



Spring 2013

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN VOLUNTEERS



Congratulations  
to these  
Volunteers Of the Month

January  
**Susan Slemenda**

February  
**Martina Dorn**

March  
**Bob Holmes**

Read their profiles on page 2.

On view for the first time in the United States!

# IMAGINARY WORLDS

PLANTS LARGER THAN LIFE

**Be enchanted by a magical garden**  
where cobras tower overhead, fish dance  
on water, and a giant goddess emerges from  
the earth. Hundreds of thousands of plants  
come together to form fantastic living  
sculptures in the first major exhibition by  
**International Mosaiculture of Montreal®**  
to be shown in the United States.

[atlantabotanicalgarden.org](http://atlantabotanicalgarden.org)

MOSAÏCULTURES  
INTERNATIONALES  
DE MONTRÉAL

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Read more about the *Imaginary Worlds* exhibit  
in the Garden Chat with Mary Pat on page 7.



# Meet the Volunteers of the Month

## January: Susan Slemenda

For the past two years, Susan Slemenda has logged over 200 volunteer hours as a GEM at the Botanical Garden. Tuesdays always find her in the Woodlands, pulling and trimming and planting. Every Friday, she is at the Garden again, this time in the perennial area. “The Garden staff members are such experts,” she confides, “that it is just an honor to be able to work alongside them and learn from them.”

Susan retired in 2007 after over thirty years as a researcher with the CDC. Soon afterward, she discovered the ABG and has been a “perennial” here ever since. A four-time member of the Centennial Club, Susan enjoys gardening at her home too, using that on-the-job training she’s picked up as a Garden volunteer. Cooking, reading and travels with her husband leave little time for anything else, but she has just discovered a new volunteer opportunity with Trees Atlanta Beltline Arboretum, where she’s training to be a docent. The Garden extends a special thank you to Susan Slemenda for her determined digging in the ABG dirt by naming her as the January Volunteer of the Month.



## February: Martina Dorn

When Martina Dorn and her family moved to Georgia in 2007, she quickly realized she knew nothing about gardening in the South. Determined to change that, she set about to learn all she could, and her quest soon led her to the Atlanta Botanical Garden. When she discovered ABG’s docent classes, she found a chance to combine her enjoyment of gardening and the outdoors with learning more about Southern gardening challenges and meeting new people. These days she leads adult tours regularly, sharing with visitors the beauty of the Garden and her newly acquired (and ever-growing) knowledge of gardening in the South. “I like to show people that there is always something blooming in Georgia and that you **can** transform a parking lot into an edible garden!” Martina’s interest in the outdoors (and in volunteering) goes beyond the Garden. In 2010, she became a certified interpretive guide and now leads nature hikes at Sweetwater State Park near Douglasville, walking tours of historic downtown Atlanta, and also volunteers at the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell.

The Garden is ever grateful that inquisitive Martina found her way to its gates and honors her as the February Volunteer of the Month.



## March: Bob Holmes

Native Atlantan Bob Holmes is a happy man when he is outdoors...hiking, camping, canoeing or at the Botanical Garden. On Thursday mornings, you’ll usually find him outside in the Conservation Garden at the Botanical Garden, happily weeding, watering, mulching, digging...whatever needs to be done. This (mostly) retired university administrator has also learned his way around the Sarracenia collection in the greenhouse and recently has also been lending a hand at the ABG’s Smithgall Woodland Garden in Gainesville. And then there are the Discovery Stations, where he and wife Penny Crump can often be found on weekends. Little wonder he is a Centennial Club member. As he tells it, he “had the good fortune” to meet Jenny, Ron and Matt of the Garden staff at the State Botanical Garden where he was participating in a Native Plant Certification program a couple of years ago. Later when a call went out for volunteers to work with them – and learn from them -- in the Conservation Garden, he knew he had found his niche. He’s been a regular and valued part of the volunteer corps since 2011.

The Botanical Garden is grateful for that chance meeting that brought Bob to the Garden and salutes him as March Volunteer of the Month.



# DOCENT DOINGS

By Paula White  
2013 Docent Chairman



When Josh asked if I would be willing to serve as docent chair this year, my first response was a resounding yes. Then he told me the job included four columns a year for **Digging In**. "About what?" I asked. "Anything," he said. While I am more than a tad daunted by this part of the job, I am going to give it a whirl.

Until we moved to Atlanta, I was largely a self-taught, solitary gardener. Expert help was not easily available, so I relied on books and reading for advice, information and design ideas. After our move, a gardener at the first nursery I visited told me that to be a successful gardener here meant that I had to volunteer at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. I became a volunteer four months later, and it changed my gardening life.

