

GGG

Granville Gardeners Gazette

Promoting Education and Recreation through Gardening Activities

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INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Monday, December 11, 6:30 p.m.

Main St. Oasis Restaurant, 130 Main St., Oxford, NC

Social time: 6:30 p.m. – 30 minutes for socializing with Oasis hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar

Served dinner: 7 p.m.

- Salad bar
- choice of steak or chicken entrée
- choice of baked potato (white or sweet) or rice
- choice of water, tea (sweet or unsweetened) and coffee
- dessert
- bread served upon request

Program: Installation of officers and board members and Awards Presentations

- President: David Quinn
- Vice president: Joyce Cifers
- Secretary: Jacalyn Thomas
- Treasurer: Dany Devito
- Board members: Kaydee Karns and Robin Word

Awards presentations

President's Notes

Why do we become members of the Granville Gardeners? Many have said they joined because they love to garden or wanted to start gardening, but that they gained much more than knowledge. Friendship and camaraderie are important aspects of a club. We come together because of plants; maybe the club is not a perfect fit for our gardening interests, but we stay because of the people. We learn at the meeting programs, the workshops, and other activities.

And we want to give back. In 2021, as much as I liked the people in the club, I was frustrated that we weren't doing much of what I was interested in. Then I realized that if I contributed, I could make sure some of the things that we did would be activities I loved. (Slow to learn...?) I volunteered to be the chair of the Projects and Activities committee for 2022 and had a lot of fun finding a variety of activities for different interests. If you find that you are in the same boat, look at all the ways to be involved – one will resonate with you and you'll be surprised at what you can do and love doing it.

Some of us have more free time than others. We are extroverts and introverts making us better suited for different jobs within the club. Some of us don't know as much about gardening, for example, and may know more about cooking or technology. All are welcome, and we learn from one another. We are trying to find ways for people of all talents and time -- or lack of time -- to help the club. Isn't there an adage that you get out of something according to what you put in?

You may have guessed by now that I'm about to make a request. Please consider signing up according to your talents and interests to help the club keep running. At last night's meeting Christi was saying something similar. (Let me interject that Christi gave an excellent program with no advance notice when our scheduled speaker couldn't make it!) The Expo Committee is breaking down the tasks into smaller chunks. With more people taking a smaller job, the work is not overwhelming.

We are also experimenting with a different structure for the Hospitality committee. Lois has done a great job, but it has been a huge work load for her – and she works full time! Not many would be willing to take on that commitment. Several people have already signed up for some of the tasks. (I will send more details about that in an email. If you do not check your email regularly, let me know, and I will alert you when an email goes out.)

Next up: our banquet and installation of officers and awards presentations. See you there!

Kat

Results of the November 27, 2023 JCRA plants auction

The bid for the very rare and exotic **Canary Islands juniper** was won by **Robin Word**. This tree is almost extinct in its native habitat. The **yellow twig boxelder** went home with **Judy McHugh**. It will brighten her winters for years to come.

Canary Islands juniper



Yellow twig boxelder



The bid for **Forrest's St. John's Wort** was won by **Kay Nutt**, so she'll have sunshine flowers all summer. The just-released, brand-new **'Groovy Glow' mahonia** went to **Ellen Sadovy** (it was bred by NCSU's Dr. Tom Ranney, and the plant patent alone cost \$25,000)

Forrest's St. John's Wort



'Groovy Glow' mahonia



Diane Holtaway won two bids: **purple stem winter honeysuckle** and **Raspberry Splash lungwort**.

'Raspberry Splash' lungwort



Purple stem winter honeysuckle



The auction brought \$295 to the GG scholarship fund!

