



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"One Hundred Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
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Bulletin Editor:
Lois Brown

Photographer:
Dawn Landsman

Send news to:
Lois Brown, editor

The Cutting Edge

Cutting on plants is an ancient practice. Folks have been removing old branches, diseased limbs, and unsightly twigs on plants since before the common era. They did this to admit light, promote health and yield, and create beauty. People cut down certain tree species to force new trees to grow up around the stump's base, a practice known as "coppicing." They were in need of the new-growth straight slender sticks for basketry and firewood. Other deciduous species can have their branches "pollarded," a cutting practice widely used in many cities to keep sidewalk trees small and manageable, city streets shaded, and tree branches out of overhead wires.

Dr. Andrew Ristvey, a UMD Extension specialist, supports the ornamental crop industry by teaching nutrient and irrigation management; he also studies alternative fruit and vegetable crops. He knows about a major practice of altering plants with sharp edged tools, namely Pruning. He will explain methods of pruning different plants and will tell us the best pruning techniques for a plant's health and longevity. Pruning is an art based on understanding the science of plant growth, a subject on which Dr. Ristvey is expert. Here's a wonderful opportunity to learn skills imparted by a specialist, skills that may save or rejuvenate that ailing rose bush.

The meeting will be held at St. Mark Presbyterian Church on **April 24** and will begin at 10:30

It's Plant Sale time!

Thursday, May 9, from 9:00 to noon
Montgomery Farm Women's Market, downtown Bethesda.

It's our biggest annual Garden Club event. It's a chance to share our love of gardening with the community.

Our goal is to sell interesting plants that fill a variety of garden needs. Enthusiastic buyers arrive early and plants sell out quickly!

How can you help?

Donate beautiful plants from your garden.

- Divide and pot your plants NOW. Your plants need time to recover.
- Assure that each pot is labelled with the plant's name, flower color and light requirements.
- Keep the pots watered, especially as the weather warms.



It is time to get ready for the Plant Sale! Learn how you can help make the Garden Club's biggest event a success!

Photo by Dawn Landsman

Not sure how you can help?

Contact any committee member:

Judy Termini, Co-chair
 Elaine Hope, Co-Chair
 Joan Black
 Barbara Collier
 Mary Horan
 Karin Kelleher
 Susan Lass
 Carolea Logun
 Janis Long
 Pat Robinson
 Janine Trudeau

Sign up to volunteer. There's something for everyone!

- Put up flyers in appropriate public places.
- Load and unload cars at the donation drop off site
- Transport plants from the drop off site to the sale
- Provide food for volunteers at the sale
- Set up before and clean up after the sale

How to sign up: upcoming email blasts from the Plant Sale Committee will link to SignUp Genius.

Spread the word!

- A printable copy of our flyer is included in this newsletter.
- Get printed copies of the flyer at the April general meeting.
- Tape the flyer on your car window, and
- Post on your neighborhood listserv.

BCGC Auction Action

Candy Kessel

Thanks to a generous outpouring of “unwants” from members, our March 27 general meeting was more productive than usual. In addition to a tasty lunch and enlightening speaker, we had a silent auction. That “little” sale raised \$320 for BCGC. Perhaps more important, we gave members the opportunity to add attractive and useful items to their gardens. A sincere “Thank you!” to all the members who included the auction as a recipient in their spring cleaning efforts.

The items that got the most interest and bids were interesting pots, including an antique-looking stone planter, that sold for \$25, the highest bid on any item. Amazingly to me, the clever “Get your dirt on” sign got only one bid, from Carolea Logun. Perhaps others felt as I did: It's great but where can I hang it?

Applause all around to the volunteers who helped organize the donations and leftovers, and accept your payments.

Outing to Exemplary NJ Gardens

Karen Fricke, our sadly short-term president, opened her lovely garden to members several times before she and her husband relocated to NJ to be closer to their children. She offered many of her garden treasures, both plants and art, to

Gardens and a Picnic!

This year's picnic on Tuesday, June 11, will offer a new format: Multiple gardens. We'll be going to Garrett Park, MD, and visiting several gardens, homes of both BCGC members and non-members. Then we'll gather at Garrett Park Town Hall for lunch, share our stories and summer plans.

