

From the Potting Shed

October 2023

www.mgofbc.org



Meeting news: Tuesday, Oct. 17

Kathy Schwarz

Our Food System in Crisis: The 2023 Farm Bill

Katherine (Kathy) Schwarz is a public health nutritionist who has worked on food and food security issues in New York and in Malawi in sub-Saharan Africa. Kathy advocates for big changes in how and where we grow our food.

Kathy will discuss the [Farm Bill](#), which is up for renewal this year. (Every five years the federal government reviews the food and farm landscape and renews the Farm Bill.)

She teaches nutrition education in the Health Sciences Department at Lehman College and has taught about food security and food policy at Lehman and at New York Medical College. She is an advocate for more community gardens to allow more people to grow some of their own food and tries to do so herself in the Nyack (NY) Community Garden.



Kathy Schwarz

(Continued on page 2)

MG of BC meetings are free and open to the public in the first-floor meeting room, 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements at 7:20 pm followed by the meeting.

New masthead, new logo

Thanks to Liz Gil, Class of 2019, who designed the new MG of BC logo, above right. You'll also see the logo on our [website](#) and our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

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From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Two heath aster plants (*Symphotrichum ericoides*) have made their presence known in my garden by bursting into bloom recently. They are volunteers that must have been brought in by a bird or an animal. Luckily for them, they were hidden in the milkweed, goldenrod, and wild ageratum.



Photo by Melody Corcoran

Heath aster in bloom

The heath aster blooms in September and October and is covered with half-inch white blooms with yellow centers. The flowers have eight to 20 petals, and the centers turn reddish with age. The ripe seeds have tufts of white hairs and are dispersed by the wind.

Before blooming, they have spindly, branching stems with small needle-like leaves and range in height from 1 to 3 feet. The non-blooming plant is generally nondescript, in other words it appears to be a weed waiting to be pulled out.

The heath aster blooms in September and October and is covered with half-inch white blooms with yellow centers. The flowers have eight to 20 petals, and the centers turn reddish with age. The ripe seeds have tufts of white hairs and are dispersed by the wind.

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(MG meeting, continued from page 1)

Kathy Schwarz, October speaker

How did you get interested in food security/insecurity?

I am a public health nutritionist. I have worked with homeless people in New York City, I have worked for a major food rescue organization, City Harvest, and I



Photo courtesy of Kathy Schwarz

Kathy Schwarz does a cooking demonstration in Malawi using sweet potatoes harvested from a plot that was previously monocropped with maize.

have worked in a hospital in Malawi (2004-06). Malawi, in sub-Saharan Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the hospital had a whole ward for the malnourished children. Food is fundamental. None of us can survive long without enough food. We are seeing more and more food

insecurity in the United States and even more around the world, and I think that trend will continue unless we make some big changes in how and where we grow our food including what we grow and eat.

How did you get interested in or focus on Malawi?

I wanted to have some experience working in another part of the world. I found an organization, Volunteer Services Overseas, which matches the skills of the volunteers with the needs of different countries, and they sent me to Malawi. I had to look it up on a map, because I had no idea where it was and knew nothing about it. It is one of the poorest countries in the world and it turned out to be a good match. I worked there for two years and have stayed in touch with some people ever since.

In brief, how/why is our food system in crisis?

I think we all recognize that there are food-related health crises in this country: Epidemics of obesity and of diabetes. Those are indicative of a food system in crisis. But connecting this to the environment, our

agricultural system contributes about 30% to greenhouse gas emissions, a contribution that often receives less attention, especially in the United States, where we seem to focus on renewable energy and electric cars almost exclusively.

And food production is itself threatened by the changing climate. So, if changes could be made, it would contribute to improved health, and it could help mitigate climate change and adapt to it at the same time.

Will the Farm Bill fix this? If so, how?

The Farm Bill epitomizes the politics of food and agriculture in this country. The Farm Bill is being reauthorized by Congress this year, as they allocate money to the Department of Agriculture for the next five years. For the last Farm Bill of 2018, the amount was \$428 billion (of our taxpayer money). Congress not only determines how much money but how the Department of Agriculture must spend this money, and that's where the politics comes in.

