

From the Potting Shed April 2021

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

Virtual meeting – Tuesday, April 27

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow

Tovah Martin Houseplants by Design - Adding Plants to Your Décor

You want houseplants, you need houseplants, but do you really use houseplants to their fullest potential? Tovah Martin, an avid (verging on obsessed) indoor and outdoor gardener, is the author of many gardening books, the most recent *The Garden in Every Sense and Season*. Her presentation, filled with photos and inspiration from her massive collection of houseplants, will explore some of the easiest, most rewarding houseplants appropriate for all types of home situations and varying window exposures.



Photo by Kindra Clineff

Tovah Martin

Tovah will talk about what to grow and where and how to host houseplants. Beyond your usual practical presentation, she'll share ideas for displaying your plants beautifully and artistically. To make your houseplants much more than just a green blob in the corner, she'll discuss design principles; how they relate to houseplants; and how to pair houseplants and display them to work with your décor. She'll display containers that make houseplants shine with personality and advise how to host and care for houseplants so they work for you.

Tovah's books include *The Indestructible Houseplant*, *The Unexpected Houseplant*, *The New Terrarium*, and *Tasha Tudor's Garden*. Visit her [website](#).

To attend the meeting, click [here](#) before 7:15 pm to allow the meeting organizer enough time to let attendees into the meeting.

Contents	Page
Spotlight On . . . MG of BC Volunteer Sites	2
Horticulture	3-4
Volunteer Site News	4
MG of BC News	4
Hits and Misses	5
Things To Do	5
Webinars	5-6
Plant Sales	6
Horticulture Grapevine	6
Things We Like	7
This and That	7

Links are clickable and are noted in blue.

From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

If you read the December 2020 *Potting Shed*, you know that a committee composed of Arnie Friedman (Class of 2008), Karen Riede (Class of 2017), and Miriam Taub (Class of 2011) was formed to research finding a new, easier-to-update platform for the MG of BC website. At first, the committee investigated build-your-own websites.



However, to include the features that we wanted, none of those options fit our needs or capabilities. They then researched and interviewed several web designers who could build a website to our specifications at a reasonable cost. After Zoom meetings with the designers, examining samples of their work, and more Zoom meetings among the committee members themselves, they choose a designer and made their recommendation to the MG of BC Board. The board approved their choice.

The Master Gardeners of Bergen County now has a new, beautiful, easy-to-navigate [website](#) with both public and member sections.

Many, many thanks and a round of applause to the committee of Arnie, Karen, and Miriam for all the hours and hard work they put in to bring us our new website. Welcome spring and welcome the new mgofbc.org. See page 4 for details about the website and how to set up your username and password.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Master Gardeners of Bergen County volunteer sites – 2021 information

While Rutgers has not given the go-ahead for in-person activities yet, it's time to plan where you'll garden. You can return to your old favorites or consider trying something new. You just may discover a new favorite. Don't hesitate to contact the site coordinators with your questions. Hope we'll be gardening soon!

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

230 E. Ridgewood Ave., Paramus 07652

Various days and times

Note: Background check required.

