



Gardens that inspire

WARBLER

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

HAPPENINGS AT WING HAVEN

Join us outside this spring!

Music in the Garden

Wednesday April 21

Wander With Wine

Friday April 30

Gardeners' Garden Tour

Saturday - Sunday May 1-2

Tea Time in the Garden

Sunday May 16

Roses & Rosé

Friday June 11

Details and tickets online at winghavengardens.org.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BALANCED WITH COMMUNITY USE

Susan Little Evans, Development Director

Fifty years ago, Elizabeth and Eddie Clarkson left in our care a very personal, quiet and inspirational few acres—Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary. We are challenged with promoting this garden for the public to enjoy, but also preserving the quality with a fine balance of public use and wildlife garden.

Then and now, the mission for this property is to:

- ▶ Keep the historic design and plantings of the garden
- ▶ Limit the garden's use and always being sensitive to its size and the fact that it is a wildlife sanctuary
- ▶ Provide a sanctuary for birds and an example of the value of and need for conserving wildlife, its habitat and natural resources in an urban setting
- ▶ Make available, to individuals of all ages and small groups, an enriching, peaceful, educational environment for year-round study of nature, ornithology, botany and garden design, and
- ▶ Continue and expand the focus on organic gardening, not only in practice but in our educational endeavors.

The goals for the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden, owned by Wing Haven since 2008, are not very dissimilar but uniquely dedicated to this nationally significant "experimental" all-season garden of the internationally celebrated garden writer, gardener and landscape architect. Here we are guided by a conservation easement held by the Garden Conservancy in our work to manage this botanically diverse, dynamic and historic Southern garden.

The mission of this property is to:

- ▶ Preserve and promote the legacy of Elizabeth Lawrence
- ▶ Manage the property as the personal, intimate expression of Elizabeth Lawrence, and as she envisioned and intended
- ▶ Create a place for the celebration and study of plants, horticulture, garden writing and design, and
- ▶ Inspire future generations of gardeners, writers, horticulturists and landscape designers through preservation and interpretation.

Your support helps to carry on the legacies of these two extraordinary women. Thank you for joining us in celebration of the natural world and our unique gardens' missions.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Well Rooted in Our Past

Happy Spring to you all! It is hard to believe it has been a year with the pandemic. If there is a silver lining to the profound challenges of the past year, it is the way the Wing Haven community has worked together. Board, donors, staff and volunteers have worked with purpose and shared goals of goodwill, creativity, resolve, cooperation, strategic planning and a positive spirit.

Time outdoors has been a welcome escape and offered healing to many. Wing Haven has been able to offer both during these extraordinary times. Our commitment to be a resource for the community has resulted in countless opportunities to extend generosity and kindness—carrying on the Wing Haven legacy of Southern hospitality in new and meaningful ways.

Through creativity and resourcefulness, we have been able to open to the public, offer programming both in person and on new virtual platforms that allow us to engage audiences across the United

States. Looking forward, we are excited about the coming months and hope to return to our normal schedule of events and programs. We will continue to work to strengthen our partnerships, tend to the gardens and provide a place of respite for all.

As I reflect on a year filled with uncertainty, Wing Haven is deeply grateful for the support we have received from so many.

With much appreciation,



Barrett Sloan Ranson
Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE

2021 WING HAVEN SYMPOSIUM

Wednesday, November 3 -

Thursday, November 4

NURSERY NOTES

Reavis Thornton, Head Gardener, Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary

Even with all COVID has dealt us, we stay busy at Wing Haven. In the nursery, last spring's online plant sale showed us that you are still working in your gardens, and willing to support us by shopping a bit differently for plants. Thank you! We took your enthusiasm and, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, we rescued, propagated and acquired all the wonderful plants that were sold at our fall sale, which was in-person by appointment only. This spring's plant sale, **April 13-17**, will follow that same model and promises to be even bigger and better!



