



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-eight Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
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Photo by Dawn Landsman

The lovely arrangements created for Strathmore Hall by Lizzie Glidden-Boyle and Dawn Landsman provide inspiration for the Greens workshop. See the article on page 2 for more photos.

The Holly and the Ivy, Part 2...

Jane Malish

BCCG is again embarking on the traditional greens workshop at 10:30 on **December 15, 2021**, at St. Mark Presbyterian church. This is the gathering where members meet to assemble small evergreen arrangements we deliver to hospitals, shelters, assisted living and extended care facilities and other community agencies.

Last year we didn't meet at all because of the pandemic. This year, as conditions have eased we are again meeting at St. Mark's where we are required to limit participants to 40. Forty members have signed up on a first-come-first-served basis and there's a waiting list should any of the first 40 find they're unable to attend.

But what about the other 90 or so of us who can't be at this gathering?? Well, here's how to condition your own greens: On December 13, say, (or any day, for that matter) cut likely looking greens such as fir, holly, spruce, yew, box, nandina, etc., 6" – 12" long and on a slant. Briefly submerge them in mildly detergent-y water, swish them around, then remove them, rinse them in cold water and immerse them overnight in more cold water until the evening of December 14. Remove them that same night and blot dry on towels, etc. Put them aside until the morning of December 15 or don't resist and get right to work on your arrangement. Or wait till morning on the 15th to dry them and then get to work. If you're so inspired photograph your creation to share with members, but most of all have fun and enjoy the feeling of accomplishment. And here's last year's dried orange slices instructions in case at least one of you remembers and thinks you want to scatter some around: thinly slice an orange, spread slices on a parchment-lined baking sheet, bake at 200 degrees for 2 hours or until dried, turning every 30 minutes. You could also try lemons and limes if you're so inspired. Enjoy yourselves and best wishes for a festive season!

Additional information from Patricia Pennington, Holiday Greens Chair

Along with the conditioned greens, remember to bring pruners, clippers, and wire cutters. It's a good idea to put your name on them.

If you have extra ornaments, ribbons, pine cones that you won't use, bring them as well.

This year we will **not** have a luncheon or gift exchange.

We're looking forward to December 2022 and hoping that by then we will have resumed our normal life and we all will be able to get together for the 2022 Holiday Greens Workshop.

Membership Update

When referring those interested in becoming a member of the club please direct them to the website for membership requests so that they can complete the form. This procedure replaces the paper form. Any questions please contact Marge Pray or Dee Lertora.

Strathmore Mansion Holiday Decorating 2021

Lizzie Glidden-Boyle



Lizzie Glidden-Boyle and Dawn Landsman decorated the library at Strathmore Hall.

The chosen theme was *Victorian Sparkles at Christmas*.

As BCGC is a member of the National Capitol Area Garden Clubs, Inc. District IV, we were asked to participate, along with nine other local garden clubs, to decorate the entrance, dining room and seven other areas at Strathmore Mansion. We were asked to decorate the library as Dee Lertora and Marge Pray had faithfully and creatively designed over the last four years. One year they won the prize for the best decorations. No prizes this year.



I was happy to be proposed to take over the decorating and even happier when Dawn Landsman offered to work with me. I did not know Dawn but by the time we decided on how Victorian Sparkle might be interpreted, we then went to the market to buy all 'faux' flowers, feathers, and ribbons. We raided vases from our shelves and basements. We became fast friends. It was a lot of planning, and making up how to make the wire stems stay secured in our vases when it was a new project for both of us. But that was half the fun and in the end we were so pleased with ourselves we didn't need a prize. We knew.

Photos by Dawn Landsman

Volunteer Needed to take on Leadership Position at Davis Library Garden Project

Margaret Edison

As you know, our garden club has managed the landscaping and maintenance at Davis Library since the library was built in the 1960's. It is a great way to support our community. I have worked in the gardens there for over 10 years and have loved working with some of you fellow gardeners to make it look good for the library patrons. Now my husband and I are

working toward moving to a retirement community near Frederick in late March or so. I can only commute from there occasionally due to a 45-minute drive. So the club and I are looking for my replacement or better yet, two co-leaders to take on the gardening at Davis. There are several beds there that need weeding and watering during the year. The Friends of Davis Library are very supportive financially as is the head librarian (though they don't actually do any gardening). It would be best if an interested candidate would work with me until I leave, to "learn the ropes." The club does provide financial support for the plants or flowers needed to make the gardens look good and there is great opportunity for one to make new and innovative changes in design. If anyone is interested in the position or would enjoy just working with the other BCGC gardeners please contact me.

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

A Wintry Eye on Order and Chaos

If you want to support the natural environment in your garden, you have to decide where you fall along the order-to-chaos spectrum. Clearly, a gardener who is trying to provide ecological niches for insects and wildlife is not going to produce a Versailles-like symmetrical tapestry of plantings (not that many of us aspire to that level of control, not to mention maintenance). But even the most nature-oriented gardener also wants a garden that is aesthetically pleasing, if only to avoid shocking the neighborhood.

Whatever your chaos tolerance, winter is a good time to assess the features that provide visual order in the garden: structural elements like hardscape, fences, and other edges, as well as your plants, especially larger ones like trees, shrubs, and sometimes grasses. Winter simplifies the look of things, so you can see the "bones" more clearly. In my case, I have had to rethink parts of my garden following major changes to the property next door, including a new wooden fence that redefines the whole

look of that area. Whether changes are sudden and dramatic (like a new fence or the loss of a tree) or slowly unfolding (like the change in sun exposure as new trees grow), the visual simplification of winter helps us contemplate our next moves in response.

It is also a good opportunity to clarify the garden's design, both on the ground and in the mind. As an ecologically minded gardener, I let the leaves mostly fall where they may in woody areas, and in most beds I let the perennials stand through winter to provide wildlife food and habitat. For really tall plants or excessively enthusiastic self-seeders, I may need to cut back to about 2 feet, leaving the stalks for insects to nest in. To keep this approach to gardening from looking chaotic, maintaining clear edges is helpful. For instance, I often use short logs as edging to wood chip paths, which allows me to adjust paths when I want; the logs help hold moisture at bed edges and provide protected space for things like Christmas ferns to volunteer. The tradeoff is that the logs and chips also welcome less desirable plants, and the logs eventually require replacement as they decompose. In the milder days of winter, I can tidy up by removing or moving unwanted volunteers in my paths (and elsewhere!), replacing the most decomposed edging logs, and refreshing the wood chips that make up the paths. With luck, while I'm at it, I might prepare for possible spring planting by weeding and mulching those areas now.

Similarly, if any standing plant stalks had been flopping into the paths, I need to decide whether the answer is to cut things back more aggressively in future, or perhaps, as suggested in a presentation I saw recently, add a border of shorter plants to provide a visual frame for the more rampant tall ones. Maybe I could find some seeds to winter sow for this purpose? (See my winter sowing article in the February 2019 bulletin.) *There's* a New Year's resolution: assess and figure out how to address those things that tried to slip toward chaos during the growing season. Happy winter!

Winter at Greystone

Lois Brown shares these scenes from Greystone, her country home, which remind us of the beauty of the winter landscape.



To borrow (and paraphrase) from John Lennon, "And so this is Christmas (and Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Rohatsu, Posadas Navidenas,...), I hope you have fun,...".

Have a wonderful holiday season, and best wishes for a healthy and happy new year!

Karen Fricke