



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

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

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
Garden Clubs and
The National Council of State
Garden Clubs, Inc.

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Margaret Hadley, editor



Goldenrod (*Solidago*) is a survivor, flourishing now in spite of the drought. Read more about survivors in Barbara Collier's article on pages 3 and 4.

Photo by Barbara Collier

Our first monthly meeting for the upcoming year will be on Wednesday September 24

Where: St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, Rockville MD 20852.

Time: 10:30 AM - please come early to pick up your name tag and have some time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones, before the meeting begins at 10:30AM.

We will start the year with our usual round-robin get together where we sit in a circle and share what we've learned from a year of gardening, the successes and the failures, new products we've found useful and those we haven't. It's always a lot of fun, so be sure to come and stay for lunch.

What Happened in our Gardens in 2025

At the beginning of every meeting year we show and tell what's happened in our yards, gardens, borders, containers, etc. If we tried a new annual we confess. If we planted more vegs than just zucchini and tomatoes, we announce our success or bemoan our failures. If we have a new tool or we found a new use for an old one, we describe our experience. If we're battling invasives apart from English ivy or nandinas we explain our methods and results. We sit in a circle and pass the mic from hand to hand and try to commit to memory or scribble notes on all the good info we hear. Then we break for a salad lunch provided by the board members and spend time catching up after the summer break. Do come and re-acquaint yourselves with your fellow club members and get ready to embark on a new year of meetings and speakers!

Silent Auction Needs You and Your Castoffs

By Candy Kessel

BCGC hasn't had a silent auction since before covid, in February of 2020. Of course, we didn't know then we wouldn't be having in-person meetings for quite a while and would need new tools, pots, and ornaments for our gardens. Playing in the dirt became a major way to retain our sanity back then.

That was a while ago. Now as gardening season winds down, you probably realize you have pots and tools you don't need, ornamental items you don't like anymore, and related excess stuff that needs a new home. Please start putting those items aside to bring to our October meeting. We welcome any items that are garden-related. Please **do not bring** garden books or florist vases. Most everyone has plenty of those. If you have an outlet for such items, please share it. Some florists will happily accept returns of florist

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vases Judith Graef discovered. They even gave her a floral bouquet they were so pleased.

You won't want to miss this special auction opportunity. And as always, you're welcome to bring friends to the meeting who are garden enthusiasts and potential members.

In addition to bringing yard-sale type items, please bring your checkbook and cash so you can purchase the items you bid on. We will not be accepting credit cards to avoid paying the fee to Square.

Items that are unsold afterwards because they don't get bids will be delivered to Humane Together, the Montgomery County Humane Society Thrift Store.

Don't wait until the last minute. Please start gathering your unwanted garden goodies now for our October 22 silent auction.

SAVE THE DATE: DECEMBER 10

WE NEED YOU!!!

Our annual Holiday Greens Workshop will take place on Wednesday, December 10th this year. PLEASE put this date on your calendars, and plan to join us for a joy-filled day. We brighten the lives of countless others in our community who benefit from our outreach. Our goal is to create and deliver 150 greens arrangements to numerous local charities, nursing homes, shelters and non-profits who serve the most vulnerable in our area.

Here is what you need you to do now:

- ❑ Add DECEMBER 10th to your calendar in big, bold red letters.
- ❑ Plan to volunteer. Sign-ups will start at our October 22nd meeting. Find a partner and create a delivery team.
- ❑ Doing fall house cleaning??? Check your holiday boxes for bows and other decorative items we can use to enhance our arrangements. We call these "doo-dads." Bring them to any meeting and we will take them off your hands.

Questions? Contact Carole Gelfeld
(cgelfeld@comcast.net)

Plant Sale News

The Plant Sale Committee has started preparation for the **May 14, 2026 BCGC Plant Sale**. This is our biggest club event and offers an opportunity for us to share our love of gardening with the public. We encourage all members to assist with the preparation and to volunteer on the day of the sale.

Three ways each member can begin preparing for the sale now:

1. Evaluate your garden and note what plants need to be thinned or divided.

Start digging & potting fall plants in **October**, after the weather cools. Also plan for the plants you will dig in the spring.

Plants that can be dug in the FALL:

Nearly all perennials & woody plants overwinter well in pots, including Joe Pye weed, daylily, hosta, aster, goldenrod, peony, and many more.

Wait until SPRING to dig these plants:

Ajuga, echinacea (coneflowers) Japanese anemone, hardy begonia, crocosmia, native salvia, Solomon's seal, plumbago, irises, sweet box, and pulmonaria. We've found these plants do not reliably overwinter

2. Collect pots for the sale.

Three pot sizes are needed: medium (6-8 inches in diameter), large (8-12 inches in diameter), and for big plants or shrubs extra-large (12-16 inches in diameter). Mum pots are especially in demand. If you have extra pots (in the 3 pot sizes noted above) please contact the Plant Sale Committee.

3. Seek advice on what plants to dig, divide, or arrange for assistance digging.

If you need input on what to dig, the Plant Sale Committee can assist you. If digging or potting poses a physical challenge, please reach out as soon as possible and the committee may be able to assist.

