



TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS

April, 2010 Edition

www.takomahort.org



Save the Date!
Our famous plant exchange will be May 16 at a new time: 3 to 4:30 p.m. Survey your gardens and make a list. Everyone leaves with plants galore and a big smile!
Guaranteed!

TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS is published on the 1st of each month. Photos, events, articles and comments are welcome. If you would like to write a short piece on some garden topic, let editor Diane Svenonius know at dbsvenonius@msn.com or (301) 585- 1566

Photo: National Japanese American Memorial, Diane Svenonius

April Club Event

Edibles in the Landscape: Master Gardener Panel

*Wednesday, April 21 at the Heffner
Community Center, 7:30 pm*

by Carole Galati

This month the Takoma Horticultural Club presents a panel discussion with three Master Gardeners from Montgomery County. The meeting begins at 7:30 at the Heffner Community Center, 42 Oswego Avenue (off Ritchie Avenue), Takoma Park, Md. Our diverse and experienced panel members Joe Schechter, Susan Bell and Erica Smith will discuss Maryland's "Grow It, Eat It" Program; challenges facing the edible landscape gardener; fun and easy edible gardening experiments; growing edibles in containers; and attracting beneficial creatures to our edible gardens. There will be ample time for you to share your "tricks of the trade" and get answers to your questions.

Erica Smith is a Montgomery County Master Gardener (class of 2007). She is the lead vegetable gardener for the Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden in Derwood, MD. In 2009 she helped implement the new statewide University of Maryland "Grow It, Eat It" program and is now coordinating the Grow It Eat It blog.

Joe Schechter is a Montgomery County Master Gardener (class of 2006) and acts as coordinator for a group of MG's at the Friends House Garden in Sandy Spring, MD. The group is in its 4th year and helps gardeners at the Quaker retirement home grow many vegetables in the "kitchen garden." In his own garden, Joe likes to experiment and he'll talk about some edibles that he's found to be fun and easy to grow and good to eat, and some edibles you can find in the woods. **Susan Bell's** lifelong gardening passion [*see PANEL , p.3*]

THC Brings in Spring with New Books at City Library...



Early this year the Takoma Horticultural Club donated \$250 to the Takoma Park Library for the acquisition of some special and distinctive new books for its outstanding Gardening Collection. Ellen Arnold Robbins, director of the library, is shown above with some of the books.

The complete list:

Big Gardens in Small Spaces: Out-of-the-Box Advice for Boxed-in Gardeners by Martyn Cox (2009). "...See how careful thought and creativity can bring the intimate enclosure of a small garden alive...Boxed in gardeners needn't feel boxed-in any more!"

Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer by Novella Carpenter. A New York Times Notable Book in 2009, this is a "unique and hilarious memoir about one woman living on a farm in downtown Oakland..."

Foliage by Nancy J. Ondra (2007). This lavishly illustrated volume won the American Horticultural Society Book Award in 2008. It organizes leafy plants by color and texture, and provides a wealth of well-organized information. *Mid-Atlantic Home Landscaping* (2006 - revised edition) by Roger Holmes and Rita Buchanan (2006) includes a 'portfolio of designs' for [See *BOOKS*, p. 3]

Photo: Ellen Arnold Robbins, by Melanie Isis

... And at Takoma D.C. Library, Here's How to Get Ready

To mark THC's donation of books to the Takoma D.C. Library this year, Club President Kit Gage and *Washington Gardener Magazine* editor and past THC president Kathy Jentz shared gardening advice for RIGHT NOW at the library on March 20. Kathy gave highlights from a helpful list of gardening ideas and tasks to be done in March and April, featured in this month's *Washington Gardener* Newsletter. Now is the time to bring in forsythia, quince and other branches for indoor forcing in water, said Kathy. Stay off wet soil in garden beds to avoid compaction; if you must tread, walk on a 2x2 board to distribute your weight. Prune diseased or dead wood, and broken branches from shrubs and trees, but wait for branches bent by snow or ice to return to normal before removing. April's list includes mucking out your water garden (muck makes great compost) and putting out dryer lint as nesting material for birds. Kit spoke about her central interests in gardening and as a professional landscaper, which include using native plants to reduce maintenance and restore a habitat that supports native wildlife. Kit also talked about managing storm water issues by



redirecting downspout flow to your own property, and gardening for dry conditions, even though it's pretty wet out there now. The list of garden books donated to the Takoma D.C. library can be found in the March THC news at www.takomahort.org. Photo: Takoma DC Library talk, by Kathy Jentz



‘Dues’ the Right Thing

‘Tis Spring. The earth is growing and so is our membership!

