

Upstate Gardeners'

BUFFALO - ITHACA - ROCHESTER - SYRACUSE

Journal



Blocks in Bloom
Sweet Arrangement
A Horticulturist's Horticulturist

FREE

Volume Twenty-one, Issue Six
November-December 2015

Celebrating
2 
YEARS
1995-2015

SARA'S GARDEN



Seasonal Momentum

Does time fly faster as it approaches a deadline? We are down to the last months of the garden year and there's still more to do. We will get those last few bulbs in and Hosta divided before the snow flies and the ground freezes. On the nice days, we will be in the garden, otherwise we are preparing for our 2nd favorite season, Christmas!

Some of those nicer late fall days will be spent gathering material for wreaths and Christmas decoration; fresh cut boxwood, fragrant cedars and more. Our handmade wreaths will nary lose a step throughout your Christmas season and beyond. Whether on your own door or as a gift, we guarantee it will be loved.

Christmas trees, fresh cut and in several varieties will bring the lushness of the garden into your home for the holidays. From table-top to cathedral, nothing says Christmas like a real tree.

Our Christmas Shop runs pretty much like the rest of the season; bringing you the rare and unusual along with the tried and true must haves. We invite you to visit this season for in about 60 days, we are gone til spring!

Stone Wall Follies 2015

Note that the photo to the left does not contain winter garden scenes, wreaths, berries, etc. It's because the walls built during our 2015 Stone Wall Follies deserved a sneak peek. We cannot say enough about the incredible weekend in early October.

If you are a lover of stone, of people and of creativity then put the 2016 session on your calendar—actually, contact me today and reserve your space. Nearly half of this year's students have reserved already; it was that amazing.

kkepler@rochester.rr.com or (585)637-4745

John will be here in 2016 along with other world renowned wallers to create magic once again. Check out the Facebook page to capture some moments!

Please check out John's blog...an inspirational read
<http://thinking-stoneman.blogspot.com/>

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What to do in the garden in November and December

INDOORS

Reduce the fertilization of most indoor plants from late October to mid-March. An exception is made for plants under grow lights.

To avoid fungus gnats on your houseplants keep them on the dry side as the gnat larva live in moist soil at the top inch or so of the planter.

Be sure to remove foil or other wrapping from the pots of plants you may receive as gifts to allow for proper drainage.

Start cuttings of your favorite Christmas cactus (or Easter or Thanksgiving). Make a cutting with 4 or 5 joints. Insert the basal end into a pot of vermiculite. Place in a brightly lit area. Rooting should occur in 3 to 4 weeks.

Use your extra time studying garden books, magazines, and seed catalogs.

Place orders for seeds now so you won't be disappointed later. By ordering early, you will be certain of getting the varieties you want.

Plant amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) and paper white narcissus bulbs.

Select poinsettias with green leaves and colorful bracts. Keep them in bright light away from pets, children, drafts, and direct heat.

If you didn't clean your garden tools, do it now. Don't forget to disinfect and sharpen your tools, too. Sharpened pruners, hoes and shovels make your work much easier.

OUTDOORS

After mowing your lawn for the last time, winterize your lawn mower. Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used up. Have blades cleaned and sharpened for a head start in the spring.

Drain and store garden hoses and turn off outside water spigots.

You can still plant spring-flowering bulbs until the ground freezes.

Finish any garden cleanup you still haven't completed. Be sure to remove and discard any plant material that was diseased.

Newly planted trees and shrubs need adequate moisture even at this time of year. Water deeply anytime there is less than 1 inch or rain per week, until the ground reaches 40 degrees F.

Once the soil is frozen put protective mulch over tender perennials and shrubs. Discarded pine boughs or mulched leaves are good options.

Erect wooden teepees to protect foundation plants from breakage when snow and ice slip off the roof.

Use burlap or shrub coats to protect susceptible shrubs from winter wind.

To reduce the amount of water that broad-leaved evergreens like rhododendrons lose during the winter, you can spray the foliage with a wax-forming anti-desiccant, or erect barriers against the wind to prevent "windburn," a form of desiccation.

