



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-six Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacomunitygardenclub.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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Phyllis Daen provided this striking arrangement for the February Meeting. Perhaps we can all hone our flower arranging skills while we are at home! See more photos on pages 3 and 6.

All photos are by Vickie Bailly unless otherwise noted.

MARCH 25, 2020 GENERAL MEETING CANCELLED

Due to the current Coronavirus situation, it has been decided that it is in everyone's best interest to cancel the March general meeting. Our scheduled speaker has already notified us that he is cancelling his talk. The April meeting and other planned club activities (Plant Sale and Annual Picnic) have been cancelled as well.

I know we will all be sorry to miss hearing the speakers and socializing with our BCGC friends. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Keep well and wash your hands frequently! We will see each other again in September.

Susan Lass
President

Flower Bomb (Not) the Perfume

Jane Malish

We currently find ourselves in the sad situation of dealing with the infectious coronavirus for which there is no antidote, vaccine or resistance unless you're 4 or 5 or younger. The club is doing its part in the self-isolating effort by cancelling the remaining meetings and activities and some of us may be contemplating further self-isolating, avoiding shopping, concerts, museums. It's a great opportunity to binge watch movies and television series, to cook up all that unhealthy pasta lurking on pantry shelves, washing windows, etc. When all that pales, you can make flower bombs (see the March 8 *New York Times Sunday magazine*). All you need is 1 part (hopefully Maryland native) wildflower seeds, 4 parts powdered clay (or dig up some clay from your yard) and 5 parts fine compost. Mix those 3 things thoroughly and add enough water so you can roll it into small balls. Dry the balls you've made outside in the sun on a cookie sheet. When they're dry tuck them in a zip-lock bag and take them along to throw ever so gently onto likely surfaces. Surfaces that might benefit from some beautification, like the verge on the south side of Bradley Lane between Connecticut and Wisconsin or anywhere you see litter. If litter can be thrown why not flower bombs. Just another way to self-isolate, driving alone in your car tossing potential beauty onto barren ground. But it's not a good idea to bomb your neighbor's yard regardless of how deserving and needful, without asking permission first.

Hopefully we will all stay healthy and succumb to nothing worse than boredom and acute cabin fever. Anticipating seeing you in September....

Dues Reminder

Time is running out! With no meeting this month due to public health concerns, your dues (\$40 check made out to BCGC) for the 2020-2021 membership year should be mailed to Suzanne Grefsheim, PO Box 15 Garrett Park, MD 20896 before April 1. Make checks payable to BCGC.

Dues are for the club year July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021.

If you plan NOT to renew for the coming year, please let Suzanne know. It will save follow up emails or calls. Suzanne's email is Grefshes@gmail.com

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO ELIZABETH ALLEN

Happy Birthday to long-time BCGC member Elizabeth Allen who turned 103 years old on March 6th! Elizabeth has been a member of BCGC since 1949 and participated in club activities for many years. She continues to have a keen interest in hearing about what the club is doing, and enjoys updates on the members she knows. Her sister, Margaret Cutler, has made a generous donation of \$100 to the club in honor of Elizabeth's birthday. We all join Margaret in wishing Elizabeth the very best in the coming year.

Plant Sale is Off

Barbara Collier

By now you have probably heard that our annual plant sale will not happen this year. However, much as we will miss this event, the decision was becoming inevitable. Fortunately, the club has a healthy savings account, so the loss of income is manageable.

So what now? Many of you have asked what to do with the plants you have already potted for our sale. You can use the newly launched BCGC listserv/Google group to post the names of the plants that you don't want to summer (and winter) over for Plant Sale 2021. Just share the name of the plant you want to give away (pictures optional). If you see a plant you want, contact the member using their email address

or phone number (found in the club directory) to make arrangements to get the plant.

We will not be collecting money for this private exchange of plants. We are just facilitating the sharing. But if you would like to make a monetary donation to the club, you may do so by mailing a check payable to BCGC directly to our treasurer, Lise Ringland.

We can still maintain social distancing while picking up plants from each other, and the listserv will help us keep in touch with other members and offer each other conversation and advice.

Annual Picnic Cancelled

BCGC Annual Picnic on June 3, 2020 to Meadowlark Botanical Gardens has been cancelled. We'll try again next year. In the meantime, please enjoy a tour of Meadowlark's many gardens online! Their website has lovely pictures and descriptions for each garden along with what's in bloom when. Check it out at <https://www.novaparks.com/parks/meadowlark-botanical-gardens/gardens>

–Picnic Committee

Katherine Benjamin, Maj-Britt Dohlie, Liz Edlind, Hillary Fitis, Suzanne Shwetz

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

Gardening in the Time of Pandemic

As avid gardeners, self-isolating and social distance may come naturally to us. But for some, one of the perks of being in our club is the opportunity to share tasks and work alongside fellow gardeners. We can still do some of that, even as we establish our virtual perimeters to stay 6 feet apart. But inevitably, many of us will be spending more solitary time.

Back in January 2018, (<http://bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/bcgjan18bulletin.pdf>) I offered some advice about using the gardening slowdown of winter to improve our knowledge by taking advantage of the

wonders of the interwebs. That article describes a number of useful websites that I would still recommend. But for those of you who may be on Facebook (despite its manifold sins and wickedness), there are some gardening-related groups you can join to get and share information. (Use social media for good and to promote social distancing!)

Some of these groups have quite strict rules on what is appropriate to post, so be sure to read any pinned posts describing these. (Persistent violators risk getting tossed out or muted, but we're all better behaved than that, right?)

