

# From the Potting Shed

April 2024

[www.mgofbc.org](http://www.mgofbc.org)



## Pass the peas, please



Photo by Terry Cohn, Class of 2020

Volunteers plant peas during Garretson Forge & Farm's annual Pea Day held on St. Patrick's Day. From left, Liz Gil, Class of 2019; Martha Carlucci (2021); and Penny Readie (2024). See more photos on page 5.

**Meeting news: Tuesday, April 16, 7:20 pm**

### Ruth Carll

#### Weird and Wonderful Plants: Succulents

Picture yourself in a desert at midday. It's not a pleasant place to live. Now imagine you're a tiny seedling. It's a wonder that plants thrive in desert habitats.

Ruth Carll of Rutgers University will speak about these amazing survivors and how to care for them in our non-desert climate. She'll also suggest a few species to try, including a native cactus.

Our April 16 MG of BC meeting will be in the 4<sup>th</sup>-floor learning center at 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Refreshments are at 7 pm with announcements at 7:20 pm. Ruth will follow at about 7:30 pm.

*(Ruth Carll, continued on page 7)*

## What's inside

## Page

Webinars	2
From the Executive Board	2
President's Desk (continued from page 1)	2
MG of BC News	3
Volunteer Site News	4-6
Events	5
Garden Club Meetings	7
Ruth Carll (continued from page 1)	7
Horticulture	8-9
This and That	9

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

## From the President's Desk

### By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016

What a fun and engaging March meeting! With 45 MGs in attendance, you could feel the energy and enthusiasm in the room as we gathered for the first time since last autumn.



Thank you to Chris Kozar, Hospitality chair, for coordinating the food and drinks we enjoyed, and thank you to all those who brought treats to share. Thanks also go to Lisa Yoler and Maria Bushman for the decorations, book donations, and facilitating the seed swap, and to Donna Faustini, Program chair, for distributing the vegetable seeds from Paul Split, our February speaker.

With all the activity, I didn't get a chance to formally introduce the board members — we'll do that during the April meeting — but I did receive some questions and feedback from a variety of MGs in attendance. Next step is to research these ideas and develop action plans. If you've got ideas/suggestions you'd like to share, please send them to [me](#). See you at the April meeting.

Here are some MG suggestions from the March 19 meeting:

- Topics for future presentations: Bees; worms; native gardens;

*(President's desk, continued on page 2)*

## WEBINARS

*All times are Eastern.*

**April 3, 11-11:30 am:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Gardening 101: The Basics and Beyond. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

**April 3, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Container Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 9, noon-1 pm:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Growing Dwarf Fruit Trees in Containers. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

**April 9, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Fungi in the Garden. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 10, 2 pm:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts: Planning and Designing Your Containers. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 10, 6-7:30 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Veggie Gardening in Small Spaces. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 16, 2 pm:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Planting for Hummingbirds. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 17, 11 am-noon:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Tips on Getting Your Lawn in Shape. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

**April 17, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Vedges and Sedges Instead of Lawn. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 17, 7-9 pm:** Native Plant Society of NJ sponsors Who's in Your Garden? The Life and Times of Insects All Around Us. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 18, 1 pm:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Planting for Bees. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

## From the Executive Board

### Thanks for listening and responding!

**By Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004**

I was pleasantly surprised to have several Master Gardeners approach me at the March 19 meeting to volunteer to help the board fill several key positions as I requested in my editorial in the March 15 Potting Shed.



Arnie Friedman

Thank you to the people who stepped up, and thanks to the wonderful members who acknowledged reading the article. *Please know that we still need more assistance.*

We need more than one person to handle key jobs like Special Events and Hospitality and to volunteer for the Speakers Bureau. We still need someone to organize Trips and Tours.

We have been reminded by our state organization that our mandate is educating the community and spreading the agricultural knowledge of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. To achieve a more robust outreach into our community we will need more Master Gardeners to help.

Thank you for listening. Contact [me](#) by email or phone at 201-707-5149. I'm happy to discuss how you can help.

