



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"One Hundred and One Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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BCGC Members Create Holiday Magic

On a rainy, nasty Wednesday (December 11th) over 50 stalwart BCGC members brought bags full of "conditioned greens," their clippers, gloves, and lots of good will to St. Mark where we held our annual Holiday Greens Workshop. These women dove straight into work to create some masterful holiday arrangements. The variety and creativity of the arrangements were nothing short of amazing. Bows and "doo-dads" were flying in all directions! Arrangers were carefully digging through piles of greens searching for the perfect clippings of osmanthus, boxwood or cryptomeria. It was quite a demonstration of talent and strength in numbers.

Many members made extraordinary efforts to be present, to help with the many tasks involved, and then to deliver the arrangements in challenging weather. Over 140 arrangements went out to 12 different charities who serve the most vulnerable and overlooked in our community.

Many thanks to all who made such exceptional efforts to spread cheer and hope to those in our community who so desperately need them. A huge pat on the back to you all.

Special thanks to Lizzie Glidden-Boyle who chaired the committee this year, and her committee members, Dawn Landsman, Karen Eppinger, and Carole Gelfeld.

Mark December 10th on your calendars for next year's Holiday Greens Workshop. We need you there!

Environmental Concerns

Winter Is Here

Barbara Collier

Yes, it's well and truly winter—both astronomical and meteorological. We've even had cold weather (if interspersed with unusual mildness) and finally some rain. At the moment, there's less to do outside, and inside a lot of festive things are happening. Still, the garden beckons us, especially on mild days, and there are things to be doing and thinking about when we are drawn outside.

If the ground is not completely frozen, this time of year is good for seeing and attacking invasive plants. Part of the invasiveness of many problematic nonnative plants is that they are green when so many of our natives are asleep. Things like ivy, vinca, honeysuckle, and pachysandra are out there flaunting their green leaves, inviting us to remove them.



One of the 140+ arrangements created at the Holiday Greens Workshop. See more photos from the event on pages 3 and 4.

Photo by Dawn Landsman

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If we do, we can use the pulled remains to support our gardens and habitat. Rather than stuffing them into lawn and leaf bags to give to the county, turn them into mulch—not by adding them to the compost pile, of course (too slow, too risky). I used to pile up tough invasive vines on our driveway and wait for the piles to dry out. But after a tip from arborist Phil Normandy, I now spread things like ivy loosely in odd bare areas and out of the way corners, such as in the shade of a hedge. There, as they dwindle and eventually turn to mulch, they provide winter habitat and cover for small creatures. (This approach also works in the growing season. As long as there are no berries or live roots on bare soil, the plants won't regenerate and come back to bother you. You can always check every so often to be sure they're good and dead.)

Last spring I found a tangle of desiccated vines under a shrub and realized it was the remains of a stack of dead vinca and ivy that I had dried ages ago. After it was quite dead, I had shoved it out of sight and forgotten it. When I found it again, it was in that satisfying condition in which it could just be broken up and scattered around the mulch. I could have just left it as it was, but it was in an area I need to check periodically for the dreaded lesser celandine.

And there's the obvious reminder that not all invasives are easily disposed of. *Arum italicum*, for example, is a hard one to attack in winter if the ground is frozen. Unless you're extraordinarily persistent in chopping off the leaves at the first sign of growth, you have to dig out the bulbs and bulblets and dispose of them. The leaves can be composted, but I don't think there's a practical way to compost bulbs at home. Bermuda grass is another tough customer. I mostly don't try to dry those wiry roots into straw. So yes, the county gets these, since its industrial composting facilities cook the compost at high temperatures and can kill everything.

These exceptions notwithstanding, it's heartening to think that even the plants we battle can contribute to our gardens' success. Reducing competition from invasives, adding organic matter, sheltering overwintering creatures—it all provides a warm feeling in a cold season.

Courtesy Committee—What is That???

Does this committee advise members on the proper gloves and hats to wear at certain functions? How to curtsy to foreign royalty?

No. It is much more practical (& 2024) than that.

The "courtesy committee" (actually one person) sends out notes of congratulations for special accomplishments of members (think maybe a Pulitzer Prize for a gardening book), get well notes, and condolence notes.

If you know of a member who could benefit from such outreach, please notify the President, Gwen Stewart, and/or the Courtesy Committee Chair, Carole Gelfeld.

Who knows? You could make someone's day brighter by letting a member know the garden club community cares about them.

Meet Our New Members



Elizabeth Bonardi



Wendy Davidson



Amy Hershey



Susan Hoffman

Photos by Dawn Landsman

2024 Holiday Greens Workshop



Photos by Dawn Landsman



2024 Holiday Greens Workshop

