

LEWIS GINTER WINTER 2018

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THE ART OF PARTNERSHIP

FIRST WORDS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INSPIRING BY DESIGN

When folks discover that I work at Lewis Ginter, some apologize if it has been a while since they visited the Garden. I wave away the self-remonstrance, believing that a visit to a botanical garden is a joy unburdened.

I sometimes ask in return, “Even if you have not been to this community garden, I am sure you have noticed something of the natural world this season, while playing, or gardening at home perhaps?” And the answer is yes. Always yes. I hear stories of a favorite tree thriving or declining. People describe the lushness and smells of an unusually wet, warm summer with a mixture of amazement and unease. They remember the odd light on the horizon at sundown as storms wrack the region. They comment on the changes that overtake the landscape as summer turns to autumn and autumn to winter.

The artistry of an intensely cultivated botanical garden is the product of thousands of acts of co-creation by skilled gardeners using the natural world as their medium. It is inspiring by design and we are inclined to notice. As a consequence, those most affected by what they see and feel return the favor to the world, creating artistry of their own. The art might be tethered to the plant world, but it floats on lines reaching to the clouds. In this winter edition, among other things, we speak about botanical illustration, the holiday light show and serving the community. All have long been embedded in the Garden experience, and are now transforming under the hands of teachers, designers and horticulturists looking at things in new ways and collaborating with new and exciting partners. I hope you have the opportunity to visit and support, to notice and be inspired, to join in the art of new creation with the earth.



Shane Tippet
Executive Director

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

Welcome to the new *Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Magazine*. We hope you enjoy this valuable member benefit and the stories of people connecting through plants to improve communities.

DESIGN

Elevation

WRITING

Lynn Kirk, Kirk Communications, with support from Garden staff and volunteers

COVER ART

Lara Call Gastinger

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS?

Beth Monroe, *Public Relations and Marketing Director*; bethm@lewisginter.org; (804) 262-9887, x316





DRAWN TO NATURE

*“Instructions for living a life.
Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”*

MARY OLIVER

American poet

Some travel hundreds of miles, but their journey is worthwhile because of their goal: A Botanical Illustration Certificate from Lewis Ginter. As one of only 12 such programs in the U.S., Lewis Ginter’s 230-hour curriculum is modeled from offerings of botanical gardens in Denver, New York City and abroad. Also, Lewis Ginter’s instructors are highly accomplished artists whose teaching styles garner glowing praise. “We regularly fill classes and have about 50 people in the pipeline at varying levels of certificate completion,” said Phyllis Laslett, adult education coordinator. Attendance has nearly tripled since the 2013 program launch.

Hazel Buys, a professional artist in Henrico County, is the program mastermind and lead instructor. “We use an old-school approach of teaching traditional skill sets—lines, form, perspective and composition—to study and render plant forms,” she explained. “We always work from life, and the formal piece is always very accurate and life-size. The good news is anyone can enjoy it. The bad news is you have to practice, but you will see yourself getting better. That is the joy of it!”

Lara Call Gastinger, a botanical artist from Charlottesville, is a Lewis Ginter instructor with international acclaim. The Royal Horticultural Society Botanical Art Show in London has awarded Lara two gold medals since 2007. Her 2018 exhibit—the only U.S.

entry—exquisitely recorded Virginia’s native plants through the seasons. Over a 10-year period, Lara also created 1,300 illustrations for “Flora of Virginia.”

While a botanist uses language to describe plants, a botanical artist relies on ink, pencil or watercolor. Lara prefers sepia that invites focus on structure versus color. “You don’t have to be a great artist; you just have to be a good observer,” she said. That’s why children (including hers) tend to be enthusiastic learners. Lara’s botanical journaling classes don’t require fancy equipment or expensive materials; participants create works of art while forging deeper connections to nature.

