

From the Potting Shed

November 2023

www.mgofbc.org



Meeting news: Tuesday, Nov. 14

Steve Adams

Edible Garden and Yard 'Weeds': ID and Culinary Values of Complementary Produce

Steve Adams is a forager/naturalist specializing in wild edibles. He and his family have routinely gathered wild food as a regular part of their year-round diet over several decades.



Steve Adams

His presentation will explore the native and invasive opportunists that appear in lawns, yards, and gardens. "The record of humanity's deep history with plants acknowledges the varied functions they served as essential provisions for food, technology, well-being, and ritual," he stated in the description of his talk. "The later historical uses, which introduced alien plants to the

Western Hemisphere, will include some cultural contexts along with a few medicinal references."

The purpose of his presentation, he wrote, is to cast "a more appreciative light ... upon such previously esteemed and purposeful botanicals now categorized as weeds. Their obvious vigor, persistence, and ability to out-compete tended growths imply the strength of their alternative values, however regarded as dismissible."

Steve will provide images of selected plants, their nutritional details, and suggestions how they can be used in the kitchen.

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.

What's inside	Page
MG of BC News	2
Volunteer Site News	3-4
Webinars	5
Garden Club Meetings	5
President's Desk (continued from page 1)	6
In the Garden	6

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

From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

I spotted the pictured lichen while volunteering at the McFaul Environmental Center. I had never seen a lichen with those upright trumpet-like structures before. Google Lens helped me identify the lichen as belonging to the *Cladonia*



genus of lichens, specifically *Cladonia fimbriata*, more commonly known as a trumpet cup lichen.



Photo by Melody Corcoran

Cladonia fimbriata, more commonly known as trumpet cup lichen.

Lichens are a symbiotic organism composed of a fungus and algae. (You remember that from biology class, right?) The fungus is the dominant partner giving the lichen its identifying characteristics from shape to type of fruiting body. Lichens are categorized based on their structure.

(Continued on page 6)

MG OF BC NEWS

Holiday party Tuesday, Dec. 12

Save the date for the MG of BC holiday party, our first since 2019. Please RSVP as soon as possible. See last paragraph for instructions.

The party will be held from noon-2 pm in the Bergen County Zoo Education Building in Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. It's open to MGs, MG alums, and MG interns. The MG of BC will supply the main course and beverages.

- **Cookie exchange:** What's your favorite holiday cookie? Snickerdoodles? Spritz? Shortbread? We'll ask attendees to bring cookies to share. More information in the November Mid-Month Potting Shed.
- **Food donations:** Please bring one or more canned or boxed non-perishable food items for donation to the [Center for Food Action](#).
- **Gift shop:** The zoo's gift shop will be open so you can browse for gifts for the special young people in your life — and for yourself.

Click [here](#) to RSVP. *We need to know how many people will attend so we can plan the menu.* See the November Mid-Month Potting Shed for information about contributing cookies or other food items to the menu.

Have you logged into Better Impact lately? Please enter your volunteer and ed hours

***By Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008
and Volunteer Records chair***

This is a reminder to keep your volunteer and continuing education hours current in the [Better Impact](#) system. If you still have not logged into Better Impact and would like assistance, call Karen Riede, horticultural assistant, at 201-336-6788 or me (Suzanne Danzig) at 201-218-4093.

Please know that your hours matter. Your hours are vital to Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Bergen County, and the Master Gardeners of Bergen County. Please do not wait until the end of the year to record your hours; instead record them as you go. It makes

Stuck at ground zero (boo hoo)



Photo by Miriam Taub

In the October Mid-Month Potting Shed, we asked readers to submit a humorous caption expressing what kind of help the dude above needed from a Master Gardener. Alas! No responses! Do you find the Potting Shed helpful? Are you interested in writing an article for the Potting Shed? (You earn volunteer hours for writing articles.) Do you read the Potting Shed? Click [here](#) to let me know.

- Miriam Taub, Class of 2011 and Potting Shed editor

my life easier, it will make yours easier, and my monthly reports will be more accurate. Don't wait for the deadline to report 2023 volunteer hours in early January; record them now. PLEASE!

In early 2024, Karen and I are required to provide a detailed and accurate report to Rutgers Cooperative Extension of the MG of BC's 2023 activities. An accurate accounting of our hours along with the number of our certified members will show our strength and value.

I would like to emphasize that to maintain your certification as an MG you are required to do 25 outreach (volunteer) hours and 10 continuing education hours. Many of you have recorded many, many CE hours and little or no outreach hours and vice versa. One does not substitute for the other though more hours are greatly appreciated, of course.

Thank you all for your cooperation and keep up the wonderful work.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

Desperately seeking volunteers and then some . . .

