



# Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

*"Ninety-three Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"*

[www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org](http://www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org)

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Our speaker on **January 25** is **Scott Kratz**, champion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Project, an undertaking inspired when Scott met Harriet Tregoning in 2011 while Ms. Tregoning was D.C.'s planning director. Ms. Tregoning was thinking about the remaining piers still standing in the Anacostia River after the old high-way bridge was torn down and she and Scott hatched a plan to construct a bridge park modeled on New York City's HighLine. Scott consequently left his position as Vice-President for Education at the National Building Museum to embark full time on realizing this vision.

Scott has been a tireless promoter of the bridge park, engaging residents of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> wards in the park's design, helping to develop strategies to protect against loss of affordable housing, and thinking ahead about forming a workforce to man the small businesses envisioned to populate areas of the bridge ...e.g., food kiosks. He has encouraged and supported a Homebuyers Club, tenants' rights workshops, and planting urban farms east of the river. He has raised approximately \$26 million to realize the park's construction with the first phase to begin in 2018 and completion projected for 2019. The entire park is estimated to be constructed in 18 months.

There are many other aspects to the plan that involve citizens in the revival and renewal of their neighborhoods, and it's an ambitious effort to coordinate nature, affordable housing, and attractive surroundings while conserving and enhancing existing features. Scott has not wavered in his support!

—Jane Malish

The meeting will be held at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, North Bethesda, and will begin promptly at 10:30. Try not to be distracted by the wonderful aromas from the kitchen while our soups are warming up! Sharon Southerland, Carolyn Randall, Holly Joseph, and Regina Fitzgerald will be stirring up various soups. Salads, breads and desserts will be provided by Lois Brown, Nina Stark-Slapnik, Barbara Collier, Lise Ringland, Deb Peck, Judy Vassalloti, and Belva Finlay.

## Gorgeous Holiday Arrangements Bring Joy

*Candy Kessel, Yvonne Orkin and Carolyn Randall*  
Holiday Greens Co-chairs

Thanks to an over-the-top effort, members produced more than 160 beautiful arrangements December 14 to brighten the holidays for individuals, shelters, and charities where folks need a lift. Our adept and enthusiastic team fashioned and delivered professional-quality centerpieces to A Wider Circle, Bethesda Cares staff, Bethesda Cares Community Goodwill Dinner, Bethesda Police Station, Catholic Charities, Central Union Mission, Coalition for the Homeless, Community Based Shelter, Cornerstone Montgomery, National Center for Children and Families, Rainbow Shelter, Shepherd's Table, Stepping Stones Shelter, Whitman-Walker Health and Waverly House. We also took arrange-



One of the more than 160 holiday arrangements created by members to bring joy to the community.

ments to several members in ill health or homebound. We produced and spread joy among ourselves and our recipients, generating a true holiday spirit.

### **A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS IMPRESSIVE EFFORT.**

Volunteers came early to set up the work area, then members arrived with bags of fresh evergreens. Diane Beverly had made lots of bows to add color and Maria Marzullo offered design guidance to those seeking direction. Members fashioned unique and spectacular designs, creating a breathtaking array of mini-masterpieces from the chaos of evergreen branches and array of baubles.

Pam Gates returned as Ms. Santa for a festive and spirited gift exchange following lunch. A special thank you to American Plant that provided cardboard trays for deliveries and bolts of nearly discarded ribbon that Nina Stark-Slapnik rescued for BCGC in December 2015.

Please pat yourself on the back if you helped in this traditional and fun project.

### **Exchange an Unwanted Present**

*Candy Kessel*

Another BCGC novelty! You have a chance to swap a gift you don't want at a gift exchange at the January 25 general meeting. Bring a useless gift and you can take a gift. It's goodies for better barter! The goal is to better match gifts with owners who appreciate them... and rid ourselves of items we don't want but hate to toss or regift inappropriately.

Please don't wrap your item. And to avoid hurt feelings, please don't bring something you received at BCGC's gift exchange.

We'll pass out numbers to donors then draw numbers to determine who gets first choice, second choice, etc. Members may swap gifts with others if they wish to, informally.

Any gifts donated but not snapped up by another gift donor will be offered to non-participants when the official swap is over after lunch. Items left after that will be donated to an area thrift shop or church bazaar.



**We have never produced so many arrangements! The long tables piled high with greens in the beginning were considerably reduced by the end! There were arrangements everywhere—on the steps, on the tables, on the floor!**





After two years leading the club as President, Candy Kessel (left) returned to her job as head of the Greens Committee. She was assisted by Carolyn Randall (below, left)... and new member, Yvonne Orkin (below, right). Thank you for taking on a challenging job early, Yvonne!



In a brilliant move, the lunch committee turned the greens tables into food tables.



Maureen Valcour and Lou Olin received the finished arrangements and prepared them for delivery.



Over the years, more and more members have used natural garden items in their arrangements.



Long-time friends Betty Bartky, Regina Fitzgerald, and Deborah Shakelton loaded finished arrangements into Regina's car. Ready for delivery to shelters, churches, nursing homes, and hospitals.

## HORTICULTURAL NOTES

# *Fifty Shades of Green*

Carole Ottesen

Sitting by the window on a winter's day I can look out and count fifty shades of green—an outcome that never occurred to me in many wild years of outrageous plant lust. Once, I *had* to have one of just about everything that would survive in Zone 7. Now, fifteen, twenty, thirty years older and wiser I wish I'd paid more attention to shade and tone.

There is no going back. The reality is that one doesn't simply lop off or transplant huge deep blue green rhododendrons just to get them away from an also-too-big-to-transplant holly in a medium grass green that—if it doesn't exactly clash—certainly looks uncomfortable next to the rhodies.

One thing that helps to amend an unfavorable color combination is the addition of a mitigating plant—one that blends the two opposing colors. Fragrant sweet box (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*) is one such. The glossy 15" foliage has a bluish tone when mature, but the new growth is a brighter, more yellowish green. Sweet box is a great plant on its own and the deer leave it alone.

There has to be enough of a mitigating plant to make a statement. One or two little specimens won't be enough, but a copious ground cover billowing around the feet of the rhododendrons and holly would do nicely.

Another strategy to remedy an awkward combo is to surround one of the clashing colors with lots of plants of the opposing color. In the case of the rhodies versus holly, that might be a ground cover of bright green ferns or *Acorus*. The end effect will be an accent, an island of blue, in a sea of grass green.

Finally, one might add a third contrasting color to draw the eye away from the unlucky combo. Yellow *Acorus*, yellow juniper, or variegated *Liriope* (deer love it) are possibilities.



This last is the going-for-broke option that may backfire and end up looking like three clashing colors. Or it might turn out to be the brilliant stroke that turns mediocre into magnificent.

It's worth a try. Design challenges are what gardening is all about and what makes it a lifetime sport.