

## SPRING HAPPENINGS

Enjoy the beautiful weather in the gardens!

### Naturalist Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 1

### Spring Plant Sale

April 12 - Members Day  
April 13-15 - Public Days

### Backyard Gardening Workshop

Saturday, April 22

### Garden Tour Sip & See

Friday, April 28

### Gardeners' Garden Tour

Saturday, April 29  
Sunday, April 30

### Tea Time in the Garden

Sunday, May 7

Details and tickets online at  
[winghavengardens.org](http://winghavengardens.org).

## WHITE ROSE GARDEN REVIVAL IN MEMORY OF CECELIA DICKSON

Susan Little Evans, Development Director

*"...rest yourselves under the tree: and comfort ye your hearts."*

—Gen XVIII:4,5—From one of the historic Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary plaques

Friends of Cecelia Seddinger Dickson, an avid gardener, longtime Wing Haven volunteer, Auxiliary President (1993-1994) and Foundation Board Member (2002-2009), recently joined together to honor her memory with gifts to rehabilitate the White Rose Garden in the historic Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary.

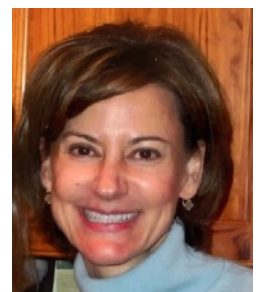
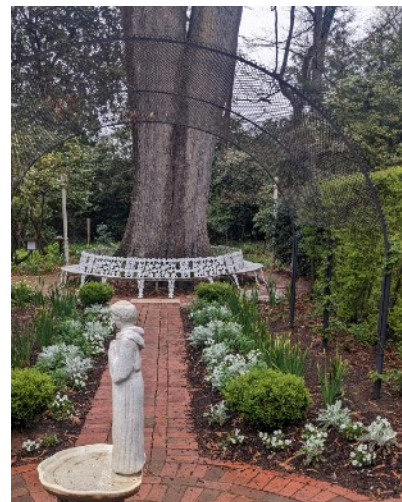
When Elizabeth and Eddie Clarkson moved into their home at 248 Ridgewood Avenue in 1927, one small oak sapling stood alone in a field of red clay. It took their shared vision and determination over four decades to create the 3+ acres of formal and wooded garden from what was, at the beginning, cleared former farm lowlands.

Originally, this area of respite around that willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) and behind what was their garage, was planted with antique, hybrid perpetual, old

garden rose 'Frau Karl Druschki' climbing on cedar arbors. The White Rose Garden was a favorite spot for the couple to sit on a bench, entertain guests, or rest in their wide hammock. The St. Francis bird bath, a favorite of bathing robins and thirsty bees, is a centerpiece of this garden room and punctuates the impressive garden vista along the long Kagawa path.

Over the years, the White Rose Garden furnishings had been replaced with white-flowering plants including a border of white sasanqua Camellias (*Camellia sasanqua* 'Setsugekka'), three white Camellias (*Camellia x vernalis* 'Dawn'), hybrid lenten roses (*Helleborus x ericsmithii* 'Champion'), white-berried nandina, Japanese anemones (*Anemone x hybrida*)—all of which are represented today.

CONTINUED INSIDE



Cecelia Seddinger Dickson

The White Rose Garden in the mid 1980s (far left). The Clarksons held many family gatherings in this area over the years.

Recreated rose arbor and new plantings in the White Rose Garden today (left).

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring is in the air at Wing Haven! We are thrilled to announce the addition of Michael Sheek as Garden Curator of Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary and the SEED Wildlife & Children's Garden. He along with Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator at the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden, manage the gardens that make up Wing Haven today.

We are also excited to welcome Sarah Tanke as our full-time Development & Office Associate, and to announce the promotions of Andrea Funk to full-time Director of Education & Community Engagement and David Sullivan to full-time Gardener of Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary.

The staff at Wing Haven enjoy sharing with all who enter the garden gates, the fruits of Elizabeth Clarkson's and Elizabeth Lawrence's work decades later. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to preserve the facilities and gardens for all to enjoy and learn. Bridging the past with future generations and sharing their legacy is

important work as greenspace becomes more and more scarce in this growing city and surrounding areas.

As you read this edition of the *Warbler*, I hope you will be inspired and eager to participate in all this Charlotte treasure has to offer. If being a part of the work that takes place at Wing Haven appeals to you, there are many volunteer opportunities. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more. Happy spring to you all. We hope to see you soon and often.

