Spring is a time of new beginnings. Though the calendar announced spring in late March, Mother Nature had other ideas. Cold temperatures delayed the emergence of spring flowers by 2-3 weeks, resulting in a mass of beautiful flowers along with a golden haze, aka pollen.

Spring Fever hit in earnest with our Spring Plant Sale, held during the weekend of March 27-28. We set up on Friday in temperatures hovering in the mid to lower 20s, along with a cold rain. Despite the bone chilling cold that greeted us Saturday morning, the sale was a huge success. Through all the inclement weather, 50 volunteers showed up, endured the conditions with good cheer, and assisted both visitors and staff without complaint. It all paid off with record sales, the best we have done in a decade.

Another new beginning has been focused efforts to recruit and engage Spanish-speaking volunteers. Planning for this began in the fall, and the marketing campaign was initiated with the new year. It all culminated in a volunteer orientation in Spanish. We now have two bilingual volunteers actively engaged in our program. We hope that a Spanish language tour will reach more bilingual lovers of the Gardens, whom we can attract to our volunteer ranks.

And yet another new beginning was the enlistment and training of 25 new docents for both Adult and Children’s Programs. Both programs continue to thrive and expand to meet the multitude of requests from individuals and groups that wish to tour the Gardens. Indeed, with the growing demand and our expanded tour program (see Did You Know), early numbers promise another record year for tours.

And finally, this spring is the inaugural spring for the Gothic Gate Kiosk. Completed in the early fall, it’s already become a popular shelter for visitors in the rain, as well as an architecturally engaging focal point that provides visitor information and ambassador comfort. And it’s been honored with Durham’s 2014 Golden Leaf Award for Neighborhood Garden & Landscape, which recognizes properties that illustrate the best visual contributions to the community.

My continuing gratitude and best wishes to each of you for a sensational season ahead.
DID YOU KNOW?

Trolley and walking tours have proven so popular, we are expanding their frequency. They are now offered four days a week, Tuesdays through Fridays, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Each trolley tour accommodates 5 visitors; walking tours may include up to 15 visitors. While we encourage advance reservations, there may be room for walk-ins. The information desk at the Doris Duke Center will have information on availability.

From the Discovery Garden:
- The beehives have moved! Still in the Discovery Garden, four hives (thanks to Burt’s Bees) have a new home in a bamboo corral next to the pollinator garden. We have another six hives just beyond the fence behind the chicken coop. And we do collect the honey.
- You might have noticed the compost bins on the east side of the tobacco barn. A key ingredient in organic gardening, composting is the breakdown of green waste such as plants, leaves, paper, and food into nutrient-rich humus, which delivers such benefits as soil enrichment, soil structure and moisture retention, waste and pollution reduction, suppression of plant diseases and pests, and contaminated soil clean up. We do all of our own composting, moving garden debris through several stages as it breaks down.
- This past year we donated about a ton of produce to the Durham Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.

Water management is a continuing challenge for all gardens, but especially Duke Gardens, which began its life as a ravine. To prevent flooding, provide for optimum absorption, keep water and mud off the paths, and clean runoff of pollutants, many water management techniques are used:
- Rain gardens and bio-swales are landscaping features used to slow, collect, infiltrate and filter storm water. The Discovery Garden rain garden is rated for a 100-year flood; its waters move on to the Asiatic Arboretum.
- In the Historic Gardens, rain gardens on either side of the Cherry Allée slow water and promote absorption. The waterfall down from the rock garden into the fish pool also serves to control flow and filter the water.
- The large pond in the Asiatic Arboretum provides for flood control.

Have you visited the blog lately? Written by Gardens staff, volunteers and work-study students, the blog offers event and program information, photos of what’s in bloom, interviews with visitors and instructors, and interesting information from our curators and horticulturists. Visit the blog at http://sarahpdukegardens.blogspot.com/.
Children’s Docent Training—Rain or Shine . . . or Snow
by Kavanah Anderson, Education Program Coordinator

Late winter is often a quiet time in the Gardens and this year was no exception. If you were among the few who happened to be here, you may have seen a new group of children’s docents in training. During training, it often felt like we were the only ones in the Gardens.

Children’s docents need to be intrepid and flexible, and the group that went through this year’s training proved that they have what it takes just by showing up! During one day of training, we headed out into the garden as snowflakes fell all around us. We shivered our way through program demonstrations, singing songs about insect anatomy, sketching animal habitats, and reenacting the life cycle of a tree.

Why were we out there in the snow? So we could be ready for April and May! Now that spring has arrived in full glory of petals and pollen, children’s docents lead programs on an almost daily basis. Back on those snowy winter walks through the Gardens, they may have questioned the commitment they were making. But when we hear comments from students like, “I’ll never look at a flower the same way again” or “I wish we could go to school here every day,” I hope the days of cold and snow are easily forgotten.

