containers

Whether you are growing all your plants in containers or only one or two special plants, you'll be sure to learn new ideas and techniques from Hilarie Blevins as she presents the latest talk in the Sandhills Horticultural Lecture Series. "Gardening in Containers" is the topic on March 27 at 1 pm in the Ball Visitor's Center.

Hilarie's presentation will cover soil composition, plant nutrient needs, pot size and shape, watering, fertilization and some of her favorite plant combinations.

There are many reasons for growing plants in containers, including a reduced risk of soil-borne pathogens, virtual elimination of weed problems and a lower risk of animal damage. Pots give you the opportunity to put color and plant structure where needed as well as plant mobility to control sun exposure, temperature and water needs.

Registration is not required. Seats will be available on a first come, first served basis. The talk is free but the opportunity to donate and support the Horticultural Gardens will be available.

Spring Garden Tips

- Clean, cut back and prepare perennials and grasses for spring
- Apply preemergence herbicide on lawns for weed prevention
- Apply first fertilization on lawns in April to May
- Plant summer annuals after last chance of frost
- Plant out veggies in the garden or pots