PHOTO: CHRISTINE MCCLUSKEY

"I have enjoyed Wing Haven for years but regarding the Wellness Mornings, I think it is a brilliant idea! For us, in particular, to be able to go to the garden early and enjoy a walking meditation together has been priceless. It feels like church to us. ... Both of us have enjoyed walking slowly and sharing our observations of the plants and flowers that [in the past] we've mostly rushed by. We've also been able to enjoy observing the work that goes into maintaining the gardens and the awesome job you all are doing there. The gardens, as you know, are a priceless part of Charlotte and I am so fortunate to live near them."

- Marty & Bob Claus, Wing Haven members and Wellness Wednesday visitors

In the fall of 2020, Wing Haven began offering open hours on Wednesdays from 8-10 a.m. in response to requests for quiet healing time away from life's worries at Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary.

BRINGING COLORFUL PLANTINGS BACK

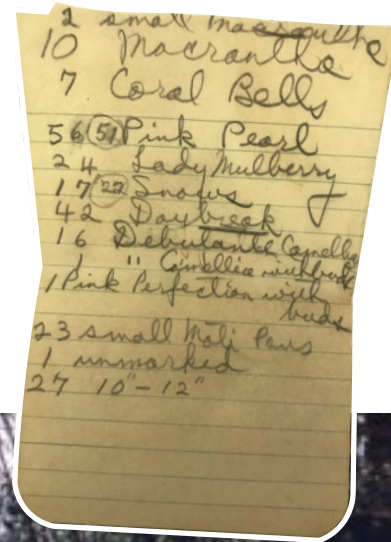
Reavis Thornton, Head Gardener, Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary

In the Clarksons' garden, a lot of our focus has been on rehabilitating the Lower Garden. We want to see the garden through Elizabeth Clarkson's eyes and how she created it. It is also important to understand the time period in order to put the garden into context. Research has turned up old slides and documents that are helping us with original placement of many azaleas that Elizabeth planted in the Lower Garden. From her handwritten list titled "Camellias + Azaleas from Furr + Fruitland, Fall '48", we know she planted *Rhododendron kaempferi*, 'Pink Pearl', *R. poukhanense*, 'Coral Bells', 'Daybreak', 'Macrantha' (pink single), 'Samite' (white macrantha), 'George Franc', Furr's Lavender, 'Mati Pan' ['Matapan'], and 'Snow'. As azaleas usually have a 40 to 50 year lifespan, and with changes in growing conditions over time, most of the original plants are no longer here. We have already purchased 'Pink Pearl', 'Snow', and 'Coral Bells' to put back, and are looking into sources for the other varieties. Our goal is to recreate plantings as close as possible to what Elizabeth Clarkson saw and intended. With the reinstatement of the azaleas it will be a much more colorful spring garden.

The slides are also helping with the location of original trees. Much of the garden was filled with pines, which would have been much more to the liking of the azaleas and camellias by providing high

shade and acidic soil. There were also many dogwoods. We reinstated ten dogwoods to the Lower Garden this past fall, which will help define the outer edges of the lower vista.

Also in the Lower Garden, a large, diseased "volunteer" elm was removed, as well as a later-planted crepe myrtle, which has opened up the vista—as it was originally—letting in much needed light and air. We look forward to seeing the garden more as Elizabeth created it.



Research of old photographs, documents and slides has turned up some interesting views. One page of Elizabeth Clarkson's handwritten list of azaleas and camellias purchased from Furr's and Fruitland Nurseries in the fall of 1948 shows the quantity and cultivar names. This photograph of the Lower Garden, taken by Elizabeth Clarkson in April 1953, shows dozens of those azaleas seven years on, as well as hundreds of daffodils and tiny boxwood edging the vista. At the far end, a brilliant yellow cloud of what we think is *Kerria japonica* (yellow rose of Texas) blooms near the area where the Oval Pool will be built in eight years. It is interesting to note the ribbon across the path, which Elizabeth used to keep visitors from entering parts of the garden where birds were nesting. Today, we use chains for the same reason.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator, Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

As I write this, it is cold, windy and overcast—the cruel clutches of winter still evident in the browned tips of stalwart camellia blooms, bronzed foliage of nandina, and a thin layer of ice on the birdbath in Elizabeth Lawrence’s garden. And yet, when I look more closely, signs of spring are everywhere.