Mark your calendar: **June 11: 10:00-2:00ish.**
Details to follow.

members and to the club for the plant sale before departing. Karen has joined an active garden club there and, naturally, created a garden at home. The last weekend in May, after Memorial Day, we have a chance to go visit as well as participate in the Roses to Rock Gardens Tour and visit several nearby gardens through Garden Conservancy Open Days.

Consider joining with other club members to car-pool up to Montclair on Friday morning, May 31. On Friday and Saturday, Van Vleck Gardens has an annual fundraiser showcasing ten or so private gardens around Montclair. You buy a ticket, get the list of houses and a suggested route, then get the ticket stamped at each house. Karen reports that last year there were some stunning private gardens on the tour with a few in the okay category. Van Vleck Gardens itself is a must-see, she says. It is open and free.
<https://montclairfoundation.org/>
<https://montclairfoundation.org/event/roses-to-rock-gardens-tour-2024/2024-05-31/>.

Also in Montclair is the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, over six acres, 14,000 iris and some 3,000 varieties. Peak bloom period is early May to early June, but, like the cherry blossoms, it's unpredictable. <https://www.presbyirisgardens.org/>

On Saturday, June 1, there are three Garden Conservancy Open Days in the area. Per Karen:

- Silas Mountsier Garden in Nutley. This garden is jaw dropping. I swear. It is a private garden owned by an elderly gentleman who grew up in the house. It alone is worth the trip, and maybe a 15-20 minute drive from me.
<https://www.gardenconservancy.org/open-days/garden-directory/mountsier-garden>

- Anna's Pollinator Haven in Montclair.
<https://www.gardenconservancy.org/open-days/garden-directory/anna-s-pollinator-haven>. Karen hasn't seen this garden.

- Cynthia Corhan-Aitken's Garden in Montclair. Cynthia was Karen's landscape designer. They became friends and now co-chair the programs committee of the Garden Club of Montclair.
<https://www.gardenconservancy.org/open-days/garden-directory/cynthia-corhan-aitken>

It's usually wise to purchase tickets in advance for Garden Conservancy Open Days as they sometimes sell out because space and parking may be limited. Also, tickets are usually half-price if you join Garden Conservancy.

Please email Candy if you'd like to go and indicate if you're willing to drive, how many passengers you could take or if you want to hitch a ride with others. She will try to organize carpools if needed.

This tentative schedule would mean spending two nights away, returning Sunday June 2. In addition to welcoming us to her garden, Karen offered her three queen guest bedrooms and a queen pullout couch, plus three guest bathrooms. She can also suggest nearby hotels.

Environmental Concerns

Barbara Collier

Make More Plants!

What do we do in April? Prepare for the plant sale! (Duh.) Of course you can pot up and donate plants if you have a superabundance (thank you kindly), but this is also an excellent time to make more plants for yourself. While doing so, you will probably run across more of those winter weeds you were trying to get rid of for the last couple of months. Putting new things in as you take the baddies out is soul-satisfying.

All the recent rain has softened up the ground (not to mention discouraging those of us who were tempted to start too early), and more emerging plants are showing themselves to the eager gardener. I have been noting with pleasure all the places where my Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) have spread. We have one healthy clump growing in a crack in our old

driveway; those won't be moved. The little ones emerging between stepping stones are easily small enough to be moved, although transplanting Virginia bluebells is said to be tricky. I have moved several that were growing in a path, when there wasn't much choice. Did they sulk the next year? Hard to say, since (fortunately) we have a fair number. Once they have shown that they are happy by self-seeding, taking a chance on moving a few is less daunting.

Those sedges I recently trimmed are starting to look lush, so it's time to dig them up and spread them around. Or if you're lucky like me, you might have a neighbor bestow some of her excess on you. But from wherever your clumps arrive, you can divide them into smaller clumps as much as your patience permits.

One thing about dividing plants (as opposed to moving them) is that it's a foolproof way to learn about root structure. The web can provide valuable information, but there's nothing like contemplating the naked roots of your plant. You can limit yourself to just whacking your tougher plants in two, but if you want to maximize the number of new plants, boldly remove all the dirt and figure out how to make sure there's a bit of root for each hunk you want to plant or pot up. Bonus: all weeds can be removed.

