

Meeting news

Michael Hagen

Native Plants for Small Spaces: Rock Gardens, Containers, Crevices, and Troughs

Tuesday, May 16

Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements at 7:20; meeting to follow

**1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack
1st-floor meeting room**

How do we address ever-growing interest in creating pollinator gardens and providing ecological services in urban and suburban gardens with limited space for an expansive meadow or woodland or when steep and rocky terrain precludes conventional landscaping?



Michael Hagen

Michael Hagen, curator of the Native Plant Garden and the Rock Garden at New York Botanical Garden, said we can easily create aesthetically pleasing combinations for the porch, patio, and small yard by drawing on native plant communities with rich selections of easily grown species and their select cultivars.

Michael's background is Medieval and Renaissance history. He has a bachelor's degree from Balliol College, Oxford University. But he didn't want to pursue a graduate degree. Instead, he started working in publishing, which brought him to the United States in 1994. That lasted about 18 months. Admittedly, he said, he wasn't doing the best job, so he decided to change careers.

"At the time I was also essentially gardening in exchange for food and sanity and was considering it as a full-time job until told that in Connecticut it's a seasonal

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From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Mosquito spraying services are busy at work in my neighborhood again. Every few weeks they come by and spray mosquito-barrier products on their customers' yards.



The most common sprays in use are synthetic pyrethrins called pyrethroids. These pesticides are touted as natural because they are chemically similar to the pyrethrins produced by chrysanthemums. But "natural" or not, they are still pesticides and harmful to other insects and critters, especially to bees and fish. And how natural can pyrethroids be when the people spraying the products are wearing respirators? My pollinator garden and I view each visit with trepidation.

According to Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware professor, author, and one of the two founders of [Homegrown National Park](#), only about 10% of adult mosquitos are killed by these sprays. And, these sprays are killing many beneficial insects. Barrier sprays would need to kill about 90% of adult mosquitos to be effective at controlling them. A better way to control mosquitos is to target the larva rather than the adults.

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SPOTLIGHT ON MATT BICKERTON

Matt Bickerton, Bergen County entomologist, works in the Office of Environmental Protection within the Bergen County Department of Health Services. He was interviewed by Karen Riede, horticultural assistant and Class of 2017.

What do you do as the county's entomologist?

As the Bergen County entomologist, I work under the Bergen County Health Department and Mosquito Control, primarily on mosquito and ticks, and I manage mosquito and tick surveillance. For three years, ticks have been collected in all different habitats and are tested for diseases so we get an idea what is out there.

What have you found?

There are several newer invading species of ticks that have shown up recently, which is concerning. Mosquito control has been going on for more than a hundred years in Bergen County. There are several mosquito-borne viruses that we pick up. West Nile is extremely common in Bergen County. It is more common in northeast New Jersey than anywhere else in the state. Typically, we have human cases and sometimes fatalities from West Nile every year. That is a big part of what I do.

Summarize the spotted lanternfly situation.

The spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*, SLF) is an invasive plant-hopper native to China, India, and Vietnam. It's also established in South Korea, Japan, and the United States. It was first discovered in the United States in Berks County, PA, in 2014 and has spread to other counties in PA, as well as New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Ohio.

SLF feeds on the plant sap of many different plants including tree of heaven, grapevines, maples, black walnut, and other important plants in New Jersey. While it does not harm humans or animals, it can reduce the quality of life for people living in heavily infested areas.

What's the SLF story in Bergen County?

We first started seeing SLF in 2020. In 2021, we started receiving complaints from homeowners. By 2022, the complaints really picked up and were received by many different Bergen County departments, including the Parks Department, Mosquito Control, the [Bergen County] commissioners, and even at the RCE office.

No further reporting of SLF sightings to the state is necessary in New Jersey since they are present in every county. The objective now is to tone down the messaging. The state of New Jersey's initial message was to get people to pay attention and be fearful of these bugs, but it is not really necessary or helpful to have

people panicking. I can't tell you how many times I heard "I can't go into my backyard because of these bugs." They don't bite and are not harmful to humans. But people are fearful of them.



