



Takoma Horticultural Club

A hardy perennial since 1916



May 2016

The Takoma Horticultural Club presents:

2016 Members Only Spring Plant Exchange

Sunday, May 22nd, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Heffner Park, 42 Oswego Ave.

Set up/Sort Plants: 1:00;

Exchange: 1:30 to 2:30

Takoma Horticultural Club's wonderful Spring Plant Exchange is just around the corner! This is your chance to exchange your garden "extras" with your THC co-members for something new. Bring as many plants as you'd like. Please label each one before you come, including the plant's name (Latin & common, if possible), light requirements and growth habit. Include your name if you want to share more info. If your plant spreads/grows rapidly, alert the gardener. Please don't bring plants many consider invasive, such as common orange daylilies or English ivy. If you are not sure, post a question on the Yahoo list. You'll get plenty of opinions! Native plants are especially desirable these days!* Try to pot up your plants now and keep them watered.

If you are a new gardener or just don't have plants or time to dig, you are welcome to bring gardening books and magazines, garden-themed cookbooks, interesting (clean) pots, garden ornaments and tools, and of course finger food snacks and drinks. There are more than a few chocoholics among us!

2016 THC Executive Committee

President: Katherine Lambert

Vice President: (vacant)

Treasurer: Taffy Turner

Secretary: Barbara Henderson

Director of Membership: Carole Galati

Webmaster: Cindy Walczak

Public Relations: Kathy Jentz

Listserv: Anne Hardman

Newsletter: Eileen Schramm, Diane Svenonius

Bulb Sale: Nancy Newton

100th Anniversary Committee Chair: Kathy Jentz

Please contact Anne Hardman at anne.hardman@gmail.com if you can come early (12:30 pm) to help set up tables and chairs. The first three Early Birds to reply get first choice choosing a plant! We are always grateful for help afterwards cleaning and packing up.

Wear a recycled name tag if you have one. This helps us get to know each other and to welcome our newest members. If you can, bring a folding chair, as Heffner has a limited supply of chairs. If you'd like to join THC, or haven't yet paid your 2016 dues, please bring \$12 cash or a check—made payable to THC. We will have no cash/change on hand.

Some other helpful hints: bring water, a hat and containers to take your plants home in. Since each person stands up and tells the group what he/she brought, bringing a list of your plants speeds things up a bit.

*Although poison ivy is native, please don't bring any!



1925 Daffodil Show in the Takoma DC Library. Note the Woodward and Lothrop vases (source: THC/HTI archives). See "One Hundred Years of THC", page 2.

One Hundred Years of THC

Where have all the flower shows gone? Not so long in passing.¹ (So 20th century)

This is the fourth installment of a monthly series giving glimpses of the Takoma Horticultural Club at various times during its history. With the help of Historic Takoma Inc.'s President Diana Kohn, the 100th anniversary committee has access to a collection of newsletters, reports, ledgers and other materials collected and preserved since its founding. Here we tell the history of THC's flower shows, as recorded in several of these documents.

Flower show is a misnomer—per earlier versions of the THC constitution, they were “exhibitions and demonstrations at the proper seasons to promote horticultural appreciation.” And, they were much more than flowers: fruits and vegetables, houseplants, artistic arrangements, and even garden plots were shown and awarded prizes.

THC lost no time in staging exhibitions. In April 1916, one month after its founding, the club held the first narcissus show in the Takoma, DC library. Founding member Dr. David Griffiths brought the blooms from the grounds of the Department of Agriculture at Arlington, as there were “few cultivated flowers grown in Takoma Park.” Another founding member supplied the vases: bottles discarded by the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction of the USDA. Club members became “aware of the possibilities enclosed in the unsightly bulbs,” and before the year was out, they staged four more shows of tulips, iris, and chrysanthemums as well as one with the Community Garden Club. Total attendance that year numbered 754 people.