Mound five to six inches of soil around the bases of roses. Use soil from another part of the garden so you don't damage the roots of your roses by digging near them.

If you have critter problems, now is the time to erect fencing and other barriers. The trunks of young trees can be wrapped with trunk wraps to protect them from the nibbling of mice and rabbits. Be sure the protection goes high enough so critters don't sit on top of the snow to browse.

Check stored firewood for insect infestations. Help prevent the spread of invasive insects such as the Emerald Ash Borer by not using or moving firewood from out of your area.

Buy a real tree for Christmas.

When selecting a Christmas tree:

- Check the needles. You should be able to bend them. If they snap the tree is too dry.
- Try lifting the tree a few inches and bringing it down on the stump. Some inside needles may fall but outer needles should not drop off.
- Make a fresh cut across the base of the trunk to prevent the formation of a seal that prevents the tree from taking up water.
- Immediately place in water.
- If you plan to have a live tree for the holidays dig the hole for the tree now before the ground is frozen. It's best to only keep the tree inside for one week then plant it outside.

Buy yourself a plant as a gift for the holidays.



INSET: Amaryllis.

— Carol Ann Harlos and Lyn Chimera,
Master Gardeners, Erie County

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If you're unfamiliar with the brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*), consider yourself lucky! The agricultural pest didn't call the United States "home" until late 1998, an accidental stowaway on a shipping container from Asia. What makes this bug such a nuisance is their lack of a natural predator in the

US. In China, *Trissolcus japonicus*, or parasitoid wasp, is the primary predator—fortunately tests are being performed for possible introduction to the US. Agricultural experts are eager for a solution due to the widespread damage to fruit and vegetable crops. Personally, I would like a solution to get them out of my house! Once the temperatures start to dip at night, stink bugs start to look for a place to hibernate during winter months—most likely hiding in any (and every) crack they can find. I've heard every possible home remedy one could imagine—have tried most too. I've rubbed window screens with dryer sheets, sprayed a peppermint oil and water solution around windows and doors, and even blotted the cut side of a garlic clove at any openings. So here is my call to our readers because I

know I'm not alone. I want to know about your stink bug problems or perhaps a successful method to deter them from your home. Next year, we'll highlight them in our summer edition to get ready for the impending 2016 invasion!

Megan



Adult and late-instar nymph stink bugs (*Halyomorpha halys*) feed on a Honey Crisp apple, a popular cultivar among consumers, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Research Service (ARS) laboratory in Beltsville, MD on Aug. 29, 2012. USDA photo by Stephen Ausmus, courtesy Flickr.

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A Horticulturist's Horticulturist:

Jenks Farmer and *Deep-Rooted Wisdom*

by Michelle Sutton

photos courtesy Timber Press

When I'm reading *Deep-Rooted Wisdom: Skills and Stories from Generations of Gardeners* by Augustus Jenkins Farmer ("Jenks"), I am torn. On one hand I feel I should be seated at my desk employing a highlighter and post-it notes, studying this book that is so dense with concepts and techniques I want to absorb. On the other hand, I want to recline in a comfy chair with a cup of tea and simply enjoy Farmer's beautiful prose, the many evocative pictures, and the pleasing design of the book.

Either way, this gem, published in 2014, quickly became my favorite among all my library of horticulture and gardening books. Even though from a storytelling perspective it is "rooted" in the South, we can profitably apply the book's many useful concepts to our gardening practices in the North. For me, Farmer is the most stimulating of prominent horticulturists of our time.

About the Author

Farmer (jenksfarmer.com) is a seventh-generation South Carolinian and farmer; the family farm is in Beech Island, SC. There, Farmer and his partner Tom Hall grow fields of crinum lilies, which Farmer describes as "amaryllis on steroids." The huge, tropical lily-trumpet flowers are borne above 3-foot mounds of foliage and are extremely drought tolerant.