Just outside the front door, I am greeted daily by the Chinese witch hazel (*Hamamelis mollis* ‘Wisley Supreme’) and its fragrant, bright yellow, shredded flowers—“four threads of translucent gold caught in a wine-colored cup,” just as Elizabeth wrote in *Gardens in Winter*. Tucked here and there throughout the garden, patches of *Crocus tommasinianus* (tommies) push through mulched leaves like tiny lavender and silver exclamation points, waiting for the first kiss of sunlight to open wide their starry blooms—an invitation to adventuresome honeybees. The *Iris unguicularis* (Algerian iris) that I restored to the garden several years ago has never had so many blooms, or bloomed as long. This is a triumph—growing this iris well can be challenging, as it is not keen on our wet winters. I planted it very near the spot where Elizabeth had hers—protected from excess moisture under the eave at the front corner of the house. Removing fallen leaves of the neighboring willow oak from the top of the rhizome has helped deter rot and snails, although that task has needed to be done almost daily. I am more than happy to do it, in hopes of more blooms!

In the sunny borders just behind the house, foliage of the lady tulip, *Tulipa clusiana*, is well above ground, even though it will be at least

another four weeks until petals of red and white will open to reveal the dark eye within. In the back of the garden—what Elizabeth called “our woods”—*Galanthus elwesii* (Elwes’s snowdrop) has made a fine showing this season. The patch at the edge of the path beyond the pool has increased well—now a swath of glaucous foliage peppered with thin stems topped by nodding bells of pure white, regardless of dipping mercury.

Spring snowflakes have begun to bloom, and squills, hyacinths and daffodils are nosing up all over the garden, insisting that the bleakness of winter’s days are numbered, no matter what Punxsatawney Phil said. And Elizabeth’s rare and wonderful *Rhododendron simsii* var. *vittatum* (Sim’s azalea) has at least one new flower open today, with more buds coloring up. Even so, I find it interesting to note that nearly everything is blooming at least five days later this year than any of the past ten, according to my records. And many, but not all, are blooming later than Elizabeth’s records of thirty-five years. Although it would be wonderful to have more things in flower right now, I am not disappointed. In fact, I am further intrigued.

Hope springs eternal in this garden as it has for 72 years. In a garden—as in life—nothing is static. Part of the beauty I find in gardens year in and year out is the journey of them... the appreciation of what greets me today, and the anticipation of what is yet to come. What will next week, next month... and next winter bring? Stay tuned!



Clockwise from top left: *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* (Lent lily), planted in 1957, coming up in the “woods”; *Rhododendron simsii* var. *vittatum* (Sim’s azalea) planted in 1949; *Iris unguicularis* (Algerian iris), restored to the garden in 2016; *Narcissus* ‘Early Pearl’ (tazetta daffodil), planted in 2015, blooming in front of the house... all signs that spring is right around the corner.

“This was my first virtual Imbibe and Inspire. And I was inspired. I know most of the plants, and I’ve heard you speak of them before, but I never tire of your enthusiasm and knowledge. Thanks for keeping Elizabeth [Lawrence] alive!!”

- Robert Shore, Wing Haven member and virtual Imbibe & Inspire participant

CHILDREN & FAMILY EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Erin Welty, Education Coordinator

As Rachel Carson reminds us in *The Sense of Wonder* (1965), “[t]hose who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.” In this season of pandemic-induced isolation for so many, I am grateful that Wing Haven has been a source of connection, particularly for children and their families. Whether virtually or in-person in a safe outdoor setting, opportunities to connect with nature and with others through Wing Haven programs have proven popular and, I believe, much-needed. Let me share with you some of the highlights of the last twelve months.

The launch of weekly Budding Naturalists nature classes for Pre-K and Kindergarten students provided children with a special chance to get to know the natural world and build close friendships with their peers. In the words of one father, the classes were a “game-changer” for his two young sons, the older of whom was kept back from Kindergarten this school year due to the pandemic, and was struggling without the socialization he grew accustomed to in preschool. After piloting a short three-class series in Fall 2019, we responded to parent requests to continue the program with three more subsequent series in Fall 2020. In Spring 2020, we expanded our Budding Naturalists offerings to also offer classes for 1st-3rd grades and 4th-5th grades.