Matt Bickerton

While their feeding may damage and weaken host plants, SLF does not usually kill trees directly. However, excessive feeding leads to the buildup of excrement called "honeydew" around the base of tree of heaven. The honeydew becomes moldy and pungent and may discolor fences or decks that are beneath these trees.

SLF has four nymphal instars that are commonly seen in April-July. Toward the end of July, the winged adults appear. The adults are poor flyers and people often complain about bugs landing on them. Because they are poor flyers, they have a habit of climbing up vertical structures, like buildings, in order to jump off and achieve better dispersal.

What can homeowners do to control the SLF?

If you see egg masses, scrape them off, double bag, and throw away. You can also place the eggs into alcohol, bleach, or hand sanitizer to kill them. However, eggs are often well out of reach and SLF distributes the eggs throughout the tree canopy. It is not recommended for homeowners to climb a ladder to scrape egg masses 30 feet high. People can get hurt. Contact a professional pest control service for controlling them on your property or visit the state website [see below] for management recommendations.

We see high numbers of SLF around big stands of the tree of heaven. SLF is often present on maple and walnut trees, but the tree of heaven drives the high populations. If you remove tree of heaven, you'll see fewer of them on your property. If tree of heaven is not on your property but close by, you'll probably still see them. There's not a whole lot you can do about it except try to convince the neighboring property owner to treat them or remove the tree of heaven. Don't rely on DIY remedies like vinegar or dish soap because these won't control the bugs and may adversely impact your plants.

For more information

- Click [here](#) for the Homeowner Resources section of the NJ Department of Agriculture website.
- Call the Bergen County Mosquito Control Division at 201-634-2880.

GOING BACK IN TIME — MG VOLUNTEER SITE HISTORY

Have you ever wondered how our MG of BC volunteer sites became volunteer sites? Here we recall the history of Garretson Forge & Farm in Fair Lawn and the horticultural therapy program at Bergen Pines, now New Bridge Medical Center. If you'd like your volunteer site to be featured, contact [Miriam Taub](#), Class of 2011, who can help you tell the story of how your site became an MG of BC volunteer site.

Garretson Forge & Farm: A living Dutch farm museum

Garretson Forge & Farm, a living Dutch farm museum that's listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places (as the Peter Garretson House), has been an MG volunteer site since 1999.

Lida Gellman, Class of 1999, who's been site coordinator since 2005, recalled that when she was an MG intern, Joel Flagler, county ag agent, mentioned that Garretson personnel requested help on the farm. One class member agreed to be the contact person and a group met with Garretson trustees April Barth, who later enrolled in the Class of 2017, and Pat Idone. "And, we've been there ever since," Lida said.

Both Lida and April emphasized Garretson's status as an organic farm as a big draw for MGs. Back in the early 2000s, organic farming was considered more on the "fringe" whereas today organic farming is considered mainstream, Lida said. However, a 300-year-old farm has had to adapt as wildlife problems have increased. The farm always had its share of rabbits and groundhogs, but the presence of deer has resulted in major changes.

For one thing, a large, fenced-in area was created to keep out the deer. But



Garretson's organic vegetables

it has a downside: The fence limits extensive crop rotation. Outside the fence, the volunteers had been planting alliums, onions, and herbs, which were considered deer safe. More recently deer have started to eat comfrey and lovage, so they've been transplanted behind the fence. "We're learning so we adapt," Lida explained.

What makes Garretson so attractive that volunteers record more hours in Better Impact at Garretson than at any other volunteer site?

In addition to the farm's organic status, Lida said another reason volunteers keep returning is that they enjoy experimenting with different vegetables. Some crops are successful, for example, horseradish and shallots; others not so much. The ornamental corn they planted last year turned out to be a "deer bonanza," so

they had to give it up, Lida said. Last year, they tried planting mushrooms and discovered they take a lot of work since the ground has to be wet at all times. This year they may try broom corn.