---

### ***(President's desk, continued from page 1)***

- "Zoom" the live presentations for those unable to attend in person;
- Hold MG meetings at local libraries instead of having all meetings in Hackensack;
- Hold MG meetings on days and times other than on Tuesday nights;
- Organize meetings where we do an activity and take home a completed product instead of always scheduling a lecture; and
- Make available active wear, for example, hats for cold weather, with the MG of BC logo.

## MG OF BC NEWS

### **Welcome, MG of BC Class of 2024**

Twenty-five interns from Bergen County are among more than 100 students from six counties participating in the 20-week online MG training this year. In addition to Bergen, students are from Burlington, Essex, Passaic, Somerset, and Union counties. (Somerset joined the group training this year.)

The online training program consists of core curriculum classes: Basic Entomology; Integrated Pest Management; Pesticide Safety; Soils and Fertilizers; Basic Botany and Plant Physiology; Basic Plant Pathology; Vegetable Gardening; Vegetable IPM; Lawn Care; Tree Fruit; Pruning; Native Plants; Tick Safety and Invasive Insects; Tree Care; and Flower Gardening.

Attendance is required via Zoom during the weekly class held Tuesdays from 10 am-12:30 pm. Faculty and staff from Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) and Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) serve as instructors. Joel Flagler, Bergen County ag agent, teaches Basic Botany and Plant Physiology and Horticultural Therapy.

In addition to the classwork, interns are required to complete 60 volunteer hours at approved MG of BC volunteer sites and special class projects within 12-18 months to become certified MGs.

"We're excited about the new class of MG interns," Joel said. "Requests from various towns are coming in for volunteers, and we're ready to jump into action in all our favorite MG sites. Earth Day events and environmental fairs are coming up, too. We look forward to seeing everyone this spring."

Joel added that both he and Karen Riede, horticultural assistant and Class of 2017, are so pleased to welcome the new interns and look forward to working with them.

Karen noted that as a result of the many calls and inquiries about the MG program in 2023, she established a waiting list. Since there's a high demand for the MG program in Bergen County, there was no need to recruit more applicants for the 2024 class. In fact, Karen said she has a waiting list for the 2025 MG training program.

### ***Congratulations on a job well done***



*Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*

Theresa Schneider, left, new president of the MG of BC, congratulates Melody Corcoran whose presidency ended in January. (Both are from the Class of 2016.) In the bag was a gift card to Rohsler's Allendale Nursery as a thank you. Melody served two, two-year terms; the first term began in January 2020.

### ***We recorded 8,513 volunteer hours in '23***

#### ***By Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008 and Volunteer Records Chair***

Congratulations MG of BC: You made a difference in 2023! Here's a summary of what MGs contributed to Bergen County in 2023 with our valuable volunteer hours. Approximately 90 MGs recorded 8,513 volunteer hours at our designated sites as well as teaching and administrative hours.

- We recorded 7,358 outreach hours; 889 administrative hours; 67 teaching hours; and 199 special project hours.
- Based on an hourly wage of \$33.82 for volunteers in New Jersey we contributed approximately \$287,909.66 to Bergen County.
- In addition, we recorded 1,385 hours of continuing education.

*We should all be very proud of our efforts year after year to beautify and preserve our very special sites in Bergen County. Keep up the wonderful work!*



## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### ***Butterfly and Native Garden will open April 9***



*Photo by Don Torino, Bergen County Audubon Society*

At left, Tammy Lavery, Class of 2015, and Pat Knight (2009) got in some pre-season pruning on a sunny day in February. They welcome new volunteers on Tuesdays from 10 am-1 pm.

The Butterfly and Native Garden in Overpeck County Park will open for the season beginning April 9 from 10 am-1 pm. Work involves controlling invasive plants, weeding, digging, watering, and planting. This season volunteers will install more native plants. Bring hand tools, bug spray, gloves, sun protection, and water. Wear long trousers tucked into socks and sturdy shoes.

The garden is located at 40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia, behind the paddocks of the Bergen Equestrian Center. First-timers should contact either [Pat Knight](#) or [Tammy Lavery](#), site coordinators, before attending.

#### **What volunteers have to say. . .**

When I trained to be a Master Gardener, I was immediately drawn to the idea of native plants and their pollinators. If you like to learn about native plants and the birds and butterflies that also enjoy them, this is the place to be.

