



The Trillium

The Gardens at Sunny Mount, Home of Kyle and Mary Sonnenberg

The Gardens at Sunny Mount comprise approximately one acre of the seven-acre property owned by Kyle and Mary Sonnenberg. A quarter-mile road encloses the principal areas under cultivation. Prior owners planted the mature magnolias, hollies, and wax myrtles that form an arc surrounding the house and its immediate environs. However, those evergreens are their only contributions to the present day landscape. All other plantings and hardscape have been installed by the Sonnenbergs since they started gardening here in 2016.

Entering the property, one encounters a recreated remnant wire grass/longleaf pine savanna along the entry drive. Kyle is also working elsewhere on the property to remove scrub oaks in order to expand the restoration area.

Mixed beds of exotic shrubs and perennials extend from the parking area to and along the front of the house. Similar to other parts of the garden, something is in bloom here all twelve months of the year starting with wintersweet in January to Copper Canyon daisies in December. Sabal palms and Chinese bananas add to the exotic mix.



The front gardens also feature an assortment of three-dimensional art. Greeting you as you enter the gardens is a unicyclist

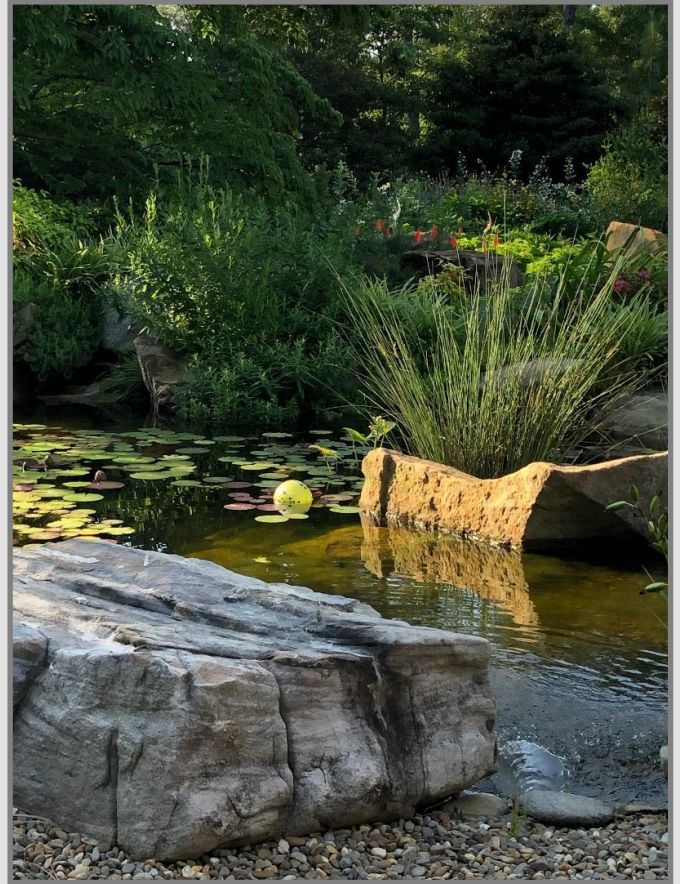
featuring a steel body and glass head while further along the path is a friendly dog by the same Florida artist. A number of pieces by Georgia tombstone maker by day and visionary stone sculptor by night Mike Jones also stand in these gardens.



On one side of the house, an urn spills water into a goldfish pool that is flanked by yellow-flowered water iris.

On the other side of the house, you encounter ten trough gardens, many of which are constructed from soapstone sinks salvaged from the old chemistry labs at Washington and Lee University.

Outside of the sunroom at the back of the house, the Sonnebergs worked with local landscape architect Vince Zucchini to design and construct a patio that overlooks a 3,000-gallon pond containing water lilies and golden orfes. Surrounding the pond are bog beds planted with water-loving plants like calla lilies and pitcher plants. A variety of waterfalls create a musical backdrop as they spill water into the pond. Overlooking the pond is a stone sculpture of a fawn carved by artisans from Zimbabwe and acquired on a trip to the

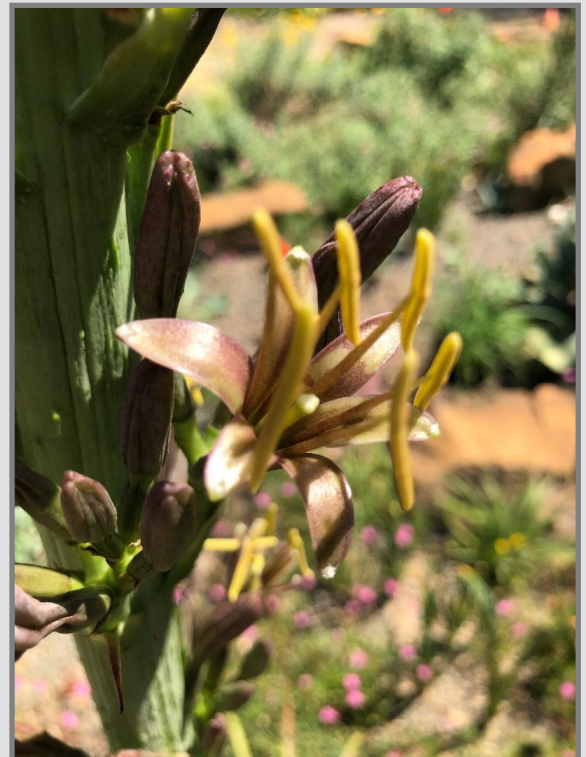


Toronto Botanical Garden.

