



# Takoma Horticultural Club

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April 2013

## Upcoming April Event: Ben Morrison and His Azaleas and the Origin of Azalea 'Takoma Park'

Join the Takoma Horticultural Club on Wednesday, April 17 from 7:30-9:00 pm at the Historic Takoma headquarters, 7328 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD. The April meeting is jointly sponsored by the Takoma Horticultural Club and Historic Takoma, Inc. William (Bill) Miller III, the founder of the azalea research organization Azalea Works will be speaking on "Ben Morrison and his Azaleas".

Mr. Miller has been a biologist at the National Institutes of Health for thirty years, and an azalea hobbyist since the '70s. He has been very active with the Azalea Society of America from its inception and served as president of the Brookside Gardens chapter in the '80s. He established The Azalea Works to focus his research, writing and teaching activities, and has written a book, *The Glenn Dale Azaleas Revisited*, and more than 55 articles about azaleas. He himself introduced four cultivars including one called 'Brookside'

Doors open at 7, and the talk starts at 7:30 p.m. Please bring a snack to share. As usual, the Club will provide beverages.

## March Event: Erica Smith on Growing Spring Vegetables

THC's March meeting featured Erica Smith, lead vegetable gardener for the Derwood, MD Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden. Ms. Smith spoke on growing spring vegetables. (*cont next page.*)



*Azalea 'Takoma Park'*

*Photo by William C. Miller III*

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*Tromboncino Squash*

*Photo by Erica Smith*

### **March Event: Erica Smith on Growing Spring Vegetables (continued from Page 1)**

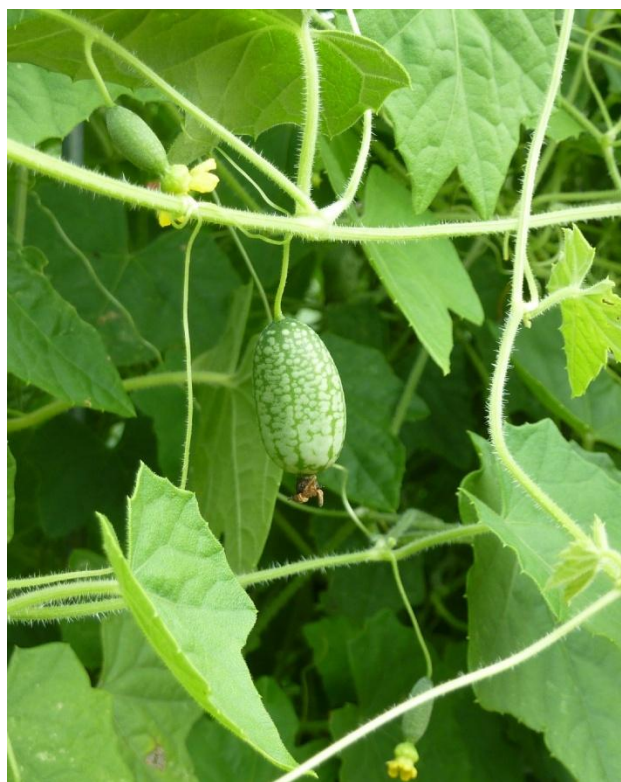
A crowd of more than 50 came to Historic Takoma headquarters on a chilly Wednesday to get a taste of elusive spring.

To cope with volatile weather, Erica Smith says, "Plan for it". Climate change will significantly affect our summer and winter gardening, but spring weather has always been maddeningly uncertain. To hedge your bets, you can use the several "average date" and "when to plant what" charts that are found on the University of Maryland Extension Grow It, Eat It! web site <http://growit.umd.edu>. Choose an early date if you want, but be prepared to protect the plants from frost, with tacked-down plastic sheeting, heavyweight row cover, a cold frame or black plastic mulch. By April you should be able to put beets, chard and beans directly in the ground.

If starting seeds indoors, Erica said, don't start too early. It is hard to maintain large plants under lights, and you have to move them in and out or find a way to maintain them outdoors until the garden ground is ready. Use a soilless mix and

check the plants every day for moisture, light, warmth. Erica estimated (speaking on March 20) that you still have two weeks to plant tomatoes indoors.

Erica discussed pests that attack cool weather vegetables such as the harlequin bug and the cabbage looper and how to deal with them. Plants in the same family often share the same pests, she noted. A lightweight row cover to deter insects can be kept on leafy greens all season, since they do not require pollination to produce the leaves we eat.



*Mouse Melon with Flowers*

*Photo by Erica Smith*

Erica shared pictures of unusual vegetables that she's used at Derwood: an all-purple sweet potato; carrots that are purple on the outside and orange within (the wild ancestors of today's carrot were purple); beautiful crinkly lacinato kale, and bull's blood beets. The huge curving tromboncino squash is

resistant to the nefarious squash borer, and can be draped around your shoulders. Mexican sour gherkin looks like a watermelon for a mouse, and purple pak choi has green leaves on the bottom, is delicious in stir fries. Now if the weather would only improve....

## Spring Gardening

Spring seems to finally be coming our way, even though we still have some very cool temperatures at night. Be sure to take a walk around your gardens – daily, if possible. It is exciting to see what is in bloom, about to bloom, or just creeping up into the light. Birds are already taking their Spring baths (bless their little hearts), calling out and chasing each other endlessly and moving into the cleaned-out birdhouses. Daphne, with its spectacular smells and flowers are attention getters – if you are paying attention. Algae, which should have been attended to over the winter, has taken over the pond – humbling, indeed!

