

WING HAVEN STAFF

Barrett Sloan Ranson Executive Director

Susan Little Evans
Development Director

Beth Gilbert

Development Assistant

Samantha Wagner

Reavis Thornton

Head Gardener, Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary

Damou Sako Gardener, Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary

Darya Silchenko Assistant Gardener,

Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary

Andrea Sprott

Garden Curator, Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

Elizabeth Myers Assistant Garden Curator, Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garder

Jill Goodrich

Director of Education & Outreach

Erin Welty

Education Coordinator

Stefanie Myer

Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator

Sally Brown Wing Haven Host

Beverly Pearson Weekend & After-Hours Host

Lorraine Piephoff

HAPPY NEWS FROM WING HAVEN

Finding Connection in Our Gardens

As I write this, Wing Haven is in full bloom, and I am grateful that springtime brings us hope in uncertain times. In accordance with statewide recommendations and with sad hearts, we too have responded to the current health crisis by closing our gates for the safety of all. Admiring the yards of our neighbors on my walks, I see that although public gardens and public events have been cancelled, gardening has not. It is springtime and we are celebrating it as best we can as the gardeners we are. Our meetings, events, lectures, workshops and tours are cancelled or postponed, yet we find ways to stay strong and connected. This year, we offered our first online plant sale to help our housebound friends and supporters who find solace in working in their gardens.

Today, more than ever, I am grateful for the feeling of connection and renewal that can be found at Wing Haven and in our own gardens. Wing Haven connects people with nature and with each other. For 50 years (1970-2020), the Wing Haven Foundation has been stewarding this mission and these places. As we look to the future and another 50 years in the gardens, it is incumbent upon us to *champion*, *connect*, *preserve and protect* these Charlotte treasures for our community and beyond.

As urbanization of the city accelerates, spaces like Wing Haven provide meaning in the region and enrich lives where people and nature thrive.

As Frederick Law Olmsted said, "gardens, parks and green spaces are the lungs of a city." A recent study at the University of Exeter in England and Uppsala University in Sweden indicates that two hours a week spent outdoors in nature, especially green spaces, appears to be crucial for mental and physical health. The study's findings held true across differences in ethnicity, occupation, gender, age and financial standing.

Together we are championing, connecting, preserving and protecting at Wing Haven. Allow me to share a few examples:

Champion - In an increasingly virtual world, we recognize the importance of a healthy refuge—a space to unplug, explore and experience the joy of our senses. We are committed to providing a place where individuals can come to find peace and tranquility in nature and be inspired. Today, Wing Haven remains a place to learn from the legacies of both Elizabeth Clarkson and Elizabeth Lawrence.

Connect - We invite visitors of all ages to connect with nature and other garden enthusiasts who share a passion for the natural world. We collaborate with other nonprofits in the area to enhance the experience for visitors. We offer educational programs that enlighten us about the importance of our ever-changing environment and instill a love for nature and ornithology.

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FINDING CONNECTION IN OUR GARDENS

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Preserve - The history of our gardens must be preserved and shared. The founders and their remarkable foresight is a part of the legacy that continues to inspire us. We do this through meticulous archiving of both women's writings and drawings, in work at the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden with the HALS (Historic American Landscape Survey) documentation project, garden rehabilitation projects, and much more.

Protect - We are committed to protecting these special green spaces: Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary, the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden, and the SEED Wildlife & Children's Gardens that are all under the canopy we call Wing Haven.

On the day when we can once again open our garden gates wide, all that is Wing Haven will be here for you. We look forward to connecting with you all in the garden soon.

In the meantime, I encourage you to visit our website as a resource for birding and gardening needs, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay connected.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for helping us make a positive difference in the community.

Barrett Ranson
Executive Director



THE PERSONALITY OF OLD PLANTS AND GARDENS

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

Too often today gardening is not a personal venture—six to eight months of color visible from a speeding car—with little to no connection to the people who live there. Gardening should connect as much to the heart and mind as it does to the design. Gardening should be a desire to grow plants that remind us of family, friends, travel or home.

When I look at my own garden, I can't help but think that the hosta and cleome my grandmother gave me are the same ones I see in the 100-year-old photos of her in her grandmother's garden, and that the pink peonies are the same ones I helped my other grandmother cut for the breakfast room table. You hear these kinds of stories when walking with other gardeners in their gardens—and you hear the excitement, pride and recollection in their voices.

