



Takoma Horticultural Club

A Hardy Perennial Since 1916

www.takomahort.org

June 2011

June Club Event

Four Takoma Park City Gardens, Led by City Gardener Mike Welsh

THC Garden Tour, Sunday, June 12, 10 am to Noon. Meet at Memorial Garden, Corner of Philadelphia & Maple.

____by *Taffy Turner*

The 2011 Garden Tour, for THC members only, will be a little different from the tours of members' gardens we've done in the past. This year Mike Welsh, the Takoma Park City Gardener, will lead us on a tour of four of Takoma Park's city gardens – three of which were initiated by members of the Takoma Horticultural Club many years ago.

The job of City Gardener is actually Mike's second career. He spent 28 years in data processing in his previous life. He studied horticulture at the University of Maryland and did an internship at the US National Arboretum. He has been Takoma Park's City Gardener for fifteen years.

The tour begins at the **Memorial Garden** at the corner of Philadelphia and Maple Avenues at 10am. You can park in the lot behind the Takoma Park (See *Garden Tour*, page 5)



. Detail taken from photo by Karen Helfert.

GARDEN SOCIAL at Behnke's Beltsville Nursery

11300 Baltimore Ave
Beltsville MD, 20705

Prizes, Plant Swap and Sale, Garden
Clubs From All Over!

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 FROM 10 AM TO 4 PM
Details next page....

THC's Annual Rite of Spring... My Plant for Your Plant

____by *Becky Lavash*

THC had another successful plant swap on May 15 with 40 people in attendance. Despite reports of imminent thunderstorms, the weather was clear. We met in Heffner Park early in the afternoon to share our garden overflows.

(See *Plant Exchange*, p.2)

GARDEN SOCIAL at Behnke's

— by Carole Galati

Friends, gardeners, plant lovers....

Join us at Behnke Nurseries in Beltsville Maryland on Saturday, June 4th for the first annual Garden Social to benefit the Friends of Brookside Gardens. This is an opportunity for people to see what garden clubs have to offer their members, meet plant enthusiasts, ask questions, and maybe even join a club. Representatives from many organizations will participate, including the Takoma Horticultural Club, the Azalea Society of America, the Beltsville Garden Club, Master Gardeners from Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties, the Gesneriad Society (African Violets and their relatives), the Potomac Hosta Club, and the Silver Spring Garden Club. The idea is for members of different groups to share with one other and pass on their knowledge and enthusiasm to Behnke's gardening customers.

But there's more to it than that: anyone who brings a garden plant from home can participate in the "plant swap" at 11:30. Also, many wonderful items will be offered as raffle prizes. All money raised from the raffle goes to the Friends of Brookside Gardens, supporting the magnificent public garden in Wheaton, so dear to all of us in the Washington, DC area.

At 3:00 pm, internationally renowned perennial expert David Culp of Sunny Border Nurseries will give a free lecture on perennials. David's Pennsylvania garden has been profiled in *Martha Stewart's Living*, and he's writing a book about it for Timber Press.

We expect this to become an annual event, so why not attend the first one? Like Woodstock... you can tell your grandchildren: "I was there!" There is plenty of parking, and food will be available to purchase from Monte's BBQ.

For more information, call Stephanie Fleming at 301-937-8150/ sfleming@behnkes.net, or get in touch with me cagalati@rcn.com. I have been working closely with Stephanie since last fall on this great event. Come by our THC table and say "hi"!

PRESS COVERAGE FOR THC

The Takoma Horticultural Club, and the plant exchange, were covered by the local press! Kevin Adler of the *Takoma Park City Newsletter* interviewed members by phone and at the exchange and Laurie Stepp took photos.

See the results at:

<http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/news/newsletter/2011/june2011.pdf>

(Plant exchange, continued from page 1)

One advantage of plants at the swap is that we can be sure that these items do well in our area. This year's offerings included lots of plants for the shade-- large and miniature hostas, ostrich ferns, epimedium, and sweet woodruff. Some members brought sun loving plants like Russian sage and iris. Others contributed summer vegetables started from seed such as tomatoes and green peppers, and herbs such as basil and thyme. We arranged the plants by type as we arrived at the swap and each talked briefly about what we had brought before the swap began.

Carole Galati, who worked very hard to organize and run the plant swap, had no time to dig up plants for the swap, so she offered several passes to tour her garden and receive six perennial plants after the tour. Other members said they had more plants at home that they had not dug out for the swap but they would be happy to share.

And even members who did not have plants to share were able to swap, bringing flower pots, plant labels, and some tasty home-baked goods in exchange. The plant swap is a great THC tradition that enables us to share our garden overflow and to pick up plants that we can count on doing well in our gardens. And it's a great motivation to join THC to take advantage of these great offerings!