By Sue Sheridan, Class of 2013

Volunteers are needed for setup at this year's Skylands Manor Holiday Open House. Setup will take place Monday, Nov. 27 and Tuesday, Nov. 28 from 10 am to approximately 4 pm. Come when you can and stay as long as you want while there's work to be done.

In addition, volunteer docents are needed to work during the event, which runs from Thursday, Nov. 30-Sunday, Dec. 3 from 10 am-5 pm. Volunteer shifts run a minimum of two hours, but volunteers who desire to stay longer can be accommodated.



Photo by Sue Sheridan

Ed and Cynthia Drennan, both, Class of 2019, prep a tree for the 2022 Holiday Open House. Click [here](#) for Holiday Open House ticket information.

Docents are assigned to a room where they monitor the décor, answer questions, and, most importantly, act as photographer for that all-important holiday family portrait. It's an enjoyable way to get into the holiday spirit or to finish up required volunteer hours.

Please consider helping out this year at this most important event. Contact me, [Sue Sheridan](#), via email, or call me at 201-281-0639 to volunteer.

Now to the 'and then some'

At the setup for last year's HOH event, the Decorating Committee discovered that a number of our trees and lights stored in the basement of Skylands Manor were destroyed as a result of flooding and rodent activity.

We were left with only a few trees and fewer light sets. *If you're replacing your existing tree and light sets, contact me at the above phone number or email.*

We're looking for:

- Taller trees, with or without working lights, with all parts intact and in good shape. Original boxes not required as we store the trees fully assembled.
- Sets of white mini lights, preferably with green or white wires; other sets might be considered, depending on their uniqueness and quantity.

The HOH Decorating Committee thanks all our volunteers and the MG of BC for helping make this event a success every year. We truly appreciate your enthusiasm and participation, and please come to the show. This is a wonderful way to get together over a few days, catch up, and decorate! Come join us!

Now you see it, now you don't



Photos by Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008

Four MG volunteers spent three hours removing the 10-by-10-foot dead shrub, above center, at McFaul Environmental Center recently. The result is below. You can view their work in less than three minutes via Joseph Cooper's YouTube video. Click [here](#) to view. In the video, that's Melody Corcoran in the green jacket, Class of 2016; Ben Weiner in the cap (2020); Paul Sisko in the gray hoodie (2021); and Joseph Cooper in the pink sweatshirt, site coordinator (2008).



(Continued on page 4)

(Volunteer site news, continued from page 3)

Fall plant sale at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center

Residents, staff, and MG volunteers came together in the medical center's auditorium recently for the fall plant sale, which also serves as a social event for residents.



Photos by Karen Clemments, Class of 2022

Above, Lynette Stewart, site coordinator and Class of 2017, and Janet Stofkoper (2023) prepped for the sale. Rose Santos Martinez (2017, not pictured) assisted, too. Above right, Pat Pacheco (2022) and Linda Bourke (2023) managed the flower arranging competition for residents. Residents chose a mug, filled it with cut flowers, and then were allowed to keep their creations. In addition to plants, the sale featured books on gardening and other plant related-topics. Trifold posters displayed information on such subjects as floral arranging and biomass of life on earth. Below left, the pollinator poster was designed by Maureen Caban, Karen Clemments, and Debra Sweet, all Class of 2022, for the 2022 Fall Festival. Below right, Janet Troy (2015) answered a visitor's question at the "Q&A" station. New Bridge's horticultural therapy program was designed to accommodate all residents, regardless of physical, cognitive, psychological, and social challenges through indoor and outdoor gardening activities. Hort therapy helps to improve cognitive, language, and motor skills," said Lynette. And, as she pointed out, "Let's face it, flowers make everyone feel good." Volunteering in the Bergen New Bridge Medical Center hort therapy program occurs year-round.

- Submitted by Lynette Stewart and Karen Clemments



WEBINARS

Nov. 8, 6-7 pm: Ecological Landscape Alliance sponsors The Secret Life of Wild Bees. Fee: Free for members; \$10 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 8, 7-9 pm: Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of NJ sponsors Rainscaping Practices: Gardening with Purpose. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 11, 9:30-11 am: Penn State Extension sponsors Home Gardening Series: Creating a Garden That Welcomes Wildlife. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 11, 10-11:30 am: Penn State Extension sponsors Winter Sowing: Low-Cost Seed Starting Method. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 14, noon-1 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Tips on Winterizing Your Vegetable Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

Nov. 15, 7-8 pm: American Horticultural Society sponsors Closing the Loop in Landscapes: Sustainability with Roots, Wildlife, and Healthy Soil. Fee: \$10 members; \$15 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 16, 2-3 pm: The Garden Conservancy sponsors the English Gardener's Garden. Fee: \$5 members; \$10 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Native Plant Society of New Jersey fall conference

Nov. 4, 8:30 am-1:30 pm
Free and virtual!