Three tractor-trailer loads of stones were used to construct the pond and the surrounding rock gardens. These gardens feature xeric plants from various dry land areas around the world. Kyle has brought plants back from his travels in the Southwest including the summer flowering shrubs senna and Apache plume which grow alongside agaves and cactus.



Hummingbird plants from Uruguay and firecracker plants from Texas add brilliant orange hues to the summertime garden.





Kyle's orchids spend the summer outside on a specially constructed table under the shade of an overhanging river birch. During the cooler times of the year, the smokeless fire pit provides a place to gather while watching the setting sun.



As one ventures further from the house, you enter the white garden with plants blooming white starting with the evergreen *Magnolia maudiae* in January through the hardy gingers at the end of the year. Here are also located two white marble sculptures of a polar bear and a beluga whale carved by Kyle.

Leaving the white garden, you enter the lawn with its surrounding mixed borders. The lawn is atop the highest por-



tion of the property and the surrounding area (the Mount) and was constructed as an informal place to play bocce. In one

side garden featuring red and yellow blooming plants is a ten-foot-tall red weather vane. On the other side is a 80-foot-long bed with a blue-bottle tree, three tall clematis trellises, and a bird feeder constructed by his father based on a design from his grandfather.

At the end of the lawn is a brick patio surrounding a crevice garden that from a distance resembles a mountain range and features dryland plants. Backing the patio are two grape trellises.

Beyond this area is the vegetable and fruit garden. There are 18 raised beds in the garden. Among the plants grown here are blackberries, raspberries, mulberries, asparagus, and a variety of annual vegetables. Apples and pears are





being espaliered on the east and south sides of this garden. Outside of the garden are mature blueberry bushes and native persimmons along with newly planted pawpaw trees.

Elsewhere, Kyle is creating a shrub walk featuring flowering trees and shrubs that includes a variety of camellias. This area is an homage to a camellia walk at his alma mater the College of William and Mary. Another homage is a dogwood tree underplanted with an assortment of shade loving perennials. This area is inspired by a similar bed under a towering oak tree at Chanticleer outside of Philadelphia.

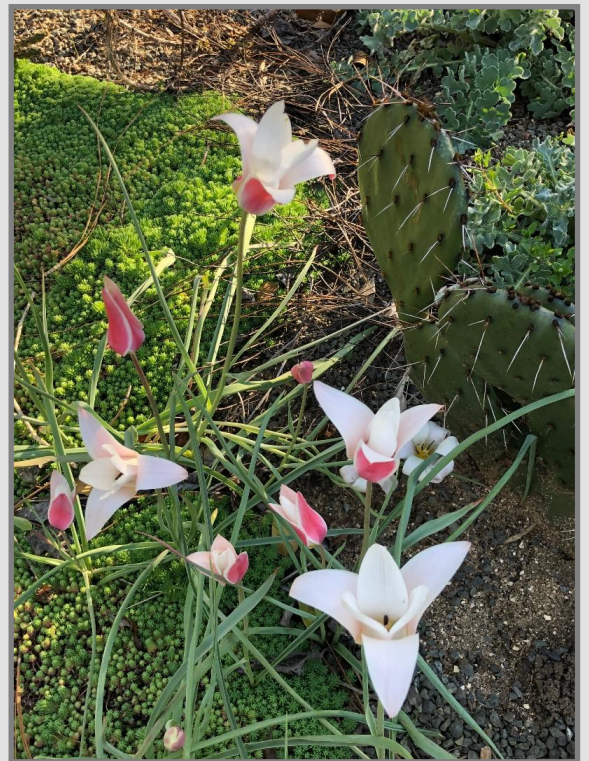
The Gardens at Sunny Mount reflect Kyle's lifelong effort to create a better and more beautiful world whether through his city management career, his nonprofit

work, his newspaper columns, or his gardens.

Kyle and Mary hope that you will be able to make it down to Southern Pines for the May picnic. Their gardens are also a featured stop for the Southern Pines Home and Garden tour in April so Kyle has been working feverishly to get everything shipshape! The drive from Raleigh/Cary is one hour down US 1.

Following the picnic, you could take in the nearby Sandhills Horticultural Gardens at Sandhills Community College.

There is also the delightful downtown in Southern Pines with a variety of boutique shopping, an art gallery, and a couple of breweries. Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve is also nearby with a variety of trails through the virgin longleaf pine forest. The oldest longleaf pine in the world is located in the Preserve; it is still going strong after 470 years!



