



Takoma Horticultural Club

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October 2013

Two October Events: Members Only Plant Exchange and Takoma Park Street Festival

On Sunday **October 6**, THC will sponsor a booth at the Takoma Street Festival where we have our only fund raising event for the year, selling flowering bulbs. In last months meeting we got some bulb inspiration from Merikay Smith our guest speaker. Merikay suggested that we look for more unusual bulbs to extend garden interest and flowering starting in late Winter to early Spring. See the article in this newsletter about that talk.

On **October 20**, from 1:30 to 3:00 pm we hold our annual fall plant exchange for members only at Heffner Park in Takoma Park. We can accept new members at the event but can only take checks or exact change of \$18 for the balance of this year and all of next year.

THC plant exchanges are always lots of fun and we get to see what our fellow gardeners have had success growing in their gardens and to share plants we have in abundance. If you don't have any plants to swap you can bring food to share or gardening items that you no longer need, such as pots, shovels, statuary, or plant stands. We also include house plants in the swap.

September Talk: Merikay Smith, Master Gardener, Bulbs for All Seasons

On Wednesday, September 15, Merikay Smith from the Montgomery County Master Gardeners Speakers Group gave a motivating talk on using bulbs in a home

garden. Merikay is the head of the Speakers Bureau and has a well designed home garden that she used to illustrate her talk about flowering bulbs.

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Merikay Smith with Canna Tuber

Photo by Becky Lavash

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Ms. Smith had a great collection of photographs showing how she had landscaped her home gardens with flowering bulbs, perennials, and annuals to provide an attractive and changing garden throughout the seasons. This type of gardening is called succession planting. For inspiration and guidance on how to do our own succession gardening Merikay recommended two books by Christopher Lloyd Succession Planting for Year Round Pleasure and Succession Planting for Adventurous Gardeners.

We learned about how daffodils are classified so that we can more easily determine which bulbs will provide the qualities we are seeking. For example, daffodils in Division 8 are the scented flowers and Division 1 are Trumpet daffodils where the cup is as long or longer than the leaves. The website Daffodilusa.org has a complete listing of all these divisions. The division information is shown on the daffodil packaging, abbreviated something like this:

<p>8W-O Division 8, white petals, orange cup</p> <p>1Y-P Division 1, yellow petals, peach cup</p>

Merikay had some strong recommendations for bulbs for home gardens. She likes daffodils because of their variety and ability to naturalize, although some divisions are more or less prone to naturalizing. She also encouraged us to plant Hyacinths, a wonderfully fragrant flower that grows stronger each year. These deer-resistant flowers like full sun but do not like to be disturbed with companion plants so need their own dedicated bed or undisturbed area. We have seen a great loss of hyacinth varieties over the last 200 years with the total number of varieties

commercially available down from 2000+ varieties to less than 20.



Bulb Catalogs

Photo by Becky Lavash

Hybridized tulips, on the other hand, require much more care and fade away year over year, with the flowers diminishing with each successive season and disappearing in only 2-3 years. For tulips, many professional gardens pull the bulbs after they bloom their first year and dispose of the bulbs. If you want to grow tulips in your home garden, Merikay recommended planting them deeper than recommended (7 or more inches) and heavily amending and fertilizing the soil. Just like daffodils, tulips are also organized by divisions by characteristics of the flower or plant. And some of the tulip divisions are more durable than the others, such as the Greigii in Division 14. For an easier-to-maintain tulip display, she recommended using the smaller species tulips. These much smaller tulips tend to bloom early with simple but colorful 4 petal blooms.

Merikay closed by talking about the overlooked flowering bulbs that we should also plant in our gardens. This group includes flowers that may bloom in late winter to early spring, such as ipheon, chionodoxa (glory of the snow), allium,

spring crocus, and fall crocus, galanthus (snow drops), muscari (grape hyacinth), scilla (Siberian squill), erantis (winter aconite). These wonderful bulbs return year after year, generally multiply freely, and are woefully under used.

If you are interested in adding to your flower garden using flowering bulbs, you can come to the Takoma Hort booth at the Takoma Park Street Fair on October 6 to get your supply. Members will get a discount on the price and everyone can get advice on good choices for their garden.