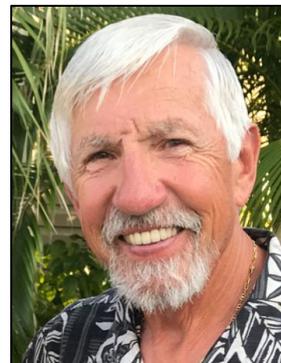
Hidden in Plain Sight: The Outstanding Natural Diversity of New Jersey. Click [here](#) for the list of speakers and topics and to register.

GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

Nov. 6, 4 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Mary Jo Sichak, Passaic County MG. Topic: Garden Safari.

Nov. 6, 7-9 pm: Teaneck Garden Club, Rodda Center, Room 2, 250 Colonial Court, Teaneck. Drive up the hill to the rear parking lot. Speaker: Lynne Proskow, MG Class of 2022. Topic: Crazy Composting Year-Round: Ins and Outs.

Nov. 8, 7 pm: Wyckoff Area Garden Club, lower-level conference room, Wyckoff Public Library, 200 Woodland Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Paul Sisko, MG Class of 2021. Topic: The Artistry of Paul Sisko-Sculptor and Gardener. Refreshments at 6:30 pm.



Paul Sisko

Nov. 16, 7:30 pm: Glen Rock Garden Club, Glen Rock Municipal Annex, 678 South Maple Ave., Glen Rock. Speaker: Lynne Proskow, MG Class of 2022. Topic: A Natural Journey Enjoying Herbs and Bee-ing Curious. Click [here](#) to visit the club's website.

Nov. 19, 2 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park, upstairs in the Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Annual Thanksgiving centerpiece workshop led by Gerri Gibney, club president. Fee: Members \$22; non-members \$27. Fee includes floral supplies to help you create a beautiful centerpiece. Bring pruners and whatever additional do-dads you want to add to your creation. Registration required. For more information and to register, send an email to [Gerri Gibney](#), or call her at 201-768-2615.

(President's desk, continued from page 1)



Carrie Stevenson, University of Florida Extension

Reindeer lichen (not moss!)

Crustose lichens are low-growing — the ones often seen growing on trees and rocks. Foliose lichens are leafy and lettuce-like. Fruticose lichens are bushy or branched. The algae, either green or blue-green algae or a combination of both, are found only on the upper surface of the lichen and contain chloroplasts, which produce food for the lichen through photosynthesis.

The trumpet cup lichen is a crustose lichen. In the photo, the lichen is lying flat on the vertical side of the

rock and the fruiting bodies are growing upward. Similar to the birds nest fungus I wrote about in August, this lichen disperses its spores when water splashes into the cup of the trumpet-like structures, which are the fruiting bodies (apothecia) of the lichen.

More widely known members of this genus are *Cladonia rangiferina* and *Cladonia stellaris*, both better known as reindeer lichen and often incorrectly called reindeer moss or deer moss. Reindeer lichen is fruticose, branched, and bushy (see photo at left). Reindeer lichen grow from the southeastern United States to the Arctic in open woodland habitats, tundra, and bogs. It is without roots and sits on top of the soil. As a groundcover, it can cover extensive areas. This lichen is a food source for wildlife, especially reindeer, hence its common name.

During the winter when there is very little other vegetation available, reindeer lichen is a preferred food source for reindeer and caribou. (Reindeer and caribou are the same species, *Rangifer tarandus*; they are called reindeer in Eurasia and caribou in North America.)

Reindeer lichen, colored or natural, is used in floral arrangements and terrariums, in model railroad displays for trees and shrubbery, and in other decorative crafts. Panels of reindeer lichen are used in interior design both as decoration and as sound-absorbing surfaces.

IN THE GARDEN

Milkweed and more...



University of Minnesota Extension photo

Common milkweed

Garden writer Margaret Roach explains that it's not only monarchs that have a relationship with the common milkweed. So do butterflies, moths, beetles, and aphids. Click [here](#) to read her column from the Oct. 29 New York Times. **Note:** If you're not a Times subscriber, you're limited to the number of articles you can view online.

Wheelbarrow got a flat tire?

From House Digest, writer Michael Alexander Uccello shares how to fix a wheelbarrow's flat tire using expanding foam. It's cheaper and easier than replacing the tire. Click [here](#) to read the story.

- Submitted by Liz Gil, Class of 2019

Rutgers November plant of the month

Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, has named *Ceratostigma*, commonly called plumbago or leadwort, as his November Plant of the Month. Click [here](#) to read all about it. At right is a profile of a plumbago and supporting bract in late September.



Photo courtesy of Bruce Crawford