

# Beltsville Garden Club Newsletter

Volume 60 Number 2 <http://www.beltsvillegardenclub.org> February 2012

## Spring Trip to Dumbarton Oaks

On May 17, BGC is sponsoring a trip to Dumbarton Oaks and Green Spring Gardens. (See page 3 for sign-up form). In this connection, it was very interesting to listen to our January speaker, David Keil, long-time docent at Dumbarton Oaks, describe the history of the house and gardens.

The gardens are approached from a series of screened terraces that enhance the visitors' view and sense of anticipation. Within each room and terrace, there are trees and plants, native and exotic, that frame the views. Of special interest are the copper beach tree, the sweeping hill of forsythia, the thousands of spring bulbs, and the long allees of yews, boxwoods and maples. The Rose Garden features varieties that progress from pinks, whites and reds to warmer oranges and yellows. There are also numerous garden ornaments including vases, urns, finials, and benches that reflect the special character of each garden area.

As time and interest permit, we will visit the Dumbarton Oaks Museum and the famous Philip Johnson Pavilion, with its world class pre-Columbian collection of art from ancient Latin American cultures.

Our second stop will be Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, VA. We will enjoy high tea in the historic house followed by a docent-led tour of the gardens. The gardens feature a woodland stream valley, native gardens and 20 thematic demonstration gardens. We also will have time to peruse the Garden Gate Plant Shop.

## February 22 BGC General Meeting

BGC will hold a general meeting on Wednesday, February 22, at 7:30 pm in the cafeteria of the James E. Duckworth School, 11201 Evans Trail, Beltsville.

**Miriam Mahowald** will speak on "**Growing and Showing Vegetables**". She will focus on starting vegetables from seeds, growing conditions and timing for showing. She also will share secrets of showmanship that can lead to earning champion ribbons at county fairs. She notes that vegetables can be grown in flower beds or flower pots, as well as in large or small gardens.

Mahowald teaches horticulture classes at Howard Community College and does consulting for her business "Ask Miriam". She is also the superintendent of vegetables at the Howard County Fair.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting. We thank everyone who brought refreshments to the January meeting. If you are planning to attend the February meeting, please consider bringing a sweet or savory snack for our refreshment table. All contributions are welcome.

**Please remember to bring a plant or garden-related item for the door prize table.**

## Did You Pay Your Dues?

Annual dues is owed in September. Please send your \$10 payment to: **BGC, P. O. Box 1953, Beltsville, MD 20704**. We need your support to build a strong club for the future.

## BELTSVILLE GARDEN CLUB

The Beltsville Garden Club is a not-for-profit organization designed to promote gardening interests of its members, increase their knowledge of horticulture, add to their enjoyment of gardening, and to encourage ornamental planting by individuals, community and business groups. Club dues is \$10 per family per year. The dues year begins in September. Send checks to: BGC, P.O. Box 1953, Beltsville, MD 20704-1953.

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### Gardening News & Tips by Sandy Lange

The USDA Agricultural Research Service offers a new 2012 Plant Hardiness Zone Map. This guide is the standard by which gardeners can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a particular location. The map is based on average annual minimum winter temperatures, divided into 10-degree F zones. The map is available as an interactive GIS-based map, for which a broadband Internet connection is recommended, and as static images for those with slower Internet access. Users may also simply type in a ZIP Code and find the hardiness zone for that area. Our region is in zone 7a, 0 to 5 degrees. In the interactive version, you can click on the map and pick out the warm spots in your neighborhood.

A 3,500-year-old bald cypress tree known as The Senator was struck by lightning and burned to the ground in Big Tree Park in Longwood, FL recently. The 18-foot tree was designated a national historic landmark by President Calvin Coolidge in 1929. The Senator was believed to be one of the 10 oldest trees in the world and probably the oldest in the United States. It measured 17.5 feet in diameter and 425 inches in circumference.

Check out the University of Maryland Extension Service website **Grow It Eat It**. It offers assistance with starting and maintaining successful food gardens. There is a garden blog and information on plants and pesticides. Master Gardeners are promoting food gardening throughout the state.

### Greenhouse Committee by Bill Koppes

Preparations for the spring sales are underway. We have a good selection of scented geraniums, coleus plants, cacti/succulents; and various types of plectranthus, and herbs. Our main plant production is done by propagation from cuttings and seeds. This year we will again have caladiums (Candidum and Frieda Hemple) grown from giant bulb sizes. We have to thread the needle with the timing on these since we would like to have some available for the April sale. This requires potting in early March and possible freeze damage in shipment. We have been fortunate so far in having no damaged bulbs.