A third attraction of Garretson is seed starting. "We encourage native plants, heirlooms, and open-pollinated herbs and vegetables," Lida and April said. "MGs can be involved in a variety of activities; it's never a chain-gang approach."

Join the Garretson volunteers Thursday from 10 am-2 pm and the second and fourth Sunday from 1-4 pm to be surrounded by history. Bring gloves and small hand tools.

Garretson Forge & Farm is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Contact [Lida Gellman](#) for more information.

(See the Bergen New Bridge story on page 4)

Horticultural therapy at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center has had several name changes over the past three decades, but the horticultural therapy (HT) program remains the HT program.

Ilona Robinson, the center's horticultural therapist, and Lynette Stewart, site coordinator and Class of 2017, recalled that Joel Flagler, county ag agent, along with Lois Horowitz, the director of volunteers at what was then called Bergen Pines, were the forces that started the hort therapy program nearly 35 years ago. Their audience was 12 long-term-care residents.



An array of plants in the Bergen New Bridge greenhouse.

Master Gardeners volunteered one day a week in a relatively empty Building 5. Hollyce Kirkland, an MG from the 1990s, ran the program for decades, Joel said.

Ilona termed these HT sessions a “resounding success” and said that within two years plans for a greenhouse were discussed. Joel credited Lois Horowitz with building awareness of HT and for initiating fund-raising for a greenhouse in 1989. Bergen Pines raised more than \$150,000 to build that greenhouse, much of it the result of Joel’s “countless lectures to countless groups who then donated to the effort,” he said. A Bergen Pines team visited other hort therapy greenhouses to get ideas, specifically one at NYU Medical Center, now NYU Langone.

Once the greenhouse was built, there were two HT programs simultaneously, Joel recalled: In Building 5 and in the greenhouse. (Building 5 is now a Korean-language unit.) Then, in the early 2000s, Joel arranged an

independent program for developmentally disabled youths from area schools who participated in outdoor beautification, mostly around the gazebo area. Joel said he was assisted by MG volunteers in this very popular activity.

“Many kids expressed great pride in their beautification efforts, and the Pines liked the community spirit,” Joel said. Most recently, MGs are volunteering in the outdoor areas, which hadn’t seen much activity in three years.

Meanwhile, the greenhouse, which had suffered wear and tear, recently underwent some significant repairs, Ilona said. New flooring was installed, and the therapy room was painted. The shades and the air-conditioner were repaired in the greenhouse itself.

Currently there are nearly 30 HT sessions every month. “Over the years management, personnel, theories on how LTC resident needs are best served, social attitudes, and mores have changed,” Ilona said. “However, the HT program has been ticking along quietly and growing steadily. This is thanks to the unfailing and tireless support of the Bergen County Master Gardener program, its volunteers, and Joel’s energetic inspiration over the years. The people/plant connection at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center is alive and thriving.”

Volunteers in the greenhouse seed, propagate, water, prune, repot, clean up, and conduct pest patrol/control on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in two shifts: 10:30 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-3:30 pm. More experienced volunteers also work with Ilona while she assists residents with planting activities.

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center is located at 230 E. Ridgewood Ave, Paramus. To volunteer, you’ll need to complete several forms and undergo two medical tests at Bergen New Bridge’s expense. Visit the [Volunteer Sites](#) section of the MG of BC website for instructions.

If you’d like to volunteer but can’t commit to a regular schedule, you can become a “research volunteer” and volunteer remotely. According to Ilona, you would still have to complete the paperwork and administrative clearance, but you won’t be required to undergo the medical tests or to be vaccinated.

“We can always use your help in aiding us [do] research on plants and their origins; toxicity to people and animals; creating seed-planting kits; cutting labels from plastic window blinds; etc. If you can’t come to us, we can ‘come’ to you and you can earn volunteer hours,” Ilona said.

Note: Lapsed as well as new volunteers must complete the entire application process plus undergo the medical diagnostic tests and be vaccinated.

