



# Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

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

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

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The cold is paralyzing...how could anything as froufrou and delicate as sinus pitcher plants survive this brutal winter. But they do. They are hardy through zone 6, though if their boggy home had frozen they may not have made it this year. **Mr. Michael Szesze**, our speaker on **Wednesday, January 24**, can inform us of their status. He can also educate us about Venus flytraps, butterworts and sundews and give us tips on how to grow these exotics both inside and out.

Mr. Szesze is a retired science teacher. You may remember the cover of the June 25, 2017 *Washington Post* Sunday Magazine that showed one of his gorgeous flesh eaters and that the magazine featured a story about him and his nursery. In addition to his passion for carnivorous plants, his great enthusiasm for science has won him the honor of being named Maryland Science Teacher of the Year and the National Science Foundation VIP-Outstanding Physics Teacher. He has been a park ranger and the Director of the Arthur Storer Planetarium in Prince Frederick, Maryland. He has been fascinated with Venus flytraps since he was 10 years old, and becoming aware of other folks' interest in flesh-eating plants, realized he could supply requests for these exotic specimens. So when he retired from teaching, he and his wife Pam moved to Smithsburg Maryland and opened the Carnivorous Plant Nursery. Luckily for us he's bringing along some of these plants for us to purchase, saving us a trip to Smithsburg. They'll be displayed on the tables in the back and you can pay for them with cash, check or credit card. It's a wonderful opportunity to own an alluring and glamorous bug catcher.

The meeting will be held at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, and will begin at 10:30. Bring a sandwich to share, preferably cut into quarters.

*—Jane Malish*

## Get Rid of Stuff for Good Cause – Feb. 28

*Candy Kessel*

The popularity of BCGC's silent auctions means the tradition will continue. Our February 28 meeting gives you the opportunity to clear out unwanted garden-related items from your garage/shed/basement/closet. Set aside and bring plant stands, attractive containers, nice unwanted tools, garden art and artifacts, gnomes etc. Please, no garden books, flimsy plastic pots or terra cotta pots.

Last year club members donated more than 85 unwanted items that we auctioned to raise nearly \$600 for the 11th Street Bridge Project. This year's auction proceeds will go to one of the horticulture/environmental organizations the club supports.



The large bear container is a highlight of the Greens Workshop each year. This year's fantastic arrangement was created by Sharon Washburn Southerland.

*All photos by Vickie Baily unless otherwise noted.*

Please participate and check all those spaces you're trying to empty before Feb. 28. The silent bidding will start as soon as set-up is completed so please arrive early so we can line up all the treasures. Be sure to bring your checkbook and/or extra cash so you can bid enthusiastically.

If you have any questions please contact Candy: candykessel36@gmail.com; 202-415-7828.

## Greens Arrangements = Holiday Cheer for Recipients and Members

*Debbie Shakelton, Patricia Pennington and Carolyn Randall, Holiday Greens Co-chairs*

On December 13<sup>th</sup> members came together for our annual Greens Workshop and created stunningly beautiful arrangements that were delivered that afternoon to shelters, charities, and others who needed some holiday cheer.

Thanks go out to everyone who contributed the wide variety of conditioned greens that made it possible for members to create 187 centerpieces and smaller arrangements. As usual, it was a team effort. Volunteers arrived early and set up the work area. Others grabbed brooms, cleaned tables, and hauled away trash at the end of the workshop. American Plant donated the cardboard trays used by Lois Brown and Lou Olin, who worked non-stop to organize arrangements for delivery. After a tasty soup lunch and a lively gift exchange, 21 members loaded their vehicles and delivered cheer—in the form of unique, beautiful arrangements—to shelters, charities and other locations around the area. Delivery teams reported the excitement and joy the arrangements brought to their recipients.

Many club members say the greens workshop is a highlight of their holiday season. If you missed the 2017 greens workshop, plan now to participate in the December 2018 workshop. Enjoy the thrill of turning a bunch of greens, baubles, and bows into beautiful works of living art. It's a great way during the holiday season to help bring cheer to those not as fortunate as us.