Over the next few years, rose, peony, gladiola, dahlia, camellia, and winter household plants were added to the list of plant-specific exhibits. Azalea shows began after WWII. Seasonal vegetables were always part of the shows, but gradually flowers predominated. In the club's early years, there were as many as nine shows a year! By the second half of the century, these numbers declined and exhibits were often combined (e.g., the 1958 show was the 41st annual tulip show, 6th annual azalea show, and 41st annual iris show in one). The Takoma, DC library remained the venue until 1950, when the shows moved to Takoma, DC Elementary School, then to Takoma Junior High School in 1962, and later to the Takoma Park Community Center. The Takoma Theatre and the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department were occasionally sites.

THC sometimes joined with DC-area plant societies in holding shows. Iris exhibitions in the 1940s were staged in cooperation with the American Iris Society. THC, the Silver Spring and Woodridge Garden Clubs sponsored the first National Capital Narcissus Show, and THC and the Silver Spring Garden Club were partners in a National Tulip Show in 1950. Members of THC won the National Capital Dahlia and Iris Society Cup in 1934, and for four consecutive years in the 1940–50s, the Club took home the Blackstone Bowl, awarded at the annual fall show of the Potomac Rose Society to the Club whose members won the highest total number of points in the show.

Orchestrating a THC flower show was something of a three-ring circus. Shortly after the first narcissus show, a member urged the club to learn from his observations at a rose show he attended in Washington, DC. It was “thoroughly organized,” and THC should “plan all our exhibitions well in advance of being held.” THC quickly drew up its detailed rules for exhibits in the same year. Scores of

members and other volunteers were required. In addition to the THC standing exhibition committee (typically 6 – 12 members), each show had a lengthy list of tasks to be fulfilled by one or more people: judging (at least three for each genus of flower and two for artistic arrangements); judges' aides (one for each judge); registration of entrants; publicity; hosting; scheduling; staging; classifying (determining the species and class—by flower color or other characteristic); publicizing; purchasing awards; tabulating points awarded; and setting up and taking down. A show with three types of flowers plus artistic arrangements could have up to 100 classes of entries, with many entrants in each class.

Shows had seasonally themed titles such as “Leap into Spring,” “Spring Splendor,” and “The Miracle of Spring.” The artistic arrangement category was also themed, with each class of arrangement representing an aspect of the theme. One year the theme was “the home,” and classes included living room picture window, father's study, daughter Betty, Bud's hobby room, and breakfast nook. A fall show included the arrangement classes of moonlight on the patio, fishing, drifting along, just resting, and married harmony. The artistic arrangement category also included classes for juniors, “inter-club,” novice, and by-invitation.

Prizes included first, second, and third place ribbons as well as items purchased from or donated by local garden shops—plants, a sprayer, shears, pruners, and saws, for example. The most treasured awards were trophies for very specific achievements. Some were “perpetual trophies,” established by or in memory of a club member. The annual winner had his or her name engraved on it, kept it a year, and then surrendered it for a miniature. Among them were the Winn T. Simmons (an early club president) Trophy for the most



1971 Flower Show winners and their prizes (source: THC/HTI archives).

(cont'd on next page)

blue ribbons in all flower shows during a year; the Albertson Trophy for the best collection of four named varieties of roses—yellow, white, red, and pink; the Oliver E. Sweet Trophy for the best collection of six different varieties of floribundas and/or polyanthas (but not grandifloras); and the Gertrude Harrison Trophy for the most blue ribbons in artistic arrangements.

Flower shows continued through the 1990s, but club membership was dropping—and the tasks associated with the shows were complex and time consuming. By 1999, the message was “It’s easy, it’s fun, it’s free...bring one entry or dozens of entries. Don’t know exactly what you have? If it’s beautiful bring it and volunteers will help with identification. You don’t have to enter to attend—come to the show and enjoy the fragrance and displays.” THC entered the 21st century with nary a word about flower shows.

