

Transylvania Times newspaper article

The Spring Garden Symposium featuring the Gardens of Biltmore

Every year the Transylvania Extension Master Gardeners host an Annual Spring Garden Symposium. This year is no exception and to help you think spring and all things gardens the theme will be *The Gardens of Biltmore*. Two topics will be presented by Biltmore Estate Horticulturalist, Jordana Chalnack. It will be held on Saturday March 14th at the Transylvania Public Library. This popular event is likely to interest both local Master Gardeners and the general public, and this year's topic will give us an insight into the local gem that is the Biltmore Gardens.

The first talk will be entitled 'Biltmore: Exploring Olmsted's Horticultural Design Intent'. This presentation will focus on the early history of Biltmore Estate, the vision of the estate's owner, Mr. George Vanderbilt II, and the planning and execution of the ambitious project by the preeminent landscape architect, Fredrick Law Olmsted. The audience will be walked through all of the historic garden areas and other garden areas of the estate, with a discussion on recent estate projects, and the decisions that have been made to ensure that the concepts that went into the original development of the estate have been maintained.

The second talk by Jordana is 'Seasonal Horticultural Displays at Biltmore'. This presentation will cover the process by which seasonal displays at Biltmore are designed, planned and implemented. We will begin by investigating sources of inspiration, work through putting pencil to paper for design and get into methods to work across the seasons to get as much use out of seasonal plants as possible. Containers, as well as landscape beds, will be addressed.

Jordana Chalnack came to horticulture when she was in her 20s and living in Vermont. To earn extra money, she worked on a friend's cut flower farm. Being surrounded by the beauty of her garden sparked an appreciation for the ornament of plants as well as a curiosity for all things botanical. When Jordana returned to North Carolina, she applied for a gardening job at Biltmore but did not have enough experience and so this inspired her to return to school for horticulture, earning an Associate of Applied Science degree from Haywood Community College in 2006.

Jordana began working at Biltmore in December of 2006 in the Azalea garden. In 2011 she moved into the Conservatory, becoming the Conservatory Horticulturalist in 2013. She says that her time in the conservatory was intensely creative and she was able to sharpen her design skills and thoroughly explore color and texture. In 2017, she moved out of the conservatory and into a supervisory position of the Entry crew. This role has allowed her to utilize her knowledge of hardy woody and herbaceous plants in the Biltmore permanent landscape settings, as well as drawing on her knowledge of tropical and annual plant materials in areas that have seasonal change-outs as well as interiorscaping.

The Spring Garden Symposium is on Saturday, March 14th from 9:00 am to about noon. It will be held in the Rogow Community Room at the Transylvania County Library in Brevard. Doors will open at 8:15am for refreshments and socializing, with the speaker beginning at 9:00 am. The entry fee is \$10.00 payable at the door, and this includes a chance to win some really nice door

prizes including gift certificates to local garden centers. This event is open to the public, and Master Gardeners both past and present. For more information please call the Cooperative Extension at 828-884-3109.

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