



TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS

May, 2010 Edition

www.takomahort.org



Photo by Karen Helfert

April Club Meeting:

Edibles in the Landscape

— *Melanie Isis and Diane Svenonius*

If your only patch of “full sun” is in your perennial border, or you have big ambitions and a tiny yard, three Montgomery County Master Gardeners had ideas and solutions for growing attractive and tasty plants at the Club’s April 21 meeting. **Susan Bell**, a landscape contractor, shared many ingenious ideas as to where edibles can grow in company with ornamentals. In her front yard, Susan’s goal was to persuade neighbors (and her neighborhood association) that vegetables can make attractive plantings. She placed garden obelisks among flower gardens for tomatoes and other vining edibles. A low hedge of blueberry was used as an attractive border just behind a wire fence (use LowBoy Blueberries for this). A fruit tree or two can be mixed in.

At her current home, a townhouse, Susan plants herbs and flowers along a sunny driveway--

[see *Master Gardener Panel*, page 3]

May Club Event

Rites of Spring:

THC Plant Exchange

May 16, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at

*Heffner Park Community Center,
42 Oswego Avenue (off Ritchie)*

— *by Carole Galati*

Gardeners, get ready! The Takoma Horticultural Club’s Spring Plant Exchange will be held on Sunday, May 16 at Heffner Park Community Center. Please, please label your plants with common name (*Latin name* also, if possible), light requirements, growth habit, and your own name if you want to give more information. If your plant spreads/grows quickly, let the gardener be forewarned. Please don’t bring plants considered invasive, such as common orange daylilies and English ivy. If you are not sure, post a question on the listserv. You’ll get plenty of opinions!

If you’re a new gardener or just don’t have extra plants, you are welcome to bring gardening magazines, cookbooks, unusual (clean) pots, garden ornaments/tools and of course finger food (brownies?) and drinks. Help us out: please wear a recycled name tag if you have one, and bring a chair if you are able. Chair supply is limited.

Remember, you must be a club member to participate in the Plant Exchange. Please bring a \$12 check made out to THC if you want to join or renew your membership. Check <http://www.takomahort.org> for membership details. If you have any questions, get in touch: Carole Galati ~ cagalati@rcn.com. Let me know if you are willing to come at 2:30 to help us set up and later put away tables and chairs.

Start “potting up” now ~ for the best looking plants!

Below are the categories we will be using; we can always add to this list.

[see *Spring Plant Exchange*, page 4]

Making Your Yard More Wildlife-Friendly

__by Bruce A. Sidwell

Many of you are interested in attracting more birds, butterflies, and other friendly wildlife to your yards. The Club has had a number of talks about this and there is considerable information on the web and in libraries about the topic. What you may not know is that THC has been



teaming with the Friends of Sligo Creek and the City of Takoma Park to create more interest in this topic through having the City become

certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

The NWF promotes certifying yards and communities as a way to build awareness of the benefits to nature. Also, a community of habitats can provide a broader safety net for wildlife.

To obtain certification, a set number of yards, schools, and other public spaces need to be identified and certified. So far the City has all the schools and public spaces needed, but is about 40 yards short of the 150 yards needed.

As you might expect, the qualities that make a yard attractive to birds, butterflies, and other welcome native wildlife are shelter, food (seeds, berries, nectar, foliage, nuts, fruits, sap, and pollen), water, and places to raise young. To certify your yard, see

www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife. For additional information, and answers to frequent questions check out the Friends of Sligo Creek website, www.fosc.org. By the way, a particularly nice example of the City-sponsored park sites is the Spring Park at the intersection of Elm and Poplar. A nice selection of native shrubs and a River Birch were paid for from a grant from the Takoma Foundation

WELCOME!

Please welcome our newest members:

Mary Hanisco, Sarah Anderson and Elissa Miller. And welcome back to Jerry Yokoyama. Pat McNees became our newest Life Member and never has to pay THC dues again! We hope to see our newest members at our Plant Exchange on Sunday, May 16. It is great fun!

May Club Event Nick Weber's Heritage Rosarium Tour

Up to 20 THC members will have an opportunity to tour Nick Weber's remarkable rose gardens in Ashton, Maryland on Saturday, May 29. Nick will take our club members for a private tour lasting about 45 minutes. After that, we'll be on our own to explore the gardens and take pictures of all the glories there.

The Rosarium contains hundreds of heirloom climbers and ramblers, and is open to the public just once a year.

Lunch will be brown bag (including beverages) at the nearby home of Kathrine Helfert Roznowski. Because parking is very limited at the Rosarium, we'll meet to carpool from the Takoma Community Center parking lot at 9:00am. We expect to be back in Takoma Park by 1:00 pm.

Please RSVP to Kathy Jentz, at LaserBlast@aol.com by May 25. This event is limited to THC members only – on a first come basis. If it's really storming on the morning of 29th, the 30th will be the rain date.

