

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023





Dear Members and Friends,

It's been an incredible year and an honor to serve as the Gardens' new executive director. In this time, I've begun to gain an understanding of where we are as an organization and where we need to be. The progress highlighted in this report has been a team effort - with an engaged board of directors, a knowledgeable staff, and a community of volunteers and donors who say "yes" – all helping to lead the way as thought partners and co-creators.

As we continue to work to preserve the Gardens' beauty and to build upon its educational foundation, the Gardens' history, importance to the Outer Banks community as one of its key cultural attractions, and your feedback will continue to serve as a guide as we set goals for the future.

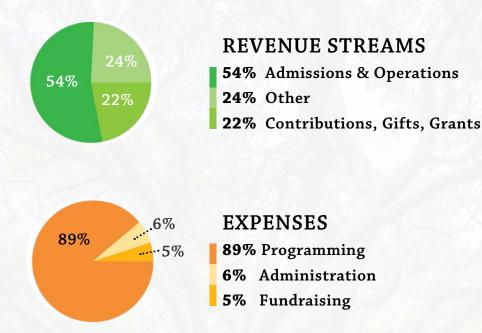
For now, enjoy reading about the progress we've made!

All my best,

Theresa M. Armendarez

24mulz





#### **NEW LOGO/BRANDING**

As we reflected on the Gardens' history, and discussed how we will continue to grow as a vibrant organization, we recognized that there was a need to revisit our membership levels and benefits, and that it was time to refresh our brand. The Gardens' new membership levels offer a wide range of benefits - whether you are a student or longtime supporter.

Membership levels		HYDRANGEA Individual	<b>CAMELLIA</b> Dual	<b>AZALEA</b> Household	<b>MAGNOLIA</b> Sustainer	OAK CIRCLE
Number of Individuals and/or Family Size	1	1	2	4	6	8
All listed rates do not include sales tax	\$30	\$60	\$85	\$110	\$500	\$1500
(Community Discount Rate)*		(\$50)	(\$70)	(\$90)		



Our new logo reflects the history of the Gardens, its beautiful location, and bright future. Its design now includes traditional Tudor Rose colors, "Manteo, NC" and a small silhouette of Roanoke Island.

#### **SURVEY RESULTS:**

You Asked, We Answered!

# PLANT SALES The Gardens' nurses

77%

The Gardens' nursery is filled with native and heritage plants, new and unusual cultivars, and butterfly and other pollinator plants. Have a gardening or plant question? Just ask a knowledgeable nursery team member!

#### **GARDENING WORKSHOPS**



Look for more hands-on seasonal workshops and classes designed to provide information and tips for home, coastal, and native plant gardening.

#### MUSIC



"Sundays at the Overlook" music series offered visitors a chance to relax and enjoy artists at the Gardens' sound overlook. More music performances to come!

#### SEASONAL EVENTS



"A Night of 1587 Pumpkins" – a family-friendly event at which we attempted to light 1,587 jack-o-lanterns, held costume & scream contests, and had hot chocolate and s'mores available to enjoy at an open-air fire.

### WHAT VISITORS SAY

"

We are very happy to have found these well-maintained gardens. On the day we visited, the gardens were not particularly busy, so our visit turned out to be a quiet garden stroll to the soundtrack of nature...

Mossy coatings, Spanish moss hanging from trees, frogs, lizards and something new around every turn.

- Jean-Maurice



Wonderful local entertainment location.

Our little one loves the pirate ship
playground . . . We love the seasons of
colors. They do a great job with events year
round. Well worth the annual membership!

- Sean

A must see experience. So peaceful and quiet. - Cindy & Dan



This was so beautiful. My husband and I were married in a certain spot 36 years ago and we just got a picture of the place we were married in Elizabethan Gardens. The whole experience was wonderful and it brought back beautiful wonderful memories.

- Donna



You must see these gardens... just beautifully planted and very well maintained!!

– Susan



We visited the gardens for the butterfly release and enjoyed it immensely. Our daughters loved watching the butterflies come to life and fly away before their eyes. The staff educated us on what butterflies enjoy and what we could add to our gardens to keep them happy and returning. We were even able to purchase a few plants at the small greenhouse they have on the grounds. Not to mention the beauty and serenity of the gardens. All the hydrangeas were in full bloom and beautiful. It was like walking through a fairytale.

