



TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB NEWS

November, 2010 Edition

www.takomahort.org

Be Our Member Gardener In the Spotlight This New Year!

The Takoma Horticultural Club will introduce a new feature of its web site www.takomahort.org starting on the first of the new year... and it could be about you! Each quarter, we'll present photos from a different THC member's garden. You choose the aspect of your garden you want to present: a spring bulb or landscaping design; a solution for storm runoff or steep incline that looks good and does the job; your long love affair with [name that plant]; or your whole garden... plus some words about how you got there.

Think of it as a way to show off the best bits of your garden without having to spruce up for Open Garden day! Or better yet, as a way to share a good outcome with other members and listserv viewers.

So...go take a look at the garden photos you took last spring, summer and fall, and send them with a few paragraphs to THC_webmaster@yahoo.com. If your garden looks especially good right now, take some photos and tell us what plant choices made a difference. You can be an inspiration or a problem-solver for someone. And we are always curious about each others' gardening experiences!

We need several digital photos (maximum size 900KB each) and your short essay (up to 400 words) about your garden and how it got there, to the THC webmaster. A member will be featured each quarter, and for the January 2011 inaugural presentation the materials must be in by November 15.
(Continued, see Spotlight, page 2)



Bring on the...

POLLINATORS!

***THC's Next Meeting with Master Gardener Paula Jean Hallberg
November 17 at 7:30, Takoma Park
Community Center, Maple at Philadelphia***
—by Carole Galati

Who cares about pollinators? We all should! Did you know that bees, butterflies, moths, and other pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat?! We need to help them survive! Today's pollinators face many threats, including habitat loss and degradation and fragmentation of the landscape. As native vegetation is replaced by roadways, lawns, crops and non-native gardens, pollinators lose the food and nesting sites necessary for their survival.

The good news is that we, the gardeners, can help. Learn how to bring bees, butterflies and moths back into your landscape by choosing pollinator-friendly plants and landscaping techniques that will provide the food and shelter they need.

Paula Jean Hallberg, a Montgomery County
(See Pollinators!, page 2, column 2)



Fall Plant Exchange photos by Carole Galati



Welcome To Our Newest Members!

Wow, are we growing! (Like weeds?) Please welcome all these new and returning members and encourage them to get involved! Between the Street Festival and the Plant Exchange, we saw a lot of new faces.

Welcome to Rebecca Rudesill, Ann Flanagan, Karen Fishman, Philip McClain, Norm Gleichman, Terese Bouey, LaTonya Smith, Etana Finkler, Brian Richmond, Maija Hay, Ruth Masterson, Elizabeth King, Jenee Weede, Dennis Olsog, George Green, Maria Haramillo, Ellen McBarnette, Susan Boscarino, and Jonathan Jay. If you joined the club in October and your name is missing, please let me know. Remember that dues are due January 1st for 2011. Our Wonderful Winter Potluck in January is a members-only event! Carole (cagalati@rcn.com)

Spotlight, continued from page 1

The new feature will be a stand-alone page, and you'll be able to preview the page for accuracy before it goes public. Submissions after the first deadline or those not used in January will be kept and considered for subsequent quarterly postings.

Note that we're being coy about the title for this feature. There will be a prize for the best title submitted by anyone-- THC member or not. The prize will be one free THC membership for 2011. The title should be interesting, and convey the ideas suggested above. Please send your naming suggestions to the webmaster.

THC's Fall Plant Exchange What a Bummer! –

If You Did Not Attend!

A great day it was: sunny, cool, slightly breezy, plenty of plants, garden items galore, delicious refreshments, plus bulbs for sale. Thank you to the 37 people who made it all happen: setting up chairs, hauling plants from cars, providing refreshments and cleaning up afterwards. How wonderful to have at least nine people there who had never been to a Plant Exchange before. And then there were the five new members who joined! If you still have plants to share or are looking for plants, use the listserv to let us know.

Our January Potluck date is not firm yet. It might be the 19th. There, we will have another, smaller plant exchange featuring houseplants and garden treasures. It is a great "after the holidays" boost. __CG

Pollinators!, continued from page 1

Master Gardener and West Virginia Master Naturalist will use content and materials provided by Connie Schmotzer for the Penn State Master Gardeners, using a grant from Haagen Dazs. She'll share valuable links and allow ample time for Q & A. Refreshment donations are welcome. There will be door prizes! For questions call 301.442.2023.



Hungry Fungus Will Eat Your Old Jeans, Says Expert

What's a mushroom? Not a plant, it's the "fruiting body" of a fungus, and its dustlike spores are like seeds for the next organism. Most of a mushroom fungus consists of a net of moist white fibers called mycelium that runs beneath the soil. The strange world of mushroom gardening was the topic of a lively rat-a-tat-tat style talk and slide show by Tradd Cotter of Mushroom Mountain in South Carolina, at this year's GreenFestDC at the Washington Convention Center.

Mycelium has wonderful digestion, and is always hungry for carbon, Cotter said. What will it eat? Many eat recycled coffee grounds, cardboard rolls, egg cartons (not Styrofoam), newspaper, office paper, pizza boxes, and old cotton clothes like jeans. Save them in a jar or pail, or an old tire. If stacked or clustered, they fuse together as the mycelium spreads through the substance.

