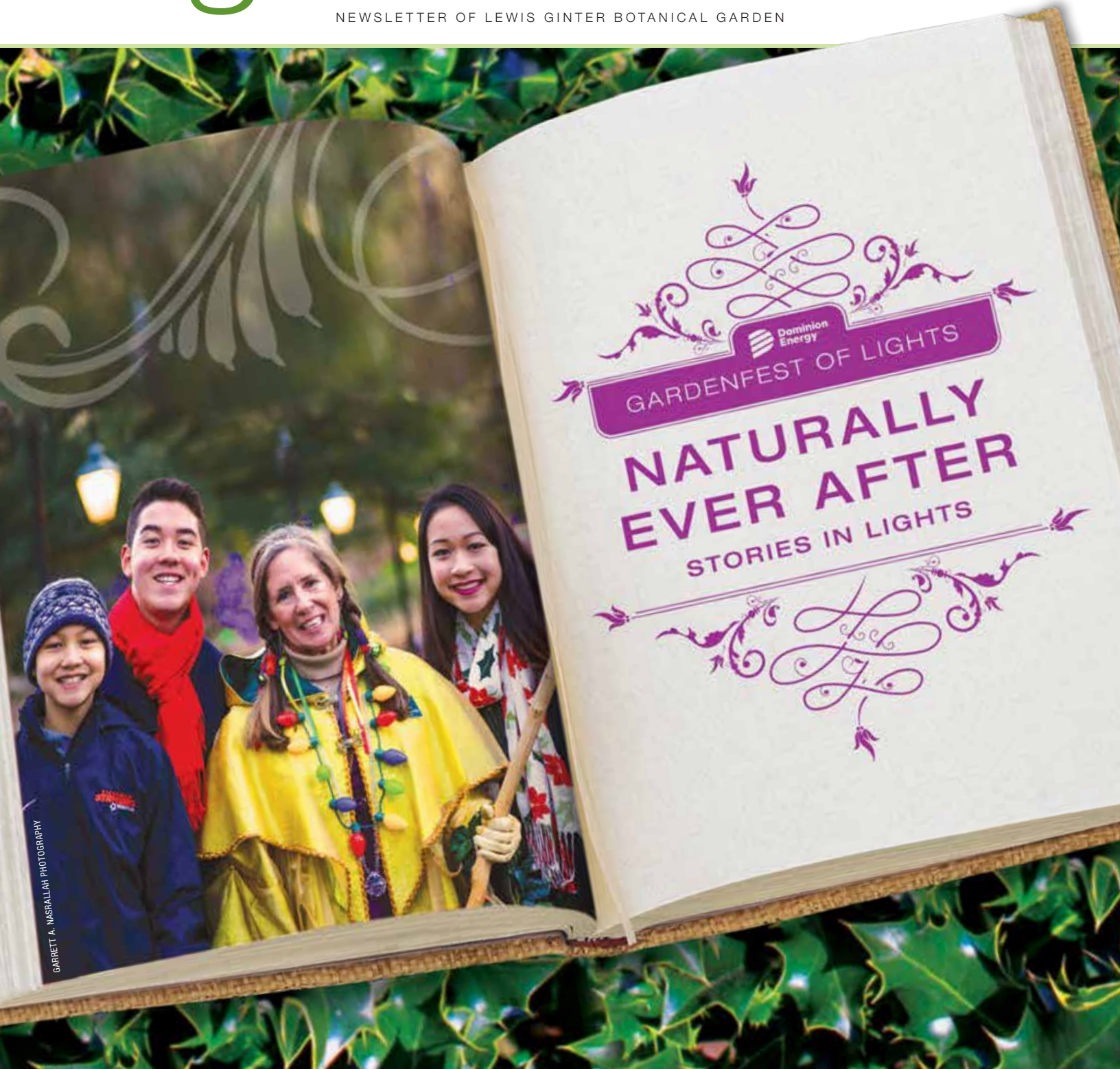


gardentimes

NEWSLETTER OF LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN



GARRETT A. NASRALLAH PHOTOGRAPHY

presenting
sponsor



supporting
sponsor

M&T Bank

media
sponsors

NBC-12
Richmond Times-Dispatch

in this issue

2-3 Message from the Director
4-5 GardenFest:
Naturally Ever After

6 Once Upon a Time
7 Sharing Stories

8-9 The Art (and Heart)
of Handcrafters
10-11 Horticulture

Message from the Director



Editor's Box

The *Garden Times* newsletter is mailed three times a year to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden members.