**- Terry Campbell, Class of 2018**

Essentially, the Butterfly Garden at Overpeck is a native-plant, pesticide/herbicide-free demonstration project benefiting native pollinators. The core team are not only skilled gardeners, but also expert birders; volunteers can gain a dual learning experience. And....HORSES! The garden abuts the Bergen County Equestrian Center. Listening to them nicker as you work is very soothing.

**- Anne-Marie Romano, Class of 2022**

I LOVE volunteering at the Butterfly and Native Garden. It's a serene environment that offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in nature, contribute to conservation efforts, and connect with like-minded people. It's inspiring to be surrounded by people who are not only passionate about the cause but eager to help and share knowledge. Come join us, you may find you love it, too.

**- Carol Ennis, Class of 2019**

### ***Teaneck Creek 'blast' is April 11***

April 11 is the "blast" at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck. Volunteers are needed to work on a new native plant garden within the Peace Labyrinth. Come any time from 9 am-1 pm. The event will be held in light rain or shine. Click [here](#) to register, which is required. Those registered will be notified if the event is canceled due to weather.

Volunteers will prep the area for planting by moving/removing plants; clearing the labyrinth path; laying out plants; and some initial planting. If you have questions, click [here](#) to contact Stephanie Landau, Teaneck Creek Conservancy associate.

Bring hand tools, gloves, sunscreen, bug spray, refillable water bottle, and snacks. Teaneck Creek Conservancy will supply large tools as needed and water for your refillable water bottle. Dress in layers with closed-toe shoes and a sunhat as the area is fully exposed to the sun. And have fun!

**(Volunteer site news, continued on page 5)**

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### Garretson Forge & Farm's Pea Day planting attracts 40

**By Melody Corcoran,  
Class of 2016**

About 40 MGs, interns, Garretson members, and local residents came out for the annual Pea Day planting held on St. Patrick's Day. Planting peas on St. Patrick's Day is traditional and said to bring good luck at harvest time.

Adults planted peas in the pantry garden and helped weed and clean up the herb beds. Children planted peas in egg cartons to take home. Parents and children worked together to clean and prepare a small garden bed and then planted oregano seeds in the bed.

The peas are Cascadia snap peas, which can be planted either in spring or fall as they're a cool season crop. Days to maturity is 60 from direct planting. The pods are 3 inches long, and they're very crisp and delicious. As with Garretson's other crops, the peas are donated to St. Paul's Community Development Corp. Food Pantry in Paterson. (The gardeners do eat a few while harvesting.)



Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli (left) and Patricia Weiss, both Class of 2024.



From left: Howie Cohen, community volunteer; Gary Puzio, Class of 2021; Noel Schulz (2016).

*Photos by Terry Cohn, Class of 2020*

*(Volunteer site news, continued on page 6)*

### Visit us on social media

- **Facebook:** Visit Master Gardeners of Bergen County | Hackensack NJ | Facebook. A pop-up box will appear requesting that you log in or create an account. No need. Just click on the "x" in the upper right corner of the pop-up box to close it, and you'll have access to the MG of BC Facebook page.
- **Instagram**



## EVENTS

**April 13, 1 pm:** Learn how to attract hummingbirds to your garden sponsored by Friends of the Laurelwood Arboretum, 725 Pines Lake Road West, Wayne. Fee: Members \$10; non-members \$20. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 13, 3-5 pm:** Take a spring tree walk at Schmidt's Woods Park, 26 Millridge Road, Secaucus, sponsored by the Hudson County Chapter of the Native Plant Society. Free. Click [here](#) to register. Space is limited.

**April 15, 1 pm:** Robyn Lowenthal, Class of 2011, will discuss Gardening the Green Way at the North Bergen Public Library, 8411 Bergenline Ave., North Bergen. No registration required.



## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### *At the Hermitage: A good time was had by all!*



The Hermitage drew a crowd during its opening days in March. From left: Maggie Raywood, Class of 2021; Ed Drennan (2019); Cynthia Drennan (2019); Marie Scotti-Bosworth with rake (2023); Donna Picheria behind Marie (2023); Joe Gemignani (2024); Marylou Moravic (2024); Chris Kozar (2020); Bernadette White, site coordinator (2021); Katherine Montgomery wearing sunglasses (2023) Liz Gil (2019); Herb Arbeiter (2019); and Bob Nunes (2023). That's Nancy Moses, Hermitage grounds coordinator, in the wheelbarrow.

