

TAKOMA HORTICULTURAL CLUB (THC) Newsletter for MAY 2009

www.takomahort.org

WELCOME to the Takoma Horticultural Club (THC) monthly newsletter, which we hope is a useful resource for you about Club news, events and garden-related items of interest.

Upcoming THC Events

Our MAY Event

The SPRING Plant Exchange

"Members Only" (you may join/renew at the event)

Sunday, May 17 from 2 to 4pm

Heffner Park, 31 Oswego Avenue Takoma Park, MD

As you tip toe through your spring gardens think about what you can pot up and bring to the exchange. Please label your plants: common name (Latin also, if possible) light and moisture needs, growth habit/height, and include your name if you want to give more information.

It is best if you can pot your plants at least 2 weeks prior to the exchange and water them well. If a plant spreads/grows quickly, please note that. Please do not bring plants considered invasives like English Ivy or Common Orange Daylilies. If you're not sure, please post a question about your offering to the THC Listserve. If you are a new gardener and/or you just don't have plants to share, you are also welcome to bring anything you have that is gardening-related including books/magazines, interesting and clean planters, garden ornaments, tools, etc. and of course FOOD. We need a few volunteers at 1:00pm to help set up and then to again help with clean up at the end of the event. These volunteers will get "first choice" when the exchange starts. Contact Carole Galati at cagalati@rcn.com to volunteer. NOTE: This event is "members only." To join/renew at the event, please bring a completed membership application form (form at our website) www.takomahort.org/membership/index.html with your check made out to "THC."

Report on Past Events

On Wednesday, April 15th Bob McDowel, A Montgomery County Master Gardener, spoke to 27 of us about rejuvenating the established garden. He emphasized improving the soil at least 6" deep with composted material and using integrated pest management (IPM) to control insects. Analyzing the conditions you have and matching the plants' needs to those conditions will improve your success. For example, if plant roots sit in water for too long oxygen will be cut off and plants many not survive. He gave us some good handouts, with resources for gardening information, including the Master Gardener State Hotline: (800) 342-2507 and Montgomery County's Hotline (301) 590-9650. A Q&A period followed the presentation.

2009 THC Bulb Order

One of the many benefits of THC Membership is the ability to purchase high quality garden bulbs at a substantial discount. The bulbs come from the De Vroomen Bulb Company in Holland and our brought to us by Jerry McNamara. For information on how to order and and to see the bulbs offered, please go to <http://www.greatbigbulbs.com>. Orders must be received by May 30, 2009 so don't wait! Become a THC member and buy as many bulbs as your heart desires! See images of the bulbs at <http://www.visionpictures.com> . Just type the variety name in the search field. You do not need to say "darwin" or "Tulip". Questions? Contact Jerry at (301) 593-0345 or Jerome.mcnamail@gmail.com

THC Membership: Dues & Renewing

The good news is that we have 84 people who have paid their 2009 dues of \$12. More good news is that we also have 24 "Lifetime THC Members." These people paid \$125 for lifetime memberships and will never have to pay dues again! Now for the bad news. there are 85 people who have NOT renewed from 2008. They will soon be dropped from our listing and will be unable to participate in "Members-Only" events like the Spring and Fall Plant Swaps. If you are not sure whether you have paid your dues, please get in touch with Carole Galati at cagalati@rcn.com. Joining anew and renewing your membership is easy. Information about membership and the membership form are on our website at www.takomahort.org/membership/index.html

IN THE GARDEN: "It's Spring Planting Time! Let's Go Native!"

It's that time of year we gardeners in the Washington, DC area have been waiting for....SPRING PLANTING TIME! As I mentioned last month, the rule of thumb in our planting area is to wait until Mother's Day to plant tender plantings. We wait to avoid the risk of killing frosts which kill our plants.

