

# The Clod-Hopper



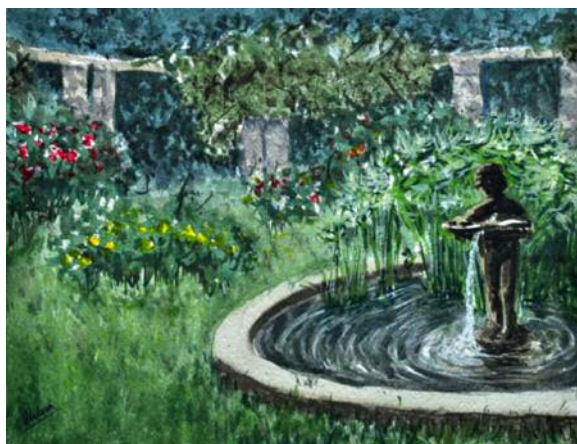
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JULY 2015

## INTEGRATION OF ART AND GARDENS: Raleigh Little Theater/Rose Garden/Amphitheater

– Laine Thomas

We discovered the Raleigh Rose Garden long before we were gardeners ourselves. If you are students at NCSU, the Rose Garden is something you stumble upon while driving around looking for parking or walking to your car. The garden is sunken down about 2 stories below street level. It is such a surprise when you don't know to expect it. The grounds include 60 beds with 56 varieties of roses presented by the All American Rose Society, paths, fountains and a stone pergola. On one end is an outdoor amphitheater that looks as if it belongs in Athens, Greece. The formal indoor theater sits adjacent. Recently, the outdoor venues have had a busy schedule of events. We attended a concert by The Connells in the amphitheater and a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Rose Garden. The artistic pieces were excellent,



[www.TeshParekhArt.com](http://www.TeshParekhArt.com)

as was the opportunity to experience the garden over the course of an evening.

Viewing a garden side-by-side with performance art is a unique experience. It gives time for contemplation and for the environment change with the setting sun. The amphitheater is backed by large, old bald cypresses. They are the

best specimens that I've seen in Raleigh, with the exception of Pullen Park. Throughout an evening at the amphitheater we watched the sun set on the bald cypress, and the leaves go from fluorescent green to dark green. The performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was literally within the roses. We were seated between rows of roses and the actors moved

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## CLUB MEETINGS

Meetings are at 7:30pm at the JC Raulston Arboretum every 3rd Tuesday.

Next Meeting will be **July 21th** and feature a presentation by Charles Gilliam and his experience with Thailand Gardens.

On **August 17th** Dr. Dennis Werner from NCSU will discuss fragrant plants for your garden.

## WATERING SOLUTIONS

– Barbara Brown

If, like me, you have plantings too far from a water source, you're faced with the problem of how to keep those plants alive over a typical hot, dry North Carolina summer. My brother gave me an ingenious solution that I want to share with the Club.

You will need a five gallon bucket and a tire valve stem (tire dealers carry them). Buy the one with the long neck and have the shop remove the valve from the stem as it takes a special tool. Drill a hole in the side of the bucket close to the bottom. I found that a 1/2' drill bit is the

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### The Clod-Hopper

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For membership information or to change your address contact Barbara Brown, membership chairman at the address published in the membership directory.

Club Website:  
[www.gardenersofwakecounty.org](http://www.gardenersofwakecounty.org)

## INTEGRATION OF ART AND GARDENS *(continued from page 1)*

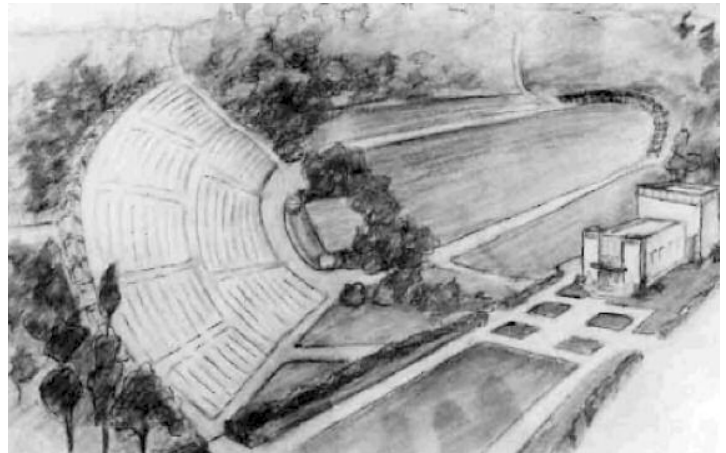
all around us. I kept wondering who was wearing a lovely perfume and then remembering it was natural. Towards the end of the evening fireflies flittered between the plants and around the distant pergola — an excellent supporting cast to the plot line about fairies.

The complex has a fascinating history. It is a designated historical landmark (see <http://rhdc.org/raleigh-little-theatre-amphitheater-rose-garden>) and the subject of a book by Guy Munger, now available online (<http://raleighlittletheatre.org/about/history/>). It is considered historically significant for its development in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration in North Carolina, which provided employment and created public works during the Depression. The location was originally a race track within the city fairgrounds. In 1939 the area was described as “an unsightly

clay pit that was a tangle of red mud and weeds ...” When the fairground was moved, the location became available to become the permanent home for a theater group known as the Federal Theater.

