

From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Is composting in winter possible? Yes, but it is generally not the same as composting the rest of the year. If the weather stays warm, you can compost as usual. But once the weather turns cold and things start to freeze, changes need to be made.



It's usually not possible to maintain a hot compost pile in the winter. The pile can be insulated with straw bales or bags of leaves to maintain some warmth, but that is most often not enough to keep the compost pile hot and cooking. Don't decide to throw out your valuable kitchen scraps just because it is cold outside. These scraps can still be turned into compost.

First, you need to have a container in the kitchen to collect your coffee grounds, fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, etc. Second, you need to have a container outside in a convenient location. This container can be a big bucket or garbage can with a locking lid, or the container must be placed in a location where critters can't get into it. You will also need a supply of composting "browns," such as leaves, shredded newspaper, and/or cardboard, hay, straw, etc.

When the kitchen container is full, add kitchen scraps to the outside container along with handfuls of "browns." The brown material aerates the scraps and keeps them from becoming stinky and slimy. If everything freezes, that's OK. You are still saving valuable kitchen scraps. When it warms up in the spring, you will already have a good start on a new compost pile.

Too much bother? You can also store your scraps in the freezer and save them for the spring. Or, if the ground is not frozen, dig a foot-deep hole or trench in the soil, place your scraps in there, and cover well with soil. This method works particularly well in between the rows in a vegetable garden. The scraps will decompose over time and feed the plants growing near that spot in the spring.

Happy holidays to everyone and keep on composting!

BCUA sells compost bins

Keep it local. Compost bins are available for purchase for \$60 each from the Bergen County Utilities Authority. Call the BCUA Environmental Programs hotline at 201-807-5825 to schedule an appointment to pick up a compost bin. Click [here](#) for details.

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Happy holidays and New Year!



Photo and text by Kathleen Sullivan, Class of 2010

Cynthia Drennan and Liz Gil, both Class of 2019, followed a nature theme to decorate the Hermitage for the holidays. The first- and second-floor rooms are a feast for the eyes with beautiful sunflowers and roses, butterflies in flight, velvet mushrooms, and birds, feathers, and beading in a whimsical nod to the residents of the home during the Victorian period. See additional photos on page 3. Visit the Hermitage [website](#) for information/tickets for daytime and candlelight tours. Candlelight tours are Dec. 3, 4, 5, 12, and 17. The address is 335 Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

2022 dues are due

MG of BC dues for 2022 are due. The cost is \$20. Please complete the membership renewal form sent with the *Potting Shed*, make your check payable to the MG of BC, and mail to a new address — MG of BC, PO Box 71, New Milford, NJ 07646 — which is on the form.

You can also find the form on the home page of our [website](#). As you scroll down the home page, a box will pop up with the headline “Renew your membership now.”

WEBINARS

Dec. 9, noon-1:30 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Getting Started with Maple Syrup. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Dec. 9, 5-6 pm: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society sponsors Gravel Gardening - A Sustainable Solution. \$25 members/\$30 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Dec. 9, 7 pm: Wild Ones sponsors Native Plants, Phytoremediation and Green Infrastructure - How Native Plants Can Be Used to Improve Environmental Quality. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Dec. 10, noon-1 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Garden Hotline Live! Winter Blues and Winter Greens. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Dec. 11, 1 pm: Sloat Garden Center sponsors All About Terrariums and Living Ornaments. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

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Fall's vibrant colors in Ho-Ho-Kus



Photo and text by Sue Robertson, Class of 2018

This redbud tree in our front yard — now wearing its yellow fall coat — self-sowed near the spot where we planted its parent 26 years ago. The parent tree died when its protection ended after PSE&G excessively pruned the maple that had partially shaded it. I hope this redbud will be hardier since it's been exposed to that brighter light for its entire life so far. Time will tell. Behind it is our neighbor's spectacular Kousa dogwood.

ARMCHAIR TOURS

Who needs the Yule log! View light shows at botanical gardens and a street corner

Have some spare time? Visit the following holiday light shows at botanical gardens and street corners:

- Denver Botanic Gardens: See last year's Blossoms of Light exhibit on [YouTube](#).
- Dyker Heights 2020 light show on [YouTube](#).
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden: Take the 2021 lightscape tour, its first ever holiday light tour, on [YouTube](#).

A Hermitage handmade holiday



Photos by Kathleen Sullivan

By Cynthia Drennan, Class of 2019



We started working on the decorations in July. The roses and sunflowers on the two trees (left and on page 1) are made of crepe paper. Liz Gil made the sunflowers, and I made the roses. The pumpkins and mushrooms (above) are from my private collection. I designed and handmade them using material from my stash. Some are beaded velvet and others are of cotton fabric

embellished with fabric flower leaves. The velvet beaded pumpkins have real pumpkin stems; the cotton pumpkins have stems of sticks. I hand-sewed the birds based on the patterns of [Ann Wood](#).

I designed and handmade the butterflies. The wings are made of paper-backed embroidered fabric from an upholstery sample book; the bodies are stuffed fabric. The legs are made of black jewelry wire, and the eyes are made of various beads and notions.



THINGS TO DO

Tour the Skylands Holiday Open House

Tickets are available for the self-guided tour of the Holiday Open House at New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands. The tours are 10 am-4 pm, Dec. 2-5. This is the Skylands Association's annual fund-raiser. The Manor House will be decorated floor-to-ceiling based on the theme "An Artists' Holiday!" The MG of BC will decorate the Main Hall. You can buy tickets at the Carriage House near the entrance to Skylands or online. There's also an evening reception from 6-8 pm, Dec. 4. Click [here](#) for ticket information. The address is 2 Morris Road, Ringwood.

Cleanup at the Greenway

Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck's next cleanup will be 11 am-1 pm, Dec. 5 at the Mary S. Topolsky Garden and Trail, Teaneck. Park on Cadmus Court or across River Road on Kipp Street. Masks are required. Visit the [website](#).

Thanksgiving cactus - a vision in yellow

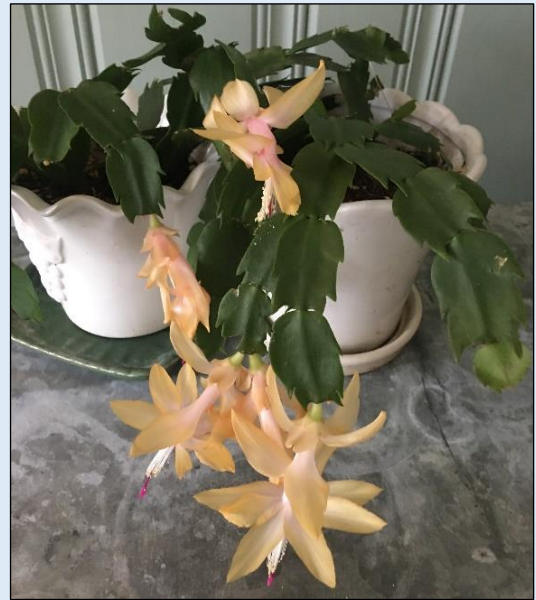


Photo by Janet Schulz

When Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, received this Thanksgiving cactus from a friend three years ago, she tied a string around the yellow-blooming section, then divided the plant into two (above). Both plants produce yellow blooms but at different times.