If there are no changes for this 2023 Farm Bill, and we maintain the status quo of huge subsidies and crop insurance going to the corporate-run factory farms, we will face a continuing health and environmental crisis and experience more and more food insecurity.

The Farm Bill, as it is now, isn't designed to tackle any food crisis. It is designed to support the major food corporations. But we have an opportunity to change it so it could support smaller farms, community gardening, changing agriculture techniques and what is grown, and where to adapt to the changing climate.

Most of the lobbying that is done around the Farm Bill is done by the major food corporations who want to receive all of the subsidies and crop insurance, and they have no incentive to change. We need to make our voices heard, too, because we all eat. And, if you don't want to get involved on the political level, all of us, as gardeners, can educate others on the importance of growing as much of our own food as we can, for our own food security and the food security of our communities.

What's your connection to Nyack?

I moved to Rockland County a few years after I returned from Malawi to take a job for Cornell Cooperative Extension's office in the county. I am living in an apartment in Nyack and have no access to a yard but am three blocks from Nyack's community garden. I joined the garden and have been growing some of my own vegetables ever since. I am a big proponent of all the benefits of community gardening!

EDITORIALS

The MG of BC is about more than putting in 25 (or more) hours of volunteer time each year. We have an Executive Board and a Speakers Bureau that require planning and leadership to make and keep us a viable organization in the greater Bergen County community. Right now, we have open positions on the board, and we can use more public speakers. (Yes, you earn volunteer hours for these roles and no digging involved.) If you've been wanting to get more involved in the MG of BC, here's how.

We don't bite!

The MG of BC Executive Board meets in person (September through November and January through May) prior to our monthly public meetings. Board meetings are open to all members and interns.

Are you interested in or curious about joining the board? Currently, we're in need of an equipment manager and a treasurer. Come to a board meeting to see if MG administration and leadership is for you. Board members receive volunteer hours for attendance at board meetings.

Board meetings are 5:30-7 pm in the first-floor meeting room at 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, the same location as the public meeting. The next meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 17. Click [here](#) if you'd like more information about how you can contribute to the board. Better yet, come to a meeting!

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.

The Speakers Bureau needs you!

By Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004

Do you love the MG program and people like I do? Do you want to continue earning volunteer hours but can't manage the physical work at volunteer sites? Is a bad back or aging keeping you from doing what you love?

Why not join the Speakers Bureau? You will earn volunteer hours, meet fun and interesting people, and have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping your community. I know all of you are knowledgeable in some way about our plants and the other living things in your garden. And you have brains packed with knowledge about native species and our environment. If you weren't you wouldn't have become an MG. So let me and all the wonderful people in garden clubs, schools, and community groups know what you have to offer.



Arnie Friedman

As chair of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau, I regularly get requests for MGs to tell their organization about nature and the plant world. It doesn't have to be a scholarly talk. It can be a friendly description of where you volunteer. Or maybe you know how to collect honey from bee hives or how to make things for the garden from willow branches. Maybe you do great potted plants or unique flower arrangements. Let us all hear about what you do.

I would be happy to mentor anyone who thinks they don't know how to create or present a talk. Want to present one of my talks? I'll walk you through it and give you the script.

It is the role of Rutgers Cooperative Extension to help our community identify pests and weeds. It is the role of Rutgers to carry research and knowledge into the community, and we MGs are part of that outreach.

Come help save our environment and help your neighbors garden and care for their land properly. Be a part of what we do. Please become a member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau. Call or text me at 201-707-5149 or contact me via [email](#). We can discuss whether you can be a part of improving people's homes and gardens.

SPOTLIGHT ON BULBS

The beauty of bulbs: Year-long interest in the garden

Now's the time to buy and plant your bulbs for 2024. Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, has shared this introduction to bulbs, corms, and tubers. A list of his favorites is on pages 5-6. All photos courtesy of Bruce Crawford. Botanical names are in italics.

In general, “bulbs” — or more properly, geophytes — are easy plants to grow, requiring full sun, good drainage, and moderately fertile soils. Geophytes are defined as any non-woody plant with an underground storage organ.

