

Beltsville Garden Club Newsletter

Volume 59 Number 3 <http://www.beltsvillegardenclub.org> March 2011

Mt. Cuba Garden Spring Garden Tour

There are still a few seats left on the bus for the BGC/Takoma Horticultural Club spring trip to the fabulous Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware, near Wilmington. The trip is scheduled for Thursday, April 28, in time to witness the emergence of both rare and common wildflowers.

Mt. Cuba is home to 55 species of rare native plants including the swamp buttercup, nodding trillium, big leaf aster and spring chickweed. Mt. Cuba researchers are among the foremost authorities on trillium and thousands of trillium are found in this woodland setting. Other wildflowers growing at Mt. Cuba include blue phlox, bellworts, wild indigo, Canada lily. There are 25 cultivars of French lilacs and many native shrubs and a wide variety of ferns.

The 2-hour guided tour takes the visitor through a wooded hillside garden and along uneven and unpaved paths. The total walking distance is about one mile. Free strolling is not permitted. There are no food or picnic facilities at Mt. Cuba.

After the tour, we will enjoy lunch at the Back Burner Restaurant, followed by plant shopping at Gateway Nursery.

The tour bus will leave Calverton at 7:30 am and will return by 6 pm. Trip cost of \$65 includes bus transportation, guided tour, lunch and snacks. **Fill out the Registration Form on page 3 and reserve your spot for this special spring tour of Mt. Cuba.**

BGC General Meeting March 23

On Wednesday, March 23, at 7:30 pm, at the James Duckworth School, Beltsville, **Susan Bell** will speak on **"Adding the "WOW!" Factor to Small Garden Spaces"**.

Susan's lifelong passion for gardening and design led her to the Master Gardener program and then to pursuing a degree in Landscape Design at George Washington University. Nine years ago, Susan started her own business as a licensed landscaping contractor in MD and DC. Susan helps homeowners increase their property values by adding the "WOW!" factor to their gardens, while also improving the homeowners' enjoyment of their property. Her company, Hilltop Gardens performs garden makeovers and seasonal maintenance that makes homes more attractive.

Please join us to hear this informative speaker. Bring a plant or plant-related material for the club's door prize table.

March Refreshments

The following members volunteered to bring refreshments for the March 23 meeting. Judy Shanefelter and Kathy Fitzgerald—sweets, and Marcy Marinelli, Maggie Schmidt and Elaine Jones—non-sweets. Mary Washington has signed up to bring ginger ale. We could use a few more volunteers for food and a centerpiece. Call Helen Pechacek 301-384-2415 if you can help.

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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The Arboretum's Azaleas By Sandy Lange

The U. S. National Arboretum is suspending actions to remove the Glenn Dale azaleas from their extensive collection of azaleas, as well as the National Boxwood Collection and Perennial Collection, subject to further discussions with stakeholders about the process and criteria for decisions about the collections, according to the Arboretum's new director Dr. Colien Hefferan. In addition, the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) received a \$1 million gift to establish an endowment fund to help preserve the collections.

The Glenn Dale azaleas were developed by the first director of the Arboretum, Benjamin Y. Morrison. They were named for the Plant Introduction Station in nearby Glenn Dale. As many as 65,000 azaleas were planted on Mt. Hamilton in the 1940s.

The hillside includes both released plants whose tags were lost and hybrids planted for evaluation. Although budget cuts led to the announcement of the elimination of the azaleas from the Arboretum, some plants people question whether all the old, overgrown and un-named azaleas are needed in order to maintain the spring show. It seems likely that the Arboretum will come up with a plan to reorganize the collections so that they continue to draw visitors and inspire us with their annual ephemeral beauty. If interested in learning more about what you can do to save the azaleas, go to www.savetheazaleas.org.

Gardening News & Tips by Sandy Lange

Start dividing your perennials now and repot or replant. Consider becoming a vendor at the April or May BGC plant sale. You not only help the club but gain more space in your garden for some new plants to purchase!

Clean up the debris from last year's annuals. Do not compost it because organisms you don't want may have developed over the winter. Hellebores will multiply if you let the flowers go to seed. Shear damaged boxwood branches to new growth. Prune butterfly bushes to 6 to 12 inches.