Volume XXXII, Number 3

Executive Director
Shane Tippet

Newsletter Editor
Lynn Kirk, Kirk Communications

Design
Elevation

Special Thanks
LGBG staff for editorial assistance

Cover: The GardenKeeper tells stories and greets guests on Merry Mondays at Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights. Find everything you need to plan your GardenFest experience at bit.ly/GARDENFEST.

More Stories

You may notice the *Garden Times* newsletter is no longer including detailed calendar listings. These are available on the website at lewisginter.org; through the Garden's Facebook page; and in the Adult Education Brochure mailed to members three times a year. The transition allows us to bring you more stories about our staff, volunteers, members, guests and the community. We always appreciate your story ideas and feedback; share them with us by contacting PR & Marketing Director Beth Monroe at bethm@lewisginter.org or (804) 262-9887, ext. 316.

Stories from our members and guests are an inspiration to Garden staff.

Let Us Tell You a Story...

I live far from the Rocky Mountains of my youth. Still, in my dreams the horizons are sometimes stark, soaring and snow-capped. Upon waking, these mountainous memories gentle down into the lush rolling vistas of central Virginia, and I join my colleagues in the work of RVA's botanical garden. We gather together from a variety of childhood homes and legacies with a multitude of past experiences, and we engage members and guests from all over the planet. I am persuaded that everyone's journey to this Garden is different, and that everyone's embrace of the natural world is as unique as an ice crystal forming on a peak a mile above the treeline.

It is said that we tell stories to make sense of our journeys – our families, circumstances and lives. At the Garden, we have come to realize that one of the best ways to accomplish our mission, to make sense of our journey, is to tell evocative stories of the plant world and our interaction with it and with each other. We do this in whimsical and fun ways, like this year's Naturally Ever After theme for the Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights. We do it in the pages of this newsletter, where in the months to come we hope to tell more stories about staff, volunteers, members and community citizens, using words from and about our neighbors to shine a spotlight on the natural world we are committed to presenting, nurturing and celebrating. We are giving thought to our graphic identity (how we “look” in publications, electronic material, mailed correspondence and permanent signs) and how that best reflects the broad reach of the stories we hope to tell and the communities we hope to inspire.

I also am persuaded that the stories that matter for the future of our region, and thus for this Garden, are frequently the stories we are told. We are continually in the planning process and the essential voice for that conversation is yours. Upon examination, it is clear that many programmatic and capital endeavors in our relatively short history sprang from stories of what our region needs, what it wants and what it deserves.

So, let us tell you a story, then let us hear your story. Let our journeys be enriched by the stories we share.

Shane Tippet
Executive Director

Christine Bulk lives in the Chicago area. She joined Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden because her daughter lives in Richmond, and she can use the reciprocal membership at Chicago gardens.



The Part You Play

Garden membership donations help us achieve our mission to connect people and plants to improve communities. However, it's only a fraction of what is needed to sustain Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden's work. As a nonprofit, we rely on Annual Fund contributions to fund our educational programs and horticultural displays, and to help us share the Garden with those who find the admission cost a barrier. Annual Fund gifts at all levels are greatly appreciated!