MG OF BC NEWS

Save the date for the MG of BC picnic June 13

The MG of BC will hold a picnic for members and interns at Van Saun Park June 13 from noon to 2 pm. The address is 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. We'll meet at Pavilion I (eye) next to Walden Pond. The pavilion is located before the Howland Avenue exit. Class of 2023 interns are welcome as are interns from prior classes who are still working on their certification.

The MG of BC will provide sandwiches and beverages. Attendees are asked to bring appetizers/salads or desserts based on the first letter of your last name.

- A to K: Bring appetizers or salads
- L to Z: Bring desserts.

We need to know how many of you plan to attend. Click [here](#) to reply "yes" if you plan to attend, and please confirm whether you'll bring an appetizer/salad or a dessert. Your deadline to reply is June 1.

Looking forward to seeing new and current members at the picnic!

Make a monthly date with Better Impact

Once you complete your volunteer hours for the day, week, or month, be sure to record them in Better Impact. In 2022, MG of BC volunteers shorted our recorded hours for Rutgers Cooperative Extension purposes by 1,130 hours by entering them after the deadline! Volunteers got personal credit for those hours toward their 2022 MG certification. But, as an organization, the MG of BC did not get credit for those hours.

If you need instructions to use Better Impact, contact [Karen Riede](#), horticultural assistant and Class of 2017, who is available to give one-on-one instruction. [Suzanne Danzig](#), Volunteer Records chair, is available to answer questions. Contact either Karen or Suzanne if you don't yet have a username and password for Better Impact.

Let's do our best to be sure our hard work is recognized by RCE and Bergen County for 2023.

Fall meeting dates

May 16 will be our last meeting until September. Our fall 2023 meeting dates are Sept. 19, Oct. 17, and Nov. 14. Mark your calendars.



Photo by Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008

A 2021 photo of Janet Schulz's part-shade garden.

Tour the gardens of 2 MGs May 20

You are cordially invited to tour the gardens of two Master Gardeners May 20. Both gardens are within a few miles of each other and have a lot to offer. Ask questions, get ideas, and enjoy the day.

Noel Schulz, Class of 2016
108 Lincoln Place, Waldwick, 10 am-2 pm

Noel has everything a gardener would want. A lovely, wooded area, a beautiful patio with hypertufa troughs, a crevice garden, and a vegetable garden. If you've never seen a crevice garden, this is your opportunity. You won't be disappointed.

Janet Schulz, Class of 1988
16 Colonial Drive, Wyckoff, 10 am-4 pm

Janet, a member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau, has given lectures to many garden clubs about her garden. Part sun, part shade, there's a little for everyone.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County

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

Karen Riede Horticultural Assistant 201-336-6788

Cooperating agencies: Rutgers, the State University of NJ, US Department of Agriculture, and Bergen County Board of Commissioners. 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.

PLANT SALES

May 5, 10 am-4 pm; May 6, 9 am-3 pm: Master Gardeners of Essex County, Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, 474 Upper Mountain Ave., Montclair. MG-grown tomatoes, eggplant, herb plants; perennials, shrubs, woodies, and roses; local honey, honey products, and related gift items.

May 5-14, Teaneck Garden Club: In the greenhouse at the foot of Lindbergh Boulevard off Glenwood Avenue, Teaneck. Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm; weekdays, noon-7 pm. Vegetables, herbs, annuals, perennials, houseplants. Click [here](#) for the flyer.

May 5-7, Rutgers Gardens Spring Flower Fair: GPS address 130 Log Cabin Road, New Brunswick. May 5-6, 10 am-4 pm; May 7, 10 am-2 pm. Free timed tickets (one per vehicle) required for entrance though you may bring any number of people in your vehicle. Click [here](#) for more information and to reserve a ticket.

May 7, 9 am-2 pm, Ramsey Area Garden Club, Ramsey Farmers Market, Main Street train station, Ramsey. Hanging baskets, perennials from members' gardens, special plant creations in beautiful pots. Garden club members will lend their horticultural expertise and advice. Rain date May 21.

