



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-six Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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The Wonders of Garlic

Garlic has been in use in China for thousands of years and ancient Greek and Roman sailors and soldiers as well as African peasants consumed it. Rural folk considered it a cure-all. Ancient Egyptians thought it a deity and swore oaths by it. In 17th-century England garlic was used as a treatment for smallpox although the English didn't cook with it much, if at all. During World Wars I and II it was used as an antiseptic to prevent gangrene. In 2015 researchers determined it did not lower blood pressure but if consumed in very large amounts it might prevent some stomach cancers in some people. Garlic doesn't prevent colds either, and the bad breath associated with garlic consumption can best be combatted by drinking milk. Although you might be able to ward off mosquitoes by eating it. Our speaker this October 23, Tony Sarmiento, knows a lot about garlic beyond these fun facts. He'll share tips on when, where, and how to plant it and when to harvest it, as well as what varieties are the best types for us to grow. He'll help us to understand how to have our very own supply of home grown garlic available the next time we hanker for Caesar salad or garlic bread. So be sure to come and find out what Tony can tell us, and bring along a sandwich to share, cleverly divided into 4 equal pieces. You could even spread a touch of garlic butter on the bread.

—Jane Malish

The meeting on October 23 will be held at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, North Bethesda. It will begin at 10:30.

A LARGE LIBRARY OF GARDEN BOOKS DONATED

We are very fortunate to have received a very generous donation of a large collection of gardening books from Art Pine, the husband of late member Betty Cochran. If you knew Betty, you know that her library includes a wide variety of carefully selected books that are in excellent condition.

These are offered as a gift to members and will be available at our next general meeting, October 23. In order not to interfere with the general meeting, the books will be displayed in the meeting room by 10:00 a.m. and also after the speaker and our business meeting. Please take the time to look over these treasures and bring home whatever you'd like, on a first-come, first-served basis. (Of course, being respectful of others.) Remaining books will be donated to other groups.

I hope that everyone will be able to find at least one book that they will enjoy. For those of you that had the pleasure of Betty's friendship, look at it as a way to remember her.

—Judith L. Graef



This sedum is one of Carole Ottesen's "Little Darlings" in the garden. Read more in her Horticultural Notes on page 3.

Photo by Carole Ottesen

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OPEN GARDENS

Judith Graef

The Open Garden program that has been going on for several years now has given us the opportunity to see many gardens, each with its individual style.

A very sincere thank you to Karen Fricke, Judith Hackett, Karin Kelleher, Carole Ottesen, and Caroline Turner for their willingness to invite us to their gardens this past spring and summer. This year Judith and Karin stepped up as first time hosts, while Karen, Carole, and Caroline actually invited us back for a second time. They all survived the experience. There were no disappointments anywhere and many of us were inspired to try something new in our own gardens, or perhaps just in our dreams! Not only did we see beautiful, interesting gardens but also we were able to relax and converse in the company of new and not so new friends.

I'm hoping that, as you prepare your gardens for fall, you'll keep in mind that we will need many new hosts next year in order to keep things going. New members are especially encouraged to become part of this group of renowned gardeners. A wonderful feature of the program is that there is so much variety in gardens, something for everyone and no need to make things perfect. Since we've all been digging in the clay, we know what's been involved in creating your unique retreat. No prizes are awarded for weed-less garden beds, manicured lawns or incredible hardscapes, just appreciation!

Please let me know if you have questions and/or would like to volunteer to host in 2020. Thank you. My phone number is 301-652-0794 .

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier and Kathy Benjamin

Rain, Rain, Come and Stay

When you're a gardener, it's hard not to be a little nervous about rain—especially in our area, which has seen some worrying rain patterns in

the last few years. Lately we tend to alternate between drought and flood, with little of the long, gentle “English rain” that my mother used to talk about. (Of course, the English are also having problems these days.)

At this writing, we are still hoping to leave summer drought conditions behind us, but not so long ago we were getting torrential rainstorms of enough strength to erode hillsides, produce soggy low areas, and drown or wash out plantings—not to mention degrade the quality of our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. What to do?

Luckily, in this area we can turn for help to various local government initiatives that aim to address the severe problems associated with stormwater runoff in ways that can also mitigate some of the worst effects of drought.

Montgomery County RainScapes (Montgomerycountymd.gov/water/rainscapes) is a program that offers rebates (up to \$7500 per homeowner) to offset the cost of a number of different approaches, ranging from conservation landscaping, which slows down and soaks up rainwater; to ways to prevent rainwater from running off in the first place (green roofs and permeable pavement); to mechanisms that store water directly, such as rain barrels and cisterns. Also included in this array are rain gardens, which are like a combination of conservation landscaping and water storage: in effect, by capturing runoff in a bowl-like depression, you give the water time to seep in through the engineered rain garden soil and eventually into the surrounding native soil. Keeping more water in the soil can really help when everything starts drying up in a subsequent dry spell.

