

Virtual meeting – Tuesday, Feb. 22

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow.

Click [here](#) to join the meeting at 7:15 pm.

Meeting ID: 926 9258 8641; password: 692429

Gardening for Butterflies

Big, beautiful blossoms? Flowering shrubs? Natives? Tropicals? Don Torino of the Bergen County Audubon Society (BCAS) will share information on how we can turn our yards into magical places for butterflies and at the same time restore the much-needed biodiversity to our area in his talk Gardening for Butterflies.

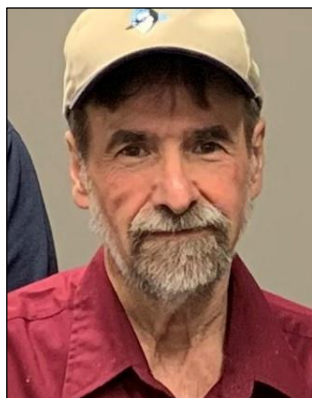
Don will discuss specific native plants that are both host plants and nectar sources for our butterflies.

Don grew up and still lives in the Meadowlands area where “I grew up learning to love the natural world,” he said.

Don leads weekly nature walks for BCAS and does educational seminars on many issues affecting our local environment.

Don has been president of BCAS for about 10 years. He writes a blog called Life in the Meadowlands. Click [here](#) for the latest post about BCAS’s Ground Hog Day walk from 10 am-noon, Feb. 2 in Secaucus. He recently published a book titled “Life in the Meadowlands” available for purchase via the blog.

[Editor’s note: Visit the BCAS [website](#) for instructions to turn your garden into a Certified Wildlife Garden. Visit [YouTube](#) to hear Don’s talk about butterflies during the 9th annual Butterfly Day event held at DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst in 2018.]



Don Torino

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Links are clickable and are noted in [blue](#).

From the President’s Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Homegrown National Park.

If you have read *Nature’s Best Hope* by Doug Tallamy or have already explored Mr. Tallamy’s website [Homegrown National Park](#), you know what I’m talking about.



Doug Tallamy maintains that our National Park System is not sufficient to support our country’s ecosystem and the ecosystem’s ability to perform all its vital functions. Homegrown National Park is a “national park” consisting of individual plantings of native plants together with the removal of invasives. Anyone, including schools, businesses, homeowners, etc., with both the ability and the space to garden is urged to join Homegrown National Park and help achieve its goal of 20 million acres of native plantings.

A map of these individual native plantings is posted on his [website](#). The map shows the number of recorded plantings by state and county and by zip code in each county. On the map, Bergen County has a recorded total of 3.805 acres of natives, less than 0.01% of the total area of the county.

Only seven zip codes in the county are represented and only 11 users have recorded plantings. Anyone can enter their native plantings on the map. Any size planting can be recorded from a few square feet to acres. It’s easy to do and the planted area can be estimated; exact measurements are not necessary. Every little bit will help to reach Homegrown National Park’s goal of 20 million acres of native plantings.

Explore the map. See how other states and other counties in New Jersey are doing. And while you are at it, add your native plantings to the map.

**Rutgers lifts restrictions on indoor activities!
See ‘Membership News’ on page 3.**

SPOTLIGHT ON . . . WINTER INTEREST IN THE GARDEN



Photos by Maggie Raywood

Winter offers form, color, texture: A Japanese maple (left) and witch hazel “Arnold Promise.”

*“In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone...”*

- Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

By Maggie Raywood, Class of 2021

In the firm grip of winter, this poem by Christina Rossetti resonates. But the quiet, chilly days can also be a source of discovery. We all know the term “winter interest,” but what does that mean for each of us? Although we often think of winter as a time of absence, for me, as I walk in gardens or forests, I am dazzled by the subtle beauty of form, color, and texture that the winter landscape offers.

When you look out the window, what do you observe? In this topsy-turvy time, are you seeing your garden in a different light? Zero in on the details, bringing in groceries, walking to the mailbox, filling bird feeders, what do you notice?

The impact of form

Form creates perhaps the largest impact in your garden. Are you missing the soft texture of a Himalayan pine? Perhaps the crisp outlines of a juniper or spruce would give a much-needed focal point? Or do you have plenty

of conifers and could use a strong architectural element, such as a pendulous Japanese maple?

The color chameleons

There is more to winter color than red twig dogwoods or arborvitae. The bark of a crepe myrtle becomes a dramatic splash, while paperbark maple displays wonderful texture. A climbing hydrangea vine turns to warm cinnamon, and blueberry stems glow with color.

The early blooms of witch hazel give your garden a jolt of color when little else is in flower. Many conifers reveal surprises as chlorophyll subsides. Lacebark pine shows vivid bark, while others such as junipers, boxwood, and cryptomeria take on bronze or purplish hues as temperatures plunge.