Barrett Sloan Ranson  
Executive Director



Michael Sheek



Sarah Tanke



Andrea Funk



David Sullivan

## WHITE ROSE GARDEN REVIVAL *Continued from front page*

One original "Frau Karl Druschki" rose remains on the arbor between the White Rose Garden and the Main Garden and is described by Elizabeth Clarkson in her notes as descended from the 'Victor Verdier' rose.

Cecelia passed away in June of 2021. She was a truly special person and will be forever remembered as kind-hearted, generous and thoughtful. Friends who miss Cecelia dearly and wanted a place to honor her memory together made gifts to restore the White Rose Garden at Wing Haven. With these gifts, we were able to install new custom-made metal arches—to better stand the test of time—planted with Rosa 'White Dawn', a large-flowered climbing rose. The roses are now surrounded by annual underplantings of white violas and dusty miller in the fall, and white begonias, Silver Falls plant, and white caladiums in the late spring.

This area of the garden is a favored spot for visitors to photograph an engagement, capture a bridal portrait or other special memory. Often, I will catch small children, couples or families resting underneath the willow oak, sitting on the massive tree's ever-expanding white metal bench, quietly enjoying this intimate garden. The view invites contemplation and offers respite from our busy world.

All who wander through this part of the garden or view the abundance of white blooms from the wide glass french doors of the Elizabeth "Pepper" Dowd Education Building will appreciate its renewed beauty... and Cecelia's friends will remember her kind spirit and soul.



*Pictured left: The original 'Frau Karl Druschki' climbing rose.*



*Friends of Cecelia celebrate her life with a reception in the Main Garden and a tour of the White Rose Garden.*

# GET INSPIRED DURING OUR GARDENERS' GARDEN TOUR

On Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30, Wing Haven will host the 29th annual Gardeners' Garden Tour. This year's tour features Wing Haven's three gardens as well as four private gardens—three located in the Elizabeth neighborhood and one in Eastover. This self-guided event is sure to delight with a variety of garden designs—from a little slice of heaven filled with rhododendron and mountain laurel to a four-generation garden pruned and cared for with love to honor the garden's historic roots.

Garden Tour tickets are good for both days, and you can visit each garden in the order of your choosing. Advance tickets are \$30 and can be purchased online or at Blackhawk Hardware. During tour hours, tickets can be purchased at will-call (248 Ridgewood Avenue) for \$35. All tickets are non-refundable and benefit the preservation and programs of Wing Haven.

Learn more at [winghavengardens.org/calendar](http://winghavengardens.org/calendar).



*Geranium oxonianum 'Claridge Druce'*

## NATURE IS FOR EVERYONE

Wing Haven is pleased to announce that we have joined Museums for All and renewed our participation in Blue Star Museums.

Museums for All is a signature access program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), administered by the Association of Children's Museums (ACM), to encourage people of all backgrounds to visit museums, gardens and cultural sites regularly. Through this program, those receiving food assistance (SNAP) benefits can gain free general admission to Wing Haven with the presentation of a SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Museums for All is part of Wing Haven's broad commitment to seek, include and welcome all audiences. Similar free and reduced admission is available to eligible members of the public at more than 850 museums and gardens across the country. Learn more on their website at [museums4all.org](http://museums4all.org).

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and museums and cultural sites across America. Through the Blue Star Museums program, Wing Haven offers free general admission to the nation's active-duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Visit their website for the full list of participating Blue Star Museums at [bluestarfam.org](http://bluestarfam.org).



## GARDENERS' GARDEN TOUR SPONSORS

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GARDEN CENTER

SILVER



BRONZE



PARTNER



SIP & SEE TITLE SPONSOR



GARRETT P. NELSON  
STUDIO  
*creating home*

## THE RETURNING OF AN OLD FRIEND

Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator, Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

The iconic photograph of Elizabeth Lawrence standing at her garden gate features a *Clematis armandii*, or evergreen clematis. Elizabeth wrote of it many times. From her *Charlotte Observer* article "Which Gardener Are You?" published March 21, 1961, she wrote, "As to foliage, *C. armandii* is the handsomest evergreen vine that I grow...". In her article of December 12, 1965, she tells of its potential vigor. "The most beautiful evergreen vine for the South is *Clematis armandii*, but it makes tremendous growth and needs a strong support and plenty of room. Mine is on an arch over the garden gate where it has to be hacked at continually to keep it from closing the entrance, even then most people have to duck to get through. Like the rest of the genus, it has a way of suddenly wilting when it is in its prime. They say this can be prevented by deep planting... Plants from containers may grow to ten or twelve feet in one year and bloom the second season. The foliage is handsome at all seasons, and in March or April there is a profusion of large fragrant white flowers."

