



# Takoma Horticultural Club

A Hardy Perennial Since 1916

[www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org)

December 2013/January 2014

## RSVP Required: Annual Takoma Hort January Potluck

On Wednesday, January 15 from 6:30 pm to 9pm, Takoma Hort members will come together at Heffner Park, for the annual Winter Potluck. Paid club members are invited to bring a dish to share and gardening items to swap.

We always have fun at the potluck, thinking ahead to the gardening season, and enjoying good company.

RSVP TO [TAFFYT@VERIZON.NET](mailto:TAFFYT@VERIZON.NET)

## November Meeting, Bees in the Garden

Urban trees or busy bees? Sam Droege, a biologist with the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and a specialist in native bee survey techniques and monitoring, firmly opted for the latter in his witty, highly partisan talk to the THC audience at the November meeting.

Once upon a time, Montgomery County was scrubby land, cleared regularly by small-holding farmers. Open, sunny edges brought flowering native plants that attracted pollinating insects, and oaks and pines grew on unfarmed land. Over time, forests and meadows were overtaken by development, and cities have tried to recover that loss by planting urban trees. Sam thinks they should be clearing spaces to draw pollinators.

“Now people want forests close by-- in the city park, and suburban lawns around the house—no snakes, no allergies”, said Droege. Nature is great, they think, but it should be “over there” in the park. But

while forest habitat supports wildlife, urban trees don't make a forest ecosystem. Takoma Park, “City of Trees,” will never be a forest of trees... it just “has trees.” Bees need meadows. *(continued on page 3)*



Sam Droege with Takoma Hort's Resident Bee

Photo by Carole Galati

### Officers

**Coordinators:** Carole Galati  
Diane Svenonius  
**Secretary:** Becky Lavash  
**Treasurer:** Taffy Turner

### Committee Chairs and Contacts

**Membership:** Carole Galati  
**Listserv:** Anne Hardman  
**Newsletter:** Becky Lavash  
**Public Relations:** Kathy Jentz  
**Webmaster:** Cynthia Walczak

## December Event Review: Holiday Centerpiece Workshop

On December 11, we met at Heffner Park to make small holiday centerpieces using fresh greens. Everyone had great fun learning how to assemble the pieces using wet floral foam (also called Oasis) and small branches of fresh greens such as boxwood, yew, privet, arbor vitae, and rosemary. We made more than 50 pieces to donate to Franklin Towers, a local home for disabled persons.



*Taffy Turner Demonstrates*  
*Photo by Becky Lavash*

Taffy Turner started the session with a demonstration and discussion of design principles. Our eager participants used their creativity and imagination to build several centerpieces each, using small tuna cans as the base container.

The pieces were decorated with small pinecones, ribbons, berries, and decorative sprays to give them some holiday sparkle and color.



*Building a Centerpiece*  
*Photo by Becky Lavash*

All our attendees reported that they had fun, and got in the holiday spirit making these pieces to donate. Some folks made a piece for themselves and others planned to apply their new skills to decorate their own homes for the winter.



*Busy Builders*  
*Photo by Becky Lavash*

This is our second year offering this workshop and we hope to offer it again in 2014!

## Bees in the Garden (continued from Page 1)

There are 16,000 or more species of bees worldwide and about 400 in Maryland and bees are industrious and effective pollinators. While the big trees are often wind-pollinated and have random distribution of thousands of seeds, flowering plants often rely on carriers to spread. They coevolved with the insects developing specific characteristics that invite bees to visit, yielding huge diversity on both sides. Many local bees are “specialists”, adapted to come for nectar to one type of flowering plant at its annual blooming time of year and even (as with the evening primrose) time of day, morning or evening.

Color is critical in attracting bugs, and flower colors, sizes and shapes developed to get the result the plant needs. Why doesn't every flowering plant have a daisy-like flower, open and easy to land on, pollen displayed up front? Pollen production is expensive for the plants to produce, said Droege, so they evolved to draw a limited but effective audience. For example, Moccasin flower with its deep pouch is pollinated by Queen bumblebees. Its shape forces the bees to “muscle inside... when they get in there's no nectar! “ But the plant has deposited pollinia on them. Luckily bees travel widely, not along specific habitual paths like butterflies, and are likely to find the plants they need... provided that we plant them where they'll grow.

