

# From the Potting Shed

April 15, 2024

[www.mgofbc.org](http://www.mgofbc.org)



## *You have to start somewhere!*



*Photo by Suzanne Danzig*

It was a cold blustery day at Washington Spring Garden but that didn't stop us from filling up the dump truck with downed branches and twigs left behind from the winter winds. That's Janet Stofkoper, left, and Wendy Bucceri, both Class of 2023. With the weather warming up, we hope to see a few more friendly faces. We meet Thursdays from 8:30 am-12:30 pm. The garden is located within Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. Park in Lot 6. Contact site coordinators [Suzanne Danzig](#) or [Janet](#) for more information.

*- Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008*



## **Worst gardening mistake EVER ...**

Allowing Creeping Jenny to creep into the ground. Now it's run rampant in my backyard. Admit your worst garden mistake (you're among friends). Send to [Miriam Taub](#), Potting Shed editor and Class of 2011.

## What's inside

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Links are clickable and are noted in **blue**.

**Meeting news: Tuesday, April 16, 7:20 pm**

**Ruth Carll**

## **Weird and Wonderful Plants: Succulents**

Picture yourself in a desert at midday. It's not a pleasant place to live. Now imagine you're a tiny seedling. It's a wonder that plants thrive in desert habitats. Ruth Carll of Rutgers University will speak about these amazing survivors and how to care for them in our non-desert climate. She'll also suggest a few species to try, including a native cactus.



**Ruth Carll**

Our April 16 MG of BC meeting will be in the 4<sup>th</sup>-floor learning center at 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Refreshments are at 7 pm with announcements at 7:20 pm. Ruth will follow at about 7:30 pm.

Ruth is the state leader of consumer horticulture and MG programs for Rutgers. Ruth is an innovative leader in the botanical education field. After earning her master's degree in botany from Arizona State University, she led the education and volunteer program at the [Desert Botanical Garden](#) in Phoenix and later became the executive director of the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#) in Scottsdale.

She joined the Rutgers Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) in January.

## WEBINARS

*All times are Eastern.*

**April 18, 10-11 am:** North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County, sponsors ABCs of Microgreens. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 18, 2-3 pm:** The Garden Conservancy sponsors Bunny Williams: Life in the Garden. Fee: Garden Conservancy members, \$5; non-members, \$15. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 19, 1 pm:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About African Violets and Other Blooming Houseplants for Mom. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 19, 8-9 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Urban Gardens and Soil Health. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 19, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Uses and Benefits of Rain Barrels. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 24, 11 am:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Vegetable Gardening for Better Health. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 25, 1-2 pm:** NJ Agricultural Experiment Station sponsors Northern New Jersey Tree Seedling Identification. Speaker: Jean Epiphan, Morris County ag agent and tree expert. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. **Note:** Only active MGs entering hours into Better Impact will receive the 1.5 continuing education hours (aka, CEUs) for attending. Registrants will receive a link to the recording of the webinar. If you can't attend the live presentation, you can view the recording.

**April 26, noon:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Small Space Trees. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 29, 6:30 pm:** Rutgers Earth Day Every Day sponsors The Influence of Personal Experiences on Perceptions of Black Bears in New Jersey. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## *Any port (or door) in a storm*

Even a female house finch had enough of our recent storms and took refuge under an awning in Teaneck. Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015, ID'd the bird.



*Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

*Are you looking for a new place to volunteer? Two sites are having events that will give you a chance to kick the tires. Bring gloves!*

### **Volunteer open house at NJBG**

The New Jersey Botanical Garden has scheduled an "open house" for volunteers April 20 from 10 am-noon. It's also the season kickoff for current volunteers. New volunteers will get an overview of the volunteer program and then work with a garden leader in one of the NJBG's various gardens. (Click [here](#) to learn about the gardens.) Most likely, you'll be raking and weeding so bring gloves. Meet in the Carriage House. The NJBG's GPS address is Morris Road, Ringwood. For more information, contact [Dania Cheddie](#), site coordinator and Class of 2013.

### **Tour the Butterfly and Native Garden**

Bergen County Audubon will lead a bird/nature walk April 22 at 10 am at the Butterfly Garden in Leonia. Enjoy nature, peek at the early spring garden, and maybe do a little planting. The garden is located at 40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia, behind the paddocks of the Bergen Equestrian Center. First-timers should contact either [Pat Knight](#), Class of 2009, or [Tammy Laverty](#) (2015), site coordinators, before attending.

*(Volunteer site news continued on page 3)*

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### *The Teaneck Creek Conservancy ‘blast’ got results*



*Stephanie Landau, Teaneck Creek Conservancy*

The Peace Labyrinth, after all the raking, awaited installation of native plants.

Despite an initial half-hour of sprinkles, MG volunteers came out to help clean up the Teaneck Creek Conservancy’s Peace Labyrinth April 11 in preparation for the installation of native plants by other volunteer groups a few days later.

