



# TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS

March, 2010 Edition

[www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org)



## **March Club Meeting Paths, Plants and Punctuation: The Artistry of Garden Design**

*Wednesday, March 17, Takoma Park  
Community Center, Lilac Room,  
7:30-9:00 p.m. Open to the public.*

There's really nothing mysterious or arcane about the artistry of landscape design. Using the basic principles common to all art and architecture and the ideas in this colorful presentation, you will never again experience a garden in quite the same way as you have in the past. For this evening, we're all garden designers!  
This is not a "what to plant where" kind of presentation. You don't need to know plant names to learn the Artistry of Garden Design. Just be ready to open up your right brain to concepts, ideas and tips that will give you the ability to appreciate good gardens and understand great gardens. Garden designer John Gordon from Belvedere Landscape Design in Ashton will lead us down the path to understanding the structure and elements of great gardens. Along the way, we'll pick up ideas for improving our own.

John Gordon is a Landscape Designer and member of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers as well as the Horticultural Society of Maryland. (See JOHN GORDON, page 5)

## **Getting Started With Orchids**

*by Anne Hardman*

After the record setting snows this winter, I know we gardeners are longing for a break. Well, invite a little spring into your home. If you haven't noticed, it's orchid season! They are available just about everywhere right now, from the florist, the garden center, and even your local grocery store. And—you might have noticed—they can be really inexpensive. So why not get a couple of these gems?

"But they'll just die!" "I have a brown thumb" "But aren't they really delicate hard-to-grow plants? Don't you really need a greenhouse??"



Nonsense! Many of the orchids that are so readily available these days are tough as nails, and definitely worth a try.

For growing in most average homes, *Phalanopsis* (left) (Moth

Orchids) are the easiest for beginners to grow because their needs are simple. Room temperature is fine (they don't like it too hot), a windowsill will work for light, and they don't need high humidity. If you can get an African violet to bloom, your conditions are about perfect. A weekly watering that includes a dilute fertilizer once or twice a month will take care of the rest of their needs. When you consider that most of these orchids grow as epiphytes in trees, it is easier to understand what they want. They like to be drenched with water (I use the sink sprayer) and allowed to drain thoroughly—as though they just went through that rainforest storm. They do like to be fertilized—but only use ½ the dilution recommended on most fertilizers. And they (See ORCHIDS, page 2)

(ORCHIDS, continued)

will want to be re-potted every year. Another orchid to grow with similar requirements is the genus *Paphiopedilum*, (right) the Slipper Orchid. I find the ones with variegated leaves easier to care for.

So how to get started? I suggest visiting one or two of the local orchid shows scheduled over the next month. (See the list that follows.) Look at the beautiful displays, then go and talk to the vendors who are selling the plants that appeal to you. They are usually eager to talk about their babies. If you want to do a little homework first, you can visit the American Orchid Society's web site, [http://www.aos.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Orchid\\_Information](http://www.aos.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Orchid_Information) where you can find care instructions for the most common types of orchids. A good local link filled with information is <http://www.repotme.com>, which features orchid advice and videos as well as almost any orchid supplies you will ever need.



#### ORCHID SHOWS AND SALES IN MARCH

Friends of Brookside Gardens Show & Sale  
March 20, 10:00am-4:00pm, March 21 to 3pm  
<http://www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside>

Orchids Galore & Repotting Demonstrations  
March 2-31 Hillwood Museum and Gardens  
[www.hillwoodmuseum.org](http://www.hillwoodmuseum.org)

Annual Orchid Auction, National Arboretum  
March 6, 10:00 am-3:00 pm  
[www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov)

Orchids! A Cultural Odyssey  
United States Botanic Gardens  
February 6 - April 11  
[www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov)

Maryland Orchid Society Show and Sale  
March 12-14, State Fairgrounds, Timonium  
[http://marylandorchids.org/annual\\_show.html](http://marylandorchids.org/annual_show.html)

#### Coming Soon: Spring (really!) and "Can't Miss" Club Events

##### *Edibles in the Landscape, April 21*

Look beyond (and beneath) those ugly snow drifts lingering out front. In April we will have a panel of Master Gardeners from Montgomery County talking about a topic that's on many gardeners' minds: *Including Edibles in Our Landscape Gardens*. The panel will include Susan Bell, a landscape designer and Erica Smith, who is working with Jon Traunfeld, coordinator of the "Grow It, Eat It" state wide campaign. It will be an informative meeting with lots of time for questions and answers. Check later for more details: [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org).