Contact: Lynette Stewart, 201-310-2498

lynettestewart35@aol.com

Ilona Toth Robinson, 732-307-4091

irobinson@newbridgehealth.org

hedyharvests@gmail.com

Butterfly and Native Garden at Overpeck Park

40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia 07605

Tuesday 9:30 am-1:30 pm

Contact: Pat Knight, 201-848-0069

gspmk@hotmail.com

Tammy Laverty, 201-449-9092

dwd12345@gmail.com

Don Torino, president of Bergen County Audubon

greatauk4@gmail.com

Davies Arboretum & Wildlife Preserve

49 Anderson Road, Demarest 07627

Monday 9:30 am

Contact: Jessica Wang, 201-600-8495

jessica007wang@gmail.com

Joanne Holmberg

joalholmberg@hotmail.com

Garretson Forge & Farm

4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn 07410

Thursday 10 am-2 pm

Sunday 1-4 pm, second and fourth of the month

Contact: Lida Gellman, 201-461-4204

lb922@aol.com

Hackensack River Greenway

Various locations along River Road, Teaneck 07666

Various days and times

Contact: Gideon Karlick, 917-670-1078

gideonk1@aol.com

The Hermitage

335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus 07423

Tuesday and Wednesday 9:30 am-noon

Contact: Kathleen Sullivan, 201-934-7595

kmsrhc@verizon.net

Elizabeth "Liz" Gil

Liz14gil@gmail.com

Master Gardener Helpline, RCE Office

1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack 07601

Monday-Thursday (April-September) 10 am-noon

Contact: Karen A. Riede, 201-336-6788

karen.riede@rutgers.edu

McFaul Environmental Center

150 Crescent Ave., Wyckoff 07481

Wednesday 8:30 am-noon

Contact: Joseph Cooper, 201-666-5111

joseph@MGofBC.org

Email to confirm seasonal start and stop dates.

New Jersey Botanical Garden

(GPS information) 2 Morris Road, Ringwood 07456-0302

973-962-9534

Wednesday 9 am-noon

Contact: Dania Cheddie, 201-699-0803

dania.cheddie@gmail.com

NY/NJ Trail Conference headquarters

600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah 07430

Various days and times

Note: You can earn volunteer hours for work done only at the Trail Conference headquarters.

Contact: Linda Flynn, 201-665-5307

mslflynn1@gmail.com

Teaneck Creek Conservancy

20 Puffin Way, Teaneck 07666

Wednesday 9-11 am, year-round

Note: Site is closed for restoration until fall 2021.

Contact: Denise Slusarev, 917-975-1400

fionaalex@optonline.net

Thielke Arboretum

460 Doremus Ave., Glen Rock 07452

Tuesday and Saturday 9 am-noon, year-round, weather permitting

Note: To volunteer, you must register on the Thielke website by clicking [here](#).

Contact: Herb Arbeiter, 646-373-7328

arbeiter@optonline.net

Jean Epiphan, stewardship director and forest ecologist

stewardship@thielkearboretum.org

jnepiphan@thielkearboretum.org

Van Saun County Park

216 Forest Ave., Paramus 07652

Monday 9 am-noon

Contact: Jeffrey Chan, 201-723-7422

jchan11918@msn.com

Meet inside the zoo.

Washington Spring Garden in Van Saun Park

216 Forest Ave., Paramus 07652

Thursday 9 am-noon

Contact: Suzanne Danzig, 201-218-4093

suzannedanzig@gmail.com

Pat Vellas

patvellas@aol.com

HORTICULTURE

Herb and hypertufa — perfect together

By Herb Arbeiter, Class of 2019

I first attempted making a hypertufa pot 10 or 15 years ago with my daughter and her girlfriend. I can't remember where I found out about it, but I thought it would be fun to try. I used my daughter as an excuse to make a mess in the garage. The result was an utter failure. The pot crumbled to pieces. Looking back, I probably used the wrong type of cement, potting soil instead of peat moss, and probably too much water.



Photos by Herb Arbeiter

Herb and Barbara's hypertufa collaboration embedded with rocks painted by Barbara's granddaughter.

and wanted to try it. I started to research on the Internet and experiment. Barbara was a little annoyed because I made the pots without her, but we have made up and we have made numerous pots including one with imbedded painted rocks.

Not all pots were successful. I've tried substituting coir for peat moss and vermiculite for perlite. That doesn't seem to work as well. The pots take longer to cure and are often crumbly. I have sometimes been able to patch the damaged pots or repurpose them, but it's better to start over and follow the proper procedure.

I got information from [Maria's Garden](#) on YouTube. I found she gives the best instructions, and she is entertaining. The only different advice I would give is to wait longer to remove the pot from the mold. Maria lives in Florida and I believe the concrete cures faster in the warm weather there. I've broken a few pots by being

I couldn't find the time to try again, and my daughter was not interested so I forgot about it until I retired and started volunteering at Thielke Arboretum. Barbara Pisacane, [Class of 2009] fellow Thielke steward, mentioned hypertufa pots at one of our work sessions.

