Beltsville Garden Club Newsletter

Volume 58 Number 1 http://www.beltsvillegardenclub.org January 2010

Tour National Agricultural Library

BGC members are invited to join area garden clubs in a special tour of the National Agricultural Library on Saturday, February 6, 1-4 p.m. There will be a guided tour of the facility with time to explore the collection. Staff will also be selling products from the collection at a 10% discount. Only cash or checks will be accepted. The NAL is normally only open weekdays during normal business hours. This is a secure facility so a photo ID will be required. An RSVP is also required with names of those planning to attend. Send RSVP to Nal-events@ars.usda.gov with your full name by February 1.

January 27 Hospitality Sign Up List

Bringing sweets: Peggy Field and Nancy Perkins. Bringing non-sweets: Elaine Jones, Hank Howe, and Sue Shawhan. Beverage: Aileen Goldman. Anyone able to bring a centerpiece, call Helen Pechacek at 301-384-2415 or e-mail at Hpechacek@comcast.net.

Seed Swap at Brookside Gardens

Washington Gardener's 5th Annual Seed Swap will be on Saturday, January 30, noon to 4 p.m., at Brookside Gardens. In addition to the swap, there will be speakers on heirloom seeds and gardening. Hundreds of seeds are available for natives, edibles, annuals, perennials, herbs and woodies. The cost is $15 or $10 for Brookside members and /or *Washington Gardener* subscribers. Mail check to *Washington Gardener*, 826 Philadelphia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20920 by January 21. You are welcome to attend even if you don't have seeds to swap.

January 27 General Meeting

The **BGC will meet on Wednesday, January 27, 7:30 p.m. ,** in the cafeteria of the James E. Duckworth School. University of Maryland Professor of Urban Forestry Marla McIntosh will present an overview of the landscapes on the UMD campus. Her talk, "Nature at the University of Maryland: Telling the Secrets of an Urban Forest" will focus on the 22-acre "Wooded Hillock", a wooded forest that in the spring is awash with blooming native azaleas, rhododendrons and mountain laurel as well as the secretive lady slipper.

Professor McIntosh's latest UMD course is "Greening Cities: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Who Cares". She was the 2009 UMD director of the Campus Arboretum and Botanical Garden and helped establish the designation TreeCampusUSA at the UMD.

Please bring a plant for the door prize table.

Get Involved with BGC

The health of our club is dependent on the involvement of our members. BGC has a proud 58 year history of providing our community with knowledge and skills to improve our environment. Please consider volunteering to help keep the club strong. We will be seeking nominations for officers for the 2010-2011 starting in March 2010. To get more involved with the club, please speak with any member of the executive board or contact Sandy Lange at salange1940@yahoo.com Marcy Marinelli at Talkdoc52@msn.com.

BELTSVILLE GARDEN CLUB 2010-2011

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.

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Submit newsletter articles by the second Wednesday of the month. Mail to Editor, 12 Pinecrest Court, Greenbelt, MD 20770 or e-mail to salange1940@yahoo.com

Greenhouse Committee By Bill Koppes

Our plant inventory looks especially healthy this year. The re-introduction of plants, following their vacation in outside locations, went well. They were sprayed with an effective systemic pesticide and passed periodic inspections for bugs with our new microscope. During the greenhouse shutdown the vents were closed and for several weeks the scrubbed benches dried in a 110 degree environment. New cuttings are doing well and we have a start on some nice hanging baskets. The new manager of the High Point High School greenhouse has visited our greenhouse several times and is consulting with Kathy Fitzgerald, BGC volunteer Greenhouse plant person, on our methods for producing saleable plants.

Save the Date—June 3 Is Next BGC Spring Trip to Chanticleer. A Pleasure Garden

Reserve Thursday, June 3, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., for the club's annual spring trip. This year we will have a guided tour of a fantastic garden and historic house at Chanticleer, in Wayne, PA. Chanticleer is considered by some to be the most outstanding public garden on the east coast. More details will be in the February BGC newsletter. We will keep trip costs affordable with a guided 1 1/2 hour tour, plus leisure time in the garden, a picnic lunch and plant shopping at a nearby nursery.

High Cost of Cheap T-Shirts

According to an article in the *Mother Nature Network* website, environmental problems arise from farming practices associated with the common cotton T-shirt. Problems range from irrigation farming that strains water resources and damages ecosystems to overuse of chemical fertilizers, to water pollution from dye wastes. Problems are especially acute in China where farmers use six times more fertilizer and pesticides than growers in Africa. American farmers are somewhere in the middle. Walmart and Kmart account for one quarter of all clothing sold in the U.S. Potentially, U.S. corporations can do much more to encourage greener growing practices i.e. more rain-fed farming, reduced use of chemical pesticides and herbicides.