Mycelium will stay mycelium unless it runs out of food, or hits a barrier and can spread no further. At that point, tiny fruits (pins) will begin to form across the surface. The bigger ones will get bigger; smaller ones can be cleared away. As the mycelium absorbs the material, it will break down most toxins, but not heavy metals (so don't pick mushrooms along a road). Depending on type, some mushrooms enjoy logs, leaves, hardwood chips and manures. For example, King Stropharia is a good edible mushroom that likes wood chips. Blewit, a

purple mushroom, likes leaf mold. Oyster mushrooms can be "planted" on oak logs (using plugs that can be purchased online) as long as the log is relatively fresh.

Cotter experiments continually with growing media in his lab and is a big booster of grow-your-own. At the end of his talk one felt like crumpling up the festival program to start a mushroom habitat right away.

You should probably resist that urge, and start with a kit as most people do, expanding into logs and gardens later. An article in *Mother Earth News* by Barbara Pleasant (October, 2010), cited by Cotter, describes several available starters, including an "oyster mushroom tower" of wheat or oat straw, plugs made of sawdust and "spawn" (mushroom starter culture) for starting shiitake on logs; and "patches" of winecap mycelium (the caps are wine-red in shade) such as King Stropharia which can be started in garden soil, wood chip piles or compost heaps. "Order a patch in late winter and give it a head start indoors then plant the chunks... anytime after soil temperature has reached 50 to 60 degrees." A Tennessee gardener grows them among his hostas, she says. The article gives several sources for kits. (Supplies can also be bought from Cotter's site, see below).

Even if you don't care about eating them, fungi are nature's great decomposers, turning the carbon of fallen forest wood into soil for new growth.. "Fungi govern the decomposition cycles, and make it possible for natural biological systems to operate. They are tremendous allies for the health of people and the planet."¹ —Diane Svenonius

Sources of information:

Tradd Cotter, www.mushroommountain.com has how-to videos and an on-line store.

Barbara Pleasant, "Grow Your Own Mushrooms", *Mother Earth News*, October 2010 can be read at <http://www.motheearthnews.com/Organic-Gardening/2004-10-01/Grow-your-own-Mushrooms.aspx>

Photo credit: This page, *stropharia rugosoannulata* by Marie, Mushroom Observer http://www.mushroomobserver.org/image/show_image/62726

¹ Paul Stamets, of Fungi Perfecti, Olympia WA, author of numerous books on mushroom cultivation, quoted in the article.

THC's Bloomin' Bulb Sale

Spring was on people's minds at the THC annual bulb sale, a part of the Takoma Park Street Festival on October 3. There was a good variety of species and hybrid tulips, daffs and many kinds of smaller bulbs, and few were left at the end of the day. Teams of THC members fielded shoppers' questions, most frequently "what don't deer eat" (daffodils) and "what about squirrels?" (pepper spray; dig deep).

As in previous years, leftover bulbs were donated to the Old Takoma Business Association which will use them at city sites.

Some Gardening Events in November

Friends of Sligo Creek

Recovering a Nature Center from an Unnatural Invasive Plant Infestation

November 16, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Long Branch Community Center, Silver Spring
Steve Young, Invasives Volunteer, Arlington County. Twenty years ago, Arlington's Long Branch Nature Center was suffering from an onslaught of non-native, invasive plants. Even the native plant gardens next to the building were being overrun by invasives like English Ivy. Steve will discuss how staff and volunteer efforts have been "taking back the park" from the invasives, including problems, solutions, and why we should be hopeful that stewardship can turn back the non-native invasion in our parks.

Brookside Gardens

www.brooksidegardens.org

Garden of Lights- Winter Walk-through Holiday Light Display

November 26, 2010 - January 9, 2011

M-Th 5:30- 9:00pm, Admission \$20 per car/van

F-Su 5:30- 10:00pm, Admission \$25 per car/van

Last car admitted 30 min. before closing time.

Closed Dec. 24 & 25 and Jan. 3-6

Conservatory Winter Display and Train Exhibit. November 27 - January 9

The Train Exhibit opens with the Garden of Lights on Friday, November 26 at 5:30pm and runs through January 9, 2011. The North House will remain open only in the evenings during display change from November 22-December 4.

Mixed Winter Container

November 10, 9:30-11:30am (118906)

November 11, 9:30-11:30am (118907)

Joan O'Rourke, Friends of Brookside Gardens

Create a miniature winter garden in a container featuring plants that can stand up to winter's harshest weather.

Cost covers all materials, including a 14" container (or bring your own).

Fee: \$60, FOBG: \$54; registration required

Montgomery Parks

Proposed Community Garden, Silver Spring

Two presentations on a proposed community garden at Fenton Urban park, corner of Fenton and Burlington Sts will be held in November.

November 8, 7-8:30 pm Ursula Sabia Sukinik will conduct a meeting to determine community interest in the project at *Montgomery College*, Commons Building, Room CM211.

November 15, 7:30 pm Ursula Sabia Sukinik and David Vismara will speak at the monthly meeting of the *East Silver Spring Civic Association*. Sligo Urban Recreation Building, 500 Sligo Ave., parking entrance on Valley St.

Grow It/Eat It, U. of Md. Extension

Have you just started growing vegetables in the last 3-5 years? GI/EI would like to know more about your experiences and the direction you are heading with your vegetable gardening. Whether you grow a few herbs in some containers or have created a large patch, we want to know how things have gone and where you are heading.

Please use this link by November 19, 2010:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VS62KR2> and complete a simple 15 question survey.

The Takoma Horticultural Club Newsletter is published to the THC listserv at the beginning of each month. Send comments to editor Diane Svenonius, dbsvenonius@msn.com. Articles and photos from members are most welcome. If you would like to contribute, e-mail or call 301 585-1566.

Photo credit, page 1, Bee on Aster

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:GNU_Free_Documentation_License_1.2