



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-nine Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

Vol. 49, No. 4 ■ January 2023

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

President:
Jeanne Weiss

Vice President:
Stella Gordon

Secretary:
Betsy James

Treasurer:
Margy Tritschler

Bulletin Editor:
Lois Brown

Photographer:
Dawn Landsman

Send news to:
Lois Brown, editor



One of the 130 arrangements created during the Holiday Greens Workshop in December. See more photos from the event on p. 2.

Photo by Dawn Landsman

Going Native

Drew Asbury, Horticultural and Volunteer Manager at Hillwood Museum and Gardens, said, in his email confirming he would speak to the club on **Wednesday, January 25**, that there's now a totally native garden below the parking decks at Hillwood. Given how pretty the grounds are at the estate, I'm imagining that might be a wonderful thing to see, full of ideas to incorporate in our own yards. He did mention his presentation would have a lot to say about design, which appeals to my notion that I really should do something about the few natives I do have and not just have thrown them in the first bare spot I saw... huge drooping, too tall specimens that hover over smaller plants and encroach on others. Drew will tell us about native groundcovers... I'm hoping he will share some easy-to-care-for items that even I can poke into the ground and keep alive for at least one season, despite the competition from their thuggish neighbors.

True to his own interest in sustainable maintenance techniques, Drew will incorporate some of his practices for keeping gardens at their best using materials at hand. And best of all, he promises "quite a few" photos of his own garden so we can spy on what a professional horticulturist chooses to plant when he can make choices for himself alone.

Please join us at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Rd. on Wednesday morning January 25, 10:00 am for a 30-minute meet and greet before Drew's talk kicks off the regular meeting at 10:30 am. There's going to be a presentation on Winter Sowing if you're intrigued by this practice and have access to empty plastic gallon jugs—and even if you don't have the jugs there're other containers you can use (you don't have to bring anything: this is just a show and tell presentation). Also, do bring a sandwich and a drink so we can sit down and catch up with each other before going in search of those containers for winter sowing. Salads and desserts will be provided.

—Jane Malish

Set Aside Stuff for Silent Auction

Please don't toss any garden tools, pots, troughs, garden gnomes and fairies, objet d'art, etc., if you're sorting and cleaning. Many of us take this non-garden season to tackle closets and sheds, ridding ourselves of unwanted items.

Please save such goodies for BCGC's silent auction at our March 22 general meeting. Our last such auction was March of 2020 when covid hit and the world changed but now that some normalcy has returned, we'll do it again.

Continued on page 2

We don't accept garden books but will gladly accept most anything else that's horticulture related.

Holiday Arrangements Cheer a Multitude

The beautiful and festive output from our traditional greens workshop brightened the lives of not only the many recipients but the enthusiastic members who came together to create them. In this traditional favorite December meeting, we made some 130 small, medium, and larger centerpieces, demonstrating creativity and the true holiday spirit. The variety of results that can be fashioned with evergreens that members cut from their yards and decorate with baubles and doodads the club purchases is truly amazing. The photos Dawn Landsman snapped offer a small sampling.

To keep the positive human connection, members stepped forward to deliver the fresh and cheery arrangements to Bethesda Police Station, Central Union Mission on Capitol Hill, Cornerstone Montgomery, two Interfaith Works shelters in Rockville, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, National Center for Children & Families, Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring, Stepping Stones family shelter in Rockville, Waverly House in Bethesda, and Whitman-Walker Health in Logan Circle.

Sincere thanks to the delivery gals as well as those who helped with the set-up and clean up chores. And special thanks to:

* Lois Brown, Lou Olin, and Joyce Mulcahy, who organized, boxed and labeled all the arrangements for delivery;



Photos by Dawn Landsman



- * Kathy Benjamin who initiated a cookie bake and encouraged a number of members to bring tasty treats to provide sustenance as we worked;
- * Carolyn Randall who again created and laminated the BCGC greetings/care tags for each cheery bowl; and
- * Sharon Southerland who helped Santa by leading the gift exchange.

–The Holiday Greens Workshop Committee: Carole Gelfeld, Lizzie-Glidden Boyle, Candy Kessel, Dawn Landsman



Want to Try Something New?

Are you interested in participating in periodic small group activities organized by fellow club members? Would you be willing to help implement such activities? Do you have ideas that you would like to kick off? We'd like to help!

Background: Last November, the club sent out an email blast, later extended in a listserv discussion, asking for ideas to help club members get to know the club and each other, share experiences and information, or contribute to the community. Post-pandemic, we felt the need to consider new, more diverse opportunities for members, especially new members, to meet and interact with each other. We set up a small ad hoc committee to chew over all the responses, and then we discussed the results at the most recent board meeting.

To summarize, we got a lot of thoughtful and interesting suggestions from members: thank you for that! I will post a summary of the suggestions and discussion to the listserv for those who have not seen it. (You can also contact me if you want it sent to you directly.)