The little details

I, for one, can't sing the praises of hellebores highly enough. Tucked into corners where they can be seen from inside or along your daily path, they are a cheering sight. Snowdrops, the more the merrier, are another must-have in the winter landscape.

And finally, if all else fails to cheer us, the seed and plant catalogs are arriving!

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Let's get back to indoor events!

Rutgers University has authorized the return to in-person, indoor events. However, mask-wearing, social distancing, and following all county or location policies remains in place.

Reporting of volunteer and education hours resumes

Volunteer and continuing education hours will be required for 2022 after a two-year suspension during which you weren't required to meet the annual requirements to maintain your MG status.

For 2022, MGs must perform 25 hours of volunteering (more hours are OK, too) and complete 10 hours of continuing education. **New for 2022:** All 10 of your education hours can come from attending webinars. Attending in-person programs will also be accepted.

Keep in mind that you always retain the right to make decisions to protect your health.

Other ways to accumulate continuing education hours are by attending MG Association and local garden club meetings with speakers or education presenters; participating in garden programs that offer tours and classes; and participating in Rutgers tours and seminars and other university and/or Cooperative Extension programs.

Using Better Impact

You'll be entering your volunteer and continuing education hours in the [Better Impact](#) system. No more forms! The following information about your continuing education hours must be entered into Better Impact for your continuing education hours to be approved:

- Name of the speaker;
- Title of the program;
- Sponsoring organization (university, garden club, etc.);
- Address and town where the program was held (if in-person);
- Format (online or in-person); and
- Length of time of the program.

For help with Better Impact or for answers to any of your questions about Better Impact, contact:

- Karen Riede, horticultural assistant, at karen.riede@rutgers.edu or
- Suzanne Danzig, Volunteer Records chair, at suzannedanzig@gmail.com.

Thanks to all the MGs who volunteered during 2020 and 2021!

- Information from Karen Riede, horticultural assistant, and Joel Flagler

A new board chair and a site coordinator

Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008, is the new Volunteer Records chair replacing Autumn O'Shea, Class of 2000. Autumn has relocated to Florida.

Paula Leibowitz, Class of 2013, replaces Denise Slusarev, Class of 2011, as the site coordinator for Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Most of Teaneck Creek has been closed for rehabilitation and renovation since the fall of 2020. The outdoor classroom area and trail off Fycke Lane remain open to volunteers and visitors.

MGs will return to volunteering at Teaneck Creek in March from 9-11 am on Wednesdays. Send an email to [Paula](#) if you'd like to volunteer.

2022 dues are due

We hope you'll renew your 2022 MG of BC dues of \$20 for the year. Dues are to be paid by current MGs and those who have recently been certified from the Classes of 2020 and 2021. Thanks to those who've already paid!

Please complete the membership renewal form available 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." Print and mail the form with your check, payable to the MG of BC, to the address on the form: MG of BC, PO Box 71, New Milford, NJ 07646.

THINGS TO DO

Chocolate lovers: This one's for you

Taste more than 12 chocolates during a "For the Love of Chocolate" presentation at 7 pm, Feb. 10 at the Hermitage, 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus. Kim Hendrickson, a graduate of the French Culinary Institute, will discuss how chocolate is grown and made, the history of chocolate, and the health benefits of eating chocolate in between the taste-testing.

Fee: \$15 Hermitage members/\$25 general admission. Click [here](#) for the Hermitage "events" page for more information and a link to register.

(Continued on page 4)

(‘Things to do,’ continued from page 3)



Photo by Kathleen Sullivan, Class of 2010

Maple syrup prepared at the Hermitage from a previous year.

Volunteers needed for the Hermitage’s Maple Sugaring event

In preparation for the Hermitage’s annual Maple Sugaring event Feb. 19, the Hermitage has scheduled an instructional meeting for volunteer MGs the day before. The Hermitage is located at 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus.

Come to the Hermitage from 2-3 pm, Feb. 18 where you’ll learn maple sugaring’s history and process, from tapping to boil-down, so that you can answer questions from the people who’ll attend the event the following day. Dress appropriately for the weather. You’ll be shown the 15 maple trees to be tapped.

Training will take place indoors and outdoors. Masks and social distancing are required.

The Maple Sugaring event will be 1-4 pm, Saturday, Feb. 19. Volunteers are needed at 11 am to set up; during the three-hour event (1-4 pm); and at 4 pm to clean up. Rain date is Sunday, Feb. 20.

From Feb. 20 until early March individual volunteers will be needed to collect sap, take it home, and boil it down. You can collect your sap at any time from 9 am-5 pm. If you plan to collect the sap, start saving gallon-size water jugs (not milk jugs). In mid-March, volunteers will have a boil-down in the Hermitage kitchen and will bottle the syrup.