May 5-7: New Jersey Botanical Garden, GPS address Morris Road, Ringwood. May 5, 4:30-7 pm for members' preview and reception. Non-members can join at the door to attend. May 6-7, 9:30 am-4 pm. Perennials, annuals, shrubs, vegetables, herbs, trees, vines, ground covers, hanging baskets, potted plants. Click [here](#) for membership information.



May 6, 9 am-2 pm: Master Gardeners of Mercer County, Plant Expo and Garden Market, Mercer Educational Gardens, 431A Federal City Road, Pennington. Perennials, shrubs,

trees, vendors. Click [here](#) for flyer. Visit the MG demonstration garden.

May 12-13, 10 am-3 pm: Tenafly Garden Club, Davis Johnson Park and Gardens, Engle Street and Westervelt Avenue, Tenafly. Annuals, hanging baskets.

Mother's Day plant sale ***Bergen New Bridge Medical Center***

May 10, 11 am-5 pm
230 E. Ridgewood Ave., Paramus

Surprise Mom with a plant or flowering plant arrangement or both from the medical center's greenhouse. Most of the plants were propagated by the residents in the hort therapy program, who also help make scented soaps and candles assisted by Master Gardener volunteers. Plants such as monstera, ZZ, kalanchoes, begonias, and African violets come from local growers. Potential volunteers: Come to the sale to view the greenhouse.

Instructions: Use the main entrance. You must sign in at the security desk and have your temperature checked. You'll receive a mask to be worn while in the hospital. Once past security, make a right and proceed to the elevators on your right; go to the second floor. Keeping to your right, you'll pass through a door into a small corridor. Continue until you go through another door. The greenhouse entrance is immediately to your left.

Donations accepted! Do you have baskets, decorative dishes, and pots to spare? Contact [Lynette Stewart](#), site coordinator and Class of 2017, to arrange receipt.

May 13, 9 am-noon: Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, Sycamore Avenue and Franklin Turnpike on the green next to the Ho-Ho-Kus Inn, Ho-Ho-Kus. Perennials from members' gardens.

May 13, 9 am-1 pm: Middlesex County Master Gardeners, Rutgers Cook campus, 103 College Farm Road, New Brunswick. Quality plants and sound advice. Eggplant, hot peppers, herbs, perennials, and Rutgers tomatoes and strawberries. Bring your plant wagon.

May 13, 9 am-3 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale train station, Hillsdale. Annuals and perennials in pots and flats, deer-resistant plants, hanging baskets, Mother's Day plants, plants from members' gardens, hand shovels made in New Jersey.

May 13-14, 9:30 am-2 pm: Laurelwood Arboretum, 725 Pines Lake Drive West, Wayne. Click [here](#) for the website.

May 20, 8 am-noon, rain or shine: Allendale Garden Club, Lee Memorial Library grounds, 500 W. Crescent Ave., Allendale. Locally grown perennials from members' gardens and NJ nurseries; baskets and containers; deer-resistant and drought-tolerant plants; rummage sale of garden paraphernalia.

Party for the Planet



Photo by Bruce Riede

Volunteers at the Party for the Planet at the Bergen County Zoo April 22. From left: Dylan Grana, Class of 2022; Sharon LaMonica (2022); Karen Riede (2017); Bernadette White (2021); and Anita Hall-Davis (2022). Scott Japko and Lynne Proskow, both Class of 2022, also volunteered. Lynne, a member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau, gave a presentation about composting in the zoo's amphitheater.

WEBINARS

For your convenience, all times are Eastern.

