



Beltsville Garden Club Newsletter

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Reflections on the Film *Botany of Desire*

By Melissa Mackey

For twenty-five years author Michael Pollan has explored the inter-relationships of nature, evolution, and culture. At our January meeting, BGC members enjoyed watching part of the film *Botany of Desire*, in which Pollan explores our co-evolutionary history with four plants. We watched the sections on apples and tulips, demonstrating how plants have as much of an effect on our behavior as we do in changing the ways in which plants grow. Fascinating history lessons included a new look at the Dutch tulip mania bubble in 1637.

I left wondering about Pollan's subsequent work and found that he has been a prolific source of wise and witty examinations of our place in the world of growing, producing, and consuming food. His more recent works include *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *Second Nature*, *Food Rules*, and *Cooked*. Netflix has just begun streaming a film version of *Cooked*, Pollan's journey to find how cooking influences both our nature and culture. He looks at how we use the four classical elements of air, water, fire, and earth to create delicious, healthy, sustainable food. He observes that cooking strengthens our relationships with the people we cook for. One door opens into another.

Thanks to Mary Ann Canter and all who contributed to the great snack experience. Our ceramic pot themed door prize table sent us home with interesting new plant containers, and Dorothy Cichra's raffle items added to the scholarship fund.

We look forward to "Five Designer Secrets to Take Your Garden to the Next Level" with speaker Carolyn Mullet in February, and being that much closer to Spring!

Designer Secrets is February 22 Program Topic

The Beltsville Garden Club will meet on Wednesday, February 22, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. in the multi-purpose room of the Duckworth School, 11201 Evans Trail, Beltsville, Md.

Please join us for a program titled "Five Designer Secrets to Take Your Garden to the Next Level." In this talk, Carolyn Mullet will explore five key areas that will help you see your garden with fresh eyes, as sometimes we're just too close to spot our own mistakes, and wonder why something is not working. She will lead us through simple steps to make our gardens more beautiful, comfortable, and functional. The talk will be illustrated with slides from Carolyn's visits to English gardens.

Carolyn Mullet is the owner of Carex: Garden Design, a design studio based in Takoma Park, MD., specializing in residential garden design. She received her formal training in landscape design from George Washington University and has practiced in the Washington, DC metro area for the last 30 years. She also produces the popular Facebook page, Garden Design by Carolyn Mullet, for an international community of over 1.4 million followers where she daily showcases gardens from around the world. In addition, Carolyn leads garden tours to Europe each spring and summer through her company, CarexTours.

Please bring something to exchange for the door prize table. It can be a plant, cutting, garden tool or magazine. Also bring sweet or savory refreshments to be served after the meeting. Remember, if schools are closed due to weather, the February meeting is canceled.

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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BGC Membership Renewal

Annual dues is \$10 per household per year. The membership year runs from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017. Renew NOW so you continue to receive monthly newsletters and invitations to special events such as the Peach Festival.

Make your check payable to:

Beltsville Garden Club.

Mail to: P. O. Box 1953

Beltsville, MD 20704-1953.

Name _____

Partner's Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I am interested in serving on a committee:

____ Publicity ____ Plant Sales
____ Newsletter ____ Membership
____ Hospitality ____ Greenhouse

The BGC newsletter is sent electronically to everyone with an email address. If you do not have an email address, check below:

____ I want to receive the newsletter ***in the mail.***

BGC Scholarship Fund

Consider donating to the BGC Scholarship Fund for the benefit of a University of Maryland student enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Scholarship Donation Enclosed: _____

Dues Amount Enclosed: _____

Total _____

Greenhouse Report *By Dorothy Cichra*

Work in the greenhouse is continuing. Seeds have been started, plants are being repotted and groomed, and cuttings taken. The students, Sherry, Samson, Ahmed, Sunita, and teachers, Ms. Collins and Ms. Kitt continue to do a fantastic job. Their willingness to help, to learn new things and even to do mundane tasks are noteworthy and much appreciated.

To help vary our plant selection, the greenhouse would like cuttings or divisions of interesting plants including succulents. There seems to be an interest in larger house plants. We have recently sold many of the ones we had so if you have cuttings or offsets of quickly growing houseplants, they would be appreciated. Ideas on what we could grow would also be helpful. We would also like donations of k-cups, little applesauce or Jello containers or Greek yogurt containers with no writing. This helps us keep the costs low which allows us to sell small plants at lower prices and also allows us to give plants to Duckworth for the Challenge Day volunteers without incurring much expense.