Most locally relevant for environmental concerns:

Maryland Area Environmentally Conscious Gardening. This group is great for finding images of particular plants at different stages, as well as local experience growing them.

Maryland Native Plant Society Discussion Group. This is not a gardening group; its focus is on what it says: discussion of native plants.

Best for science-based gardening advice and debunking of questionable lore: *The Garden Professors blog*. Only science-based information: if you offer an anecdote of your own experience, you will be asked what science your practice is based on. (Of course, this means apologetic prefaces of "Well, this is anecdotal, but..." so it can creep in.)

Good for plant identification: *Plants Idents*. There are lots of identification groups, but this is the one I use. (iNaturalist.org also has a Facebook page, but I mostly use the app.) There are also groups for identification of insects and other critters out there. If you're interested, explore a little. Such sites are excellent for asking questions.

And last but not least:

Bethesda Community Garden Club. Yes, we have a Facebook group. Now is the time to use it for sharing information with fellow club members.

Barbara Collier

Invoices and Receipts for Reimbursements

Members with receipts for club expenses wishing to be reimbursed, or with club invoices that need to be paid, please submit them to me by snail mail to my address, Lise Ringland, 4622 Rosedale Ave., Bethesda, Md. 20814, or electronically to lringland@aol.com.

Please include a brief note with your name and which committee the expense or invoice is for. I will pay the invoice, or write and snail mail you a club reimbursement check.

Due to the anticipated number of members needing me to provide this service, much as I would love to see lots of fellow members, in the on-going public health situation, please do not drop off your paperwork in person.

Take care everyone!

Lise Ringland
Treasurer



We now have SO many members that the lunch line goes all around the room!

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Carole Ottesen

Time can completely transform a landscape, providing unexpected, but not necessarily unpleasant outcomes. It is humbling to realize that no matter how well thought out it may be, a garden plan must eventually compensate for plants' idiosyncratic and widely varying rates of growth. Changes through the years will always be necessary.

Trees are responsible for the greatest transformations. The little stewartia sapling that once stood lost in a field of azaleas now towers over them. As the stewartia stretched upward and outward, it altered the patterns of light and shade and controlled the amount of moisture in the soil. The once plump azaleas grew lankier and one-sided with denser growth straining desperately toward the light. But no matter. The azaleas got new homes and age has endowed the stewartia with a spring show that is nothing short of splendid.

The effect of maturing shrubs is equally dramatic, if on a smaller scale. What was once a diminutive winter hazel underplanted with glory-of-the-snow is now a glorious specimen and the glory-of-the-snow bulbs have seeded themselves off to more congenial digs.

There is nothing quite like a stroll through a mature garden to come upon surprising delights. This is especially true in spring. Perhaps it has to do with the bulbs' relatively short seasonal show or the early flowering of hellebores before they turn summer green. It's easy to delight in the fresh beauty of these plants and then forgot about them in the midst of summer's luxuriance.

Surprises may also be due to the muddling effect of passing years upon memory. You may come upon an absolutely glorious drift of snowdrops and for the life of you, you can't remember planting them there—or planting them at all. And weren't those three dearly purchased great white trilliums lovingly set into



Stewartia malacodendron



Virginia bluebells

Photos by Carole Ottesen

**Trillium***Trillium sessile*

the ground along the front garden path where they wouldn't be missed? How is it they now appear in cheerful settings here and there and in a lavish clump in the back garden?

Likewise, how did a single sessile trillium, carried back from a native plant conference, become a clump; how did, a single Virginia bluebell spread into a carpet?

And even if you do remember purchasing little bags of a winter aconites and crocuses—a dozen each, you can't quite recall exactly when they multiplied to thousands?

A stroll through a garden—especially in spring—highlights not only the passage of time, but surprising caprices of plant performance.

**Crocus amid winter aconite**

Bargains Galore at Silent Auction

By Candy Kessel

Who could have dreamed that our February meeting would be the last of our fiscal year and our silent auction the only fundraiser? Definitely not the spring we anticipated.

We had a turnout of more than 70 members and guests — great for winter — and some 160 unwanted garden items donated. Surprisingly, we made only \$361, well below the \$500 and \$600 the club has raised in our past silent auctions. Some 13 items got only one bid of \$1 so those customers went home with incredible bargains. And we sold about 10 items for \$2 each, those on the bargain table where some of the more tired donations ended up, accompanied by other vases, pots, etc, since we ran out of bid sheets. The highest bid was \$22 for the lovely set of new garden tools in a tote bag. The sets of new plant stakes were the next most popular items, selling for \$13 and \$12.

We donors freed up some space at home and repurposed unwanted stuff. I delivered three boxes of unsold items to Wagging Tails, the Montgomery County Humane Society Thrift Store. They would not accept the antique stone child with flower “fountain” that nobody bid on because of its condition, but I put it in the alley, where many discards in my upper Northwest neighborhood go, and it disappeared the next day. Several other members had asked in advance if they could take back their donations if they weren’t bid on so a handful of items were disposed of that way.

So, bottom line, we didn’t add to the landfill. And many participants have new tools, pots, and doodads to enhance their gardening season.

Applause and thanks to the members who helped in the organization and and cashiering operation: Diane Beverly, Regina Fitzgerald, Elaine Hope, Karin Kelleher, Carol Myers, Margy Tritchler, and Janine Trudeau.



Marge Pray (right) and Venil Ramiah look over items at February’s silent auction.

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



Ginger Macomber