



ATHERTON GARDEN GUILD

Since 1966

Newsletter

March 2024

## Calendar

### Meetings

Board Meetings: 9: 00 am

Social: 9: 30 am

Meetings: 10: 00 am

*Meetings are on Mondays  
unless otherwise noted*

March 4

Suzanne Legallet

88 Selby Lane,

Atherton

Jennifer Dungan

*"Memories of an  
Extraordinary Garden"*

April 1

Garden in Portola Valley

875 Westridge Drive,

Portola Valley

Tour

May 6

Atherton Town Center

Dinkelspiel Ln. & Ashfield Rd.

Atherton

Tour

May 15

AGG Garden Tour

"Welcome to My Garden"

tour of 4 Private Gardens

12:30 pm to 4:30 pm

June 3

Rita Wachhorst

298 Park Lane

Atherton

*Mark Your Calendars*

**AGG Garden Tour**

**"Welcome to My Garden"**

**May 15, 2024**

**12:30 pm to 4:30 pm**

## *AGG Meeting · March 4*

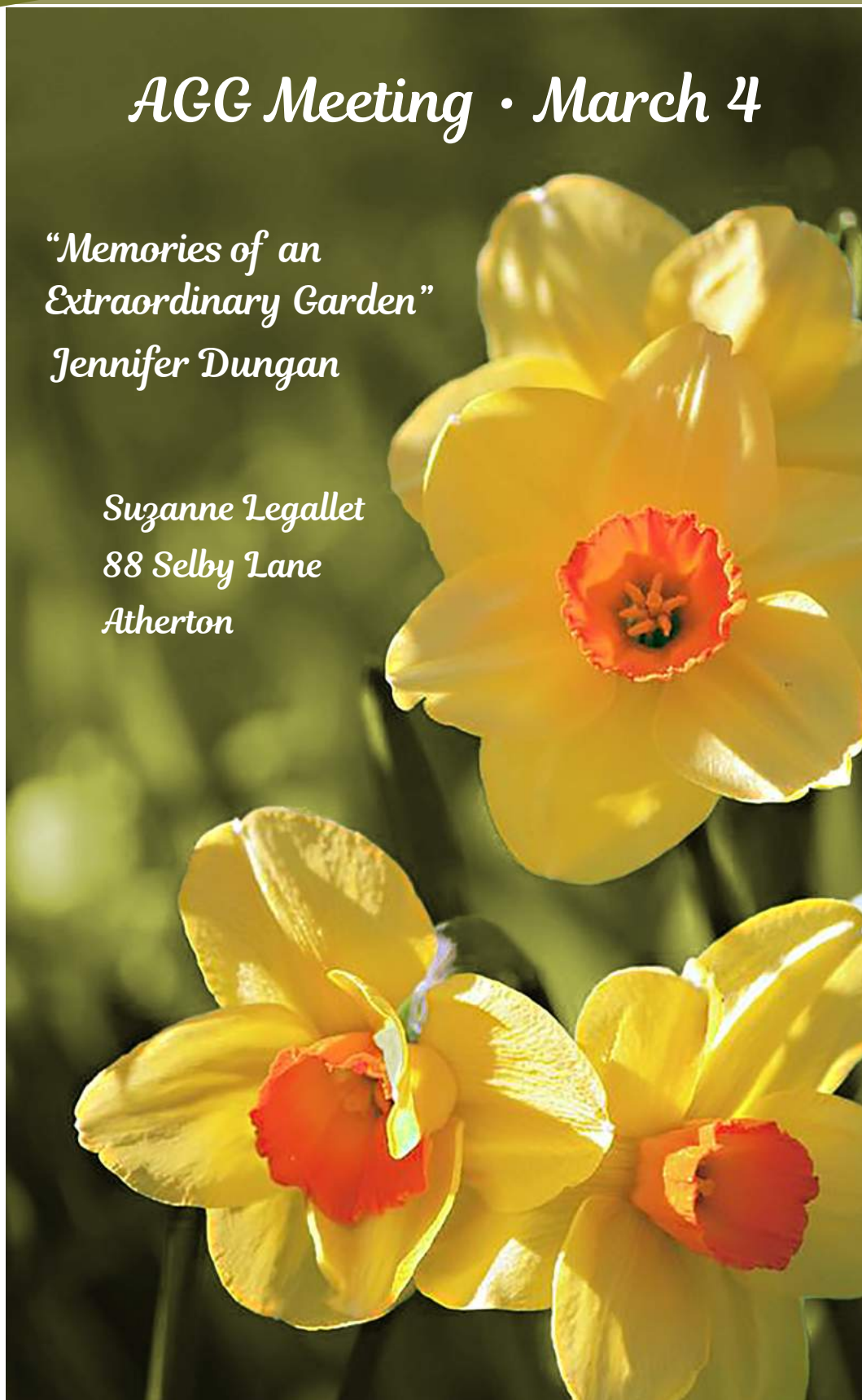
*"Memories of an  
Extraordinary Garden"*

