



Takoma Horticultural Club

A Hardy Perennial Since 1916

www.takomahort.org

November 2011



Sassafras albidum at the National Arboretum

Getting Your Garden Ready for Winter

A talk on Thursday, November 10 at 7 pm,
at the Takoma DC Public Library, 5th and
Cedar Streets.

Grow a beautiful garden filled with flowers and foliage and still honor the earth by using sustainable gardening practices. Kathy Jentz, a THC officer and Editor and Publisher of *Washington Gardener Magazine* will talk about how to prepare your yard for the next growing season in an eco-friendly way.

The talk marks the donation of 18 new garden books to the Takoma DC library by the Takoma Horticultural Club. They will be on display at the talk and are listed in this issue. For information, call the library at 202 576-7252. Free.

November Club Event

Holiday Designs Using Natural Materials, presented by

Anne Brooks, Master Gardener

*Wednesday, Nov 16 at 7:30 pm at Heffner
Park, 42 Oswego Avenue, Takoma Park.*

Free and open to the public.

by Carole Galati

Many of you might know Anne from her workshops at Brookside Gardens, from the Beltsville Garden Club's Spring plant sales at High Point High School, or if you are really lucky, from a tour of her beautiful garden in Brookeville, Maryland. Anne is truly an avid gardener and design artist extraordinaire!

For our meeting, she will demonstrate several holiday pieces in the Williamsburg style (i.e., using only natural materials), including a Thanksgiving centerpiece for the dining room table, a Christmas coffee table arrangement, and a candle ring. She will also show how to creatively decorate a door wreath. As she works, she'll recommend various greens for arranging that are easily grown, many of which she'll be bringing from her own garden.

Come get new inspiration for your own holiday designs at this very special event!

Also in this issue:

The President's Plot, page 2

Making Space in the Garden, page 3

New Members and Club Leaders, page 4

Plant Exchange and Garden Books, pg. 5

Desert Delights

Imagine walking through a garden and hearing, "Don't back up!" Or, "Don't wave your arms around so much!", or just plain, "Ow!" If so, you might be standing in the 145 acre Desert Botanical Garden located in Phoenix, Arizona. While only 65 acres are under cultivation (by contrast, Brookside Gardens is "only" 50 acres), there's lots to explore. Besides the several garden areas they maintain such as the Cactus and Succulent Galleries, Agave Yucca Forest, Herb Garden, and (watch out Brookside) Butterfly Pavilion (seasonal), five trails wind through the rolling hills where you can view over 4,000 species and approximately 17,000 individual plants.

Which leads me back to my opening line. Multiply 17,000 plants by a few hundred spikes (minimum) and you'll see why you might be walking a wee bit cautiously! Example 1, *Stenocereus Gummosus* (dagger cactus) below—surely a plant that inspired clothing for Madonna or Lady Gaga.



And while these spikes are formidable, when standing back and viewing the plant in its entirety (this specimen was probably 20 feet tall), what struck me was the whiteness of the spikes against the medium green of the flesh—and how very pretty it all was.

An example of a very different type of spike can be seen below in the *Ferocactus Wislizeni*. While some of the spikes stick straight out, others end in a distinct "curl", hence it's more common name, fishhook barrel cactus. I wonder if any intrepid American Indians used them as such?



The broader desert landscape view also made for very pleasant vignettes, as can be seen in the mix below of prickly pears, yucca *Schottii*, organ cacti, and unidentified fourth cacti in the far background.



Making Space in the Garden

by Becky Lavash

We've all been there. We planned out our garden for the year, and determined that we were done. No more plants. And then we went to a great plant sale and found just a few more. And so we find a way to make them fit.

Over the years, I've done that too many times and now many of my garden beds are crowded and the plants are suffering. Some plants have grown larger than I expected and some have multiplied and the children are spreading over the bed in unexpected ways, or the sunlight has been reduced since the original planting by overhanging trees. It's time for me to make some space in the garden.

I've been viewing gardens that I find welcoming and relaxing, and the one unifying feature in all of them is open space. But open space doesn't have to mean boring space. Space can take the form of paths, large stones or statues, or chairs and benches. But the space must NOT be a space for weeds!

So this Fall I have been digging out new paths through several garden beds so that I can walk into the beds more easily to prune, weed, and add plant supports to flopping plants. To make space for the paths, I am pruning back some larger, overgrown plants and making some hard decisions about plants that I have to thin, prune, move, or simply let go.

To make the paths, I am digging a small curved trough, lining with landscaping fabric, and filling with medium and large pine bark chunks.

Desert Delights (continued)

One surprising discovery was that prickly pear cactuses aren't all green. While I didn't see any orange or blue, I did stumble on a quite lovely shade of purple (Oh wait, isn't that redundant? Aren't all shades of purple lovely?).



The Arizona Cactus and Native Flora Society was founded in 1936 with the sole purpose of 'saving the desert' in the Phoenix area. The Desert Botanical Garden was in turn founded by the Society in 1939 to fulfill this goal. Given the stunning the garden they've created in the 70 years since, something tells me they don't follow my design strategy of "plant once, transplant till you get it right". I encourage everyone to experience the garden for yourself. Visit www.dbg.org/ for more info.

