



South Atlantic Region of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
60th Annual Convention
Historic Boone Tavern and Restaurant
Berea, Kentucky
March 20-22, 2022

“Coming Home to Kentucky”

Jonathan Webb
Sunday, March 20th - Evening Banquet Speaker



Jonathan Webb is the Founder and CEO of AppHarvest, a sustainable foods company developing and operating some of the world’s largest high-tech indoor farms to build an efficient food system. AppHarvest’s farms are designed to grow non-GMO produce using sunshine, 100% rainwater and up to 90% less water than open-field growing, all while producing yields up to 30 times that of traditional agriculture in a climate-resilient growing system.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky’s Gatton College of Business, Jonathan spent years developing massive solar projects for the U.S. Department of Defense. During this time, Jonathan learned about the Netherlands’ modern, tech-forward system of hydroponic agriculture. This research, coupled with reports that global food production would need to nearly double by 2050 and news of expanding drought and wildfire across the country, led Jonathan to realize that the American food system required change – fast.

Jonathan returned home to Kentucky the same year to start AppHarvest. Jonathan knew that, by harnessing the best of nature’s capabilities with future-forward technology to grow delicious produce at scale, we could tackle systemic supply chain issues while also advocating for modern methods of sustainable farming. He also knew that AppHarvest could reduce environmentally costly diesel emissions incurred during the shipping process by locating closer to consumers, all while delivering more reliably fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables.

AppHarvest currently operates its flagship farm – about the size of 50 football fields – in Morehead, Ky., producing tomatoes. The company is developing a network of farms to

produce a variety of vine crops, leafy greens, and berries with three more farms currently under construction.

Note: Our program for the Monday, March 21st Luncheon was to be given by Jon Carloftis, Gardener Designer. Unfortunately, his schedule has changed, and he must have surgery that day. He was so disappointed to miss the convention however I know you join me in wishing him a quick recovery. He has asked his friend, Alex Narramore, to provide us with a real treat of a program! See her bio below.

Alex Narramore

Monday, March 21 Luncheon Program



Alex Narramore

The Mischief Maker

Alex Narramore is a botanically accurate sugar flower artist based in Lexington, KY. Alex was educated in art and is a self-taught baker. Merging her love for gardening with sculpting and color, Alex grows the specimens in her garden that she needs to study and observe to accurately sculpt to a correct scale and paint the sugar flowers that will later adorn her cakes. Each sugar petal, stamen, and flower part is made by hand and each finished bloom is hand painted. The cake designs are retired immediately upon baking and are never

recreated. Very low volume, only one cake per month is ideally accepted, as the detail work for each cake can take many weeks of preparation. Alex works with her mother on the sugar flowers at her grandmother's house in eastern Kentucky. Tucked away in the mountains, they do some of their best creative work with their sugar flowers. Whether at Mamaw's or in her home garden downtown in Lexington, she can always be found somewhere between the garden and the studio, usually with her Irish Setter, Mocha, on her heels.

Alex has been recognized world-wide within her field, including: periodical publications, news outlets, being named one of the top four international wedding cake designers of 2015 by the Cake Masters' Awards, and being named, by prestigious judges: Sylvia Weinstock, Mike McCarey, Chef Nicholas Lodge, Colette Peters, Ron Ben- Israel, Kerry Vincent, Eddie Spence M.B.E., Chef Sherry Yard, and Lisa Mansour, the 2017 winner of the award for international wedding cake artist of the year by The Golden Tier Awards. The Golden Tier Awards is the first American-hosted, international awards show of its kind. This exclusive event brings together pastry chefs, cake and sugar-artists, dessert professionals, authors and writers, chocolatiers, instructors, and retailers from across the globe to celebrate the very best the industry has to offer. In 2018, The Mischief Maker was named one of the top 10 cake artists in the United States by Cake Masters magazine.

Please see <http://www.mischiefmakercakes.com/> for a preview of Ms. Narramore's amazing work!

Lisa Kuduk

Monday, March 21 Horticulture Presentation

“The Wonderful World of Daffodils: How to grow, show, and enjoy them!”

Lisa Kuduk, and her husband Dr. Michael Kuduk, live in Winchester, Kentucky on a small horse farm with their 31-year-old horse, dogs, cats, and chickens. They have been members of The American Daffodil Society since 2005, and accredited judges since 2015. Both have served on the American Daffodil Society Board with Michael on the Executive committee, Regional Vice President while Lisa served as the National Youth Chairman. They are avid exhibitors with many national awards to their name. They have over 1000 different varieties of daffodils on their farm with more added every year and are working on making their garden an ADS display garden.

Their love of flowers does not end with daffodils as they are members of The American Dahlia, Daylily, Peony, and Iris Societies and Lisa is currently an Apprentice Iris judge.

Val Schirmer

Monday, March 21 Farmer Florist Program



Val Schirmer

Founder of Three Toads Farm, Winchester, Kentucky

Monday, March 21 Afternoon Program

“Growing Fabulous Garden-to-Vase Florals All Season Long”

A little Kentucky bourbon is most likely the force behind every great big, totally far-fetched idea. That’s what happened in 1997 when Val Schirmer made a pact with a family friend and newly retired firefighter Charlie Hendricks to start a tiny business growing flowers. But not just any flowers. The pair had the crazy notion they wanted to grow the kind of flowers that could literally stop people in their tracks.

Over a few bourbon-infused toasts that summer evening on the Schirmer’s country porch, Three Toads Farm — which Martha Stewart Weddings has named one of the top 10 farmer florists in the country — was born and the pair learned through trial and error over the next several years to grow the biggest, boldest Oriental lilies that most people have ever seen. And that’s the basis for everything the farm does: big, bold, using the largest bulbs commercially available. That applies to the holiday and spring bulbs they force, along with dahlias, peonies, and more.

Today Three Toads Farm is part of the local flower renaissance taking place around the world, growing uncommon and heirloom “stop you in your tracks” flowers, teaching on-the-farm workshops and Flower Schools, and — thanks to Hendricks’ daughter Elizabeth, who first interned as a Toad when she was 11 — creating exquisite fresh-from-the-garden floral design for select weddings and events.

For the past five years Val has served as the Southeast regional director of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and has now been elected the Association's president. This past fall she published her first online on-demand course produced by The Gardeners Workshop for home gardeners and commercial growers, "Forcing Glorious Blooms for the Holidays & Beyond." Ms. Schirmer speaks at regional and national conferences and was most recently interviewed for The Podcast with Scott Shepherd, Debra Prizing's Slow Flowers podcast and Niki Jabbour's Weekend Gardener (the largest garden radio program in Canada).

Please see the Three Toads Farm website for a preview: <https://www.threetoadsfarm.com/>