I have been amazed and gratified by the astonishing, prolific world of gardening resources opened up by the Garden. First and foremost is the garden staff. We all know that they are talented, smart, world class horticulturists, but they are also generous, considerate people who willingly answer questions, give advice, respond to an email, and show you the beauty of plants in new and unexpected ways. The joy of knowing these amazing horticulturists makes me want to pinch myself.

Docent field trips over the last few years have unwrapped yet another layer of gardening expertise, also eagerly and willingly shared. Just a few examples include our trip to the Georgia Perimeter College botanical garden where George Sanko, local fern expert, gave us a personal tour and vastly expanded our understanding of ferns and native woody specimens. Tom Cox, owner of Cox Arboretum, graciously shared a spring morning with us showing us his private collection of temperate flora and discussing many of the conifers he was growing. Dr. Armitage led a private tour of the UGA trial garden, joyously describing plants and urging us to take cuttings. Mike Francis, proprietor and grower at Maple Ridge nursery, devoted hours sharing his expert knowledge about this magnificent small tree (and I might add, addicted me to collecting them). I have only touched the surface, but you get the idea.

Finally, a daily source for gardening questions and ideas are the volunteers at the Garden. Docents and GEMs alike have inspired me, helped me, taken courses with me and given me plants. The richness of the botanical world in Atlanta is truly incomparable.

*Paula*

News from the Volunteers at

## Smithgall Woodland Garden



By Diane Korzeniewski

### What's New at Smithgall?

We've been sprucing up at Smithgall despite the spring's cold weather. In early April we spread pine straw .....with snow flurries coming down. That was a first for us! Caring for the tropicals in the nice warm hoop house was a coveted respite from the cold. By the time you read this they will be back home at ABG after spending their winter vacation in Gainesville.

We have also been propagating for the Smithgall booth at HCMG Spring Expo. In addition to tropicals and annuals we will be selling hard to find magnolias, hydrangeas and perennials. We are also selling a host of native azalea cultivars that we propagated.

Soon we will be visiting Cox Arboretum in Canton. Tom Cox and the Smithgall staff have shared plants a number of times in the last few years. Tom's specialty is conifers. His book **Landscaping with Conifers and Ginkgo for the Southeast** (coauthored with John Ruter) has just been published.

Drum roll, please..... Our big news is groundbreaking at Smithgall was held on April 17<sup>th</sup>!





# Digging Deeper: A Closer Look Inside the Garden

## GEMs Are Gems!

By Vicki Womack

On a chilly spring morning, with the Garden glowing with thousands of bulbs, a dozen or so GEMs were carefully deadheading tulips, pinching pansies and pruning parsley. They were kneeling, stretching, stooping and every single one was SMILING!

As ***Digging In*** discovered, the reason is not simply that gardening is good for both body and soul, it is that every GEM asked commented on how appreciated he or she felt by the staff. The sense of being valued for their work compensates for summer heat, bugs, and winter cold from working outside in Atlanta.

GEM is the amalgam for Garden Essential Maintenance, a group of fifty volunteers who assist the Horticulture Staff weekdays from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. with weeding, deadheading, pruning, mulching and other basic gardening tasks.

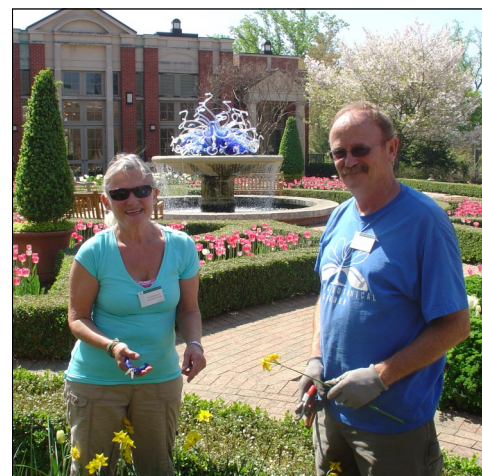
According to GEM coordinator Valerie VanSweden, the most gratifying aspect of working with them is that this group of individuals from very diverse backgrounds work so hard together for a meaningful common goal.

Among the enthusiastic GEMs ***Digging In*** met were the cheerful team of Pat Gianelloni and Agnes Miller-Landers grooming the Parterre Garden. The two have worked together for the past three years. Like most GEMs, they also volunteer in other departments—Agnes is a Docent, and Pat, a Master Gardener, chairs the Plant Hotline. Pat is a Kansas native who got to Atlanta by way of IBM. Agnes is from France, and found her way here from around the world through the Peace Corps.

