



# Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

*"Ninety-nine Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"*

[www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org](http://www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org)

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## Tree Montgomery

Montgomery County Maryland's Department of Environmental Protection has recognized the value of trees' shade to cool us in the summer, reduce our energy use and help clean our air and water. Through two of its improve-the-county efforts it has established Reforest Montgomery, which provides shade trees to urbanizing and urbanized neighborhoods that lack the resources to fund the planting of trees, and Tree Montgomery, a program that offers free shade trees to single family homes, multi-family communities, parking lots and areas in need of more shade.

At our **November 16, 2022** meeting we'll be informed about Tree Montgomery. **Laura Miller**, an arborist who is Forest Conservation Coordinator for Tree Montgomery, will discuss the program established by Montgomery County, its mission and its goals and her work as liaison among people, trees, and forests. If you're interested in a free tree, be sure to join us at this meeting for details on how to acquire one! Oh, and by the way, lunch will be served....

The meeting will begin at 10:30 at St. Mark Presbyterian Church.

*Jane Malish*

## December Greens Workshop

Thankfully we will ALL gather together for one of our favorite garden club events, The Greens Workshop on **December 14, at 10:00am**.

We will catch the real Holiday spirit as we make our arrangements and take them to shelters, Missions, health centers, soup kitchens, and other charities that serve our community. We are hoping to make about 150 arrangements.

Here's how we will make this happen:

1. Come at 10am sharp, Wednesday, Dec. 14. If you have signed up to help set-up, please come at 9:30 to make sure all the supplies are ready.
2. Be sure to bring your own tools including clippers, perhaps gloves, an apron, a broom and some plastic bags to help with the clean up.
3. Bring your own sandwich. Warm spiced (not spiked!) apple cider will be provided.
4. Most important is that we bring greens 6-12" long or longer. Cut/prune them from your shrubbery on the Sunday or Monday before the meeting. Lay them in a laundry tub or bathtub in a mild solution of detergent (Dawn) and lukewarm water. Soak briefly, swish and rinse in cold water. Soak in the cold water until Tuesday evening, then lay them on towels or sheeting and bring them to the meeting.



Barbara Collier provides tips on how to help the bees and other critters in her Environmental Concerns column, p. 2.

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Greens can be the following: Spruce, pine, boxwood, juniper, aucuba, cedar, holly, yew, Southern magnolia, nandina, dusty miller, cryptomeria, Osmanthus “Goshiki, Viburnum Chindo, etc. In short, we welcome just about any greens tough enough to last several weeks in a wet oasis.

5. There will be a number of doodads to add sparkle to your creations.
6. Our greens arrangements will be donated to these organizations: Bethesda Cares, Stepping Stones Family Shelter, Waverly House, Whitman Walker Health, A Wider Circle, Shepherd’s Table, Bethesda Men’s Shelter, Bethesda Police Station, Catholic Central Union Mission Coalition for the Homeless, Whitman-Walker House, Rainbow Shelter, Cornerstone Montgomery

## Plant Sale News

Mary Horan

The Plant Sale Committee has had a busy Fall. We’ve dug and potted plant donations from the gardens of club members Judith Hackett, Carolyn Kulik, Carol Meyers, Marge Pray, and former member Selma DeLeon. Eleven members are overwintering the plants from those digs.

Thanks to all of you who joined us to dig, pot, and label. What great teams we have had! We couldn’t do it without you!

We hope you’ve had a chance to dig and pot donations for the Plant Sale from your own garden this fall. Help them to overwinter by keeping them watered and protected from critters.



Photo by Dawn Landsman

Carolyn Randall, Candy Kessel, and Sharon Souhterland sported Halloween headgear at the October BCGC meeting..

We’re eagerly looking forward to the next Plant Sale: Thursday, May 11, 2023, at the Montgomery Farm Women’s Market in downtown Bethesda. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for updates in the spring.

## Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

### Winter Is Coming

In the meantime, we’re having a remarkable beginning of November, aren’t we? The nice weather is great for admiring the glorious fall foliage (see my lovely fothergilla!) and for doing things in the garden before winter sets in.

This season of changes brings revelations and opportunities. For instance, when their leaves change color, scores of tree seedlings that were hiding in the greenery show themselves, giving me a chance to remove them before the leaves drop and they become invisible little sticks. I enjoy pulling them out, tearing off the leaves, and scattering the leaves and bare twigs onto the ground to compost in place—chop and drop, as they say.

The *Hydrangea arborescens* are losing their leaves, which shows off their dried flower heads, and also lets me see the stray bits of vinca, ivy, and creeping euonymus that are trying to sprout at their feet. Ha! Gotcha.

Rambunctious spreaders like white snakeroot and late boneset bear masses of flowers that go spectacularly to seed, so I remove the seed-laden branches to scatter elsewhere (leaving stalks for the bees, now doing their final foraging but soon to be looking for nesting sites). The resulting visibility shows me where the birds have been spreading ivy and porcelainberry: fresh little sprouts of both are now visible, fortunately still small enough to be pulled right out.

Where I can, I’m trying to establish a “base layer” of low-growing, noninvasive ground covers, rather than mulch. (In my garden, this approach seems to work best in mixed sun and shade.) As leaves die down, it’s a good time to check those ground cover areas for weedy interlopers. I can see places where I need to help out

Photos by Barbara Collier



**Fothergilla shining in the sun**

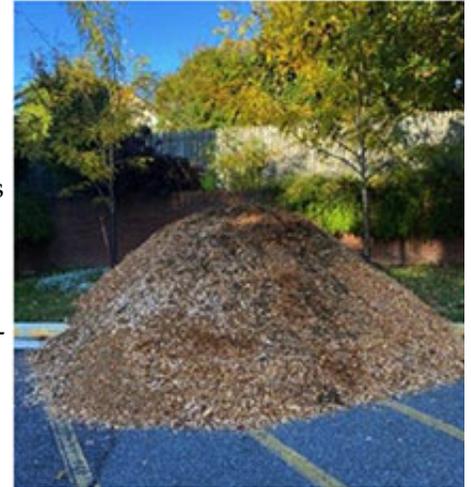
the good guys by adding some wood chips or leaves. In other areas, particularly in full sun, I need to add a thick layer of wood chips if I'm going to foil the winter weeds—I've already seen some well-grown hairy bit-tercross in our "lawn," and sure enough, when I look in the beds, there are the seedlings starting to sprout. This is when the scuffle hoe comes in handy.



In my wild and woolly "meadow" areas, it's time to make decisions about what to leave standing for wildlife and winter interest, and what to remove because it's just in the wrong place. Any invasives are removed, obviously, but there are also the aggressive natives that need to be reined in, not to mention all the saplings trying to take over. Time to start stacking brush in strategic places! Thus can I satisfy my (weak) urge toward tidiness, while still helping out the bees and other little critters sharing my garden.

## How to Spread a Massive Pile of Wood Chips

The second week-end in October, the Connie Morella Library received, gratis, an enormous pile of wood chips. Blanca Ruebensaal ok'd the delivery. To be perfectly honest, she did not get a preview of the amount, just that it was a free load.



Blanca is accommodating, so she said, "Yes." Riding high in the front seat of the truck with the tree cutters, the world seemed full of possibility as the driver followed my directions to the library. They dumped the load, and immediately remorse set in.

