

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SMALL GARDEN TOUR

This year's **Small Garden Tour** is located in historic Eastville and on creeks to the north. Large, rambling lawns are surrounded by record-sized trees and filled out with boxwoods. Oases of sun and shade plants and shrubs dot the expanses. Tickets may be purchased the day of the tour at Copper Cricket Farm or at The Gallery at Eastville on Courthouse Road, Eastville, listed below.

Lunch Purchase a take-out meal at either *Yuk, Yuk and Joe's* or *Yianni's*, both on Courthouse Road, Eastville and carry it to either the town park, next to the post office, in Eastville or to **Solitude Farmhouse** (stop #2), sitting on the banks of the Mattawoman Creek. Both restaurants are making a donation, based on sales, to Habitat.

The tour begins north of Eastville at Copper Cricket Farms. Five miles outside Franktown on Rt. 13, turn right at Blue Heron Realty. Take Rt. 628, Wilsonia Neck Drive, 1.8 miles. Turn left on Solitude Trail. The Farm is .6 miles on the right. Parking is in front of the barn.

1. 13586 Solitude Trail, Wilsonia Neck,

In 2007, Arthur "Cricket" Upshur and his wife, Carol, joined with neighbors Bob and Melody Copper to form the "**Copper Cricket Farm.**" The New England style barn on the property represents a triumph of amateurism and community support as neighbors helped out with the design, materials, and extra hands when needed on the building project. It was built mostly of the timber harvested on Solitude Trail (with Cellar Root Lumber milling), and with recycled materials (thanks to a neighbor, Bill Mytnik). A slide show on their barn construction will be showing in the barn.

The "garden" is approximately a two-acre space featuring nearly a hundred different varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The farm uses no chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. Hence the farm's slogan: "Biologically managed, sustainably grown". Each of the twelve 100 foot long, planting beds has permanent paths and built in drip irrigation to minimize water use allowing each to produce enough to feed over 100 people from an unusually small space. The center of each bed is reserved for herbs and flowers to create an environment for beneficial insects and provide variety in the customer baskets. Memberships for this year are still available.

The owners will answer organic gardening questions and are offering organic starter plants of basil, parsley, dill, and Brandywine tomatoes, for sale @ \$1.50. **\$1 per plant will go to Habitat.**

Return to County Rd 628/Wilsonia Neck Dr. Turn left. Go .5 mile to Deerfield Trail. Take Deerfield all the way to the end, following a curve to the right. Go through the iron fence and park in the circle.

2. 13453 Deerfield Trail, Wilsonia Neck

"**Solitude Farmhouse,**" built in 1898, is owned by Rick Gregor. He purchased the 7 acre plus property in 2002 completely remodeling it in 2008. Overlooking the bay, with 1/3 mile of shoreline on Mattawoman Creek, the property is home to the largest "Southern Bayberry" in the US, based on America's Biggest Trees registry. A small fruit orchard provides an abundance of apples, peaches, pears, and plums. Asian pears, pecans and walnuts, as well as hollies, redbud, vitex, crape myrtle, and Japanese maples are placed around the property. There is ample space for a large selection of shrubs: hydrangeas, butterfly bushes, azaleas, gardenias, lilacs, beautyberry, and aucuba. Herbaceous perennials include large beds of peonies, day lilies, irises and dahlias. Walking paths abound through the property leading to many hidden garden treasures. Look for the "leopard plant" and roam through the "woods garden." Rick is donating sales from potted red maples, priced at \$5 & \$10, to Habitat.

Return to Wilsonia Neck Road and continue to Rt. 13. Turn right and go 2.4 miles south to Courthouse Road. At the sign for Eastville, turn right onto Courthouse Road. Go 2.8 miles to Rt. 630, (opposite Yuk-Yuk & Joe's). Turn right onto Old Town Neck. Take Old Town Neck to the end. Turn right onto Hungars Beach Road. Go to the 5th house and park on the RIGHT side of the road.

3. 13453 14432 Hungars Beach, Eastville

Jennifer & Mike Ash started building this log home in 1992, working on weekends for twelve years, commuting from Virginia Beach, and doing all the work themselves. Before construction began, the lot was cleared of some trees and brush, but much grew back between weekends. Some plants were given by friends to “see how they do in your soil” or “find a place, this might do well”. Two Lace-cap hydrangeas, split from bushes at friends’ Sunnyside Plantation and given to the Ashes thirty-five years ago are some of the originals.

Jen maintains that there is no real design to the landscaping. They just outlined areas where some shrubs had established themselves and then created a lawn with St. Augustine grass plugs from their Virginia Beach home. Mike and Jen call the garden a “happening” garden in that whatever is growing “happens” to be left or transplanted by the voles, moles, squirrels, deer and raccoons! The main glory of the garden is the riot of color in late May/early June that the hydrangeas and day-lilies show.

Return to Old Town Neck Road. Turn left. Harbour Lane is .5 miles on the left. House #4 is the 3rd house on the left.

4. 14332 Harbour Lane, Eastville

Vinnie and Barbara Hannigan, originally from Long Island, bought 3 1/4 acres on the mouth of Barlow’s Creek in 1986 with the goal of designing and building their own home. Beginning in 2000, they spent many hours working alongside contractors to complete the home. In 2002 with the house completed, Barbara, a certified Master Gardener, began transforming the lawn. Since then, with Vinnie’s help digging holes, she has planted over 1000 herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees. The multitude and variety of trees and plants qualify the property to be certified by the state of Virginia as a bird sanctuary. The property sports sun and shade gardens as well as native and salt resistant plants. Barbara uses the vegetable garden alternately for vegetables in the summer and as a nursery area in the winter. Near the vegetables, look for her unique “Mexican” potting shed, complete with hand painted clouds on the ceiling.