President's Plot by Sherrell Goggin

Garden Galleria

How many times have you noticed people walking past your house, only to see them stop and look around your yard? If walking in twos or threes, you might also notice them smiling and talking as they motion towards various parts of your yard. I myself love walking around different parts of my neighborhood (or heck, I will drive/bike to other areas) to see what people are doing. And one thing that rarely fails to make me smile is seeing some type of "Yard Art". It can be something simple, such as arranging plants to make a heart or the owner's initials, or maybe a small topiary in the shape of a basket with flowers flowing forth from the center. Or it can be more elaborate, such as a neighbor near me who had to cut down a large tree. Rather than taking the entire tree down, they left about 15 feet of the trunk and had two lizards carved into the tree, one climbing up, the other climbing down, with tails curling around the head of their mate. Very clever!

I was reminded of what fun art in the garden can be on a recent trip to Pittsburgh, when we stopped in the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, a huge steel and glass Victorian-era greenhouse that began its life in 1893. They've made several expansions since then, and while portions of the greenhouse are devoted to typical garden fare such as orchids, ferns, and desert plants, another portion is currently showcasing, well, a bit of garden whimsy.

Celebrating its Victorian roots, an indoor pond features a modern interpretation of a fainting couch, complete with glass-tiled "cushions" and a shower "curtain" frame suspended above—the curtain being created by water falling down from holes in the frame. I don't think I'd dread these 90+ degree temps nearly so much if I had one of these in my backyard!



In another "room" an old three-drawer clothes dresser has been made into a tiered garden bed, with marigolds, geraniums, and other flowers spilling out (much as my dresser looks some mornings when rampaging through for a certain item), with a potted begonia on top for good measure.



The most ambitious room (an homage to Alice in Wonderland in my opinion, but for them a display in what can be done with a bit of recycling) showcased huge flowers sprouting up from the ground (made from linoleum), dandelion balls hanging from the glass ceiling above (thanks to a bit of bunched-up fabric), and a large mirrored wheel in the back (made from broken glass glued to a board encircled by spoons, with forks and knives radiating outwards like the rays of the sun). My only complaint was that you could only view the room from one end of the room, rather than being able to wander through, immersing yourself in the setting. But then, maybe they were afraid someone might plop down in that red chair by the mirror, entranced by the little waterfall opposite, and try to figure out just where that rabbit hole was.



As you might guess, I left the Phipps that day with a big grin on my face, inspired by what I might cook up for my own garden art.

Back by Popular Demand: Lovely Stormwater Gardens in Takoma and Environs
Wednesday, July 20 at 7:30 pm

See how the Hancock Avenue Rain Garden is progressing one year after its installation. Watch the Green Roof at the Takoma City Building spread. Check out the Cleveland Avenue pervious pavers and rain garden. Finish off at Kit's house to see her cistern, rain garden, conservation landscaping and those of her neighbors. Meet at the Takoma City Building at 7:30pm. Walk to Hancock, back to carpooling to Cleveland Avenue and then finishing with a snack at Kit's. Directions at the meeting.

Forget-Us-Not: Membership Counts

It's time to climb out of the garden to nag you once again about paying dues. Here's the score: Thank goodness, the dues are winning: 127 to 71. We have 127 members in good standing. But there are 71 who have not paid their 2011 dues. These names will be removed from our membership list before the end of June. Not sure if you paid your 2011 dues? Please ask me. To join or pay dues go to www.takomahort.org for instructions. We have several Members-only events coming up soon. Check out the 2011 THC Program on our website. Don't miss out! Please welcome our new and returning members: Sherelyn Ernst, Margaret Easter, Debby Luxenberg, Vicky Michener, Raja Nadarajah, Stacy Gilbert, Barbara Muhlbacher, Anna Chan, Angie Secrest, Jennie Sniderman, Rani Parker, Hank Heflin, and Linda Voris!

Thanks, Carole (cagalati@rcn.com)

(Garden Tour, continued from page 1)

City Library parking lot. We then proceed west on Philadelphia, left on Cedar Ave to Tulip Ave to the **Thomas Seigler Garden** at the corner of Tulip & Cedar. From there, we head northwest on Tulip, left on Holly Ave, right on Eastern Ave. NW to Piney Branch Rd. to the Upper Portal Garden at Piney Branch & Eastern.

Then it's on to our last stop, going northeast on Piney Branch to Chestnut, right on Philadelphia to the **Stewart Armstrong Garden (Hodges Height)** at Philadelphia & Holly.

The entire tour is less than 2 miles – an easy walk. Mike will provide commentary and answer questions at each garden. You may do the tour on your own, but we recommend joining the group to get the benefits of Mike's knowledge of these gardens. Directions from Google to the right.

