



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

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

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
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From the Public to the Private, from the Vast to the Particular

Claudia Kousoulas, our speaker this month, worked for many years as an urban planner for Montgomery County and has written books with Ellen Letourneau about the county's agricultural history from a culinary standpoint (*A Culinary History of Montgomery County Maryland*) as well as one (*Bread and Beauty—a Year in Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve*) focused specifically on a year in the county's 93,000 acre Agricultural Reserve. A champion of the Reserve, Claudia has testified in favor of its continuation.

While her interests include cooking and architecture as well as urban planning (she has a Master's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Virginia), she's talking to us today about gardens featured in her book *Private Gardens of the Potomac & Chesapeake*, gardens from the District, old town Alexandria and the eastern shore. The book is notable for its detail: architectural drawings, hardscapes, plant lists, plus the architects, builders, installers, and suppliers involved in the creation of the gardens. Fifteen gardens by famous landscape designers are discussed and the book has a forward written by Adrian Higgins, former garden columnist for the *Washington Post*. Here's a chance to hear some ideas that might be perfect to adapt to your own plot!

SOUPS ON! We will enjoy a soup lunch this month along with salads, bread and desserts! Yum!

Environmental Concerns

The Waiting Game

Barbara Collier

February is hard to love (despite Valentine's Day). At least we're more than halfway through. The weather has been uncooperative for even the most determined gardener, what with snow, frozen ground, slush, mud, rain, and biting winds.

I managed to winter sow some seeds in jugs in January, but they won't be doing anything until they finish their 60-odd days of cold stratification. They don't require any attention, other than my making sure no deer or foxes have knocked them over. And it won't make sense to start seeds indoors for a few weeks. So I have to wait.

The nearest I've come lately to actually working in the garden is kicking leaves off flagstone pavers. But if I do manage to go out, I can observe the first blooms of snowdrops, winter aconite, and witch hazel—nonnatives all,



Native grasses, such as broom sedge, provide color and interest in winter gardens. Learn more in Barbara Collier's article at right.

Photo by Barbara Collier

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but welcome to the earliest foraging bees and other insects—as well as the blades of daffodils and naked ladies poking up through the leaf litter.

Even though we don't get native flowers this early (at least I don't, not having any skunk cabbage), our native plants do present us with foliage attuned to the grey skies and occasional bright intervals of February: from various shades of evergreen to the rusty colors of dry grasses and perennials. My swathes of wood oats and broom sedge look quite handsome in contrasting browns. And the red-twig dogwood provides welcome streaks of color.

Christmas ferns are at their droopiest now, but nonetheless green. Similarly, many of the carex, not the showiest plants in the garden, provide winter interest. Some of them manage to be evergreen even at this low point of the season. I like the muted brightness of the strappy leaves of *Carex plantaginea* (seersucker sedge, plantain-leaf sedge), and I am happy to note that I should be able to divide some and spread them out, once we really hit spring. The more slender grasslike tufts of *Carex appalachica*, *Carex rosea*, and *Carex texensis*, in various shades of yellowish green, are holding their own. (I do occasionally help them along by pushing aside fallen leaves.) My *Yucca*



Christmas fern



Carex plantaginea



Wood oats, broom sedge, and a touch of red (twig)

Photos by Barbara Collier



Carex rosea



Yucca filamentosa 'Color Guard'

filamentosa 'Color Guard', a native cultivar I picked up at the late lamented Behnke's in 2010, is now well grown enough to be striking even on a grey day.

An unexpected reward for venturing out on a bitterly cold February day is the sight and sound of masses of birds collecting the various berries and seeds that remain in the yard. There are two large Nellie Stevens hollies along our fence line (a non-native species, but it has good wildlife value). This year they produced a bumper crop of berries, and it appears that this is the moment when all the birds show up to eat them. Maybe the cold makes the berries tastier? Or are they just the last ones left?

Or perhaps the birds were playing a waiting game, too. Like me, waiting and watching.



Robins and berries

Plant Sale News

Please mark your calendar for our annual Plant Sale:

When: Thursday, May 15, from 9 to noon.

Where: Farm Women's Market in downtown Bethesda.

More information about the sale and how you might help will be in upcoming newsletters, at our meetings and through email blasts.