Master Gardeners will be on site to describe the many varieties of plant and trees. They will also be available to answer visitors’ gardening questions and will have multiple brochures on gardening published by Virginia Tech.

Return to Old Town Neck.

Mattawoman Creek Organic Farms, 4103 Barlow Creek Lane. Tours of the farm and plants will be available for purchase. **10% of the proceeds will be donated to Habitat.** *Turn left and go to Yeardeley (sand road) Turn left on Barlow Creek Lane. Drive straight thru 2 white posts.*

Return to Old Town Neck. At the end of Old Town Neck, turn right onto Courthouse Road.

The Gallery At Eastville, 16319 Courthouse Rd. Owners, David Bruce Handschur & Mary Miller, award-winning artists in glass, jewelry, knitwear and original art, will give Habitat **25% of sales** to Garden Tour ticket holders.

Continue on Courthouse Road to the Eastville Inn. Park beside the Inn.

5. The garden behind Eastville Inn was designed and brought to life by Eleanor Gordon and Master Gardener assumed care of the garden in 2006. It boasts flowering shrubs and many colorful perennial flowers, which start blooming in early spring and continue into the autumn. Walkways through the garden allow you a full view of the ever-changing garden. Master Gardeners will be manning the garden to answer questions.

Turn left on Willow Oak Road, across from the Eastville Inn.

6. 5264 Willow Oak Road

Guests enter the home David and Andrea Scott purchased in 1997 through a typical plantation style corridor of 70 year old ash trees. The frame home, built circa 1750, was designed by Griffin Stith. He included a brick wall on the west end of the house. A smoke house also sits on the back of the property. The original homeowner, Mrs. Addison, had a landscape plan which the Scotts are trying to reconstruct. The grave of Jacob Parker sits near the barn on the back of the property.

Situated on 3-acres, the back of the property is consumed by a huge rectangular English boxwood garden. The original boxwood garden was cut down by a previous owner, but the present plants have been thriving for the last 60 years. English and American boxwood are the prevalent shrubs on the property, but azaleas, peonies, iris and dogwood have found a place in the sun alongside the boxwoods.

7. 5325 Willow Oak Road

“**Willow Lawn,**” built in 1895, is owned by Mr. and Mrs Ralph Dodd. The property was named in honor of the remarkable willow oak tree, *Quercus phellos*, which shades the entire front yard. Until recently, the tree was listed on the National Register of Big Trees as the largest willow oak in the country. In 2004, the tree was recorded to have a circumference greater than 25’ at 4 ½ feet above ground level, a spread of 136’ and 112’ tall Eastville residents voted to name the road Willow Oak after the award-winning tree.

Japanese maples, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, and skip laurel are happy under the range of the oak The backyard is divided by a magnolia grove that helps protect the rose garden. Mrs. Dodd enjoys exhibiting as well as growing roses.

8. 5350 Willow Oak Road

“**Windrush Farm,**” owned by Eleanor Gordon, is a mid-19th century house and big red barn surrounded by 2 acres of gardens with room for ponies. Eleanor, well known for her landscaping ability, has used her knowledge of plants to introduce varieties on her property that delight true gardeners. The horse fencing lining the drive provides a background for peonies and roses while the opposite side of the yard has more of a “let nature take its course” look with vines, Virginia creeper and variegated Solomon seal. The area in back of the house holds plants with names that serious gardeners can pronounce, like *buddliea alternifolia*, *leucothoe* and *rosa mutabilis*. Tall evergreens behind the potting shed support sky high purple wisteria and climbing hydrangea. Mid-May means roses, peonies, poppies and larkspur will be in full bloom.

9. 16514 Courthouse Road

The Queen Anne style house of Stuart and Louise Oliver, originally called “**Ailworth Hall,**” was built in 1916. The house sits on 1 1/2 acres and has been in Stuart’s late wife’s family ever since. Stuart inherited it after her death in 1986. Stuart dismantled a back porch and used the bricks to form a walk leading from the drive to the front door and a huge patio in the front of the house. Another of Stuart’s innovative changes is the colorful evergreen “tree wall” between the property and the Rectory next door. Stuart came into possession of a combination of Hollywood juniper, golden mop juniper, and Nellie Stevens holly and planted them in a straight line in an alternating pattern, with surprisingly, according to Stuart, delightful results. Louise is responsible for the design of the plantings around the front of the wrap-around porch. Ruffled-leaf, *Ilex koehneana*, holly, punctuate the corners of the house and are spaced along the front of the porch in harmony with dwarf Japanese burfordia.

Many of the early 1900 trees remain, including golden raintree and western red cedar. A 90 year-old ash, with a conspicuous purple box hanging from the trunk, marks the northern corner of the property while a mature blue spruce marks the driveway. The Carolina allspice may be finished blooming, but the Lady Banks climbing rose will be profuse with blooms.

Late breaking news is a **LANYAPP!!**

Lanyapp is a deep South phrase, often found in New Orleans, for an unexpected gift. Owners of **EYRE HALL**, on the west side of Rt. 13 between Cheriton and Eastville, have invited Habitat ticket holders to tour their garden. This celebrated 18th century property on Cherrystone Creek reflects the remarkable 250-year stewardship of a single family. Littleton Eyre, great-grandson of the first Eyre to settle here in 1623, completed the manor house in 1759.

History also lives in the magnificent garden, established c. 1800 and considered the oldest in Virginia to have been continuously maintained. Here, 150-year-old crape myrtles tower above parterres enclosed by ancient box and set off with colorful English-style mixed borders.



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