

# From the Potting Shed November 2021

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

## Virtual meeting – Tuesday, Nov. 16

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow.

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

Meeting ID: 926 9258 8641; password: 692429

## Plant Geeks Are Us - Oddball Plants for Oddball People

Is finding an unusual plant for your garden on your to-do list for 2022? Adam Wheeler may have some ideas for you in his fun-filled lecture that explores the world of unusual and uncommon woody plants focusing on rarities best suited for Northeast landscapes.



Adam Wheeler

Adventurous gardeners with an experimental appetite will learn about a diversity of treasures available only from a handful of sources in the world. Ornamental qualities, cultural details, and design perspective are all integrated into this geeky and visually pleasing presentation.

Adam earned a BS degree in urban forestry and landscape horticulture at the University of Vermont. In

2004, he began working at [Broken Arrow Nursery](#) in Hamden, CT, where he now manages plant propagation, container production, mail order, and the acquisition and development of new plants.

Adam loves to share his passion for plants through photography and educational outreach. He lectures on a variety of subjects and is an adjunct lecturer at Naugatuck Valley Community College and the Berkshire Botanical Garden. In his spare time he enjoys cultivating his eclectic collection of rare and unusual plants, rock climbing, and competitive giant pumpkin growing.

### We want your opinion on speakers and topics

We're planning our spring meetings. Are there any topics you'd like to learn about or speakers you'd like to hear? Contact [Donna Faustini](#), program chair, with suggestions. She'll consider requests within the limits of the MG of BC budget.

Contents	Page
MG of BC News	2
Horticulture	2-3
Webinars	3
Things to Do	3-4
Volunteer Site News	4
Farmers Markets	4
Editor's Pick	4
Horticulture Grapevine	4

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

## From the President's Desk

### By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Who doesn't like woolly bears, those fuzzy black-brown-black striped caterpillars? They are the larva of the Isabella tiger moth, *Pyrrharctia isabella*. Other names for these caterpillars are woolly worms, fuzzy bears, and hedgehog caterpillars. Like a hedgehog, they "play dead" by curling up into a tight ball when they are disturbed.



Woolly bears are most often seen in fall when they are crawling about searching for the perfect spot to hibernate under logs, rocks, or bark. Woolly bears spend the winter as caterpillars. They are able to do this because they produce glycerol, the same chemical found in antifreeze. Most of the caterpillar will freeze solid, but the centers of the caterpillar's cells are protected from freezing by the glycerol.



Photo courtesy of J. R. Baker, NC State University

This woolly bear caterpillar is heading left.

When temperatures rise in the spring, the woolly bear thaws out, eats for a few days, and then forms a cocoon and pupates. After a month, the adult moth emerges. Adult moths do not eat; they spend a few days mating and laying eggs, then they die. The generation that emerges in the spring produces the second generation that will hibernate in the fall.

Folk wisdom says that woolly bears can predict what kind of winter we will have. Each woolly bear has 13 segments, one for each week of winter. If the caterpillar

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

is mostly brown, the winter will be mild. If the caterpillar is mostly black, the winter will be harsh. If the head of the caterpillar has a wider black stripe than the tail, the beginning of winter will be severe; conversely, if the tail is blacker than the head, the end of winter will be harsher.

The direction in which a woolly bear is seen crawling can also predict the type of winter ahead. If the caterpillar is heading south, the winter will be severe. If the caterpillar is heading north, the winter will be mild.

Folk wisdom, however, is wrong. The coloration of the woolly bear is not a weather predictor. Coloration depends on the species (some are entirely black), age, and feeding of the caterpillar. Woolly bears molt six times. They are all black when they hatch, and the middle brown section widens with each successive molt. Abundant food sources will result in a narrower middle brown section.

Woolly bears are such popular insects that there are woolly bear festivals in Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Ontario each fall. Parades, woolly bear races, and weather predictions are the highlights of the day at these festivals.

Just for the fun of it, go outside, find a woolly bear, and make your own winter prediction. Beware of an all-black woolly bear heading south! The winter will be severe.

**Editor's note:** Watch this segment about the life of an arctic woolly bear caterpillar from the PBS documentary "Snowbound: Animals of Winter." It's on [YouTube](#).

## MG OF BC NEWS

### President and VP elected at October meeting

Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016, was elected president of the MG of BC for a second term at the Oct. 19 virtual meeting. Elizabeth "Liz" Gil, Class of 2019, was elected vice president.

Until recently, Melody also served as site coordinator liaison. Liz took over the site coordinator liaison role in June. Liz is also site coordinator at the Hermitage.

Said Melody: "Who knew that my first term as president of the MG of BC would be combined with a pandemic and Zoom. These two years have been a real learning experience for me. I want to thank all of our board members and MGs for their help and support. I could not have done this job without them, and I will continue to rely on them and their experience for the next two years."

## Have you visited our website?

The MG of BC [website](#) awaits your visit. Check out the public section, which has general information, volunteer site descriptions, the most recent *Potting Shed* and *Mid-Month Update*, and helpful links. The members-only section gives you access to the online Member Directory, organization documents, meeting minutes, and past issues of the *Potting Shed*. For access to the members-only section, send an email to [info@mgofbc.org](mailto:info@mgofbc.org) with the username and password you want to use. Passwords are case-sensitive and limited to 10 letters/numbers (no special characters). Usernames and passwords didn't carry over from the old website.

## HORTICULTURE



Photo courtesy of Bruce Crawford

Aster Tataricus Jindai with Blue Star Amsonia.