“I really love to help people observe nature, be mindful and open their eyes to see the world around them,” Lara added. “It’s the perfect way to be outside and seamlessly combine a love of nature with art.” She takes students to the Flagler Garden’s Woodland Walk at Lewis Ginter “to focus on cycles of nature and to capture structures of native flora so ecologically important.” Typically one in eight students continues botanical journaling thereafter; Lara observed that “as an instructor, that’s powerful to me.”



BRINGING ART TO LIGHT

Richmond touts a thriving arts scene, as does this year's Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights. The *Bringing Art to Light* theme will reinterpret well-known works of art through one million radiant lights, glimmering colors and handcrafted artforms. Exploring nature as the muse for artists, architects, sculptors, dancers and musicians, this year's GardenFest is an event *by our community for our community*.



Collaboration began with staff brainstorming the nature-inspired theme. Once an art focus was confirmed, lead designers visited a partner organization: the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA). The museum's Director of Education Celeste Fetta led Lewis Ginter staff through galleries and provided rich background on artists and their artworks.

"I hoped to find a piece that could inspire conversation," said Senior Horticulturist Elizabeth Fogel. "In addition to being a beautiful painting, 'In the Sun' by Theodore Robinson portrays the delicate balance between plants and animals for healthy ecosystems." Elizabeth was motivated to craft a flourishing meadow in the Lora M. Robins Library.

Meanwhile, collaboration never stopped among volunteers. In January, some inventoried last season's lights, while others prepped for this year's show. "Individuals, couples and families with grandchildren are producing nearly 60 light forms," said Operations Manager Justin Brown. Bonus benefits are the friendships formed—camaraderie extending to outings and a potluck finale.

"This year, we forged partnerships with local arts organizations that emphasize our community connections based in creativity," said Ellyn Parker, exhibitions manager. Collaborations are highlighted throughout GardenFest, from Host of Sparrows portraying "living statues" and ensembles



from the Henrico Pops Chorus performing on opening night, to recurring weekly activities with the Visual Arts Center of Richmond on Artful Wednesdays. In addition, the Garden is working with Art on Wheels to present a community-created display at GardenFest, and VMFA will host a related studio event at their museum. The connections extend to area schools as well; when you visit, be sure to check out the tree decorations in the Kelly Education Center hallway (example shown). These were fashioned by elementary schoolchildren across Henrico County, allowing them to explore art and nature while meeting Virginia Standards of Learning.

“As a Garden we bring people together. Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights illustrates the power of connection and creativity.”

KRISTIN THOROMAN

Director of Education and Exhibits

COMING UP IN THE GARDEN



EVENT

Dominion Energy GardenFest of Lights

Nov. 23, 2018-Jan. 7, 2019

Closed Dec. 24 & 25

(Ticketed event)

Title Sponsor:

Dominion Energy

*Presented in part with
support from the National
Endowment for the Arts*

*Be sure to visit the
Kelleher Warming Fire
in the Children's Garden*

SPECIAL NIGHTS

GardenFest Illumination

Friday, Nov. 23

Member and Volunteer Nights

Nov. 26, 27, 28, 29, 2018,
and Jan. 7, 2019

GardenFest for Fidos

Dec. 6, 2018 & Jan. 3, 2019

New Year's Eve Family Frolic

Dec. 31

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Merry Mondays

Caroling Tuesdays

Artful Wednesdays

Musical Thursdays



THE BIG PICTURE

Go for the glow of more than a million lights and make warm memories of time spent with family and friends. Photo by Don Williamson.



GROWING TOGETHER

FeedMore's Community Kitchen is abuzz with meal preparation—and it's only 8 a.m. Executive Chef/Production Manager Antjuan Fisher, 12 staff members and up to 75 volunteers prepare 3,000 hot, nutritious meals every weekday for Central Virginia's neighbors in need.

About half of the meals are served in FeedMore's Kids Cafes, an after-school program for children who may not have the prospect of dinner at home. The remainder are diet-specific meals delivered through FeedMore's Meals on Wheels program to homebound seniors and disabled neighbors.