*Photo by Caroline Newman, Class of 2019*



*Photos by Bernadette White*

**A bucketload of fun:** From left above, Donna Picheria (2023) takes a break from leaf collecting; Bob Nunes (2023) transports leaves; and Katherine Montgomery (2023) collects fallen branches. Nancy Moses, Hermitage grounds coordinator, reports that upcoming volunteer sessions will include raking and cleaning flower beds; working in the pollinator garden; sowing seeds; weeding and dressing the herb garden; and potting plants for an upcoming sale. Volunteers meet Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:30 am-noon. The Hermitage is located at 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus.



## GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

*All meetings are free and open to the public.*

**April 4, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park,** Harrington Park Public Library upstairs meeting room, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: Christopher Raimondi, president and CEO of the Raimondi Horticultural Group. Topic: What's New in 2024. Refreshments and Q&A to follow. Visit the club's [website](#).

**April 9, 7 pm: Ramsey Area Garden Club,** Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 55 Wyckoff Ave. (corner of Woodland Avenue), Ramsey. Park behind the church. Speaker: Suzy Ludwig, club member. Topic: Off the Menu - What Ravenous Deer Prefer to Pass By.

**April 10, 6:30 pm: Wyckoff Area Garden Club,** Wyckoff Public Library, 200 Woodland Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Kathy Sauerborn, Passaic County MG. Topic: Gardening for Hummingbirds. Refreshments served.

**April 10, 7 pm: Garden Club of Oakland,** Oakland Senior Center, 20 Lawlor Drive, Oakland. Speaker: Jim Wright, writer, photographer, and bird specialist. Topic: "The Screech Owl Companion," Jim's latest book. Refreshments served.

**April 11, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Teaneck,** Room MP1, Rodda Center, 250 Colonial Court, Teaneck. Drive up the hill to the rear parking lot. Speaker: Michael Lynch, farm manager of Greens Do Good, vertical hydroponic farm in Hackensack. Refreshments at 7 pm.

**April 17, 6 pm: Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club,** 320 Boulevard, 2nd floor, Hasbrouck Heights. Park in the lot at rear of the building. Speaker: Lynne Proskow, MG Class of 2022. Topic: Container Gardening in Small Places.

## *Time for a trim*



*Photo by Keith Mazanec, Class of 2019*

Herb Arbeiter, Class of 2019, uses a pole saw to prune an overgrown false holly at Thielke Arboretum. The result: More sunlight for the adjacent tree and the flower bed below. Assisting is Bob Nunes (2023).

*(Ruth Carll, continued from page 1)*

Ruth is the state leader of consumer horticulture and Master Gardener programs for Rutgers University. Ruth is an innovative leader in the botanical education field. After earning her master's degree in botany from Arizona State University, she led the education and volunteer program at the [Desert Botanical Garden](#) in Phoenix and later became the executive director of the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#) in Scottsdale.



**Ruth Carll**

She joined the Rutgers Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) in January. Her current research interests focus on the impact of consumer horticulture activities conducted throughout the state.

## HORTICULTURE

### *Tale of a sensational lilac*

**By Edith Terzano, Class of 2018**

I've always loved lilacs, so one year I asked for a lilac bush for Mother's Day. First planted outside under my kitchen window, I looked forward to catching a whiff of the fragrant lilac trusses (clusters of florets at the end of a branch) that bloomed each spring. After a time, we relocated the bush to the backyard so that I could enjoy a full sensory experience by sitting outside, seeing, smelling, and enjoying the once-a-year happening.

Then one year, much to my surprise, I noticed a single all white truss that appeared among the many purple-and-white-tinged brethren on the bush. Hmm, my curiosity was piqued. I wanted to know what caused this to happen.

First, I learned that my lilac bush is a *Syringa vulgaris*, a common lilac variety named 'Sensation.' This variety features large trusses of fragrant, single purple-red florets edged in white that typically bloom in mid-spring. It is a vigorous upright shrub with heart-shaped, bluish-green foliage that turns yellow in the fall. It can be planted alone, like mine, or with others to form a hedge.