*Jennifer Dungan*

*Suzanne Legallet*

*88 Selby Lane*

*Atherton*



# President's Message

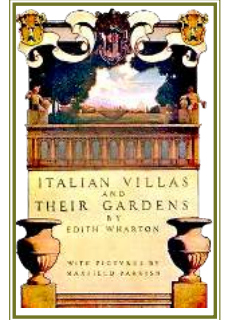
*"I'm a better Landscape gardener than a novelist, and this place (The Mount), every line of which is my own work, far surpasses The House of Mirth." Edith Wharton*



Dear AGG Members,

American novelist Edith Wharton was not only a brilliant beauty, a Pulitzer prize winner for fiction for her masterpiece novel "Age of Innocence," but she was also an extremely talented gardener. Among her thirty-eight published works, she wrote a gardening book entitled "Italian Villas and Their Gardens" in 1904.

Wharton explores over seventy-five Renaissance and Baroque period villas in this easy to read book, showcasing the intimate relationship between the house, its formal gardens, and the surrounding countryside. I can imagine Wharton visiting the gardens with her scholar's eye, reporting on the history and character of Italian garden, architecture and ornamental statuary, including busts in niches, curving steps, grottos, fountains, and vases.



The two elements of Italian gardens that Wharton especially liked were the pleached alleys that create a magical shady path leading to an extraordinary vista. She loved water theatres where water was pumped to the top and flowed down through various basins and intricate channels like the Villa Conti garden she showcases in the book.

Wharton took what she learned from Italian and French gardens and incorporated its ideas into her own garden at The Mount in Lenox, Massachusetts. Here she designed a sizeable French flower garden, a sunken Italian or walled garden, an alpine rock garden, a lime walk with 48 Linden trees and grass steps. Her gardens were an elegant series of outdoor rooms living harmoniously with the house and surrounding landscape. Her favorite flowers were reliable lilies, hydrangeas, delphinium, cleome, and dahlias. She lovingly described peonies as having "jolly round faces blooms."



She drew so much satisfaction from her garden work that she claimed she was better landscape gardener than a novelist. Today, the Mount is an historical landmark sitting on 198 acres and welcomes 50,000 visitors annually. Like Wharton's garden in The Mount that brought her much joy, I hope our next monthly meetings will leave you delighted, your spirits lifted, and encourage you to get in the garden. Come and enjoy Suzanne Legallet and Karen Handal's wonderful program on March 4th where Nancy Schram from Carmen's Nursery will sell bonsai starters, dwarf conifers, and unusual plants. Cash and credit card will be accepted. See you all at Suzanne's house. Happy gardening, *Patti*

*Save the Date*

## *Atherton Garden Guild Garden Tour*

**May 15, 2024**

### *Welcome to My Garden*

Enjoy touring four lovely gardens the afternoon of

Wednesday, May 15

12:30 pm - 4:30 pm

*This first-time private tour will feature the "Gardener's Garden."*

Tickets are \$40 each and are only sold by AGG members.

Members are asked to sell a minimum of four tickets and to staff a garden for two hours.