Gardening Tips & News

By Sandy Lange

Behnke's Nursery offers a senior citizen discount every Wednesday. Also, every week you can clip a savings coupon for Behnke's from their website.

Did you receive a potted cyclamen this holiday season? Cyclamens grow and bloom in the winter. Once the leaves turn yellow, it is a sign that the plant is going dormant. Stop watering it. When all the foliage is gone, re-pot into a larger container, resume watering, and fertilize when new growth appears. Cyclamens can also be saved by planting them in a semi shady spot in the garden in the spring.

To remove snow from shrubs, Brookside Gardens recommends sweeping upward with a broom, not downward which can break brittle twigs and branches. Also, winter is a good time to prune shrubs and trim dead branches.

Protecting plants from frost is always a challenge. Mulch is good. Also plastic can be used, but only for a single night, if it is covering leaves. Otherwise, you encourage fungus and disease. Miniature Xmas lights can be wrapped around trees. Old lights (not LEDs) are inefficient enough to provide extra warmth for your trees. Microclimates (usually on the south side) offer protection to marginally hardy plants.

Do not use salt to melt ice on walkways or driveways. Salt damages plants and grass. Instead, use products with potassium chloride or magnesium chloride. Spread sand for traction on ice to be more earth friendly.

BGC member Joe Burge recommends the product called Super Thrive to help improve indoor plant health. It is not a fertilizer, but rather a combination of vitamins and hormones that can be used with fertilizers. Add just a few drops to your container as you water your plants.

Bring in branches of Cornelian Cherry Dogwood and put them in a vase to force early blooms.

How to Care for Your Holiday Poinsettia

By Sandy Lange

- Keep plant in indirect sunlight
- Water when the soil feels dry to the touch
- Fertilize AFTER the blooming season with a balanced fertilizer
- Avoid drafty areas with temperatures below 50 degrees
- Don't overwater or allow to sit in standing water.

To Re-Bloom Your Holiday Poinsettia

- By late March or early April, cut plant back to about 8" in height. Continue to water and fertilize.
- Place plant outdoors when chance of frost is over and fertilize every 2-3 weeks.
- Prune to maintain a bushy appearance during the summer but not beyond Sept. 1.
- Keep plant in indirect sun and water regularly.
- Around June 1, transfer to a larger pot. Use a soil mix with peat moss or organic matter.
- Starting October 1, place plant in a dark room or cover with a box for 14 hours continuous.
- During October, November and December, poinsettias require 6-8 hours of bright sunlight daily, with night temperatures between 60-70 degrees.

Also, poinsettias are not poisonous. No toxicity was demonstrated based on a study by Ohio State University. Study indicated that even if a 50-pound child ingested as many as 500 poinsettia bracts, there would be no toxic results. However, eating the leaves or bracts is not recommended by either humans or animals!!

As a houseplant, poinsettias are helpful in removing pollutants from indoor air. So, keep your holiday poinsettia around as long as possible even if you don't want to try to get it to rebloom. At least it may turn into a nice bushy green plant which will keep your indoor air fresh and clean.

Beltsville Garden Club
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Gardening Events

Sat., Jan. 23, 1 p.m. African Violet Workshop & talk by Sonja Behnke Festerling**.** Receive an African violet, 3 leaf cuttings, & a $5 coupon.. Register in advance & pay $10 at the door. Call 301-937-1100. Snow date is Jan. 30.

Also at Behnke's on **Sat., Jan. 23. National Pie Day**. First 100 customers receive a token pie.

Sat., Jan. 30, 12-4 p.m. 5th Annual Seed Exchange sponsored by Washington Gardener Magazine. Brookside Gardens. Fee. See page 1 on how to register before Jan. 21.

Sat., Feb. 6, 1-3 p.m. Where in the World Did That Come From? Talk & tour the Gotelli collection of dwarf & slow-growing conifers. U.S. Arboretum. $12 fee. Call 202-245-4521 to register. Rain/snow date is Feb. 7.

BGC Calendar of Events

Wed., Jan. 27, 7:30 p.m. General Meeting. Nature at the University of Mary land: Telling the Secrets of an Ur ban Forest. Speaker is Prof. Marla McIntosh. Duckworth School.

Tues., Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m. Executive Board Meeting.

Sat., Feb. 6, 1-4 p.m. Tour National Agricultural Library, Beltsville. See details on page 1.

Wed., Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m., General Meeting. Topic TBA

Sat., April 10 & Sat. May 8, 8 a.m.-noon, BGC Plant Sales