



Takoma Horticultural Club

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Another Big Month for Plant Sales
See www.takomahort.org

**Members Only:
Spring Plant Exchange
Sunday, May 20th, 1:30-3:30pm at
Heffner Community Center,
42 Oswego Avenue, Takoma Park**

—by Carole Galati

Takoma Horticultural Club's Spring Plant Exchange is almost here! This is your chance to exchange your garden "extras" with your THC co-members for something new. You can bring as many plants as you'd like, we only ask that you *please label them* with the plant's common name (Latin name too, if possible), light requirements, and growth habit. Include your name if you want to give more info.

If your plant spreads/grows quickly let the gardener be forewarned. *Please don't bring plants considered invasive, such as common orange daylilies or English ivy.* If you are not sure, post a question on the Listserv. You'll get plenty of opinions! Native plants are especially desirable these days! If possible, pot up your plants at least a week before the swap, so they can acclimate to being disturbed and don't look ragged on swap day. Just don't forget to water them in the interim!

If you are a new gardener or just don't have extra plants or time to dig, you are welcome to bring: gardening magazines, cookbooks, interesting (clean) pots, garden ornaments or tools, and of course finger food and drinks. Let (See *Plant Exchange, page 4*)

~~The *Takoma Horticultural Club Newsletter* is published monthly on the listserv and at www.takomahort.org. Contributions, comments and suggestions are warmly welcomed. Contact the editor Diane Svenonius at dbsvenonius@msn.com



Grow Your Own Victory Garden!

by Madeline Caliendo

In the 1940s America was at war. During WWII food and supplies on the home front were scarce so rationing was the norm. The war created labor and transportation shortages, so food on farms couldn't efficiently be harvested and transported to market. Americans at home—mostly women and children—were asked by Uncle Sam to show their patriotism by growing food at home. These food gardens were called **Victory Gardens** and amazingly nearly 20 million Americans heeded the call and fed themselves and their families with food they grew at home.

Seventy plus years later and Americans have again begun to grow food at home. Some grow it to protest the extreme industrialization of America's food supply, while others grow food at home because there's none better in terms of freshness and taste. Some grow food at

home because it's more economical to do so, while others grow food because it's the new chic thing to do. Whatever the motivation, growing food at home is easy as 1-2-3. Here are some tips to help get those of you who don't yet grow edibles started.

1. Start small.

No need to overdo it. You can simply grow herbs in a pot or on small plot of sunny land. I grow basil, parsley, thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano, mint, chives, and lemon balm. Some are in pots on the porch and some in a small raised bed in the backyard. The ones in the raised bed re-seed annually so I have a steady supply year after year. And believe me when I tell you, there is nothing as delicious as homemade pesto from herbs you grew yourself.

2. Grow what you like to eat

This is basic common sense. No need to grow all that fancy stuff that you are not even sure how to prepare—like kohlrabi (although I am sure it is delicious, kohlrabi is just not my thing). I love greens. I use greens to make green shakes in the morning, I put greens in salads, I sauté greens with olive oil, garlic, sea salt and a splash of fresh lime as a side dish or as part of a main dish and they're divine. I grow several varieties of kale, collards, spinach, chard, and assorted other greens. I grow my greens in a small raised bed out back, and they too re-seed annually. I harvest greens year-round as many kinds tend to be cold hardy. A neighbor grows her greens among her ornamental plantings out front. The kale and chard look especially gorgeous!

3. Keep it simple

No need to spend a lot of money on raised beds, special soil, novelty equipment, etc.—just find a small space and start with one or two things.

(See Grow Your Own Victory Garden, page 4)

President's Plot

by Sherrell Goggin

Saturday April 28th kicked off the 75th anniversary of Maryland's House and Garden Pilgrimage tours, which will run over the next several weekends in various counties of the State. Saturday's tour was in Bolton Hill, Baltimore, a gorgeous neighborhood of near-palatial brick and/or stone rowhouses built in the mid 1850s. Most were four stories, some five. While the "house" portion of the tour featured a bit more prominently than the "garden" part, and container gardening did rule, there were still some nice displays, both in the private and public spaces.

Among the private gardens, one that attracted my attention wasn't due to its plantings, which were quite modest, but rather due to its elegance and simplicity. Sturdy brick walls, stone terrace, ornamental gates, funky yet simple sculpture, and two long banquet tables down the center, surely this is a frequent gathering place!