For the 2020-21 school year, we shifted our long-standing outreach initiative, Preschool Environmental Education Programs (PEEPs), to a virtual format to continue to engage under served preschool students despite the schools’ inability to visit the gardens during the pandemic. Thanks to generous grants from Truist, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated, PNC Financial Group Services and Mary and Tim Stokes, and the assistance of the PEEP’s volunteer team, we were able to prepare and deliver lesson supplies and a virtual video

lesson to a record-breaking 22 classrooms each month. To better serve the Spanish-speaking families of many of our PEEP’s students, all video lessons and materials were provided both in English and Spanish, expanding the potential for learning and engagement at home.

We saw evidence of families turning to nature and outdoor experiences more than ever before! Family programs and events, such as Story Time and More and the Homeschool Explorer Program, have flourished, and adjustments such as holding two programs per month instead of one have allowed us to maintain safe, smaller crowds while serving an expanding audience. A year ago, I would never have expected a December or January Story Time and More program to sell out – for outdoor programming like ours, winter tends to be a quieter season. And yet, the renewed interest in outdoor experiences in this season delivered programs operating at maximum capacity, even through the cold winter months.

The growing popularity of Camp Wing Haven came to a head in January 2021, when registration for summer camps sold out within an hour of opening. The eagerness—or, you could say, mad rush—of local families to participate in our summer camps is affirming of the hard work invested for decades by Wing Haven staff and volunteers to grow the reputation of Wing Haven as an educational resource for the community.

I am filled with gratitude for the incredible growth and energy that surrounds Wing Haven’s children and family programming, and I am sure that with your help, our impact will continue to expand. Thank you for your support of Wing Haven—support which empowers valuable experiences in nature for children and families from all walks of life.



Clockwise from top left:
Weekly Budding Naturalists classes included mixing up a bowl of “seed soup” to observe different seeds with our Sprouts class (Pre-K and Kindergarten students)!

A student at PEEP’s partner school The Learning Collaborative shows off the binoculars he crafted in his classroom as part of October’s virtual PEEP’s lesson.

Cold temperatures didn’t stop this participant in February’s “All About Nest Boxes” Homeschool Explorer Program from measuring, cutting, and assembling a true-to-form chickadee nest box prototype.

NATURE IS ESSENTIAL

Jill Goodrich, Director of Education & Outreach

A year ago, for only the second time in the Foundation's history, Wing Haven's gardens' gates closed to all guests. Although nature flourished behind closed gates, human presence was missing and, thereby we could not share the benefit of nature with the community. It was a time for staff to rethink how to deliver education and engage the public in the ever-increasing awareness of how important the natural world is to us all. Through creativity and determination, team members—staff and volunteers together—provided educational opportunities to children and adults through recorded garden tours, virtual learning experiences, and reimagined outdoor programs. Our “new normal” had begun.

Norms of outdoor exploration with groups of people proved difficult, albeit only temporarily, as Wing Haven supported and abided by public health guidelines and recommendations. Still, our gardens needed to be shared. Outdoor children's programming was the first to adapt with new safety protocols and adjusted methods of learning. Summer camps filled the gardens with laughter, even from beneath colorful face masks. Adult programs pivoted to recorded “Imbibe & Inspire” programs and live-stream “Nosh & Knowledge” lunch hour productions. Whereas, these programs used to have limited capacity, now in a virtual world, there is no limit. As a result, even more guests could “participate”—a silver lining of this pandemic. Program attendance has doubled and tripled with each passing month.

During the colder winter months, we have traditionally engaged with the community through our Lecture Series, and this year was no different... or was it? Indeed, it was! All programs in the series were offered virtually as Zoom webinars, providing live-stream presentations and interactive Q&A. Speakers “zoomed” from across the country—and one from across the pond!—as did dozens upon dozens of attendees. Again, without capacity limits, attendees all up and down the East Coast, throughout the Midwest, and even along the West Coast joined us to learn from garden writers, expert horticulturists, birding enthusiasts, landscape historians, brilliant botanists, and exciting ecologists—all increasing our knowledge of the need to care for our natural world and ourselves.

