

## ELIZABETH RIVER GARDEN CLUB COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Elizabeth River Garden Club is dedicated to the conservation and beautification of Portsmouth and its surroundings and supports several organizations and their initiatives with both funding and volunteer efforts.

### Paradise Creek Nature Park

The Elizabeth River Garden Club will concentrate “special projects funds” for three years to support the creation of Paradise Creek Nature Park, an undertaking of the Elizabeth River Project. Our three-year commitment allows the Elizabeth River Project to know that funding will be consistent for that length of time and allows the ERGC to have a substantial role in the reclamation of this industrial creek. Following are the plans for our \$2,000 contribution for each of the three years beginning in 2012:

- Year One: Support one acre of wild flower planting along the park frontage. This includes tilling, seeding and planting wildflower seed mixture.
- Year Two: Plant native trees along park pathways.
- Year Three: Create an interactive tree trail at the park. Visitors would walk through the trail to identify different trees using educational materials and identification markers.

To benefit this project, ERGC sponsored a Contemporary Flower Arranging Workshop in March, 2012, and raised enough to complete funding for the first year of the commitment. Additionally, for three years, the proceeds of the sale of both versions of the The Styles of Flower Arranging are dedicated to this endeavor. Finally, ERGC also plans to provide volunteer support.



Rendering of future Paradise Creek Nature Park

Anyone interested in helping support this project by purchasing the Styles of Flowering Arranging books may find information on the <Flower Arranging Books> page on this website.

## Hill House

This four-story, English basement style home was built in Portsmouth in 1825 and still houses many of the furnishings and decorative accessories collected by successive generations of the Hill family over 150 years of gracious and fashionable living.

In a long-standing tradition for many years, ERGC members have decorated this historic house on North Street for the Christmas season. Closed for several years, the Hill House reopened in 2011 to public visitors and once again ERGC members stepped up to arrange appropriate period decorations. This is likely to continue as an ERGC community project.

This house was open for the Historic Garden Week Tour on Saturday, April 21, 2012. All the rooms had fresh flower arrangements made by ERGC members.

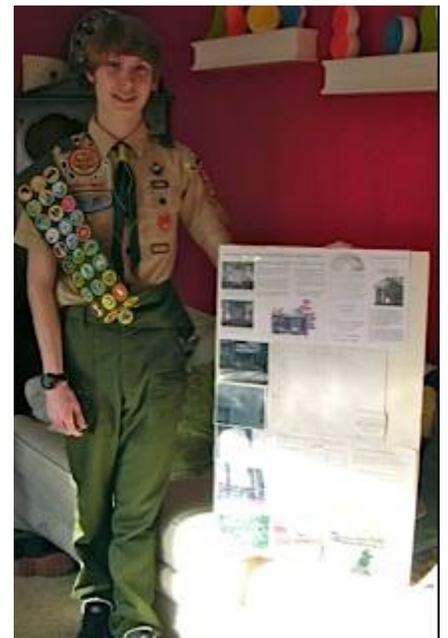
Following are photos of some of the 2011 seasonal arrangements, inside and out:



## Jewish Museum and Cultural Center

Chevra T'helim Synagogue on Effingham Street in Olde Towne Portsmouth had housed a Jewish congregation from 1918 until 1985. In 2002 the Friends of Chevra T'helim organized to preserve the historic landmark and opened the Jewish Museum and Cultural Center in 2008. Shortly after building renovations were completed, the Friends turned their attention to the grounds and ERGC agreed to help. They collaborated with a young man looking for an Eagle Scout landscaping project and funded plantings that would block the view of an unsightly parking lot and beautify the back corner of the property. These plantings, installed in 2010, would not impede plans for future expansion of the museum facility.

The following photos illustrate the progress from the planning and preparing of the beds to the planting of the white Camellias sasanqua 'Autumn Rocket'.



Eagle Scout  
Andrew Creech  
presenting his  
completed  
landscaping  
project at a  
meeting of the  
Elizabeth River  
Garden Club

### **The Scatter Garden in Cedar Grove Cemetery, Portsmouth**

Since 2007 when the Portsmouth Cedar Grove Cemetery Foundation and the City of Portsmouth opened it for the scattering of cremated remains, ERGC has had the beautification of the Scatter Garden in Cedar Grove Cemetery as a community project. Each fall pansies are planted in the Scatter Garden and in the spring begonias are planted. These flowers provide color and a sense of life to the Scatter Garden. The Cedar Grove Cemetery Scatter Garden is one of only three in the Commonwealth.



Cedar Grove Cemetery Scatter Garden

## Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve

This urban oasis is Portsmouth's last viable wilderness area and habitat for native wildlife and includes a tidal creek and salt marsh, riparian pine and hardwood forest, wildflower meadows, and a non-tidal brackish lake. It offers interpretative trails and programs introducing visitors to its diverse wildlife.

The Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve has been the recipient of ERGC funding and many volunteer hours. Members have been involved in the clearing of phragmites, an invasive grass, and landscape design and planting around the new administration building and visitor center. Many members have volunteered for work crews over the years and the site was featured on the ERGC Historic Garden Week Tour of 2006. The Foundation also receives ongoing funding in the way of an ERGC membership

These photos show the lake, the shore of which had become clogged with invasive phragmites before the cleanup efforts of volunteers including members of ERGC. Also shown is Executive Director Randy Strutton perusing the ERGC-provided landscaping around the visitor center.



## Elizabeth River Project

This grassroots organization has been instrumental in making the public aware of the poor conditions of the Elizabeth River and has initiated programs supported by businesses, non-profits, and individuals to clean up the river and make it viable again for fishing, crabbing, even swimming, and especially for propagating new young marine life, including oysters. In the past ERGC has supported the Elizabeth River Project with funds and has volunteered at their RiverFest events. In 2011 ERGC committed to a 3-year program of aiding the replenishment of Paradise Creek, a major endeavor of the Elizabeth River Project. This commitment includes funding and volunteers and begins in 2012. A description of this project is found at the beginning of this tab.

## Non-Profit Memberships

The ERGC has supported several non-profit organizations with ongoing yearly memberships. These include the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Elizabeth River Project, and the Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation. The committee considers these to be standing projects of the ERGC. In 2011, it added a membership to the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. Links to each of these worthwhile organizations are found on the <links> page of this web site.