

# Petal Pushing

WITH BULBS IN FULL BLOOM AND THE POPULAR ANNUAL PLANT SALE IN FULL FORCE, IT'S THE PERFECT SEASON FOR A TRIP TO MYERS PARK'S WING HAVEN GARDENS AND BIRD SANCTUARY


BY MICHAEL J. SOLENDER

**S**trolling the manicured grounds at Wing Haven Gardens it's easy to imagine the late Elizabeth Clarkson sharing afternoon tea on her shaded patio with her neighbor Elizabeth Lawrence. The women shared a special bond developed over years of working together in their respective gardens.

Once the private gardens and residence of Elizabeth and Edwin Clarkson, today Wing Haven's three acres of formal gardens, woodlands, and special plantings is enjoyed by thousands of visitors annually. And since 2008, visitors to Wing Haven have also had access to the adjacent Elizabeth Lawrence House and Garden. The Clarkson's neighbor from 1948, Lawrence was a renowned gardener and accomplished writer. From 1957 to 1971, Lawrence wrote more than 700 weekly gardening columns for *The Charlotte Observer*. The Lawrence property is maintained as a learning center featuring a number of unique examples of woody plants,

perennials, and bulbs.

But Wing Haven remains the star of the show. Starting at the main gate, a series of brick pathways lead past fragrant annuals in bloom. Head in the direction of the upper garden and you'll find varied colorful ground-cover such as Sweet Box, Bugleweed, English Ivy and Periwinkle. The Kagawa path, named for a favored Japanese poet, affords the long view of the garden encompassing its entire width. Springtime finds lavender blooms of Lady Mulberry Azaleas along the walkway.

"Visitors in late April will experience this garden at its peak of color," says Jeffrey Drum, the garden curator. "We are loaded with bulbs, including wood hyacinths and scillia that lay down a blanket of pale blue, white and a touch of pink. It is quite magical." *Wing Haven Gardens & Bird Sanctuary*, 248 Ridgewood Ave., 704-331-0664, [www.winghavengardens.com](http://www.winghavengardens.com), \$6 Adults, Children under 18 and members free. 

## GET GROWING

Each April, Wing Haven holds semiannual plant sales as fundraisers and community outreach. Gorgeous, hard-to-find plants (past years have included Prostrate Monkey Puzzle Trees and Pseudo Camellias) are featured and Wing Haven's knowledgeable volunteer staff is on hand to provide advice based on their Southern garden knowledge.

Tue. April 16, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
(Wing Haven members only,  
\*Membership available that day  
at the gate).

Wed. April 17, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thur. April 18 – Sat. April 20,  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.