While most of the crinums he grows are not hardy in upstate New York, *Crinum bulbispermum*, with flowers from white to peppermint to pink in color, will grow in zone 6a. Farmer says, "Plant it where it can live for decades. I have a bulb that is now 80 years old." In addition, the shell-pink, sweetly fragrant crinum cultivar 'Cecil Houdyshe' has performed well, in protected spots, for Farmer's customers down to zone 5.



Farmer's connection to plants started young. He writes:

It was in the third grade that I became a gardener. My parents set me up in a paradise—an old farm full of rocks, boards, and scrap metal; an ancient yard filled with crinum and red spider lilies, right next to a magnolia forest carpeted with ferns. Those were my supplies. I was free to dig, transplant, and make little walkways and rooms in any way I wanted ... I'd sow seeds I found in parks. It wasn't even until my second year in college that I realized that other people were building their gardens from store-bought plants and stones.

ABOVE: Jenks Farmer among his crinum lilies



TOP/BOTTOM: Jenks Farmer designed this low-impact garden using all small plants, no gas-powered equipment, no synthetics, no tilling, and no irrigation.

Farmer initially resisted the idea of studying horticulture, turned off by the emphasis on “reductionist science” and the marketing of newer and newer products. He says, “When I walk through the product-lined shelves of some big-box store’s lawn and garden section, I inevitably ask myself, ‘How did we get here? How did we go from cuttings and manure and seeds and fun to this commercial maze?’”

Nonetheless he did pursue horticulture in college, earning a BS in Horticulture from Clemson University and an MS in Botanical Garden Management from the University of Washington. This prepared him for leadership of South Carolina’s two most highly regarded public gardens. From 1991-2001, he designed and built Riverbanks Botanical Garden on typically recalcitrant red clay soil in West Columbia, SC, and from 2001-2011 he was the director

and founding horticulturist of Moore Farms Botanical Garden in Lake City, SC. Since then, Farmer has continued to work with public gardens in a freelance capacity, and he served as interim director of historic gardens for eight house/garden museums in Columbia, SC. Going out on his own has enabled him to pursue his own garden design business more fully and to do more teaching and writing. *Deep-Rooted Wisdom* is the expression of everything he’s learned since that fateful first summer on the family farm as a kid.

Deep-Rooted Structure

Each chapter of *Deep-Rooted Wisdom* is divided into three sections. In the first section, Farmer introduces old skills or ideas and looks at how those things may have gotten unnecessarily complicated or consumeristic in recent decades. In the first chapter, “Stacking Up: Growing Plants for Food, Construction, Flowers, Teaching, and Connections,” he explores the permaculture principle of “stacking up”—finding multiple uses for plants (and animals, and structures, and so on) and how we’ve gotten away from viewing plants in that way. We have come to see them as commodities and things to be collected.

In the second section, Farmer introduces us to his mentors and other teachers for those skills and their wisdom on the topic. So in “Stacking Up,” for instance, we meet Richard Hager, whose garden is wild and woolly, and all about multiple uses.

We pass by an apple tree, and Richard begins listing its uses, among them that apple wood is durable and great for building little fences and it can add flavor to smoked meats. Through every season, something from that tree is being used in the kitchen, the garden, the compost bin, or for repairing the chicken coop fence. Nothing from this plant goes to waste.

In the third section, Farmer combines the wisdom of his teachers with his own lived experience to share lessons for modern gardeners. So on his and Tom Hall’s farm, many useful plants are integrated into the crinum lily fields. For instance, long rows of parsley provide food for people and pollinators until August, when Farmer cuts down the plants and spreads them as mulch. And in the fall, after eating and pickling okra pods during the summer, Farmer leaves the thick stalks standing, where they become trellises for February-sown sugar snap peas.

There are chapters about rooting “pass-along” plants, saving seed, handmade structures, scavenging plants, watering by hand, tools, pest philosophy, and building fertile soils. A whole chapter is devoted to stopping the tilling cycle, a topic dear to my own heart.