SAVE THE DATES FOR THESE COMING CLUB EVENTS

Details are coming soon!
Check www.takomahort.org

Open Garden Tour (Members Only)
Sunday, June 6 from 10 a.m. to noon

Stormwater Friendly Yard Fixes Tour
Wednesday, July 21, 7:00- 8:30 pm

[*Master Gardener Panel, continued from page 1*]

thyme with golden marjoram, spring bulbs, pansies, rosemary, sage, chives, and fennel (see photo). In summer, when the fennel is blooming, she adds annuals for color. She combines colors for “hot” and “cool” effects (a hot combination is blackberries, pansies, blueberry bush, Swiss chard “Bright Lights”, leeks; cool might be agastache (enjoyed by birds), broccoli (a beautiful blue), and cabbage.

For her clients, Susan fills containers with vivid herb and flower combinations: lettuces, spinach, and cilantro with violas; alyssum with red cabbage and lettuces; Golden Thyme, chives and pansies. She uses “companion plants” that help one another, such as squash with petunias; spinach, violas with cilantro. A strawberry jar can hold lemon verbena and lavender on top, with purple calibrachoa, silver sage, marjoram and rosemary on the side openings. She inserts a perforated pvc pipe into the center of the pot for watering throughout without losing soil from pockets.

Joe Schechter gardens in a small space (he says he’s a “Small Yardener”), and loves to experiment. The “small yardener” has 3 options for maximizing output: UP- vertical supports, food in trees; OUT- structures for clinging, climbing; or DOWN - pots, the ground. Joe grows small trees: hackberry and serviceberry (shadbush), which can take some shade and can serve as a climbing support for vines. Oriental dwarf persimmon can be grown in a pot; it will reach up to 10’ tall. “Out” means supports for clinging or climbing edibles such as hyacinth beans (*dolichos lablab*), beautiful and tasty when fresh (dried beans are poisonous and must be cooked). Malabar Spinach (*basella rubra*) grows well on bamboo poles tied at the top, and will endure heat longer than true spinach. It can thicken a soup; at palm size, its leaves are great for wraps.

Look “down” for violets whose flowers and leaves can be eaten in salads and are good source of Vitamin C. Joe also recommends pots on rollers to move plants into shadier areas once well-started. Turnips can be grown in pots with flat leaf parsley, for example; thin the greens for eating in summer; eat turnips in September. He grows potatoes in 20-inch pots, 2-4 to a pot,



Herbs: between a rock & a hardscape: By Susan Bell

adding soil as the green tops grow. At the end of the season, 4-5 lbs. can be conveniently harvested by simply dumping!

“Oh, Deer!” was the topic for **Erica Smith**, who works on “Grow it Eat it”, a University of Maryland program whose web site offers many resources, including when-to-plant-what charts for the area. There is no guaranteed way to protect vegetables (glamorous or otherwise) from deer and other animals, said Erica. (Deer can jump an 8-foot fence if they can see what’s on the other side.) A fence 8’ or higher or an electric fence can work; a fence to exclude groundhogs and rabbits must be buried. Some repellents can contaminate vegetables, and deer can get used to them. She suggested switching among them periodically.

The simplest approaches are: placing vulnerable plants close to the house, using containers and window boxes, and fencing or covering individual plants. Greens can be grown in salad boxes or tables off the ground (see <http://growit.umd.edu>). Plant vegetables that deer don’t like: hot peppers, fish pepper (an African American tradition in the Chesapeake region), alliums, garlic chives, leeks, rhubarb, and cardoons (beautiful, but the entire plant must be covered for blanching).

Erica recommended a visit to the Master Gardener’s demonstration gardens at the Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood, MD. They also have a wonderful garden at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds.

[*Spring Plant Exchange, continued from p.1*]

We can always add to this list. Cuttings can also be included.

Ground Covers, Grasses & Vines

House Plants & Tropicals

Perennials- Shade

Perennials- Sun

Trees & Shrubs

Annuals

Seeds & Bulbs

Garden Items/Tools

Vegetables & Herbs

Pond Plants

Directions to the Heffner Park Community Center

From Philadelphia Ave (MD410) and Piney Branch Road, head NE on Piney Branch, passing TP Middle School. Turn right on Ritchie (top of hill), take first right onto Oswego. Community Center entrance comes up quickly on the right. From 495/Georgia Ave, go south to Colesville Rd then 6 lights to left turn at Sligo Avenue. Go about a mile to Piney Branch traffic light, turn right on Piney, left on Ritchie, right on Oswego.

LOCAL RESOURCE WEB LINK COMING!

THC is readying a link that will allow members to list their garden-related business services at www.takomahort.org. As soon as it is launched, the link will be announced on the listserv. Meanwhile, you can continue to make requests for gardening help on the listserv. Please consider sending replies and recommendations directly to the requester, not to the whole list! We thank you for your patience while waiting for a better solution.

The Takoma Horticultural Club News is issued on the club's listserv and posted on the web site each month. Contributions- articles and photos of interest to gardeners- and comments are most welcome. Contact the Editor, Diane Svenonius, at dbsvonius@msn.com or 301 585-1566.