She had seen a demonstration at an MG meeting

impatient and removing them too early. On larger pots I wait at least a week before removing from the mold.



Herb's hypertufa pot with texture.

I like my hypertufa pots to have texture and look more like a stone. I line the mold with different sizes of bubble wrap to achieve the texture. I've also made pots in a milk crate and in wire hanging baskets.

You line the containers with newspaper to prevent the material from falling through. Then, after the hypertufa material has cured, the newspaper can be washed away. There are all types of possibilities. I love to experiment with different molds. I have used frying pans, glass bowls, roasting pans, wax milk containers, etc.

I created the how-to booklet as part of the project for the [2019] Fall Festival and to give to classmates so they

could make their own pots. I tried different recipes and formulas that I had found on the Internet and put the booklet together based on the formula and process I had the greatest success with. The booklet was my own doing, but I had a partner, Gerry Rotunda [Class of 2019], for the project.



Another example of Herb's hypertufa pots.

Editor's note: Herb's how-to booklet was attached to the email with the April *Potting Shed*.

Event suspensions and site closures

All in-person events, classes, programs, MG meetings and events, and other group activities organized by or under the auspices of Rutgers Cooperative Extension have been suspended through April 30, 2021.

A plea from the butterflies, fireflies, bees, and other beneficial insects in your garden

In the March Mid-Month Update, Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004, suggested that one of our March garden chores was to clean up yard litter. Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015, presents a different view of garden clean-up, hers from the eyes of a beneficial insect.

By Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015

Thank you for not raking all the leaves or cutting down the plant stems.

You've let the stems stand all winter creating great garden interest, and the birds loved the seeds, too.

(Thank you very much! Tweet, tweet.)



Photo by Tammy Laverty

NJ's state butterfly, the black swallowtail.

Now it's spring and we know you're itching to clean up the garden. But please wait just a little bit longer to cut the stems. We're hunkered down in the hollow plant stems and not quite ready to emerge. Please wait until the daytime temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees for at least a week.

If you really, really can't wait, perhaps you can gather the cut stems and:

- Place them upright in a tomato cage.
- Tie them into small bundles and hang them on a fence or lean on a tree.

This will give us time to emerge. Also, once we leave the hollow stems, maybe native bees will set up camp for the summer!

As a thank-you to you nice, considerate gardeners, we will please you with our beauty and pollinate all your veggie and flowers, too.

For additional information, the Xerces Society offers two blog posts about leaving the leaves. Click [here](#) and [here](#).

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

'Habitat Helpers' orientation training

The MG of BC's newest volunteer site is the NY-NJ Trail Conference headquarters building, 600 Ramapo Valley

Road, Mahwah. Here volunteers, known as "Habitat Helpers," work in the native plant gardens along with members of the Bergen-Passaic chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey.

Site volunteers plant native plants and seeds, collect seeds, prune native plants, and weed and mulch the gardens. However, before you can volunteer at this site, you must attend a Zoom orientation, which is scheduled for 7 pm April 13. Click [here](#) to register for the one-hour orientation.

Free seeds at Garretson from A (artichoke) to Z (zucchini)

By Lida Gellman, Class of 1999

Garretson Forge & Farm's community seed bank/library is again offering free seeds, both organic and open-pollinated. The seed bank will be open every Thursday through May 20 from 10 am-noon, outdoors, at the homestead, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Rain cancels. Masks are required. The Garretson seed bank/library also will be open at the homestead from 1-3 pm April 11. Rain cancels.

We have many vegetable seeds to share, from artichoke to zucchini, including plants to start indoors now, like tomatoes and peppers, and those that can be planted outdoors very soon.

Seeds are all organic from [High Mowing Seeds](#) and [Seed Savers](#). There's a limit of five varieties per person. Envelopes are provided, and no contribution or donation is required.

MG OF BC NEWS

Same web address, new website

Visit our redesigned [website](#)! It has a new look and different fonts but, like the old site, it has public and member sections.

MGs who've paid their 2021 dues can enter the member section with a username and password. For access, send an email to info@mgofbc.org and designate what you want your username and password to be. Usernames can be any length. However, passwords are limited to 10 letters and/or numbers. No characters are permitted in the password.

