



# TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS

December, 2009 Edition ~ [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org)

## Dues & Discounts!

Guess what ~ this is the last dues reminder for 2009! They are due in January. Yes, we are working on a real membership card for Takoma Horticultural Club members who pay their 2010 dues! I realize there are a lot of you who have already paid 2010 dues and even 2011 dues. But the cards are not ready, because we want to combine them with some great discounts from some local



garden shops, nurseries, etc. When these discounts have been finalized you will be sent an email attachment with your card and the list of the discounts. Please make sure I have your current email address. If you are just joining, be sure your email address is written very

clearly on the form, at [takomahort.org/membership](http://takomahort.org/membership)

If you have a garden-related business or know someone who does, put me in touch with them if you think a discount can be offered to our members. Life Time members who have paid \$125 should have a special membership card. Let me know if you do not have one. These cards must be mailed or given to you in person at a club event. Remember, our first event for 2010 is our wonderful potluck dinner and indoor plant exchange on Wednesday, January 20. You must be a member to attend. You may pay your 2010 dues or join the club at the dinner. We appreciate your paying with a \$12 check made out to THC, as we will not have change at the dinner. *(continued p.2)*



## November Club Meeting

### **Garden Round Table**

#### **Provides Helpful Advice**

Master Gardeners Fran McClure and Chris Lewis answered gardening questions and offered advice at the Club's November 18 meeting, a 'Garden Round Table'.

After door prizes were distributed to lucky ticket-holders, the expert panel took on a wide range of questions from the audience, from diseases affecting boxwood and clematis to landscaping suggestions for difficult spots. For two landscaping problems, a "green wall" to complement a planned mosaic on Westmoreland Avenue, and a channelized stream whose steep banks have become a safety issue, Fran McClure suggested that they contact her landscape design team, which does some *pro bono* design for community projects. For a small yellowing boxwood growing in a pot, the experts recommended Epsom salts applied and washed through the root ball. Yellow-orange can be a sign of magnesium deficiency, they said. Plants with mysterious conditions, such as a member's spotty and blackening clematis, can be brought to the Plant Clinics held at Brookside Gardens.

*(continued p.2)*

(Dues, cont'd) Thanks to our wonderful 169 members, and especially the 54 who have already paid their 2010 dues. Happy Holidays!  
Carole Galati [cagalati@rcn.com](mailto:cagalati@rcn.com)

## THC Program for 2010 Take Shape- Here's a Preview!

This draft of the 2010 program is still incomplete and subject to change. More information and details will be posted on the Listserv and [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org) as each event is confirmed. Keep checking!

### January 16

*National Agriculture Library  
Private Open House*

### January 20

*\*\*Winter Potluck & Plant Exchange*

### February 17

*Designing Gardens Using Native Plants:  
Carla Thomas*

### March 17

*Landscape Design: John Gordon*

### April 21

*Using Edibles in the Landscape*

### May 15

*\*\*Spring Plant Exchange*

### May 30

*\*\*Nick Weber's  
Heritage Rosarium Tour*

### June 13

*\*\*THC Garden Tour*

### July (TBA)

*Rain Garden Event*

### August (TBA)

*\*\*Summer Potluck*

### September 15

*Gardening With Conifers: Fran McClure*

### October 3

*Takoma Street Festival/THC Bulb Sale*

### October 17

*\*\*Fall Plant Exchange*

### November 17

*Trees: Todd Bolton*

**\*\* THC member event**

## THC OFFICERS FOR 2010

President: Kit Gage  
Vice-President: Karen Helfert  
Treasurer: Taffy Turner  
Secretary: Melanie Isis

## Welcome One and All

Welcome to our new November members: Ed & Marianna Diggs, Erica Thum, Ruth Masterson, Aga Traynor and Fran McClure. We hope you join in the activities and take advantage of the many benefits that THC membership has to offer. Becky Lavash and Kit Gage changed their status from annual members to Life Members. Now they can never quit! Hope we didn't miss anyone!

## (Garden Roundtable cont'd)

The evening's business was the election of club officers for 2010. Current officers were re-elected for another term and Carole Galati gave a preview of the program for the coming year. The audience then shared garden projects and resources. Sue Gleason has an Aerogarden, a nifty apparatus in which plants grow hydroponically in nutrient-laden water, yielding fresh lettuce and basil on her kitchen counter. Aga Traynor, a Master Gardener, also gardens soil-lessly in her basement; her business *sligogarden.com* helps people start. She talked about different kinds of equipment available and crops that can be grown hydroponically. Carole, Karen Hefner and others shared books from their libraries such as the *Plant Book of Lists*, which lists plants under conditions they prefer, *Month by Month* and *Indoor Bonsai*. Kathy Jentz, editor and publisher of *Washington Gardener*, available to members at a 10% discount, spoke of the various events the magazine sponsors, including a seed exchange, a garden lecture series, and a garden photo contest opening in January. More than one attendee said they enjoyed the give-and-take format and hoped the Roundtable would be repeated.