Unable to take it back, Blanca called the Connie Morella troops to spread the chips. Forward they came: Sylvia Diss, Betsy James, Candy Kessel, Gwen Stewart, Blanca Ruebensaal, Jeanne Weiss. Spreading began using buckets ferried by car, by buckets on a dolly, single buckets, and a single wheelbarrow, some of us dumping and others spreading, on parking lot islands, alongside the



**Dan, aka John Henry**

to pick up his 6-year-old son from Sidwell Friends. He needed something to do and thus Dan took over the single wheelbarrow.

yews. It was worse than daunting. It was demoralizing and wretched as we watched the chip pile recede to where it was almost off the blacktop. But then Gwen found Dan, a father waiting

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Our only entertainment until then was to watch the police interrogate the fellow who had defecated twice on the library property. Gwen had buried it on the first occasion, and I had dumped it in the trash on the second. The police banned him from the property for ninety days for other inappropriate behavior inside the library.

Our focus shifted as we watched Dan, the parent who was working at an astonishing pace. Dan cajoled his son Arda into dumping a couple of buckets before they left for home and work stopped for the day.

Over the weekend, another gardener some of us know came with a pick-up truck and a couple of helpers. They took a truckload, maybe two. Things were looking better, but not great.

Dan returned the next week when the BCGC CM crew returned in the afternoon. He had tried to recruit other Sidwell parents to join us, but no one else took up the offer. It's a mystery why rational adults, waiting for their kids after school, would not want to spread wood chips. Nevertheless, he took up the wheelbarrow and worked with us again. We all noted independently that Dan was dumping two wheelbarrow



loads for one of whatever we were dumping. We began referring to him as John Henry.

Also, that day Nina came, and she and Blanca filled the backs of their vehicles with chips and made two runs to the Davis Library. In less than a week, between our efforts, other outsiders who took chips, and John Henry, the pile was nearly gone. I made a solemn promise not to ask for more chips. Blanca said it was like a chip fest. Gwen agreed. Candy and I were more than surprised at having done the impossible.

On Thursday afternoon last week, John Henry returned, borrowed a rake from Blanca, and raked up all the chips remaining on the grass and

distributed them. It appears that 1:00-3:00 p.m. is a good time to schedule work at the library because the Sidwell day ends at 3:00.

I can't imagine that adventures such as the above would not entice more BCGC members to volunteer at either the Connie Morella or the Davis Libraries.

Also, for anyone wondering about wood chips, check out the link Barbara Collier sent about wood chips. Or, you can watch the YouTube video

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315662938\\_Using\\_arborist\\_wood\\_chips\\_as\\_a\\_landscape\\_mulch\\_WSU\\_Extension\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_FS160E](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315662938_Using_arborist_wood_chips_as_a_landscape_mulch_WSU_Extension_Fact_Sheet_FS160E)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC7GQH9-8Q>

Dana Richardson, producer, and director of Back to Eden Film and cofounder of Dana & Sarah Films sits down with one of the leading experts on the scientific research behind gardening and landscaping with arborist wood chips, Dr. Linda Chalker Scott. Find out the truth about the biggest myths about wood chips! See the questions list below, to which you will learn the answers!

“Arborist Wood Chips: The Best Mulch for Gardens and Landscapes” What are arborist wood chips? What kind of woody mulches are negative to use for soil and plant health? Nitrogen and carbon ratio in fresh versus composted wood chips. The mind-blowing benefits of arborist wood chip mulch. How to prevent weeds; water-saving; local resources; slow-release of nutrients. Why do we need to shift our mindset on the aesthetic appeal of landscaping mulch? The free availability, economic benefits, and true value of arborist wood chips. The impacts of sheet mulching with paper and cardboard on soil health. Best ways to smother weeds without suffocating the soil. How thick to apply wood chip mulch for restoration sites, perennials, and weed problems. When to apply wood chip mulch and when to add more. The pros and cons of coarse versus fine arborist wood chips. How to solve

nutrient deficiencies in the soil. Debunking common wood chip myths. Does applying wood chips as a mulch tie up nitrogen? Should gardeners practice tilling or amending the soil with wood chips by mixing them in? Do woody mulches acidify soils? Do some woody mulches leach allelopathic chemicals that can kill other plants? Do woody mulches attract termites, carpenter ants, and other pests? Do arborist wood chips pose a risk of transferring disease? Does the contamination of Herbicides or Pesticides pose a concern? What destroys beneficial mycorrhizae? Are arborist wood chips a beneficial mulch for vegetable gardens or only perennials? To learn more: <https://www.backtoedengardening.com/> <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/4...>

**Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott Bio:** Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott has a Ph.D. in Horticulture from Oregon State University and is an ISA certified arborist and an ASCA consulting arborist. She is WSU's Extension Urban Horticulturist and a Professor in the Department of Horticulture and holds two affiliate associate professor positions at the University of Washington. She conducts research in applied plant and soil sciences, publishing the results in scientific articles and university extension fact sheets. In 2020, she was named the new editor for the Western Arborist magazine.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315662938\\_Using\\_arborist\\_wood\\_chips\\_as\\_a\\_landscape\\_mulch\\_WSU\\_Extension\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_FS160E](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315662938_Using_arborist_wood_chips_as_a_landscape_mulch_WSU_Extension_Fact_Sheet_FS160E)

## BCGC Represented at Farm Women's Market 90TH Anniversary Celebration

On a gorgeous October Saturday, the Montgomery County Farm Women's Co-operative Market celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The market, just ten years younger than the Bethesda Community Garden Club, hosted numerous booths, one of which was BCGC's demonstration of how to grow herbs indoors in winter. Dee Lertora, Janine Trudeau, and new member Janet Bill showed many visitors to their demo how to prepare basil, parsley and rosemary for indoor growing.



Janet Bill, Dee Lertora and Janine Trudeau preparing herbs for fall and winter

With the celebration originally scheduled for October 1, and with their plants ready for that date, the trio had to scramble to make sure the herbs were in good condition for the postponement date, October 29. There were lots of inquiries about BCGC, and most of these were satisfied with how to check the online site. Several supplied their email addresses so they could be contacted directly.

A llama, donkey, calf, some goats, rabbits, ducks, and chickens attracted lots of attention as did the face painter. As the band played, dads danced with their young daughters, a vendor sold Mombo sauce (that's the spelling on the label), baskets from Senegal and so many children visited the BCGC sponsored pumpkin patch and walked away with a free pumpkin. The vendors inside reported a robust day of sales.



By the end of the event, children had taken almost all the pumpkins

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As most of our members know, for many years the market has permitted BCGC to use their site for our plant sale in May. Key to that operation was Ray Renn, a vendor there, and facilitator who died suddenly earlier in the week. It was a shock and a blow to those who knew him. His family graciously came saying Ray was looking forward to the day. They filled the space where Ray would have been and spoke to the many people who came by. Their presence allowed the anniversary celebration to be a happy event.

### Scenes from the Farm Women’s Market 90th Anniversary celebration



Sign courtesy of Joyce Mulcahy



Holly Joseph at the Bethesda Historical Society table



The Mombo Sauce guy.



Vodka visits the BCGC herbs table



Taking a load off at the BCGC pumpkin patch

# HORTICULTURAL NOTES

## *The Gold Before the Cold*

Carole Ottesen

Was the sky ever this blue before? Or the silver maples quite as gold?

It seems that while we were going about our days, heads down, shopping, cooking, paying bills, raking leaves, carpooling, avoiding Covid, and worrying about the elections, fall has been busy gilding the landscape.

Enjoy it before it's gone.

Robert Frost said it best:

Nothing gold can stay.  
 Nature's first green is gold,  
 Her hardest hue to hold.  
 Her early leaf's a flower;  
 But only so an hour.  
 Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
 So Eden sank to grief,  
 So dawn goes down to day.  
 Nothing gold can stay.



Clockwise from left:  
 Asian spicebush (*Lindera angustifolia*), Bluestar (*Amsonia hubrichtii*) with Tatarian aster (*A. tataricus*), Winter hazel (*Corylopsis 'Longwood Chimes'*), Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*), Bigleaf magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*)



Photos by Carole Ottesen