



From the Potting Shed February 2017

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

SAVE THE DATE

MG meeting - Tuesday, Feb. 28

1 Bergen County Plaza

1st-floor meeting room

Hackensack

Refreshments at 7 pm

Announcements at 7:20 pm

Program to follow

Bracco Farms: Graphic designer to hobby farmer to full-fledged family farm grown out of the momentum of the food movement.



Anthony Bracco is here to tell his story and to raise awareness of where our food comes from. He will share his methods of farming; talk about naturally grown and sustainable methods, tools, and implements used; and discuss safe seed sources (GMO vs non-GMO), etc. He will demonstrate how small-farm growing methods can be adapted to backyard gardens and will share his seed catalog sources, demonstrate farm implements, and provide information on fertilizers, compost, and natural pesticide control.

The farm, in Pine Island (Orange County), NY, operates a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) subscription with 140 members and sells from his own farm stand. He also supplies many farm-to-table eateries and grows a variety of herbs, micro-greens, and specialty greens requested by chefs.

Come to learn and understand how we can all improve the quality of our food and maybe give some vegetables a chance to grow in our own gardens.

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

From the President's Desk



Although there is not much to look at in the gardens, there are plenty of things we can do. 90% of deciduous pruning can be done in the winter, so consider walking around your property and inspecting trees and shrubs. Look for dead, overgrown, crossing, or rubbing branches. Cut back shrubs and vines like roses, wisteria, hydrangeas, and clematis. This is also a good time of the year to clean and sharpen tools as well as order seeds, bulbs, and plants. I like this time of year to plan garden projects and learn more about horticulture. I generally get my inspiration from the garden shows, since they offer lectures and workshops with some of the most experienced people in their profession. Here are some upcoming garden shows and their links:

- [New Jersey Flower & Garden Show](#), Feb. 23-26
- [Connecticut Garden & Flower Show](#), Feb. 23-26
- [Philadelphia Flower Show](#), March 11-19.

Reminder, the Rutgers 41st Annual Home Gardeners School is coming March 18.

Happy gardening.

- Joseph Cooper

Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office

Joel Flagler Agricultural/Resources Management Agent & County Extension Dept. Head 201-336-6780

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Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, the State University of NJ, US Department of Agriculture, and Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension educational programs are offered to all without regard to race, religion, color, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

**Volunteer hours were due in January.
Please remit now**

We use the information from the V&EAR for our Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) and Rutgers University reports as well as for the annual recertification of Master Gardeners. And, RCE receives additional funding based on total number of reported volunteer hours.

There are two ways to report your hours:

1. **Excel form:** Can be used on any PC and emailed. This is the easiest and most accurate way to track hours. Do not create your own spreadsheet, even if you are a skilled Excel user.

2. **Paper form:** Paper has to be mailed, and you need to make a copy for records.

Both forms can be found on our [website](#). If you haven't downloaded new forms (particularly paper) recently, please download updated versions found on the website. The November 2016 Excel form has the most accurate list of approved sites, which are the *only* entries that should go under the location column.

When using the Excel form, please remember to save the file with your name and year of reporting. If you need help renaming your file, please ask. Send the entire report as one spreadsheet. Do not separate your education and volunteer hours into two or more reports, and do not send two or more spreadsheets. Do not skip lines when you enter data. Enter only one date per line, especially if you are submitting a paper version. If I can't read it, I can't enter it.

Visit <http://www.mgofbc.org/> for examples of volunteer and education forms. They can be found under "Documents & Forms" and then "MG of BC Forms." They may answer your question on how to list volunteer or education activities. If you need additional help, I can email a document with more instructions.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call or email.

- **Donna Karpel**, 201-327-8835,
donna9189@gmail.com.

