



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-five Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
Garden Clubs and
The National Council of State
Garden Clubs, Inc.

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NIHON TEIEN (Japanese for "garden")

Bevan Shimizu together with his father Osamu Shimizu operates Shimizu Landscape Design. Bevan grew up in Bethesda and has a degree in economics from Wake Forest University. He gradually became interested in landscape design through the influence of his father's work. He spent a year in Japan studying gardens, learning to speak Japanese, and being delighted by Japanese architecture and style. He has studied at the National Tropical Botanic Garden on Kauai and is interested in organic farming, restoration, and bonsai. He also has a Masters in sustainable landscape design from George Washington.

Bevan's subject for our meeting at 10:30am on Wednesday, **February 27** is *Japanese Gardens*. Shimizu Landscape here in Bethesda blends the Japanese approach with the American style of gardening, often incorporating ponds, paths, and large stones and the result is serene and tranquil and a space that is interesting year round. These same elements are found in classic Japanese gardens. Come hear Bevan inspire you to try some Japanese ideas in your own garden. And also to enjoy lunch: a bowl of one of the Club's famous soups!

The meeting will be held at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, North Bethesda.

PAY YOUR CLUB MEMBER DUES BEFORE APRIL 1st

Lise Ringland, Treasurer

We're on the cusp of spring and before we know it, a new club year will begin, so it's time to pay your dues for 2019-20 and continue to enjoy all the lectures and activities that our dues make possible.

Dues for 2019-20 continue to be \$40.

Pay \$40 by check made out to BCGC, or use cash.

Remember to bring your checkbook or cash to the February 27 or March 27 meetings.

Or snail mail a check for \$40 made out to BCGC, to treasurer Lise Ringland, 4622 Rosedale Ave, Bethesda, MD 20814. Deadline is April 1.

Welcome new member Susan Chaudry

Susan is a nurse practitioner by profession not currently in clinical practice but doing consulting. She recently became certified as a Yoga Instructor with an interest in mindfulness. Susan's hobbies include: dance, yoga, music, nature, travel, and babysitting grandkids!

She is looking forward to broadening her world of knowledge about plants, flowers, and gardening.

SO WHAT IS AN OPEN GARDEN?

Judith Graef

Our Open Garden Program originated with Montgomery County Master Gardeners and was copied, several years ago, by yours truly. The goal of the program, quite simply, is to create an opportunity for BCGC members to enjoy seeing one another's gardens. If you are even slightly interested in letting the rest of us visit your garden or want more information, please let me know as soon as possible. If you decide to participate, your commitment will only be for 2 to 3 hours on the weekday of your choice. It is **important** to know at the outset that **this is not a competition**. No admission is charged, there are no monetary awards given, but you will be certain to receive lots of appreciation. Whether you have a "work in progress" and would like some advice, or have a four-season showcase that always looks terrific, or more likely, something that you'd just enjoy sharing, members will want to come.

There is even some added benefit to scheduling a date. It could spur you on to completing a garden project. Everyone will benefit from the opportunity to gather in a small group to pick up gardening tips and to learn a bit about one another. There's nothing bad about that!

Open Gardens are scheduled whenever a host is ready. Generally it is spring, summer, and fall although if you have a winter-interest site, people will come. Since time and change of seasons present new perspectives, visiting gardens we've already seen will still be very appealing. So whether you're a brand new member, a veteran to the program, or just plain ready, please let me know.

Judith Graef – the self-appointed organizer.
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SAVE THE DATE!

US National Arboretum's
33rd Annual Lahr Symposium
*Native Plants: Advancing Our Dialogue
with Nature*
March 30, 2019

Registration to open soon. Go to:
www.usna.usda.gov/visit/events-calendar/

Learn to look at cues from nature, whether it is pinpointing the best grasses and sedges to control storm water or combining natives to reduce maintenance.

Hear about newly discovered native species, visit an Arboretum restoration project, discover how pesky invasives can help produce alluring art, or learn about plants toughing it out in some unexpected places.

■ Talk Topics/ Speakers

- *LOOKING to NATURE for BEAUTY with LESS MAINTENANCE*

C. Colston Burrell, principal, Native Landscape Design and Restoration,

- *THE NEW WORKHORSES of the GARDEN: Native Grasses & Sedges*

Shannon Currey, marketing director, Hoffman Nursery

- *TWO SIGNATURE NATIVES: Leather Flower & Wake-robins*

Dr. Aaron Floden, botanist, Missouri Botanical Garden.