To attract our native bees, we should seek to have sunny open spaces with a wide diversity of the native plants that they are partnered with. Our native bees tend to be solitary, and nest alone- often in bare ground, so provide bare areas for nesting. Avoid large trees that cast shade, but smaller native trees are desirable. Other keys to attracting bees are flower

succession through the year (spring, summer and fall bloomers), a weedy lawn-clover's good!- or weedy meadows which you mow once a year, in March. The first frost takes out 80% of bees, and then pollinating flies take over the job.



*Maryland Bees at Work on Baptisia  
Photo by Becky Lavash*

## Membership and Dues

### 2014 Dues!

Well, November was a quiet month on the new membership front. We only had one new November member to welcome – but what a bright ray of sunshine she will add to the club. Please welcome Sara King! Sara even paid her 2014 dues. Have you?? They were due January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Don't be left out in the cold!! Our “Members-Only” winter Potluck & Garden Exchange is Wednesday, January 15th. You will be asked to RSVP and pay your 2014 dues before you can attend. It is a fun-filled evening of garden socializing, great food and a wonderful exchange, featuring house plants and all things garden re-gifters have to offer! ~Carole Galati

## Save the Date

*Monday, Jan 20, Gardening for the Butterfly Life Cycle, 8:00-9:30pm, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD*

Kathy Stevens, Brookside Gardens Wings of Fancy curator, will walk us through the best butterfly plants for our region as well as how to care for them. This talk is 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](mailto:WGardenermag@aol.com).  
Directions: [www.brooksidegardens.org](http://www.brooksidegardens.org)

*Tuesday, January 21, 7 pm, at the Historic Takoma Bldg, 7328 Carroll Ave, Takoma Park*

The once-mighty American Chestnut succumbed to an invasive fungal blight introduced over 100 years ago. By 1950, the tree was all but eradicated from its natural range, with profound consequences for East Coast forest ecology. But there is hope for this classic American tree.

The American Chestnut Foundation has been engaged in a long-term breeding program designed to produce blight resistant American chestnut cultivars to reintroduce into our forests. Volunteers in Maryland have been critical to this effort. Bruce Levine, President of the American Chestnut Foundation's Maryland chapter will discuss the status of the breeding program and prospects for reintroduction of the American Chestnut here in Maryland.

This event is offered as part of Historic Takoma's Series: Culture Shift: Connecting with Nature". Free to the public, light refreshments. Check our website for event updates at: [www.HistoricTakoma.org](http://www.HistoricTakoma.org), we are now planning January and February events.

*Saturday, Jan 25, Seed Exchange, 12:30-4pm, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton, MD*

Washington Gardener, the publication for DC- area gardening enthusiasts, is hosting the seventh annual Washington Seed Exchange. This event includes lectures, face-to-face seed swap, and more. You bring your extra seeds to swap with other gardeners. Everyone will leave with a bag full of seeds, new garden friends and expert planting advice. Fee includes lectures, goody bag and seed swap. Register by calling 703-642-5173. Fee: \$15/person \$10 for Washington Gardener subscribers and Friends of Brookside Gardens.

For more information, contact Kathy Jentz, Washington Gardener Magazine, 301-588-6894, [WGardenermag@aol.com](mailto:WGardenermag@aol.com).

*Saturday, Feb 1, 7th Annual Seed Exchange, 12:30-4pm, Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, VA*

Washington Gardener, the publication for DC- area gardening enthusiasts, is co-hosting the seventh annual Washington Seed Exchange at Green Spring Gardens. This event includes lectures, face-to-face seed swap, and more. You bring your extra seeds to swap with other gardeners. Everyone will leave with a bag full of seeds, new garden friends and expert planting advice. Fee includes lectures, goody bag and seed swap. Register by calling 703-642-5173. Fee: \$15/person \$10 for Washington Gardener subscribers and Friends of Green Spring.

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