Making Space, continued _____

I can already see the improvement in the appearance of the beds and how much easier it is to see the key plants that I have chosen to keep. I am confident that in the coming garden seasons, the plants will respond to the increased air circulation and space to grow into more attractive and healthy plants too. The space looks much better!

Happy Fall to Y'all!!



At our booth last month at the Takoma Park Street Festival we sold hundreds of bulbs, as expected. But the big surprise was that we had 17 people join the club and they have already paid their 2012 dues! We want to welcome many new and returning members: Gail Fisher (who helped sell bulbs before she even joined!), Susan Farnsworth, Jonathan Jay, Jenny Reed, Sandhya Mehta, John Swellgrove, Geoff Maxson, Elizabeth Gelfeld, Carrie Berman, Lowe Gresham, Tim Rahn, Theodore Curtin, Scott Wibbert, Christiane Minnich, Torrie Mattes, Leda Black, Valerie Tonat, Jane Godfrey, Stan and Dorothy Hunter, Elizabeth McGuinness, Dorothy Cichra, and Polly Pettit. Please let me know if your name is missing.

Our next members-only event is on January 25, when we'll gather for our Winter Potluck Dinner & All-Things-Gardening-Exchange. What started out as a simple (house) plant exchange has blossomed into a re-gifting of holiday garden gifts. What fun we have! Of course, you might want to check if the original gift-giver will be at this dinner—or if they are, that they have a very good sense of humor!

As the year winds to a close we hope you've enjoyed your membership in the club and have been able to participate in several (or better still, all!) of our monthly events. We are always looking for suggestions for lectures, workshops, or trips, so if you've got an idea, please drop us a line at THC_webmaster@yahoo.com.

In just two more months it will be time to renew your membership. Dues can be paid at the January potluck, or if you prefer to pay sooner, see the website (www.takomahort.org) for more info. If you've accidentally let your 2011 dues lapse and would like to renew for 2011 and pay your 2012 dues, it's just \$18. If you have any questions or comments unanswered by the website, please feel free to contact me (Carole Galati) at cagalati@rcn.com.

Officers, Committee Chairs and Contacts

President: *Sherrell Goggin*
Vice President: *Carole Galati*
Listserv: *Anne Hardman*
Membership: *Carole Galati*
Newsletter: *Diane Svenonius*
Public Relations: *Kathy Jentz*
Secretary: *Becky Lavash*
Treasurer: *Taffy Turner*
Webmaster: *Sherrell Goggin*

The *Takoma Horticultural Club News* is published monthly on the member listserv and the web site www.takomahort.org. Please send comments and contributions to the Editor at dbsvenonius@msn.com.

**Takoma Horticultural Club
2011 Book Donations
to the Takoma, D.C. Public Library**

50 High Impact, Low-Care Garden Plants by Tracy DiSabato-Aust.

The Backyard Berry Book by Stella Otto.

The Backyard Orchardist by Stella Otto.

Big Gardens in Small Spaces: Out-of-the-Box Advice for Boxed-in Gardeners by Marilyn Cox.

Front Yard Gardens: Growing More than Grass by Liz Primeau.

Gardening for a Lifetime: How to Grow Wiser as You Grow Older by Sydney Eddison.

Gardening When it Counts: Growing Food in Hard Times by Steve Solomon.

Incredible Edibles: 43 Fun Things to Grow in the City by Sonia Day.

Native Plants of the Northeast by Donald J. Leopold.

The Non-Stop Garden: A Step by Step Guide to Smart Plant Choices and Four Season Designs by Stephanie Cohen and Jennifer Brennan.

The Revolutionary Yardscape, Ideas for Repurposing Local Materials by Matthew Levesque.

Starter Vegetable Gardens: 24 No-Fail Plans for Small Organic Gardens by Barbara Pleasant.

Succession Planting for Year-Round Pleasure by Christopher Lloyd.

Urban and Suburban Meadows: Bringing Meadows to Big and Small Spaces by Catherine Zimmerman

Vegetables, Herbs and Fruit: An Illustrated Encyclopedia by Matthew Briggs, Jekka McVicar, and Bob Flowerdew.

We Grew It, Let's Eat It by Annie and Veda as told to Justine Kenin.

Weeds of the Northeast by Richard H. Uva et al.

Wild Washington: Amazing Wildlife in and Around Our Nation's Capitol by Don Chernoff.

A Fall Fair Exchange

A lovely late summer day welcomed plant mavens bearing greenery (and cookies, and dips, and cakes) to the annual Fall Plant Exchange.



From miniature rose to monster philodendron to carrot seedlings, members of the Takoma Horticultural Club found something they wanted at the plant swap, held as tradition dictates on a Sunday in October at Heffner Park. After several rounds of lottery picks ending in the "free for all" round of happy snatching, little was left.

There was also an opportunity to buy bulbs left over from the hundreds offered by the club at its Takoma Park Street



Fair booth on October 2. The remaining bulbs have been donated by the club to Main Street Takoma for planting in the city of Takoma Park, and to the Holy Cross Hospital Healing Garden, where they were planted by Silver Spring Garden Club volunteers on October 22nd (for more info, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3vcq6xy>).

Photo credits for the November issue:

Page 1, U.S National Arboretum, usna.usda.gov

Pages 2 & 3, Sherrell Goggin

Page 4 & 5, Diane Svenonius