## Trees—a Year-Round Joy! by Cynthia Tootle

(Editor's Note: *The other day I came upon my neighbor, Cynthia Tootle raking neat piles of unfamiliar(to me) tree leaves out to her curb. I thought that the different tree choices she's made for her property might interest THC News readers. Cynthia is a Minister at the Takoma Chapel and has gardened in Silver Spring for 31 years.*

I am an unabashed tree lover. Trees provide much needed shade in the summer. They can turn an unsightly view into a vision. They can provide privacy and serenity to a city space. They can add color to a winter landscape. They add vertical interest to your flower garden. What's not to love? (Except leaf raking- but I figure the exercise is good for me, and what else is there for a gardener to do in November anyway?)



Now is the perfect time to examine your land and garden with thought for tree planting in the spring. With the foliage of the trees, shrubs, and perennials gone, you can better see the shape and bones of your yard. Where do you have the space for, or need of a tree? Let me give you some examples of how I have used trees.

My bedroom has two windows. One looks north and gave me a great view of my front yard and a telephone pole and my neighbor's driveway. I planted two trees, a fluffy evergreen and a *stewartia pseudocamellia*. The evergreen has grown to block the unsightly view year around and acts as a backdrop for the *Stewartia*. The *Stewartia* adds greenery, flowers, fall color, and lovely bark in the various seasons so I always have an attractive view (even when my annuals are gone!) My other bedroom window looked out at the side of my neighbor's house, which is windowless dark brown siding. Since my house is on the side

of a hill, only a tree would be tall enough to improve this view. I planted a clump of Heritage River Birch. The birch grew to visible height very quickly and adds color and motion to the view. The birch is able to do well despite the limited light between houses and under giant oaks. I particularly like the way it sways with the slightest breeze so the blank view now has motion as well as color. It's like a living Calder mobile.

We are lucky in Silver Spring to have many beautiful big oaks and maples to shade us from the heat all summer, but smaller trees can provide us with beauty on more human scales while adding privacy. In the back corner of my long narrow property, I wanted to create a little refuge for myself. Fences provided privacy on two sides but the other sides opened into my yard but also to a view of my neighbor's house. So I planted three trees over time to provide beauty, shade, and intimacy. I planted a weeping cherry that



stays low and spreads and blooms in falling waves of white. I planted a dogwood for spring flowers and lovely shape. I also planted a Katsuratree for its movement and color and dappled shade. Many years from now the Katsuratree

will be a giant tree but for now all three are relatively small and add their own character while defining a lovely area for reading and meditation.

Winter is a wonderful time to dream of the garden you can create next summer. Consider the wonderful addition of a tree or two as you plan.

*Photos: Stewartia bark(web); Gingko in fall, C.Tootle;*

*Page 1, ilex aquifolium (web); sign from photo by by Karen.Helfert at [takomahort.org](http://takomahort.org)*

## GARDENING EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE COMMUNITY

*Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallen Avenue, Wheaton*

### **Friends of Brookside Gardens Annual Wreath Sale**

**Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12, 4pm-8pm**

FOBG will be selling 18" boxwood wreaths made by Friends members and 24" Balsam Fir wreaths shipped fresh from Maine. Wreaths may be purchased at Brookside. Come before 5 if you are not attending the Garden of Lights.

### **Garden of Lights**

**5:30-9:00pm through Jan. 3**

940,000 twinkling colorful lights shaped in imaginative displays throughout the gardens. Enjoy the four seasons illuminated as giant summer sunflowers, autumn leaves, winter snowflakes, spring flowers, rain showers, and more. Walk along the easily accessible paths and you'll see hundreds of wrapped trees and shrubs, beautifully lighted gazebos, cascading fountains, and the individually formed displays in the shapes of blooming flowers and wild animals, some in motion.

### **Holiday Train Exhibit**

One of the most popular features, the train exhibit will be open all during the Garden of Lights Display. The Washington Virginia Maryland Garden Railroad Society will return for its fifth year to operate a garden railway inside the south conservatory. Flowering plants and evergreens will provide a colorful landscape through which the trains travel.

*Hillwood Museum and Gardens*

**December 27 Serene Sunday**

Hillwood is open on select Sundays throughout the year. After hustling and bustling this holiday season, take this Sunday to relax with family and friends, stroll through the gardens and enjoy the estate's holiday decorations.

*US Botanic Garden*

**Holiday Magic through Jan.10**

A miniature railway winds through storybook gardens and a miniature National Mall, with buildings (this year including the American Indian Museum) and scenery made from plant-based natural materials,

**Evening Hours with Music**

**6:00- 8:00 pm**

On some Tuesdays and Thursdays in December the Botanic Garden will remain open until 8, and different musical groups will perform. Dec. 1 is Harpers Bizarre, Dec. 10 is Klezmer. Other programs are on Dec.3. 15. 22. 29.

*Green Spring Gardens*

*4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria*

"Gifts from the Garden" workshops will yield holiday presents. Decoupage with ferns, December 5 at 9:30; Winter Wreaths, December 5 at 1:30. Gardeners' Holiday Open House, December 6. See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/ed-adult.htm> for details and costs.

Send comments and contributions to the THC News to Diane Svenonius, the editor, at [dbsvenonius@msn.com](mailto:dbsvenonius@msn.com)