Garretson Farm News

Please join us Sunday, Feb. 26 from 1-4 pm as we celebrate the opening day of our third season hosting the Garretson Community Seed Bank. Our seed library offers heirloom and organic seeds from the farm

as well as donations from carefully selected heirloom and organic seed companies including High Mowing, Seed Savers Exchange, Renee's Garden, Territorial, Hudson Valley, and more.

The mission of the seed library is to educate the community on the importance of preserving heirloom seed varieties as well as to offer support for people who wish to start their gardens from seed.

This event is free and family friendly. We'll give out free seeds and free refreshments, and Master Gardeners will provide free advice. It's a great place to meet like-minded folks and dream of spring.

For more information, contact Liz Scholl at garretsonseedbank@gmail.com.

The Hermitage



At left, a marker shows the age of the sugar maple, which was standing when George Washington visited the Hermitage in 1782. At right, MG Monica Buesser gets sap from a 1771 sugar maple on the grounds of the Hermitage in 2016.

Tapping into Tradition: Maple Sugaring at the Hermitage

Kids got cabin fever? Take them outside over President's Day Weekend to start making their own maple syrup from trees.

The Hermitage Museum and the Hermitage Master Gardeners are holding a maple-tapping event Saturday, Feb. 18. About 15 trees will be tapped on the grounds of the National Historic Landmark at 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus. Kids over 12 and adults will get hands-on practice from 1-4 pm.

Rose Anne Weissel, who leads maple-sugaring classes for the Girl Scouts, will tell stories about how the Lenni-Lenape tribe and early Dutch and English settlers in North Jersey got their sweeteners from sugar maples and other sap-producing trees.

Guests will be sent home with the equipment to tap the trees in their own yards and instructions on boiling the sap into syrup.

Go to www.thehermitage.org to make reservations. The cost is \$25 per family and \$15 per individual. Admission includes a tour of the Hermitage where Aaron Burr and Theodosia Prevost were married in 1782. Proceeds from the event will support children's educational programs at the Hermitage. The rain or heavy-snow date is Sunday, Feb. 19.

For more information, contact Melody Corcoran at mmegnin@verizon.net or Monica Buesser at mkbuesser@gmail.com.



MGs planting seeds in mini greenhouses recently to get a jump on spring at the Hermitage gardens.

Photo by Kathleen Sullivan

We are making gallon jug greenhouses and sowing hardy perennial herbs and cold-weather-tolerating vegetables. We will continue with this project for the next several weeks. Outside work can be done if the weather cooperates. We work on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am (our winter hour) until at least noon.

Contact mkbuesser@gmail.com to be added to our weekly email to keep informed about our activities and weather-related cancellations. Look forward to seeing you soon.

- Monica Buesser, Hermitage Master Gardener

Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum

We have started the winter sowing project at the arboretum, and you are invited to help on Saturday mornings that are close to or above freezing, not very windy, and not raining or snowing.

If you are interested in native plants, sowing seeds, and germination, come join us. You will learn how to plant seeds for maximum yield, soil mixtures for native plants, and how easy and fun the process is to grow plants. This is also an upcycling project in which we use recyclable plastics to house the plants through winter. If you have clean, clear/translucent gallon water containers or clear two-liter bottles handy, please bring them along with a durable pair of scissors.

If you know anyone who would like to come, please spread the word. Remember, this work is done only on Saturdays from 9:30 am to noon when the weather is good, clear, and not blustery and super cold.

SHOWS, CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

The Language of Bark - a Winter Workshop

The trees in winter have their own unique language. They provide their "ID" through their bark in very specific ways. Join expert Jean Epiphan at the Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum from 12:30 to 2 pm Saturday, Feb. 18 for an interactive workshop on bark ID. Rain date is Feb. 19.

Learn to unravel the mysteries of bark patterns, texture, feel, color, and sometimes even smell to identify the trees. Jeannie has a rich and varied background in her relationship with nature. She has held positions as a perennial gardener, forest ranger, arborist, landscape designer, and field biologist. Currently, she is a Rutgers staff ecologist in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources. In addition, she is the volunteer land manager for the arboretum, where she uses her skills to carefully maintain, protect, and enhance its ecology.

