



Takoma Horticultural Club

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March 2013

Upcoming March Event: Erica Smith Speaks about Spring Vegetable Gardening

Join the Takoma Horticultural Club on *Wednesday, March 20 from 7:30-9:00 pm at the Historic Takoma headquarters, 7328 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD.* Erica Smith will speak on "Spring Vegetable Gardening." In her talk, Ms Smith will cover how to grow vegetables in often-unpredictable spring weather, provide recommendations for plants and varieties for spring and summer that may be new to experienced growers, and tell us what gardeners can do to make it all happen.

Erica is the lead vegetable gardener for the Montgomery County Master Gardener's Demonstration Garden in Derwood, and runs the University of Maryland Extension's *Grow It, Eat It* blog.

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.

February Event: Kevin Conrad on Choosing Trees for the City and Suburb

"We garden in interesting times" says Kevin Conrad, who spoke at THC's on February 20 meeting on choosing trees for urban settings. "Imagine you were a maple living with fluctuating temperatures, 40 degrees one day, 60 the next, derechos, hurricanes..."

Mr. Conrad discussed and illustrated a number of attractive trees that are suitable for urban planting and streets and in gardens. One qualification is that

urban trees should not grow to more than 30 feet tall, so that they don't reach overhead wires and attract Pepco's ungentle attention. "we force trees to do things that they don't really want to. A catalpa that should be 75 - 100 feet is forced into a small umbrella shape." 'Right plant, right spot' should be the guideline. *(continued next page)*



Crape myrtle hybrid 'Natchez'

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Prunus campanulata 'First Lady'



Pistacia chinensis

February Event: Kevin Conrad on Choosing Trees for the City and Suburb (continued from Page 1)

Examples of 'right trees' for some urban spots included new or overlooked maples such as *Acer buergerianum*, which has exfoliating bark and good fall color, and

will stay in the 25-foot range for 30 years. *A. truncatum* and *A. campestre* are other choices. Triflorum, related to the paperbark maple, which can be seen in the Asian valley at the Arboretum, and *A. miyabei* 'State Street', from Morton Arboretum in Chicago, is a "Power Tree", recommended for planting under power lines.

Crape myrtle hybrid 'Natchez' is a work horse, beautiful in all seasons, particularly the purple leaf forms, said Kevin. There are also several other variable-sized crape myrtles that do not need pollarding to regulate growth. For tulip poplar, choose a compact type with an open canopy such as *Liriodendron* 'Ardis' or 'Little Volunteer'. The circumference of 'Little Volunteer' is 20-25', and you can garden under it. It has a smaller flower and a much smaller leaf than the species. Tennessee nurseries are ramping up production of this.

The dogwood 'Venus' is a hybrid between *Cornus nuttallii* and *C. kousa* with wide white bracts. It is disease-resistant and durable, with good fall color. Variegated *C. officinalis* is hardy, has early bloom with a yellow flower, and is starting to bloom RIGHT NOW. It reaches 20 feet, with quarter-size fruit (from which you can make liqueur!!) and four season interest.

Kevin said that crabapples need no longer be messy, and there are many disease-resistant varieties such as *Malus* 'Adirondack' and 'Red Jewel'. *Chamaecyparis* 'Filifera Aurea', with golden foliage, is a slow grower and can take 30 years to reach 30 feet. It displays one or more beautiful colors in fall. Native American Smokebush (*Cotinus obovatus*, found in Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina) is very hardy. It's not for a courtyard setting, needs to be seen from a distance to be appreciated.

Pistacia chinensis is drought tolerant, with dark, corky bark and excellent fall color. A Japanese apricot 'Peggy Clark' is the equal of the Yoshino cherry, Kevin said, with a double, deep rose flower and a red calyx. Thuja 'Green Giant', a hybrid of Japanese and western thuja, can be substituted for Leyland cypress as a screening plant. Also check out the cherry *Prunus campanulata* 'First Lady', which will be planted at the USDA complex in Beltsville, on the left side going north on Route 1.

It was pointed out that most of the trees on the list were sun-lovers. For shade, Kevin suggested that you look in a given genus for an understory species. For maples, an example would be the striped bark maple, *A. pensylvanicum*. Zelkova is overused, Kevin said. "There is a wealth of diversity" coming from nurseries today that can be reflected in our urban plantings.

Kevin Conrad is Curator of Woody Plants at the National Arboretum. The meeting was held in the very pleasant quarters of Historic Takoma, Inc. on Carroll Avenue.

Membership and Dues

Please welcome our newest members to join the Takoma Horticultural Club: Alison Gillespie, Nancy Abbott Young, Carole Clem, Karen Shavel and Rosemary McCutchen. We hope you will find our club a great place to meet other gardeners and enrich your gardening experiences.

Our dues of \$12 cover the calendar year. We have 90 paid-up members, but unfortunately there are also about 90 who are on our list from 2012, but have not paid their 2013 dues. These names will be removed from our membership list soon. Please contact Carole if you are unsure of your membership status (cagalati@rcn.com). And visit our website for our 2013 Calendar of Events and a lot

of other club news and gardening information: www.takomahort.org

Save the Date

*Thursday, March 14, 7-9:30 pm,
Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD*

The Four Seasons Garden Club announces its March meeting, Thursday 3/14/13 at Brookside Gardens. Munchies at seven, speaker seven thirty. Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator & Director of Outreach at the Denver Botanic Garden, will speak on "The Golden Mountains of Central Asia: a tale of two trips to the Tian Shan and Altai Mountains of Kazakhstan and Mongolia"

We are limiting the audience to paid-up members of the Four Seasons. However, membership may be purchased at the door.

*Monday, March 18, 8 pm, Brookside
Gardens, Wheaton, MD, Free and Open to
Public*

The Silver Spring Garden Club invites you to their March meeting with speaker Marie Mims Butler from the Virginia Zoo.

Marie has elephants tracking up the grass and cats that weigh over 300 pounds. And where do they sit?...Come learn about the challenges of Zoo horticulture and take away some practical techniques and tips that work for gardeners who don't have elephants in their garden...or 500,000 guests a year, either.

*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.

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. A wide variety of experiences are offered through its diverse gardens and facilities."