Elizabeth's original evergreen clematis suddenly wilted many, many years ago. Lindie Wilson, previous owner and savior of Elizabeth's property, reinstated one on a larger support near the front corner of the house. That one had to be removed in early 2010 to make some repairs to the house. When I started working here in November of that same year, there was talk of reinstating the vine to the arch over the garden gate. Admittedly, I resisted, citing Elizabeth's foreboding words from the article quoted above, and envisioned endless hours of maintenance to keep the vine from swallowing the garden gate, its small arch, and the bamboo grove beyond. I had seen it happen in other gardens; the evergreen clematis can become a bit of a monster.



For years I searched for a suitable alternative. I grew annual vines, but they never seemed to be what the space needed, and I never seemed to plant them out early enough to reach their full potential. In 2018, I found a newly discovered (therefore new to cultivation), smaller-growing, winter-blooming evergreen clematis. It seemed to be the perfect solution, as it was said to grow to an ultimate height of 15 feet. It was lovely and interesting, but it just wasn't the same. Its leaves were smaller, lighter green, and semi-evergreen. Although I think Elizabeth would have loved the fact that it was winter-blooming, its flowers had no fragrance. I held out hope that it would eventually create at least a similar feel to the space. Sadly, after just a few years, it suddenly wilted.

The past couple of springs, I have felt a longing for the fragrance of a *Clematis armandii* in the garden. The weird thing is, I have had a vine on-hand for a few years, just waiting for me to find the right spot for it. Well, I finally did. It isn't much to behold at this moment, as it has been installed for only a day as I write this, but immediately after planting it, I felt a sense of relief. The evergreen clematis has returned home. No matter the maintenance it may require in the future, it will be good to be greeted by an old friend at Elizabeth Lawrence's entry gate once again.

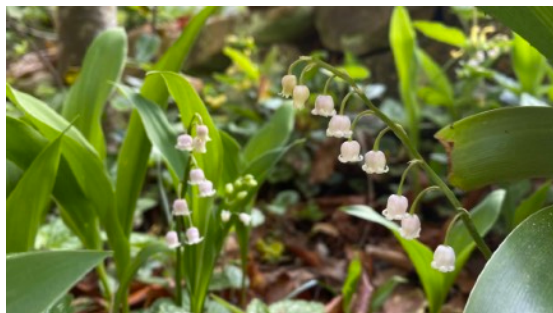
Historic photo of Elizabeth Lawrence at the Garden Gate courtesy of the Charlotte Observer Collection at the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room.

The newly reinstated *Clematis armandii* vine on the gate into Lawrence's garden.



# GARDEN WORTHY GEMS

Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator of the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden



*Convallaria majalis* var. *rosea*  
pink Lily-of-the-valley

“I saw the pink flowered kind in Mrs. French’s garden this spring, the dainty bells flushed with the palest tint. This variety does not seem to spread very much, for her aunt sent it to her thirty-five years ago, and she still has only a small patch—though I am sure that it has been divided many times with other gardeners.”

*Charlotte Observer*  
July 10, 1960

Elizabeth Lawrence planted this wonderfully fragrant spring-blooming rhizomatous perennial in 1961, where it grew for decades in the shade of a cherry laurel below her studio window. The ailing cherry laurel was replaced in 2010, yet this tough ground cover continued to thrive in full sun as if nothing had changed. It still grows in that very same spot, more than 60 years on, in the shade of the “new” cherry laurel. It blooms most reliably in mid-April.



*Helenium* ‘Tijuana Brass’  
Helen’s flower

“During the last of August, the heleniums begin to bloom gaily even under the most adverse conditions. Very tall and erect, they do not have to be staked, nor do they take up more than their allotted space. The large flowerheads of bright daisies are attractive in the border, and very useful for cutting.”