- Ashley



My husband and I discovered a visual coastal treasure chest while visiting beautiful Elizabethan Gardens during our recent vacation to the Outer Banks area! Elizabethan Gardens is A MUST SEE! The Gardens are filled with precious and unique 'gems'! I took seemingly a million photos! I'll forever remember this amazing visit!

– Brenda



Lovely afternoon with the family and learning a little history as well. Beautiful scenery and sitting areas.

- Gladys

### **OUR TEAM** 2023-2024



#### Theresa Armendarez

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A California native raised in Arizona, Theresa received her B.A. in Communication from Arizona State University and J.D. from UC Hastings College of the Law. Her second career and passion for the nonprofit sector began as director of the Beach Food Pantry in Kitty Hawk. Before joining the Gardens, Theresa completed Duke's Continuing Studies Certificate in Nonprofit Management, the Outer Banks Chamber Leadership Program and served as executive director of Higher Edge in New London, CT. Theresa is delighted to have returned to the OBX which she and her husband consider home.

# Dan Hossack

**GARDENS & FACILITIES MANAGER** 

An interest in the natural world and an enduring curiosity have driven Dan towards forests and new environments. Before moving to the Outer Banks, he studied science and philosophy at UMass Boston. Through partnerships at the College of the Albemarle he was fortunate to work with the National Science Foundation on forest health initiatives. Scientific study moved towards the art and history of landscape design as he learned to garden amongst names like Olmsted, Steele, Shurcliff, and Farrand. As Dan learned and experienced more about these impressive relics of place-making, it became clear that he wanted to return to work in one special place.

Initially the nursery manager at The Elizabethan Gardens, he now works with an

impressive team managing the gardens, greenhouses, and facilities.



# Laura Hensley PROGRAMS MANAGER

Laura has a variety of experiences in education, including formal classroom teaching, informal education in after-school programs, summer camps, and developing programs. She moved back to her home state of North Carolina last year after working in Mississippi developing programs for the Mississippi Aquarium. She lived in Alaska for 11 years working in outdoor recreation and education while getting her master's degree in biology. Prior to joining the Gardens, she served as Curator of Education at the North Carolina Aquarium at Roanoke Island. Her passion is environmental education and connecting people to the natural world through hands-on learning experiences.

# **OUR TEAM** 2023-2024

# Tamara Hughes GIFT SHOP MANAGER

Tamara moved to the Outer Banks from Richmond, Virginia. She studied fashion merchandising and interior design at the Braxton School of business and has spent her career in tourism retail management. Prior to joining the Gardens, she served for the past twelve years as the manager of Jennette's Pier's gift shop.



# **Phil Brockway**

ASSISTANT GARDENS MANAGER

A devoted gardener and plantsman, Phil is detailed and creative in his approach toward his work and life. A native of northern Virginia, his academic and professional development took him towards travel and a deep appreciation of nature. His attachment to the natural world and history has led him to preserve it for others and Phil is a devoted steward of both topics. The kinds of work Phil has been involved with in his career varies from archeological surveys with the National Park Service to caring for Roanoke Islands' most storied property. He is an impressive mix of many different talents and good spirit.



# Glyn Byrd NURSERY & GREENHOUSE SUPERVISOR

Glyn grew up in the Outer Banks. His history as a market gardener began as a provider of fresh vegetables and herbs that evolved into caring for a wide variety of plants. Glyn is knowledgeable and affable with a keen eye for organization. He is working to bring the most historically significant plants from our garden to yours.



# COMPLETED PROJECTS & NEW EQUIPMENT

A newly installed roof allowed us to reopen the bathrooms adjacent to the Overlook Terrace. A new tractor, gator and trailer have significantly helped our small gardens team accomplish tasks necessary to maintain the Gardens' beauty.

#### PATH LIGHTING PROJECT

In April '22, we sent out an appeal for contributions to repair and replace 40 existing path lights, and to add more. Donors contributed over \$5400! With additional funding from the Cannon Foundation, we have installed 108 new lights to the Gardens' paths, and have upgraded our capacity to

increase this number in the future. With bright paths, we look forward to hosting more evening events and educational programs! Thank you!