Photos by Hope Wilder, Education Program Assistant

GOINGS ON

Duke Gardens is host to several independent groups that meet regularly on the premises. They welcome Gardens members and visitors to join them in learning more about horticulture. For the most up-to-date list, meeting schedule and fees of our Gardens Partners, visit https://gardens.duke.edu/learn/gardens-partners.

Durham County Beekeepers meets on the 3rd Monday of the month, from 6:30-9 p.m.

The Durham Garden Forum, an informal group coming together to enrich its members’ gardening knowledge and skill, meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Durham Photography Club at Duke Gardens meets on the 2nd Monday of the month 6:30-8 p.m.

N.C. Cooperative Extension Service: Durham County Center. The Durham County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will be in the Gardens several days a week in spring and fall to answer questions about plants, gardening, insect pests and disease.

Sarah P. Duke Ikebana International Chapter 264 is part of a worldwide organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and other countries through ikebana, the art of Japanese flower arrangements, and other related arts of Japan.

Triangle Orchid Society meets monthly at the Doris Duke Center at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month.
When asked to write about my perspective as a volunteer, I recalled my original “calling” to be a garden volunteer. In 1977, when transferred to Brooks AFB, TX, we joined a new church. One Sunday morning we walked into church to discover the sermon was on tithing. Being a young, cash-strapped captain in a new home, my limited budget came to mind. Fortunately the minister acknowledged that while some members could write a check, others were financially struggling. He pointed out that we all have talents and, if willing, he could find a task for us—be it cleaning the church before or after services, shelving books in the library, or helping him with yard work the next Saturday. He added that if there were no volunteers, he would need to hire a landscaping service to cut the grass and collect the leaves. Hence, our “calling.” The entire Prather family spent that next Saturday tithing our 10% by cutting the grass and collecting bags and bags of live oak leaves. Chuck is much like that minister: if you have a willingness to volunteer, he will find a task suitable for your talents. You could be a weed puller, an ambassador, a digger, etc. Just volunteer, and he will put you to good use.

My second epiphany came in the form of the best gardening advice I ever received. Shortly after I retired from the Air Force and moved to Chapel Hill, my wife Cheryl and I hired landscape architect Alicia Berry to help us with a vision for our new permanent home. Previously, our approach to landscaping was driven by the fact that we would be moving every 2-4 years, so we invested little in landscaping. Our new degraded woodland garden/stream had great promise, but where to start and what to plant? We were complete neophytes. Alicia’s advice: if you want to learn about gardening, volunteer in a garden. Cheryl (class of ’70) quickly decided that the Sarah P. Duke Gardens was the place. She started in the Blomquist with Ed Steffek, the former curator. My initial volunteer efforts were limited because I was still working. Ed and I had talked about various stone projects he wanted help with when I retired, but his untimely passing prevented those dreams from becoming a reality. Fortunately, along came Stefan Bloodworth, master horticulturist and stonemason. I have enjoyed helping Stefan, but just as important, I have learned from him. Recently, we’ve been working on a new stream. I never appreciated the artistic aspect of building a rock-filled stream until I watched Stefan at work. If I had placed the stones, they would have lined up like soldiers, all in a row. And I’m able to be a kid again, but instead of Tonka toys, it’s a real backhoe. Although they don’t let me operate the equipment, I do get to adjust the straps and coordinate the placement of 1- to 2-ton stones as Stefan places them in the creek. And some 45 years after my steel design final exam at NCSU, I actually got to help place my first steel beam for the new bridge (with lots of supervision).
ART AND NATURE: ARTWORK INSPIRED BY THE HISTORIC GARDENS
By Rachel Weber

Ceramics by Sasha Bakaric

A visitor need only take a quick stroll through Duke Gardens to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature. For many local and regional artists, the Gardens serves as inspiration for their creative works. We celebrated these artists in the second annual Art and Nature Exhibit in March, featuring artwork inspired by the Terrace Gardens, the Butterfly Garden and the Perennial Allée.

Horticulture has roots in both science and art. From a scientist's perspective, accurate observation and communication is the cornerstone of successful horticulture. At one time all scientists drew often highly detailed renderings to record the specific features of a plant, where it grew, and what grew alongside it. From the artist's point of view, design abilities and compositional skills are needed to create beautiful gardens.

The exhibit included two- and three-dimensional pieces in both representational and abstract styles, showcasing a diversity of subjects and media, and highlighting the varied connections these artists have to the Gardens. Some 40 works from 20 local artists were on display.

One of the exhibiting artists was North Carolina native William Alberti, a member of the American Society of Botanical Artists. As a botanical illustrator, Alberti loves the native and exotic plants in the Gardens. But what he is most inspired by is the hardscaping of Duke Gardens--what he calls the Gardens' "bones."