■ Concurrent sessions:

- *ALIEN WEEDS: Art from an Insistent Abundance*

Patterson Clark, senior graphics editor, *Politico Pro*

- *SPRINGHOUSE RUN RESTORATION*

Max Fedeli & Angela Magnan, staff, U.S. National Arboretum

- *FINDING NATURE in ALL the WRONG PLACES*

Dr. Brett McMillan, science teacher, The Bryn Mawr School of Baltimore

- **Native plant sale: 8:30 to 1pm**

Fan Mail!

The Club received an email from a visitor to the web site, Dorothy McKinley, who wanted to send some positive feedback on behalf of a sixth grade student she mentors. “Julianna had an idea to do a spring garden project for Earth Day in April, and as she was doing some research online she stumbled onto the BCGC’s “Resource Links” webpage. They “found tons of great information from the sites there so—thank you. And we had fun checking out your club’s photos too!

We also thought we should share an educational garden resource of our own! It’s “A Kids Guide to the Parts of a Flower” — www.serenataflowers.com/en/uk/kids-guide-parts-flower

Environmental Concerns

Winter Sowing Revisited

Barbara Collier

If you remember my article on winter sowing back in November 2017 (or if you go to our handy web page and look it up), I wrote about starting seeds of native plants that require “cold stratification” to germinate: that is, a period of chilling. Using winter sowing, you don’t have to refrigerate your seeds to get them to germinate; you just sow them in little homemade greenhouses and leave them outside to sprout in their own time. The little greenhouses are made from recycled containers with clear tops, with tops and bottoms perforated to allow air and water in and out. Read all about it online at www.wintersown.org; there is also a Winter Sowers Facebook page if you use that platform.

I have mostly used the technique for native perennials, but I have been reading about other people’s experiences with different types of plants, including hardy annuals, herbs, vegetables, and other familiar garden plants. It seems that you can use the basic technique for pretty much anything except extremely tender plants such as tropicals.

Specific plant suggestions are given in the plant lists at www.wintersown.org/Seed_Lists.html. For example, the list of hardy annuals includes such familiar flowers as ageratum, alyssum, snapdragons, cosmos, California poppy, strawflower, nicotiana, nigella, Mexican sunflower (*tithonia*), and a host of others. If you’ve grown these, you may have noticed some of them self-seeding in later years, which shows that the seeds can survive our winter temperatures. A note on the list suggests that you can also sow more tender annuals if you wait till a few weeks before winter ends: basically around now! (Some bold people even try tropicals, waiting till almost the end of winter to begin.)

When grown from seed, vegetables and herbs are often started indoors or direct sown, but by using the mini-greenhouse approach, you can avoid such direct-sowing problems as the seeds being eaten, drying out, or rotting. At the wintersown.org site, the list of vegetables and herbs suggested for winter sowing is not as long as the one for hardy annuals, but it includes many popular vegetables (such as beets, carrots, lettuce and other greens, even tomatoes) and herbs (e.g., chives, cilantro, dill). The list also includes a few tips and warnings (e.g., beans need very well-draining containers; as a tender annual, basil is best sown towards the end of winter).

From an ecological perspective, flowering annuals and herbs are excellent for attracting and nourishing pollinators all season long—as we all know, our perennials may be glorious, but they have limited seasons of bloom. Those of us who want our gardens to support insects, birds, and other wildlife have good reason to make sure our gardens have a variety of plants of different types, blooming seasons, sizes, and structures. There is no need to be a native plant purist to achieve this goal. (And of course, if you’re interested in food plants for people, you can’t be a native plant purist.)

Of course, with vegetables and annuals, even more so than with perennials, you (and I) need to watch our containers. We will want to put the containers in the sun so that the seedlings are in a position resembling where they will eventually grow. It’s important to monitor them to make sure they don’t dry out (in, say, an

unexpected heat spike) and to notice when the seeds germinate. The rule of thumb is to plant the seedlings out when they get two true leaves; and with vegetables, you may not want to rely exclusively on the “clump of seedlings” method, which is basically survival of the fittest. (We generally expect to coddle our vegetables a bit.)