##### *Chanticleer Gardens, June 3*

THC is excited about our June trip to these enchanting gardens in Wayne, PA. We have partnered with the Beltsville Garden Club for this great event. Check out Chanticleer's website: [www.chanticleergarden.org](http://www.chanticleergarden.org)

And we will also go to a wonderful nearby nursery-- to be announced. Our luxury bus holds 45 people and 15 have already signed up! **See the sign-up form on the last page of this newsletter.** If you do not belong to either club you can join now or get in touch and I will put you on a wait list. Questions? Carole Galati, [cagalati@rcn.com](mailto:cagalati@rcn.com)

#### THC in the Community:

##### **Club Donation Provides Books for Takoma D.C. Public Library**

*by Madeline Caliendo*

The Takoma Horticultural Club (THC) recently donated \$250 to the Takoma DC Public Library ([www.dclibrary.org/takomapark](http://www.dclibrary.org/takomapark)) to purchase garden books to benefit the local community. THC member Madeline Caliendo led the effort for the Takoma, DC library donation. Melanie Isis is leading a similar effort with the Takoma Park city library, and you will hear more about that shortly. Meanwhile, THC invites local gardeners to the **Takoma DC Public Library, 416 Cedar Street, NW**, on the first day of spring, **Saturday, March 20 at 3:00 p.m.**, where the club will host a talk "*Getting Our Gardens Ready For Spring.*" (see *LIBRARY*, page 4)

**February: Designing with Natives**  
by Sherrell Goggin



For those not at our February 17 meeting, you missed a very knowledgeable speaker, Carla Thomas, present a slide show entitled "Native Plants and Habitat Gardening, A Design Primer". She and her husband run a nursery and landscaping company based in Alexandria, VA ([www.Nature-by-Design.com](http://www.Nature-by-Design.com)). Carla was brought to the club's attention by member Katherine Lambert (thanks Katherine!) For our 30+ assembled guests (only one of whom slept through most of the meeting—through no fault of the speaker—he was Stacy's one-month-old son Cole), Carla discussed:

[1] The benefits of Conservation Landscaping—conserving the good, pitching the bad, but perhaps preserving the ugly. The good elements are of course native plants that not only look good, but also feed and provide shelter to bees, birds, butterflies, and bats (oh my!) No one will disagree that tent caterpillars are ugly, but they can actually help some trees (if not too heavily infested) get through dry summer months by eating the leaves. The trees lose less moisture and hence it helps them get through a dry spell. In addition, when alders and other trees are defoliated, shrubs and smaller trees below can get a boost in growth due to the increased sunlight. Finally, I'm sure everyone knows that non-native invasives are bad for your garden, but (see *NATIVES*, page 4)

**Do The Dues!**  
by Carole Galati

Some are gone, some are severely reduced, some are fine and some we just don't know about yet.

I'm speaking of our plants, trees and shrubs of course. But take heart ~ THC is here for you. This great club has survived for almost 100 years and with our diverse, exciting 2010 Program, you can always find support for your gardening endeavors. Check our website: [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org) for information about all our resources.

But our club is driven by active members, especially those who pay their dues and join in our "sustainable garden club" efforts. We have 106 members who have paid their 2010 dues, including 30 Life Members. But there are 79 people who will soon have to be "pruned" from our membership list because they have not paid this year's dues, which are were due the first of the year (that would be January 1, 2010).

If you have not paid your 2010 dues here is what you must do: send a check for \$12, made out to THC and mail it to Carole Galati; 106 Melbourne Ave.; Silver Spring, MD. I promise I will not use dues monies to pay for Phil Normandy to come to my garden and expertly prune my disasters. The dues go straight to Taffy Turner, our Treasurer and into our Takoma Hort Club account. From there they are used to put on some very special events, donate books to our local libraries, and support special events at Brookside and other community garden projects. Thanks for your time. Now I have to go out to reduce the 3 feet of snow, still piled high on my street-side garden! God Bless those MC front loaders!?

**NEW MEMBERS**

We must welcome our newest members who recently joined the club: Julie Evans and Sharon Cohen. We hope you join in and share your love of gardening with us.