Bulbs with large underground structures of 1 inch or more are termed “major bulbs.” Examples are tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths. “Minor bulbs” have underground structures smaller than 1 inch. Examples are *Galanthus*, *Crocus*, and *Chionodoxa*.



Spring bloomer: *Muscari latifolium* (grape hyacinth)

These storage organs contain carbohydrates, nutrients, and water and allow the plant to endure extended periods of time that are not suitable for plant



Summer bloomer: *Lycoris squamigera* (autumn lily or resurrection lily)

growth. The word geophytes literally means “earth plant” as “geo” is from the Greek *gea* for earth and *phyte* from the Greek *phyto* for plant. The term geophyte was coined by the Danish botanist Christen Raunkiaer (1860-1938) when he developed a classification system based on the location of dormant buds in relation to the ground. Geophyte was one of three subgroups found within the group named cryptophyte or “hidden plants”; *crypto* is from the Greek *kryptós* meaning hidden.

Both major and minor bulbs can be accommodated in a mixed border or in a meadow. In perennial borders, use clumps of the larger (major) bulbs, such as *Allium*, *Narcissus*, or *Camassia*. The smaller (minor) bulbs reseed and are easily disturbed during division of the perennials. This

ability to reseed makes them good candidates for naturalizing in areas of the garden that will not be disturbed, including areas beneath shrubs and in lawns. If planting into lawns, select the earliest blooming bulbs or corms such that the foliage will have withered by mid-May permitting the lawn to be cut.

Types of geophytes

Bulb: Swollen leaves or leaf stalks, attached at the bottom to a modified stem called a basal plant. The outer layers are modified leaves called scales. Scales contain necessary starches and nutrients to sustain the bulb during dormancy and early growth.



Fall bloomer: *Colchicum speciosum* 'Alba' (autumn crocus)

(Continued on page 5)

(Bulbs, continued from page 4)

The outermost scales become dry and form a papery covering or tunic. At the center are developed — albeit embryonic — flowers, leaves, and stem(s). Roots develop from the basal plate. Examples are *Tulipa* (tulip), *Narcissus* (daffodil), and *Allium* (flowering onion).



Winter bloomer: *Crocus tommasinianus* (Tommasini's crocus)

Corm: A swollen stem that is modified for food storage. Eyes or growing points develop on top of the corm. Roots develop from a basal plate on the bottom of the corm, similar to bulbs. The dried bases of the leaves form an outer layer, also called the tunic. Examples include *Crocus* and *Erythronium* (dog tooth violet).

Hypocotyl or stem tuber: Stem tubers differ from the true tuber, described in the next section, by being perennial and increasing in size from one season to the next, rather than expiring after one year. The hypocotyl is the portion of a seedling that connects the unfurling cotyledons (the first or initial leaves) with the root. Stem tubers can produce leaf and flower shoots from the upper side and roots from either the top, bottom, or in some instances they emerge on both sides of the structure, depending on how close the tuber developed to the

root or the shoot. In other words, depending on where the tuber forms along the hypocotyl (closer to the cotyledons or the root) determines whether the tuber will be more root-like or stem-like. Examples are *Cyclamen*, *Eranthis* (winter aconite), and *Anemone* (wind flower).

Tuberous roots: These enlarged storage elements also resemble tubers but are swollen roots, not stems. They produce growing buds only at the swollen upper end of the tuberous root called the crown. The crown forms at the junction of the previous years' stem and the tuberous root. During active growth, both shoots and lateral roots appear from the crown. The shoots obviously grow to produce the stems, leaves, and flowers while the lateral roots initially perform the typical function of water and nutrient absorption. Over the course of the summer, swellings develop on these lateral roots, developing a number of new tubers connected to the central stem. Examples of tuberous roots are daylilies and asparagus.