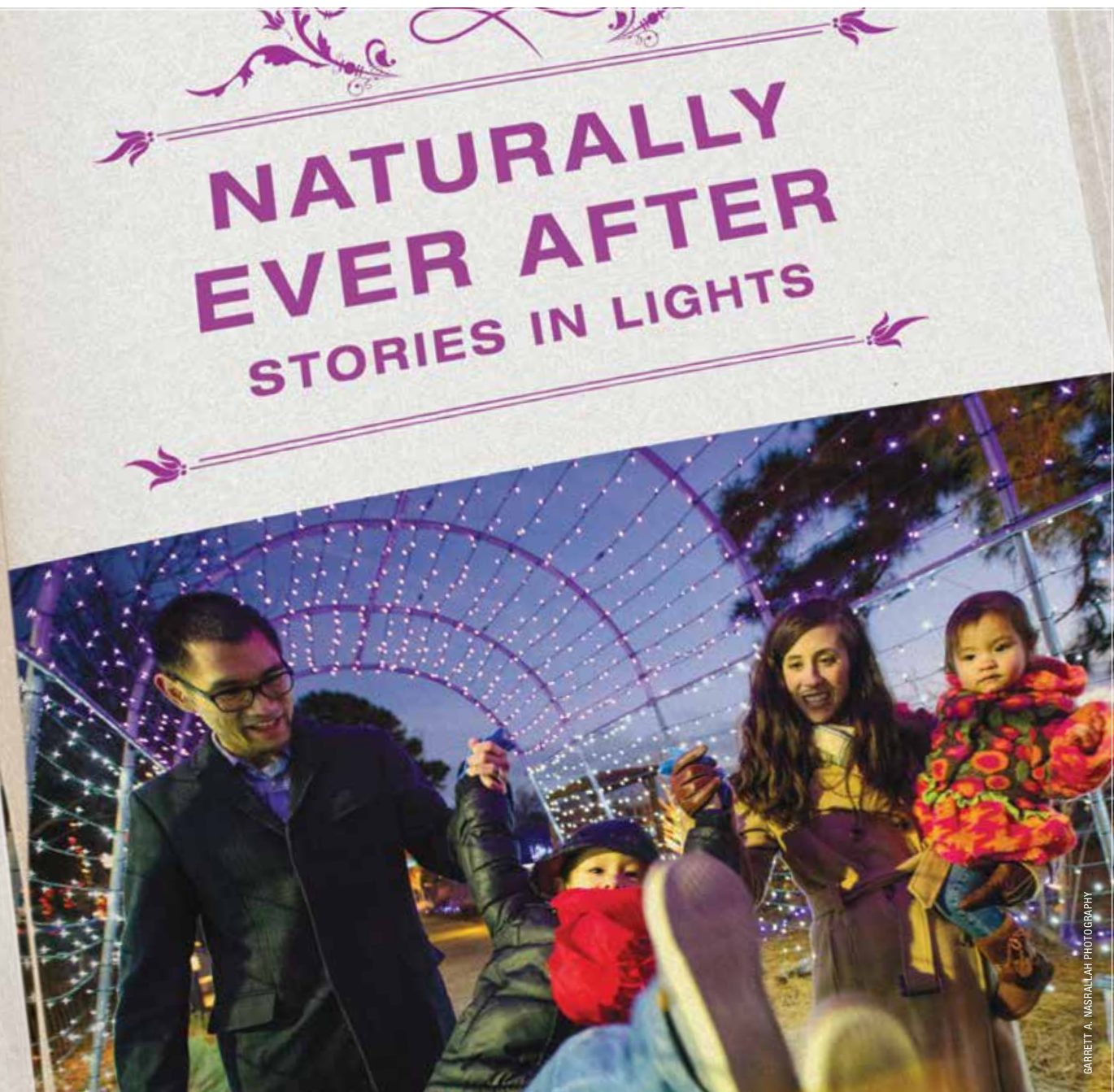
Kroger Community Kitchen Garden

Produce is donated to FeedMore and LAMBs Basket Food Pantry. Our annual impact is not only life sustaining; it's educational and people-plant centric:

3,000+
pounds of food donations

2,000+
hours of education

1,000+
hours from volunteers



NOVEMBER 24 – JANUARY 8

Everyone loves a good story. Now imagine myriad stories, legends and rhymes embellished with a half-million holiday lights! **Naturally Ever After** presents **Stories in Lights**, from fairy tales and folklore to time-treasured classics. Indoor and outdoor displays, family activities and holiday events spotlight tales that span cultures and time ... explore natural phenomena ... teach life lessons ... celebrate the seasons ... and ultimately, connect people through plants.

More trees wrapped in lights than ever before! Thanks to Root Down Tree Management.

DON WILLIAMSON



gardenfest of lights

Behind the Scenes

Every January—while volunteers systematically take down lights—staff turns its focus to the next GardenFest. “There’s no start and stop anymore from one GardenFest to the next,” says Operations Manager Justin Brown, who has been with the Garden 10 years. “I now manage all operations [plus GardenFest’s outdoor displays], so I’m lucky to have such dedicated volunteers who take a lot of weight off my shoulders.”