Welcome to our new and returning members: Kirra Jarratt, Edamarie Mattei, Marie McLeod, Annie Corveller-Hill, Doriann Asch and Sharon Broderick. We welcome you and invite you to go to our website: www.takomhort.org to check out all the club activities and to join the Listserv, if you are not already on it.

Please remember, 2010 dues were due on January 1st. In May we will be removing all those who have not paid their dues for this year. We have a lot of Members-Only events coming up in the next few months. Contact Carole at cagalati@rcn.com if you are not sure if you paid your dues. The website provides dues-paying information.

[*PANEL, continued*] led to Landscape Horticulture and Landscape Design at George Washington University. She became a Master Gardener in 2001, and started her own landscaping business in 2002, providing design consultations, garden services and landscape installations. Susan’s personal gardens and container plantings have always included herbs, fruits and vegetables for the kitchen. Her latest project is as Master Gardener lead for Falls Grove Community Garden, where she promotes beneficial companion flower plantings with the vegetables and no-till gardening.

Photo: Lisachair, Chanticleer Garden website

MEMBERS’ TOUR OF NICK WEBER’S
HERITAGE ROSARIUM IN MAY

Watch For Details
www.takomahort.com

Join Us for Our Trip To Chanticleer Garden on June 3

We have partnered with the Beltsville Garden Club for a wonderful day trip. Our luxury bus holds 45 people. Check out Chanticleer's website:

www.chanticleergarden.org . We will also go to a great nearby nursery for some garden shopping. Use the sign-up form PDF attached with this newsletter, and check www.takomahort.org for upcoming details. Questions? Contact Carole Galati, cagalati@rcn.com.

[*BOOKS continued*] gardens with different themes in a variety of spaces. Also shows how to make paths and walkways, fences, arbors, trellises, ponds and retaining walls, along with problem solving tips and detailed plant profiles. spaces.

Native Trees for North American Landscapes: From the Atlantic to the Rockies by Guy Stenberg (2004). This detailed compendium received the National Arbor Day Foundation Award. Includes tree profiles of more than 650 species and varieties, and more than 500 cultivars – each describing flowers and fruits, native and adaptive range, culture, problems and best seasonal features.

The New Encyclopedia of Hostas by Dina Grenfel and Michael Shadrack (2009 – revised edition). This new edition of an award-winning work describes more than 700 varieties with 800 photographs, arranged according to leaf color and type of variegation.

Perennial Vegetables by Eric Toensmeier (2007) – This winner of the 2008 American Horticultural Society Book Award is a gardener’s guide to over 100 easy-to-grow edibles. Gives species profiles with history and ecology, and information on tolerances and preferences, pests, propagation and planting, harvest and storage, and uses.

Understanding Perennials: a New Look at an Old Favorite by William Cullina. Another 2009 New York Times Notable Book, the author focuses on the “psychology of perennials...their needs, wants and potentials.”

What’s Wrong With My Plant (And How Do I Fix It?): a Visual guide to Easy Diagnosis and Organic Remedies by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth (2009). Reviewed in the Washington Post. Flow charts allow for easy diagnosis; it is well organized and clearly illustrated. –by Ellen Arnold Robbins, Melanie Isis

Planes, Trains, and Automobiles—

by Sherrell Groggin

---Oh wait, that was the movie I watched last night! *Paths, Plants, and Punctuation: The Artistry of Garden Design* was the subject of our March 17th presentation by landscape designer John Gordon. All good landscapes are created with paths, plants, and punctuation, some better than others. None of these can be considered in isolation from the other, for they all work integrally together.

John's presentation was geared towards DIYers. However if you're using a designer, it will give you a basis for thinking about what you want. He said he wasn't going to give us plans, lists, etc., but ideas to think about, to give us the ability to make critical assessment of our own gardens. So what did we get then? A photo-packed presentation detailing his three main topics.

Structure in the garden means the bones of the garden, defined by hardscape (paths), plants (the permanent, woody elements in your yard), and punctuation (the elements in your yard that create a focal point or destination, such as a sculpture, bench, gazebo, or pond). This is what creates the walls, floors, and ceilings of your design (ceilings defined by arbors, the undersides of trees, or even the sky). Whatever the size of a garden, paths should take you from 'here' to 'there'. The first path you should think of is the path to your front door. The arrival sequence should be well-planned, for it's the visitor's first impression. Next you should focus on paths that navigate your garden, and how you want them to unfold for the visitor. Remember, 'unseen' paths (i.e., those that turn a corner) aren't the same as 'non-existent'. Have a way to move people through your garden.

