



Beltsville Garden Club Newsletter

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Successful BGC Events in April and May

On April 28, 42 BGC and Takoma Horticulture Club members and friends ignored the stormy weather forecast and boarded a charter bus to Mt. Cuba Center in northern Delaware. Their optimism was rewarded with guided interpretive tours through the breathtaking areas of native plants and wildflowers.

The woodlands were enchanting, carpeted with several varieties of trillium, wood lily, shooting star, mountain phlox and many other wildflowers. The gardens, meadow, paths and ponds were bursting with vivid colors in this mild and overcast day. The rains arrived near the departure time—and lasted only through lunch. Everyone expressed their enthusiasm for the trip, congratulating each other on their good luck for touring the garden on such a wonderful day.

On April 8 and May 7, BGC held its two plant sales in the parking lot of High Point High School. While the April sale occurred on a chilly Saturday morning, and drew a handful of vendors, the May sale—traditionally held the day before Mother's Day—brought out 19 vendors and attracted a bevy of buyers.

Total income from the April and May sales was \$789.78, more than \$100 over the amount raised last year when the greenhouse had not been rebuilt. Proceeds from the plant sales go toward the BGC Scholarship Fund. BGC awards \$1,000 annually to a horticulture student at the University of Maryland's School of Agriculture. Plant sales and donations are important revenue sources for the Scholarship Fund.

Monarch Butterflies is the Topic for May

BGC members will meet on Wednesday, May 25, 7:30 pm, in the cafeteria of the James E. Duckworth School to hear William Dent speak on "Butterfly Gardens and the Monarch Sister Schools Program". Mr. Dent will discuss ways to successfully attract monarch butterflies.

Mr. Dent currently serves as the Executive Director of Natural Partners and leads the Monarch Sister Schools Program (MSSP) for schools in the United States and Mexico. The MSSP is an initiative to involve school children across North America in the protection and restoration of the habitat of the monarch butterfly, including its threatened winter forest habitat in the highlands of central Mexico and its disappearing milkweed habitat along its migratory "flyway" from Mexico to Canada.

At the meeting, BGC also will elect officers for 2011/2012. **Please bring a plant or plant related material for the door prize table.**

Saguaro Cactus Free to Good Home

Kathy O'Malley is offering her Saguaro cactus, 44 inches tall from the ground to the top (including pot), to someone who can give it a good home. Plant has had the same home for over 30 years and has doubled in size. It spends the summer outside. It has become too heavy for Kathy to handle, and her indoor conditions over the winter are not ideal. This plant is offered free to anyone who can give it a good home. It is located in Beltsville near Route 1 and Behnke's.

Contact Kathy at kathleen.omalley@verizon.net or call her at 301-937-5879.

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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Gtreenhouse News by Bill Koppes

Since the collapse of the greenhouse due to the snow in 2010, we have encountered many impediments to producing our normal inventory of plants for sale.

There was no heat from the baseboard heaters, hot water only was available from the sink but that had to be blended with stored room temperature water before it could be used on the plants, and finally no running water was available. Containers had to then be filled from a remote sink and transported to the greenhouse.

Plants that survived had to be brought into the potting room where some heat could be captured from the hallway, but they weakened from insufficient light since there was limited space under the fluorescent fixtures.

So much time was spent in just trying to save plants. Propagation finally began with installation of an electric heater and the advance of spring. The plant inventory began to grow and we had plants for the April and May sales.

Many thanks to Bernie Spaulding, Bob Pechacek, Dorothy Cichra, Aileen Goldman, and especially to Katherine Fitzgerald for the extra work required to produce plants for the spring sales under difficult conditions. Rod Hendrick generously volunteered to transport our plants to the May sale at High Point High School.

Gardening News & Tips by Sandy Lange

Planting in dry areas can be challenging. Some experts recommend plunging the entire root ball in a large bucket of water. When there are no more bubbles and the roots are well-moistened, place the plant in a hole that contains a liberal amount of compost. Keep watering and mulching until the plant is well-established.

Do not over-fertilize plants during the spring. Giving too much nitrogen promotes excessive growth which leads to heat stress during the summer. Consider planting host plants for monarch butterfly caterpillars. Good choices are Joe Pye Weed, several varieties of Aster, Goldenrods, Ironweed, and the Milkweeds. Dogwoods, Tulip trees and Paw Paws also attract native butterflies.