Deep-Rooted Highlights

I found useful takeaways on nearly every page of this book but can only hold up a few here. From the “Stacking Up” chapter, I learned that Farmer uses a variety of light-weight, dry perennial stalks, known as “haulm,” to mulch other plants on his farm.

Fern fronds were used traditionally for haulm to be applied as a light mulch and covering for frost protection. We save fennel, okra, and asparagus stems and pull them over fall veggie seedlings on the first really cold nights to act as an insulating blanket. It's the free version of floating row covers ... Thin-leaved grasses work great as mulch, too. Having a big clump of grass is like having your own little straw factory in the yard.

In the “Stop the Tilling Cycle” chapter, Farmer lays out the many reasons we should all think about employing no-till in our gardens. Tilling destroys soil structure, in part by breaking up vast colonies of fungal mycorrhizae (webs) that Farmer likens to “wingmen for plant roots.”

Think of a plant's roots like your arms when you're trying to reach a jar on the top shelf that's just out of reach ... If you could somehow magically extend your arm, you'd have it. For your plant roots, that magic extension is often a fungus ... they can extend the range of roots by up to a thousand times.

Tilling also releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and brings up weed seeds. Farmer's crinum farm (which has so many other crops weaved in) hasn't been tilled in 30 years. On the edge of the farm, at the line dividing their land from their neighbor's, there's an 8-inch drop-off, representing 8 inches of lost topsoil. This graphic visual evidence prompted the neighboring farmer to recently convert to no-till practices.

In *Deep-Rooted Wisdom*, Farmer tells you just how to go about using no-till for even the most recalcitrant soils. One technique I really want to try is building soil with mushroom beds, the way that Farmer and Hall are doing with edible and delicious king stropharia mushrooms (hardy to Zone 3). In an area of one of their crinum lily fields, the roots of neighboring pecan trees have created desert-like conditions. “Fungi eat dead wood and turn it into living topsoil,” Farmer writes. To remediate the soil, they put down king stropharia mushroom spores that came in moist sawdust, then layered woodchips, more spores, and newspaper and watered in every day that it didn't rain.

Within a week, white fungal hairs (hyphae) had spread into the paper and wood chips. Watching this process was an amazing, sublime experience... in just under three months, the stunning wine-and-coffee colored mushrooms erupted. We used them in our omelets.

In the chapter, “Watering by Hand,” Farmer challenges the notion that wilt means you need to water. “Even in saturated soil, a plant may wilt,” he writes. “On really hot days, a plant may be wilting to protect itself, to conserve water.” Farmer describes the ways in which irrigation doesn't always serve plants, and reflects on the art that is hand-watering. For the crops he can't hand-water, Farmer recommends the drip tape that he and Hall use.

The outflow is tiny; the goal is to slowly, deeply saturate the soil, not to keep it constantly wet. We water the dirt, the organic matter, the bacteria, and the fungi in the soil, letting those all hold water and slowly release it to the plants.

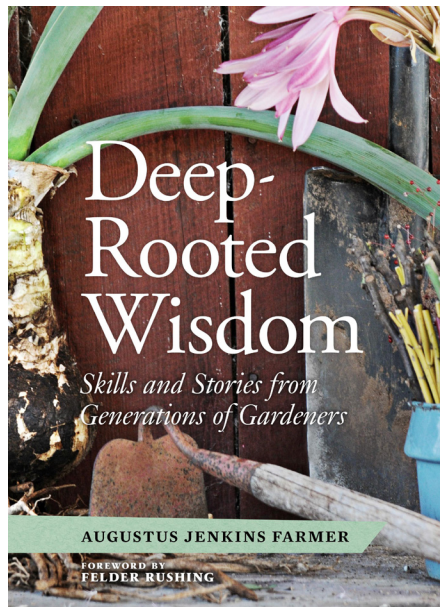
In the chapter, “Rooting in the Ground,” Farmer expounds on his love of this form of propagation. “You don't need a greenhouse, chemicals, or special potting soil to root plants,” he writes. Granted, in South Carolina, he's able to root wider variety of material in the ground more readily than we can in upstate New York, but the principles are the same. Farmer and his mentors give advice on “sticking” a variety of plants including willows, one of the plants most commonly propagated by direct cuttings around the world and used for hedges, fences, arches, biomass, and whimsy.

