



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-four Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
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Sharon Washburn
Southerland's arrange-
ment fit the Halloween
theme at the October
meeting.

Pond Memories

Jane Malish

On June 20, 1936, Lily Pons, the celebrated opera diva, officially dedicated the new post office in Lilypons, Maryland. She travelled to the Washington, DC suburb especially for the gala ceremony where she sang an aria from the front porch of the new post office. All this pomp and circumstance occurred because back in June 1917 G. Leicester Thomas, Sr. started a fish hatchery then called Three Springs Fisheries which grew to be one of the country's largest goldfish suppliers. There was so much business that the United States Postal Service established the above mentioned post office specifically dedicated to the large volume of mail order parcels. And since Mr. Thomas was an ardent fan of Miss Pons, what better manifestation of his adoration than to name the new post office for her. And besides, there were all those lily ponds.

As time went by the operation became more botanical, focusing on water gardening and cultivating water lilies. In 1978 the company's official name became Lilypons Water Gardens.

On August 4 of this year Lilypons was 100 years old. Mr. Charles B. Thomas, the current family patriarch, turned over ownership to his daughter and an all-woman management team oversees the business. It's a business that provides clients with truly named water lilies, lotus, bog plants, advice, and service.

In keeping with Lilypons' emphasis on advice, **Richard Koogle**, the speaker at the meeting on **November 15**, will advise us how we can install our own water garden like those we've admired at our members' open gardens. He'll supply information on plants and fish we should choose, how to stock and maintain the ponds and the secrets to clean clear water. It will be a presentation you won't want to miss!

The meeting will begin at 10:30 at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, North Bethesda. Note that the meeting is on November 15.

A hot lunch will be served.

Save the Date: December 13! Holiday Greens Workshop

Deborah Shakelton, Patricia Pennington, Carolyn Randal

Our December meeting is a wonderful opportunity to create beautiful and festive holiday arrangements to spread cheer in our community during the holiday season. We deliver these arrangements to a variety of community organizations that provide care and assistance to some of our neighbors. This year we will make about 180 arrangements to share within our community. This meeting begins at 10 am as there is a lot to accomplish. We will need help setting up, cleaning up and delivering the arrangements. Sign-up sheets will be circulated at the November meeting.

Our arrangements are prepared using greens from our members' gardens such as boxwood, yew, magnolia, aucuba, holly, juniper, pine, and spruce—basically any live material that can hold up for several weeks. Other garden materials such as dried flowers, berries, seed pods, and herbs are also welcome. We will need a lot of greens! The club provides the oasis, dishes, bows, and various baubles to make these lovely arrangements. No previous floral design experience is necessary! There are many members who enjoy sharing tips to make the project fun and successful. Regardless of the weather we will meet to create the arrangements.

This is a great way to serve our community and have a great creative time as well!

Holiday Gift Exchange

We will continue our tradition of a holiday gift exchange at the December meeting. If you wish to participate bring a wrapped, garden themed present, \$10 limit.

Bring me your Box Top Coupons!

Lou Olin



For years our club has been participating in the Box Top for Education program. You may have seen these coupons on various products that you use. Each box top is worth 10 cents which may not seem like much but when lots of them are put together it can mount up. These are sent to FONA Youth Gardens where the funds generated from the box tops are used for their library and educational purposes. The person who collects these from me sent in \$500 worth in the fall and has just sent another \$150 worth. You can go to the site for Box Tops for Education, which lists the products that have them. **They are dated so please do not send ones that are out of date and please trim them. You can give them to me at any meeting and I will take it from there.

BCGC CONTRIBUTIONS

The BCGC board has been focusing attention since the late summer on how best to allocate the funds we have in the budget for our contributions for 2017–2018. The following is a list of organizations (most not new to our club) that we are looking at:

Friends of Brookside Gardens \$500
 Scholarship NCAGC \$200
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation \$200
 FONA–Washington Youth Gardens \$500
 Common Good City Farm \$500
 Potomac Conservancy \$300
 FONA–Azalea/Boxwood Collections \$200
 US Arboretum–Fern Valley \$200

The following are new for consideration:

American Horticultural Society \$100
 11th Street Bridge (BBAR) \$1,000
 Miscellaneous \$300

*All dollar amounts are tentative

We would like input from members with your thoughts on this list as well as any new organizations which we should consider. You should be able to provide as much information as possible on mission statements, budgets, etc. for your proposal.

If you have comments or additions please email Regina Foltzgerald at RLM1827@aol.com

*Lou Olin, Carol Meyers, Carolyn Kulik
 Finance Committee*

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

Adventures in Winter Sowing

If you would like to acquire a lot of new plants without breaking the bank, you might consider starting seeds. If you're also interested in native plants, as I am, you will find that many of them need to undergo a period of chilling to germinate, known as "cold stratification." A fairly easy method of doing this is called winter sowing. You can read all about it online; see, for instance, www.wintersown.org, which has lots of information on how to do it, plants to choose, etc. My experience over the past four years, since I began trying it, ranges from utter failure (no germination at all) to so much success that I end up with more plants than I can reasonably use (which doesn't stop me from trying).

The basic technique is to recycle various types of containers that have clear or translucent plastic tops: carryout containers, dairy tubs, plastic gallon milk jugs, etc. (Cut milk jugs in half horizontally,

using the top half as a lid; remove the cap to vent the lid.) Perforate containers at the base (for drainage) and at the top (to let in air and water). Some people rig up container lids using perforated plastic wrap (there are lots of ideas out there; check the web).