GEM training is conducted three times yearly in spring, summer and autumn. GEMs play in the dirt one morning weekly, scheduled according to their preferences. Those interested in the GEM experience should contact Josh Todd, Volunteer Manager at [jtodd@atlantabotanicalgarden.org](mailto:jtodd@atlantabotanicalgarden.org).



Interested in digging in the Garden dirt as a GEM?  
Contact Josh Todd at  
[jtodd@atlantabotanicalgarden.org](mailto:jtodd@atlantabotanicalgarden.org)  
or 404-591-1548  
for more information.



GEMs Pat and Chuck (above)

(Below) Horticulture staffers  
and GEMs on a  
chilly April morning

(Below left) Pat and Agnes at work



## Meet the Garden Staff:

# Chris Kozarich: The Garden's Graphics Guru

By Josh Todd, Volunteer Manager

You've seen Chris Kozarich's work all around the Garden...and all around the city! Chris is the Garden's Design and Communications Manager. His responsibilities include all of the graphic design for ABG, including marketing creative print materials, banners and illustrations. He also oversees Summer Graves, the Garden's Digital Marketing Coordinator, on all website content and social media efforts. Chris designs the layout for the membership newsletter, *Clippings*, and also assists with getting the volunteer newsletter on the website.

An Atlanta native, Chris graduated from the University of Georgia with a BFA in Graphic Design. Before starting his career at the Garden over seven years ago, he worked for Scientific Games designing the familiar Georgia Scratch-off Lotto Tickets for two years.

"My favorite marketing piece to work on each year is *Cocktails in the Garden*," Chris explains. "It offers an opportunity to design a variety of different materials but keeps the same overall feel throughout the season." Chris has designed upwards of 30 unique posters for *Cocktails* over the past seven years, and it was the first thing he created at the Garden with his own stamp on it. "Among the Cocktail posters, *Moonlight and Moonshine* is probably my favorite. But really, I could say my favorite is whatever I am currently working on. This year, to accompany the *Imaginary Worlds* exhibition, we got creative with the monthly themes and came up with naming schemes like *Social Butterflies*, *Snakejuice* and *Hair of the Dog*, to name a few."

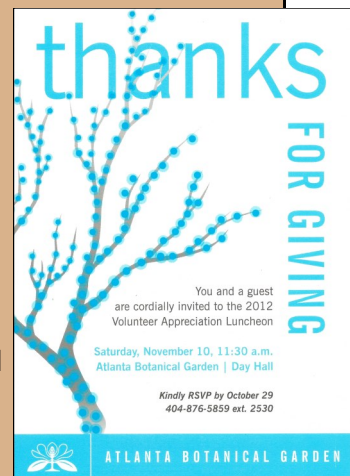
So far in 2013, Chris has designed marketing materials, including promotional posters and billboards, for *Atlanta Blooms* and *Orchid Daze*. Along with the rest of the Garden staff, April is all about *Imaginary Worlds*! You'll soon see Chris's 19-foot tall 3-D Cobra on a billboard at the Connector and 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

"This was an exciting project. I worked with consulting company Atomic Props on design ideas, picking out colors and plant samples for the billboard. This has been a challenging but exciting exhibit to market, mainly because each piece was being constructed and planted during our marketing deadlines. Nothing outside the Cobra existed, so we couldn't take pictures, and there is no prior imagery. It took a lot of Photoshop and imaginative efforts to create marketing from scratch."

We all look forward to seeing the design materials for *Imaginary Worlds* and *Cocktails*. And let's not forget that *Scarecrows in the Garden* and *Garden Lights* are just around the corner!



Chris' work is an integral part of the Garden's identity.





## Behind the Garden Gate: Staff Insights

### **The Aquatics Collection**

By Valerie VanSweden

The aquatics collection at ABG is a lovely bonus for visitors. Art exhibits, tulip explosions and gorgeous plantings get top billing, but the serene and varied water plants quietly wait to be discovered. Each aquatic display has a specific theme, but often plants will be used in two or more displays to create a cohesive look for the collection as a whole. Let's take an inside look at the Garden's collection.

#### **Aquatic Plant Pond**

The largest body of water is the Aquatic Plant Pond. Originally it was simply a retention pond for rain runoff from the rooftops of the Conservatory and Orchid Center. It has become the home of the bulk of our hardy water lily collection. The color range of the hardy cultivars goes from white to yellow and nearly red. Most of the lilies displayed were developed by three powerhouse plant breeders. Joseph LaTour-Marliac showcased his successes at the World's Fair in Paris in 1889 and captivated the imagination of Claude Monet. Kirk Strawn, a professor at the Texas A&M, picked up the water lily breeder baton and expanded the palette of hardy cultivars. Strawn's contemporary, Perry Slocum, bred hardy water lilies and lotuses in Florida and then Franklin, NC. Slocum's goals were vibrant colors, plentiful blooms and disease resistance.