The final chapter, “Finding the Spirit,” is about telling our stories through our gardens.

In a world where the artificial divide between nature and us grows larger every minute, we need gardens more than landscapes. We need gardens in public plazas, in parking lots and suburb entrances, in giant containers and in drainage ditches. We need gardens to tell our awesome stories, even if they are a bit chaotic—especially if they are mythical, emotional stories of how we are dependent on and compelled to be stewards of the spirit of every place.

Michelle Sutton (michellejudysutton.com) is a horticulturist, writer, and editor living in New Paltz, NY.

INSET: In addition to being the author of this phenomenal book from Timber Press (2014), Jenks Farmer is a speaker, organic lily farmer, and landscape designer specializing in environmentally sustainable landscapes.



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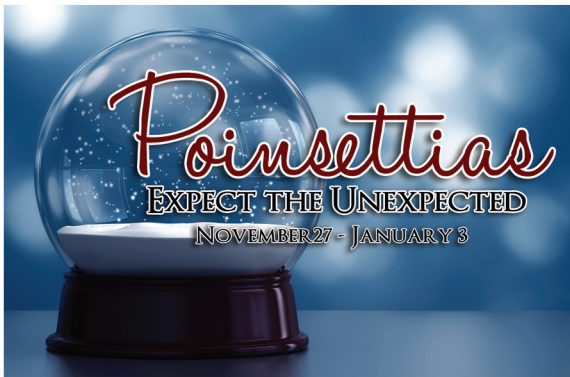
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Calendar

BUFFALO

REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

African Violet & Gesneriad Society of WNY meets the third Tuesday of the month, March – November, at 7 pm, Lancaster Volunteer Ambulance Corp, 40 Embury Place, Lancaster. Contact: Judy O'Neil, judyoneil1945@gmail.com.

Alden Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of the month (except July & August) at 7 pm, Alden Community Center, West Main Street, Alden. New members and guests welcome. Plant sale each May. 716/937-7924.

Amama Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of the month (except January) at 11 am, Burchfield Nature & Art Center, 2001 Union Road, West Seneca. 716/668-1100.

Amherst Garden Club meets the fourth Wednesday of the month (except December, March, July & August) at 10:00 am, St. John's Lutheran Church, Main Street, Williamsville. New members and guests welcome. 716/836-5397.

Buffalo Area Daylily Society. East Aurora Senior Center, 101 King Street, East Aurora. 716/ 698-3454; info@buffaloareadaylily.com.

Federated Garden Clubs NYS – District 8. November 17: Fundraiser – A Caribbean Day, 11:30 am, \$25, Protocol Restaurant, Lancaster. Marcia Becker, District Director. 716/681-3530; marshmelo601@yahoo.com; gardenclubsofwny.com.

Friends of Kenan Herb Club meets Monday evenings, Kenan Center for the Arts, 433 Locust Street, Lockport. Meeting dates, times and campus locations: kenancenter.org/affiliates.asp; 716/433-2617.

Garden Club of the Tonawandas meets the third Thursday of the month at 7 pm, Tonawanda City Hall, Community Room.

Garden Friends of Clarence meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, September – June, Town Park Clubhouse, 10405 Main Street, Clarence. gardenfriendsofclarence@hotmail.com.

Hamburg Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of every month at noon, summer garden tours, Hamburg Community Center, 107 Prospect Avenue, Hamburg. 716/648-0275; droman13@verizon.net.

Ken-Sheriton Garden Club meets the second Tuesday of the month (except January) at 7:30 pm, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 576 Delaware Road, Kenmore. Monthly programs, artistic design and horticulture displays. November 10: *Sowing Seeds in a Milk Jug*. New members and guests welcome. 716/833-8799; dstierheim@gmail.com.