"The bones of the Gardens create a structure for renewal," says Alberti, who was also part of the inaugural exhibit. "Every year things change, all the flowers change, but the bones kind of stay the same." Alberti added that he was excited that this year's exhibit was open longer so that more members of the community could enjoy the display.

Blue Heron & Water Lilies by Kathryn DeMarco

Artist Ippy Patterson called the exhibit energizing and democratic, "a diversity of artists and media and viewers together in a beautiful room celebrating nature's flora."

The week-long exhibition opened with an artists reception, giving us all the opportunity to meet with the artists, discuss their works and share our love for the Gardens.

Rachel Weber is a junior at Duke, majoring in Public Policy with a certificate in Energy and Environment.
BEYOND PLANTS: Handrails
by Ellen Levine

The plantings and landscape design of Duke Gardens are so compelling, it is easy to miss the human-made structures and artifacts that are, indeed, abundant. I decided to walk the Gardens with an eye less on the natural world and more on works of human design and craft. This article is the first of an occasional feature in The Dirt highlighting these other garden treasures. I invite volunteers to tell us what inspires you.

If your appreciation of handrails, like mine, did not go much beyond utility, visit the Gardens, where utility is animated by nature to create art.

I was first struck by the handrails up to the Doris Duke Center from the parking lot (front and back), created from powder coated metal by Greensboro metal artist Jim Gallucci and installed in about 2006. The sinuous shapes and aqua color integrate into the plantings to be a functional element that fits almost seamlessly into the natural setting.

This curvilinear shape continues with the handrails down the steps into the Rose Garden (powder coated stainless steel), created by Cedar Bluff, Va., metal artist Marc Maiorana. Standing apart, independent from nature, and painted black, these rails project a graceful strength. They present the perfect visual counterpoint to the variegated pastels of the Tennessee Crab Orchard flagstone.

Moving into the Historic Gardens, down the pergola steps into the Terraces and up to the Frances P. Rollins Overlook, we are met with more traditional notions of handrails: classical forms and finishes. They fit perfectly with the Italianate-style landscape design. The pergola rails are original, with iron pickets and bronze top cap. The overlook rails were made by Jim Gallucci to mimic those at the pergola.
The Blomquist Garden of Native Plants offers a magnificent blending of the natural world with the utilitarian, thanks to the creativity, design and skill of curator Stefan Bloodworth. He designed handrails that combine the beautiful with the wild, while providing safety and support on the many steps that traverse the space. The words organic and alive come to mind. The wood of long-dead red cedar trees was harvested from Stefan’s family’s farm in northern Durham County. The Gardens’ Annabel Renwick, Michael Patrick, and summer intern Alex Nesbitt helped with the sanding and finishing; metal anchors were fabricated by Storybook Metal Shop. They were installed 2012-2014.

In the Asiatic Arboretum, handrails fit both the plantings and design, and they are effective symbols of the space. The railings of the Japanese-style arched bridge combine a graceful simplicity with dramatic color to announce the Asian aesthetic from the dam. The bronze lotus flower bud finials cap the posts to complete the picture. The bridge was designed in 1992 by Raleigh landscape architects Hayter, Reynolds and Jewell and built from southern yellow pine by C. T. Wilson Co.; finials (“giboshi”) were imported from Japan.

A more subtle railing, using bamboo that is prevalent throughout, is that of the small bridge above the Japanese iris collection, approaching the Durham-Toyama Sister Cities Pavilion and Garden. The straight lines and simplicity almost disappear into the the environment, while guiding visitors to the tea house. It was designed and built in 2014 by arboretum staff.

Heading back to the Doris Duke Center, as I made my way across the ravine in the Spring Woodland Garden, the naturalistic handrails up the steps to the path were, again, the perfect complement to the environment. They were crafted by Jim Gallucci from metal with acrylic, shaped and painted in the French faux bois style to simulate tree limbs.

These handrails offer a mere taste of what human talent can do to meet functional needs in an artistic way, when inspired by a place such as Duke Gardens. As you walk about, try to tear your eyes away from Mother Nature and discover and enjoy these creations.

Photos by Ellen Levine
It’s open!

McNabb Family Bridge and Stream
Blomquist Garden of Native Plants
*Photo by Rick Fisher*

Kudos to Gardens Staff

Doris Duke Center Gardens curator **Jason Holmes** appears in the upcoming Uptone Pictures film *Union Bound*, based on the diaries of Sgt. Joseph Hoover, a Union soldier captured in 1864 at the Battle of the Wilderness and taken to the notorious Andersonville camp. Hoover escaped and made it back to Union lines with the aid of slaves through the Underground Railroad. Film release is scheduled for fall 2015. In addition to his Duke Gardens gig, Jason is a Civil War reenactor and resident expert on the war. He shared his passion with us at the Tuesday Talks in November, where we had the opportunity to sample corn bread (pretty good) and hard tack (not so good). More information: [http://www.uptonepictures.com/films.html](http://www.uptonepictures.com/films.html).