## Caring for Cut Flowers

Kathy Jentz, editor of *Washington Gardener* magazine and BGC member, offers the following tips for caring for cut flowers:

- ◆ Cut flowers from your garden early in the morning.
- ◆ Cut stems diagonally to allow for greater water uptake.
- ◆ Remove all foliage from stems that are placed in water to reduce bacteria.
- ◆ Change water regularly, every day or every 3-5 days.
- ◆ Add a pack of flower food or a teaspoon of sugar with a few drops of lemon.
- ◆ Use warm water except for daffodils and tulips which need cold water to prevent flower drop.
- ◆ Keep daffodils and paper-whites out of mixed flower bouquets. These plants produce a substance that is toxic to other flowers.

## Starting Seeds Indoors

There are four basic components to achieving success with starting seeds indoors.

- ◆ **Light** Use fluorescent lights. Tubes must be placed 1" to 2" above seedlings. At least 14 hours of light are required.
- ◆ **Soil** Purchase high quality starting mix that holds moisture yet has good drainage. Do not use garden soil because it has too many diseases and pests.
- ◆ **Water** Keep seedlings moist but not soggy. If too wet, fungus will kill seedlings.
- ◆ **Containers** Any clean container is good. If reusing old containers, soak them in a 1:9 bleach/water solution to kill potential pathogens. Cover container with a clear lid or plastic wrap. Remove cover when you see the first seedlings.

Harden off seedlings for about a week by taking containers outside and placing them in a filtered sun/shade location. Avoid harsh winds. Consider starting now: cabbage, chives, fennel, sage, thyme, rosemary, ageratum, alyssum, snapdragons, and annual phlox.

## Registration Form

### Beltsville Garden Club

Invites You to Join Us for the

### SPRING TRIP TO DUMBARTON OAKS AND GREEN SPRING GARDENS

Thursday, May 17, 2012

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

e-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

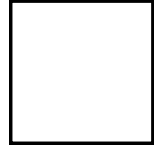
**Cost is \$70 per person which includes coach bus transportation, guided tour of the gardens, High Tea at Green Spring (this will be lunch), beverages & snacks.**

**Meet the bus at 8 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 5:30 p.m. Deadline for registration is Friday, May 10. For information, contact Sandy Lange at 301-474-1402 or e-mail at [salange1940@yahoo.com](mailto:salange1940@yahoo.com)

**Total Amount Enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

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

Beltsville Garden Club  
P. O. Box 1953  
Beltsville, MD 20704-1953



### Garden Events

**Sun., Feb. 12, 1 pm. Growing Orchids in Your Home.** Behnke's. Beltsville.

**Sun., Feb. 19 & 26, 1 pm.** Make a Hypertufa Planter. Behnke's. Beltsville. \$35 fee.

**Sun., Feb. 26, 1-4 pm, Tour the National Agricultural Library.** RSVP to WashingtonGardenerMagazine@www.WashingtonGardener.com before Feb. 24.

**Sat., Mar. 3, 11 am. Starting Seeds Indoors. What Works Best.** Behnke's. Beltsville.

**Sun., Mar. 4 to Sun., Mar.11, Philadelphia Flower Show,** Pennsylvania Convention Center.

**Sat., Mar. 17, 10 am-4 pm, Sun., Mar. 18, 10 am-3 pm. Orchid Show & Sale.** Brookside Gardens. Wheaton.

### BGC Calendar of Events

**Wed., Feb. 1, 7:30 pm. Executive Committee Mtg.** Home of Marcy & Dan Marinelli.

**Wed., Feb. 22, 7:30 pm. Growing & Showing Vegetables.** Miriam Mahowald, speaker. Duckworth School.

**Wed., March 7, 7:30 pm, Executive Committee Mtg.,** Home of Judy Shanefelter.

**Wed., March 28, 7:30 pm. The Price of Liberty: Weeds.** John Peter Thompson, speaker. Duckworth School.

**Wed., April 4, 7:30 pm. Executive Committee Mtg.,** Home of Nancy Perkins

**Sat., April 14 & Sat., May 12, 8 am-Noon, BGC Plant Sales. High Point High School parking lot. Rain or shine.**