

Takoma Horticultural Club

A hardy perennial since 1916



May 2018

Spring Plant Exchange—MEMBERS ONLY!

Sunday, May 20th from 1pm – 3pm at Heffner Park.

How to get ready? Decide which plants you have in abundance, then thin them and pot up for the Exchange. If you do it soon, they will be able to recover from transplant shock and will be lookin' good for the Exchange. What to bring? Natives, annuals, perennials, grasses, ferns, trees, shrubs, tropicals—you name it! Veggie starts are particularly popular this time of year—how many tomatoes do you really need?

Please label each plant before you come, including the plant's name (Latin and 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 your fellow gardeners. Please do not bring plants known to be invasive, or the common orange daylilies.

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!

Last but not least, pay your membership for 2018. Not sure if you have renewed? Contact Carole Galati cagalati@gmail.com, our membership chair. Full details about the exchange can be found on the THC web site: www.takomahort.org. I'll be reminding you again closer to the date, but if you have questions, contact me: anne.hardman@gmail.com. Same thing if you would like to volunteer to help set up.

—Anne Hardman

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June: Open Gardens Galore!

by Carole Galati

Our Open Garden Series begins on June 1 and continues **every Friday evening in June**. Here is a short description of each garden—just to stir your curiosity and encourage you to mark your calendars. Each weekend in June, look for a post on our List for the following Friday's Open Garden. These postings will include a fuller description of the garden, plus address, directions and parking instructions.

June 1 we will travel to Beltsville to visit the stunning garden of Steve Branch and Wade Kness. Since we visited their rear garden in 2015, they have done a complete renovation of the front garden, starting two years ago. A description, with photo, appears on the next page of this newsletter. Meanwhile, the "young" rear garden we saw has filled in nicely. (*Details on page 2.*)

June 8 features the gardens of neighbors, Rani Parker and Louise Howells, right here in Takoma Park—a "two for one" event! Their shared garden has resulted in more space and beauty for both neighbors. Rani's garden has evolved largely through advice and donations from THC members (Plant Exchanges, etc.) and Master Gardeners. Her garden is structured to serve as a place of beauty that can be used for socializing, while also providing a quiet space for contemplation. It is also a source of materials for her wonderful cooking skills. Some of Rani's vertical gardening experiments will be on display.

To the left of Rani's is Louise Howell's delightful garden. The prominent feature is a very contained stand of running bamboo. Her steeply sloped yard is surrounded by trees and familiar plantings that can survive dry shade and the family dog. Epimedium keeps the English ivy (that once covered the entire eastern slope) at bay. Hostas, astilbe and ferns border a flower garden of impatiens and begonias to add color. In the back, a repurposed children's sky fort serves as an open-air potting shed. Louise has truly created her outdoor "comfortable place."

June 15 is the Open Garden of Deidre Rye. Her ever-changing front garden is full of "pollinator magnet" plants attracting all kinds of butterflies and bees. Large stands of Echinacea and Rudbeckia,

etc. keep the garden buzzing all season long. Around back you will find several focal points to gravitate to and relax in. Each area is carefully planned for comfort and visual delight. The pond and waterfalls invite with surrounding patio and chairs. Deidre is truly an “evolutionary gardener”, constantly adding and changing to create

new areas of interest to her garden. Her priorities are to plant for wild life, pollinators, four season interest, and plant diversity with a native plant priority.

June 22 is the Open Garden of Arleen Seed. Arleen’s 1.5 acre garden includes an enclosed vegetable garden, two orchards, a rockery, a major composting operation and

a sprawling lawn flanked by mixed borders. Over 100 tropicals overwinter in her greenhouse, which she uses to start most of her plants. Arleen is a fine art painter and will have her art studio open for us to explore.

June 29 is the Open Garden of Janet Johnson and Linda Borghi and will be described in the June THC Newsletter.

Takoma Horticultural Club Presents:
Garden of Steve Branch and Wade Kness

Friday June 1, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
11128 Emack Rd., Beltsville MD

As with most home projects, one thing leads to another. To those who visited the back garden three years ago, you may have noticed the deteriorating brick retaining wall in the front. Replacing the wall was only the beginning. It snowballed and became several major projects. Enter London Landscapes. Steve and Wade worked closely with Barbara Katz for over a year, designing various hard-scape projects. Now walkways and stairs gradually ascend to a new front porch with columns, allowing you to stop and view the garden from several points of interest along the way. Pennsylvania field stone walks and Colonial Wall Stone dry stack were used for the retaining walls, stairs and patios. Over forty yards of topsoil were brought in to terrace the front property. This entirely changed the topography of the front gardens.

Steve and Wade researched and designed the plantings themselves using unusual and interesting evergreens and deciduous trees. Texture and year round color were requirements. Plantings include Colorado blue spruce and dwarf conifer cultivars such as ‘Skylands’. You will find Oriental spruce, weeping Alaskan blue cedar, a purple weeping beech, Japanese maples, and redwood ‘Amber glow’. Shrubs and perennials add layers of seasonal color and texture with plantings of red buckeye, yellow magnolia, hollies, barberry, deutzia ‘Nikko’, weigela, edgeworthia and oak leaf hydrangeas. This past fall, they planted over 1,500 bulbs, including iris, crocus, daffodils, heirloom lilies, eremurus, colchicums, and spider-lilies.

As you come up the driveway you will see a faux water feature of liriopie in the top bed near the house, home to five blue fish and tropical plants. As they told us last time, it’s “a work in progress.” Their last Open Garden featured the very new backyard garden. It is now about five years old and beautifully filled out with lots of good things to see and places to explore.

There is plenty of street parking available. This Open Garden is about 2 miles off Route 1, not far from Behnke Nurseries. Please call 415-290-1700 the day of the Open Garden if you get lost or have any questions.



Left: the redesigned front yard of Steve and Wade’s house with new hardscaping. Right top and bottom: the beautifully filled in back yard.

Photos: Steve Branch / Wade Kness