If you have not paid 2021 dues yet, look for the "Renew Your Membership Now" box on the bottom of the home page and download the renewal form. **Note:** Life members and members of the Classes of 2020 and 2021 don't owe dues. For Class of 2020 members who paid 2021 dues, your dues will be credited toward 2022.

HITS AND MISSES

Share a story of a recent success or failure in your garden or with your indoor plant collection. It can be a story, like the one below, or as simple as a photo and detailed caption. Contact [Miriam Taub](#) to share your experience.

A gardener's commandment: Know thy plant's name

By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

Many people make fun of me because I try not to use common plant names and here's why.

Many years ago, I bought a plant at a garden club sale called marsh marigold, or was it lesser celandine? It comes up each spring with beautiful round shiny leaves and has beautiful yellow flowers.

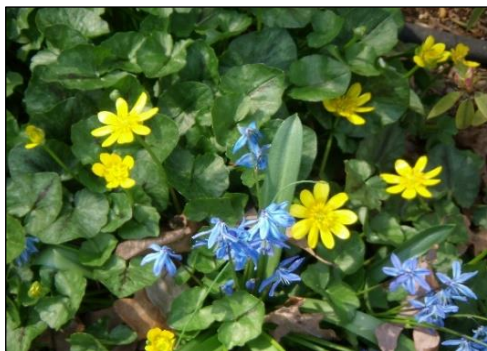


Photo by Janet Schulz

The dreaded lesser celandine is the yellow; the blue is chionodoxa.

though **marsh marigold** is a native plant, it can have exuberant growth when in the right site. **Lesser celandine**, though, is a pernicious weed that spreads by seed and by the small, peanut-sized tubers hidden in the root system and bulblets along the stems.

It is almost impossible to eradicate. I am still trying to contain this plant after 10-12 years. It is coming up in the lawn in the backyard, side yard, and front yard and most of my garden beds. It is impossible to control. Yes, it is a spring ephemeral and disappears in late spring, but it crowds out more desirable plants. So, lesson learned: Know what you are buying!

The first thing we need to do is differentiate between marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*). Even

THINGS TO DO

Native Plant Day at DeKorte Park

The Bergen County Audubon Society will host Native Plant Day from 10 am-2 pm April 24 at Richard W. DeKorte Park, 1 DeKorte Plaza, Lyndhurst. The event

will feature walks and talks to inform the public about native plants beneficial to birds, wildlife, pollinators, and habitats. There will be enough walk leaders to ensure adherence to outdoor gathering protocols. Social distancing and masks are required.

Duke Farms extends hours

The trails at Duke Farms are now open from 8:30 am-6 pm Tuesday-Saturday. The Bikeshare program and outdoor café have reopened. However, buildings are closed. Saturday visitors will need to reserve a free entry pass per car. Click [here](#) for more information and to reserve a free entry pass for Saturdays. Duke Farms is located at 1112 Dukes Parkway, West Hillsborough.

International MG Conference is virtual

Registration begins April 5 for the International MG Conference (IMGC), six days of virtual networking, workshops, and education sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program and Virginia Cooperative Extension. The event will be Sept. 12-17, and the conference registration fee is \$150.

Click [here](#) for the conference website where you'll find the schedule, registration, and how the virtual format will work. The IMGC is held every two years.

WEBINARS

April 7, 6:30-7:30 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Vegetable Gardening on a Budget. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 13, 7-8:30 pm: Duke Farms sponsors NJ Environmental "Rock Stars." Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 13, 7-8 pm: Jersey Friendly Yards sponsors What Lurks Above and Below - Spotted Lanternfly and Crazy Worms. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 13, 7-8:15 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Planning a School Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 14, noon-1 pm: Ecological Landscape Alliance sponsors Maximizing Space in the Garden - Creating More of a Good Thing. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

April 15, 7-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Warren County sponsors An Organic Gold Mine in Your Yard. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 16, noon: National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Hydrangeas. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 20, 7-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Growing Figs in the Home Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

April 21, noon-1 pm: Ecological Landscape Alliance sponsors Creating Community with Our Insect Neighbors. Free. Click [here](#) for more information, to register, and to join the ELA.