Information for visitors

Visitors who want to attend the maple sugaring event can register on the Hermitage website. Click [here](#) for the “events” page for more information and a link to register. Fee is \$25 families/\$15 individuals. The ticket price includes a peek inside the historic Hermitage home, a National Historic Landmark, and the tap.

WEBINARS

All times are Eastern.

Feb. 1, 8-9 pm: Iowa State University Master Gardener Program sponsors Houseplant Propagation. Free. Click [here](#) for the winter webinar series list and to register.

Feb. 3, noon-1 pm: Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Let’s Talk Spiders - From Fear to Fascination. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 5, 9:30-11:30 am: Master Gardeners of Monmouth County sponsors Create Your Own Germination Station - How to Start Seeds Indoors. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. Download the handout found below the “event description” on the registration page.

Feb. 9, 7:30 pm: Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors Partners for Life - Fungi and Plants. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 10, noon-1 pm: Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Growing Native Edibles. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 11, 1-2 pm: Holy Name Medical Center sponsors Understanding Nutrition Labels. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 12, 9:30-11:30 am: Master Gardeners of Monmouth County sponsors Elevate Your Gardening - Raise Your Beds! Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. Download the handout found below the “event description” on the registration page.

Feb. 15, 2:30 pm: University of Illinois Extension sponsors Organic Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 16, 7 pm: Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors An Introduction to Xeriscape Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 16, 7 pm: Wild Ones sponsors Genetic Diversity and Plant Preservation. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Feb. 17, noon-1 pm: Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Seed Starting at Home. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

See additional webinars in the February Mid-Month Potting Shed.

HORTICULTURE

My experience 'growing' plants from seed

By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

You all know what happens this time of year. We are all suffering from lack-of-garden-dicitis.

One of the symptoms is poring over seed catalogs that have been arriving for months. I know they were put aside due to the demand of the holidays, but now that the holidays are over, the catalogs call. Do you know how many types and varieties of tomatoes, beans, and squash are in those catalogs? How about the 39 varieties of zinnia?



Photo by Noel Schulz, Class of 2016

I usually buy my plants from a local garden center, but I was thinking that for the price of a packet of seeds — around \$3 or \$4 — I might be able to grow at least 20 or 30 plants.

I perused the catalogs and knew I could not grow vegetables because I do not have enough sun. But I ordered two packets of flower seeds that I thought I might have success with. In addition, I ordered one packet of *Vigna caracalla* or corkscrew vine. I saw the corkscrew vine during a Garden Conservancy tour in Connecticut a few years ago. I found five seeds for \$6. They are rare and hard to find.

The seeds arrived, and I was hyped. I went to my local garden center (support your local business!) intending to purchase seed-starting trays and a bag of seed-starting soil and then I'd be ready. Then I recalled reading that you could not really start seeds and grow them successfully on a windowsill, so I figured I had better buy a light set-up that I could install in the basement. I left the store with the seed-starting soil, seed trays, and light set that included "grow" bulbs.

I hung the light fixture; filled and watered the seed trays so they were ready to receive seeds; opened the packets and — OMG — it looked like dust in the packets. I never knew begonia and coleus seeds (they both grow in the shade) were so tiny. I thought if I can grow just eight to 10 pots of each I would be ahead of

the game. I sprinkled the "dust" on the seed trays, covered the seeds, and waited. I waited and waited and waited. No germination. I finally asked a friend who had been growing seeds how long would it take for my seeds to germinate. I found out two things: 1. I was already a few weeks too late starting the seeds for them to be of good size when the time was right to plant outdoors. 2. You do *not* cover the seeds of coleus and begonias because they need light to germinate. Lessons learned.

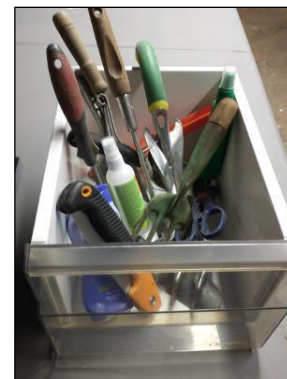
I'm having a garage sale this spring. Anyone need a half-bag of seed-starter soil; clean, used seed trays; and a light fixture?

Better late than never: Garden Conservancy recorded webinar series

Tune into the Garden Conservancy's webinar series Gardens for a Changing World from 2020. The topics are Gardens as Refuge; Inclusive Gardens in Unconventional Spaces; Gardens for Wellness of People and the Planet; and New Approaches to Revenue at Public Gardens. Click [here](#) to view any or all of these hour-long recorded webinars. They're free.

Tell us about your garden tool organization

Share your favorite way to organize or store your garden tools no matter the size. Send your photos in .jpg format to [Miriam Taub](#), Class of 2011, with a brief description of what works for you. (Your tool caddy has to be better than using an old vegetable crisper.) Photos will run in future issues of the *Potting Shed*.



Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office

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

Karen Riede Horticultural Assistant 201-336-6788

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