Most of the rowhouses featured incredibly tall windows, which given the proportion of the rooms (ceilings seemed to soar beyond sight at 14+ feet) isn't surprising. It's probably not surprising either that the windows at the back of the houses have come to be used as "doors".

Beautiful wood or sometimes even wrought-iron balconies cascade down the backs of the houses. One of the most pleasant I



I saw was a screened-in porch off the living room. Boston ferns, cushioned chairs, and ceiling fans above with a towering magnolia and other plantings in the garden beyond made for a serene setting. (The screened-in porch on the floor above featured rocking chairs, should you prefer a more mobile seating arrangement.)

One block of the neighborhood was utterly charming. "In 1952, during the height of flight from the city, the residents of the 1300 block of John Street, in an effort to make their

(See President's Plot, page 4)



(Grow Your Own Victory Garden, continued from page 2)

Then when you get more confident and/or time permits you can expand. Also, there is absolutely no need to buy all those expensive tomato cages, trellises and supports. We make our own using local bamboo and twine and we also repurpose other things we have around the house and garden and it works just fine.

Do you like salads? Lettuce is very simple to grow. I grow assorted lettuces out back in a shady part of the garden in a raised bed (arugula is my favorite) and also in a planter on the porch. Like the greens, the lettuces I grow in the raised bed re-seed so I get new patches of it every year.

You can also try using a salad table. It was invented by the folks at the University of Maryland extension service. Martha Stewart liked it so much she featured it in her magazine! Here's a link to it <http://growit.umd.edu/Salad%20Tables%20and%20Salad%20Boxes/index.cfm>

Having your own personal Victory Garden is incredibly satisfying. Why not give it a try? You already like to garden, so just grow some edibles too. I know you'll be glad that you did!

(Plant Exchange, continued from page 1)

Carole know if you can come at 1:00 to help us set up tables and chairs and put them away after the exchange. The first 3 early Birds to sign up get first choice choosing a plant. Help us out: please wear a recycled name tag if you have one. This helps us get to know each other, especially new members. Also, bring a chair if you are able. **(See next column)**

We always run out of chairs. Remember, you must be a club member to participate in the Plant Exchange. Bring a \$12 check - no cash - made out to THC if you want to join or renew your membership at this event.

(President's Plot, continued from page 3)

neighborhood more desirable and livable, convinced the city to block off their busy street to create a park. By agreement with the city, the residents were and continue to be responsible for the park's upkeep. [...] The park serves as a communal living room for the Bolton Hill Community."

No mention of who paid for the plantings, but I'm guessing it was the residents as well. A brick wall partitions the trees, ferns, azaleas, and tons of other greenery. It truly is a little oasis. And it's not the only one. A block away in the 1400 block of Rutter Street is Rutters Mill Park, created when several decrepit alley houses and garages were torn down in the 1970s. It features an in-ground fountain on a brick plaza, cool wooden tables with wrought-iron legs, and massive trees which made it feel 10 degrees cooler the day I was there. The park is used for community gatherings and events, such as their annual Easter egg hunt.

While voyeurism does factor into these tours (and I won't deny I love peeking inside private spaces), what I really find inspiring is to discover how others have solved "problem" spots in their house or yard, in oftentimes very compelling and unexpected ways. Which of course gives me ideas for my own yard...if only I had the time to implement them all! If you'd like to attend the remaining garden tours, check out their website for more info: <http://www.mhgp.org/>. But please don't forget about our local **Takoma Park's House and Garden Tour** which is happening Sunday, May 6th from 1-5pm. It doesn't conflict with the Maryland tours, and helps support our own community. Visit <http://www.historictakoma.org/> for more information. Enjoy!

Photos: Greens, p. 1, Diane Svenonius; p.3, Bolton Hill Garden Tour, Sherrell Goggin; p. 5 Michael Szesze and his carnivores, Carole Galati.



Positive Dues Rhyme

Please due pay your dues, if you haven't already.

First pay your dues, then eat your spaghetti!

January first is when they were due,

Member benefits are more than a few!

Plant Exchange the 20th of May,

Tour Adkins in July, bulb discounts, hooray!

And be sure to remember,

Pot Luck in September.

Check for \$12 to THC

Questions? Just contact me!