“The Peace Labyrinth was raked of the leaves and debris that had accumulated over this past winter season exposing pathways and stone pavers,” said Liz Gil, site coordinator liaison and Class of 2019, who described the work done by MG volunteers.

“Native carex that had come up through the stone walking path was transplanted around the stone circle seating area. Weeds were pulled, invasive plants eliminated, and bushes and small trees were pruned to expose the structure in what will continue to become a native plant retreat for both humans and inhabitants.”

Stephanie Landau, Teaneck Creek Conservancy associate, explained that the work done by the MGs was the prep work for the actual planting. Native plants (shown above) would be installed by prospective yoga teachers as part of their community service and, two days later, by PSE&G corporate volunteers.

Dave Chalek, owner of [Sprout Farms & Gardens](#), a landscape designer, is the lead designer and is directing the installation of the plants. He worked with George Reskakis, the lead volunteer steward, who consulted with Dave about the removal of invasives and other issues.

“We are planting a variety of cultivars to showcase different colors, heights, and uses so that people can learn and get an idea of plants that they can use in their yard if they have similar conditions,” Dave explained in an email.

Since the entire 46-acre park has about eight or nine microclimates, Dave wrote, “There is some interesting variation of what we can use and where. There are only about 35 commercially grown native plants that will work well in this small-scale site without getting too aggressive, so we have to be a bit creative with the cultivars to add more interest.”

Some of the plants he chose are cardinal flower, Virginia bluebells, bee balm, seersucker sedge, cinnamon fern, sweetspire, turtlehead, and Joe Pye weed.

In addition to Liz, other MG volunteers were Paula Leibowitz, site coordinator and Class of 2013; Terry Campbell (2018); Seana Kirk (2020); and Jin Kupperman (2024). Chondra Young from the Teaneck Garden Club also volunteered; Dave’s employees did the heavy lifting.

Liz concluded: “Our MG volunteers continue — through one-day blasts and regularly scheduled workdays — to make a difference at a site that was once considered a damaged and undesirable spot. It was a good day’s work.”

Visit the Teaneck Creek Conservancy [website](#). Click [here](#) for the history of the park that was once a dump site.

**Site coordinators:** To arrange a one-day “blast” at your site, contact [Liz Gil](#).

# HORTICULTURE

## Free trees seedlings from the DEP

Get five bare-root seedlings, for free, from the state Department of Environmental Protection's Community Tree Recovery, an Arbor Day Foundation program. This is the ninth consecutive year that the DEP has partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation to give out more than 800,000 tree seedlings in total to New Jersey residents. If you have a question about each seedling giveaway in the list at right, contact the municipality.

### How big are the trees?

Six inches to 2-foot-tall bare root seedlings in a bundle of five.

### What do I need to bring?

Show up at the listed location on the designated date and time. No registration or ID is required. However, be sure to sign up if your municipality is requesting it.

### What if my town isn't listed?

Pick up trees at any pickup location; you don't need to be a resident of that town.

### What kind of tree species will I receive?

Each location may have a variety of tree species, but there is no published list of species per location.

Municipalities in the northern part of the state may receive persimmon or red oak trees.

Here's where and when to pick up your seedlings.

Demarest	April 20, 10 am-4 pm	Festival at Demarest railroad station
Fair Lawn	April 21, 1-3 pm	Memorial Park Pavilion, First Street and Lambert Road
Glen Rock	April 20, 9:30 am-12:30 pm	Thielke Arboreum, 460 Doremus Ave., next to the shed
Mahwah	April 20, 9 am-noon	Town Hall, upper-level parking lot, 475 Corporate Drive
Maywood	April 17, 7 pm	Memorial Park Pavilion, Spring Valley Road and Coolidge Avenue
Oakland	April 22, 10 am-2 pm	Oakland Public Library, 2 Municipal Plaza
Paramus	April 19, 9 am-1 pm	Paramus Public Library
Ridgewood	April 21, 11 am-2:30 pm	Van Neste Park at the Daffodil Festival
Saddle River	April 22, 10 am-3 pm	Clerk's office window at Borough Hall
Township of Washington	April 20, 9 am-12:30 pm	DPW facility yard, 350 Hudson Ave.

## 'Invasive species of the month'



Michele Bakacs, Rutgers Environmental Stewards

[Rutgers Environmental Stewards](#) has named jetbead (*Rhodotypos scandens*, at left) as its invasive species of the month for April. Jetbead is an invasive spring-flowering deciduous shrub. It's available as an ornamental and spreads into

understory forests and roadsides. Its attractive white flower starts blooming in April making it easy to identify this time of year. Click [here](#) for more information and photos.

## We got ya' plant sales



These coleus are among the 60 varieties — that's right 60 — for sale at the Teaneck Garden Club's plant sale May 3-5 and 9-12. (See the May Potting Shed for a list of area plant sales.) Robyn Lowenthal, Class of 2011, is the leader of the garden club's Thursday Work Group composed of 11 women who've been growing the coleus plants in the club's greenhouse since last fall. Separately, as a member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau, one of Robyn's presentations is titled "All About Coleus." Go Robyn!