This workshop is for adults and teens; children are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Register online at www.glenrockarboretum.org. Cost is \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members.

The arboretum is located at 460 Doremus Ave., Glen Rock. For more information and other activities, visit www.glenrockarboretum.org or our Facebook page. The Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum is run by the volunteer members of the Friends of the Glen Rock Arboretum and is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

- Carolyn Gretchen, publicity chair, 201-991-8140

2017 Community Garden Conference

**Saturday, March 4
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
353 E. Hanover Ave., Morris Township 07960**

Whether you're an experienced or new community gardener, a Community Garden manager or coordinator, or an activist trying to get a Community Garden started, you will want to attend this program from 9 am to 4:30 pm. A list of speakers follows:

Keynote speaker

- Peter Hatch, director emeritus of gardens and grounds, Thomas Jefferson Foundation

Irrigation Tools and Techniques

- Peter Nitzsche, agricultural and resource management agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Morris County

Composting at Community Gardens

- Rick Carr, compost production specialist, Rodale Institute

Planting for Pollinators

- Dr. Randi Eckel, owner, Toadshade Wildflower Farm

Plant Breeding

- Dr. Tom Orton, extension specialist, Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Cover Crops and Green Manures

- Dr. Kristy Borelli, sustainable ag extension educator, NE-SARE Coordinator, Penn State Extension

Perspectives: A Coordinators Roundtable

Speakers from various NJ Community Gardens offer their unique perspectives to kick off a roundtable discussion for coordinators and managers of Community Gardens.

Lunch is provided; click [here](#) for more information and to register. Snow date Sunday, March 5. You are eligible for 5.0 Rutgers Master Gardener CEUs for attending this conference.

Rutgers Home Gardeners School

Sunday, March 19

9 am-4 pm

Cook/Douglass campus, New Brunswick

Rutgers Home Gardeners School: Green Thumbs Invited to Let Knowledge Bloom



Rain barrel workshop at Rutgers Home Gardeners School.

Photo by Rebecca Sheil Rathmill

Gardening enthusiasts are invited to register for the upcoming Rutgers Home Gardeners School from 9 am-4

pm March 19 on the Cook/Douglass campus. This is the 40th year of this annual event, which many attendees come back for year after year.

Workshop topics for the 40th Annual Home Gardeners School include perennial favorites such as canning fruits and vegetables, easy drip irrigation, composting, and pruning, as well as 21 new offerings to keep the content fresh and timely for returning attendees. Subjects for the new workshops include basic soil science, great garden day trips, plant propagation, and flowering shrubs, to name a few.

For more information or to register, visit www.cpe.rutgers.edu/hgs or call the Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education at 1-848-932-9271.

MG OF BC NEWS



Meet Barbara Johansson, Class of 1993

By Miriam Taub

A visit to Barb Johansson's home in the Township of Washington is like a day away. From the windows that make up

the rear wall of Barb's home, she has a view of her deck and Schlegel Lake. Members of the private lake community can fish, canoe, use electric-powered boats, and enjoy the view but no swimming allowed. She recently gave up a trustee position in the Washington Lake Association after many years of working to stop pollution of lake water.

Barb, who is 81 going on 82, was born and grew up in the Bronx. As she tells the story, she walked the same 17 blocks to elementary school, high school, and Hunter College (now Lehman College) where she received her BS degree majoring in home economics. She worked for General Foods for a year hoping to go to its (then) newly opened labs in Tarrytown, was bored, and took a teaching job, which would become her career for 31 years.

In her personal life, she married; had a son, Robert; was divorced; and then moved close to her parents, who were then living in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, as she began the next stage of her life. She went back to Hunter College for an MS in home economics. "Yes, we

had chemistry, microbiology, biology, etc.” she said. She taught clothing construction and food to teens in the Fort Apache section of the Bronx. She was told “No tests and keep the students busy having a break from their important classes.”