Summer bloomers

- *Allium sphaerocephalon* (drumstick allium)
- *Arum italicum* (Italian arum)
- *Lilium canadense* (Canada lily)
- *Lycoris squamigera* (autumn lycoris, resurrection lily)

Fall bloomers

- *Colchicum cilicicum* 'Purpureum' (autumn crocus)
- *Colchicum* 'The Giant' (autumn crocus)
 - ✓ 'Lilac wonder'
 - ✓ 'Waterlily'
- *Colchicum speciosum* 'Album' (white autumn crocus)
- *Crocus speciosus* (autumn crocus)



Tulipa tarda (late tulip)

- *Cyclamen hederifolium* (hardy cyclamen)
 - ✓ 'Alba'

Winter bloomers

- *Bulbocodium* (now *Colchicum*) *vernum* (spring meadow saffron)
- *Chionodoxa luciliae* (now *Scilla luciliae*, found under the section *Chionodoxa* within the genus *Scilla*) (glory of the snow)
 - ✓ 'Alba'
- *Chionodoxa sardensis* (*Scilla sardensis*) (lesser glory of the snow)
- *Crocus tommasinianus* (Tommasini's crocus)
- *Eranthis cilicica* (winter aconite)
- *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite)
- *Galanthus elwesii* (giant snowdrops)
- *Galanthus nivalis* (snowdrops)
 - ✓ 'Flora plena'
- *Gladiolus communis* subspecies *byzantinus* (*Gladiolus byzantinus*)
- *Puschkinia scilloides* (striped squill)

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WEBINARS

Oct. 9, 11 am-noon: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors How to Start Growing Your Own Salad. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

Oct. 9, 7-8 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Crafting: Make Your Own Terrarium. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

Oct. 11, 7-8:30 pm: Native Plant Society of NJ sponsors Where Do Butterflies Go in Winter. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 14, 10-11:30 am: Penn State Extension sponsors Lasagna Gardening Method. Fee: \$20. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 17, 7-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Facts About the Bats of New Jersey. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 18, 7-8 pm: American Horticultural Society sponsors Designing with Nature. Fee: \$10 AHS members; \$15 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 18, 7-8:15 pm: East Brunswick Library sponsors Option Green: Invasive Plants. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 19, 7 pm: Laurelwood Arboretum sponsors Beyond Monarchs and Honeybees: The Case for Diversity. Fee: \$10 members; \$20 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 26, noon: Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Growing Resilience. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Oct. 28, 9:30-11 am: Penn State Extension sponsors In Love with Fabulous Ferns. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 1, 7-8:15 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Orchids for Everyone: Introduction to Orchids. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



Winter bloomer: *Eranthis cilicica* (winter aconite)

(Bulbs, continued from page 5)

- *Scilla mischtschenkoana* (squill)
- *Scilla siberica* (Siberian squill)
 - ✓ 'Alba'

Spring bloomers

- *Allium aflatunense* (Persian onion)
- *Allium christophii* (star of Persia)
- *Allium* 'Mt. Everest' (Mt. Everest onion)
- *Allium moly* (lily leek)
- *Anemone blanda* (Grecian wind flower)
- *Fritillaria imperialis* (crown imperial fritillary)
- *Iris (Juno) bucharica* (Bukhara iris)
- *Gladiolus communis* subspecies *byzantinus* (*Gladiolus byzantinus*) (hardy gladiolus)
- *Ipheion uniflorum* (occasionally still sold as *Triteleia uniflorum*) (spring star flower)
- *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye giant' (summer snowflake)
- *Muscari armeniacum* (grape hyacinth)
 - ✓ 'Valerie Finnis'
- *Muscari latifolium* (grape hyacinth)
 - ✓ 'Grape Ice'
- *Muscari paradoxum* (*Bellevalia pycnantha*) (grape hyacinth)

Narcissus

- *Narcissus bulbocodium* (hoop petticoat narcissus)
- *Narcissus* 'February gold' (February gold cyclamineus daffodil)
- *Narcissus* 'Thalia' (*Thalia triandrus* daffodil)

Tulipa

- *Tulipa* 'Little Princess'
- *Tulipa urumiensis* (often listed as *Tulipa tarda*) (tulip)
- *Tulipa whittallii*

MG of BC NEWS

Volunteers needed for 2023 Skylands Manor Holiday Open House

By Sue Sheridan, Class of 2013

Please join MG of BC volunteers during the Skylands Manor Holiday Open House, a fund-raising event sponsored by the Skylands Volunteer Association to benefit the New Jersey Botanical Garden.