Also, the Duckworth School requests volunteers to help with the courtyard vegetable garden area, to help maintain the plants in the courtyard out front and in the butterfly garden after they are planted by the AOBA volunteers, and to generally help with plant/landscape issues. Contact Gabriella in the school office 301-572-0620, or Dorothy Cichra for more information.

Greenhouse volunteers are always needed.

Master Gardening Spring Conference

Master Gardeners of Montgomery County invite all gardeners to their 17th Annual Spring Gardening Conference on Saturday, February 25, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., University of Maryland Extension, Montgomery County Office, 18410 Muncaster Road, Derwood, MD. Topics include Pollinators, Shade Gardening, Veggies, Landscape Design, Beekeeping and Pruning, and Wildlife Habitats.

The fee is \$55 per person or \$50 for groups of two or more. For registration information, go to <http://goo.gl/i4nalm>.

Garden News and Notes *By Sandra Lange*

So, all the people who showed up during the Inauguration and the Women's March managed to severely damage the Smithsonian Gardens. Now, the director of the Smithsonian Gardens, Barbara Faust, is requesting donations to restore the gardens. If interested, send your check to: Smithsonian Gardens, P.O. Box 37012, Capital Gallery, Suite 3300, MRC 506, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012. Attention Smithsonian Gardens. Indicate that the funds are intended for garden restoration.

The April 26 BGC program will be "*Growing, Harvesting, and Preparing Therapeutic Herbs for Self-Care.*" In this talk, Donna Koczaja will share how herbs can be amazing healers, and how herbal 'medicines' need not be complicated to make at home. This lecture will highlight best methods of harvesting different plant parts and how to make simple preparations such as teas, syrups, and oils, as well as topical salves and poultices. Example herbs and their growing habits will also be highlighted.

Behnke's Nursery recommends the following four houseplants for growing in low light: Peace Lilies, Chinese Evergreen, Snake Plant and ZZ Plant. The latter is new to me, described by Behnke horticulturist Larry Hurley as "the closest you can come to a plastic plant that is still alive". It is very exotic-looking, and stays small if it doesn't get much light or water, but will grow bigger if it summers outside in a shady location.

Among the new hybrids out this year is the "Ghost" apple with white skin and flesh. It is said to be semi-dwarf (12 to 15 feet tall) and needs 500 chill hours and a compatible apple tree as a mid-season pollinizer. It is available from Dave Wilson Nursery, www.davewilson.com.

Woody plant expert Michael Dirr (author of the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*) has developed a crape myrtle called "Sunset Magic" with purple/black leaves and red flowers that bloom heavily. It grows from 5 to 10 feet tall and will spread from 4 to 8 feet wide. It is available from Bailey Nurseries, Inc., www.baileynurseries.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
BGC SPRING TRIP
THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2017
MAYMONT MANSION & GARDENS
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

DETAILS IN MARCH NEWSLETTER

Garden Events

Through May 14. *Smithsonian/U. S. Botanic Garden Annual Orchid Show* at the Hirshhorn Museum on the Mall. The Smithsonian Gardens and United States Botanic Garden 2017 Orchid Exhibition, showcases over 100 orchids in a limited-time display amidst the Hirshhorn's unique architecture.

Sunday, February 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. *National Capitol Area Orchid Society 39th Annual Orchid Auction*. Behnke's Nursery. More than 300 orchids to be auctioned. Visit www.ncos.us for more information.

Friday, February 24, *Green Matters Symposium: Plant Solutions*. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Silver Spring Civic Center. Fee is \$99. Register at ActiveMontgomery.org. Call 301-962-1451 for information.

Sunday, March 11-Sunday, March 19. *Philadelphia Flower Show*. Philadelphia Convention Center. See website for tickets or join a group tour.

BGC Calendar of Events.

Wednesday, February 22, 7:30 p.m. "*Five Designer Secrets to Take Your Garden to the Next Level*" by Carolyn Mullet, Garden Designer.

Wednesday, March 1, 7 p.m. BGC Executive Board Meeting, Place TBA.

Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 p.m. "*Understanding Soils and the Impact on Gardening*". Scott Aker, speaker. U. S. Arboretum.

Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. "*Growing, Harvesting, and Preparing Therapeutic Herbs for Self Care*" Donna Koczaja, speaker.

Saturdays, April 22 & May 13, 8 a.m.-noon. BGC Plant Sales.