—cgalati@rcn.com

Behnke Garden Party on June 9

It's May! And then comes June, and then June 9th - the day of the Behnke's Garden Party, from 9 to 3. Our Takoma Horticultural Club will have a table, along with six other area garden clubs. There will be garden vendors and plant societies, as well. Start some extra seedlings now so we can give them to the public as they pass by our table. We need your help to let the public know what a great garden club we have. Sign up to spend a few hours staffing our table or maybe you can contribute to the raffle to benefit Brookside Gardens. Contact Nancy Newton (n.newton@verizon.net) to help out. She is putting together a schedule of two hour shifts, between 9 and 3. We can also use help earlier (*continued right*)

in the day to set up, from 8 to 9 am. If you have general questions about the day's festivities, including the Plant Swap, let Carole know (cagalati@rcn.com). Our very own Anne Hardman will be running the Plant Swap on June 9 – bring one, take one!

THC April Meeting

Plants for Your Fruit Fly Problem

It's rare for a THC speaker to bring dozens of living examples to illustrate his talk about the origin and culture of carnivorous plants. (We're not talking petunias here!) Even better, Michael Szesze, who spoke to the club on April 18, made them available for sale to the audience after the show.

Michael explained that carnivorous plants evolved their dietary strategies as a way of competing in nutrient-poor environments. Many grow in bogs, where acid peat and sphagnum moss dominate. Plant types are distinguished by their methods of catching invertebrates: actively closing a trap, like the Venus flytrap; presenting an attractive tube lined with hairs that invite the insect in and prevent it from leaving, like pitchers; or spreading alluring sticky leaves that can curl around the hapless visitor as the sundews and butterworts do. The microscopic glands that do the digestive work are biochemically similar to those on our tongues

The secret of raising them at home (indoors, outdoors, in a terrarium) is to imitate critical aspects of the bog-- moisture constant, minerals absent. NO tap water (use rainwater or condensation), NO garden soil (he uses equal amounts peat and builder's sand), and ALWAYS keep it wet.

Michael showed slides of beautiful plants from all over the world, and some beautiful bogs as well. See more information at his website, <http://www.carnivorousplantnursery.com> His nursery is in Derwood MD

Note: Starting this month, the US Botanic Garden allows you to get inside a pitcher plant, among other things. See events, next page.

Gardening Events in the Area

FAMILY EVENTS

Smithsonian Gardens Garden Fest Enid A. Haupt Garden, Independence Avenue at the Smithsonian Castle-Free.

Friday, May 11, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and
Saturday, May 12, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.,

The theme of this year's Garden Fest at the Smithsonian is "Gardening for Healthy Living," featuring live music and a variety of activities for children and adults. The free festival will be held in the Enid A. Haupt Garden, a 4.2-acre public rooftop garden between the Smithsonian Castle and Independence Avenue.

Smithsonian Gardens' horticulturists will share their knowledge of the gardens with hands-on demonstrations and more than 20 family-friendly activities. Visitors may pot tomatoes, view and judge a container contest, play garden games, learn about Smithsonian Gardens' Orchid Collection and show off their artistic skills by adding to a garden mural.

Visitors may participate in the kick-off of *Let's Move! with Smithsonian Gardens*, by joining an active scavenger hunt in the Smithsonian gardens.

U.S. Botanic Garden- "Savage Gardens" Exhibit Opening May 26 – Free.

www.usbg.gov

See beds full of carnivorous plants and a live bog garden to get immersed in the fascinating world of these adaptive plants. Combining science, botany and hands-on activity, *Savage Gardens* demonstrates the wonders of these unique plants and the importance of preserving the delicate environments in which they live.

If the allure of live meat-eating plants is not enough, four larger-than-life sculptures permit a bug's-eye perspective of four carnivorous plants:

The 10-foot-tall Tropical Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes*) invites visitors to step inside to imagine the fate of an unlucky insect.

Seven North American Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia*) sculptures reach heights of 15 feet and their brilliant color is illuminated from within.

The 9-foot-tall Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) sculpture replicates the closing of the "trap" through the use of hydraulics.

The Sundew (*Drosera*) comes to life as fiber optics illuminate more than 500 hundred of the sculpture's tentacles.

Carnivorous plants may seem exotic, but many of them, such as the Venus flytrap, are native to North America.

Brookside Gardens "Wings of Fancy" Butterfly and Caterpillar Exhibit Starting Saturday, May 5 – Admission.

www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside/wings_of_fancy.shtm

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, South

Conservatory, 1500 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton
This year the focus is on butterflies in your backyard, and the host plants that local caterpillars need in order to survive and thrive. Learn about the life cycle of these amazing creatures, and be surrounded by hundreds of North American, Costa Rican and Asian butterflies flying freely inside the Conservatory.

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