## EVENTS

### ***Tree dedication at Bergen New Bridge***

**April 18, 2 pm:** Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, 230 E. Ridgewood Ave., Paramus. Tree planting and dedication ceremony in honor of Earth Day. Rain date April 23. A white birch will be planted at the raised outdoor beds.

**Directions:** Turn left into the main entrance. Travel slowly up the road and make the second right. Follow the road until the end. At the stop sign, make a left. Follow the road as it curves to the left, then to the right. There will be speed bumps. Follow the road until you reach the second large parking lot. Turn left and park. The venue for the event is across the road near the blue raised beds.

- **Lynette Stewart, site coordinator, Class of 2017**

### ***Ridgewood Daffodil Festival***

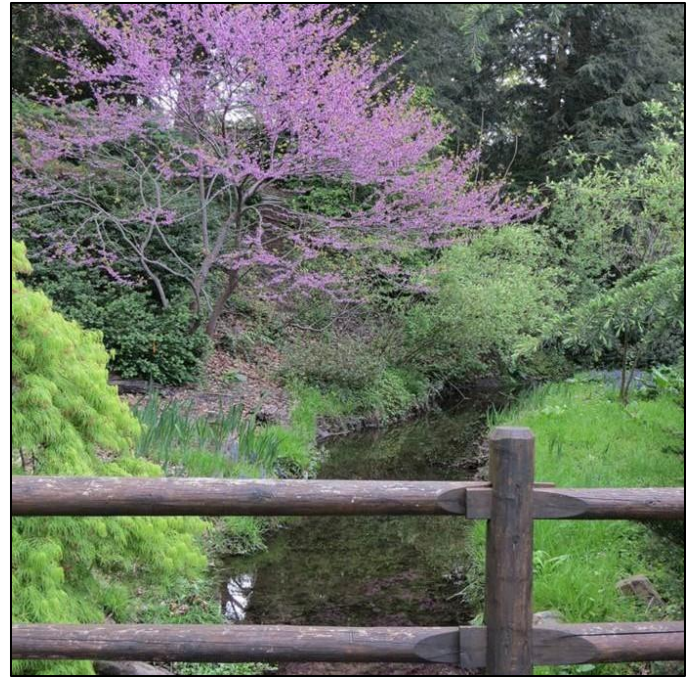
**April 21, 11 am-2:30 pm:** Memorial Park, Van Neste Square. An event for the whole family including the dog. Educational displays and programs; goat yoga; petting zoo; "recycling magician"; live music by Blue Plate Special; demonstrations and crafts. You and your leashed dog are invited to don costumes for the Daffy Dog Parade at 12:30 pm.

### ***Earth Day at Laurelwood Arboretum***

**April 27, noon-4 pm, rain or shine:** Laurelwood Arboretum, 725 Pines Lake Drive West, Wayne. Native trees for sale; seed giveaways; tours; information from environmental community groups and horticulture experts; educational displays; children's activities. Park at the Pines Lake School, 511 Pines Lake Drive, Wayne, and take the shuttle. Scroll down on the home page of the [website](#) for the flyer. See next column for more about Laurelwood.

### ***Spring ephemerals walk on the AT***

**April 28, 10 am-noon:** View spring ephemerals along the NY-NJ border of the Appalachian Trail. Sponsored by the Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. Space and parking are limited.



*Friends of the Laurelwood Arboretum*

A scene from Laurelwood's native plant demonstration garden.

### **Tour Laurelwood Arboretum on foot, in a cart, or with binoculars**

Laurelwood Arboretum is a 30-acre botanically diverse property featuring woodland trails and gardens; wildlife; two ponds; streams; and hundreds of varieties of rhododendrons, azaleas, and other unusual species of plants and trees all connected by gravel paths. Laurelwood is located at 725 Pines Lake Drive West, Wayne. Laurelwood is open from 8 am-dusk daily. Visit the [website](#).

Here are some of Laurelwood's upcoming events. All are free:

- **Guided walking and cart tours:** April 27, noon-3 pm; May 4, 10:30 am; May 18 and 19, 10 am; June 1 and 15, 10:30 am. Meet at the entrance patio of the Knippenberg Center. First come, first served.
- **Bird walks:** Beginners welcome. Listen, observe, identify. Wear appropriate attire; bring sunblock, bug spray, and binoculars. Meet at 8 am in the Sensory Garden near Vale Road on these dates: April 27 (rain date April 28); May 13 (rain date May 15); May 27; June 15 (rain date June 16). Walks will take place in light rain, but heavy rain cancels.
- **Sculpture Trail:** Take a self-guided tour with your cell phone as a guide. Brochures and maps with the QR code are on the notice board at the Pines Lake Drive West parking lot.