By Marty Finkel

Q & A

Q: *I think there are several versions of a home-made food for birds and would like to make some to attract more birds nearer my house (also to supplement their wild diet, of course!) Which would you recommend?*

A: I receive the most gorgeous photos of birds at seed feeders and at bird pudding bowls from a friend, and when I asked what recipe his wife used, here's what she sent:

Winter Pudding

Bluebirds do not visit seed feeders, preferring nuts, fruit and dogwood berries to supplement their usual diet of flying insects and grubs, so try this Winter Pudding recipe from the N.C. Bluebird Society

2 quarts water

1 cup peanut butter

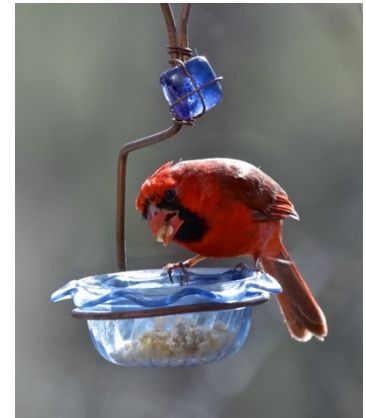
1 cup margarine

Handful of raisins or peanut hearts (optional)

4 cups regular grits

BRING water and margarine to a boil in a large saucepan. Slowly add grits, stirring and cooking until mixture begins to thicken. Remove from heat and add peanut butter, raisins and peanuts. Mix well and place in feeders. Freeze the balance in plastic or foil containers for future use.

As you can see, Peggy's pudding attracts more than bluebirds, photographed by her husband, David.



Photos by David Poulos <http://www.camerart.com>

Recipe sent by Peggy Tate

Q: The time to plant seeds or transplants in the spring always catches me with unprepared beds and delays planting time. Can I prepare beds now and plant right away this spring?

A: The answer is YES. How to do it arrived in the November/December 2023 issue of *The American Gardener* magazine.

Clean up vegetable and ornamental beds if you haven't already done so by pulling up and disposing of dead plants. Put the corpses in trash or yard waste that is taken away, **not** in the compost pile. Cut the foliage of other plants such as asparagus that has turned yellow or brown, ornamentals that no longer have seeds for birds, and add to the compost pile if not diseased. If you haven't cut back ornamental grasses, wait until late February, then let the cut grasses stay where they fall for easy mulch. You can either cut back or leave herbs such as mint, thyme, chives, and sage.

After the clean-up, if you haven't done a soil test in the past couple of years, take samples and send or take to the Extension office at 125 Oxford Outer Loop Rd., Oxford 27565. Telephone 919-603-1350, email at granville.ces.ncsu.edu There is a \$4.00 per box charge from December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024; it's free except for this period.

Next, replenish the soil. Cover it with a three-inch layer of organic matter. This will not only reduce the germination of weed seeds and prevent erosion, it will protect the soil from being compacted by rain. Use chopped leaves, leaf mold, compost, or a cover crop. Cover crops are "living mulch" and do a lot for the soil – improve structure, fix nitrogen, feed microorganisms, and add nutrients while protecting the soil. Contact the Extension office for what to plant and when to turn it over in the spring. This last step is really the only preparation you will do – the microscopic fungi and microbes will have been working all winter, and the hatching earthworms will be ready to aerate and enrich the soil.

Now that you can relax, you can revisit the list you made for next year. Think back over what worked and what didn't, and why – was it the variety, the weather, insects, or disease? And decide if you want to try it again. Maybe it was a plant that just doesn't grow well here, such as the gorgeous 'My Monet' weigela that was such a hit some years ago. Most that were planted in the spring didn't survive the summer, and none lasted for longer than a year (if that long). Also, try some vegetables, annuals, and perennials such as the 2024 All America Winners and other plants that are new to you.



'My Monet' Weigela
(*Weigela florida* 'My Monet')



Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)