Brainstorming begins and the next theme evolves, mirroring the mission of connecting people through plants. A staff contest determines a catchy title, such as this year’s Naturally Ever After: Stories in Lights.

Lead staff members artistically sketch and present proposals to Kristin Thoroman, exhibitions manager since 2016. She coordinates and sometimes curates the Garden’s seasonal and changing exhibits, including GardenFest.

Mid-summer, while one department develops educational programs or events, others communicate with members or media. Special projects and staff days provide hands-on opportunities to be part of the story.



Operations Manager Justin Brown and Exhibitions Manager Kristin Thoroman collaboratively coordinate the production of GardenFest.

Meanwhile, the Kelly Education Center basement comes alive with a dedicated cadre of volunteers (see pages 8–9). Their hard work brings mere ideas to reality. By late summer, most props are completed and outdoor installation begins.

Both Justin and Kristin agree that the biggest challenge is time. “Every season, there are so many wonderful ideas about how to convey the theme—if only we had time to pursue them all,” Kristin shares.

Anticipation builds. *Will the lights work? Will visitors relate to the theme? And what memories will be made?*

On GardenFest Illumination night, eight staff members are armed with radios throughout the Garden, waiting for the signal to switch on the lights. The community countdown begins, and at the magic moment, GardenFest comes alive with a half-million holiday lights!

“GardenFest is a chance for the Garden to shine in a different way, highlighting the creativity and talent of our staff during a season most people aren’t tempted to visit a public garden,” Kristin says. “What staff does with the resources we have is truly spectacular.”

To Market We Go

Every January, while most are storing holiday decorations, three Garden Shop managers travel south to buy even more! Their destination is Atlanta and AmericasMart: one of the world’s largest wholesale marketplaces.

“We’re on a mission,” says Martha Anne Ellis, Garden Shop manager. “We’re looking for quality items related to the next GardenFest theme.” Victoria Wilson, outdoor buyer, shares: “It’s hard to translate a light show into things that are marketable, but still applicable to the theme.” They shop non-stop for four days. “It’s exhausting, exciting and exuberating,” admits Heather Pearce, assistant manager. “We start with ideas, process what we observe and go down a path.” Decisions are based on quality, handcrafting, sustainability and more. They buy with confidence, based on 45 years of combined experience.

Six months later, purchases start to arrive, filling storerooms (including a basement area nicknamed The Dungeon). “The fun for me is decorating: seeing our plans, ideas and stories come together,” Heather says. Martha Anne welcomes the customer service opportunities, another Garden Shop strength, while Victoria reminds us, “Retail therapy is a good thing!”

Garden Shop
proceeds support our
educational mission.

Watch for new offerings mid-October, and visit lewisginter.org for holiday shopping events.

Once Upon a Time

This year's show explores a treasure trove of legends, stories and tales!

INDOOR Displays

Miss Rumphius was encouraged by her grandfather, an artist and traveler, to make the world more beautiful. She plants countless, colorful lupines along coastal Maine. *This children's picture book connects generations and demonstrates the power of natural beauty.* **LORA ROBINS LIBRARY**

Chinese New Year Immersed in Asian-inspired decor, discover how a sage kept the fire-breathing dragon away and saved the day! *This legend explores cultures and man's interaction with the natural world.* **ATRIUM**

Jack and the Beanstalk

recounts the rags-to-riches tale, complete with fe-fi-fo-fum treasures. *This English fairytale demonstrates overcoming obstacles and how plants affect our lives.* **ROBINS ROOM**

Consider this enchanting setting in the Robins Room for your holiday event or facility rental. Contact facilityevents@lewisginter.org.