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Picnic at the Sonnenberg's Gardens at Sunny Mount

The May picnic will be hosted by Kyle and Mary Sonnenberg on Saturday, May 6 at 11 am, rain date is Sunday, May 7. Their address is 535 McDeeds Creek Rd , Southern Pines, NC 28387. Please note that some GPSs have the address come up as Carthage instead of Southern Pines.

The main dish and beverages will be provided, and members are invited to bring a salad, side dish or dessert to share. There is seating inside and out, so it's not necessary to bring your own.

Kyle says, "I was planning on having some plants from my garden as giveaways. I potted a number of unique perennials up in the fall and hopefully they have made it through the winter. I also have three or four orchids to give away to anyone interested in orchids. I also have water lilies that are potted up."

Members will receive an email invitation soon with further details – hope you can make it!

NARGS Piedmont Chapter Service Award, 2023

Tony Avent has been a long time, reliable supporter of the Piedmont Chapter since he joined in 1994. His support during the last two years has been especially important to our chapter. When



the pandemic shut down our March 2020 meeting, Tony invited members to an impromptu tour of Juniper Level Botanic Garden; soon after, Tony's plant donations made it possible to hold an online plant sale, when in person events were cancelled. Tony has followed up with repeated donations to our other online sales and at numerous in-person events over the years. Tony often donates and auctions special plants at our meetings, helping the Piedmont Chapter to maintain fiscal stability. The crevice garden at JLBG is a wonderful resource for our members, serving as a reference garden for rock gardening in the Southeast. The Piedmont Chapter is lucky to have Tony as a valued member.

(Recommended by Cyndy Cromwell and photo by Bobby Ward.)



Help Make Our Plant Sale a Success!

A letter from our Plant Sale Manager, Jim Hollister

Hi All,

We are just a month away from our 2023 Plant Sale and we need your help!

I have been stressing a couple of points for the last couple of months.

The first is we need your plants. It is not too late to get some potted-up and looking presentable by the end of April. I'm not fussy about what plants you want to donate. As I've said before, if you like it your garden, chances are somebody else will like it in theirs. Plants must be labeled. Name, sun/shade, etc.

The second is that I would really like you to mark your calendars with a couple of important dates:

1) April 28th. This is D-day for bringing in plants for the sale. We need to get all of our plants delivered on Friday. Tentatively this is between noon and 3:00 pm (the arb is still finalizing its instructions). I expect that we will be coming in the back gate again. I will have more detailed instructions as we get closer to the date. We will also start our sale on that afternoon during the Raulston members-only presale which runs from 4:00 to 7:00. Word to the wise... Some of the choicest plants will be snapped up at this time.

2) April 29th. Raulston Blooms 10:00 to 3:00. A great day out, and a great day for selling plants.

Now for a third request. I need your help to make this happen. We will need people to set up on Friday and tear down on Saturday. We will need people to attend to the booth, schlep plants, make sales, etc. So please consider volunteering. You don't need to commit to any time slots or tasks at this time, but I would like to get you on my sale contact list so I can contact you directly and not blast the entire membership with details. **Please send your contact info to me at hollijm@gmail.com**

As I've mentioned before: this event is fun and educational; so don't hesitate to raise your hand to volunteer. I welcome any of your questions.

Thank you

Jim Hollister

hollijm@gmail.com



Field Trip to White Pines Nature Preserve, Sanford — March 25



Photo by Sandy Harwood



Aesculus sylvatica

Photo by Bobby Ward

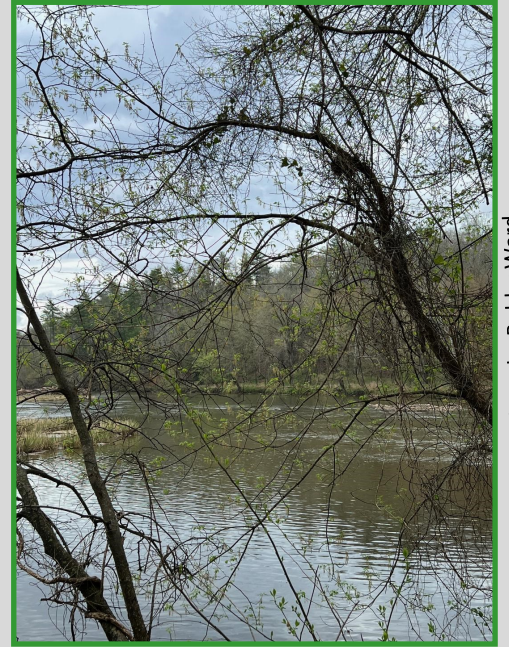


Photo by Bobby Ward



Photo by Sandy Haywood



Photo by Bobby Ward

Walking under Mountain Laurel



Photo by Sandy Harwood



Photo by Sandy Harwood



Photo by Bobby Ward