



Takoma Horticultural Club

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July 2011



In Fenton Park Community Garden, p. 4



Tour of Takoma Park's leafy spaces, p. 2

**MEMBERS' ANNUAL SUMMER
POTLUCK**
Sunday, August 14
See page 3

July Club Meeting

Back by Popular Demand: Lovely Stormwater Gardens in Takoma and Environs

*Wednesday, July 20, 6:30pm–8pm. Meet at
the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500
Maple Avenue at Philadelphia.*

Free and open to the public.

—Kit Gage and Wendy Bell

See how the fabulous Hancock Avenue Rain Garden is progressing, a year after its installation. Watch the sedum on the Green Roof at the Takoma City Building bloom and spread. Check out the Cleveland Avenue pervious pavers and the well-established rain garden. Finish off at Kit's house to see her cistern, rain garden, and conservation landscaping and those of her neighbors. Kit and Wendy will answer questions about design, construction, native plants used and rationale for these methodologies.

This is a chance to see some of the innovative approaches that the city has taken to address stormwater management. The Hancock Avenue rain garden was created with city funding over a year ago to capture stormwater at the foot of the street. The Takoma Horticultural Club and the Friends of Sligo Creek donated additional funds for plants and signs (signs are not yet in place), and club members worked with local residents to accomplish the planting.

We will meet at the Community Center at 6:30 pm, walk to Hancock, walk back to carpool to Cleveland Avenue and then finish with a snack at Kit's. Directions will be provided at the meeting place.



First Behnke Garden Social Brings Bucks to Brookside

—*Becky Lavash*

On Saturday, June 4, Behnke's Beltsville Nursery held its first-ever Garden Social as a fund-raiser for Brookside Gardens. Brookside received \$1200 from a raffle and silent auction of items donated by garden clubs, local businesses and generous individuals. It was a beautiful day, and many garden clubs and plant societies had tables set up with information to share. So everyone could walk away with something new for their gardens, Behnke's arranged a plant swap and door prizes in the form of \$25 Behnke's gift cards.

I was particularly interested in the plant society tables such as the gesneriad, begonia, and hosta societies. Each society provided stunning examples of their plant types and lots of literature explaining the plant varieties. The Begonia Society had one great sample that caught my eye - a large glass terrarium holding a 12" tall, multi-colored leaf begonia. The Gesneriad Society (think African Violets and gloxinias) had very nice examples that the local members loaned from their collections. The Potomac Hosta Society had lots of unusual hostas for sale and provided information about growing conditions. I had always thought that hostas had to be grown in the shade, but I learned that some hostas actually prefer some sun (generally ones with white on the leaves). Grown in sun, these sun-loving hostas bloom more profusely!

The highlight of the event was the raffle for Friends of Brookside. All the donated items were set out on (*see Garden Social, p.3*).

First Annual Garden Social = Success

—*Carole Galati*

Well, it's been almost a month since the Garden Social at Behnke's on June 4. It was a glorious day for the garden clubs, vendors, plant societies and customers who participated. The entire process has been an exciting learning experience for me. The idea started with a casual conversation I had with John Peter Thompson at Behnke's two years ago. He turned me over to his sister, Stephanie Fleming, granddaughter of Mr. Behnke, and we started serious planning last fall. Now we are processing feedback surveys as we plan the Second Annual Garden Social for 2012.

I want to send out a special "Thank You" to all the THC members who stepped up to staff our table at Behnke's. If you attended or participated and would like to give feedback and/or ideas for 2012, please let me know (cgalati@rcn.com). There are many things we will change and improve, but we felt this was a successful first attempt. Raising \$1200+ for Friends of Brookside spells success! But we want to make it even more fun and inviting for everyone.

THC Tours Takoma Park's Leafy Public Gardens with Mike Welsh



Takoma Park City Gardener Mike Welsh led THC members on a tour of four city parks that feature garden spots. We saw some inviting shady spots, learned about the city's gardening plans and resources, and saw plantings created many years ago by Takoma

Horticultural Club (THC) members.

First stop was Memorial Park, across from the city library, where a plaque commemorates the donation of a red maple by the club to mark the city's centennial in 1990. Named for its memorial to veterans, the park has a collection of azaleas, fothergilla, witch-hazels and a variety of trees. (*See Garden Tour, p.4*)

Summer [Membership] Cleaning!

__Carole Galati

It's me, the Duchess of Perennial Dues! And since June is over, it's time to clean house. All those who have not paid their 2011 dues will be removed from the THC Membership List and gently excluded from members-only club events, including that delicious August 14 Potluck and the Fall Plant Exchange on October 16, an event guaranteed to please all. Oh, yes, and there's that THC Member discount on bulbs at the Takoma Street Fair on Sunday, October 2.