It's time to prune the fall blooming camellia and fig tree and cut back scraggly grasses and native vines and perennials. And then there are the oak (etc.) leaves which the winds drove into every possible crevice in the gardens. I don't even own an oak tree . . . It's also a great time to import some of that wonderful leaf mold (composted leaves) from the Municipal Yard on Oswego Ave. All garden soil needs refreshing now. Leaf Grow is great, but can be expensive. The best mulch is pine fines or shredded pine bark. It not only cuts down on weeds, but also nourishes the soil. Unlike the hardwood mulches, it doesn't compact, layer and keep rain from soaking into the garden. It adds nutrients, rather than sucking them out of the soil.

One last thought, when you have gardening questions, call the Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC)

Hotline: 1.800.342.2507. The horticulturalists are a wonderful resource. You can also email them and send pictures: [www.agnr.umd.edu/users/hgic](http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/hgic) Also, check out our local Plant Clinics at Brookside Gardens. While you are there, see what's in bloom. Imagine adding some of these treasures to your own garden!

## Membership

Welcome to Our Newest Members

Please welcome our two newest members: Fred Feinstein and Georgine Prokopik. Many others who attended our March meeting at Historic Takoma expressed an interest in joining the Takoma Horticultural Club. Some of the email addresses you gave me were hard to decipher. If I don't get back to you soon, please go to our website, [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org) to find our membership application with instructions on how to join. Let me now if you have any questions.

Thanks, Carole ([cagalati@rcn.com](mailto:cagalati@rcn.com))

## Club Dues

Spring is overdue  
January 1st, dues were due;  
Thanks to all those who  
Paid dues and knew,  
I'd say a BIG THANK YOU!  
Plant Exchange is May 19;  
Members only will be seen –  
. . . . . there!

## Save the Date

*Wednesday, April 3, 6:00 to 7:30 pm,  
Shaw Library at 1630 7th St NW, DC,  
Shaw Metro.*

Washington Gardener Magazine Book Club is meeting to discuss this month's selection - *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* by Michael Pollan. The room allows food and drink and you may bring

your dinner and/or snacks to share. The book club meetings are FREE and open to anyone who would like to attend. Please RSVP to WashingtonGardener@rcn.com.

*Monday, April 15, 8:00 pm Silver Spring Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Companion & Succession Plantings (Crop Rotation), 8:00pm, Brookside Gardens, Visitors Center*

Find out what edible plants naturally benefit by being planted together and what plants should never be neighbors. Also, learn about getting the most out of small space gardening by crop rotation and inter/succession planting.

The Silver Spring Garden Club featured speaker is Elizabeth Olson, PG Master Gardener and MD Certified Horticulturist. Elizabeth writes the "EdibleHarvest" column for Washington Gardener Magazine. This event is Free. It is open to the public.

*Thursday, May 2 2013, 7:00am to 6:30 pm Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and Sandy's Plant Nursery, Richmond, VA \$70 per person*

The Beltsville Garden Club is organizing this day trip to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden with a stop at Sandy's Plant Nursery.

From the Lewis Ginter website: "With something for all ages and interests, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is a place to learn about plants, to marvel at nature, to relax in a beautiful setting, to take gardening classes, or to have a wedding or a business meeting.

## **Plant Sales**

*Saturday, April 13, 8 am, Beltsville Garden Club Spring Plant Sale, High Point High School, 3601 Powder Mill Road, Beltsville, Maryland*

The first of two of BGC's annual Spring plant sales. It's not to be missed!

*Saturday April 13, 10 am to 4:00 pm Greenfest, Howard Community College, Columbia MD*

NATIVE PLANT VENDORS visit GREENFEST - Our native plants are often difficult to find. This year at GREENFEST native plants will be readily available from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia vendors. GREENFEST is a free, family event. Fun for all! GREENFEST

*Saturday, April 13 from 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday, April 14, from noon to 4 pm, Adkins Arboretum Spring Plant Sale*

From their website: Prepare for spring in the garden! The region's largest selection of ornamental native plants will be for sale, including a broad selection of flowering trees and shrubs, perennials, ferns, and grasses for spring planting. Ornamental native flowers and trees make colorful additions to home landscapes and provide food and habitat for wildlife. Master Gardeners will be available to answer questions, and Arboretum docents will be on hand to lead guided walks. The sale benefits the Arboretum's education programs and introduces the public to the beauty and benefit of gardening with native plants.

*Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 26 to 28, Native Plant Sale at Black Hill Regional Park*

Shop for nursery-propagated native wildflowers for your yard and garden, many of which are nectar and host plants for butterflies. The sale is offered by the Friends of Black Hill Nature Programs, and all proceeds will be donated to Black Hill Nature programs. Call 301 528-3484 for information on species and possible pre-orders. Friday 4/26 3:00pm-7:00pm; Saturday 4/27 10:00am-3:00pm; Sunday 4/28 1:00pm-3:00pm

*Saturday, May 11, 8 am, Beltsville Garden Club Spring Plant Sale, High Point High School, 3601 Powder Mill Road, Beltsville, Maryland*

The second of two of BGC's annual Spring plant sales. Don't miss this one if you missed the first one!

*Saturday, May 11, 8 am, Silver Spring Garden Clubs's Plant Mart, Brookside Gardens*

A great sale sponsored by the Silver Spring Garden Club.