When Elizabeth married Eddie Clarkson and moved to Charlotte in 1927, she brought her roots with her—memories of her family and Texas home. She would have experienced them when she walked in her own garden—in the fragrance of the climbing rose rooted from her grandmother's garden, the white rain lilies from her mother's garden, and the old milk and wine crinum lily she told Elizabeth Lawrence was too big for the border but that she could not be without. A weeping willow in the Main Garden must have held special memories of being courted by Eddie in a rowboat in Boston under the same type of trees.

Some of these original plants and their stories still live in the Clarksons' garden—the over three-acre Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary. We know from records that some plants put here by Elizabeth have been lost (through time, changes in growing conditions or natural disaster), along with the stories and memories they held. However, we are committed to bringing these plants back to the Clarksons' personal urban refuge.

A handwritten list Elizabeth left behind gives us the names of many plants, and historic photos help guide their original placement. But *why* she planted them is not always clear. Mostly, we can only guess—but sometimes the plants themselves give us clues. For instance, the coral vine on her list gives us two: it has pink blooms (her favorite color) and is a native of Mexico. She must have seen it covering walls and trellises in her hometown of Uvalde. Bringing these plants back to their garden honors the Clarksons' spirit, reconnects with history, and grows their legacy for future generations to study, enjoy and be inspired to create personal gardens of their own.







DESPERATELY SEEKING SOLACE... AND FINDING IT

Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator, Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

The past several months of our world being turned on its head leaves us all reeling a bit. But nature keeps on going, never skipping a beat, unaware that anything in our world is amiss. This gives me such peace—and reminds me that, no matter what, there is always wonder and delight to be found just outside the window... away from the television, the internet and our devices. While we closed our office and later our gardens, I continued to come into work. I struggled with this decision at first, but then I looked out into the garden and thought about what Elizabeth Lawrence would do.

I feel confident she would continue to take daily morning walks through her garden—pencil and small 3-ring binder in-hand—to study each plant and note every freshly unfurled bloom. She would go back to her studio, sit at her desk overlooking the garden and transcribe new information in her card index, making notation of what she so keenly observed: the size and scent of *Phillyrea decora* (sweet olive) blooms—"tiny, very sweet," the plantings of "tulips, blue phlox, blue squills, columbine, ajuga, *Mazus reptans*, yellow cowslips, azalea 'Snow' and yellow jessamine" are "all lovely together," and the first hummingbird of 1964 arrived on April 18.

She would continue to spend her afternoons writing countless letters to gardening friends near and far. Armed with her fountain pen and writing paper, as she rarely typed letters, she would tell them that she thinks her "peacock moss is nearly established this time...," that she "will have more sweet rocket seedlings" for them the next time they are in town, that if she doesn't let her Korean daisy "dry up, it is so fresh and sparkling in October," and that she hopes her handwriting won't put their "eyes out."

There is so much more than meets the eye in these missives and observations. There is a piece of Elizabeth in each bloom list, index card and scribbled letter. Her desire to share her garden with others—through seedlings and divisions as well as through her books and articles—is part of the joy of gardening for us all.

Look out your own window. I know you will find solace in some form there, just as Elizabeth Lawrence would if she were around today. We look forward to seeing you again, and sharing with you what wonders and delights can be found in your own garden.

Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden

Garden-worthy Gems

Iris ochroleuca [syn. *I. orientalis*] spuria iris

"Iris ochroleuca is the most distinguished of the spurias... The delicately formed white flowers look as if they had lighted upon the stiff stems. It is a very shy bloomer with me."

"Perennials Suitable for the Mid-South" House & Garden, July 1936

Perhaps the *Iris ochroleuca* about which Elizabeth wrote that passage was not as happy in her Raleigh garden as the ones she planted in 1976 in the borders of her Charlotte garden—and are not "shy" bloomers in the least! These start glistening in the borders in early May.