The good news is Mother's Day 2009 is Sunday, May 10th. In honor of the day, let us plant a special plant or two in honor of those women we all know and love--our mother's, aunts, grandmother's, etc. Did/does your mother like roses? Then how about planting a rose bush in her honor? Or was/is she more the exotic type? If so, maybe planting canna tubers in her honor is the way to go? You decide. However, please, please, please do not forget to plant a plant or two for the mother of them all...MOTHER EARTH! It's her day too and in celebration how about we consider planting a native plant or two...because local natives are what Mother Earth loves best.

What? You don't know any local natives? No problem! I will suggest a few for you to consider, and also point you to an incredible and FREE resource to help you decide. So let's get started...

Looking for a fern? How about a northern maidenhair fern (*adiantum pedatum*). Not sure what it looks like? Check out this link: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=ADPE>. This fern likes full to partial

shade and grows 1 to 2 feet high in delicate, textured clumps. It is most often found in moist woods and rocky shaded habitats. It likes damp soil with a soil pH of 4.5--6.5. It is native to both DC and Maryland and is said to have herbal uses.

Looking for a grass like plant? You might want to consider a tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) Not quite sure what this sedge looks like? Check out this link: http://www.abnativeplants.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=plants.plantDetail&plant_id=5. This sedge grows 1 to 3.5' and in May through August flowers with reddish to purple/brown flowers. This sedge likes full sun in moist to wet areas of the garden with a soil pH of 3.5-7. It is native to both DC and Maryland and is often found in marshy areas, shrub swamps, forested wetlands, swales and fields. Songbirds are particularly fond of this plant.

Are you in the market for an herbaceous plant or two? How about bee balm, Oswego tea (*Monarda didyma*)

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=modi> or sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) http://education.stonehill.edu/fieldguide/Field_Guide/Small%20flowering/SwGrod.htm? The bee balm likes full to partial sun and grows 2-5' high. It has beautiful, showy red flowers from July through September and a nut-like fruit. The plant has herbal uses too. It likes moist to wet soil and is found near creek banks, floodplains and woods. It is native in DC and Maryland. Butterflies, hummingbirds and beneficial insects love bee balm.

The sweet goldenrod likes full to partial sun and grows 1.5-5' in both dry and moist soil. It gets pretty yellow flowers July through October. It is native to DC and is often found in dry, open woods and barrens. Butterflies, songbirds and small mammals love sweet goldenrod.

Looking for a shrub? How about black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)? Not sure what it looks like? <http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=G240>. It grows big, 12-24' high and it has beautiful white flowers April through May and pink to bluish-black berries from July through November. It is lovely in Fall too with its reddish purple colors. It is very versatile and can grow in full shade to full sun in dry, wet or moist soil with a pH of 4.8-7.5. It is native in both DC and Maryland and is found in woods, thickets, fields and near roadsides. It is a very valuable plant for songbirds and small mammals. Its fruits are edible and are often used for preserves.

In the market for a tree? How about a white fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)? See a photo of it at:

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/trees-new/chionanthus_virginicus.html. It is native to both DC and Maryland and grows 20-35' high with a similar spread. It is versatile and can grow in full sun to full shade in moist or dry soil with a pH of 4.5-6.5. It is often found in moist stream banks, ridges, hillsides and in sandy to deep rich soils. It flowers May to June with long white flowers and fruits September-October with bluish-black berries. It turns yellow in the Fall and songbirds love it.

Many people think native plants are dull and limiting, but they are not. An excellent resource about native plants in our area comes from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and it is called "Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed." You can order your own copy of this excellent guide at <http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/chesapeake/> or you can download it.

I hope you decide to plant something in honor of your mother or some other mom you know this Mother's Day, including a native plant or two for Mother Earth. Here's to wishing the Takoma Horticultural Club community a happy month of May plantings!