## Cannas and asters and monkshood, oh my!

What's still blooming in the garden? Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, who opened her beautiful shade garden to the MG of BC this summer, reports that her fall bloomers are sending a message. Her Aster Tataricus (purchased many years ago at the [Cross Estate Gardens](#) in Mendham) and Aster Tataricus Jindai (a gift from Donna Karpel, Class of 2013) are blooming "like crazy," she reported.

When the monkshood (*Aconitum*) blooms, winter is around the corner and it's time to put the garden to bed. Her advice for the cannas: Wait until the first frost. Then, whether the cannas are planted in the ground or in pots, cut them and store them for the winter.

For more about Aster Tataricus, read Bruce Crawford's "Plant of the Month" [column](#) from November 2020. For more about putting your garden to bed, see the following:

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

- How to put your garden to bed and prepare for cold weather from the [Spruce](#).
- Top tips for preparing your garden for winter from the [Farmers' Almanac](#).
- Putting your garden to bed with your own personal style from [Penn State Extension](#) Philadelphia Master Gardeners.

## WEBINARS

**Nov. 1, 6:30 pm:** Rutgers Cooperative Extension's Earth Day Every Day series sponsors In the City! Let's Stop As-Salt-ing Our Streams - The Impacts of Road Salt on Freshwater. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 5, noon:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Winter Care for Shrubs. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

### Native Plant Society of NJ's online fall conference

**Nov. 6, 8:45 am-4 pm:** Native Plant Society of NJ holds its annual fall conference. Free. Click [here](#) for more information, the schedule/times, and to register. Presentations and speakers:

- The Dawn of Ecosystems, James Boyer, [New York Botanical Garden](#);
- Recognizing and Protecting Ancient Forests, Joan Maloof, founder of the [Old-Growth Forest Network](#);
- Basic Plant ID, Nancy Slowik, NYBG; and
- Rethinking the Front Lawn - Monoculture and the American Dream, Caitlin Merritt, NYBG.

**Nov. 9, noon-1 pm:** Rutgers Cooperative Extension Homesteading Academy sponsors Fun with Fungi - Grow Your Own Mushrooms. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 16, 7-8 pm:** Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Garden Railroads (an outdoor miniature railroad with strategic plantings around it). Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 16, 7 pm:** Wild Ones sponsors the Self-Perpetuating Landscape. Speaker is Larry Weaner,

## Gone to pot



What can you do with all those plastic flowerpots? For those you can't recycle, bring them to Home Depot. Learn about the Home Depot plant pot [recycling program](#). Meanwhile, Lowe's recycles rechargeable batteries, cell phones, CFL (compact fluorescent lamp)

bulbs, and plastic shopping bags at the stores' entrance. The Paramus Lowe's will accept plastic flowerpots in its garden department.

landscape designer. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 17, noon-1 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Pruning Young Trees for Strength, Structure, and Form. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 17, 7-8 pm:** Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County sponsors Warm Up with Healthy Soups. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Nov. 17, 7-8 pm:** Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation sponsors Managing Pests While Protecting Pollinators. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## THINGS TO DO

### Wreath making workshop at NJBG

New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands will sponsor its annual wreath making workshop at 10 am and at 1 pm, Nov. 20. Cost is \$20 members/\$25 non-members. Materials will be provided; bring clippers and any special ribbon or decorations you might wish to use.

Reservations are required. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. You also can call the NJBG office at 973-962-9534.

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

## Cleanup at the Greenway

Get out your loppers and pruners for the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck's cleanup at Lower Brett Park, Teaneck, from 11 am-1 pm, Nov. 7. Park on Riverview Avenue, Teaneck, and meet at the Frank Chapman entrance. Masks are required. Visit the [website](#).

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### Earn hours at the Holiday Open House

You can earn volunteer hours at the upcoming Holiday Open House at Skylands Manor Nov. 29-Dec. 5.



A sprite from the MG of BC's 2019 display at the Holiday Open House when volunteers decorated the dining and breakfast rooms.

to volunteer, contact Sue Sheridan at 201-664-2120 or by email at [swsheridan78@gmail.com](mailto:swsheridan78@gmail.com).

The Skylands Manor HOH is an annual event sponsored by the Skylands Association to raise funds that are used to restore and add to the New Jersey Botanical Garden's landscaping and buildings. For example, funds helped pay for a new roof to the Carriage House and are going toward restoration of the Pump House.

## FARMERS MARKETS

**Ramsey Farmers Market**, Main Street train station. Sundays, 9 am-2 pm through November. **Note:** The market will be open December-April from 10 am-1 pm at

the train station except when severe weather is expected. For a list of rules, vendors, and other information, click [here](#). For last-minute changes, check the market's [Facebook](#) page.

**Ridgewood Farmers Market**, train station parking lot, Godwin and West Ridgewood avenues. Sundays, 8:30 am-2 pm through Nov. 21.

## EDITOR'S PICK

A team from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the University of Pennsylvania transformed vacant lots in Philly into green spaces, which resulted in a decrease in gun violence. Read the [guest essay](#) in the New York Times by Dr. Eugenia South, assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and faculty director of the Urban Health Lab. She explains the project. There's more about land transformation on the [PHS website](#).

- *Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*

## HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

**Oct. 18, 6-8 pm, Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, Hasbrouck Heights library meeting room, 320 Boulevard, 2nd floor, Hasbrouck Heights. Speaker: Marc Hachadourian, senior curator of the orchid collection at the New York Botanical Garden. Topic: Orchids. Greetings and refreshments at 5:30 pm. Park at the rear of the building.



Three amigos in Ridgefield Park

### Thank you, Master Gardeners

for contributing to the November *Potting Shed*: Melody Corcoran, Donna Faustini, Janet Schulz, and Sue Sheridan.