(NATIVES, cont'd)

there's also such a thing as hybrid natives which aren't much better. While they will have some characteristics of native plantings, they will usually fail in some key capacity, such as the ability to be a host plant for local pollinators. So, steer clear of them if you can!

[2] The problems of contemporary (modern use) landscaping—loss of native species, loss of genetic diversity, invasion of exotic or non-native species, decline of predators and pollinators, deforestation, and pollution (air pollution, pesticide use, excess nutrients, and heavy metal toxicity (and I don't think she meant the latest Metallica CD release)).

[3] How to mimic nature by "layering" your yard, starting at the bottom with native vines (ground covers or climbers); then meadows (using grasses, asters, and other perennials); moving up to sub-shrubs and small woody plants; then understory plantings (taller bushes/smaller trees), until finally, if space permits, the taller canopy trees.

[4] Including a water feature in your yard...and this doesn't mean you need to recreate the fountains from Versailles (though do expect a few unannounced visitors if you attempt this). It can be something as simple as a birdbath, or a bog, catchment, or retention pond.

Carla's plant suggestions include the following:

Virginia wild rye (good for part shade)—grasses are a particularly important source of food for winter feeding, and Carla encouraged their use.

Huckleberry makes a good sub-shrub

Carolina Moonseed, also called Coralbeads, with very red berries in Fall/Winter

Native azaleas such as the Choptank River, which has a fragrance to boot. Carla says native azaleas actually prefer full sun.

Thermopsis villosa, a good substitute for Lupine. Grows 3-5 feet, with yellow flowers in late Spring/early Summer. While it tolerates acidic soil, it's not very drought tolerant.

Seashore mallow (*Kosteletskya virginica*), a relative of hibiscus but with much smaller flowers. However, it grows in height to 4-6 feet (see NATIVES, page 5)

(LIBRARY, continued)

President Kit Gage and others will share their years of gardening know-how and wisdom with local gardeners and those who want to start gardening.

We invite you to join us as we shake off those wintertime blues. Come learn what you need to do to get your garden ready for Spring. While at the library, also peruse the impressive list of garden books purchased with the THC donation.

Here are the titles:

**Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife** - Tallamy, Douglas W.

**Edible Schoolyard: A Universal Idea** - Waters, Alice

**Field Guide to Medicinal Plants and Herb** - Foster, Steven

**Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture** - Hemenway, Toby

**Garden Anywhere: How to Grow Gorgeous Container Gardens...** - Fowler, Alys

**Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition** - Harrison, Robert Pogue

**How to Grow More Vegetables and Fruits: (And Fruits, Nuts...)** Jeavons, John

**McGee & Stuckey's the Bountiful Container** - McGee, Rose Marie Nichols

**Organic Kitchen Garden** - Roberts, Juliet

**Outside the Not So Big House: Creating the Landscape of Home** - Messervy, Julie Moir

**Roots Shoots Buckets & Boots: Gardening with Children** - Lovejoy, Sharon

**The Truth about Organic Gardening:** - Gillman, Jeff

**Understanding Perennials: A New Look at an Old Favorite-** Cullina, William

**Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother...** - Stewart, Amy

**Worms Eat My Garbage** -Appelhof, Mary

**Home Outside: Creating the Landscape You...** - Messervy, Julie Moir

**Compost Specialist: The Essential Guide** - Squire, David

**What's Wrong with My Plant? (and How Do I Fix It?)** - Deardorff, David

**The Garden Primer** -Damrosch, Barbara

**The Truth about Garden Remedies** - Gillman, Jeff

**A Weed by Any Other Name: The Virtues of a Messy Lawn...**--Gift, Nancy

(NATIVES, cont'd)

Hibiscus Coccineus grows 5-6 feet. Sometimes called swamp hibiscus because it is native to marshes and swamps in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, but is hardy to Zone 6. Hollyhock-like, 5-petaled, bright scarlet red flowers (3-5" diameter). Carla reports it will stop hummingbirds in their tracks!

Hibiscus moscheutos is another variety, slightly more drought tolerant, which can also take part sun, unlike the *Coccineus* which prefers full sun.

Gallardia (Indian Blanket). Be sure to get the pulchella variety, not the Mexican or hybrids.

New England aster

Honeysuckle—beware of non-natives, get the native *Lonicera Sempervirens* which bears red fruit and is a magnet for butterflies.