Niagara Frontier Orchid Society (NFOS) meets the first Tuesday following the first Sunday (dates sometimes vary due to holidays, etc.), September – June, Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo. niagarafntierorchids.org.

Orchard Park Garden Club meets the first Thursday of the month at 12 pm, Orchard Park Presbyterian Church, 4369 South Buffalo Street, Orchard Park. President: Joan Sutton, 716/662-4777.

Silver Creek-Hanover Garden Club meets the second Saturday of the month at 2 pm, First Baptist Church, 32 Main Street, Silver Creek. Sue Duecker, 716/934-7608; duke.sue@roadrunner.com.

South Town Gardeners meets the second Friday of the month (except January) at 10:30 am, Charles E. Burchfield Nature & Art Center, 2001 Union Road, West Seneca. New members welcome.

Western New York Carnivorous Plant Club meets the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm, Menne Nursery, 3100 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst. wnycpclub@aol.com; facebook.com/wnycpclub.

Western New York Herb Study Group meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo.

Western New York Honey Producers, Inc. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, 21 South Grove Street, East Aurora. wnyhpa.org.

Western New York (WNY) Hosta Society. East Aurora Senior Center, 101 King Street, East Aurora. A group of hosta lovers who have come together to promote the genus hosta. Next meeting: November 8, 1:30 pm. 716/914-6167; h8staman@aol.com; wnyhosta.com.

Western New York Hosta Society Breakfast Meetings, a friendly get-together, first Saturday of the month at 10 am, Gardenview Restaurant, Union Road, West Seneca.

Western New York Iris Society meets the first Sunday of the month in members' homes and gardens. Information about growing all types of irises and complementary perennials. Shows. Sale. Guests welcome. Pat Kluczynski: 716/633-9503; patrizia@roadrunner.com.

Western New York Rose Society meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7 pm, St. Stephens-Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 750 Wehrle Drive, Williamsville. wnyrosesociety.net.

Wilson Garden Club generally meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm, Community Room, Wilson Free Library, 265 Young Street, Wilson. Meetings open to all, community floral planting, spring plant sale, local garden tours. 716/751-6334; wilsongardenclub@aol.com.

Youngstown Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7 pm, First Presbyterian Church, 100 Church Street, Youngstown.

FREQUENT HOSTS

BECBG: Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14218. 716/827-1584; buffalogardens.com.

BMAC: Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, 1610 Welch Road, North Java, NY 14113. 585/457-3228; 800/377-1520; buffaloaudubon.org.

LOCK: Lockwood's Greenhouses, 4484 Clark Street, Hamburg, NY 14075, 716/649-4684; weknowplants.com.

MENNE: Menne Nursery, 3100 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst, NY 14228. 716/693-4444; mennenursery.com.

CLASSES / EVENTS

• Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.

November 5 – 8: A World of Christmas – Grand Opening. Find inspiration and holiday decorating

ideas for fireplaces, tables, walls and doors. Over 30 decorated trees. Food, drink and entertainment. **MENNE**

November 7: Walk at Knox Farm State Park – Skeletons of Winter, 9 am. Look for the dead plants still standing as winter starts to tighten its grip and learn their value to the creatures that stay active throughout the cold weather. Donations appreciated. Registration required. Knox Farm State Park, 437 Buffalo Road, East Aurora. **BMAC**

• **November 7: Stories in the Woods,** 10:30 am. Kids will hear a nature story followed by a guided walk in the woods. Ages 3-7. Free. Registration required. Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, 93 Honorine Drive, Depew. 716/683-5959; dec.ny.gov/education/1837.html.

• **November 7 – 21: Kids' Art Classes,** Saturdays, 9 – 10:30 am. A different piece of art will be completed at each class. Ages 5-15. Instructor: Joan Saba, professional artist and teacher. Series: \$35. Single session: \$13. Registration required. **BECBG**

November 10 – December 8: Beginner Watercolor for Adults, Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Participants will learn basic watercolor painting techniques and concepts. Instructor: Joan Saba, professional artist and teacher. Series: \$60 members; \$66 non-members. Single session: \$17 members; \$18 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

November 12 – 15: Christmas Open House, 10 am – 5 pm. Chicken Coop Originals, 13245 Clinton Street, Route 354, Alden. chickencooporiginals.com.