Since 2009, the nourishing meals have been enhanced with more than 50,000 pounds of fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs contributed by the Community Kitchen Garden at Lewis Ginter. The FeedMore-Lewis Ginter nonprofit collaboration expanded two years

ago to include another significant partner, Kroger, as part of the company's Zero Hunger Zero Waste initiative. Every summer, individuals, corporate and community groups—including New Community School, Groundwork RVA, Genworth, UVA Law School, VCU Service Learning Students and the Ginter Urban Gardeners—provide almost 600 volunteer hours as they help plant, weed and harvest crops in the Kroger Community Kitchen Garden.

From time to time, Antjuan visits the Garden and offers feedback on crops to grow. "That gives us an opportunity to use lots of fresh produce that we don't have to purchase from vendors, cutting our food cost for summer produce almost in half," he said. The summer savings are then reallocated for winter needs, including preparation of special menus for the holidays.

A Meals on Wheels client* agrees fresh is best. "Eating more vegetables with my meals every day gives me more strength and energy," Marvin said. "It has made me more active and healthy."

**Named changed to protect confidentiality.*



"I have great joy when I see that produce 'kissed by the sun' coming into the Kitchen."

ANTJUAN FISHER
Executive Chef & Production Manager,
FeedMore

JONAH HOLLAND



OUR MOST IMPORTANT PARTNER: **YOU**



GLOSSY PRODUCTIONS

After a bountiful harvest, we're called to give back.

In addition to growing food for the hungry, we teach thousands of schoolchildren each year; mentor and work side by side with people of all ages and abilities; partner in neighborhoods to build community gardens; and strive to educate and to learn in all that we do.

Gardeners tend to be sharing people. Whether offering a cutting from a plant or advice learned the hard way, there's a spirit of giving. In much the same way, your donations to the Garden yield a harvest greater than we alone can sow.

Those who work with and appreciate the earth also often have a deep respect for good stewardship. **That's why the Garden was especially honored recently to earn our third consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, an organization that rates nonprofits on fiscal integrity.**

The 4-star rating is the highest, and the third consecutive year is an accomplishment achieved by less than a quarter of all charities evaluated.

Thank you for allowing us to continue serving our community.

PUTTING THE GARDEN TO BED



As you prepare your garden for winter's slumber—by removing debris, mulching and dreaming about next growing season—check out these gardening hacks.

Bag it: Cover a healthy, spent seedhead with a small paper bag and tie closed. Cut the seedhead from the plant and flip the bag right-side up. After the seedhead fully dries, gently shake the bag to release the seeds for storage and next-season planting.

Grounds for success: Ask your local coffee shop (including Starbucks!) for used grounds that will enrich your compost.

Weigh in: When transplanting large, non-hardy plants for indoor overwintering, fill the bottom half of extra-large containers with crushed recyclables—plastic bottles, milk jugs, etc.—before topping with soil. The lighter-weight planter will be easier to maneuver.

Grass be gone: Extend garden space by covering grassy areas with layers of newspapers, cardboard or plastic and cover with mulch. Come spring, you'll be grass-free without chemicals.

Planting measures: Use a permanent marker and a ruler to denote inches on your shovel handle. What a handy resource when planting bulbs at different depths!

Put to the test: Submit a soil test now, so you won't have to guess about amendments later.

Tool time: Sanitize, sharpen and oil your tools. Pinterest offers nifty ideas for organized storage.

Join the conversation: Lewis Ginter's Facebook Group *Gardening in Virginia—Questions & Answers* will keep you "in the know."

**LEWIS
GINTER**
BOTANICAL
GARDEN

1800 Lakeside Avenue
Richmond, VA 23228

NON-PROFIT
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**Dominion
Energy®**

GARDENFEST OF LIGHTS



BRINGING ART TO LIGHT
NOV. 23, 2018 - JAN. 7, 2019
CLOSED DEC. 24 & 25

Be dazzled by more than a million lights
and decorations re-interpreting famous
works of art; all designed to illuminate
nature and her power to inspire.

Member Nights: Nov. 26-29, 2018 & Jan. 7, 2019