*The monies raised will be used for our donation fund.  
The more tickets sold, the more AGG will be able to  
donate to horticulturally and community related causes.*

*Suzanne Legallet*

# March Program

## MARCH MEETING PROGRAM CHANGE

### *“Memories of an Extraordinary Garden”*

Presented by Jennifer Dungan

Monday, March 4

*At the home of Suzanne Legallet • 88 Selby Lane, Atherton*



Jennifer Dungan will give us an interesting presentation about her mother's beautiful garden in Carmel Valley. The personal touch and beautiful images will make us wish we were there. Instead, we get a garden visit through pictures. Jen worked at NASA, Earth Science division, with an expertise on earth satellite photographs. She has authored or co-authored over 50 scientific papers.

Our scheduled speaker, Nancy Schramm, is unable to drive due to a broken elbow. Hopefully, she can join us next year to give a presentation about Carmen's Nursery and specialized plants. *Suzanne Legallet*



*Rena Rose*



*Clematis*



Atherton Garden Guild Proudly Presents

### **2024 Spring Floral Demonstrations**

*Our lineup features three of Atherton Garden Guild's top Floral Artists  
Open to all skill levels. Come and be inspired*

**First demonstration is March 6<sup>th</sup>**

Atherton Heritage Town Hall • 11:00 am to 11:45am

#### ***Joan Sanders, first presenter***

Atherton Garden Guild's past president, Joan Sanders, has been a flower arranger for almost 50 years. She studied under legendary floral designer Ron Morgan and well-known Peninsula floral teacher Virginia Farewell. Joan started the floral design program at Filoli Gardens.

*Learn how to assemble three very simple arrangements using the one, two, and three methods.*

#### ***Karen Handal, second presenter***

Karen Handal was a member of the Garden Club of Old Greenwich for 34 years and received awards in local and Connecticut state flower shows. She received a Certificate from the New York Botanical Garden Design Program, which helps you achieve your own aesthetic and master the mechanics for everything from simple bouquets to grand-scale arrangements.

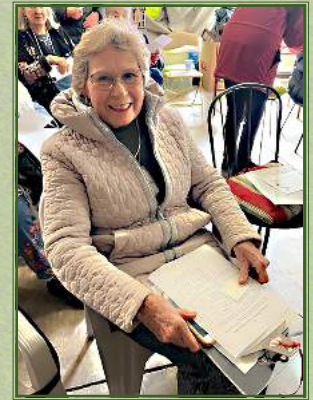
*Learn the importance of oval vintage containers and how they can embellish floral arrangements.*

#### ***Suellen Rottiers, third presenter***

Suellen Rottiers graduated from Filoli's Floral Design Program and was the Filoli house flower arranger for 18 years. She studied Ikebana for six years with Nancy Locke and presented at de Young Bouquets to Arts. Suellen is a floral arranger for Gamble Gardens House.

*Learn how to create a beautiful floral arrangement using spring plants.*

# February Meeting



# Horticulture Report

## AGG Horticulture Report

By Patti Spezzaferro

### March Master Gardener's Checklist

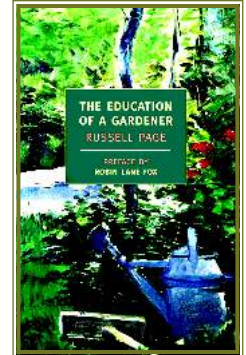
- Feed your garden with organic, all-purpose plant fertilizer.
- This is the best time to shop for rhododendrons and azaleas. Then, feed them after they have flowered with organic azalea/camellia/gardenia fertilizer.
- Continue to prepare planting beds for spring. Turn the soil and add at least 4 inches of compost. Test your soil for pH, nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, and add the appropriate fertilizer or supplement.
- If you planted fava beans as a cover crop in your garden, pull up the plants when half of the blooms have opened. This will give you the greatest return of nitrogen to your soil.
- Feed citrus trees this month with granular citrus fertilizer.
- Plant vegetable starts.
- Check the nurseries for blooming and budding annuals for spring.
- Plant gladiolus and dahlias for summer color.
- Consider planting companion plants to provide an environment that welcomes beneficial insects. Choose cosmos, marigolds, nasturtiums, sunflowers, and zinnias to attract bees.
- If you must water, do so early in the morning to prevent wet foliage at night. Wet foliage attracts snails and fungal diseases.