#### **Tropical Water Lilies in the Conservatory Pool**

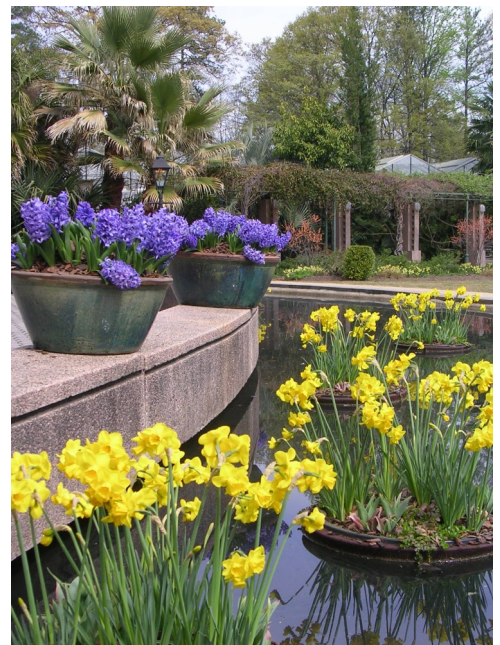
Our tropical water lily collection is fairly transient. Since these plants can't survive our cold winters (and it's not cost effective to overwinter them), we order fresh plants every spring. The tropical water lilies have a broader range of more saturated colors including blues and purples. The crowd-pleasing Victoria Lilies fall under the heading of tropical as well. These giants are from the Amazon River basin. Victoria Lilies and a few tropical lilies are night bloomers, which is a trait enjoyed by our visitors at evening events.

#### **Marginal Plants in the Potted Water Gardens**

Not every water garden is in a pond. Every spring, a series of potted water gardens are displayed to the left of the Aquatic Plant Pond. These illustrate what can be achieved through the use of waterproof containers and combinations of floating, shallow water and submerged plants.

#### **Edible Aquatics in the Edible Garden Aquatic Display**

A very small subset of aquatic plants is edible; thankfully they're also beautiful. American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) is an obvious choice for this display since all of its parts are edible. This display has also grown water chestnut (*Eleocharis dulcis*) and rice (*Oryza sativa* 'Red Dragon').



#### **Natives**

There are so many plants in North American wetlands that have ornamental value. We've incorporated some of these beauties into our plantings. American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) is the largest wildflower in North America, Melon Sword (*Echinodorus cordifolius*), Pickerel Weed (*Pontederia cordata*), various rushes (*Juncus* sp.), Arrowhead (*Sagittaria* sp.), Lizardtail (*Saururus cernuus*), Horsetail (*Equisetum hymale*) and Louisiana Iris adorn the Children's Garden Pond among other water features.

#### **Rarities**

A seedling of the Chinese Swamp Cypress (*Glyptostrobus pensilis*) was donated to the Aquatic Plant Pond years ago from our conservation greenhouse. It is the tall thin tree near the back side of the pond (pictured left). Chinese Swamp Cypress is extinct in the wild in China and are only grown in cultivation now. As with so many specimens here at ABG, rare and endangered plants are on display that might never be seen by the general public.

## A Garden Chat With

# Mary Pat

The Garden's Executive Director shares  
her vision and opinion



Josh asked me to write about *Imaginary Worlds*, providing you with an insider's view about how the exhibition came about and the thought process behind it. I enjoy reliving the advent of our collaboration with Mosaiculture International of Montreal; as I write, the fanciful pieces are being placed in the Garden and I've spent the better part of the day watching visitors and listening to their reaction. As one would expect, it's very positive and rather humorous. My favorite statement came from a young boy this afternoon as he caught a glimpse of the unicorn from afar. "Mom! It's an elephant made with nature!" he yelled to his mother and family. From an educator's perspective, I'm delighted that he got the *nature* right even if the unicorn was misidentified as an elephant.

My first introduction to the imaginative, spectacular works of Mosaiculture came in 2003 when the second exhibition was displayed on the waterfront in Montreal, with the theme *The Planet is a Mosaic*. I was smitten at first sight, though my introduction was through photographs, not an actual visit to Montreal. The scale, color, and sophistication of the individual pieces and scenes caught my attention. They truly had "pushed the boundaries of the mosaiculture art form," as stated on the website. You may not recall, but in 2003 we were talking with team Chihuly about a major exhibition here. I began to dream about getting Mosaiculture to Atlanta but couldn't image how, given the scale and fact that the exhibition had not traveled to any city beside Montreal.