“Perennials Suitable for the Mid-South”  
originally published in *House & Garden*  
July 1936

*Helenium* ‘Tijuana Brass’ was planted in 2017 in the lower border. From the first time this native perennial bloomed, it has been a cheerful and bright face in the lower border. Growth begins in early spring, with flowering stems topping out at around three feet, which do require minor staking in this garden. Helen’s flower blooms come at a time when the garden (and the garden curator!) is feeling the draining effects of heat and humidity that mid to late August brings in the mid-South. The luminous 2-inch yellow flowers create a haven for pollinators and visitors alike, happily bridging the summer and fall seasons, continuing on until late fall.



*Leucothoe* [syn. *Agarista*] *populifolia*  
dog laurel

“*Leucothoe populifolia*...adapts itself perfectly to dry shady situations, and is one of the best evergreens in my garden, where it is a shrub to six or eight feet with an equal spread. In late May the slender arching branches are crowded with cylindrical flowers that look like tiny milk-glass bottles beneath the neat double rows of narrow acuminate leaves. The shrub is sometimes called pipewood because the hollow stems are used for pipestems.”

“Some Trees and Shrubs of the Southeast”  
*The American Horticultural Magazine*, October 1964

Elizabeth’s original shrub, planted in the fall of 1954, still blooms in her garden every May, although in the early part of the month instead of the end. Its flowers are fragrant—something of honey and vanilla—and their scent fills the back of the garden. A bit larger now than it was when she wrote about it in 1964, the dog laurel is still one of the best evergreens in her garden. Find it just past the pool in the area she called the “woods”.

## The Great Backyard Bird Count

We welcomed over 250 citizen scientists in this year’s Great Backyard Bird Count, a world-wide event organized by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. Wing Haven participated on Friday, February 17 and Monday, February 20 this year, and visitors reported 41 different bird species! All sightings were uploaded into eBird, a tool managed by the Cornell Lab that tracks bird migration and conservation.

American Crow	Carolina Chickadee	Fish Crow	Purple Finch	Turkey Vulture
American Goldfinch	Carolina Wren	Hermit Thrush	Red-bellied Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch
American Robin	Chipping Sparrow	House Finch	Red-breasted Nuthatch	White-throated Sparrow
Baltimore Oriole	Cooper’s Hawk	House Sparrow	Red-shouldered Hawk	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Barred Owl	Dark-eyed Junco	Mourning Dove	Red-tailed Hawk	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black and White Warbler	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal	Red-winged Blackbird	
Brown Thrasher	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Mockingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Brown-headed Cowbird	Eastern Phoebe	Northern Pintail	Song Sparrow	
Brown-headed Nuthatch	Eastern Towhee	Pine Warbler	Tufted Titmouse	

Special thanks to Mecklenburg Audubon Society who provided knowledgeable volunteers for this event, enhancing participant experience with guided bird walks and species identification. The most common bird spotted again this year was the Northern Cardinal, North Carolina’s state bird!

For more information:

The Great Backyard Bird Count - [gbbc.birdcount.org](http://gbbc.birdcount.org)  
Mecklenburg Audubon Society - [meckbirds.org](http://meckbirds.org)



# CELEBRATING THE RETURN OF IN-PERSON PEEPS CLASSES

Tracey Roode, Education Coordinator

You may have noticed there are a lot more little smiling faces in the SEED Wildlife & Children's Garden these mornings. That is because our Preschool Environmental Education Program, or PEEPs, is back in-person for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. PEEPs was started in 1997 and is the longest running outreach program here at Wing Haven. When the pandemic began, our Education staff and volunteers worked together to transition the program to a virtual platform by creating engaging educational videos, translating lessons to Spanish as needed, and assembling creative classroom kits to be delivered each month.

Although I have enjoyed carrying on the coordination of the virtual aspect of this program, I have been waiting for the day our PEEPs preschoolers could return to the gardens since I took on the role of Education Coordinator two years ago! That day finally came this past September when we were able to offer monthly virtual and in-person program format options for our 23 participating classrooms at four child development centers and preschools. This school year, with the support of generous grants from Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated, Bojangles Foundation and the Fig Tree Fund, and with the guidance of our dedicated PEEPs volunteers, children have learned all about Wing Haven, the Clarksons, and everything nature! We have gone on garden hunts for leaves, squirrels and their messy nests, and birds - real and plush; and have expressed ourselves through creative nature-inspired art projects such as marbling paper with paint and acorns, making elaborate leaf crowns, and creating collaborative classroom garden murals.

We have so many more fun and educational nature activities planned for the littles this spring! We will go on bug hunts and dig for worms (did you know worms have five hearts?!), learn all about fish, frogs and polliwogs, and release goldfish in the garden's pools.

