



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-seven Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

Vol. 47, No. 4 ■ December 2020

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

Co-Presidents:
Judith Graef
Suzanne Grefsheim

Vice President:
Karen Fricke

Co-Secretaries:
Caroline Turner
Barbara Collier

Treasurer:
Margy Tritschler

Bulletin Editor:
Lois Brown
301-365-7419

Photographer:
Vickie Baily

Send news to:
dnleb@aol.com



The cheerful scene at the 2019 Holiday Greens Workshop. This year's workshop will be a little different, but still fun and rewarding.

Photo by Vickie Baily

The Holly and the Ivy...

...and the yew and the box, magnolia, nandina, rosemary and all the assorted greenery we use to make seasonal arrangements are being gathered by club members so we can make the small arrangements we traditionally construct this time of year. Except we'll be using them to make our own houses as fair as we are able.

So if you signed up to PROVIDE GREENS, here's a reminder or two about how to proceed. Cut the greens 6"-12" long, condition them by swirling them in a bath of mild detergent and water. Swirl them on Sunday December 13 and no later than Monday December 14. Remove the greens from the detergent-y water after their brief wash, rinse in cold water and submerge in more cold water until Tuesday evening, December 15. Then that same Tuesday evening take them out and blot them dry on towels, etc. Members who graciously agreed to supply greens will be emailed a time to drop them at Maria Marzullo's yard (9801 E. Bexhill Dr., Kensington 20895) on Wednesday December 16.

On Tuesday, December 15, members who signed up to MAKE ARRANGEMENTS will be emailed a time to go to Maria's yard on Wednesday December 16. There they'll collect materials for their arrangements. Wear a mask please; you may also want to wear gloves. Back at your house arrange your twigs and bits into 2 charming concoctions to show and tell about at a late afternoon ZOOM meeting. The exact meeting time will be advised later.

And by the way, dried sliced oranges seem to be having a moment. Here's a "recipe". Slice whole oranges pretty thin, Place them on a rimmed baking sheet one by one, heat them in a 200 degree oven for about 2 hours, turning them every 30 minutes until they're dry. Then you just have to figure out a way to use them in your arrangement. They're supposed to add fragrance.

A great many thanks are due Patricia Pennington, Maria Marzullo and Katherine Wood who intrepidly embarked on this New Greens Workshop adventure. Speaking for myself I'm looking forward to it.



Venil Ramiah shares one of her hair and wool sculptures. See more of her sculptures and learn the story behind them (page 3).

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

Winter Invasive Watch

Now that we are well and truly in meteorological winter, it's a good time to seek out and destroy nonnative invasive plants. A characteristic of many of our more challenging nonnatives is the way they persist through winter or come up very early in spring—important aspects of their invasive character, as it allows them to crowd out desirable natives.

So all that time you saved not clearing up your fallen leaves and your spent perennials, so that the birds could eat the seeds and the insects could winter over? Now you can justify applying some of that saved time to those patches of English ivy, honeysuckle, creeping euonymus, vinca minor, and other vines that may be occupying areas of your garden or growing up trees. These incursions can be unobserved when shrubs and trees are in leaf, but now they are clearly exposed. So early winter, while most things are dormant but it's still relatively mild out, is an excellent time to get the bad stuff under control.

I once struck up a conversation at a Maryland Native Plant Society meeting with a man who assured me that the very best time to attack vining honeysuckle was in January, because it came up most easily then. I can believe it, because while clearing the above mentioned vines in certain neglected areas of my own yard, it was satisfying to find how fast the work went along. Also satisfying? Observing our deer visitors munching on the enormous pile of pulled vines I had created.

Another ancient enemy has emerged much earlier this year than I have ever seen before: the dreaded lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) appeared in late October this year. Although it's not ever a welcome sight, its early appearance has a definite silver lining: not only is there more time to attack it, it is much easier to see coming up now than when other young plants are emerging. It's looking fresh and

green, so relatively easy to see and distinguish from, say, old violet leaves (see picture).

Another increasingly ubiquitous plant in my neighborhood is *Arum italicum*, a handsome garden plant that unfortunately has proven very aggressive. It is very easy to see at this time of year. It requires serious digging to get at the deep bulbous roots, and persistence to get at the small bulbs that are inevitably missed the first time.

So if you are out scuffle hoeing paths and other places where the winter annual weeds are springing up (hairy bittercress, chickweed, ground ivy, false strawberries, etc., etc.), take some time to look under shrubs and other hidden places for the lesser celandine, rosettes of garlic mustard, *Arum italicum*, and others, and check the bare tree trunks for ivy. Getting them out now frees up space where you might prefer ferns, spring ephemerals, or other native ground covers, whether robust (like *Packera aurea*, golden ragwort) or more sedate (like *Antennaria plantaginifolia* or other pussytoes). It's a great time for setting the stage for spring planting.



Bright green lesser celandine sprouts (top) with battered violet leaves nearby. Lesser celandine leaves are more rounded, hairless, and glossy than violet leaves and have wavy edges; violet leaves are more scalloped or sawtoothed.

Photos from Our Members:



These are some of my hair and wool sculptures, inspired by the garden. I mostly use my dogs' hair (which my goldens provide liberally!) and humanely sourced sheep wool, sculpting them together with a variety of needles. The themes explored in these pieces include the awkward and often cruel intersections between humanity and its habitat, as well as notions of life energies present in the smallest and seemingly inanimate beings.

—Venil Ramiah



From Candy Kessel:

Here are a couple of pictures of my new kittens. [To maintain a garden theme], I did dangle a fake flower at them for the shot [on the right]. Fortunately they're not that interested in the houseplants yet, though most are on radiators.

They are Blackjack and Boots, two litter mates not quite three months old that we got from Humane Rescue Alliance. I met them virtually at their foster mom's because most all of the shelters are closed re: covid and that's the only way one can get animals. Fortunately many of them have been adopted to keep folks company. It's not easy to find kittens. But boy do they adapt quickly!

More Photos from Our Members:



**From Caroline Turner [left to right, from top]:
New England Aster (thanks Nina!), Tithonia
(from Lizzie), Toad Lily, Blue Wood Aster and
white Japanese Anemone.**