As some people pointed out, the club already has a lot of opportunities for involvement (as described in the yearbook/directory that we hope all members now have). However, many of these are ongoing commitments. Although we already have some one-off or short-term events, such as open gardens and occasional outings, many people liked the idea of having more workshops, demonstrations, teas, and the like, especially for smaller groups and in varying times and places. Plus, if such events are being held by another group, members who were interested in attending could publicize them to our group with the idea of carpooling or whatever. There were also suggestions for encouraging both old and new members to get acquainted at general meetings.

In this spirit, look out for a few changes at the January meeting, including a small demonstration.

If you would like to volunteer to help with this kind of thing or offer ideas, please contact club president Jeanne Weiss.

–Barbara Collier

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

More about Mountain Mints

Way back in March 2018, I wrote about *Pycnanthemum*, the mountain mints (there are several). These rewarding plants are powerhouse attractors of pollinators and provide winter interest with their interesting dried flowerheads.

Back then, I had two: *Pycnanthemum muticum* (the most common species that you're likely to find on sale) and *P. tenuifolium* (narrow-leaf mountain mint, a shorter species, with leaves reminiscent of *Coreopsis verticillata*). Since then I acquired a couple more, *P. incanum* (hoary or silverleaf mountain mint) and *P. flexuosum* (Appalachian mountain mint). I couldn't find my *P. flexuosum* this year, so I guess it got outcompeted in my undisciplined garden, but I am very pleased with my *P. incanum*. I joined a bumblebee watch project this past summer, and it seemed to me that the *incanum* attracted even more than the *muticum*. My theory was that this is because the *incanum* flowers are bigger, so better for those big bumblebees to land on.

The differences among these in the winter garden are striking.

I have far more *P. muticum* than the others, as I got it long ago, and it is one that spreads readily; the two others are more restrained. However, recently I learned that there are different strains of *P. muticum*. The source I found refers to the "garden-center" strain and "local ecotype" strains, with the garden-center strain being larger and more aggressive than the local ecotypes. I concluded that I had both, based on the photos presented (archewild.com/species-spotlight-pycnanthemum-muticum-clustered-mountainmint). This makes sense, since I acquired some from Chesapeake Natives, which deals with local ecotypes, and some from plant swaps and the like.

So if you want the advantages of growing mountain mint but were worried that it might take over your garden, you have options!



Pycnanthemum incanum

Photos by Barbara Collier



Pycnanthemum tenuifolium



Pycnanthemum muticum

BCGC Favorite Recipes

The November meeting brought forth wonderful soups and treats. By popular demand, here are recipes.

LACY NUT ICEBOX COOKIES

Jane Malish

Heat oven to 350 deg. when ready to bake.

1 cup plus 5 Tblsp butter at room temp.

2-¼ cups confectioners sugar, sifted

¼ cup clear corn syrup

1-¼ cup all purpose flour

1-¼ cup chopped nuts (I used half and half walnuts and pecans) pretty finely chopped

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. With mixer running, add corn syrup. Lower mixer speed and add flour; beat til combined, then add nuts and beat til combined.

Turn dough onto a large piece of parchment paper, at least 12"×16". Position dough across the paper and roll into a log. Refrigerate for at least 30 mins. (I refrigerated mine for an hour, maybe a little longer). Slice into ½" thick rounds and place on cookie sheet 3 ½" apart. Bake for 15-20 mins. until brown and lacy. WATCH CAREFULLY.

Cool sheet of cookies on a rack for 5 mins. then transfer firmed-up cookies to another rack. Will stay fresh in an air tight container for 2 weeks.

NB: this recipe is from Martha Stewart, back in the mists of time.

Also, she recommends lining cookie sheet with parchment, a step too far for me. It might be a good idea, if you're also not lazy like me.

EASY BLACK BEAN SOUP

Sharon Southerland

SERVES 4 to 6

Pureeing a portion of the beans gives soup body, while a hearty base of aromatics—garlic, oregano, cumin, and chili powder—gave it a lot of flavor. For the liquid, chicken broth proved the best bet because its flavor was not intrusive. If you want more liquid you can use some of the drained

liquid from the cans. Since the soup is cooked so briefly, we looked for a quick-cooking pork product and found that sliced spicy chorizo sausage added meaty richness. A handful of cilantro, stirred in at the end, offered freshness.

INGREDIENTS

4 (15-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed

3 cups chicken broth

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

6 ounces chorizo or andouille sausage, halved lengthwise and sliced ¼ inch thick

1 onion, chopped fine

1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped fine

(Sharon's note: I don't like cooked peppers so did not include peppers, just used as topping)

6 garlic cloves, minced

1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried

¾ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon chili powder, Sharon used chipotle

1 strip Kombu seaweed cut in to small bits (this is supposed to reduce the gas from beans)

1 Lime zested and cut for juice

½ cup minced fresh cilantro *(Sharon's note: I don't like cilantro so only used ½ tsp dried in the soup and let it be added to soup as a topping)*

Salt and pepper

Hot sauce

Process 2 cups beans and 1 cup broth in blender until smooth, about 10 seconds.

Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add chorizo, onion, and bell pepper and cook until vegetables are softened and lightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in garlic, oregano, cumin, and chili powder and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in remaining 2 cups broth, scraping up any browned bits.

Stir in pureed beans and remaining whole beans and kombu bits, bring to simmer, and cook until flavors meld, about 15 minutes. Stir in lime zest,

lime juice and cilantro (or some dried if you don't love cilantro) and season with salt, pepper, and hot sauce to taste.

You can top bowls of this soup with sour cream, plain Greek yogurt, finely minced red, orange or yellow peppers, chopped cilantro or lime wedges.

GREEK SALAD

Dawn Landsman

Dressing

12 basil Leaves
125ml extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons wine vinegar
2 garlic cloves
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Salt, pepper, and paprika
¼ teaspoon mustard powder
¼ teaspoon sugar

Vegetables

3 Romaine lettuce heads, cut in thin strips
20 spinach leaves
4 tomatoes or 15 cherry tomatoes
1 cucumber sliced
10 baby carrots
1 red pepper sliced
2 avocados in cubes
olives optional
8 ounces crumbled feta cheese

Chop up basil leaves and garlic in a food processor. Add the rest of the dressing ingredients and mix well.

Place vegetables on a platter.

Add crumbled feta cheese over vegetables.

Pour dressing over salad and cheese and mix well.

MERINGUES WITH CHOCOLATE CHIPS & WALNUTS

Carole Gelfeld

2 egg whites
6 oz. chocolate chips (mini chips work best)
¾ cup sugar
1 cup toasted, chopped walnuts
Pinch of salt

Preheat oven to 375°.

Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually add sugar and pinch of salt. Fold in nuts and chocolate chips. Drop by teaspoons full onto parchment-covered (or greased) cookie sheets.

Put cookies into heated oven. Immediately turn off oven. Let cookies remain in oven overnight or at least for 5 hours. [I always leave them overnight!]

Makes 2 dozen cookies.

Note: Baking these on highly humid days may result in meringues that are too chewy

HUNGARIAN KUCHEN

(Margy's Raspberry Nut Bars)

Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes

¼ lb. softened butter
½ cup granulated sugar
2 eggs – separated
1 ½ cups flour
½ tsp. baking powder
1 pinch baking soda

Finely chopped walnuts

Raspberry preserves (I use Bonne Maman or Safeway Signature brands)

Cream butter and sugar until well blended.

Add egg yolks.

Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda together, then add.

Dough will be crumbly.

Press it into 8x10 inch foil lined pan.

Spread raspberry preserves on dough.

Beat the 2 egg whites with 1 Tbsp. sugar until stiff.

Spread it gently on top of raspberry layer.

Sprinkle chopped nuts on top and bake.

TURKISH SOUP: GREEN LENTIL SOUP WITH NOODLES AND MINT

This soup is common throughout Anatolia, Turkey. Use angel-hair pasta or even fettuccine.

Aleppo pepper is sold in Mediterranean markets, Whole Foods Markets and Penzeys and at La Cuisine in Alexandria (703-836-4435).

Make Ahead: The lentils need to be soaked for 3 to 4 hours.

SERVINGS: 6

INGREDIENTS

8 cups low-sodium chicken broth, preferably homemade

1 cup dried green lentils, soaked for 3 to 4 hours, then drained

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

½ tablespoon tomato paste

½ tablespoon red pepper paste

¾ cup dried angel-hair pasta or fettuccine, broken into matchstick-size pieces

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon canola oil

1 tablespoon dried (ground) mint

½ teaspoon Aleppo pepper (see headnote)

DIRECTIONS

Bring 6 cups of the broth to a boil in large pot over high heat. Add the drained green lentils, salt and pepper to taste, tomato paste and red pepper paste; mix to incorporate. Cover the pot and reduce the heat to medium-low; cook for 20 to 25 minutes.

Add the remaining 2 cups of broth (it doesn't have to be warm) and the pasta. Stir to

incorporate, then cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes, until the pasta is tender.

Transfer to a soup tureen or individual bowls, or cover and turn off the heat.

Combine the butter and oil in a small skillet, then stir in the mint and Aleppo pepper. Drizzle over the soup and serve hot.

RECIPE SOURCE

Adapted from "The Turkish Cookbook," by Nur Ilkin and Sheilah Kaufman (Interlink, 2010).

CRANBERRY SALAD

Debbie Shakelton

1 large box (or 2 small boxes) of lemon Jell-O

1 ½ cups of hot water or hot fruit juice

Juice of ½ lemon

½ cup of chopped celery

½ cup of crushed pineapple well drained

2 cups of cranberry sauce

1 cup of chopped nuts

Dissolve Jell-O in hot water

Add lemon juice

When nearly set add the other ingredients

Put in a pretty bowl and chill until set!