Inspired by my reading, I am trying the technique with some native plant seeds that germinate in warm soil (including some grasses and a couple of native annuals), as well as for some herbs and other annuals that are medicinal—or



Part of the reason we had such a big crowd at the January meeting was that government workers who are normally working during the day were able to come.



The speaker at the January meeting, J. Dean Norton, was multitalented!

Vickie Baily is adding to the collection of member photos printed in the 2018-2019 Yearbook. Please clip out and add the following photos to your Yearbook:



Susan Chaudry



Janet Georgatsos



Stella Gordon



Kay Shlaes



Marge Tritschler



Katherine Wood



Karen Fricke brought the most beautiful bouquet of unusual flowers for the Speaker’s Table.

Photos by Vickie Baily

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

A Late Winter Stroll

Carole Ottesen

A sunny afternoon in late-winter is a good time for a walk through the garden. You can check how everything fared in the preceding months and search for those heartening first signs of spring. Sometimes, along with signals that the end of winter is in sight, there are disappointments.

For example, this year, for the first time ever, the deer grievously damaged one (but only one!) of my Florida anises (*Illicium floridanum*), a truly aromatic native evergreen with somewhat leathery leaves. It has graced my garden for almost thirty years. I like to think the damage was done by a couple of inexperienced young fawns, now suffering the dreadful intestinal consequences of their gluttony.

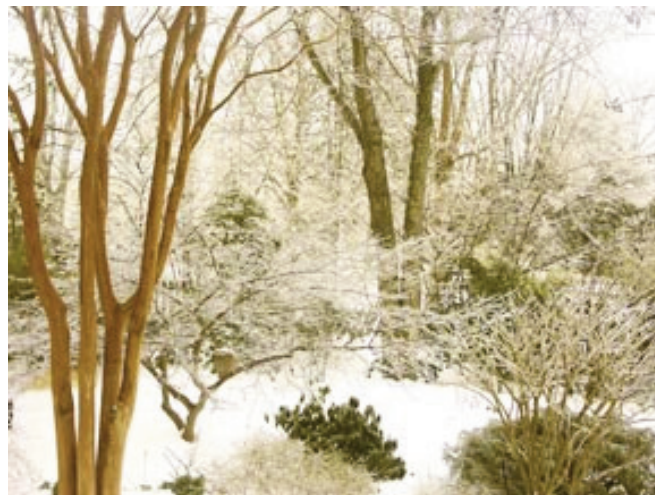
Another unfortunate first, I think, was that deer started eating the tiny bits of juniper (*Juniperus procumbens nana*) that protruded through the snow and then kept at it, having developed a taste for what must be the equivalent of uncooked artichokes.

Happily, most other plants remain unscathed. Looking fresh and perky, sweet or Himalayan box (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var.



humilis) is a low mounder that spreads into a shiny, green groundcover. It is only about a foot tall but its tiny late-winter flowers make up in powerful perfume for what the plant lacks in stature.

Another shrub with shiny green leaves has no noticeable fragrance. Native doghobble (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*) sends out great arching



Photos by Carole Ottesen

stems that have spread into a five-foot tall mass that is indeed a hobble for dog, deer, and woman. Doghobble has never been eaten by deer.

Equally untroubled is a trio of andromeda (*Pieris japonica*), a patch of *Rohdea*, and the upright, bushy, and spreading plum yews (*Cephalotaxus*). These last, unlike the yews (*Taxus*) they resemble, are unpalatable to deer.

Among the evergreen perennials, golden sweet-flag (*Acorus* 'Ogon') and *Carex* 'Ice Dance' have been untouched by deer and unsullied by weather. This cannot be said of the hellebores. While the deer have never eaten them, the weather has taken a vicious toll. The leaves are flattened, ragged, and spotted brown.

Likewise, a relatively new-to-market plant, evergreen Solomon's Seal (*Disporopsis pernyi* 'Sichuan Jade'), a "discovery" of plant hunter Dan Hinkley, has been felled by snow and ice, but hasn't been touched by the deer.

Taken all together, there is more to celebrate than mourn. All is as it should be. A stroll through the late winter garden will reveal buds

on the maples that are small but starting to swell, snow drops that are showing white, winter aconites opening yellow, and emerging daffodil shoots that look solidly upright and determined.



Winter aconites



Snow drops