Last but surely not least,

Passion flower! Also known as Maypop, the *passiflora incarnata* is a purple flowering vine with incredibly bizarre stamens. The plant is the larval food for a number of butterflies (such as zebra longwing and Gulf Fritillary), and bears small but edible fruit. (Photo above is by Oliver P. Quillia and was taken at the Wave Hill Gardens in Riverdale, New York).

Thanks to members renewed or joined up, those who brought food and drink to share, and to everyone who came out on a cold winter's night.

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(JOHN GORDON, continued)

Belvedere Landscape Design has offered garden design and water-gardening services for more than fifteen years in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. John studied landscape design with James Matthew Evans, ASLA, and Joel Lerner, APLD. He then took design-related courses at Montgomery College and the Community College of Baltimore County and also studied in the Landscape Architecture program at the University of Maryland, College Park. John has taught at Montgomery College and presented the Water Gardening unit for the Montgomery County Master Gardeners training. He is currently teaching Landscape Design at the (formerly USDA) Graduate School in D.C.

## Events for the Opening of Vegetable Season



[graduallygreener.wordpress.com](http://graduallygreener.wordpress.com) with permission.

### **Brookside Gardens**

**Vegetable Gardening in Small Spaces**, Carol Allen, Horticulturist. Learn the ins and outs of starting your own organic vegetable garden in this 4-part series of workshops. From building raised beds and prepping your soil, to timing planting dates to ensure bountiful backyard harvests, these hands-on workshops will cover everything you need to know to get started growing tasty, healthy vegetables at home. Fee and registration info: [www.brooksidegardens.org](http://www.brooksidegardens.org)

### **Green Spring Gardens**

**4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, Va**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/education.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/education.htm)

March 7, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

**Luscious Landscaping with Fruiting Trees, Shrubs and Vines** What could be more pleasant than picking fruit from a plant you also admire for its beauty? Lee Reich, author of *Landscaping with Fruit*, introduces you to the best trees, shrubs and vines for flowers, color and form. \$10  
March 21, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

### **It's A Jungle Out There: Creating and Growing Your Own Tropical Paradise in a Non Tropical Climate**

Joe Seamone, aka Boca Joe, describes the best and most dramatic plants for your garden. Tour amazing "tropical" gardens located in the Washington, D.C. area and across the country. \$10

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### **TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS**

is published on the 1st of each month.

All of this month's articles were contributed by club members. If you would like to write about or illustrate some garden topic, let editor Diane Svenonius know at [dbsvonius@msn.com](mailto:dbsvonius@msn.com) or (301) 585-1566

*Picture Credits: Salix discolor (native pussy willow), Wikipedia ,public domain; orchids, Anne Hardman; Passion flower, Oliver P. Quillia in Wave Hill Gardens, Riverdale; seedlings, [graduallygreener.wordpress.com](http://graduallygreener.wordpress.com) with permission.*



# Beltsville Garden Club

And

# Takoma Park Horticulture Club

## Invite You To Join Us for the Annual Spring Trip To CHANTICLEER, A PLEASURE GARDEN

### Thursday, June 3, 2010

- 7:15 a.m. Board Bus
- 7:30 a.m. Bus Departs Beltsville
- 10:30 a.m. Guided Tour of Chanticleer,  
Garden & Historic House
- 12 Noon Picnic Lunch & Explore  
Garden on Your Own
- 2 p.m. Depart for Nursery Shopping
- 3:30 p.m. Return Trip to Beltsville
- 6 p.m. Arrive in Beltsville



Cost is \$55 per person which includes coach bus transportation, guided tour of the house & garden, beverages & snacks. Bring your own bag lunch. We will eat in the picnic area at Chanticleer.

Meet the bus at 7:15 a.m. in the Calverton Tower Office Building Parking Lot, 11785

**Beltsville Drive, Beltsville** (just past the shopping center, office building has a blue roof). We return by 6 p.m. Deadline for registration is Monday, May 24, 2010. For information, contact Sandy Lange at 301-474-1402 or e-mail at [salange1940@yahoo.com](mailto:salange1940@yahoo.com)



Name(s) of all registrants: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to the Beltsville Garden Club. Mail to: Sandy Lange, 12 Pinecrest Court, Greenbelt, MD 20770.**

Total Amount Enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ persons

By land or by sea  
Come sit on me  
For a view of the pond  
You will never believe