November 14: Miniature Succulent Garden, 10 am. Natalie Twining will help participants create a miniature garden containing plants such as sedum and hens & chicks. Includes soil and a selection of plants to fill a 12" container (not included). \$22. Registration required. **MENNE**

November 14: Open House, 10 am – 4 pm. Enjoy soup, treats, beverages, prizes & surprises. **LOCK**

November 14: Miniature Fairy Garden, 1 pm. Natalie Twining will guide participants in creating a miniature garden. Includes container, soil, plants, a fairy and one fairy accessory. \$40. Registration required. **MENNE**

November 14 – 15: Orchid Show, Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm; Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm. Exhibits, educational programs, vendors. Presented by Niagara Frontier Orchid Society. Included with admission. **BECBG**

November 19 – 22: Christmas Open House, 10 am – 5 pm. Chicken Coop Originals, 13245 Clinton Street, Route 354, Alden. chickencooporiginals.com.

November 21: Holiday Container for Porch or Patio, 10 am or 1 pm. Combine fresh greens and holiday accents to make a welcoming display. Materials included; additional accents available for purchase. \$35. Registration required. **MENNE**

November 21 – February 20: Horticulture II Certificate Program, six Saturdays, 11 am – 1 pm. *Soil Science, Advanced Plant Propagation, Hydroponics, Water Gardening, Practical Principles of Pruning, Introduction to Landscape Design.* For beginners or gardeners wishing to brush up on their skills. Instructor: David Clark. Series: \$105 members; \$130 non-members. Single session: \$20 members; \$25 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

November 22: Thanksgiving Centerpiece, 1:30 pm. Join floral design instructor David Clark to make your own arrangement using fresh flowers, greens, twigs, gourds and corn. \$45. Registration required by November 17. **LOCK**

November 24: Fresh Fall Centerpiece, 6 pm. Create a seasonal centerpiece using fresh flowers and greens. Materials included. \$35. Registration required. **MENNE**

November 24: Fresh Thanksgiving Arrangement, 6 pm. Participants will create their own autumnal arrangement in this floral design workshop. \$35 members; \$40 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

November 27 – January 3: Poinsettias, 10 am – 5 pm. *Expect the Unexpected!* See a snow globe of poinsettias and more. Included with admission. **BECBG**

November 27 – January 3: Garden Railway Exhibit, 10 am – 5 pm. Presented by Western New York Garden Railway Society. Included with admission. **BECBG**

November 28: Give Thanks to Nature, 10 am – 12 pm. Join Naturalist Mark Carra for a leisurely hike to look for the signs of nature's benefits from the Native American perspective in the unique habitat at Ghost Pond. \$3 members; \$5 non-members. Registration required. **BMAC**

November 28: Holiday Wreath, 10:30 am. Make a lush wreath using fresh-cut greens accented with a bow. Instructor: Sally Cunningham. \$28. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

November 28: Artisanal Wreath, 3 – 5 pm. Learn how to design your own wreath handcrafted from flowers, herbs and other natural materials. Materials included. \$45 members; \$50 non-members. Registration required. Darwin Martin House, 125 Jewett Parkway, Buffalo. 716/856-3858; education@darwinmartinhouse.org; darwinmartinhouse.org.