Plants, on the other hand, can't be considered until you figure out what your paths will be. Once that is done, you can begin determining whether a plant is right for a space. One suggestion John had that was especially useful was to spray paint [see *PLANES*, page 5]

Is Your Garden Really 'Green'? Sustainability for Home Gardens

by Diane Svenonius

If you've heard of the Green Building (LEED*) voluntary rating system for the energy efficiency of buildings, widely adopted by architects and developers, you might be surprised to hear that plants are nowhere mentioned in the ratings. Set in a green bower or on a vast cement plaza, the building's score for "sustainable design" remains the same!

Filling this gap, the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) has partnered with the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Ladybird Johnson Foundation to form the *Sustainable Sites Initiative* (SSI). In November, they published a set of voluntary guidelines and benchmarks for sustainable landscape design, which they hope will become a standard for the landscaping industry. Principles and scoring can be seen at www.sustainableites.org

A next step will be to adapt SSI guidelines for the use of home gardeners. A free publication for gardeners is coming in September, and will focus on the same broad areas as the SSI: soil, vegetation, water, and the health and well-being of people. **Holly Shimizu, USBG Director**, discussed these elements of sustainable home gardening at a Sierra Club talk on March 7. Sustainability means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations," said Shimizu. Gardening for sustainability means, for one thing, replacing introduced plants with natives where possible to reduce maintenance, restore healthy soils, and encourage our native pollinators to thrive. She recommended Doug Tallamy's *Bringing Nature Home* which describes how plants co-evolved with their pollinators. Shimizu is glad to lure bats, as well as bees, to her own garden. "Try to love insects, too"—96% of terrestrial birds rear their young on insects, said Shimizu. She showed slides of colorful natives used in the landscape; the coffeetree *gymnocladus espresso*, sassafras, [See *SHIMIZU*, page 5]

[PLANES, *continued*]

their ultimate sizes on the ground, so you can see how close they will be. I think this is a much better visual than looking at a piece of graph paper with intersecting circles on it!

Punctuation is anything that calls attention to itself. Like an exclamation point in a sentence, it announces, "You cannot miss me, I'm special!" Whether it be a rock, pond, sculpture, anything that makes a statement is good.

An apt quote on one slide was from Tom Mannion, garden designer: "Garden plantings should create space, not fill it up."

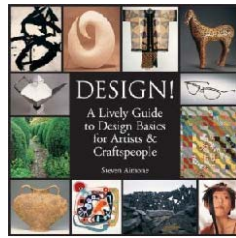
Gardeners work in four dimensions: width, height, distance, and time—since things change within a season or over many seasons. And they have at their disposal four key elements of design: Line, texture, form, color. Line can be formed by pathways (running straight, or in radial lines as they branch out from a central spot), low walls (created in stone, or by plants, or even the veins in plants. Texture comes from differently shaped and sized leaves, e.g. fine vs. bold. Form comes from tall vs. low plantings or other items that give shape and structure. Color can come from plants, from your house (purple shutters anyone?), or objects in the garden (blue metal bench, statuary, pots).

John seems to like the number 4, for he next discussed four essential garden techniques: variety, emphasis, repetition, and balance. Too much variety causes chaos; not enough variety creates dull/boring encounters. He's been collecting old front porch posts, painting them different muted colors, and putting birdhouses on top. He was inspired by the collection of birdhouses that Janet Draper has put together in the Ripley Garden next to the Smithsonian Castle.

Finally, a few book suggestions:

Foliage by Nancy Ondra (author) and Rob Cardillo (photographer), which is organized by color and texture (a THC library donation, see p.2). Steven Aimone's *Design! A Lively Guide to Design Basics for Artists and Craftspeople* is not just for landscapers, it's for anyone who wants to do anything artistic. But you can get a lot of good ideas from it.

Finally, *Bringing Nature Home: How you can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* by Douglas W. Tallamy (U. of Delaware Professor & Chair of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology). I found this recommendation especially timely, for Dr. Tallamy will be discussing this book in



Washington, DC on Tuesday, April 13. He'll speak at 10:30am at the US National Arboretum in a joint meeting of the Gardening Consultants Council and the Environmental Consultants Council of National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. The councils invite all NCAGC members to attend. (Bring your own lunch and the councils will provide coffee, tea and other soft drinks. RSVP to: Paula Knepper, 301-424-7582 or e-mail pknepper@verizon.net)

That night, he will speak at 7:30pm at The Church of the Brethren, 337 North Carolina Avenue SE, Washington DC, at the regular monthly meeting of the Capitol Hill Garden Club (open to the public). The church is on the southwest corner of 4th Street and North Carolina Avenue, SE at Seward Square. Enter through the 4th Street side entrance. It's only 3 blocks (via Pennsylvania Ave) from the Eastern Market metro station.

