

# Takoma Horticultural Club

*A hardy perennial since 1916*



August 2017

## Soil Mixes for Houseplants and Container Gardens

*presented by Carol Allen*

**Wednesday, August 16, 7:30pm**

**Historic Takoma, Inc., 7328 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD**

Got a plant to pot? Want to give it the best possible chance in life? On Wednesday, August 16 at Historic Takoma Inc., Carol Allen will talk to the Club on "Soil Mixes for Houseplants and Container Gardens." You will learn exactly what you are buying in that bag of potting soil, why one is cheaper than another, and do you really need mycorrhiza? ....and what the heck is it? Carol will bring samples for you to compare and will talk about how water, substrate, and air come together to help you grow your plants.

Carol, who describes herself as a "committable plant-a-holic," has over twenty-five years' experience in the horticulture industry, with special interests in Integrated Pest Management, landscape

design, native plants, tropicals of many kinds, and especially orchids. She enjoys helping people understand how to care for their plants and as many know, holds a monthly orchid diagnostic/repotting clinic in Beltsville, MD.

After serving a term as supervisory horticulturist at the United States Botanic Garden Conservatory, Carol returned to college and earned a degree in horticulture. She went on to complete her

Master's degree in plant science, working with virus transmission in orchids. Carol teaches a wide range of horticultural topics and biological sciences at local colleges and universities and frequently speaks to plant groups and societies. She grows a varied range of plants in and around the home that she shares with cats, anoles, tropical frogs, tropical fish, and pet snakes.

*Carol Allen.*



Photo: Stephanie Thompson Fleming

### 2017 THC Executive Committee

*President:* Katherine Lambert

*Vice President:* Barbara Henderson

*Treasurer:* Taffy Turner

*Secretary:* Joan Frye

*Director of Membership:* Carole Galati

*Webmaster:* Cindy Walczak

*Public Relations:* Kathy Jentz

*Listserv:* Anne Hardman

*Newsletter:* Eileen Schramm, Diane Svenonius

*Bulb Sale:* Wendy Bell, Barbara Henderson

## July goings on...



Photo: Carol Galati



Above: more than 40 attended "Small Water Features in the Garden," a talk by Master Gardener and water-lily fancier Joan Kramer. Complete with water plant door prizes, good questions and information, the evening gave many of us ideas for creating or enhancing small water garden features. Left and below: THCers marched as pollinators on the Fourth of July, distributing native flower seeds. A caterpillar impersonated by Diana Vidutis was the hit of the day.



Photos: Ginny Klein

## Bartholdi Park Gets a Transformation

On a pleasantly cool day in July (you remember it, right?) one half of the THC News editorial team toured the US Botanic Garden's remodeled Bartholdi Park, behind USBG's Conservatory. The park has been renovated several times, not always imaginatively. This time flowers, trees and vegetables are flourishing, and the name-sake fountain was exuberant, with water gushing wildly from the mouths of those crazed bronze fish.

The fountain is ringed now with color and form from verbena bonariensis, *ruellia* (Mexican petunia), ninebark, goldenrod, cardoon and many more varieties. Other perennials are in about a dozen sunken rain gardens that absorb all the rain that falls in the park, including the recent downpours. Trees that were "preserved in place" during construction include a Franklinia (blooming now), the species famously found by John Bartram, and a *ziziphus jujuba*, thought to be a survivor by cloning of one in the founding collection. (See <http://washingtongardener.blogspot.com/2011/07>)

Ray Mims, manager of Conservation and Sustainability for USBG, said that two goals drove the new plan. The American Veterans Disabled for Life memorial is just across the street from the Park and USBG's paths fell short of full accessibility for visitors coming from this new neighbor. Meanwhile, SITES, a rating system modeled on LEED for buildings, sets forth best practices for sustainability in landscaping and ecological restoration. USBG worked with the Lady Bird Johnson organization to fulfill such goals as capturing rain and soil on site, minimizing impermeable surfaces, reducing use of potable water for plantings, and preserving habitat.

Thus when the concrete octagon path around the fountain was replaced with a simpler circular path, old concrete was crushed and reused. Soils were dug and set aside for new beds; flagstones and other materials were recycled or donated for reuse. A special depressed bed that fills and drains serves as bog for pitcher plants (*sannaceria*) and will hold other carnivorous plants. While many native plants have been used, Mims will also be testing non-natives that grow well here, counting the pollinators they attract and ensuring they are not invasive.

Another tour will be offered in August.  
See [usb.gov.programs-and-events](http://usb.gov.programs-and-events), *Rediscover Bartholdi Park*.

Smithsonian Gardens is holding "Let's Talk Gardens" events on Thursdays at 12:15 pm on the Arts and Industries Walk. For August the topics are:

- August 3 – Tropical Containers
- August 10 – Tool Cleaning and Care
- August 17 - Native Plant Substitutes
- August 24 - Transitioning to a Fall Vegetable Garden
- August 31 - Build a Terrarium

## You Too Can Do Members Only Events!

This could be another dull "Pay Your 2017 Dues" article, but it's not! It's more of a "Look What You Can Do When You Pay Your Dues" or "Save These Dates!" type of article. If your 2017 dues are paid, you can save these dates: **September 17**—Summer Potluck at Taffy Turner's fabulous garden and **October 15**—Fall Plant Exchange at Heffner. These are two of the most popular events for the Takoma Horticultural Club. Check with me if you are not sure about your membership status.

Let's welcome our new and returning members: Liz Bakacs, Lauren Callaghan, Elizabeth Thornhill, Jim Hughes, Henriette Taylor (answers to Taylor with a smile), Janet Sloven and Shohreh Hoffman. We are looking forward to seeing all of you soon at one of our monthly club events!

Thanks to all who have paid their \$12 dues for 2017. Your dues continue to keep our club thriving—for over 100 years!

—Carole Galati, Membership Chair ([cagalati@rcn.com](mailto:cagalati@rcn.com)), [www.takomahort.org](http://www.takomahort.org)