Old Man Winter explores how blustery winter morphs into glorious spring. *Vivid personification and symbolism deepen this cross-cultural look at seasonal change.* **KELLY EDUCATION CENTER**

Moon and the Stars A spinster's treasured jewelry and hair ornaments miraculously transform into the celestials. *This Filipino legend reflects Asian culture while exploring the wonders of creation.* **DOME HOUSE**

Thumbelina follows a wee woman's adventures in the natural world, including encounters with dangerous creatures and ultimately, her prince charming. *This happily-ever-after classic explores one's adventurous spirit and journey to self-acceptance.* **NORTH WING**

Origin of Orchids Imagine that time began with melting snow that created rivers and waterfalls. Rising vapors formed clouds and eventually a rainbow. Immortal spirits gathered around its beauty, causing the rainbow to shatter with their weight. Sparkling fragments floated to earth, transforming into breathtaking orchids. *New Zealand folklore creatively examines the water cycle and the enchantment of flora.* **EAST WING**

How the Mouse Stole Fire A white-footed mouse carries fire in his elderberry pipe, lighting darkness and creating the sun. *This Native American legend explores nature's phenomena.* **WEST WING**

The Story of the Root Children follows imaginary children's seasonal responses to Mother Nature. *This classic explores man's interaction with changing seasons.* **CAFE**

The Secret Garden An abandoned garden, brought back to bloom, leads a young girl and her invalid cousin to discover the mysteries of nature. *This timeless classic exemplifies nature's healing power.* **READING ROOM**

OUTDOOR Displays

Relive childhood rhymes and bedtime stories, such as:

- Humpty Dumpty
- Ugly Duckling
- Tortoise and the Hare
- Charlotte's Web
- Old MacDonald's Farm
- Pied Piper
- Princess and the Frog
- The Giving Tree



Sharing Stories



Thousands of guests enjoy Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights each year. Many more would like to, but find the cost prohibitive. That's why the Garden works with other nonprofits and agencies to provide opportunities for need-based groups to visit. In 2016, nearly 1,000 complimentary GardenFest tickets were distributed through the Sharing the Garden program. Below is just one story.

Many of us eagerly anticipate holiday traditions. For Esperanza Soria-Nieto, it's helping to bring a group of ESL (English-as-a-second-language) students and their families to Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights each year. The students attend Oak Grove/Bellemeade Elementary School, located in south Richmond off Jefferson Davis Highway. It's one of the most impoverished areas in our region, with close to 95 percent of the school's students participating in the National School Lunch Program.

Soria-Nieto, an Upper School Spanish teacher at Collegiate School, began working with the students and their families about four years ago, joining forces with community volunteer Bob Argabright. "[GardenFest] is the highlight of their year," says Soria-Nieto. "It's an outing for the parents and the children to go somewhere as a family. They don't often have that chance; many of the parents don't have a car." For the GardenFest trip, Collegiate School provides transportation, and the Garden offers free tickets through its Sharing the Garden program.

Their favorite activity? "Making s'mores is the best thing ever," says Soria-Nieto. "Many have never done that before. [At GardenFest] the children can be kids. They run around and have fun; that's something they can't do where they live. When it's time to leave, they ask 'Can we come again next week?'"



The Art (and ♥) of Handcrafters

Meet a few of our many hardworking volunteers.

Watch for additional stories at bit.ly/GardenStories.



Intergenerational Trio The Harrells

Glenda volunteered for GardenFest in 2013. The next year, her teenage granddaughter Ashley joined in, needing 125 community-service hours for an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Younger sister, Lauren, says: "Ashley dragged me along, but now I enjoy it, too." This year marks the teens' third summer of working alongside their grandmother, every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon. Glenda's favorite part? "Finishing one project so I can go to another," plus time well spent as a family.



The Inspector Wayne Saunders

"We make the magic happen," Wayne boasts on behalf of Justin's Basement Team. "I'm not a garden person, but I enjoy working with my hands." He puts his skill to good use, regularly checking all displays for light outages and damage. "I get lots of exercise walking the Garden, plus I enjoy the people," he says.



The Recycler Claudia Saunders

Claudia's husband, Wayne, volunteered last year. This year, she told him, "If you're going to have that much fun, I want to, too." She joined the basement volunteers, and during inventory noticed 100 empty plastic containers. "I didn't want to get rid of them, so I said I'd try to make something of them." Claudia ingeniously constructed a rat pack for the Pied Piper story. "I don't consider myself crafty," she claims, but through creative recycling, Claudia is now a proud Mouse Mama!