Water Conservation & Gardens by Sandy Lange

At the April BGC meeting, Kimberley Knox, Community Outreach Manager for WSSC, presented a number of ideas on how to conserve water. They included the following:

- ◆ Plan and design the garden to identify use areas with plants of similar moisture needs i.e. roses clustered together for efficient watering.
- ◆ Select plants that are appropriate for the site; native plants often have adapted to our hot, humid, dry summer weather.
- ◆ Improve the soil with organic matter which holds water well, provides nutrients, is aerated and allows water to be absorbed.
- ◆ Use turf efficiently and, if possible, cut back on lawn areas which require a lot of water.
- ◆ Mow high, cutting only 1/3 of the height of the grass.
- ◆ Don't water lawns in August.
- ◆ Leave grass clippings on your lawn.
- ◆ Don't fertilize if it is raining as chemicals will flow into the Chesapeake Bay.
- ◆ Mulch plants to a depth of 2-4 inches to reduce watering needs.
- ◆ Use organic fertilizers on trees and shrubs in the fall to encourage good root systems.
- ◆ Install a turn-off knob on your hose and water plants directly with a garden hose or a hand-held sprinkler.
- ◆ Using a hose without a nozzle is an inefficient way to water because it delivers water more quickly than can be absorbed.
- ◆ Place a rain gauge in your lawn. With 3/4 to 1 inch of rain during the week, you can skip your next watering.
- ◆ Install a rain barrel for use with ornamental plants.
- ◆ Weed plant areas throughout the year.
- ◆ Avoid heavy pruning which stimulates growth and requires more water.

Knox stated that the largest number of insect problems, fungi and plant diseases occur when plants are over-watered. She recommended that you water each plant once, then repeat the watering process in 15 minutes, after the water has seeped into the soil.

BGC Membership Renewal

Annual dues is \$10 per household per year. The next membership year runs from September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012. **Renew NOW for the next membership cycle. New members will be invited to 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

Check only one:

____ I want to receive the newsletter **by e-mail.**

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

BGC Scholarship Fund

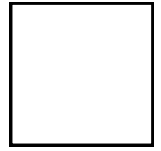
Consider donating to the BGC Scholarship Fund 2011/2012 for the benefit of a University of Maryland student enrolled in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Scholarship Donation Enclosed: _____

Dues Amount Enclosed: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

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



Garden Events

Daily thru Sept. 18, 10 am-4 pm. Wings of Fancy live butterfly exhibit. Brookside Gardens South Conservatory. Wheaton. \$6 teens & adults, \$4, ages 3-12.

Sat., May 14, 10 am-4 pm. World Bonsai Day. Curator-led tours hourly, 11 am-3 pm. Continuous demonstrations and drawings for trees. U. S. National Arboretum. Free.

Sat, May 14, 10 am-4 pm. An Herbalicious Day at Behnke's. Pick out a planter & herbs, & Behnke's will plant them for you.

Sat., June 18, 1-4 pm. National Herb Garden demonstration of the art of creating "tussie mus-sies", or nosegays. U.S. National Arboretum. Free.

Thurs., June 2, 5:30 pm and Thurs., June 30, 6:30 pm, Evening Tours of the National Garden. U.S. Botanic Garden. Free.

BGC Calendar of Events

Note: There are no General Club Meetings in June or July.

Wed., May 25, 7:30 p.m. Duckworth School, **Butterfly Gardens and the Monarch Sister Schools Program**, William Dent, speaker. Also election of officers: Bob Pechackek, President; Joan Simons & Nancy Perkins, Co-Vice Presidents & Program Chairs; Dan Marinelli, Treasurer; Judy Shanefelter, Secretary.

Sat., June 4, 10 am-4 pm. Garden Day at Behnke's Nursery. **BGC will have a table.** Bring a plant to swap for another plant. Raffle to benefit Brookside Gardens. Talk by perennial expert David Culp.

Tues., Aug. 2, 7:30 pm, BGC Executive Board Meeting, Home of Dan & Marcy Marinelli

Sat., Aug. 6, 2 pm, Annual Peach Festival, Home of Helmut & Linda Jaehnigan, Columbia.