Senior Bird Walks recommenced in the fall, allowing attendees to safely enjoy the outdoors while visiting and seeking the many birds that reside or pass through our natural habitat gardens. A holiday floral arrangement workshop became an outdoor in-person event, and was offered virtually to at-home learners. This hybrid format of education provides endless opportunities for Wing Haven in the future.

The excitement of having the gardens open to enrich guest experiences fulfilled a need—a need to be outside for some, and, for others, that need to experience gardens through the use of technology and cutting-edge communication. As we received feedback and gratitude from program participants and guests, we became acutely aware of the crucial need to address a by-product of these uncertain times: mental health.

Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary has always been a place of respite for those who have needed it, and this was the time to remind people of that. “Wellness Wednesdays” began in the fall, providing early garden hours to adult guests who need or want sanctuary in nature. Some guests take a leisurely stroll or sit on a bench and others watch for birds when the garden is quiet—no programs and no hustle and bustle. During these early Wednesday hours, guests can utilize a self-guided mindfulness walk, thanks to our new partnership with the Charlotte Mindfulness Center; and, on the horizon, experiences such as Tai Chi and outdoor yoga are in the works. Recognizing the added burden and stress facing our frontline healthcare workers, Wing Haven partnered with Atrium Behavioral Health to provide complimentary garden access. Expansion of these types of partnerships will continue.

As spring unfolds, our education and outreach programs and events will take on a new look, a new feel, and a new purpose. It is a time for renewal—our senses will awaken and we will experience nature however we can, because it is, after all, essential.

“He brought so much more information than what I expected that I'm still absorbing it all. I am thrilled to have the recording as I want to go through it again. Thank you SO much!!!!”

- Virtual Lecture Series participant, speaking about “Nature's Best Hope” with Doug Tallamy

HELPFUL NEWS

Susan Little Evans, Development Director

We've been sharing this information with many supporters of Wing Haven, and they have found it incredibly helpful in how they think about giving to all of the causes they support. So I wanted to share it with you, in case it's useful to any of your giving!

This year, we are seeing an increase in people giving stock. Here's why:

Many people are realizing that this easy way of giving can save them money on two types of taxes—they avoid all capital gains taxes and get a full income tax deduction for the value of the stock. Did you know that you can save more than 50% of your gift in taxes this way?

A lot of folks are also surprised how easy it is—it can be just a few minutes, and people that do it once tend to prefer this method going forward.

Always check with your financial advisor for advice. I think you'll find this to be a valuable consideration in any of your giving.

ROOTS VOLUNTEERS

Stefanie Myer, Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator

“Help one another, there’s no time like the present and no present like the time.”

– James Durst

What an apt quote for 2020, the year like no other. When we reopened the gardens last summer, we did not know what the future of volunteering at Wing Haven would look like. Would our volunteers feel safe working in the gardens? What measures would we need to put in place to ensure safety?

To our relief but no one’s great surprise, our Roots Volunteers returned, slowly at first and then with more gusto. Those who safely could, stepped up—face masks donned and hands sanitized—and happily took on a few extra responsibilities for those who couldn’t. Although not every volunteer group has been able to return, those who have helped our staff devise creative solutions so that we could safely carry out certain events and programs within capacity limits and social distance guidelines.

Camp Wing Haven counselors and facilitators helped our Education team manage three successful camp sessions by keeping our campers masked up and entertained; our Nursery Volunteers pulled

off a challenging plant sale by using timed nursery entries (and even temporarily gave up the famous lunches!); a small number of Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden volunteers were able to continue assisting Andrea with her essential garden duties; and our hosts graciously welcomed visitors six feet apart outside the Clarkson House. These are just a few examples of the many ways volunteers have rallied together for Wing Haven during this year like no other.

Our volunteers didn’t have to be here, and yet here they were. I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again—our Roots Volunteers are the backbone of the Wing Haven Foundation. This was felt more so this year than in any recent years. We would not have been able to successfully proceed with as many programs as we did without them. We are proud and so humbled to have such committed volunteers who are truly passionate about our mission and the future of Wing Haven.