### Book of the Month

## The Education of a Gardener

By Russell Page

“Something of a classic, a manual on the art of the garden by a man who designed them for over 50 years, but also much more...” *The Times (London)* (Sean French)



A few years back the Atherton Garden Guild had Katsy Swan come and speak about garden design. She was the most generous and knowledgeable speaker. A real pro. She distributed to her audience a small packet of her favorite plants and books. The Education of a Gardener is on her list of favorite books. Russell Page, (1906-85) one of the legendary English gardeners and landscapers of the twentieth century designed gardens great and small for clients throughout the world. In his book, The Education of a Gardener, he puts together a painter's eye (his only formal training was in art) with an encyclopedic knowledge of horticulture to produce extraordinary gardens. He is most known for his formal classical French and Italian garden traditions. A book that needs to be in every gardener's library. Buy it on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



### Library Flowers

#### March

- 4 Mimi Hillyard
- 11 Rita Wachhorst
- 18 Martha Woollomes
- 25 Terri Bailard

### Hospitality

#### March

- Coordinator: Suzanne Legallet
- Sally Brudos
- Martha Woollomes

# Who's in Your Garden

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## Who's in Your Garden

by Patti Spezzaferr0



**Patti:** Which three historical or present gardeners would you invite to your dinner party?

**Martha:** I would invite my two grandmothers who had beautiful gardens. I grew up in Indianapolis and as a little girl I loved to wander in their gardens. I thought the snapdragons were magical. The roses were gorgeous and one garden was surrounded by profuse peony bushes. For the third dinner guest, I think that I might include Makoto Hagiwara, landscape designer responsible for developing the Japanese Tea Garden in the SF Botanical Gardens.

**Patti:** What is your greatest fear?

**Martha:** Last summer I suffered through numerous, serious leaks in my irrigation system. Consequently, I lost the front lawn because there was no water. I had to install a new irrigation system, I hope that I never see another leak.

**Patti:** What is your idea of perfect happiness?

**Martha:** Relaxing in my garden" tea house" with my three daughters sipping delicious tea and enjoying a lovely summer afternoon.

**Patti:** Which gardens are your favorites?

**Martha:** Such a hard question to answer. I loved visiting the impressive Huntington Botanical Gardens, saw some gorgeous gardens in the Cotswolds and enjoyed a fabulous dinner in the greenhouse of the largest private garden in Europe (Florence).

**Patti:** What have you learned recently about gardening that you wish to share?

**Martha:** Pam Smith told me about Kurapia a new ground cover she was researching. I decided to plant it in the area in front of my house instead of grass. Once established, it needs far less water than grass.

**Patti:** What is your favorite gardening product and why?

**Martha:** "Eleanor's VF -11" I have used it for years on house plants as well as in the garden. The fertilizer will be absorbed by the plants leaves as well as the roots. It is an all purpose fertilizes good for any plant. I use it every time I water the indoor plants.

**Patti:** What inspires you to garden?

**Martha:** It is great to be outdoors and so satisfying to see the plants grow and bloom. I especially love the roses. I also enjoy photographing the garden at different stages.

**Patti:** A motto by which you live by while gardening?

**Martha:** Do no harm.

**Patti:** What is your greatest extravagance?

**Martha:** Caring for a garden can be expensive both time-wise and monetarily (especially this past year). Other than the garden, the purchase of a new Apple Macbook Pro computer, and Jasmine White Tea Pearls from the Red Blossom Tea Company.

**Patti:** What does AGG mean to you?

**Martha:** Knowing the wonderful ladies in the group. I am inspired by the enthusiasm expressed for the various events and projects, and the knowledge, talents and graciousness of the AGG members. It is a joy to belong to the AGG!.

## Views of Martha's Garden



# Horticulture Page

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## Tulips

by Dr. Judith M. Taylor

*Dr. Taylor is a retired, Board-certified neurologist who now “practices history without a license.” She was born in England and educated at Oxford. Dr. Taylor is a noted author whose focus is on all aspects of horticulture. She has written seven books about gardeners, gardening, and horticulture.*



We are accustomed to seeing serried ranks of uniform vase shaped flowers marching across our parks and borders. One tulip on its own is a handsome flower but does not have the weight to sustain our concentrated gaze. It is the repetition of the same color which makes the display substantial. These tulips are almost always modern cultivars, bred for sturdiness, clear color and reliability. They do a wonderful job but they are only one facet of a phenomenal genus of plants.

