



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-nine Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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September 2022–December 2023 CENTENNIAL

Jane Malish

Bethesda Community Garden Club's 100th anniversary meeting year begins with the **Wednesday, September 28, 2022 10:30am in person** meeting and ends with the December 2023 meeting. The club convenes at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10707 Old Georgetown Rd, North Bethesda after a two year absence due to pandemic social distancing. We're easing back into together-again, starting the centennial with the usual Round Robin format—our version of show and tell. We will pass the mic from person to person and everyone will have a chance to share their pandemic gardening experiences, what they learned about gardening's ability to ease troubles if there were any, or the sheer delight of having time to indulge in garden projects too involved or ambitious in the before-times. Please come and join in garden club camaraderie and let us know what gardening discoveries you've unearthed in these pandemic times. You are welcome to arrive at 10:00 to begin meeting and greeting. **Please bring your own lunch and beverage; dessert will be provided!**

Plant Sale News

Mary Horan

The Plant Sale Committee is getting back to work, following our very successful sale in May. After a two-year pandemic hiatus, we were thrilled to be back at the Farm Women's Market, and our customers returned!

We're happy to report our proceeds were \$6,534. Many of you helped make the sale a success. Our only problem was that we ran out of plants very quickly! And that means we need more plants for next year. [See more photos from the Plant Sale on page 2.]

Now is a great time to evaluate what plants your garden might provide for the Plant Sale. Are there plants that could be thinned, divided or dug up for the sale? Is there something you have too much of?

Fall is a great time to dig and pot plants for the sale! Most perennials and woody plants happily overwinter in pots, including favorites like coneflowers, Joe Pye weed, daylily, hosta, aster, goldenrod and peony.

We will sell plants in three pot sizes: medium (6 to 8 inches diameter, roughly quart size); large (10 to 12 inches) and "shrub" (larger than 12 inches).

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Caroline Turner shared this photo of her charming summer arrangement. See another of Caroline's photos on page 3.



Plant Sale 2022



The Plant Sale committee needs pots with diameter of 6-8 inches and 10-12 inches! Please let us know if you have spares to donate.



Photos by Dawn Landsman

Contact Judy Termini or Elaine Hope *now* if you need pots or if you want advice on which of your plants might benefit from dividing. We may be able to help you with digging and potting.

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

The Nativity Scene

Gardeners have many motivations for trying to grow more native plants: supporting insects, birds, and other creatures for their own sake; attracting beneficial insects to attack pests on our plants; choosing plants that are well-adapted to our region's soils and climate; and simply enjoying the many and varied native plants that are becoming more available as interest in them grows.

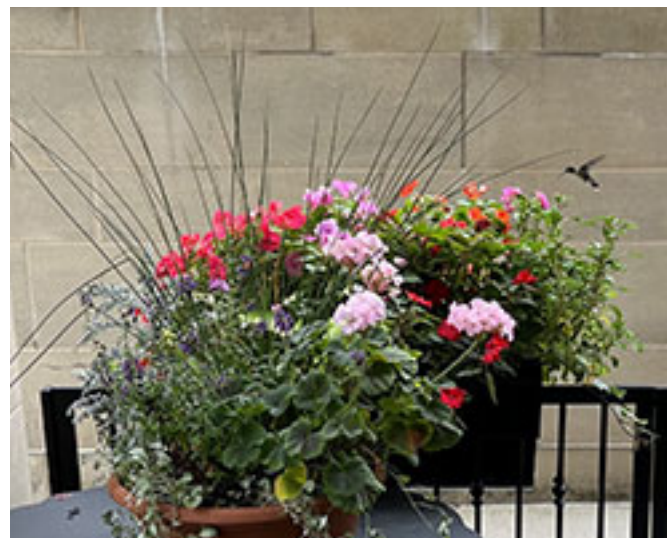
This growing interest extends both to our members and to customers at our annual plant sale. With the prospect of an in-person public plant sale next spring, we hope to be digging our own plants or other people's this fall. Identifying and marking our plants appropriately (always vital!), including whether they are native, helps our customers (and us—so that the plants end up on the appropriate category on our crowded tables). If you can, using the botanical nomenclature is really helpful, since so many common names are ambiguous. Plus, it really helps when you need to figure out nativity, since the exact species makes a big difference.

Considering how many popular and useful garden plants are not native (*Hosta*, day lilies, all but one species of *Astilbe*, *Epimedium*, *Hellebore*, lamb's ears, etc.), it is nice to find that there are some large groups of New World origin. You can be pretty sure that almost all species of *Solidago* (goldenrod), *Phlox*, *Echinacea*, *Heuchera*, *Rudbeckia* (black-eyed Susans), *Liatris*, *Gaillardia*, *Agastache*, *Monarda*, *Coreopsis*, *Helenium*, and *Penstemon* are native to at least the Americas (if not necessarily to the mid-Atlantic region or Maryland).