May 2, 7 pm: Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors Gardening in the Shade. Free Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 3, 11 am-noon: Center for Health and Wellbeing sponsors Basics of Herb Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 3, 4 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Healthy Living: Try Out Raised Bed Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

May 6, 9:30-11 am: Penn State Extension sponsors Spotted Lanternfly and What You Need to Know Now. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 8, 1 pm: National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Container Design. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

May 10, 7 pm: American Horticultural Society sponsors Conversations with Great American Gardeners: Doug Tallamy. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 11, 1 pm: National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Spirea. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

May 11, 1-2 pm: Xerces Society sponsors Lights Out for Fireflies and Other Insects. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 16, 2:30-3:30 pm: University of Illinois Extension sponsors Invasive Plants: Beyond Outlawed. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 16, 7-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Pests in the Vegetable Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 23, 7 pm: Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors Container Vegetable Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 24, 5 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Start Spring by Touring Longwood Gardens. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

May 25, 6:30-7:30 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Tomato Grafting for Home Gardeners. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 30, noon-1 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Public Trees to Encourage Property Ownership. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

(President's desk, continued from page 1)

To target the larva, I just set up a Mosquito Bucket of Doom. What is a Mosquito Bucket of Doom? It's a simple way to help control mosquitoes in your yard without using pesticides that could harm other insects and critters living in your yard.

All you need is a five-gallon bucket, some straw or grass clippings, and a mosquito dunk containing *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Fill the bucket about half-full with water and add a few handfuls of straw or grass clippings. Let this sit for a few days to ferment and make the soup that the mosquitoes like to lay their eggs in. Add a quarter of the mosquito dunk, cover the bucket with chicken wire if children or pets are around, and you are done.

The females will come by and lay their eggs, and the dunk will kill the larva quickly. Replace the dunk once a month. Watch Doug Tallamy on [YouTube](#). Simple, easy, inexpensive, good for the environment and bad for the mosquitos.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

May 1, 7 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale Public Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Jeffrey Van Pelt. Topic: Top 10 Roses for Your Garden.

May 4, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park, Harrington Park Library, second floor, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: Mark Zukovich, owner of Sterling Horticultural Services. Topic: Ferns and Their Shady Friends.

May 5-8: Teaneck Creek Conservancy, official reopening weekend. May 5, book talk; May 6, nature walk; Click [here](#) for a description of these events, times, and registration information as well as other May events.

May 8, 12:30 pm: Cresskill Senior Center, 67 Union Ave., Cresskill. Speaker: Lynne Proskow, Class of 2022. Topic: Container Gardening (with hands-on planting project). Open to Bergen County residents 55 and older. Register by calling Donnajo Pascetta, senior center director, at 201-503-9831. Limited to 24 attendees.

May 10, 7 pm: Wyckoff Area Garden Club, Wyckoff Public Library, Monroe Room, 200 Woodland Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Mary Jo Sichak, Passaic County MG. Topic: The Art, History, and Benefits of Indoor Gardening. Refreshments at 6:30 pm. Click [here](#) for more information.

May 13, 10 am-4 pm: Garretson Forge & Farm Spring Festival with open-hearth cooking and spinning demonstrations, New Jersey Revolutionary War reenactors, Maypole dancing, and tours of the home and gardens. The annual plant sale features organic herbs, native perennials, common milkweed, and pollinators such as bee balm, tansy, valerian, agrimony, wild ginger, orris, Mayapple, ferns, and more. Garretson is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Visit the [website](#).

May 13, 12:30-2:30 pm: Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of NJ, annual plant swap, Dumont Arboretum, 100 W. Shore Ave., Dumont. Native plants only! You don't have to bring plants to take them. Bare-root plants are best; wrap them individually in moist paper towels, if possible. Click [here](#) for more information.

May 20, 11 am-3 pm: Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, 474 Upper Mountain Ave., Montclair. Family garden party with more than 100,000 iris flowers in bloom. Crafts, entertainment, food trucks. Free. Rain date May 21. Click [here](#) for the website.

May 21, 10 am-2 pm: Native Plant Day, 2 DeKorte Park Plaza, Lyndhurst. Walks, presentation, information booths. See flyer attached with the Potting Shed.