The Adaptor Bob Lincoln

Bob created three Humpty Dumpty forms this summer for the nursery rhyme's three-scene vignette. Impressive, but more so because he used last year's beehive forms to make them! Bob also morphed a former shrimp into a rabbit and more. "I adapt [previous years'] materials and frames into stuff for this year's theme," he says. The creative recycling saves the environment and reduces expenditures. "I really enjoy it," he adds. "It's nice and cool in the basement [during summer's heat] ... and the re-creative aspect is very fun."

Thank You, Volunteers!

With only **70** full-time-equivalent staff, the Garden couldn't change GardenFest themes annually—or host such an elaborate extravaganza—without your dedicated support.



The Preservers

Bay Seale *(left)*

Darlene Hinman *(right)*

"We work every Tuesday, from when the hellebores start blooming through the gathering of acorns and fall camellias," explains Bay, a volunteer since 2006. "And we're the only people allowed to cut [peak-of-bloom] flowers in the Garden," adds Darlene, who recruited Bay to help with the process. Their volunteer assignment for more than a decade has been to cut and preserve blooms, leaves and seedpods for use in botanical decorations. Some are pressed, while others are air-dried in the basement area. Most are preserved using silica glass, which should not be touched or inhaled, so they don protective masks, gloves and eyewear. Along with Jane Barthurst and Anne Thompson, Bay and Darlene preserve as many as 100 flowers a week. The beautifully preserved botanicals are used to adorn the Lora Robins Library, which features The Secret Garden vignette this year.

The Creator

Debbie Guckert

She comes with a PhD in textile chemistry, teaching experience at two universities and 25 years with DuPont in textile research and technical management. Debbie Guckert, now retired, applies her extensive knowledge to GardenFest of Lights.

Debbie starts planning with the horticulture staff in January, then artistically creates characters and buildings from May through October. "My husband has every tool in the world, so working at home is perfect," she says.

This year, Debbie's focus is Thumbelina in the Conservatory North Wing. "My assignment is to create all the Thumbelinas: 12 scenes that span the seasons, culminating with a fairytale garden wedding." The figures (below) are crafted from clothespins, wire and beads, then dressed in silk flowers and preserved botanicals, such as ginkgo-leaf dresses, flower-petal skirts and pussy-willow wraps. They sport perfectly coiffed hairstyles, crafted from embroidery floss. Debbie's repertoire also includes a mole, mouse, frog ... and of course, a charming prince who brings the fairytale to a happy ending.





Bio

Morris County Park Commission, NJ
Superintendent of Horticulture
2002–2017

New York Botanical Garden, NY
Curator of Outdoor Gardens
1999–2002

Cornell University Plantations, NY
Plant Records Curator & Greenhouse Manager
1986–1999

Cornell University, NY
Master's, Plant Pathology
Bachelor's, Ornamental Horticulture & Botany

Meet Our New Horticulture Director: John Morse

It all began with a morning television show. “When I was a little kid, I’d get up at 6 a.m. to watch ‘American Farmer’ on TV,” John Morse said. The farm reports, tractors and backhoes fascinated him, as did yardwork outside his family’s suburban Connecticut home. “My parents were very hands-on,” he recalled. “They were very involved in caring for our yard—not as technical gardeners with botanical knowledge, but with love for being out in the yard and making things look nice.” Little did anyone realize how much these activities would influence John’s future.

Years later, when John entered college, his career path focused on farming and environmental conservation. He declared forestry as his major, but then became intrigued by the science behind it. He morphed into a horticulture major when hired as a student gardener at Cornell University Plantations. “Prior to that, I thought horticulture was just the mow-and-blow guys,” he said with a smile. “But then I really grew to love the field, especially public horticulture.”

During undergraduate and graduate coursework, John developed an appreciation for all aspects of horticulture: from hands-on gardening and design techniques to the science of growing and propagating plants. He was fascinated by plant taxonomy (identification and classification of plants), as well as public gardens and their extensions into the community. “I realized public gardens are commitments to open spaces in our overcrowded world, which bring beauty and joy to people’s lives.”

John brings with him these philosophies, coupled with knowledge and passion, as the Garden’s new director of horticulture (effective July 2017, following a national search). He comes with a memorable first impression, too. “Every time I visited during the interview process, I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff, clearness of the Garden’s mission and the unity of the staff behind it. I saw a high level of involvement and support from the community, too,” he said. “It’s not always like that at other public gardens.”