Photo by Karen Helfert

DUES & DON'TS

It's time to do the Membership List "spring cleaning." As of July 1st, all those who have not paid their 2010 dues will be removed from our current membership list. Here are some statistics: there are 40 Life Time members (they paid \$125); there are 80 members who paid their 2010 dues and will be able to participate in the Members Only events for the rest of 2010.

And then there are the 70 people who have not paid their 2010 dues. These names will be removed from our 2010 Membership List. Some have moved away; some decided not to remain in the club and I'm sure a lot of you just plain forgot to pay your dues. If you are not sure, contact me (cagalati@rcn.com) If you want to pay your dues, go to www.takomahort.org for instructions and take a look at the 2010 Program to see the benefits of membership.

Gardening Events in the Community

Washington Gardener Magazine Panel Discussion and 5th Anniversary Celebration

May 23, 2 to 3:30pm, at Historical Society of Washington. "The Future of Local Gardening" a panel discussion led by Kathy Jentz, editor & publisher; and the Magazine's anniversary celebration. "We sent out our premiere issue in March/April 2005. Come join us for a slice of cake and cup of bubble to mark the magazine's 5th Anniversary in print. Local experts will share their views and we anticipate a lively discussion of where we've been and where we are headed next." Free, open to the public. Directions www.historydc.org

More Gardening Events of Interest in the Community

Historic Takoma House and Garden Tour

May 2 1:00-4:00 pm “Once Rural Takoma” features homes and gardens between Piney Branch and the Community Center, on the site of a 60-acre dairy farm not developed until the 1920s, known today as Hodges Heights. Ticket information at www.historictakoma.org.

Silver Spring Garden Club

Garden Mart

May 8, 9:00am-1:00pm, Brookside Gardens Wheaton MD. The Club's 60th annual Garden Mart Plant Sale features heirloom tomato seedlings, native plants, herbs, houseplants, and much, much more. Come early in the sale for best selection. Free, open to the general public. Directions at <http://www.brooksidegardens.org>

Talk: “Building a Butterfly Garden”

May 17, 7:30-9:30pm at Brookside Gardens Carol Allen tells you how to attract “winged flowers” to your garden. Doors open at 7:30, talk at 8. Free and open to the public.

Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

www.nps.gov/keag

May 1, 8, 15, 22 Morning bird walks, 7:45-8:45. April and May are the bird migration period, and the park opens at 7 for birders.

May 23, 29 and 30, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Join a ranger for an hour's walk around the ponds to see what is blooming. Marsh and wetland wildflowers bloom in the spring; water lilies start up in late May. Free, no registration required.

U.S. National Arboretum

www.usna.usda.gov

Succulents Container Workshop

May 8, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, Arboretum lobby Choose from a dazzling mix of heat and drought tolerant succulents to create your own container garden that will thrive on neglect and reward you with colorful foliage and unusual forms, with Bradley Evans, arboretum horticulturist and container specialist. Fee: \$45 (FONA \$36). Registration www.usna.usda.gov/Education

Community Forklift Plant Sale

4671 Tanglewood Drive, Edmonston MD
Saturdays in May, 10 am- 1 pm
Organic veggie and flower seedlings for sale.

United States Botanic Garden

The Power of Natural Light

May 28, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m

Allen Rokach, Director of Photography New York Botanical Garden has traveled the world since 1975 on assignments that range antiquities of Egypt to the vast Amazonian rain. An expert best known for his photographs of flowers, gardens and landscapes, Mr. Rokach will share his secrets to taking beautiful photographs. In this evening lecture, he will show you how to analyze the quality, direction and intensity of light to make your images equal to and surpass reality. Code: LA052810 (202) 225-1116 Friends: \$10, Non-members: \$15

Audubon Naturalist Society

www.audubonnaturalist.org

Spring Hike on Sugarloaf Mountain

May 22, 10am- 3pm

Melanie-Choukas Bradley and Tina Brown lead an outing devoted to botany, wildlife, geology, and history of Sugarloaf Mountain, a monadnock in the rural Piedmont northwest of Washington, DC. The 1.5-2.5 mile hike is timed for the flowering of many woodland plants, including fringe-tree, pinxter, an uncommon form of Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and several violet species. Members \$25; nonmembers: \$35

Brookside Gardens

<http://www.brooksidegardens.org>

Dahlia Tuber Sale

National Capital Dahlia Society

Saturday, May 1, 10:00am-2:00pm

Azalea Sale

Brookside Gardens Chapter Azalea Society

Saturday, May 15, 9:30am-2:30pm

Outside the Visitors Center

Luscious Landscaping – with Fruiting Trees, Shrubs, and Vines!

May 14, 10:00-11:30am, Visitor's Center Auditorium. *Lee Reich, Ph.D., Avid “Farmdener,” Horticultural Consultant and Writer* Meet some of the best fruiting trees, shrubs, and vines, plants that require little maintenance yet provide stunning flowers in spring, color in autumn and neat form in winter. Learn how to grow shadbush, gumi, actinidia, medlar, and other ornamental, fruiting plants, and how to use them to beautify your yard. Course number 102351 Free; registration required.