Plant Sale committee

Elaine Hope, *co-chair*

Mary Horan, *co-chair*

Joan Black

Elizabeth Bonardi

Barbara Collier

Janice Fischer

Karin Kelleher

Susan Lass

Carolea Logun

Janis Long

Judy Termini

Janine Trudeau

BCGC COMMITTEE ROLES:

Did you ever wonder how our Club functions so smoothly? Are you interested in volunteering in some capacity? Here are the Committees that make the club function and a short description of each.

Plant Sale committee chairs oversee our annual plant sale, working with committee members and recruiting volunteers as needed. They find and manage digs in the spring and fall. They determine storage for potted plants and manage supplies for the sale. Before the sale, they manage plant clean-up, pricing, and labeling. They direct all aspects of sale day. They speak at board and general meetings and manage publicity for the sale. (*Mary Horan & Elaine Hope*)

Yearbook/Directory editor:

The editor updates and formats the Yearbook, sends it to the printer, and coordinates volunteers to distribute copies at the September meeting. (*Barbara Shaw*)

Website Committee chairs revise and update the website as needed. They work remotely with our webmaster to address software issues. (*Mary Horan & Barbara Collier*)

The **Membership Committee** welcomes new members by informing them of volunteer opportunities, introducing them at monthly meetings, presenting welcome gifts, managing nametags and attendance, and assisting with dues collection. (*Janet LeBrun & Terry Schubert*)

The **Finance Committee** is responsible for reviewing and signing off on the Treasurer's financial and banking documents on an annual basis. Also, to assist the Treasurer if needed. It is prudent practice to always have more than one person with access to financial records. (*Susan Lass*)

Mentoring

A description of the committee is in the BCGC directory.

There is always need for current members to serve as mentors to our newcomers. This basically requires that you stay in touch with your mentee and do all that you can to familiarize her with the club's activities and introduce her to others. This is ideal if you aren't able to commit to large blocks of time but want to make things run smoothly for new members.

Please contact *Judith Graef* if you are interested.

Open Garden

A description of the committee is in the BCGC directory. Since Open Gardens is the opportunity for members to visit other member's gardens, we are always in need of volunteers to host an Open Garden. The initial need is to find hosts. It would also be useful to have a few members who would be willing to help the committee organize Open Gardens and "represent" the committee at events, from time to time, by assisting the host as needed, setting up, answering questions, etc. Time commitment is minimal and ideal for anyone whose schedule is already full.

Contact *Judith Graef* if you are interested

Lunch Coordinators:

Each monthly meeting is followed by a delicious luncheon that has been organized by the coordinators and provided by club members. The coordinators maintain a sign-up sheet for each month to request contributions for that meal. Before the meeting begins, coordinators and "chefs" set up the buffet and beverages. Everyone helps clean up afterwards. Tablecloths are taken home by a luncheon volunteer to launder and return at the next luncheon. Members are encouraged to volunteer to provide a dish at least once a year. The coordinators are responsible for inventorying the paper products and ordering supplies when low. This is a great way to meet other members and to enjoy a great meal. (*Debbie Shakelton*)

Environmental Concerns: This committee shares information with the membership on environmental topics and activities through regular newsletter articles and occasional email blasts, and encourages members to follow green practices.

Co-chair job/role description: We provide articles for each newsletter issue describing and encouraging environmental practices in our own gardens. At our monthly meetings, we facilitate the use of recyclable materials as well as recycling food waste.

Volunteer opportunities: We would welcome new committee members (currently we are just two people) who would be interested in joining us, whether by contributing to these ongoing activities or by pursuing new ideas. *(Kathy Benjamin & Barbara Collier)*

The responsibility of the **flower arrangement committee** is to provide flower decoration (central piece and table decorations) for our monthly meetings. Practically, it means finding volunteers to make arrangements and, prior to our meeting, to remind them about it. If volunteers are not found, it's the obligation of committee to provide decorations. *(Katarzyna Massie)*

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW—
Payment Due Date April 1, 2025**

It's time to send in your Garden Club membership dues (\$45) for the upcoming 2025-26 year. Your dues includes membership to the NCAGC (National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc.). We are required to submit our updated member list and dues to the NCAGC by May 1st.

Please note that according to our Bylaws, Section 5, *"A Member who has not paid dues by May 1 of each year shall be dropped from the roster, after due notification by the Treasurer."*

To pay online

Visit our website

www.BethesdaCommunityGardenClub.org

Select the tab JOIN

Go to the bottom for CURRENT MEMBERS

Click on SQUARE SITE

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Amount: \$45.

Mail to: Margy Tritschler, Treasurer
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