THC Fall Potluck at Jeff and Herman's Home

Once again Jeff and Herman invited us to their remodeled Arts and Crafts home on Sherman Avenue. We had a great time walking around the back garden swapping stories, plants, and garden items while eating chicken and members' other food offerings. We all had a great time and appreciate Jeff and Herman's generosity in sharing their home with us.



A wide stone staircase leads to the side door

Photo by Becky Lavash

THC has two potluck meetings in the year, one in the spring and one in the fall. These are member only events along with our annual plant swaps. We would like to see you at these fun events to share the fun!

This year Herman offered us a tour of their beautiful home that was remodeled in 2001. Herman and Jeff said we could share some photos of their house and garden in the newsletter.

This is a view of the back garden from the master bedroom on the second floor overlooking the screened porch. They have a nice stone patio behind their screened porch and way back in the corner they have a swing and seating area with a small fire pit.



. View from the Master Bedroom

Photo by Becky Lavash

In between the porch and stone patio is a great two-tiered fountain. Jeff and Herman have lush plantings around the patio in the ground and in pots. River stone paths fills in the spaces around some of the beds and act as mulch to block out weeds but allow water through to the soil for good drainage.



Plantings by the Screen Porch



Planting by the Stone Path



Fountain by the Porch

The Arts and Crafts remodel of the house includes this bright and airy staircase to the new top floor with office, bedrooms, and great storage.



New Staircase

Photos by Becky Lavash

Membership and Dues

Welcome! Please welcome these new and returning members: Elizabeth Forrest, Beth Karn, Liz Joyce and Nancy Keith. Now they can join the rest of our members to get the 10% discount on the direct-from-Holland bulbs that we will be selling this coming Sunday, October 6, at the Takoma Street Fair (10:00 to 5:00). This is also a great place for old and new members to get to know each other.

~Carole Galati

Takoma Park Street Festival-Come Purchase Fall Blooming Bulbs from Takoma Hort

Every year Takoma Hort offers top quality fall-blooming bulbs for sale at the Takoma Park Street Festival. This year the festival is Sunday October 6. We can always use extra help in cleaning up after the sale, so let us know if you can spare 30 minutes or so to help pack up.

Save the Date

Thursday, October 3, Regionally Adapted Plants Talk, 2:00pm - 3:30pm, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD

With Kathy Jentz, Editor/Publisher of the Washington Gardener For people who are new to gardening and gardeners who are new to the DC metropolitan area, learn about our local gardening world and resources. Low-maintenance gardening is the goal of many of us in our busy lives and the key is planting the right plants for our local climate. We'll talk about some native plants, of course, but mostly we'll explore the tried and true plants that can take clay soil, deer, and/or periods of drought. Season-by-season, we'll share our favorite

plants that excel in our local gardens. Course # 248803 Fee: \$18; FOBG: \$15; registration required Visitors Center Auditorium Walk-ins welcome

Thursday, October 17, 2:00pm - 3:30pm, Local Gardening 102 Talk , Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD

With Kathy Jentz, Editor/Publisher of the Washington Gardener. For people who are new to gardening and gardeners who are new to the DC metropolitan area, learn about our local gardening world and resources. So you've been gardening for a few years, but still feel like there are some holes in your gardening knowledge that you'd like answers to? This class is for you. We'll take it to the next level and talk about local gardening challenges like poor landscape drainage, gardening on a slope, dealing with deer, planting in clay soil, and more. We'll examine case studies of local gardeners who have conquered these common garden challenges Course # 248804 Fee: \$18; FOBG: \$15; registration required Visitors Center Auditorium Walk-ins are welcome. Details at: <http://www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside/xperience.shtm>

Monday, Oct 21, Exploring the Urban Jungle Talk, 8:00-9:30pm, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD

Washington Post columnist Patterson Clark talks on Natural History at Your Doorstep. Silver Spring Garden Club's monthly meeting. Open to all. Free. For more information, contact Kathy Jentz, Washington Gardener Magazine, 301-588-6894, WGardenermag@aol.com. Directions at www.brooksidegardens.org