#### **COLONIST BRICK PATH**

The Gardens established a colonist brick path to honor the 117 valiant men and women who, as English colonists, came to Roanoke Island and walked "away through the dark forest into history" as the Lost Colony. Each brick placed at the Gardens' Great Gates entry is engraved with a colonist's name. Thank you to those who contributed to this special project which has been completed!





We lit over 250 jack-o-lanterns, held costume and scream contests, and had hot chocolate and s'mores available to enjoy at an open-air fire. Join us for this family-friendly event on Saturday, October 28, 2023 from 5-8pm!







# COMMUNITY











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# US CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE EVENT 2022

We had a great time seeing the tree and making pine cone ornaments with the community at Ft. Raleigh National Historic Site on Sunday, November 13, 2022.













### COMMUNITY



#### TRIBUTE TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The Elizabethan Gardens released 70 butterflies, as a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II, on Tuesday, September 27th at 1:30 p.m. at the Great Lawn. The event was free to attendees with regular garden admission.

Queen Elizabeth II recognized the historical significance of Roanoke Island in 1984 on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of English explorers. Princess Anne represented the Queen and traveled to North Carolina to join the celebration, reflecting the Queen's





interest in the exploration and colonization of the Island. Princess Anne was interested in the design as well as the history of the Gardens. "She had a meeting with the head gardener and later sent him seeds for the herb garden," explained Gardens' Executive Director Theresa Armendarez. "Later, when the Gardens established the Rose Garden, the Gardens received the gift of a Queen Elizabeth Grandiflora Rose from Her Majesty which has thrived in the formal walled garden."

In 2021, the Gardens celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, paralleling the celebration of Queen Elizabeth's seventieth year on the throne. "We were pleased to have with us members of the North Carolina chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire who planted an oak at the Great Lawn in honor of the Queen's reign," said Gardens' Board President Linda Davenport. "With this special tribute, we joined all those in our country and beyond who celebrated her inspiration and achievements over 70 years as Queen."





PlantED is designed to inspire an appreciation of science as it relates to gardening, nature, and the environment.

We are off to a fantastic start with the hiring of a Programs Manager, and due to the generosity of the Keeney family, individual donations, and grants from Dominion Energy, the Cannon Foundation, and the Outer Banks Community Foundation, we are building capacity to support our efforts.

The new greenhouse - dedicated to Margaret French Keeney-Sterns - with additional funding from Dominion Energy for interactive displays and supplies - will allow us to educate children and adults about plants and their various uses. Funding from the Cannon Foundation to renovate the Discovery Cottage will provide newly designed indoor and outdoor classroom space. In addition, plans for the cottage garden will add sensory elements to enhance the experience for all visitors - which is being made possible by a grant from the Outer Banks Community Foundation.







Camp Discovery 2023 at the Elizabethan Gardens began Monday, June 26th! Campers enjoyed a funfilled summer of nature-based games, activities, crafts, and more. The goal of our camp program is to foster appreciation and love for the environment through hands-on learning experiences.











Explore the wonder of nature with your preschooler through hands-on learning activities and nature play. Each scheduled month has a different theme, such as outdoor play, winter hibernation, popular pollinators, plants as food, and spring gardening. Sessions include a story, activity or craft, and a light snack. Activities are designed for ages 3-5 years.

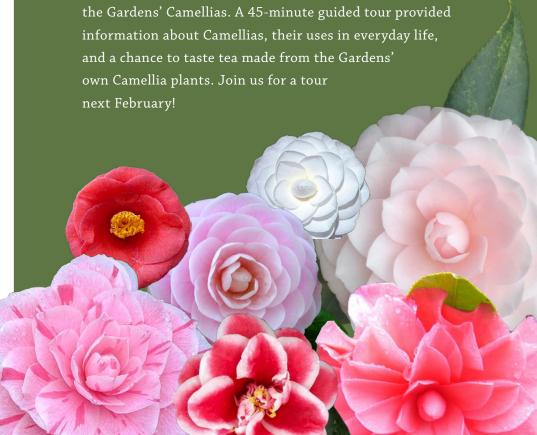


or choose one of three separate instructor-led programs; soil science, life-cycles, or plant biology. Our field trips give teachers the ability to supplement their curriculum and student learning in an outdoor setting with programs that are science-based and interactive. We look forward to welcoming teachers and students in 2023-2024.