John noted he’ll strive to keep the Garden’s positive momentum going as he becomes familiar with the property and people. “It’s important to have gardens that can be appreciated by all our guests, regardless of their background or experience. From first-time visitors and gardener wannabes, to longtime members and horticultural enthusiasts, we’ll continue to offer elements in the Garden’s landscape that appeal to each.”

Winter Work

Horticulturist Chelsea Mahaffey recommends these end-of-growing-season chores:

Prune fruit trees and canes after the leaves have dropped.

Prepare beds by removing debris, testing soil, adding soil amendments or sowing a winter cover crop.

Plan for next year by ordering seeds, rotating crops and inventorying seeds and tools.

Expand plant beds or lay pathways.

Tend cold frames and other season-extenders that protect against frost damage.



Native Plant Profile

'Tis the season for berries, which brings to mind a true Virginia native: American holly (*Ilex opaca*).

The Sexes

Hollies are dioecious, meaning there are male and female plants. Flowers of the male plant provide pollen, while flowers of the female plant produce berries.

Pollinator Cooperator

The tree's small flowers attract bevy of native pollinators, including bees, wasps and some night-flying moths.

Berry Beautiful

Late summer, the female flowers morph into berries. By fall, these fruits turn vivid red or yellow, depending on the cultivar. Though noxious to humans, the berries are a favorite winter food of the American robin.

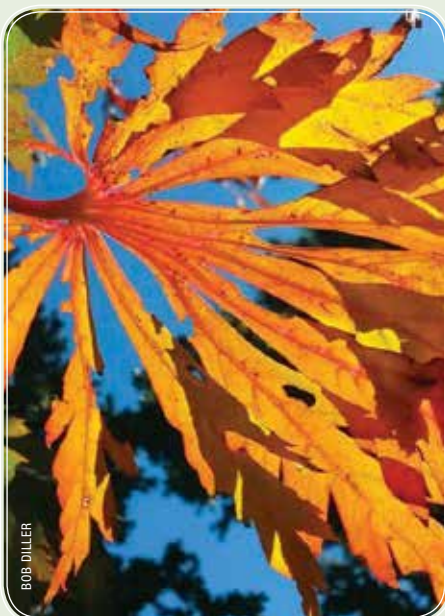
Good Life For Wildlife

American holly's thick foliage provides safe havens for birds to rest, nest and hide from predators.

Bright Spots

Autumn

Cut-leaf Japanese maple
(*Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum*)



Winter

Norway spruce
(*Picea abies*)



The Birds & the Bees

We asked Horticulturist Megan Lacey about nature's response to winter.

Q. Where do non-migratory birds go?

A. "Birds that stay here nest in bushes and crevices of trees. For example, woodpeckers find a nice hole inside a tree and build a nest. They still gather food, but they hunker down."

Q. What about honeybees?

A. "They form a cluster within the hive, which helps keep the bees warm. A feral hive ideally has enough honey stored to get them through winter. For our beehive [at the Garden], we keep fondant inside the hive, which is basically sugar."





Lewis Ginter
Botanical Garden

1800 LAKESIDE AVENUE
RICHMOND, VA 23228-4700
(804) 262-9887
lewisginter.org

Non-Profit
Organization
U S Postage
PAID
Permit 520
Richmond, VA



Each day is
another page
of your story.



Instagram
contest

details at bit.ly/InstaGardenFEST



gardenfest of lights

Nov. 24–Jan. 8 • 5–10pm

Ticketed event. Closed Dec. 24 & 25.

GardenFest Illumination

Nov. 24 • Doors Open 4pm • Illumination 5pm

bit.ly/IlluminationNite

Free Member & Volunteer Nights

NOV. 27–30 & JAN. 8 • 5–10pm

Exclusive benefit for members & volunteers

GardenFest for Fidos

NOV. 30 & JAN. 4 • 5–10pm

New Year's Eve Family Frolic

DEC. 31 • 2–5pm

Merry Mondays*

Caroling Tuesdays

Crafty Wednesdays*

Musical Thursdays

*Presented by M&T Bank

Find all the details and calendar information you need to
plan your GardenFest experience at bit.ly/GARDENFEST.

Purchase tickets online at bit.ly/onlineTIX.