Crinum 'Cecil Houdyshel'

crinum lily

"If I could have but one crinum, 'Cecil Houdyshel' would be it, for it out-flowers them all, putting up one scape after another, from late May through August. I keep it in the back of the border, as the scapes are nearly four feet tall—twice as tall as those of the amarcrinums, which must go near the front—and the large mass of foliage is rather untidy. While this eight—year—old crinum is not so handsome as a clump of lilies in full bloom, no lily has ever bloomed in my garden for three months, or bloomed for so many years with increasing vigor."

the Charlotte Observer February 6, 1958

Leucothoe populifolia [syn. Agarista populifolia]

dog hobble, pipewood

"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, which she planted in December 1951, is much larger now and still blooms in her garden every May, filling the back half of the garden (the area she called the "woods") with delicious honey fragrance.



A YEAR OF GROWTH FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

Erin Welty, Education Coordinator

What a difference a year makes! The 2019-2020 school year brought a number of unprecedented moments for children's programming as we launched new programs to meet community needs, saw long-beloved programs grow in popularity and depth, and developed virtual programs to meet the unexpected challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. With this year of growth has come the opportunity to fulfill the mission of Wing Haven more deeply. The examples set on Ridgewood Avenue by the Clarksons and Elizabeth Lawrence—to keenly observe and share their knowledge and love of the natural world generously with the community—guide our vision as we look to the future of Wing Haven's children and family programs.

The introduction of new program offerings in the 2019-2020 school year allowed us to fulfill our mission in exciting new contexts. Our commitment to reach students from underserved communities with environmental education programs led to a successful new partnership with Brookstone Schools serving 115 students this school year in a weekly after-school program. We also launched the newest addition to our program repertoire, Budding Naturalists, which allows us to better serve classroom teachers through seventeen specialized programs on birdwatching, trees, and other topics for school field trips and other visiting groups, grades Pre-K through 12th.

Long-established programming such as Story Time and More and our Preschool Environmental Education Programs (PEEPs) underwent creative developments this year to accommodate growing popularity as well as an unprecedented set of circumstances. Our monthly Story Time and More proved to be a community favorite, as families made it a regular part of their month to bring their little ones to the garden for stories and crafts. In response to this growth, starting in July 2020, we hope to offer two Story Time and More programs per month to better serve the families in our community. When COVID-19 prevented hosting programs in the gardens this spring, Story Time and More was the first program adapted to a virtual format bringing nature-themed stories and crafts to the homes of our social media followers. Following this success, we developed virtual resources that were provided to our PEEPs partner schools, enabling students to stay engaged with the program by completing simple environmental education activities at home with their families.

Every bit of growth in children's programming this year deepened our capacity for inspiring future generations of nature lovers. This year and its peculiar challenges yielded plenty of moments of inspiration—the Brookstone Schools student who returned to Wing Haven with her mother on a winter Saturday after experiencing our after-school program, the preschool teacher inspired by a PEEPs lesson to get her students' hands in the dirt back at school, and the families at home who connected with us from afar through virtual stories and crafts. What a difference this year has made, not only for our organization but also for the many children, parents, and teachers who carry their inspiration from Wing Haven into the future, ready to love and preserve nature's treasures.

Looking to learn and explore with your family at home?

Visit winghavengardens.org/education to access virtual educational resources, including Wing Haven coloring sheets, nature activity guides, and video versions of favorite children's programs.



THE FUTURE TAKES ROOT

Jill Goodrich, Director of Education & Outreach

If you have been to Wing Haven lately, you've enjoyed the beauty and the magic of these special gardens, and you've hopefully walked away having gained something new, something inspiring. What is that? Education! Simply by visiting Wing Haven, your knowledge of the natural world grows: the intricacies of plant identification, the methods of landscape design, the horticultural practices of an urban garden, the use of a rain barrel or structure of an insect hotel, and the habitats of songbirds. Being in nature expands the mind, the body, the soul. As the Clarksons determined many decades ago, we "need places like this."

Yet, as humans, we always crave more. As the natural world shrinks, the need for open spaces and a connection with wildlife and plants has increased. The recent pandemic has revealed the beauty and grace of our environment—a place that was and continues to be one of wonder, respite and learning. I would bet that during the stay-athome order the keen interest in the why, how, when, what and where in nature has been even greater as we have taken the time to slow down and observe. The need for more nature existed well before the worldwide health crisis. In recent years, Wing Haven has deliberately, methodically and strategically expanded our educational offerings—digging deeper into issues, offering a wider variety of programs, mixing up the format and reaching out to untapped communities. The relevance of Wing Haven is grounded in our purpose to share what we know—to teach, to educate—this is our future.