For more than five hundred years this Eurasian bulb has exerted a powerful hold on the imagination of otherwise rather serious and staid individuals. The Flemish diplomat, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbeq, was the first European to pay attention to the flower he found in Turkey and send it home in 1554. Flanders was part of the Netherlands and that country very quickly became the epicenter of tulip production and commerce.

Most people have no idea that the flower originated somewhere else but almost everyone has heard of “Tulipomania”, the brief period in the late seventeenth century when the price of tulip bulbs spiraled out of control in northern Europe. There was a “bubble” when tulip bulbs sold for more than the price of a house. As one can imagine it all ended very badly.

When it comes to wild tulips, things get very interesting. The heavy symmetrical petals are nowhere to be seen. Exquisite pointed petals appear, lending immense appeal to one blossom at a time. The blossom can be bell shaped, on a short stem, just peeping out of the grass.

The distinguished Russian botanist Tatyana Shulkinina wrote a fascinating book about her travels over the length and breadth of the old Soviet Union seeking new wild plants that would lend themselves to commercial development. She made her journey in the late 1980s before, as she put it, “The USSR became 15 different countries, all at war with each other.”

In the southeastern part of the country, close to the Asian boundary, wild tulips were found all over mountain sides. Dr Shulkinina believes that there are many more still to be found if only it were possible to reach them.

The genus has four subgenera, each with several species of great variation. The pointed petals and varied colors appear in some of these groups. Cross breeding has led to very attractive commercial varieties including the Darwin tulip. Next time you feel like buying tulip bulbs consider all these delightful possibilities.

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*In the language of flowers, tulips symbolize perfect love and affection. The inherent meanings associated with tulips can change with the color of the bloom: red tulips represent true love, purple symbolizes royalty, yellow conveys cheerful thoughts, and white tulips signify forgiveness.*



*The Atherton Garden Guild*  
PO Box 685  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

## *AGG Newsletter*

*March 2024*

### OFFICERS 2023 - 2024

**President:** Patti Spezzaferro  
**Co- First Vice Presidents Programs:**  
Karen Handal, Suzanne Legallet  
**Second Vice President Membership:** Karen Olson  
**Treasurer:** Judy Blommer  
**Recording Secretary:** Suellen Rottiers  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Sue Matthews  
**Historian:** Diana Bryan  
**Newsletter:** Martha Woollomes  
**Co-Parliamentarians:** Julie Douglass, Joan Sanders  
**Website & Technology:** Anita Joy

### CONTRIBUTORS

Di Bryan, Suzanne Legallet,  
Patti Spezzaferro, Dr. Judith Taylor  
Martha Woollomes

### PROOFREADERS

Sue Barkley, Kasey Hansen,  
Sue Matthews, Patti Spezzaferro

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023 - 2024

**Atherton Library Flowers:** Sally Brudos  
**Holiday Party: Hostess/Committee Chair** Leslie Howard  
**Committee:** Katie Blommer, Julie Douglass,  
Kasey Hansen, Berenice Mancilla, Nan Ray,  
Patti Rodley, Patti Spezzaferro, Anna Zappettini  
**Donations:** Chair Pam Smith, Nan Ray, Karen Handal  
**Holbrook Palmer Rose Garden:** Patty Leugers  
**Horticulture:** Patti Spezzaferro  
**Hospitality/Refreshments:** Berenice Mancilla  
**June, 2024 Luncheon: Hostess** Rita Wachhorst  
**Committee Chair:** Terri Bailard  
**Committee:** Katie Blommer, Erika Enos, Sue Fitch,  
Karen Handal, Suzanne Legallet, Jeanne Quinlan  
**Newsletter:** Martha Woollomes  
**Nominating:** Chair Barbara Tyler, Julie Douglass, Karen Olson  
**Website:** Anita Joy  
**Yearbook:** Terri Bailard



## *Birthdays*

### **March**

*Flower: Daffodil*  
*rebirth, new beginnings, happiness*

### **March Birthdays**

- 4 Sally Young
- 8 Suzanne Legallet
- 14 Toni Heren
- 19 Nin Lyon
- 20 Patty Davis