## 2017 Greens Arrangements Recipients

A Wider Circle, Bethesda Cares staff, Bethesda Cares Community Goodwill Dinner, Bethesda Police Station, Catholic Charities, Central Union Mission, Coalition for the Homeless, Cornerstone Montgomery, Interfaith Works Women's Center (formerly Community Based Shelter), National Center for Children and Families, Rainbow Shelter, Saint Mark Presbyterian Church, Shepherd's Table, Stepping Stones Shelter, Whitman-Walker Health, Waverly House

The following members in ill health or home-bound also received an arrangement: Elizabeth Allen, Mary Ellen Bittner, Betty Cochran, Sandy McKnight, and Jane Read.

I asked Lise Ringland if this were her second Greens Workshop. "Yes!" she said, "and what a different experience from my first! Last year I was just trying to figure out the process, watching other people and doing what they did. This year I actually feel proud of my arrangements!" We all remember our first year! I managed to get all the way to the event without having a clue what it was. I thought we were going to learn about greens! —Vickie Bailly



# Greens Workshop 2017

There were two themes for the day—"Is your oasis showing" during the greens event, and "Where is the amaryllis?" during the gift exchange (there was no amaryllis). Patricia Pennington stepped in to check that the greens completely covered the foam oasis.



Deborah Shakelton Head of the Holiday Greens Workshop Committee, puts a finished arrangement out for delivery. Her day began at 5 a.m., and who knows when it ended?



Year after year Lois Brown and Lou Olin do the difficult job of matching arrangements to delivery points.



At right: Finished arrangements go into flats donated by American Plant, and go out for delivery by members.



Photo above by Patricia Pennington



Carolyn Randall and Derek Longbrake, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH) Relationship Manager

Those members who sign up for clean-up are unsung heroes. Little greens clippings go everywhere! Carolyn Randall took home all the bags of leftovers to compost.



See more photos on pages 5 and 6.

## January Gardening

Barbara Collier

What can the avid gardener do in January? Well, there are many traditional options, beginning, of course, with perusing seed and plant catalogs and making grandiose plans. There is cleaning and oiling all one's garden tools (have I ever managed to do that?). There is winter sowing! (See my article in the November newsletter.) There is pruning (when the temperature climbs out of the teens), which for deciduous plants is much easier when you can see the structure of the branches. And there is wandering aimlessly about the garden, just observing. I find it useful to see the garden structure unobscured by the lushness of the growing seasons, and the winter garden can reveal overlooked plants or other unexpected developments. Have you noticed, for example, that many Japanese maples are clinging to their leaves this winter? I gather this can happen when a cold snap short-circuits a tree's normal winter preparation process, and the cell layer that pushes the dead leaves off the tree is not completely formed.

We can also hope to do winter walks further afield to admire the landscape, test our winter plant identification skills (if any), or simply embrace the theme of a mural created by my second grade class: "A Walk in the Woods in Winter." This mural was particularly memorable because it inspired a little friend and me to go into nearby Rock Creek Park and carry out this excellent idea. However, we soon became distracted by the sight of the creek, temptingly covered in ice. Could we actually *cross the ice*? Well, no, as it turned out. We couldn't. We could get soaked up to our knees and slosh home again, gasping and giggling. (I forget how my mother reacted.)

But one thing that we can do all year is improve our knowledge by taking advantage of the wonders of the interwebs. Our club website has a nice list of garden resources, which I would recommend exploring. Here are a few more, along with why I think they are useful, especially for those of us interested in native plants and their ecological benefits.

*Mount Cuba Center.* We should all know (and many of us have visited) this wonderful garden in nearby Delaware, which does plant trials of various native

plants and cultivars. The Center also has an excellent database of native plants; the descriptions include suggestions for attractive companion plants that do well in the same conditions. Alas, the current website design, although beautiful, does not make the database link immediately obvious. Fortunately, clicking the site search box reveals a dropdown menu with Native Plant Finder in large type at the bottom of the list.

*Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.* The address is [wildflower.org](http://wildflower.org), which has a wonderful native plant database that covers the whole country, with extensive information on plant characteristics including distribution, garden benefit, wildlife benefit, and propagation. It also includes links to government online resources such as USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, [plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov), and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, [xerces.org](http://xerces.org), which has information on pollinators and other insects.

*Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Center.* This site includes a native plant database that is the online version of a booklet that many of us have been depending on since it first came out in 2003. You can also download the free pdf version, *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping*. Its original size is 8½ by 11, so for online browsing, the database may be a better bet.

*Missouri Botanical Garden.* It's true: we don't live in Missouri. But [mobot.org](http://mobot.org) comes up prominently almost every time I search for particular plants, and the information provided is pretty comprehensive. The site has a number of useful features, including a Plant Finder tool that allows one to search for various characteristics, from soils and light requirements to tolerance of deer and black walnuts.

Barbara Collier

## The Gift Exchange

by Vickie Baily

It's wonderful to see the shadow side of our human natures come out, after the outflowing of our generosity. The yearly gift exchange has gotten rowdier as the years go by, I'm happy to say. We women do a lot of caring for our family and friends, especially during holiday time, and it's fantastic to see us acting out our greed, and then laughing until we cry. As C.G. Jung said, "the acknowledgement of the shadow must be a continuous process through one's life." He said a lot of our creativity gets bound up in our desire to see ourselves as ONLY generous and kind and giving.

The gifts we're fighting over can't, by the rules, have cost more than ten dollars. Gifts are not labeled with the name of the giver. Each participant gets a number and chooses a wrapped present without being able to see what is in it, and opens it in front of the group. If they covet something that was opened earlier, they can steal that gift from its present owner rather than choosing uncertainty. This year the real fun began when Judith Hackett opened a box of paper-white narcissus bulbs. (Jung might have commented on the resonance of that name, but I won't!)



When it was Candy's turn, she called out "Who has the amaryllis?" without realizing that none had been opened. (In spite of the fact that they are the favorite gift every single year, no one brought an amaryllis bulb this year.) (The myth of Amaryllis is more complex than that of Narcissus, but seeing no one brought one, we needed concern ourselves with it.) (Besides, the plant has been renamed

*hippeastrom* which doesn't trip off the tongue, or the pen.) Here Candy is taking her chances with a

*hippeastrom*-sized box. She is feeling fear, another of those dark emotions!



Sharon Washburn Southerland has shed the mask of Pam Gates that she wore last year, and has taken on the role of Mistress of Mayhem for herself. Here she explains that once a present has been stolen twice, it cannot be stolen again.

Anna Ruth Masters tries to hide her present in the corner. She had managed to snag a small orchid. This joined the narcissus and a terrarium kit, in a triumvirate of greed and shenanigans.



Having lost the narcissus, Judith tried to feel better by taking the orchid.

Enter best friend Marge Pray, who in this particular moment (below), has her hand on the narcissus.

One of them was heard to call out, "But you have to get a ride home with me!"



*Continued on next page*

## The Gift Exchange *(continued)*

There was a brief pause in the Bulb Wars when this gift was opened. No one noticed that it had a name on it, or that it wasn't technically a gift bag. Margaret Edison had the public humiliation of pulling out nothing but plastic bags. People were calling out possibilities. "The plastic bags ARE the present!" "It must be microscopic!" "Were you naughty this year?" Until suddenly someone realized it was a bag of recycled bags brought for Irene Sinclair to use as poop bags for her dog! (I won't let Jung near this, let alone Freud!)



I will say in closing that I think it is extremely rare to have a public way to act out the opposites of our personalities, all in a socially acceptable setting, and within a few hours. That, as well as so many other things, are why I love this garden club. I will leave you with this quote from Marie-Louise von Franz, my favorite Jungian. "If we can stay with the tension of opposites long enough —sustain it, be true to it—we can sometimes become vessels within which the divine opposites come together and give birth to a new reality." How's that for a short morning near the intersection of 270 and 495? —Vickie Baily

Then it was back to the Bulb Wars as Jane Boynton scooped the paper-whites. Or was it the orchid? The terrarium?



Holiday-themed cookies were part of the festive atmosphere.



Vickie Baily shows how the orange berries she picked from her rohdea went perfectly with the orange and yellow bows Diane Beverly and her team created, and the owl on Vickie's sweater!

*Photo by Sharon Washburn Sutherland*



Jane Malish, Joyce Casso, Jane Boynton, Holly Joseph and Jeanne Weiss, all sported Holiday Sweaters!