For those who weren’t able to volunteer with us in 2020, you were missed greatly and thought of often. We look forward to seeing everyone in the gardens once again soon!



BE SAFER OUTSIDE: WING HAVEN MEMBERSHIP

Susan Little Evans, Development Director

This year, resolve to get outdoors more. With a Wing Haven membership for yourself or someone you care about, you can plan more visits to our gardens, be inspired to create or improve your own garden or backyard habitat, learn to be a better birder, and more. Your membership helps preserve and enhance our gardens and programs, and in turn, we hope to encourage your passion for the natural world every day with:

- **Unlimited Admission** to Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary, SEED Wildlife & Children’s Garden, and the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden. Sign up online to visit often and stay “Safer Outside.” Experts say that if you are going to leave your home, it’s safer to be outside. And don’t let cold weather stop you from being active outdoors! Dress in layers, and protect your head, hands and feet. Then head outside for a winter stroll with a friend, an early morning bird watching session, or a children’s Story Time at Wing Haven, made toastier with blankets and outdoor heaters
- **Discounts!** Show your current membership card to receive a 10% discount at Blackhawk Garden Center, Campbell’s Greenhouses, Wild Birds Unlimited, Bird House on the Greenway, Wildology at Waverly, and Carolina Garden Systems. Then get to work on a Backyard Habitat designation or “Best Yard” award

- Speaking of best yard, members get **First Pick** and expert advice at our biannual Plant Sales (mark your calendar now for Members Only Days coming up April 13-14 for the Spring Plant Sale)
- **Free or Discounted Rates** on special Wing Haven programs, trips and events
- **Free Entry** to more than 300 additional gardens nationwide through the Reciprocal Admission Program
- **Access** to garden and bird experts, and more!

Join or renew today online or call the office 704.331.0664 and ask for Samantha to check on your membership status and renew by phone. Now more than ever, Wing Haven is here for you. See you outside!





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Charlotte, NC 28209
winghavengardens.org

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*Cultivating sanctuary in nature,
environmental stewardship and the
legacy of Southern horticulture*

OPEN HOURS:

Wednesday - Saturday 10 - 12 & 1 - 3*

**by online reservation only; see winghavengardens.org for details.*



Wing Haven is supported, in part, with funding from ASC.

WING HAVEN STAFF

- Barrett Sloan Ranson**
Executive Director
- Susan Little Evans**
Development Director
- Beth Gilbert**
Development Support
- Samantha Wagner**
Office Administrator
- Reavis Thornton**
*Head Gardener,
Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary*
- Damou Sako**
*Gardener,
Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary*
- Dawn De La Torre**
*Gardener,
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- Andrea Sprott**
*Garden Curator,
Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden*
- Jill Goodrich**
Director of Education & Outreach
- Stefanie Myer**
Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator
- Sally Brown**
Wing Haven Host
- Beverly Pearson**
Weekend & After-Hours Host
- Lorraine Piephoff**
Accountant

THE BEST PLANT SALE IN CHARLOTTE

April 13-14 Members Only

April 15-17 Open to the Public

As our gardens awaken from the chill of winter, we're reminded that **spring is the perfect time for renewal**. Look no further than the Wing Haven Nursery for everything you need for a happy, healthy and refreshed garden! Shop from a choice selection of all kinds of plants suited to growing conditions in the Middle South, and confer with our knowledgeable volunteers.

Current Wing Haven members get first pick! Members will have an additional day to shop this time. Not a member? Join online at winghavengardens.org.

Shop for plants in person between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. by appointment only. **Look for sign-up and details in your mailbox soon.**

Our Plant Sales are an important source of revenue for our very special properties. Thank you to everyone who shops and/or volunteers with us. We appreciate your support!

CAPTURE YOUR MOMENTS HERE

Capture your perfect moment at Wing Haven! Timelessly beautiful in all seasons, our gardens offer breathtaking backdrops for your next family picture, engagement photography or bridal portrait. Full details on our website. To book your session, contact Office Administrator Samantha Wagner at 704.331.0664 x 101 or samantha@winghavengardens.org.



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