Preparing the Garden for Spring

It is not too late to start your vegetable seeds indoors. Or you can purchase your cool weather plants beginning in mid-March. Put your plants out during the day, but bring them in at night until they are strong enough to withstand the wind and light. When soil is sufficiently dry, add compost as you prepare to plant seeds and seedlings. Vegetable roots need permeable soil so do not plant if the soil is muddy. One source of both screened and un-screened compost is the City of College Park, Dept. of Public Works, at 240-487-3590. They will deliver compost by the cubic yard for a fee plus delivery charge.

March is also a good time to add a blooming camellia to your collection. Check out the Camellia Show at Brookside Gardens, April 2 and 3.

Membership Renewals

Some people are still unclear about when to pay their membership dues. **Dues is owed in September.** If you have not renewed your BGC membership, please send your \$10 check to the BGC, P.O. Box 1953, Beltsville, MD 20704.

Greenhouse Report by Bill Koppes

In November of 2001 BGC members planted six trees in the playground area behind the Duckworth School. The intent was to eventually provide shade for the new playground. Helmut Jaehnigen selected the trees at Behnke's Nursery: 2 Crimson King Norway maples and 4 October Glory red maples. Some of the trees required great effort to establish a sufficient size planting hole due to the compacted clay soil. One of the red maples that was in poor soil had to be removed. Later an October Glory had to be removed also. An ornamental purple-leaved plum tree and a Dawn Redwood were used as replacement trees.

The trees have been watered during dry periods in the summer and periodically top dressed with compost. We have developed a forest management plan for the nearby wooded area in order to have a more interesting nature walk for the students. More details about this in our next report.

Mt. Cuba Center Garden Tour Registration Form

**Beltsville Garden Club
And
Takoma Horticultural Club**

**Invite You to Join Us for the
Spring Trip to Mt. Cuba**

Thursday, April 28, 2011

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Cost is \$65 per person which includes coach bus transportation, guided tour of the gardens, lunch at Back Burner Restaurant and snacks on the bus.

Meet the bus at 7:15 am, in the Calverton Towers Office Building Parking Lot, 11785 Beltsville Drive, Beltsville (just past the shopping center, office building has a blue roof). We return by 6 p.m. Deadline for registration is Monday, April 18, 2011. For information, contact Sandy Lange at 301-474-1402, e-mail at salange1940@yahoo.com or Carole Galati, 301-442-2023, e-mail at cagalati@rcn.com

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

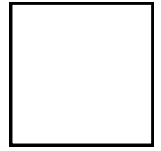
**Make your check payable to:
Beltsville Garden Club**

Mail Form & Check To:

**Sandy Lange
12 Pinecrest Court
Greenbelt, MD 20770**

____ BGC Member ____ THC Member

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



Garden Events

**Sat. & Sun., March 19 & 20, 10 am-4pm.,
Orchid Sale**, Brookside Gardens.

**Sat., March 26, 25th Lahr Symposium.
Native Plants & Landscape Solutions.** U.S.
Arboretum, event held at Beltsville Agricultural
Research Campus. Register at
www.usna.usda.gov or call 202-245-4521. \$71
for FONA members, \$89, non-members.

**Sat., March 26, Behnke's Spring Open
House.** Beltsville.

**Sat., April 17, Noon to 4 pm. Celebrate
Earth Day** at Brookside Gardens. Also spring
display at Brookside Gardens Conservatory until
April 10. Free.

**Fri. & Sat., April 29 & 30, FONA Garden
Fair & Plant Sale.** U.S. Arboretum

BGC Calendar of Events

**Wed., March 23, 7:30 pm. *Adding the
"WOW!" Factor to Small Garden Spaces,***
Susan Bell, speaker.

**Tues., April 5, 7:30 pm, *BGC Executive
Board Meeting,*** Home of Marie & Doug Bolt.

**Sat., April 9, 8 am to Noon. *BGC Plant
Sale,*** High Point High School, rain or shine.

**Wed., April 27, 7:30 p.m. *General Meet-
ing,*** Topic TBA.

**Tues., May 3, 7:30 pm, *BGC Executive
Board Meeting,*** Home of Sandy & David
Lange

**Sat., May 7, 8 am to Noon, *BGC Plant
Sale,*** High Point High School, rain or shine