The education team has dusted off every program, from our preschool outreach and story time to our adult lecture series and symposium, and given it new life by seeking out richer curriculum or developing our own, vetting top-notch speakers from around the country, and partnering with newer and like-minded organizations. As a result, we expanded our biennial Symposium with hands-on workshops, educational forums and thought-provoking issues delivered by atypical presenters. Our lecture series showcased a diverse group of individuals to stretch our minds with ideas on everything from the impacts of invasive pests to the state of our planet. Some speakers kept us grounded with practical horticulture tips while others took us to faraway garden and filled us with feelings of wanderlust.

When we return to normal operating hours, each month the writings and work of Elizabeth Lawrence will continue to be brought to life with deeper understanding in yet another wonderful adult education program led by Andrea Sprott, Garden Curator. Attend one of her Imbibe & Inspire programs and tell me you don't walk away in awe of what you've learned, like the lily planted sixty years ago as an experiment that is still present in the garden and will exist in the time ahead. Also, our senior bird walks and all age bird counts morph into more ornithological programs woven throughout our educational offerings, as novices and true bird nerds continue to delight in these

feathered indicators of the world's future (see "Breakfast with the Birds").

In her article, Erin Welty beautifully reports the growth of our children and family programming as we inspire future generations to soar among the birds (and bring their parents and grandparents along for the ride). This programming does not simply center on the young child alone. To better connect with the natural world, our generations must connect as well. The future lies with intergenerational environmental education programming. The growth she articulates is not only a result of more programs serving more people, but stems from the growth of Wing Haven's physical space. The SEED Wildlife Garden is coming to the close of its second year of use and the trampled plants and well-worn garden tools tell us it has been well used! More than an outdoor venue to explore and appreciate cohabitation with wildlife, SEED is unique to Wing Haven in that it is 100% native by design. This style of garden is typically easier to maintain, attracts pollinators, breeds beneficial insects, and meets the needs of local wildlife. To ensure sustainability across ecosystems, native gardens are the future.

Tucked away in the SEED Wildlife Garden is a small plot of plants, anchored by a bench that is adorned with a water-proof journal. We call this little nook the Healing Garden. All of Wing Haven can serve to provide respite for those in need, and this tiny space in a children's garden offers up a deliberate and safe space to receive that interlude. Fueling the soul allows one to take on what lies ahead. Educational offerings will aim to capture more health and wellness programs incorporating mindfulness, therapeutic horticulture and the like. Furthermore, our intention is to fold into our outreach model more health and wellness-related organizations and institutions. As a result, we anticipate a growth in partnerships to sustain and grow our impact in the community.

Most recently, we have been challenged with supporting the legacy of education without providing on-site programming or visitation. During this time, we have implemented creative ways to stay engaged with our membership and community through virtual Story Time, fun facts blasted out through social media, and educational lessons sent to our preschool and other outreach beneficiary educators. We encourage adults, children and families to use their time at home to participate in our Birdhouse Building Contest, which teaches the importance of bird nesting boxes through a fun, hands-on activity. As a result, the expressiveness of others manifests into a wonderful array of creative houses for all to enjoy.

Our eyes are on the future. Wing Haven is an important resource in the community that keeps us connected to the natural world through exploration, study, preservation, mindfulness and outreach. What lies ahead is firmly rooted in our mission to educate.



BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS

Jill Goodrich, Director of Education & Outreach



Far beyond the Charlotte community, Wing Haven serves as a resource and a "hotspot" for counting birds. The recorded numbers of both resident and migratory birds inform our scientific community, which strives to influence policy when it comes to bird conservation and the health of our planet. Once again, Wing Haven participated in all four days of the Great Backyard Bird Count, a worldwide citizen science event supported by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, to capture an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds. Many thanks to the Mecklenburg Audubon Society volunteers who assisted in this event by offering guided bird watching strolls and aided visitors in bird identification. Wing Haven's Hospitality Committee members and other volunteers kept our visitors fueled with homemade breakfast. Over the four-day period, we saw 296 citizen scientists (158 adults, 138 children), resulting in 94 checklists, and 39 identified species! Check out which feathered friends joined us for breakfast (species in **bold** are birds spotted this year, but not last year, and are pictured below):