Check with me (cgalati@rcn.com) if you are not sure if you paid or not. Also, please go to our website: www.takomahort.org to find out how to renew. You don't need to fill out another form. Just send a \$12 check. Best bargain in town!

On a lighter note, please welcome our newest and returning members: Karen Fishman, Drake Hagner, Beau Archer, Esther Josties, Rosa Nunez, Stephanie Kaufman, Leslie Zucker and Mary Antoun. Thanks for paying your 2011 dues!! We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming summer event.

Officers, Committee Chairs and Contacts

President: Sherrell Goggin

Vice President: Carole Galati

Listserv: Anne Hardman

Membership & Program Coordinator:

Carole Galati

Newsletter: Diane Svenonius

Public Relations: Kathy Jentz

Secretary: Becky Lavash

Treasurer: Taffy Turner

Webmasters: Karen Helfert
& Sherrell Goggin

Photo Credits:

Page 1, Eggplant, Diane Svenonius; Viewing the Thomas-Siegler Garden, Kathy Jentz; Page 2, Raffle prizes at Behnke's, Carole Galati; Rhodo, Kathy Jentz; Pages 3 and 4, Fountain at Sara Hisel-McCoy's, Fenton Park Community Garden scenes, Diane Svenonius; p. 5, Waterlily, web.

Save the Date!

Summer THC Potluck...

Sunday, August 14, 4 to 7 pm



Open Garden tour 2010 at Sara Hisel-McCoy's

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 14! It's our annual Summer Potluck. This year it will be held at Sara Hisel-McCoy's lovely garden in Takoma Park.

Since this event is for members only, make sure you have paid your 2011 dues now (see article at left), so we don't have to handle business at this relaxing social event. Of course, garden-related talk will be encouraged! More details will be posted as we get closer to the date. __Carole Galati

(Garden Social, continued from page 2)

a table, each with a flower pot to collect the purchased tickets. Donors provided a great selection of items...a bonsai in a beautiful pot, orchids, and many other items. THC member Jim Dronenburg donated a harp concert for a party or event and member Dan Weil offered a photographic session for the silent auction. As the drawings were held in the early afternoon, I saw lots of smiling faces as lucky winners carried off their prizes.

At the end of the day's events, David Culp, a knowledgeable specialist on perennials from Sunny Borders Nursery, gave a presentation in one of the Behnke classrooms.

The **Takoma Horticultural Club News** is issued each month to the listserv. Current and previous issues are at www.takomahort.org. If you would like to write on a gardening topic for the News, let editor Diane Svenonius know at dbsvnonius@msn.com.



Update: Local Community Gardens Open

After a wet April and a wait that seemed interminable for those whose seedlings were looking anorexic, the Fenton Park Community Garden was finally deemed “dry” and open for gardening on May 9. (The King Street garden, also in Silver Spring near Takoma Park, opened a day earlier). The county had tilled and retilled the former plumbing company site, outlined 43 plots, and provided fencing, plot markers, wood chip paths, and piles of wood chips and leaf mulch for gardeners’ use. A few days later, a 1500 gallon cistern was operating with faucets for hoses and watering cans. Newly-landed gardeners (including some THC members) moved in quickly to outline beds, dig in compost and put in tomatoes, lettuce, marigolds and beans...or, cabbage, corn, watermelon, zinnias and squash, as taste buds dictated. Plots range from wide expanses dotted with anonymous leafy items to elaborately landscaped and meticulously labeled garden spots. Some others found on a quick tour: loofah, Vietnamese coriander, artichoke, purple tomatillos and many varieties of basil. People walking along the fence on US 410 frequently start conversations. “What’re you planting? Wow, that’s healthy. How can I get in on this?”

(Garden Tour, continued from page2)

The War Memorial is more visible now that dense yews and other shrubbery have been trimmed back and its stone has been power washed.

Mike said that “re-treeing” to replace older trees is a priority for this park, and that “volunteer” tree seedlings can help accelerate the process. Some of these, such as tulip poplar, are being left to mature and contribute to the canopy. He and City Arborist Todd Bolton plan to add *Pinus virginiana* to the mix... “it’s a good tree and not prevalent in the city”.. and have added about 20 native dogwoods (*Cornus florida*).

