



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

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

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Photographer:
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The 2025 Plant Sale is in the books, and it was a grand success! See more photos on pages 4 and 5.

Photo by Dawn Landsman

Picnic June 10 Brings Productive Year to a Close

Now that we've put another successful plant sale in the history books, it's time to celebrate the end of BCGC's fiscal year. Join your friends and make some new ones as we gather for our annual picnic. We have a variety of gardens to explore in Garrett Park, then meet up at the nearby town hall for a box lunch.

One of the gardens we can tour is that of Jim Fleming and Leora Hoffman. Jim and Leora love Asian gardens and saw the potential to install one in the backyard, given the layout and large tri-trunk Japanese maple that dominates the space. The garden was designed and installed by Lee's Oriental Landscaping. The owners are delighted with the result though they've had some issues with larger keystone specimen so the garden is still a work in progress. They added a tall faux hedge along the back, a flagstone patio and lighting all around the property that beautifies the night. The previous owner, Mitzi Rapp, was also a devoted gardener and along with other Garrett Parkers, registered Garrett Park as one of the first town arboretums in the country.

Another garden on Rokeby Ave. is the home of Margaret and Karl Soltan. They bought the house from Monro Leaf, author of the children's classic *Ferdinand the Bull*. The topiary bulls in the front are an homage. In keeping with Ferdinand's theme, this is a simple and delightful space plus buzzy rear pollinator garden including a long path through the woods to a peaceful meditation space in the far back of the property. Margaret, an author and emerita professor at George Washington University, is the home gardener and planner.

Picnic attendees also will have the chance to return to the unusual garden with a labyrinth of Vickie Baily, a former member, plus the continually evolving gardens of members Barbara Collier and Suzanne Grefsheim.

The gardens will be open for visits from 10:00-12:00 noon on Tuesday June 10. You could walk between the gardens though some walks are rather long. Driving may be preferable in some instances though parking is often challenging. The final notice to picnic registrants will include all the needed street addresses so you can determine your desired route.

At 12:15, the box lunch picnic will be available at the Garrett Park Town Hall. We'll have a tasty spread of options from Hollinger's including chicken salad, egg salad, and roasted eggplant sandwiches with salad accompaniment and dessert. We'll also have a few of each option on gluten-free wraps for ladies who require those.

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Please make your reservations promptly if you want to attend. Attendance is limited to 60 members due to space limitations.

1. Mail your \$22 check, written to BCGC, to Kathy Benjamin, P.O. Box 486, Garrett Park, MD 20896 Please email Kathy (katherine.benjamin@verizon.net) when you mail your check so we can keep an accurate attendance count.

2. Pay the cost directly via Zelle to Kathy Benjamin if you have a Zelle account.

Any questions can be directed to Candy Kessel (202-415-7828, candykessel36@gmail.com).

Gwen Stewart
301-452-6999 C



Alex Dencker, horticulturist, Smithsonian Gardens

Smithsonian Garden Tour

Alex Dencker, horticulturist at the Air & Space museum, will take us on a tour of the gardens on May 28 at 10:00. Please meet at the corner of Independence Ave and 7th street. You will see a large aluminum-looking statue on top of a water feature. That is the Air and Space Museum. Alex will be loitering on the corner around the water feature.

The closest Metro stop is L'Enfant Plaza. Please plan your trip and arrive early— 9:45-9:55.

Environmental Concerns

May Exuberance

Barbara Collier

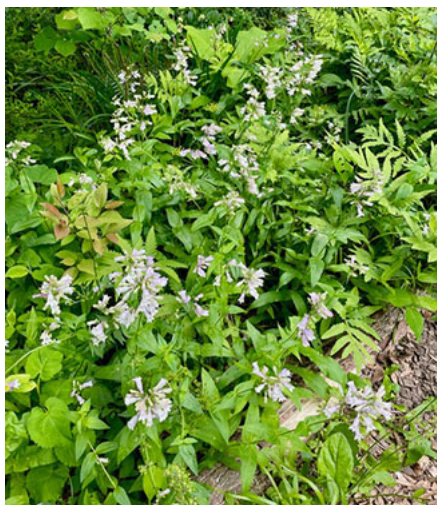
Does everyone else feel as if the long wait for real spring was followed by a headlong rush?

Is it like this every year? I think not. We had that strange hot and cold weather, then all that rain, and many things are behaving differently. (Welcome to climate change.)

I keep being taken aback at how quickly everything has burst forth. I was pleased to see my *Penstemon calycosus* making a brave display next to an American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*) that is now so big it's starting to move into the path. Across the path the *Spigelia marilandica* is starting to bloom, and a little further, the fragrance of the sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) is pleasantly fruity.

In the great exuberance of growth at this time of year, we also find the things that have not worked. In my case, one such was a variegated pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia* 'Golden Shadow'), the top of which now looks entirely dead, with new growth only at the base. They do say that variegated leaves have a weakening effect on plants, since the areas without chlorophyll can't feed the plant as effectively. It may be true. So as lovely as a variegated plants are, they need to be sited carefully. I bought this one in 2015 on one of our club trips up into Pennsylvania. When I planted it, I put it in a moist shady place—maybe too much shade for a variegated plant, especially as the neighboring plants grew bigger. In recent years the tree suffered from anthracnose and looked bad in late summer. To combat this, I tried to let in more light and air by trimming back its encroaching neighbors (a hemlock and our enormous button bush). But I think what finally did for it was inadequate protection against deer rubbing. Alas. Perhaps I will be able to transplant the living part to a better spot?

This year I also found that my ever-expanding stand of mayapple is being infiltrated by



Penstemon calycosus

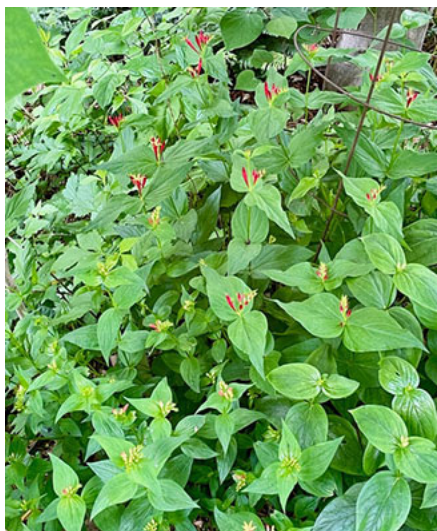


Aralia racemosa

Photos by Barbara Collier



Calycanthus floridus



Spigelia marilandica

Maianthemum racemosum, Solomon's plume (sometimes called false Solomon's seal, but I prefer the other name). So where I was used to a rather sculptural field of umbrella foliage, plummy things were peeking out between the umbrellas. At this point the umbrellas are taller than the plumes, but now the jewelweed and the *Zizia aurea* are poking up among them (not to mention the golden ragwort and the white wood aster). Now I have to decide what steps to take—other than my usual step of not taking steps. Will I tweak the fierce competitors in the mayapple patch for a more “designed” look?

Fortunately, maintenance is a great impetus to fixing designs. One motivation for opening my garden for the upcoming picnic is to make sure I really do much needed maintenance (like cleaning the house before a party). A key thing, both for safety and the look of the garden, is maintaining the paths. Since paths act as plant nurseries, I always have to choose which volunteers to move and which to compost. At the same time, I must find homes for the winter-sown seedlings that I started in January. In my garden, that means clearing space, because there's too much competition for these little babies if I just bung them in anywhere. Time to rationalize the exuberance!

Plant Sale 2025





Photos by Dawn Landsman