Any budding garden writers among us? Would you like to do a little research or share your expertise/experience by writing a short article (500 words or so) for the newsletter? Is there a particular plant or flower you love? Want to tell us about it so that we might want to grow and enjoy it too? If so, send Madeline Caliendo, the Newsletter Editor, an email at vivaitaliana@gmail.com

Selected Community Garden Events of Interest

May 2, 10am to Noon

"Container & Rooftop Gardens"

Twin Oaks Garden at the corner of 14th and Taylor Streets, NW in Washington, DC
This workshop is geared for DC gardeners. Those who RSVP in advance will get a free garden bag filled with gardening goodies. Info and to register contact kelly.melstead@dc.gov or (202) 671-0350, FREE.

May 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 2pm

"Docent Led Garden Walks at Brookside Gardens" Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902. Info: (301) 962-1411

May 6, 1pm to 2pm

"Tour of the National Garden" at the US Botanic Garden

Stroll the garden with a knowledgeable tour guide who will tell you information about the rose garden, native plant garden, folktales, etc. FREE but pre-registration is required. Meet at the National Garden Lawn Terrace. Info and to register call (202) 225-1116.

May 9, 9am to 1pm, FREE

"Silver Spring Garden Club Garden Mart at Brookside Gardens" 1800 Glenallen Avenue, Wheaton, Maryland.

This sale is for bargain hunters and plant lovers alike. Come early for the best pick of annuals, perennials, shrubs, houseplants, wildflowers, herbs, and much more, Rain or shine.

May 17, Join the Montgomery County Sierra Club for a Full Day of Tours & Workshops on native plants and sustainable gardening practices. For information and to register go to:<http://maryland.sierraclub.org/montgomery>. FREE.

May 30, 10am to 11:30am, FREE

"Landscaping with Natives" with Cheval Force Opps. Presented by the Historical Society of Washington (HSW), DC Urban Gardeners, and Washington Gardener Magazine. The talk will take place at the Historic Carnegie Library's auditorium which is home to the Historical Society of Washington, 801 K Street NW, Washington, DC. .

Looking Ahead...

May 2 thru September 12 Join the Neighborhood Farm Initiative (NFI) , a non-profit project of the America the Beautiful Fund NFI's Gardening Education Program is an all-inclusive, hands-on training course in all aspects of organic vegetable gardening! The course includes your own 12'x12' garden plot for the 2009 growing season, all plants & transplants, compost & soil amendments, drip irrigation system, trellises, tomato cages/stakes, your own trowel & gloves, seasonal use of NFI's communal tools, and bi-monthly instruction in all aspects of starting and maintaining the garden, plus one-on-one assistance in applying class lessons to your garden! The class topics will take you from testing and preparing the soil to planting, maintenance, to organic pest and disease management! When: Alternate Saturdays, May 2 –September 12, 10am-noon. Where: Mamie D. Lee Garden (Ft Totten Metro Station—Red, Yellow, & Green Lines) Cost: \$600/season (payment plans available) Info: send email to neighborhoodfarm@gmail.com for more info.

Sunday, June 14, 10am to 5:00pm "All Our Relations Sacred Gardening Workshop" with Mare Cromwell at Blueberry Gardens Center in Ashton, MD. Cost: Sliding scale \$40-\$60 (pay what you want/can. In these changing times Earth Mother is calling us to heal ourselves and our relationship to nature. Our gardens are where we can rekindle a deeper relationship and promote healing. This workshop teams Native American practices and to encourage deeper gardening practices that honor nature's energies, garden health and planetary healing. The workshop will open with a plant and seed swap. Mare Cromwell is a professional gardener, author and speaker who has apprenticed with a Cherokee Medicine Woman for 13 years. Questions (410) 448--3679 . Register at www.sacreddogllc.com.

Also, don't forget to check out Washington Gardener Magazine for information on a free garden talk series Washington Gardener is co-sponsoring throughout 2009 at the Washington Historical Society in downtown Washington, DC. For more info:http://www.washingtongardener.com/index_files/Events.htm

THC Newsletter Editor, Madeline Caliendo, vivaitaliana@gmail.com. at Visit our website at www.takomahort.org