The city has perhaps 70- 80 “garden spots” in various places, maintained by a staff of 3 1/2: Mike, another city employee and 1.5 contractor staff, helped by volunteers from Takoma Academy Middle School, Washington Adventist College, and Takoma Park Boy Scout Troop 33. The group next visited the Thomas-Siegler Garden on Cedar near Tulip. The land and carriage house belonged originally to the city’s first postmaster. Isaac Thomas, and was bought by the Siegler family in 1919. The main house

is in private hands, and the resident came out to hear Mike talk about the city’s plans for the site. The city partners with Historic Takoma in gradually restoring it with volunteer help. This fall, Troop 33 will eliminate euonymus burning bush, honeysuckle and English ivy. May apple and dogtooth lilies have reappeared on the property where the ivy has been removed. Other native plants featured at this garden site include Virginia Creeper and a grove of sassafras trees. A tall scrawny *cryptomeria*, is now filling out as it gets more sun due to past winter snow damage to three mature oaks. Native deciduous Pinxterbloom azalea - *Rhododendron periclymenoides*- is another newly exposed plant enjoying its brightened location. Many large sprawling rhododendrons were in bloom; they go back to Frederick Siegler, a Department of Agriculture employee who had a connection to the Arboretum where the Glenn Dale variety was developed. (See Tour, page 5) The tour next went to Lower Portal Park, a triangular space at Chestnut, Philadelphia and Piney Branch Road. (See Garden Tour, p. 5)

Gardening Events in the Community

US Botanic Garden

Green Genes Talk & Tour Series

Fridays, 12 to 1 pm, Conservatory Classroom Kyle Wallick, USBG Botanist

This series delves into the plant family tree featured in the Terrace exhibit “Green Genes: Mapping the Plant World”

There are four talks in July: **Early Angiosperms – the Magnoliid group**, July 8; **Caryophyllales** (pinks) on July 15; **Poaceae** (grasses) on July 22 and **Malvaceae** (mallows) on July 29.

Free, register at www.usgb.gov

National Arboretum

Lecture and Tour: All about Crape Myrtles

July 31, 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Visitor Information Trailer. Crape myrtles provide brilliant, long-lasting color in summer gardens, and many also feature attractive fall foliage and striking bark color, making them a beautiful and versatile shrub or small tree. After a lecture, join a walking tour through more than 30 varieties of mature trees in peak bloom. Fee: \$12 (\$10 FONAs) Rain date August 7, 1:00 – 3:00 pm.



Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

1550 Anacostia Avenue, NE, directions at <http://www.nps.gov/keaq/index.htm>

Annual Water Lily Festival

July 16, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

See a spectacular display of lotus and water lilies, enjoy garden workshops and traditional Asian dancing performances, tour ponds, greenhouses and wetlands, and meet exhibitors from garden and nature organizations. Information (202) 426-6905.

Casey Trees

Tudor Place Tree Walk

July 23, 9 am – 11 am

1644 31st St., Washington DC

Experience the trees of Tudor Place through a tour of the 5 ½ acre historic property overlooking Georgetown. Suzanne Bouchard, Director of Gardens, will share the history of the gardens and grounds. Register at <http://www.caseytrees.org/>

(Garden Tour, continued from page 4)

In addition to the Frank White azalea garden, the park has Chinese elms, which Mike appreciates (but which are regarded as invasive), as well as a spruce, a cedar and witch-hazels. Mike said that they are now “taking back” grass areas in the gardens to eliminate mowing, covering the grass with cardboard and wood chips and applying vinegar to new growth. The tour returned to Hodges Heights to the Stuart Armstrong Memorial Garden. A glade here was planted with azaleas and other shrubs by the Azalea Committee, a subgroup of THC members, and named for an avid amateur horticulturalist associated with Benjamin Morrison, developer of the Glenn Dale azaleas. Most of these azaleas are gone, but the area at the entrance at Philadelphia and Holly Avenues is being restored with azalea, rhododendron, witch-hazel and black gum. A nature center will be developed on the back part of the property with a bird sanctuary, labeled plants and informative signs. Due to the number of ageing trees, an oak and a few dogwoods have been added. A large specimen of “glossy privet” with larger leaves than the typical hedge privet stands on the main intersecting path, along with a large pear, magnolias and many redbuds. Right now it has a secluded, leafy feel, screened from Philadelphia by trees and shrubs—you might like to walk in and spend a few peaceful moments if you find yourself in the vicinity of Philadelphia and Holly Avenues!

—Taffy Turner and Diane Svenonius

Green Spring Gardens

4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, Virginia

Bold Native Plants and Their Hybrids

July 23, 9:00 am to 11 am

Curator Brenda Skarphol guides you through the garden and provides an in-depth look at bold summer natives and hybrids derived from natives. Learn from Green Spring’s successes and failures to create habitats and design attractive gardens using these natives and their hybrids. \$15.00

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/ed-adult.htm>