[Philadelphia Ave & Maple Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912](#)

1. Head west on Philadelphia Ave toward Old Philadelphia Ave 430 ft

2. Turn left onto Cedar Ave 0.3 mi

[Tulip Ave & Cedar Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912](#)

3. Head northwest on Tulip Ave toward Holly Ave 0.1 mi

4. Turn left onto Holly Ave Entering District of Columbia 364 ft

5. Turn right onto Eastern Ave NW 0.1 mi

[Piney Branch Rd & Eastern Ave Washington D.C., DC](#)

6. Head northeast on Piney Branch Rd Entering Maryland 0.3 mi

7. Continue onto Chestnut Ave 338 ft

8. Turn right onto Philadelphia Ave 443 ft

[Philadelphia Ave & Holly Ave Takoma Park, MD 20912](#)

Officers, Committee Chairs and Contacts

President: *Sherrell Goggin*

Vice President: *Carole Galati*

Listserv: *Anne Hardman*

Membership & Program

Coordinator: *Carole Galati*

Newsletter: *Diane Svenonius*

Public Relations: *Kathy Jentz*

Secretary: *Becky Lavash*

Treasurer: *Taffy Turner*

Webmasters: *Karen Helfert*

& Sherrell Goggin

The **Takoma Horticultural Club News** is issued each month on the listserv. Current and previous issues can also be found at www.takomahort.org. Comments and contributions of articles and photos are most welcome. Contact dbsvenonius@msn.com

Photo credits in this issue:

page 1, THC plant exchange, Karen Helfert; page 3 and 4, Phipps Conservatory, Sherrell Goggin; page 6, blooming on Silver Spring Avenue, by Diane Svenonius.

Gardening Events in the Community

U.S. National Arboretum

Exhibit: Becoming a Bonsai

June 25 – August 28, 10am–4pm

National Bonsai & Penjing Museum

Special Exhibits Wing

How do they do that? This exhibit demonstrates the steps involved in creating a bonsai, and shows the process that transforms a common crape myrtle into a charming bonsai through pruning, wiring, and repotting. Artifacts from the museum's collection will also be displayed, including tools used by renowned bonsai masters Toshio Kawamoto, John Naka, and Yuji Yoshimura. Free.

U.S. Botanic Garden

Green Genes: Mapping the Plant World

Green Genes Lecture & Tour Series

The plant world is at once glorious and confusing. Fortunately, humans have the unique ability to form categories and bring order to the more than 300,000 species of plants. Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus' careful observation of flower parts in the 18th century led him to define the current system by which we classify plants. Now scientists are rearranging the plant family "tree of life" by studying the accumulation of changes in so-called "clock genes" that chart the course of evolution. Several lectures and tours are and a Green Genes Festival are planned.

www.usbg.gov

The first is: Before Flowers and Fruit – Ferns and Gymnosperms

June 4, 10:30–11:30 am Conservatory

Classroom. Todd Brethauer, USBG Volunteer.

During the height of the Age of Dinosaurs 150 million years ago, it was warm, wet and there was lots of carbon dioxide. It was a great time to be a plant! Ferns and gymnosperms dominated the landscape. Flowers and fruits were still millions of years in the future. Join Todd to learn about these plants' living descendants, their place in the environment, how they are used around the world, and how "green genes" and the fossil record help explain their evolution and protect endangered species. Code: LH060411

FREE: Pre-registration required www.usbg.gov

Hillwood Museum and Gardens

Spring Garden Tours

Docent-led tours are offered on a first-come first-served basis Tuesday-Saturday at 10:30am and 12:30pm, and on Sunday, June 12 at 2:30pm. Tickets are distributed at the Visitor Center upon opening each day.

Green Spring Gardens Park

Ground Covers for Shade

June 18, 9:30am

Are you looking for just the right plants to cover a barren patch of soil, control erosion on a hillside or create a new garden under a tree? Now is the time to act. Learn how to use ground cover plants to pull your garden design together and solve a multitude of problems. Mary Frogale, horticulturalist at Green Spring shares her favorite plants for shade. Out of county fee \$17. Register at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp

Brookside Gardens

Delicious Color for Your Garden

June 9, 6:30–8pm, Visitors Center Auditorium. Karl Gercens of Longwood Gardens points out what you can do with rich Merlot, buttery yellows and silver to spice up your landscape. See how foliage color can lend a zesty punch and which edibles can garnish the top for a savory finish. Course number 130852, free, registration required.

Wings of Fancy

The live butterfly and caterpillar exhibit runs through September 18 and is open 10am to 4pm daily in the South conservatory. \$6 teens and adults, \$4 ages 3-12.