Many plant genera, especially those with large numbers of species, are much more mixed. For instance, *Anemone*, *Asclepias* (milkweeds), *Helianthus* (sunflowers), *Aquilegia* (columbines),

Iris, *Vernonia* (ironweed), *Salvia*, and *Verbena* have species from many regions of the world; knowing exactly which species you have is essential to answering the nativity question. Consider the lobelias: *L. cardinalis* (cardinal flower) and *L. syphilitica* (great blue lobelia) are familiar and beloved natives, but lots of charming garden lobelias are not. Then there are the ever-vexing asters: these come from all over, and are often hard to distinguish from each other. The botanists have tried to "help" by splitting species formerly known as asters into Old World and New World genera: if the scientific name is *Aster*, it's Old World. New World aster species are in other genera, notably *Eurybia* and *Symphotrichum*. (Others are *Almutaster*, *Canadanthus*, *Doellingeria*, *Eucephalus*, *Ionactis*, *Oligoneuron*, *Oreostemma*, and *Sericocarpus*. Phew.)

All this botanical Latin may seem daunting, but it's really helpful to clear up ambiguities. And if you're also figuring out nativity, you may be lucky enough to find out that the species name gives you some nice, obvious clue, like *japonica*, *chinensis*, *tatarica*, *canadensis*, *virginiana*, *novae-angliae*, or *marilandica*. Question answered!



A hummingbird visits the planters on Caroline Turner's patio.

Photo by Caroline Turner

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Bulb season, Fall planting, Beyond Daffodils

Carole Ottesen

Bulb catalogs are showing up in the mailbox. Though they are pleasant to peruse and the photos are disarming, you may never again be tempted to buy another daffodil bulb, especially if (thirty or forty years ago), you planted a *N. poeticus* Pheasant's Eye.

Legend has it that this lovely, late-blooming, fragrant beauty was one of the first daffodils to be cultivated in gardens, that it came to Europe with the Crusaders and/or was brought across Europe by Roman soldiers who erroneously believed its sap had healing properties.

Pheasant's Eye is handsome, upright, and a prolific spreader. You will have enough of these charming blooms as time goes by. Time to try something else.



Less vigorous and smaller, the saffron crocus, *C. sativus*, is as useful as it is charming. Planted in the fall, it very likely

will do nothing until next October, beyond sending up fleeting spring foliage. Purple flowers won't emerge until the following fall, when each blossom will produce three orangey-red stigmas in its center, the saffron.

My experience is that saffron crocuses do not all bloom at once. Which means daily excursions into the garden to check on their development in order to harvest the stigmas

If you miss a day or two, you may come upon bees lolling drunkenly in the flower cups. Apparently, the stigmas contain, among other substances, mood altering chemicals—not

enough to work on humans, but powerful enough to inebriate bees.

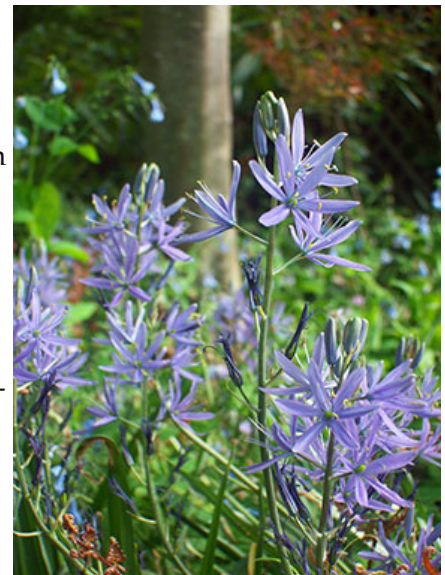
One reason saffron is so expensive is that the small stigmas dry and shrink to disappointingly smaller, thin saffron "threads." These must be harvested



by hand. It takes at least two or three dozen crocuses to provide enough saffron to flavor a single dish. However, in the right spot (sun, good drainage), these fall bloomers multiply rapidly.

Another bulb with culinary potential is the camas, *Camassia quamash*. This is the bulb Northwest Native Americans fed to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Making the bulbs edible requires a very long preparation and thorough cooking.

Arriving after daffodils, but before peonies, Camas can naturalize energetically at the edge of woods or in moist meadows. Blue, lavender,



purple, and white, blossoms top 15-inch stems, attracting butterflies and pollinators. Camas will flower in the gap between daffodils and peonies.

Want to try some? The Van Engelen catalog (23 Tulip Drive, P.O. Box 638, Bantam, CT 06759-0638) offers 100 bulbs for \$17.75.

Happy planting!

Photos by Carole Ottesen