[SHIMIZU, *continued*]

rhodo "marydel", fothergilla, cyrilla, and muhlenbergia looking like "purple cotton candy".

When choosing a tree for your yard or local streets, she tells people to "plant things that will be here in 100 years". Big trees are slow to establish, but give a big atmospheric pay off in greenhouse gas reduction. Big or small, give trees the environment they prefer. Redbuds and dogwoods don't want to be in the middle of a sun-baked yard.

On water, "engineers think of water as a waste product," when building, said Shimizu. Water is cleansed by soaking through permeable landscape down to the aquifer. She showed

pictures of rain gardens and swales created in yards and between the sidewalk and the street, to capture, absorb and filter water. Don't overwater, Shimizu said. Some plants go dormant in summer; they don't need to be watered then. In response to questions, Shimizu said that the rain garden display at the Botanic Garden will be replaced by a permanent one, to be finished in the spring, and that over the next two years Bartholdi Park will be replanted with natives and edibles.

*Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

Gardening Events of Interest in the Community

National Arboretum

www.usna.usda.gov

Garden Fair April 24, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

New York Avenue parking lot

The 18th annual Garden Fair offers an extensive selection of unusual plants, garden supplies, books, art, family activities, and more.

Sponsored by the Friends of the National Arboretum. Free admission.

Tours of the Azalea Collection, with Barbara Bullock April 23 & 28 10 a.m to noon; April 30, 5-7 pm; Mother's Day, 10- noon.

Koi Sale

April 17, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Administration
Building Terrace
Purchase koi from
the arboretum's



extensive collection or come to watch and learn more about these popular arboretum residents. The population is being thinned and surplus fish of all sizes, colors, and prices will be available for sale. Experts will be on hand to help make selections and provide information. Sale proceeds support the arboretum's Gardens Unit. Free admission. *Koi Photo: usna.usda.gov*

Rhododendron and Azalea Show

April 24, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Auditorium
Rhododendron and azalea blooms artfully displayed by members of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. See website or call 202-245-2726 for details.

Casey Trees 1123 11th Street NW

April 7, 2010 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Mike Galvin, Deputy Director. Record snows in February did major damage to some trees in the Washington, D.C. area. How do you assess your trees for damage? What types of damage may your trees be susceptible to going forward? Learn what types of damage can be fixed and what ones cannot.

Free, register at www.caseytrees.org

Historic Takoma House & Garden Tour

May 2 This year's tour is along Hodges Heights, between Piney Branch and Ed Wilhelm field, Philadelphia Ave and Takoma Park Middle School. The theme is "Once Rural Takoma" because the area was the site of a dairy farm. Docents receive a free ticket to see the tour before or after your shift. Apply to Crystal Polis, 301-270-1090

Brookside Gardens

www.brooksidegardens.org

Earth Day Festival

April 18, activities for all from 8 am to 9 pm

Daffodil Show

April 10, 2:00-5:00pm; April 11, 9:00am-4:00pm Visitors Center

Walks: Edible Plant ID*

April 7, 1:00pm with Diane Lewis
Course number 102201

Demo: Planting Roses*

April 8, 1:00pm with Roger Haynes
Course number 102200

*Free, registration preferred.

Cool-Season Leaf Crops and Raised Beds

April 7, 1:30-3:30pm

Build a raised bed and get ready to plant lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard, and herbs. Each registrant will leave the class with the know-how to build raised planter beds in their backyard and a pot full of salad
Fee \$39, registration required.

Conservatory Summer Display: Summer of Food

April 24 -September 19, 2010
10:00am-5:00pm daily; FREE

Green Spring Gardens

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks>

Multiplying Garden Treasures: Division

April 10, 9:30-11:30am.

Fill your garden with perennials, grasses and bulbs without emptying your pockets. Mary Frogale, staff horticulturalist, will demonstrate how to use hatchets, pruning knives and garden forks to lift, split, and divide single plants into many divisions. Take them home and add them to your gardens! \$22

Anacostia Watershed Society

Thursday, April 8, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Kathy Jentz Presents "Preparing Your Garden For Spring"

The George Washington House, 4302 Baltimore Avenue

Bladensburg, MD 20710

Free to AWS members, \$10 others. RSVP

www.anacostiaws.org