This year's theme is "A Highlands Holiday." The MG of BC's Decorating Committee will decorate the Manor House dining room and breakfast room to reflect the tradition of



Photo by Sue Sheridan

One view of the MG of BC's decorations at the 2022 Holiday Open House.

and security of both attendees and the decorative items in the displays and to answer questions.

Depending on the quantity and size of some of the decorations, there may be an opportunity to earn volunteer hours by helping at drop off, but this will be decided at a future date. A separate request for help will be sent at that time.

Here is this year's event timeline:

- Drop off of decorations: After 1 pm Sunday, Nov. 26;
- Setup: 10 am-4 pm Monday, Nov. 27 and Tuesday, Nov. 28;
- Holiday Open House event: 10 am-4 pm Thursday, Nov. 30; Friday, Dec. 1; Saturday, Dec. 2; and Sunday, Dec. 3.

Hogmanay, the Celtic celebration of the New Year, a holiday steeped in the rites and rituals of the ancient Druids.

Volunteers are needed to aid the committee in assembling and decorating trees, stringing lights, and placing theme-based decorative items throughout the rooms. In addition, we will need volunteer docents for the event. Docents are needed to ensure the safety

Volunteering for setup shifts is now open ended, and any help is appreciated from two hours to the entire day. In addition, docent shifts are flexible from a minimum of two hours to an entire day. You may include travel time to and from Skylands in your volunteer hours of up to a total of one hour.

Prior to starting a shift, volunteers sign in at the Carriage House. Be sure to include shift hours and travel time when signing in.

The HOH event is an opportunity to earn volunteer hours and meet other Master Gardeners. And it's fun!

To volunteer your time at setup or as a docent, send an email to me, [Sue Sheridan](mailto:Sue.Sheridan@skylandsnj.org), or call me at 201-664-2120 (H) or 201-281-0639 (C). I will coordinate the shifts.

Patricia (Pat) Vellas



Pat Vellas, 72, Class of 2014 and MG of BC treasurer, died Sept. 21. Pat worked as a national bank examiner with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency for 40 years before retiring in 2014.

In an interview that appeared in the Potting Shed in 2017, Pat said that during her career, she was "probably involved in every economic crisis" in the United States, such as those in Texas and New England.

Pat was a member of the Demarest Garden Club and had served on its board. She volunteered primarily at Washington Spring Garden where she had been site coordinator along with Suzanne Danzig. However, she told the Potting Shed that "Houseplants are my big thing."

Pat is survived by her husband, Ken Kochenburger. Send condolences to him at 785 Walnut St., New Milford, NJ 07646.

We will miss her!

GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

See additional club meetings in the October Mid-Month Potting Shed.

Oct. 2, 6:30 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Kathy Sauerborn, Passaic County MG. Topic: Gardening for Hummingbirds.

Oct. 5, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park, upstairs in the Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: Marc Gussen, director, Closter Nature Center. Topic: Hydroponics - A Gardening Alternative to Dirt.

Oct. 10, 7 pm: Ramsey Area Garden Club, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 55 Wyckoff Ave., corner of Woodland Avenue, Ramsey. Speaker: Michael Kolenut, owner, Lincoln Landscaping, Franklin Lakes. Topic: Using Native Plants in Your Garden.

Oct. 11, 7 pm: Oakland Garden Club, Oakland Senior Center, 20 Lawlor Drive, Oakland. Speaker: Arnie Friedman, MG Class of 2004. Topic: Stone in the Garden. Refreshments to follow presentation.

Oct. 11, 7 pm: Wyckoff Area Garden Club, Wyckoff Library, 200 Woodland Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Janet Schulz, MG Class of 1988. Topic: Gardening with Bulbs. Refreshments at 6:30 pm. Visit the club's [website](#).

EVENTS

Garretson Fall Festival

Oct. 8, 10 am-4 pm: Garretson Forge & Farm, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Free. Open-hearth cooking demonstrations; tours of the house and gardens; hands-on children's activities; re-enactors in period costumes. For sale: Limited late-summer organic vegetables and herbs; dried herbs; strawberry jam; lavender sachets; Garretson's hard-neck organic garlic. Visit the [website](#) for more information and photos.