Edith's *Syringa vulgaris* 'Sensation'

I discovered that 'Sensation' is a lovely French cultivar with an interesting history. In 1938, Dirk Eveleen Maarse, Sr. — whose interest in lilacs was sparked in the 1920s by his friend and colleague D.C. Keesen — introduced the first bicolored lilac as a mutation (or "sport") of the purple 'Hugo de Vries' lilac. In 1954 in the United States, it was very unusual to patent plants, but Maarse patented his 'Sensation' lilac (PP # 1,242). [Editor's note: PP stands for plant patent.] His unique cultivar remains the only lilac known for its single purple flowers with white edges.



Photo courtesy of Rosie Lerner, Purdue University Extension

Example of an all-white truss appearing on *Syringa vulgaris* 'Sensation.'

OK, so then how did this all-white truss come to be on my bicolored 'Sensation'?

Next, according to Purdue University Extension Services for Home Gardeners, I found that certain cultivars, like 'Sensation' with interesting color variegation, begin as sports. After being successfully propagated, sports are ready to be introduced as named cultivars. But it turns out that these cultivars may not be entirely stable. Sometimes one or more branches can revert back and lose their unique color pattern. Because my 'Sensation' lilac is a cultivar, it appears that its white truss was a full-fledged reversion of the cultivar's pre-mutation origin. Hmm, I like that. It humors me.

Finally, according to my research, if I carefully pruned away the white truss or even the branch it grew on the shrub would not be harmed. But I'm not inclined to do so. I like its storied past and the visual intrigue it represents. In its own way I find it "sensational."

*(Horticulture, continued on page 9)*

#### **Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County**

<b>Joel Flagler</b>	Agricultural/Resources Management Agent/County Extension Dept. Head 201-336-6780
<b>Karen Riede</b>	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.



(Horticulture, continued from page 8)

## **'Romeo' and 'Mary Poppins' together at last**



*Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture for the [Morris County Park Commission](#), is the first to refer to himself as a plant geek. In mid-March, he passed along these photos of narcissus that were blooming at the [Frelinghuysen Arboretum](#) and [Willowood Arboretum](#).*

*"I have been enjoying snowdrops since January, but I am still sad to see*

*them fade! On the other hand, I am eager to see the next round of bulbs appear. Yet, I am not at all a fan of these overly warm temps. It is tough being a gardener and plant geek," he wrote. "We planted some new species of narcissus at the arboreta last fall, and I have been enjoying these beauties. *Narcissus romieuxii* [above] is one that I never even heard of and saw it for sale in Brent and Becky's catalogue.*

Meanwhile, at right, is a species type of *Narcissus bulbocodium* called 'Mary Poppins.' "It is a lighter yellow than 'Romeo,' and slightly taller, but still very cool," he wrote. "I only purchased 50 of the 'Romeo' but will get more next year."



*Photos courtesy of Bruce Crawford*

## **And speaking of Bruce Crawford . . .**

Bruce has named *Jeffersonia diphylla*, commonly called twinleaf, as his April Plant of the Month. (At right



are *Jeffersonia*'s buds and foliage shown in early April.) The name pays tribute to Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States. Click [here](#) to read more on the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station website. Click [here](#) for the list of previous Plants of the Month.

*Photo courtesy of Bruce Crawford*

## **Potting soil or potting mix – which to use?**

Martha Stewart's website describes potting soil and potting mix and advises when to use each. Click [here](#) to read the article.

## **THIS AND THAT**

### **Save the dates for the Fall Festival**

The Bergen County Fall Harvest Festival will be Sept. 20-22 at Overpeck County Park in Ridgefield Park. Alas, last year's festival was rained out. Let's hope for better weather this fall.

### **Aww, aren't they cute!**

Check out the Duke Farms live eagle cam on [YouTube](#) and watch the parents raise two eaglets. The family resides in an 80-foot sycamore in a restricted area of Duke Farms. For more about the American bald eagle and links to other web cams, click [here](#) to visit the American Eagle Foundation.