As that neighborhood became more dangerous, she decided to move to Rockland County. She took a job teaching at what was then Spring Valley Junior High School where she worked for 20 years and developed classes in foreign foods and nutrition, the latter not considered important in the 1960s.

Meanwhile, after coaxing from her brother, she took up skiing as an activity she and Robert could do with her brother and his son. She joined the Ramapo Mountain Ski Club, which owns a lodge in Vermont. It was at the bar where the ski club held meetings that she met fellow club member Dick Johansson. “I was thrown into a new age of women sitting at bars,” she laughed. Her father owned a restaurant where this was not allowed in the 1950s.

However, it turned out OK. Barb and Dick were married in 1980. Once her son graduated from high school, they moved to Bergen County where she didn’t have to worry about seeing her students and their parents on the street or when shopping. “You had to make sure you had your makeup on,” she joked.

Once she retired in 1990, one of the first things she did was enroll in the Master Gardener program which she’d learned about through friends. As a child, Barb said she was interested in flowers though the only plant in her parents’ apartment was a mother-in-law’s tongue. To get her fix of flowers, she frequently walked to a nearby private street where she’d gaze longingly at the variety of flowers in the gardens. If a sprig of roses protruded through the fence, she’d take a cutting. “As a 5-year-old, I don’t recall ever being disciplined for that,” she said. She also was taken to the New York Botanical Garden, a short bus ride from where she lived as a child.

As an MG, Barb volunteered at Van Saun for 13 years and chaired many committees, such as Hospitality (“to me it’s second nature,” she said); Trips and Tours; and Skylands Holiday Open House as well as being the MG state rep and archivist, usually managing each role for three to four years. She also served as president for one year and, until recently, did interviews for *The Potting Shed*.

Barb’s other activities include counted cross-stitch, sewing (though she says most of her sewing these days consists of mending), and genealogy. She’s a member of the Genealogical Society of Bergen County, which meets at the Ridgewood Public Library. She has researched her father’s family going back to the first U.S.

census of 1790 though she knows the family came to the New Word in the 1600s.

Today, Barb says she does “as little cooking as I can get away with.” In fact, she added, Dick makes his own breakfast and lunch. “If you want to go out to eat,” she said, “we’re there.”



Sunshine New

Salvatore Lagattuta is the new chair of the Sunshine News. Send items for Sunshine News to slagattu1@verizon.net.

HORTICULTURE NEWS

From the Green Side

By Arnie Friedman

As you may see elsewhere in this newsletter, the Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum is asking for volunteers to help plant native seeds on Saturday mornings this winter and spring. These are seeds that were collected locally. The idea is to stimulate the regeneration of the local native ecology. This leads me to the definition of “native” plant.

We hear this term bandied about a lot, and many of you are strict promoters of native plantings. My issue has always been on how to define what is native. I received a note from Jean Epiphan, who is in charge of the plant life at the arboretum. Jean, by profession, is an ecologist who works for Rutgers and her focus is the collection and use of native locally sourced seed. Her note better defines the term “native” and gives me a direction when advising clients and friends on native landscape plantings. I want to pass it on to you because it hopefully will help you to have a scholarly basis for deciding on what a native plant is and how to approach plant choices when planting.

Here is part of Jean’s email:

“Clarifying the definition of native is very important. There is not a grey area with native. Some people ask, well, how native is it? Native to North America is not necessarily native to NJ, and native to NJ doesn’t mean it belongs in our local ecosystems.

“For instance, people think that something being native to NJ is good to plant anywhere in NJ . . . like some you find at any garden center . . . This is not true. It is better than planting an invasive plant, yes, but we can do much better in our native plantings to re-create what was lost

using native plants that originate from a nearby location and are for the same habitat type.