Through the years, Mosaiculture has drifted back into my life as people sent images of shows in exotic places like Japan and China. The exhibition during the Beijing Olympics brought their work fully to our attention as several friends, members and donors sent photos from the internet asking if we might consider such a grand exhibit. Again, the idea was a distant fantasy as those exhibitions were international competitions with the participation of multiple countries, cities and the investment of millions of dollars.



Flash forward to January 2011 when a colleague and friend, Gilles Vincent, the Executive Director of the Montreal Botanical Garden, told me that the Mosaiculture International was interested in doing exhibitions at botanical gardens. We both agreed that it was a great idea and made plans to have Gilles and Lise Cormier, CEO of Mosaiculture International, visit us sometime in 2012. The rest, as they say, is history!

We agreed to do an exhibition in 2013 and began to consider themes and images that would be spectacular and fanciful. Cathleen Hunt, our exhibits manager at the time, came up with the idea to call the show *Imaginary Worlds* and that directed us to the fantasy creatures like the cobras, unicorn and dancing fish. The berries were conceived as a way to unite the *Imaginary Worlds* exhibit to the Edible Garden, our most popular outdoor garden. A cost/benefit analysis led me to decide that the considerable investment should have a lasting legacy. We chose to make Earth Goddess an iconic piece for the Cascade Garden by purchasing it as a part of this exhibition. All going well, she will welcome our visitors for years to come and surprise some with a transformation each winter to the Ice Queen.

We are now a few days away from the grand opening, installing the largest pieces, planting the gardens to enhance them, and adding the finishing touches with interpretation, a video and special photographic exhibit. We should have a robust year with great attendance and I look forward to more time in the Garden with visitors and the *oohs* and *ahhs* that are sure to come with such a magical exhibition. And best of all, this one is primarily made with plants!



## Concerts in the Garden 2013

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June 23  
Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo

June 28  
The B-52s

July 12  
The Carolina Chocolate Drops

July 19  
Boz Scaggs

July 26  
Lyle Lovett

August 9  
Mary Chapin Carpenter &  
Shawn Colvin

August 10  
Bruce Hornsby  
with special guest  
Railroad Earth

August 18  
Roger Hodgson:  
The Legendary Voice of  
Supertramp

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Make your plans now!  
Tickets are on sale to  
members only until April 26  
when they go on sale  
to the public.

Volunteer opportunities and  
shifts will be posted  
on Friday, May 3.

## Growing the Garden: Inside the Garden Associates

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The Associates Spring Forward  
By Tisa Moore

The Atlanta Botanical Garden Associates group is in the midst of a busy spring. Under their belt is Garden Envy, an auction of rare plants and garden treasures. This year's event was held on Thursday, April 4, at Mershon Hall. The second annual event raises funds for the Garden's Jitsuko Johnson Plant Explorer Fund, which supports the Garden's needs to travel, procure rare plant material and return it to the collection. The fund is named for the wife of Ozzie Johnson, a long-term collaborator and supporter of the Garden, with whom the Garden often works to obtain rare plants. This year's honorary chair was garden expert, writer, radio and television host Walter Reeves, "The Georgia Gardener."



*Garden Envy co-chairs  
Becky Wallis, left, and Tisa  
Moore, right, with this year's  
honorary chair Walter  
Reeves, center, at  
the April 4 event.*

The Gardens for Connoisseur's Tour this year features 11 of Atlanta's finest private gardens as well as a garden tour of the Atlanta Decorators' Show House and Gardens in collaboration with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. This year the gardens range from small (Greenville) to large (Heards Ferry) and old/historic (Boxwood House and Astrop) to new but established (Claire Rose Lane) and compact and inspirational (Noble Drive and 28th Street). Also on this year's itinerary is the garden of Ryan Gainey, who started the tour 29 years ago with Mary Wayne Dixon. For more information about this year's tour, see the Garden's website.

The Associates also have a spring luncheon and other activities upcoming. The Garden Associates volunteer for numerous other events throughout the year. They are a dynamic service organization that provides leadership, creative energy and support for important special events and fundraising initiatives. This diverse group has varied talents and interests, ranging from gardening, conservation and education to event planning, personal enrichment and "fun raising." There is always room for more folks in this group.

If you would like tickets to Connoisseur's Tour or are interested in the Associates, visit [www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org](http://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org).

"Digging In" is published for the volunteers and staff of the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

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