#### FEBRUARY CAMELLIA TOURS & TEA TASTING

In 2022, the Gardens received news that it had been selected to be added to the list of the American Camellia Trail Gardens, a project of the American Camellia Society. American Camellia Trail gardens are public gardens containing notable collections of camellias. The Elizabethan Gardens joins as one of only four gardens on the trail in North Carolina. Our gardens currently have 124 novel cultivars of camellias on site. Early-season varieties begin blooming in autumn with later varieties blooming through April.

In February 2023, we opened to the public to highlight





#### STANLEY BEACHUM TALK

As part of the Gardens' 2023 Camellia celebration, Stanley Beacham met with a group of 30 visitors and discussed his work at the Gardens. After serving in the Coast Guard for 18 years, he took advantage of a government program offered to veterans to develop job skills. Stanley joined a program at what is now the Norfolk Botanical Gardens where he began his career as a horticulturist and worked across the region. He joined Superintendent Louis Midgette as a gardener at the Elizabethan Gardens and worked with him until Midgette's retirement, when Beacham became Superintendent. Among other aspects of the Gardens, he described the development of the Gardens' renowned camellia collection.





The Elizabethan Gardens has seen tremendous growth and expansion over its 72-year history, bringing an amazing array of features much to the delight of members and visitors.

The Colonist Brick Walk, which commemorates the original English colonists which landed on Roanoke Island, was installed in 2017. The Great Gates, a gift from the French Ambassador and an entry point to the Gardens, were restored that same year. The John White Butterfly Center and Children's Discovery Cottage were opened in early 2019. Both venues were designed to offer new opportunities for educational experiences.

And as mother nature nourishes the beauty of the earth, she can also be very forceful - in late 2019, Hurricane Dorian took its toll on the Gardens, destroying a greenhouse and causing over \$20,000 in damage. With the help of our dedicated staff, volunteers and many donations toward the recovery effort, we were up and running in less than a month.

Then Covid-19 hit in March of 2020, and the Gardens was closed for two months, with herculean efforts allowing plant sales by appointment; new covid protocols for employees and guests; an innovative timed ticketing process to control the numbers allowed in the Gardens and receipt of the Payroll Protection Plan funds to keep the staff working throughout the pandemic. Having to cancel events, programs

and planned work took a tremendous toll on the Garden's financial picture, but the good news was that contributions to the annual fund and new and renewed memberships grew. To adapt to the post-Covid world, the very successful Kentucky Derby Party of previous years became a Derby Party to Go; WinterLights was reimagined to allow socially distanced attendance; and the Gardens had a successful year because folks flocked to be in an outdoor, safe environment to enjoy the sanctuary and beauty.



In 2021, to celebrate the 70th year anniversary, the history of the Gardens was unveiled through a series of artistic panels displayed in Odom Hall to tell the story of the Garden Club of North Carolina's project — which started in 1951 and is now the Elizabethan Gardens. During the same year, the iconic Gazebo was moved to a safe location, saved from falling into the Sound as erosion continued to take away the Garden's shoreline. The Enchanted Faery Project created a visual and audio pathway through the Gardens,

as told by 12 ancient and fanciful faeries. The official 70-year anniversary was celebrated along with members of the North Carolina Daughters of the British Empire. Together our organizations celebrated the Garden's 70th Year along with our namesake, Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee 70th year.

The following year 2022, with generous donations and grants, an authentic English greenhouse was procured; new and improved pathway lighting was installed throughout the paths; out-of-service restrooms were repaired and reopened; entertainment events were introduced and an educational program manager was hired to enhance the focus on educational opportunities to be offered.

The Gardens is recognized as an ArbNet Level 2 arboretum, a member of the Camelia Society, an official stop on the Bluebird Trail and an excellent source of host plants for many butterfly species.

Under the exceptional leadership of Executive Directors Carl Curnutte and Theresa Armendarez, the amazing staff, volunteers, members, sponsors and donors, the Elizabethan Gardens has grown and will continue to thrive as a memorial to the past and a gateway to the future.