At McFaul Environmental Center



Photo by Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008

McFaul Environmental Center volunteers Ben Weiner, Class of 2020, and Varda Gold (2017) cleaned the canna lilies for winter storage last fall. And now it's spring and time for new tasks. Join McFaul volunteers from 8:30 am-noon Wednesday with a bagel break around 10 am. This spring's tasks include planting sunflowers from seed as well as planting — as needed — trees, shrubs, annuals, and bulbs; cutting and pruning trees and shrubs; weeding and mulching beds; seeding wildflower beds and covering with protective landscape fabric; cutting ornamental grasses; and removing invasives, such as bamboo and Japanese knotweed. The center provides supplies, tools, and an electric golf cart. Bring gloves and eye protection. Some volunteers will bring their favorite tools like pruners, hand saws, Hori Hori knives, and cultivators. McFaul is located at 150 Crescent Ave., Wyckoff. Contact [Joseph Cooper](#), site coordinator, for more information.

May 22, 7:30 pm: Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, Community Church, 400 Warren Ave, Ho-Ho-Kus. Speaker: Paul Sisko, Class of 2021. Topic: The Artistry of Paul Sisko - Art in the Garden (55-plus years of Paul's history as a sculptor, furniture maker, and gardener). Contact [Paul](#) for more information.

June 4, 10 am-5 pm: Women Gardeners of Ridgewood sponsors its 2023 Secret Gardens Tour. Tickets: \$35 through June 2; \$40 June 3 or 4. Click [here](#) for more information and where to buy tickets.

THIS AND THAT

It's No Mow May, Low Mow Spring

2023 marks the fourth “No Mow May,” a campaign launched by [Plantlife](#), a national and international conservation charity in the United Kingdom, whose mission is “to secure a world rich in wild plants and fungi.”



Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011

No mow ever! Miriam had an 8-by-29 foot “meadow” installed in her side yard a few years ago. No mowing is required, though weeding is.

According to Bee City USA, which took up the no mow program in the United States, “Lawns cover 40 million acres, or 2%, of land in the US, making them the single largest irrigated crop we grow. Lawns are mowed, raked, fertilized, weeded, chemically treated, and watered sucking up time, money, and other resources. Lawns provide little benefit to wildlife and are often harmful.

Grass-only lawns lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and are often treated with pesticides that harm bees and other invertebrates.”

What can you do? Click [here](#) for Bee City USA’s No Mow May page. Bee City USA has 335 affiliate cities and campuses in 46 states. It’s an initiative of the [Xerces Society](#) for Invertebrate Conservation.



Photo by Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008

Relive the holidays in May

Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008, has posted his video of the 2022 Holiday Open House at Skylands Manor. The theme was “A Holly Jolly Holiday.” Click [here](#) to enjoy this seven-minute video on YouTube featuring the decorations created by volunteers in the 11 rooms on the main floor. Above is the foyer.

(Michael Hagen, continued from page 1)

occupation,” he said, adding that he was advised to apply to work at White Flower Farm. He wound up spending 5½ years working there in propagation before ending up as the farm’s trial gardener. At that point, he said, he realized he would either have to specialize his focus or broaden his horizons by working in public horticulture.

Growing up in England, he recalled, he had gardened a little. “It was never a passion, just part of family life that included weekend trips to nurseries, the annual cycle of putting out hanging baskets and containers, walking around examining and naming plants. I had not realized how much I had taken in and retained just through the process of living with that knowledge around me.”

Rock gardening, he added, was another of those things that he grew up with calling it “a very efficient way to grow plants in small spaces and tough conditions.”

He continued: “My interest has really deepened into the smaller and minor spring-blooming bulbs (which I teach

here at NYBG), and it’s almost by association the plants that grow well with them. By their very nature, many of these rock garden plants are hard to grow. As I learn more about plant ecology and adaptive strategies, I become increasingly fascinated by building functioning and self-sustaining plant communities from different biomes and geographical areas that might survive here in NYC, an extremely challenging location.”

Michael is also an institutional conservation officer for the Center for Plant Conservation. He previously served for almost 13 years as staff horticulturist for Stonecrop Gardens, Cold Spring, NY, and was garden manager at Rocky Hills, Mt. Kisco, NY, a preservation project of the Garden Conservancy. He is an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College where he lectures on sustainability; native plant propagation; and gardening with native plants.