Put maybe three inches of potting mix in the containers, water well, sow your seeds to the appropriate depth, close the containers, and then leave them outside all winter. Put them in a sheltered spot, like by the north wall of a house (you don't want them cooked by the sun).

I use yogurt containers with clear tops, and I set mine at the north side of a yew hedge. I always intend to do mine by mid-January, but I have begun as late as February.

In the spring, watch your containers for the first signs of germination, and when the seedlings emerge, start monitoring: check moisture, decide when to make the lid holes bigger to let in more air, begin hardening off, and so on. Since not all seeds will germinate, be sure to try enough different types so that the occasional failure is not too discouraging. Depending on your germination rate and your proclivities, you can thin your seedlings before planting out, plant them out in little clumps, or pot up to give away.

Of course, germinating seedlings is one thing; planting them out and growing them into well-established plants is another. Being suddenly faced with hundreds of seedlings can be daunting, especially if you don't have lots of nice beds all prepared in the right conditions. I have found myself tucking clumps of seedlings in all kinds of odd places and hoping they can sort themselves out. (This is also a way to hedge your bets on growing conditions: if you're not sure of the optimum spot, you can try a few different places to see where they do best.)

If the seedlings manage to become young plants, you may have to reconsider where they should end up in the garden. I don't always have a very realistic idea of what the full-grown plant is going to do (plus, different specimens of the same plant can differ significantly). I now have a large number of enormous cup plants (*Silphium perfoliatum*), because the rather small first-year plants were browsed by deer and rabbits, so I really didn't know how many



Photo by Barbara Collier

Cup plants (*Silphium perfoliatum*)

would survive. But lots did, and this year they all grew to be over 6 feet tall. Next year I have to get serious about exactly where and how many they should be.

I have also had success with nodding onion (*Allium cernuum*), *Penstemon calycosus* (calico or long-sepal penstemon), yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), pale coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), and wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), among others. I suspect one thing all these have in common is that they are tough and easy to propagate.

On the other hand, with sparse germination, you can be more attentive to the lonely little seedlings that manage to appear: I managed to establish from seed one Carolina lupine (*Thermopsis caroliniana*) and two *Senna marilandica* (two is actually plenty: they're big).

Last winter, I ordered bulk seed of nine varieties to sow in a small meadow area. I decided to winter sow several pots of each type and direct sow the rest. My idea was that the seedlings in pots would help me tell the wanted seedlings from the weeds in my meadow and fill gaps. This worked fine, but I also learned other things: for example, direct-sown Black-Eyed Susans can quickly grow large and bloom, whereas a crowded little clump of winter-sown seedlings stuffed into a tight space will be miniaturized and bloom later. I suspect next year some of those small Black-Eyed Susans will be bursting the seams of their beds.



Members embraced the Halloween theme at the October meeting. At left, Sharon Washburn Southerland's fascinator. Below, black and orange Arche shoes! At right, Kate Perry sported a wonderful black dragonfly! Perfect for both Halloween and garden club.



Barbara Faust, Smithsonian Garden Director, spoke on the past, present and future of the Smithsonian gardens at the October meeting.



Nina Stark-Slapnik's lovely arrangements graced the luncheon tables.



Enid Haupt, after whom the garden is named, with Ladybird Johnson

Vickie Baily is adding to the collection of member photos printed in the 2017-2018 Yearbook. Please clip out and add this photo to your Yearbook:



Archana Dheer

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Camellias in Hedgleigh Spring, Charles Cresson's Garden

Carole Ottesen

Do you remember the ferocious winter in the late 1970s when the evergreen magnolias dropped all their leaves and most of the camellias died? After that fierce winter melted into spring, it was discovered that one camellia at the National Arboretum survived almost unscathed: *Camellia oleifera* 'Lushan Snow.'

Today, 'Lushan Snow' lives on in the Arboretum's Asian Valley. It has grown to a monumental 25 feet tall by approximately 45 feet wide. Although this plant has rather small, simple white flowers, its impressive survival in the face of extreme cold inspired Dr. William Ackerman to use *C. oleifera* in his breeding program. His efforts resulted in the camellias with showy flowers and greater cold hardiness that we enjoy today.

As a very young man, horticulturist Charles Cresson learned of the 'Lushan Snow's exceptional hardiness and rooted a cutting of it. Almost forty years later, that cutting has grown to a 12-foot tall tree that is equally wide, and has gorgeous cinnamon colored limbs. It occupies a place of honor in Cresson's Swarthmore, Pennsylvania garden, Hedgleigh Spring.

'Lushan Snow' was also the beginning of Cresson's collection of hardy camellias. Most of these have *C. oleifera* blood and many are fragrant.

On the warm afternoon of the fifth of November, Cresson graciously gave a small group a tour of his extensive garden. As there had not yet been a frost in Swarthmore, the garden was full of summer flowers. Among these were soft-hued camellias, luminous against a fiery backdrop of autumn leaves.



Cresson's camellia collection is an important element in his garden, but only a small part of the garden's wealth. His collection includes thousands of rare perennials, bulbs, and shrubs.

What adds to this garden's magic is its setting. Cresson is the third generation to live in the house his grandfather built and to garden on its land. As a result his collection is set off to perfection by the mature trees and shrubs planted by his forebears.