### Linda Davenport

**OUTGOING BOARD PRESIDENT** 



# VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers do so much for the Gardens. From weeding, pruning, hanging lights, stuffing eggs, talking to guests, handing out marshmallows, giving tours, and everything in between, our volunteers are the cream of the crop. We cannot thank you enough for the time, energy, and smiling faces you bring to this space!





#### JOIN US AS A VOLUNTEER!

Do you like being outside, talking to people, or gardening? We have a variety of tasks you can help with, including digging dirt, helping with educational programs, events, the gift shop and other ongoing garden activities.



Sign-up on our website at elizabethangardens.org/volunteers-get-involved/

# DID YOU KNOW?



#### THE BUTTERFLY HIGHWAY

The Gardens is a "pollinator pitstop" along the North Carolina Wildlife
Federation's "Butterfly Highway."
The Butterfly Highway is a statewide conservation restoration initiative that aims to restore native pollinator habitats to areas impacted by urbanization, land use change and agriculture across North Carolina.

# AMERICAN CAMELLIA TRAIL GARDEN

American Camellia Trail gardens are public gardens containing notable collections of camellias.

The Elizabethan Gardens

joined this past year as one



of only four gardens on the trail in North Carolina. We celebrated our collection this past February with tours and tea tastings - join us in February 2024!

#### NORTH CAROLINA BIRDING TRAIL

Are you an avid or novice bird watcher? Did you know the Elizabethan Gardens is a great place to view birds and a site on the North Carolina Birding Trail? The NC Birding Trail is a variety of locations that "serves as a driving trail to link birders and nature-based tourists with great birding sites across the state and the local communities in which they are found."



Our location with maritime forest, beach, pinewood, and hardwood forest creates ideal habitats

for various species of birds including warblers, ducks, geese, sparrows, wrens, hawks, and many other birds. Visit us today to begin your bird watching journey in the Outer Banks.

#### **ORGANIC MAINTENANCE**

To better serve our environment and our visitors we decided to begin maintaining the Elizabethan Gardens organically 4 years ago. The benefits of this change were immediate and heartening. By providing a healthier, more sustainable garden for our visitors we can better serve the people who come here to have fun, to work, and to learn.

# ANNUAL LUNCHEON

The Annual Luncheon and Butterfly Release held in May celebrated the Gardens' new educational greenhouse, this past year's accomplishments and what lies ahead! Many thanks to our entire community and guests for your continued support that enables us to inspire an appreciation of nature.







### ANNUAL LUNCHEON

### 2022 AWARD WINNERS

### **Dominion Energy**

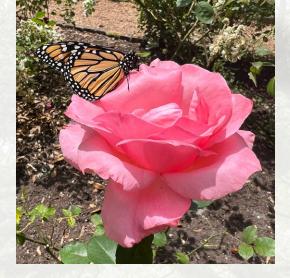
BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Dominion has been a long-standing supporter of the Gardens. This past year was no exception - providing \$20,000 to support PlantED's new educational greenhouse, and sponsoring WinterLights' Virginia Dare Night. Dominion volunteers came out for a day to help hang lights, and attended Virginia Dare Night to help collect food for the Roanoke Island Food Pantry. Thank you Dominion for continuing to serve our community!

### **Rich Stone**

INDIVIDUAL OF THE YEAR

Rich joined the board's facilities committee as a community member and immediately took on the task of project managing the Discovery Cottage renovation and new greenhouse installation. His skills as a retired engineer have been invaluable as we near the completion of both projects! Thank you Rich!







# Terri & Craig Davis VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Terri Davis not only regularly volunteers to help with gardening tasks, but as a veterinarian has taken care of our Garden cats, Camellia and Kevin. Craig managed to get our old gator working again - which has added another tool to accomplish daily gardening tasks. Thank you both for sharing your time and knowledge!

# Fred & Joan Brumbach SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR WINTERLIGHTS

When we set out with the goal of highlighting the gardens' trees and Elizabethan design, Fred volunteered his time, creativity and knowledge as a lighting and sound engineer to help us bring our vision to life. The Sunken Garden was lit for the first time to showcase its mosaic design, and the gardens' trees were illuminated to showcase their beauty. Joan volunteered her time to plan and install lights. She also designed and created a new suit for Santa that is befitting the Elizabethan era. Thank you both!