To take advantage of these opportunities, you need to visit the RainScapes site to figure out what you want to do, make a plan, apply, and follow through. Depending on the project, there are various requirements for approval of plans, inspections before and after installation, and submission of receipts. The website offers project manuals that provide useful information even if you aren't planning to apply to the program.

What if you want the runoff-controlling benefits of a shade tree? You can get help planting trees from Marylanders Plant Trees (dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/MarylandersPlantTrees/Introduction.aspx), which will give you online coupons for \$25 off a tree costing \$50 or more. Visit the website for details. You can also apply for a free shade tree from Tree Montgomery (treemontgomery.org), unless you live in Gaithersburg or Rockville, which have their own programs.

In the District, similar opportunities for rebates are available through DC's RiverSmart Homes programs (doee.dc.gov/service/riversmart-homes). Participation requires an application for a home audit from the Department of Energy and Environment to determine what benefits a property is eligible for: rain barrels, shade trees, rain gardens, BayScaping (replacing grass with plants native to the Chesapeake

Bay region), permeable pavers, or re-vegetation. In this case, there can be a wait time as long as 5 to 6 months before an audit is scheduled (and an additional wait of 3 to 6 months after the audit for some of the services).

As for shade trees, the RiverSmart Homes program will plant them for you at no cost if the audit finds you eligible, but what if you don't want to wait for an audit? There is another option: you can get a rebate of \$50 or \$100 (depending on the tree) from a different program, DC's Shade Tree rebate program (caseytrees.org/resources/tree-rebate/).

Even if you don't plan to apply, you can visit these websites for plant suggestions and to get an idea of the principles involved in keeping the rain, once it arrives, from running off. Your garden and your environment will benefit.

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Little Darlings

Carole Ottesen

It happens before you know it: both you and the garden become "mature." While you were otherwise occupied, the perennials multiplied and outgrew their beds (a number of times) before you replaced them with shrubs that soon reached peak heights and widths (and now require energetic pruning). Meanwhile the trees soared ever higher, casting more and more shade. Suddenly, you have a garden in a lot of shade in which there is little opportunity to indulge your passion for new acquisitions—unless they are very, very small.

Happily, a number of little darlings, tiny plants, happily hug the edges of beds, creep through cracks, and cover the ground around taller plants.

Delightful Tidal Pool speedwell (*Veronica xintermedia* 'Tidal Pool') is one that will thrive in just



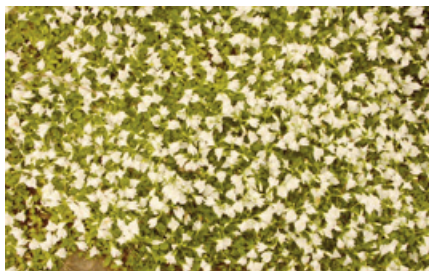
Dichondra repens

a spot of sunlight, growing into a perfect evergreen circle that spreads to a ground-hugging 30 inches but remains under three inches tall. In

spring, the dense foliage is covered in royal blue flowers with sparkling white eyes.

A speedwell of another color and slightly different form is 'Whitewater' veronica (*Veronica repens*). It spreads into a 15-inch evergreen mat that stays under three inches tall. Whitewater covers itself with white flowers in late spring. There is a blue-flowered form, 'Georgia Blue.' Both require moist, well-drained soil and tolerate part shade and very light foot traffic.

A plant that tolerates a bit more foot traffic, dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Nanus') is a perfect substitute for lawn that never needs mowing, a quality that is especially useful in hard-to-reach spots. Four-inch tall mondo grass grows best in moist part shade. It spreads quickly, but can be nibbled by deer.



The deer leave creeping mazus (*Mazus reptans*) alone. This bright green ground-cover spreads quickly in

moist, well-drained full sun to part shade. The late spring flowers—in white or purple—are showy. Lovely between stepping stones or around bulbs, the leaves are evergreen in our climate.

Small but mighty, perennial *Dichondra repens*, spreads by creeping stems that root as they go. It belongs to the morning glory family, Convolvulaceae. Native to New Zealand and Australia, dichondra has flowers of the palest blue borne on tiny, prostrate leaves that coat the ground.

The genus *Lysimachia* yields a number of little darlings. Creeping Jenny (*L. nummularia*) and its bright yellow form *L. nummularia* 'Aurea' are two ground-huggers that will also cascade if grown in containers. Much smaller, miniscule miniature moneywort (*Lysimachia japonica* 'Minutissima') is becoming a little devil in my garden. Unlike its cousins, it is, by virtue of its



Dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*)

tenacious roots and small size, difficult to hack out easily.

Among the zillions of sedums, there are tiny forms that perform well in dry sun to shade. Once you start looking, you'll find there is no dearth of little darlings for those tiny bare spots in the garden.



Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea'



Lysimachia