NJBG Harvest Fest

Oct. 14, 10 am-5 pm: New Jersey Botanical Garden, GPS address Morris Road, Ringwood. Free admission; parking \$5 per car. Craft fair; pumpkin

(President's desk, continued from page 1)

Heath aster is native in most of the United States and is often a pioneer plant in disturbed areas helping to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. It can grow



Photo by Melody Corcoran

Pearl crescent butterfly

pretty much anywhere but prefers dry, rocky soils. The plant spreads by rhizomes and seeds and can spread aggressively.

Deer, rabbits, and other herbivores may eat the young plants but generally do not forage on the mature, flowering plants. (I guess that explains why the local deer herd has not eaten it yet.) Heath aster is a good source of nectar for late-season pollinators and is a host plant for the pearl crescent butterfly.

Here's hoping that I recognize the plant in the spring and don't weed it out and that the animals don't eat it.

painting; games; walks and tours; applesauce making; food; music; autumn plant sale. Click [here](#) for more information.

Laurelwood mum show

Oct. 14-15, noon-4 pm: NJ Chrysanthemum Society show at Laurelwood Arboretum, 725 Pines Lake Drive West, Wayne. Free. Click [here](#) to visit the Laurelwood website for more information

Tree symposium at Frelinghuysen

Oct. 21, 9 am-3 pm: Tree symposium sponsored by the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum and the American Conifer Society at the arboretum, 353 E. Hanover Ave., Morris Township. Friends members \$50; non-members \$60. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Native plant seed swap

Oct. 22, 2-4 pm: Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of NJ's native plant seed swap in Glen Rock. RSVP to [Vicky](#) for the address. To prepare, label seeds of native plants with name of plant (both common and Latin, if possible); straight species preferred. Seed envelopes will be provided. You may take seeds even if you don't bring any. Come prepared to learn new seed-starting techniques or to share those that have worked for you.

Spotted in Illinois - yarn bombing



wrapped with colorful yarn creations. Would this work in Bergen County? Notify the [Potting Shed](#) if you try it.

Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, took these photos of “yarn bombing” in Sunset Woods Park, Highland Park, IL. The Park District of Highland Park, [Art Impact Project](#), and Art Center of Highland Park developed this “all-ages, [multi-community art project](#) aimed at bringing joy, comfort, and camaraderie” to area residents “through the therapeutic process of knitting to culminate a colorful and collaborative art installation,” reported Elizabeth Fales, executive director of the Art Impact Project. Designated trees lining the park’s paths and a grove of trees in the center of the park were

IN THE GARDEN

Winterizing your perennials in pots

By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

If you want to keep a perennial, tree, or small shrub in a pot over the winter there are a number of things you must consider and do.

Size of pot: Your pot *must* be large enough for the plant to grow roots properly. To have proper drainage, the pot must have a large enough hole or holes for the soil to be quick draining.



Soil: When choosing and purchasing potting soil at the garden center or big-box store, be sure it is bark-based, not peat-based. Peat-based soils absorb and hold water that can freeze and rot the roots. Peat-based soils, otherwise known as growers mix, have great drainage.

Move your pots into a shed or unheated garage, if possible. If you do not have room, after the ground freezes turn the pot on its side, as shown at top, so you will not have crown rot. If the pot is too large to place on its side, place a large serving platter in the center and put a large stone on top to keep the wind from blowing it away, as shown above.



Photos by Janet Schulz

Rutgers Master Gardeners 2023 state conference

Oct. 21, virtual and in person

9 am-2 pm followed by greenhouse tour

Fee: \$5

- Click [here](#) to register for Zoom attendance.
- Click [here](#) to register for in-person attendance.

Conference schedule/speaker information included under the links above.

About those SLF traps...

Elaine Silverstein, Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of New Jersey, commented on the photo of sticky traps for spotted lanternflies on page 7 of the September Potting Shed:

Sticky traps are not the recommended way to deal with spotted lanternflies. They kill indiscriminately, so they kill beneficial insects and birds, not just “bad” insects. A recommended method is circle traps. You can find directions for building a circle trap on the Penn State Extension [website](#). And if you Google the term, you can buy them ready made.