### DONORS 2022 - 2023

#### \$25,000 and above

The Cannon Foundation

#### \$15.000-\$20.000

Outer Banks Community Foundation Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Dominion Energy

#### \$5,000-\$10,000

Betsy Brown Southern Bank and Trust

#### \$2,500 - \$5,000

Garden Club of North Carolina

#### \$1.000-\$2.500

Brenda Crocker Frank & Linda Davenport

Sarah Johns Jaye Massecar Barbara Schultz

#### \$500-\$1,000

Haley Buford Eddie Eagle Rosemary Haas David Hatchell Vicki Hecht-Boehme Gail Reynolds

Patricia Ann Rudolph Dixson

Bob Snapp

The Winston Salem Foundation

Joseph Zoll

#### \$250-\$500

Carol Cowell
Dan Crocker
Hecht Family Foundation
Bill Ivey

L.H. Puckett Connie Rose Ann Rust Jane Webster George & Lynda Wood Celeste Wood

#### \$100 - \$250

Ahoskie Garden Club All Seasons Garden Club

Amy Allis Angie Austin Mollie Bass Jim Bell

Bermuda Run Garden Club

Kathleen Boyle David Brandt

David & Dee Buchanan Thomas Cafferty Michael Callaghan Carrie Campbell

Charlotte and West Peidmont Judges Club

D.M. Clooney Alex Corle

Rita Ayers & David Morris

Jeanne DeCamps Ralph Deger Chris DeLong Allie Jane Dilday Lisa Early

Edgecombe Garden Club

Jennifer Evans
Randolph Fenninger
Maria Ferguson
Donald Ferrell
Jack Fertal
Dennis Firme
Susan Fugh
Gardenerettes Garden Club

Christopher Gauger
Elizabeth Granitzki
Margaret Harvey
Andy Hazenberg
Marlene Hendrickson
George Hettenhouse
Darene Honeycutt
Juliana Howdershell
Casi Huffman
Gail Hutchison
Christine Jewell

Samantha Lindsay & Justin Lenoir

Bill Keefe

King of Spades Garden Club

Kitty Hawk Kites
Judy Knight
Jenna Kroner
Sabrina Kropp
Alysa Labat
Colleen Laurendi
William Layng
Benita Lloyd
Nanette Loftis
Pat Mansfield
Colin Meyer
David Mohler
Harry Money
Rebecca Nugent

Loren Phillips

Donna Pittman Robert Preckajlo Jon Presgrave

Rich Square Garden Club Peter Riddleberger Rachel Ritenour Charles Ryan

Sardiswood Garden Club Kristi Cage & Sean Sheehan

Wayland Sermons
Richard Shaw
Bonny Sims
Chester Smith
Patricia Smrdel
Nannette Smyre
Neil Songer
Mary Stea
James Thompson
Betsy Toner
Candie Tran
Leroy Trimbath
Jayne Tutwiler
Tracy Volz

Kathleen Ward-Gaus Curt Welch Rhett White Travis Williams Sunshine Williams Nancy Grady Wilson

#### up to \$100

Marion Bachand Larry Bailey Janice Baker James Barkley

Tanju Sonuparlak & Billy Benson

Harold Casterline Laura Coover John Denny Karen Fisenhauer MaryBeth Enderle Michelle Evans Gavle Felton Barbara Fletcher William Ghirardi Christi Gordon Stuart Hale Lance Haworth Dorothy Hester Gail Hill Katy Johnson Kathy Jones William Kelly Bernice Kenneweg Timothy Kling

Lisa Brenskelle

Brian Morgan & Leslie Geiberger Kent Houston & Nita Boyce-Houston

Roena Oesting Glenn Rohrbach Brie Sansotta Bill Scott Chris Seawell Constance Serafin Veronica Shearin

Village Home & Garden Club BB Wylie & Don Walden

Anne Welch
Philip Wemer
Leland White
Jamelyn Williamson
Jayne Young

Thank you very much for your continued support!



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elizabethangardens.org (252) 473-3234