The proceeds from our May 2025 sale were \$7962. We use these funds to help support our work at Davis and Connie Morella libraries, pay for our meetings and events, and allow BCGC to donate to local horticultural and conservation organizations.

Thank you to all the members who assisted at the 2025 sale!

To reach the Plant Sale Committee send an email to:

Elaine Hope: paris71197@gmail.com or

Mary Horan: mfhoran@gmail.com

Environmental Concerns

Surveying the Survivors

Barbara Collier

At this point, I survey the desiccated garden—finally getting some much-needed rain—looking for the bright spots. Yes, some things are dry and sad, but others remain undaunted. These include many natives that are starting to put on a real fall show, helping to make up for the crispy astilbes, the retreating geraniums, and the hostas and hardy begonias mowed down by deer searching for moisture.

It's all feeling a bit familiar. When I checked the column I wrote last September ("Drought Thoughts"), I found that I could almost run it unchanged this year. The fall flowers are stalwart as ever despite drought: asters, goldenrods, cardinal flowers, blue mist flower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*), false aster (*Boltonia asteroides*), brown-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia triloba*), sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*), and others. This is when we (and the



A cloud of *Boltonia*



Volunteer cardinal flower, brown-eyed Susans

bees!) really appreciate these exuberant spreaders. Plus, areas with thick vegetation, especially in the shade, stand up to drought best. Mulch helps, but plants covering the ground help create their own resilience. To repeat the moral of the story from last year: plant more plants in more places!

Of course it's still up to us to figure out the aesthetics and try to balance the competition. (OK, I admit it, not my strongest suit.) In my denser plantings, I can edit out some of the weedier natives to make room for the desirable self-seeders, allowing the mist flowers, brown-eyed Susans, and often cardinal flowers to make little explosions of color from place to place. (Cardinal flower reminder! They love disturbance. When the flower spikes have gone to seed, scratch up the soil a little and lay the seed heads down to get more next year.)

The late boneset (*Eupatorium serotinum*) and white snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*) are forming their white masses—the snakeroot is a white so vivid it almost glows. Although they make a glorious display, I need to cut their flower heads after the pollinators have visited and before they all go to seed, or they would soon fill the whole garden.

The same applies to some of the goldenrods. I'm happy to let the well-behaved *Solidago nemorosa*, *caesia*, *flexicaulis*, *rugosa* ('Fireworks'), and *shortii* ('Solar Cascade') go to seed, but with the 8-ft

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monsters, I should not only cut but also remove, or they will take over (*S. canadensis*, *gigantea*, and/or *altissima*—it's hard to tell these apart, so I'm not sure which ones I really have). Good thing the ground is no longer dry as a bone!

Here and there, despite the long dry spell, I come across surprise late blooms, such as a couple of *Zizia aurea* (normally a spring bloomer). My slow-growing *Illicium floridanum*, planted in 2018, finally began blooming properly this past spring. But now it has several late flowers (and a seed pod!). As it was also tending to droop from drought, I hope the blooms weren't a desperate attempt to reproduce before expiring. But perhaps the *Illicium* was just taking a cue from a couple of rose bushes, which both decided that this autumn was a good time for a second bloom. (These two are the reverse of pampered: a miniature that I stuck outside decades ago and a Knock Out that has been limping along since 2012 in the face of deer browsing and general neglect.)



A late rose



Solidago 'Fireworks'



Solidago caesia

With luck, the recent rain will let me do some of the transplanting I've been wanting to do. We are advised that planting and transplanting in the fall is often best, and I was happy to learn that even warm-season grasses can be transplanted as long as we still have more than four weeks before the first frost. Last year I got a flat of *Carex rosea* in late fall and used it to fill in some areas that seemed sparse. This year they are looking good, so that's an encouragement to do what? Plant more plants in more places! Of course.

Photos by Barbara Collier

Garden Club Newsletter Deadline Dates and Meeting Dates for your information

Deadline dates	Meeting dates
September 17, 2025	September 24, 2025
October 15	October 22, 2025
November 12	November 19, 2025
December 3	December 10, 2025
January 21, 2026	January 28, 2026
February 18	February 25, 2026
March 18	March 25, 2026
April 15	April 22, 2026

And a little history to remember....The BCGC web page was started 10 years ago by Pam Gates and Jane Boyton. Jane remembers that she completed her Word Press training for the new garden club web page she'd been working on all summer. Pam reported: "I forgot how hard it is to spend hours in a "learning" environment! I think, with my smart colleague Jane Boynton, we'll be able to maintain and "grow" this page fairly easily".

Directory photos to add

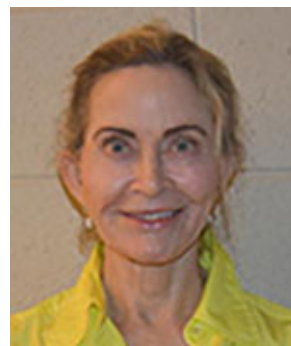
These photos of new members were inadvertently omitted from the new 2025-26 Directory. Please cut them out and paste them in your Directory.



Elizabeth Bonardi



Wendy Davidson



Amy Hershey