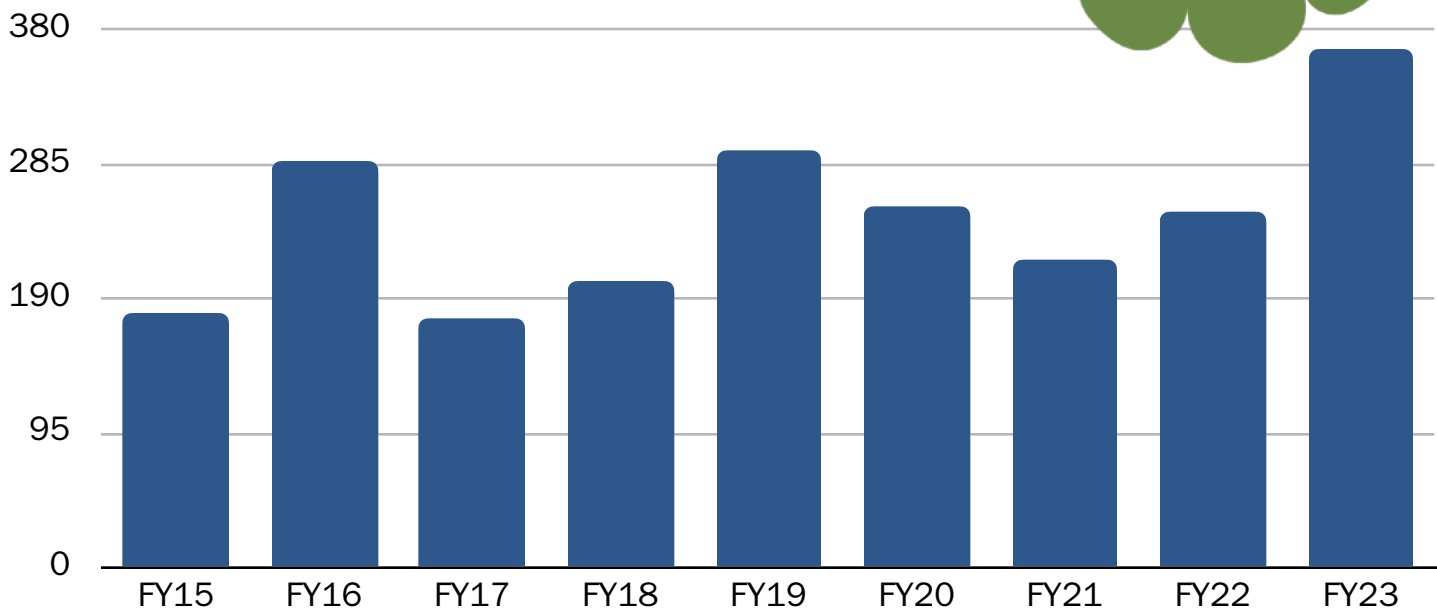
It has been such a special experience for all involved in this program to get to know the children this year, and to see their smiles light up the gardens once again.



One of our recent PEEPs classes were blown away when they saw "Archimedes", Wing Haven's resident barred owl perched high above in a holly tree.

366 children in 23 classrooms from 4 schools currently participate either in-person or virtually each month

## TOTAL PRESCHOOLERS SERVED EACH MONTH THROUGH PEEPS (FY15-FY23)



PEEPs was started more than 25 years ago, and serves children ages 3-5 attending MECK Pre-K and NC Pre-K programs at child development centers and preschools in Charlotte. Students learn all about the natural world through books, creative art projects, outdoor hands-on exploration, and more!

# GREAT GROUPS!

Andrea Funk, Director of Education & Community Engagement

Throughout the summer and fall of 2022, we had the help of a myriad of corporate and nonprofit groups who came and shared their time and talents in the gardens. Members of these groups raked, pulled weeds, cleaned the nursery, swept paths, planted herbs and perennials, deadheaded plants, trimmed bamboo, and moved mulch and gravel. Special thanks to:

- ▶ **The Junior League of Charlotte** provided more than 40 members to volunteer in November. Along with a generous grant, the Junior League also provides volunteers to help with our PEEPs and Nest Explorers outreach programs on a regular basis throughout the fall and spring.
- ▶ **Wells Fargo** (below left) sent volunteer teams from two different workgroups at the end of August. Members of these groups helped prepare the Nursery building and grounds for the Fall Plant Sale. Teams from Wells Fargo are slated to come help during the spring of 2023 as well.
- ▶ A group from **Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Carolinas Realty-SouthPark** (middle picture) volunteered in September,

working in the Main Garden and in the Clarkson Home Front Garden.