April 24, May 8, May 22, noon-1:30 pm: Pike Lane Gardens sponsors a three-part series Cultivating Organic Produce. \$55. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

See more webinars in the April Mid-Month Update.

PLANT SALES



Ramsey Area Garden Club: May 2, 9 am-2 pm at the Ramsey Farmers Market, Main Street train station. Annuals, hanging baskets, perennials, and plants from members' gardens will be sold.

Teaneck Garden Club: May 8-16, at the greenhouse, foot of Lindbergh Boulevard, Teaneck.

Allendale Garden Club: May 22, 8 am-noon, COVID permitting. Lawn of

Lee Memorial Library, 500 W. Crescent Ave., Allendale. For more information, email [Eleanor](#) or call her at 201-934-0916.

Native and exotic grasses



Photo courtesy of Bill Kolvek

Bill Kolvek, who formerly owned a nursery in Chestnut Ridge, NY, frequented by many MGs, presented photos of native and exotic grasses and their relatives at our March virtual meeting. At left, *Calamagrostis brachytricha*, a species of reed grass with large feathery seed plumes that will tolerate partial shade. For a file

with the photos from Bill's presentation send an email to [Miriam Taub](#).

HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

April 5, 7 pm, Bogota Public Library via Zoom: Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Tips for a Successful Garden. Click [here](#) to register.

April 7, 7 pm, Englewood Public Library via Zoom: Speaker: Janet Schulz. Topic: Tips for a Successful Garden. Click [here](#) to join the meeting. Meeting ID: 842 6985 2646; passcode: 559869.

April 7, 7 pm, Mahwah Public Library via Zoom: Speaker: Robyn Lowenthal, Class of 2011. Topic: Vegetable Gardening 101. Click [here](#) to register.

April 21, 7 pm, Bergenfield Public Library via Zoom: Speaker: Robyn Lowenthal. Topic: Gardening the Green Way. Click [here](#) to register.

THINGS WE LIKE

Margaret Roach on gardening

By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

My favorite garden blog is written by Margaret Roach, the former garden editor for Martha Stewart. Margaret can be very scientific at times, but she is one if not the most knowledgeable garden blogger out there. You have the option to read along with her interview or listen to her podcast. I always read along. I can skip what I am not interested in, but I almost always follow her links.

Margaret usually interviews an expert on something associated with gardening — writer, seed supplier, integrated pest management, vegetable gardening, specific kinds of plants, birds, and recipes using your home-grown vegetables. She frequently has [Ken Druse](#) as a guest, and they cover many different garden subjects. Visit her [website](#). I think you might like it.

Editor's note: Margaret Roach writes the "In the Garden" column in *The New York Times*. In a recent [column](#), she advocated for a wildlife camera in your backyard so you can discover who else lives on your property.

THIS AND THAT

Eggs-pert egg information

You have jumbo eggs in the fridge, but the recipe calls for large? Use this handy guide to egg conversions from the [Spruce Eats](#) when you need to substitute one size egg for another. The table converts sizes from small to jumbo.

Recycle those pesky pieces of leftover soap

Reduce, reuse, recycle! Here are two short YouTube videos with instructions to recycle those annoying soap slivers into something more useful.

Transform your leftover soap into a soap ball. You'll need a washcloth. Click [here](#) for instructions. Click [here](#) to make soap using a mold. You'll need a mold and a sauce pot.

When you need a laugh

Here's a [compilation](#) of squirrel antics on YouTube. Squirrels will do almost anything for a peanut or a mouthful of birdseed.

From our gardens



Photo by Karen Pennell

Karen Pennell, Class of 2009, took this photo of eranthis in the Waldwick garden of Noel Schulz, Class of 2016, during a recent visit with Janet Schulz, Class of 1988 (no relation to Noel). Janet opined about eranthis: They are the first bulbs to appear in the spring. If someone offers you eranthis, take them. But avoid buying them online because they'll arrive dry and dehydrated and should be planted immediately. Even then, maybe one in 10 will survive, she said.

Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office

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