If you managed to do some winter seed sowing (unlike me this year), you can start looking for and clearing places to plant your clumps of seedlings as they start to get their true leaves. (Or pot up some for the plant sale? Hint!) But maybe you have some self-sowers outdoors? If so, you may have found that they are all crowded together; rather than thinning the seedlings you can try spreading the wealth by gently moving some around. Some seedlings are quite tough, but you might need to let them recover under a flowerpot or other protection if they seem shocked after disturbance.

This is a good time to see if any of your shrubs have managed to layer themselves and make babies. If they have, and the daughter plants seem well rooted, you can cut them from the parent plant and either transplant them right away, or wait and see how well they like independent living before deciding where and when to move

them. If none of your plants have taken the initiative themselves, you can pin down and bury some flexible branches now and check in a couple of months or next spring. The web offers a lot of information on layering if you're ambitious or you're dealing with a difficult plant, but the pinning down method seems like the easiest.

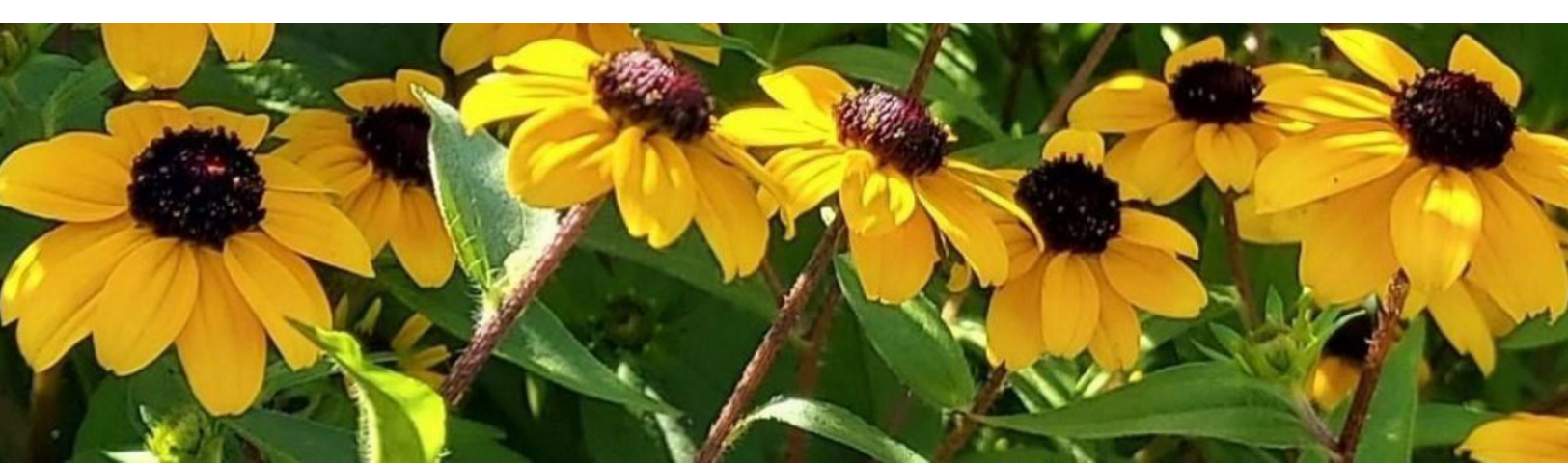
Some plants are notoriously easy to propagate, such as red-twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). This past winter I took a number of cuttings from mine for outdoor winter decor; some I put in a flowerpot full of dirt, and I stood a few bigger ones in a basket with white and green sticks. I was delighted this spring to see leaves (and flower buds!) on the ones in the flowerpot. Although most of the cuttings were just using their stored energy to sprout leaves, at least three had small roots. So they're now all out in the garden.

Where will I put them if they all root and start growing? Well, of course, there's always next year's plant sale...



Photo by
Barbara Collier

Cornus sericea cutting leafing out



Bethesda Community Garden Club

PLANT SALE

Thursday, May 9 9 AM – NOON
Montgomery Farm Women's Market
7155 Wisconsin Ave, Bethesda MD 20814

Plants that thrive in the metro area

CASH – CHECK – CREDIT CARD



Plants from gardens of members and friends.
Sales support our work in Davis and Connie
Morella public library gardens, and local
horticultural and conservation organizations.

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