- ▶ **J.T. Williams Secondary Montessori** helped the education team prepare for fall and winter programs. One hundred students volunteered over four separate days in October and November.
- ▶ High school students from **Providence Day School** (below right) help in the gardens with a variety of projects between September and May with the guidance of Foundation Board Member and teacher Ian Kutner.

If you are interested in bringing a group of volunteers to the garden to explore and help please contact Andrea Funk, Director of Education & Community Engagement by email [roots@winghavengardens.org](mailto:roots@winghavengardens.org) or phone 704.331.0664 ext. 120.



# SAVE THE DATE

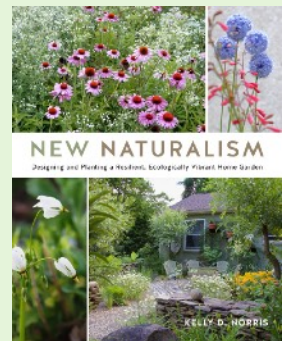
## WING HAVEN'S FALL SYMPOSIUM

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19

Enjoy the national perspectives of leading horticulturist and award-winning author **Mr. Kelly D. Norris** speaking on the "New Naturalism" and a presentation and live demonstrations by the renowned floral designer **Mr. Michael Walter** of Lexington Gardens during a half-day coffee greet, book signing, symposium and luncheon at the Charlotte Country Club.

Individual Tickets \$150. Sponsorships available. Read more on our website.

Presented by



# WING HAVEN FOUNDATION



260 Ridgewood Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28209  
[winghavengardens.org](http://winghavengardens.org)

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

OPEN HOURS: WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY 10 - 5



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**Infusion Fund**  
A Partnership for Arts + Culture



Wing Haven is supported, in part, by the Infusion Fund and its generous donors.

## CHARLOTTE'S BEST PLANT SALE

### Spring Plant Sale

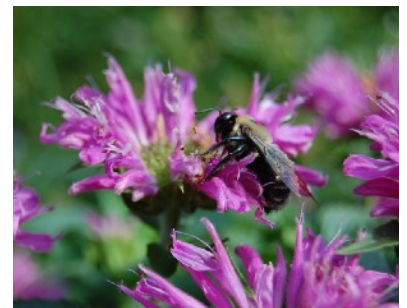
**MEMBERS DAY** April 12  
**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** April 13-15

**Spring is the perfect time to plant bee-loving blooms.** 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 unique and tried & true plants suited to growing conditions in the Middle South, hand-picked by our knowledgeable volunteers.

**Current Wing Haven members get first pick!** Not a member? Join or renew online at [winghavengardens.org](http://winghavengardens.org).

Shop for plants in person between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily

*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!*



## BOOK YOUR NEXT EVENT OR MEETING AT THE GARDENS



Conveniently located in the heart of Myers Park and close to Uptown, Wing Haven is the ideal place to host your event, whether you're planning a party, business meeting, company retreat, or baby/bridal shower. See our website for full details.

To book our venue, contact Development & Office Associate Sarah Tanke at 704.331.0664 x 101 or [sarah@winghavengardens.org](mailto:sarah@winghavengardens.org).

*The recently renovated Elizabeth "Pepper" Dowd Education building can accommodate up to 50 guests and is equipped with two Samsung TVs available for screencasting.*

WING HAVEN STAFF

Barrett Sloan Ranson  
*Executive Director*

Susan Little Evans  
*Development Director*

Ellen Baesel  
*Office Manager*

Andrea Funk  
*Director of Education & Community Engagement*

Beth Gilbert  
*Development Assistant*

Sarah Tanke  
*Development & Office Associate*

Stefanie Myer  
*Marketing Coordinator*

Tracey Roode  
*Education Coordinator*

Andrea Sprott  
*Garden Curator,  
Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden*

Michael Sheek  
*Garden Curator,  
Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary*

Damou Sako  
*Gardener,  
Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary*

David Sullivan  
*Gardener,  
Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary*

Amy Poole  
*Admissions Host*

Janet Porto  
*Admissions Host*

Beverly Pearson  
*After-Hours Host*

Lorraine Piephoff  
*Accountant*