In case you missed it, **Chuck Hemric**, director of volunteer services and our esteemed leader, was featured in the February/March 2015 issue of *Working@Duke*, as an employee who “exemplifies a Coach K teamwork fundamental.” While recognized specifically for engendering trust among his troops (us!), Chuck also exemplifies the other four Coach K fundamentals: communication, collective responsibility, caring and pride. He’s the whole package! Congratulations, Chuck. Read the article at [http://today.duke.edu/showcase/coachklessons](http://today.duke.edu/showcase/coachklessons).

**Ambassador on the Information Desk**

By Ellen Levine

With the winter hiatus of the Ambassador Program, I hung up my green vest and picked up a shift on the information desk. What a revelation! I gained much new knowledge and discovered a wealth of visitor resources regarding the Gardens, university, Durham, dining, transportation, Nasher... I could go on. I now have more to offer interested visitors as I resume my gigs at the Gothic Gate and the Blomquist.

And it’s fun to greet those die-hards who come to the Gardens on 25 degree days. I recommend the experience to all. Chuck is always looking for substitutes, so you can try it out without a long-term commitment. And for an information desk veteran’s many-years reflections, see the feature on Rose Boyarsky in the current issue of *Flora*.
Triangle Gardeners Volunteer Recognition

On May 12, Sarah P. Duke Gardens hosted the 2015 Triangle Gardeners Volunteer Recognition: *Inspiring Growth* event. This event gathers and honors the volunteers who so willingly give of their time and talents to support each garden. It also enabled us to show off Duke Gardens and showcase the talents, creativity and commitment of the curators, horticulturists and volunteers. In all, some 120 volunteers and staff attended.

This year marked the third such collaboration between the JC Raulston Arboretum, Juniper Level Botanic Garden, North Carolina Botanical Garden and Duke Gardens. It provided a great opportunity for volunteers of each Triangle garden to learn anew or enhance their current skills and make new friends. Regardless of which garden we come from, we are all kindred spirits in the plant world.

The program contained a variety of tours and workshops. Morning tours included “The History of the Gardens,” “The Role of Women in Creating Duke Gardens,” “Sustainable Gardening Practices,” and “The Asiatic Arboretum.” At lunch, attendees were treated to an inspiring keynote by education program coordinator Kavanah Anderson, whose topic “Nature at Your Service” was enthusiastically received. The afternoon offered concurrent workshops with a corresponding theme to earlier tours.

A personal reflection came from Susan Kosempa, who participated in the historical themed tour and workshop. “I learned a lot of historical facts and lore about Duke Gardens,” she said. “I also learned how history has impacted garden design and how those influences are on display at Duke Gardens. This knowledge will be helpful in my role at the information desk as I greet visitors to the Gardens.”

Mother Nature cooperated with a delightful sunny day. Informal feedback (i.e., overheard comments) confirmed what we all know: Duke Gardens is a special place of which we can all be proud.

We are grateful for the support of area businesses who donated items for this event: Dunkin’ Donuts, Bruegger’s Bagels, Burt’s Bees, and Durham Coca-Cola.

*Photos by Bob Ayers*
Duke Performances has announced its 2015 summertime concert series in Sarah P. Duke Gardens, where concertgoers enjoy picnic dinners and music in one of the most beautiful places we know, the lawn behind the Doris Duke Center.

Now in its eighth year, the series, which runs from June 3 through July 29, features North Carolina-inspired Americana, Piedmont blues, Appalachian harmonies and bluegrass.

“We’re offering world-class music in a setting that almost could not be more beautiful,” Duke Performances executive director Aaron Greenwald said in an interview with Duke Today.

An added attraction: musician Phil Cook is the son of a Gardens volunteer!

Mark you calendars!

| June 3   | Mipso                      |
| June 10  | Music Maker Revue: Cool John Ferguson with Sam Frazier, Jr. |
| June 17  | Dom Flemons Trio           |
| June 22 - 24 | Phil Cook’s Southland Revue: 3- Day Event  |
|           | - Trials, Troubles and Heartache |
|           | - Are You Ready for the Jubilee? |
|           | - Introducing ‘Southland Mission’ |

| July 1   | Laurelyn Dossett           |
| July 8   | Alice Gerrard and Rayna Gellert   |
| July 15  | Music Maker Revue: Boo Hanks, John Dee Holeman, Ironing Board Sam & Williette Hinton |
| July 22  | Diali Cissokho & Kaira Ba    |
| July 29  | Music Maker Revue: Pat "Mother Blues" Cohen & Big Ron Hunter |

For additional program and ticket information, go to https://dukeperformances.duke.edu/calendar/music-in-the-gardens
The Dirt
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