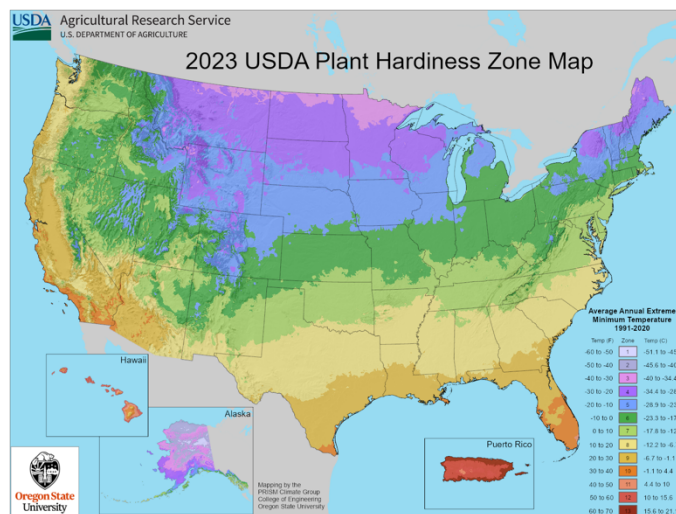
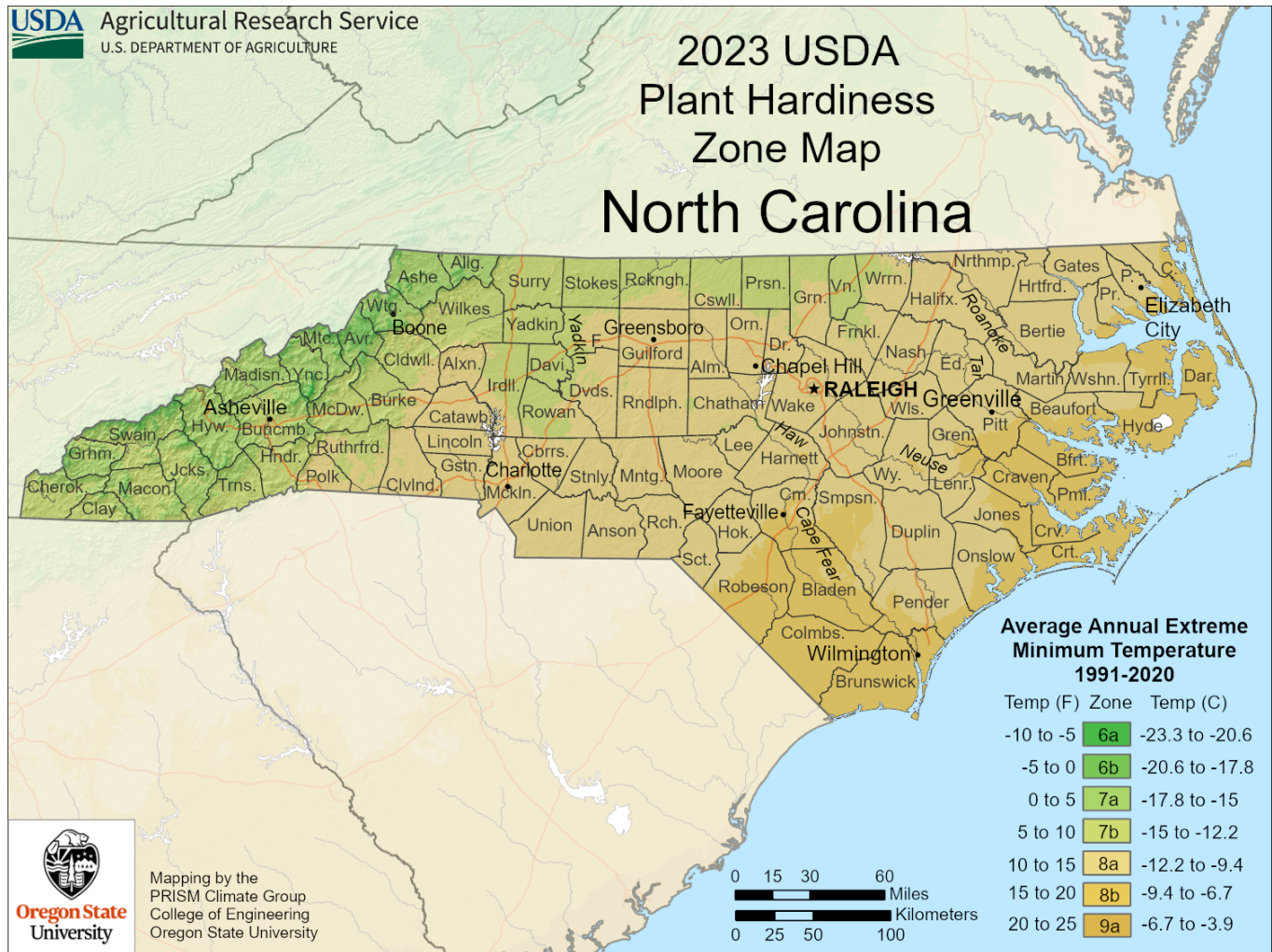
Phlox 'Jeana' *Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana'

By Marty Finkel Source cited in article

Photo credits: Left: Proven Winners, Middle: NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox Lenora (Ellie) Enking CC BY-SA 4.0, right: Inland Bays Garden Center

Q: Can you supply a copy of the new plant hardiness map?