“An example may be that people in Bergen County say to plant redbuds, because they are native to NJ. However, redbuds are really not found very much in our Bergen County forests. They are understory trees of southern NJ. Central NJ is the northern-most extent of their range. Our local ecosystems do not include this species, so planting them is not providing much for our local ecosystem.

“Plus, many of the "native" plants at nurseries are usually cultivars or genetic clones of a species. It is like having a city full of thousands of people that are really only one person, just thousands of replicates . . . no genetic variety, which is a health risk for the future of a species.

“These genetic clones are what is available in our local nurseries and sold as native when they probably originate from states far away.

“At the arboretum, we are trying to go past this roadblock and collect seeds from our local environments, grow

them, use them in local restorations, and hopefully in time be able to provide low cost and local natives for the community to have in their yards to boost our local ecosystem, provide for wildlife, and preserve the local progeny of our threatened and local ecosystems before they are lost.”

- Jean Epiphan, ecologist, Center for Urban Restoration Ecology, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

FARMERS MARKETS

Ramsey Farmers Market, Eric Smith Middle School, 2 Monroe St. www.ramseyfarmersmarket.org
Through March; Sundays 10 am-2 pm

GARDEN CLUB GRAPEVINE

- Feb. 3** **2 pm, Demarest Garden Club**, United Methodist Church, 109 Hardenburgh Ave. Speaker: Dorothy Smullen. Topic: Blues in the garden — exploring color wavelengths, plant pigments, and blue flowering plants throughout the season.
- Feb. 6** **7 pm, Sun Dial Garden Club**, Meadowbrook Elementary School, 50 Piermont Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Tom Bender, Stonehouse Nursery. Topic: Techniques of shrub and tree pruning.
- Feb. 8** **7:30 pm, Garden Club of Oakland**, Oakland Senior Center, 20 Lawlor Drive. Speaker: Gigi Schmidt, club co-president. Topic: Gigi's armchair garden travelogue featuring her latest trips to private and public gardens abroad.
- Feb. 8** **9:30 am, Wyckoff Area Garden Club**, social followed by meeting at 10 am. McFaul Environmental Center, 150 Crescent Ave. Speaker: Janet Schulz. Topic: This and that in the garden.
- Feb. 9** **7 pm, Garden Club of Teaneck**, refreshments followed by meeting at 7:30 pm. Rodda Center, Room 2B, 250 Colonial Court. Speaker: Patricia O'Brien Libutti. Topic: The A to Z of culinary herbs.
- Feb. 15** **7 pm, Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, 320 Boulevard. Library meeting room, 2nd floor. Speaker: Joe Papa. Topic: All about soil in the garden.
- Feb. 21** **7:45 pm, Glen Rock Garden Club**, Glen Rock Municipal Annex, 678 Maple Ave. Speaker: Paul Kubarych, landscape architect. Topic: Landscape design in your garden.

Feb. 27 **7 pm, Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club**, Bishop House, 176 E. Saddle River Road, Saddle River. Parking in rear. Speaker: David Daehnke, local horticulturist and radio show host (WGHT 1500 AM, 12:45 pm Wednesdays) and former landscape supervisor at McFaul Environmental Center. Topic: Living *with* nature - protecting the garden from animal pests while continuing to grow what you want.

Contact Lucy Malka at lhalka@optonline.net or 201-791-3562 to supply information for the Garden Club Grapevine. *Publication deadline is no later than the 25th of the prior month.*

As a reminder, the Master Gardeners of Bergen County does not share or sell its mailing list to non-members. We keep all membership information confidential and for use by members only. If you receive email from other organizations, we did not give permission for their use of our membership list. We would appreciate it if our members would not share our list with non-members or use it for any unauthorized purposes as it is for official MG use only. When sending an email to the MG mailing list, please remember to address it using the "bcc" option instead of "to" in order to keep the list of recipients from being visible.

Please share photos of your volunteer work or of your garden. We would all like to see photos of Master Gardeners at work either at volunteer sites or in home gardens.