American Crow
American Goldfinch
American Robin
Blue Jay
Brown Thrasher
Brown-headed Cowbird
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Carolina Chickadee

Carolina Wren
Cedar Waxwing
Chipping Sparrow
Common Grackle
Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Phoebe
Eastern Towhee

European Starling
Field Sparrow
Hermit Thrush
House Finch
House Sparrow
Mourning Dove
Northern Cardinal
Northern Mockingbird

Ovenbird
Purple Finch
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Red-eyed Vireo
Red-shouldered Hawk
Red-winged Blackbird
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Sharp-shinned Hawk

Song Sparrow Tufted Titmouse White-breasted Nuthatch White-throated Sparrow Winter Wren

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Yellow-rumped Warbler





Whereas a few species were spotted in the garden this year and not during last year's count, there were 11 species spotted in the gardens last year not seen this year. Can you name at least one (see list back cover)? Why do you suppose we did not spot the same birds in the gardens this year?

THE FUTURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Stefanie Myer, Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteers have been the backbone of Wing Haven throughout the past, present, and will be in the future. Though the volunteer opportunities at Wing Haven have evolved and expanded over the years, the root of volunteering is the same. Volunteers choose to give their time and talents to maintain—and become part of—something special. They achieve this by teaching and creating, while sharing their passion for gardens and birds with our visitors young and old. They care for each of Wing Haven's gardens like they are their own. Wing Haven's vision to inspire passion for the natural world is accomplished through our events and educational programs, and also through volunteering.

The future of volunteering at Wing Haven lies with the next generation. Instilling an understanding and love of nature in children while they're young increases their awareness of the importance of green spaces. One great example of this is Ian Kutner, an English teacher at Providence Day School and friend of Wing Haven for over 20 years. Ian has been bringing a group of high schoolers called The Students of Service Club to volunteer at Wing Haven almost every month for 15 years. When Ian first visited Wing Haven, he immediately felt a connection. "I was just taken by the fact that such a sparkle of beauty existed in the middle of Myers Park." He loves that Wing Haven is truly a sanctuary for both wildlife and

visitors, and he is passionate about the longevity of this organization. Ian believes that "volunteering is the ownership of being part of the Clarkson story."

He feels that as you work to preserve the historic gardens, you become part of the history of this place, and he shares that belief with his students. They prefer to undertake rigorous tasks at Wing Haven and are proud of the impact they make. Each year the club president recruits new volunteers by sharing his excitement about their accomplishments with his fellow classmates. Ian said, "Today's youth want to make an impact and feel connected to what they're doing; they don't want a one-and-done experience. **They feel a connection, and that's what it's all about.**"

With our growing number of educational programs, we have an increased need for volunteers to share their knowledge and passion for gardens, birds and Wing Haven. As we prepare for a return to normal programs and events, please help us share our vision with the Charlotte community and beyond by giving your time, and bring your family or friends to make a larger impact. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Stefanie Myer at roots@winghavengardens.org to learn more.



lan Kutner (third from right) has led the Students of Service Club in volunteer work at Wing Haven nearly every month for 15 years. The participants change over time, but their feeling of connection remains.

ONLINE PLANT SALE

Our first-ever online plant sale is going so well that we are continuing to offer sales online with **curbside pick-up on Wednesdays**.

See the full plant list, make purchases and schedule your pick-up time at winghavengardens.org/online-spring-plant-sale, or simply click the Plant Sale link at the top of our homepage.

You will find beautiful plants of all kinds, handpicked from local growers by our Nursery volunteers. Also offered is our *Legacy Plants Collection*, featuring plants propagated from our two historic gardens: Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary and the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden.

Zephyranthes candida (white rain lily) glistens in the



WELCOME NEW STAFF







We welcome Office Administrator Samantha Wagner (left) and Wing Haven Garden & Bird Sanctuary Assistant Gardener Darya Silchenko (middle) to the Wing Haven staff. In addition, we are pleased to announce that Elizabeth Medearis Myers (right) joins our team as Assistant Garden Curator with the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT ANSWER

Here is the list of 11 species of birds spotted in the gardens last year that were not seen this year:

Barred Owl Black Vulture Canada Goose Cooper's Hawk Dark-eyed Junco Golden-crowned Kinglet Pine Warbler Red-tailed Hawk Ring-billed Gull Rock Pigeon Turkey Vulture

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