The overall concept for the theater, amphitheater and rose garden complex was the creation of Raleigh’s most accomplished architect of the period, William Henley Deitrick (best known for Broughton High School and the Raleigh Water Tower). Landscape architect R. J. Pearse designed the amphitheater and adjacent landscaping. According to the historic designation applica-

tion, “Groundbreaking for the Theatre was held in January of 1939... A lack of enthusiasm on the part of Durham WPA officials for the theatre building slowed its construction, but constant pressure from ... local officials pushed completion through in early fall, 1940.” A newspaper article in January, 1939 quoted Mrs. Grover Dill, chairman of the planting committee, as saying “State College foresters were combing Wake County woodlands for native trees to fill in the biggest spots in an arboretum designed by R.J. Pearse for the north end of the bowl. Local nurseries and garden clubs were solicited for donations of azaleas, roses and



bulbs... The Rose Garden was developed from the sunken garden area in 1948 with an original planting of 3,000 bushes.”

This is an incredible convergence of art, architecture and gardens. It is also an amazingly well-preserved piece of history. If you want to know more about the history, maneuvering and politics that went into making this happen, check out Guy Munger’s book. There are also a bunch of great pictures of the people involved and location from the 1930’s and 40’s. Visit the gardens anytime or check out the events at <http://raleighlittletheatre.org>.

## GROWING ZINNIAS

– Chris Elliott

I know Tony Avent says, “Friends shouldn’t let friends grow annuals,” but I have to make an exception for one of my favorite summer flowers, zinnias. They thrive in the moist hot weather of North Carolina and bloom from late May through the fall. Zinnias grow beautifully from seed. And there are lots of different varieties from which to choose: profuse little blossoms on plants that grow about 12 inches high to wonderful huge blooms on plants that grow three feet tall or more. They come in singles, doubles, pastels, brights, solids and variegated. I like to grow them all.

I planted my crop this year in mid-April. In one area I dug an eight foot curved trench about six inches deep through mulch and soil, then scattered a packet of large flowering seeds throughout. The trench makes watering easy when we don’t get enough rain. In another area I dug three 18" square beds through the mulch and soil and sprinkled two different kinds of seeds in them. Other than to monitor for moisture for the first few weeks, and water maturing plants during dry periods, I ignore them. I should thin them but don’t; though I have successfully transplanted some too snug plants to other areas of the garden needing color.



You can cut flowers for arrangements in the house, but I mostly enjoy them in the yard. I do dead head spent blooms. And about mid-summer I stake the tall plants to help support the stems as they get top heavy with blooms. Zinnias provide a lot of color for the effort. That’s why I make an exception to Tony’s advice and encourage you to give zinnias a try in your summer garden, too.



## WATERING SOLUTIONS *(continued from page 1)*

perfect size. Pull the valve stem through the hole (it should be a tight fit). The screw cap seals the stem while filling the bucket. Remove it after you’ve carried the bucket to the back forty and — voila! — you can deliver a slow stream of

water right to the roots of those valuable plants. I engineered four buckets this way and the four azaleas I bought at the GWC Azalea Sale thank me every day.



## FOUR O’CLOCKS

– Vivian Williamson

My second favorite plant in our yard is not a spectacular plant in the plant world, but is very special because of the story behind why it is in our yard. Thirty (30) years ago a teacher announced to her 4th grade class that there were to be no “teacher gifts” that year-end because she was giving “student gifts.” She created several weeks of anticipation with this announcement. This creative teacher spent the last 2 days of school (which we all know traditionally are not instructional days) with lesson plans around flowering plants — from seeds (how to plant) to seedlings in paper cups she had grown (with planting instructions) to flowering plants (complete with pictures). There were multiple plant varieties sent home in the paper cups. My daughter Tricia’s plant was Four O’Clocks and she came home excited to see this plant “grow up” in her yard (a kid who had never had any interest in our yard or any plants). The lesson continued into fall as the kids shared their stories and pictures of their plants when they regrouped the next school year and still garners attention from her as she makes sure they are up and doing well each year. We have thinned and moved these dark pink Four O’Clocks.

Four O’Clocks usually open from mid-afternoon, and remain open overnight, closing in the morning. They produce a strong, pleasant fragrance which attracts nocturnal pollinators such as long-tongued moths or hawk moths. On the following day, a new set of

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Change Service Requested

## **MONARDA SCARLETT**

– Vivian Williamson & Laine Thomas

**Vivian Williamson:** My favorite plant right now (and a big favorite of the hummingbird) is Monarda Scarlet bee balm. It sits just off our deck & is an attention-getting, showy clump of red flowers atop slender stems with a busy hummingbird enjoying the small tubular flower clusters most of the day. I have attached a picture. It is an easy to grow perennial, 3-4' tall, does well in 4.5 hours of sun from late morning to early afternoon which makes it ideal for our backyard spot.



**Laine Thomas:** I have to agree with Vivian! I also have Monarda Scarlet. I bought it a year ago and it has spread rapidly, despite being in poor, clay soil. It looks great! I have two giant clumps in the front yard. My mom loves it and wants some too, but it is hard to part with. I still don't feel as if I have enough I planted it near yellow Asiatic lilies and orange day lilies. They make a great combo.

## **FOUR O'CLOCKS** *(continued from page 3)*

flowers opens. They are often sold as annuals, but are actually perennials. Ours have been out there for 30 years. They die back in winter and regrow from the tubers. You can also move the tubers in early spring, as they grow to be very large. They also drop seeds freely which sprout. We weed them out if we don't like where they choose to grow. Four O'Clocks like a lot of everything, including a sun and a lot of nutrients. They are reported to prefer full sun; however, ours choose to grow in areas that get 4 hours, mostly morning, and none get all day or afternoon sun. Similarly, they are happy to be fertilized but we only fertilize once a year at best. I would consider them a "maintenance free" plant except for the weeding out new sprouts. The result is great! They flower throughout summer and fall, making it worth allocating some real estate in the sun. Watch out! They will take up a lot of real estate if you let them.