A: Here it is for NC! Oxford's Average Annual Mean Extreme Minimum Temperature (see chart on right on the map) puts it in Zone 7b. Previously it was on the border of 7a and 7b. Raleigh has been designated 8a now.



To-Do List

- Run the lawnmower over fallen leaves to chop them, then use as mulch. If you have more leaves than needed to cover beds, pile them up and let them weather into compost for next year's garden. Or alternate with "green stuff" to make lasagna compost (see November 2014 issue of the GGG)
- Continue to plant trees and shrubs this month.
- Keep checking kale, cabbage, etc for caterpillars even if the temperature has been in the low 20's a couple of times. Treat with BT or insecticidal soap.
- Wait a couple of months before pruning (if any is needed).
- Leave ornamental grasses standing for winter interest and for habitat for overwintering pollinator insects, larvae, and eggs.
- Cut stalks of perennials that have gone dormant – except perovskia (Russian sage), perennial salvias, caryopteris (blue mist shrub), or any others that have hollow stems that will collect water, freeze, and kill the roots.
- If you didn't get all the spring bulbs planted last month, be sure to do so now.
- If certain perennials or shrubs didn't do well for you over the past couple of years, take them out.
- On nice days this month and in January, walk through the yard and garden with pad and pen and make notes of where and what to plant. There will still be time for roots to become established before the heat of summer.
- Look at seed and plant catalogs as well as garden magazines and books for inspiration for combining colors, adding textural plants, etc.
- Order seeds so you will have them on hand when they need to be started early for transplants to set out around March 31 (revised first frost date). Vegetable seeds such as snow, snap, or green garden peas need to be in the ground in February.
- Trees and shrubs planted in Oct. and Nov. should be checked to be sure the soil they are planted in is not dry. If it's dry, one deep watering is probably all the water they will need until the spring rains come.

Plant of the Month



Japanese flowering apricot (*Prunus mume*)

Prunus mume makes a small to medium, wide spreading tree from 15' to 30' tall and often nearly as wide. The mature bark can be somewhat attractive with cinnamon tints and corky ridges and the young branches are a distinctive glossy green. While the summer foliage is nondescript, the 1" to 1¼" flowers more than make up for the pedestrian foliage. The flowers range from white to dark rose pink and provide a vibrant exclamation point in the winter landscape with their spring-like color and delicious, spicy scent. The thin-fleshed fruits are inedible by American standards but are commonly pickled in Asia.

Japanese apricot is native to moist, well-drained hillsides in China and is an important landscape plant in China and Japan. It flowers best in full sun but will tolerate slightly shaded spots. Young, grafted plants grow quickly often as much as 5' in a season. It roots readily from softwood cuttings taken in late May through July but grows more slowly as a rooted plant. Although susceptible to several insects and diseases, these are rarely fatal and *P. mume* are often long-lived landscape plants.

Source: J. C. Raulston Arboretum, <https://jcra.ncsu.edu/horticulture/plant-profiles/details.php?ID=6>

Also in Bloom This Month

Note that bloom times vary, depending on climatic and meteorological conditions, and many plants bloom several months in a row (and sometimes rebloom).

Autumn flowering crocus
Compact strawberry tree
Camellia
Chinese tea-olive
Dwarf fragrant winterhazel
Fatsia japonica
Fragrant Wintersweet
Flowering quince
Grapeholly
Hellebores

Late red hot poker
Magnolia cavaleriei
Mahonia
Purple heart tradescantia
Sempervivum
Sweet box
Viburnums
Winter flowering iris
Winter honeysuckle

Photos of Some of the Plants in Bloom This Month



Fragrant Wintersweet



Japanese fatsia



Dwarf fragrant winterhazel



Sempervivum 'Red Heart'



Autumn flowering crocus



Hybrid flowering quince



Winter flowering iris



Winter honeysuckle



Grapeholly (hybrid)



Late red hot poker



Viburnum obovatum (dwarf)