Although THC’s flower shows are no more, some pieces of the exhibits’ history still remain (although the whereabouts of the perpetual trophies remain a mystery). A few fortunate current club members have in their possession the vases and/or their wood storage boxes, purchased in 1918 with a \$10 award from the now out-of-business Woodward and Lothrop at \$3.00 for 100 vases. These were used through the last of the shows. The Club is also privileged to have on loan a set of colorful hand-sewn banners, made by long-time member, Mickie Riley, in the late 1980s. These will be displayed as part of the THC centennial exhibit at Historic Takoma, Inc.

—Nancy Newton

¹ *Apologies to Pete Seeger, et. al.*

THC Sponsors Hospitality Booth at the Takoma Park House and Garden Tour Today

If you’re taking the Tour...that’s the May 1 Takoma Park Annual House and Garden Tour...please be sure to stop at the Takoma Horticultural Club’s Hospitality Booth at the intersection of Willow and Valley View, and flash your ticket for a for a spot of lemonade and a sugar cookie! This year’s theme is “The American Craftsman” and features 14 homes reflecting the Arts and Crafts movement in Takoma Park. Get day-of tickets at the corner of Maple and Philadelphia across from the library or visit www.historictakoma.org.

Announcements

Centennial to be Proclaimed!

On Thursday, June 2, County Councilman George Leventhal will read a proclamation of our club’s Centennial at the Friends of Sligo Creek’s program meeting, to which Council members are invited to discuss environmental issues. The meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Silver Spring Civic Center on Veteran’s Place, is open to the public. The proclamation will also be read at the TP City Council’s meeting on May 18.

Party’s On!!!

A venue has been chosen for the Club’s Centennial Celebration for club members and guests, to be held on Saturday, August 27 from 3 to 6 p.m. It will be at the EF Language School, 6896 Laurel St NW, just across Eastern Avenue from the site of the Sunday Farmer’s Market. The room for the venue, with its soaring ceilings and high windows, once served as the chapel of the Washington Theological Union. **Details to follow!**

Membership

Thanks to all of you who responded to my email reminder last month, and paid dues for 2016. We appreciate your continued membership.

For those who haven’t, here are some excellent reasons to continue your membership:

- Pick up great plants at the May 22 Plant Exchange;
- Wear something historic & march with us in the Takoma Park 4th of July Parade;
- Help create and dedicate a new Centennial city park;
- Attend our Centennial Celebration for members and guests in August, which this year replaces the summer potluck.

If you’re unsure of your membership status, let me know (cagalati@rcn.com). You can renew with a check for \$12 at the Plant Exchange!

Thank you and Happy 100th Birthday to the Takoma Horticultural Club: 1916 – 2016!!

—Carole Galati

Coming Soon in June

Gardens Opening For You!

We are very excited to bring you another series of Open Gardens, sponsored by the Takoma Horticultural Club! These popular events are free and open to the public. They are held on Friday, between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Here are the Open Garden dates and hosts for this year:

June 10 Alison Gillespie **June 24** Monica Cretzu

June 17 Priscilla Labovitz **July 1** Wendy Bell

Mark your calendars now! There will be descriptions and directions for each Open Garden in our June Newsletter posted on our Yahoo list and on our website (www.takomahort.org).

These Open Gardens provide opportunities for all gardeners, including new club members, prospective members, members of nearby garden clubs, neighbors and friends, to gather, socialize, network, learn and enjoy each other’s passion—gardening!

—Carole Galati

Thank You!

THC wishes to thank the generous members who have responded to the Centennial fund drive as of April 30:

Sedum

—

Aster

Anonymous

Rhododendron

Kit Gage

Melanie Isis

Kathy Jentz

Loretta Neumann

Diane Svenonius

Taffy Turner

Oak

Carole Galati

Jeff Trunzo

Current total: \$1,225.

We are almost 1/3 of the way to our \$4,000 goal!