• **November 28 – 29: Visit with Santa**, 1 – 4 pm. Free. **MENNE**

December 5: Decorated Boxwood Tree, 9 – 11 am. Participants will create their own unique boxwood tree. Includes ribbon and small holiday décor items. \$35 members; \$40 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

• **December 5: Breakfast with Santa**, 9 am – 12 pm. Enjoy a homemade breakfast with Santa. Activities include crafts, storytelling, nature walk and talks. \$7 adults; \$5 children ages 4-12; ages 3 and under free. Registration required. **BMAC**

December 5: Holiday Container for Porch or Patio, 10 am. See description under November 21. \$35. Registration required. **MENNE**

December 5: Outdoor Winter Arrangement, 10:30 am. Create a welcoming container using greens, twigs and berries decorated with a bow. Instructor: Beth Henesey. \$45. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

December 5: Fresh Conifer Wreath, 12 – 2 pm. Participants will create a fresh and fragrant 14" conifer wreath. Includes ribbon and small holiday décor items. \$35 members; \$40 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

December 5: Christmas Fairy Garden, 1 pm. Use your imagination to create a miniature indoor garden. Includes container, soil, plants, a fairy and one holiday-themed accessory. Additional accessories available for purchase. \$40. Registration required. **MENNE**

December 5: Multi-Textured Holiday Wreath, 1:30 pm. Make an elegant wreath using several kinds of natural evergreens with cones. Instructor: Sally Cunningham. \$38. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

• **December 5 – 6: Visit with Santa**, 1 – 4 pm. Free. **MENNE**

December 6: Holiday Container for Porch or Patio, 1 pm. See description under November 21. \$35. Registration required. **MENNE**

December 6: Colonial Windowsill Swag, 1:30 pm. Create this New England classic with greens and bow. Instructor: Beth Henesey. \$28; 2 for \$50. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

December 6: Miniature Succulent Garden, 3 pm. See description under November 14. \$22. Registration required. **MENNE**

December 9: British Kissing Ball, 6 pm. Make this outdoor decoration used as an alternative to mistletoe. Instructor: Sally Cunningham. \$38. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

December 12: Boxwood Tabletop Tree, 10:30 am. Use pieces of cut boxwood, bows and baubles to create your own tabletop decoration. Instructor: Sally Cunningham. \$38. Advance registration required. **LOCK**

December 12: Holiday Bows, 2 pm. Learn how to make three styles of holiday bows. Materials included. \$10. Registration required by December 10. **MENNE**

• **December 12 – 13: Visit with Santa**, 1 – 4 pm. Free. **MENNE**

December 17: Fresh Holiday Arrangement, 6 pm. Participants will design their own table top arrangement. \$35 members; \$40 non-members. Registration required. **BECBG**

December 19: Christmas Centerpiece, 10:30 am. Create an elegant design using mixed greens, twigs, cones, berries and candle. Instructor: David Clark. \$45. Registration required by December 14. **LOCK**

December 27: Dollar Day, 10 am – 5 pm. \$1; members & children under 3 free. **BECBG**

• **December 29: Nature Grandparents**, 10 – 11:30 am. Grandparents and their grandchildren will gather to hear a reading of the book *The Grandpa Tree* followed by a short walk to Beaver Meadow's own Grandpa Tree. Craft and snack. \$3 per child; grandparents free. Registration required. **BMAC**

ITHACA

REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

Adirondack Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society (ACNARGS) meets the third Saturday of the month (except December & January), Whetzel Room, fourth floor, Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca. *November 14: From Front Yard to Rock Garden – Step by Step*, 1 pm. Free and open to the public. 607/269-7070; acnargs.org.

Windsor NY Garden Group meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 10 am, members' homes or Windsor Community House, 107 Main Street, Windsor. windsorgardengroup.suerambo.com.

FREQUENT HOST

CP: Cornell Plantations, 1 Plantations Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. Inquire ahead for meeting locations. 607/255-2400; cornellplantations.org.

CLASSES / EVENTS

• **Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.**

November 11: Fall Lecture Series, 7:30 pm. *Ginkgo: The Tree that Time Forgot*. Free. Statler Hall Auditorium, Cornell University. **CP**

November 14 – 15: Captured with Colored Pencil: Design and Contrasts in Nature, 9 am – 5 pm. Participants will choose their own natural subject to draw on dark paper then excerpt and magnify a portion of that subject for the background. Different colored pencil application techniques will be covered with focus on "reverse grisaille." \$180 members; \$200 non-members. Registration required. **CP**

November 21: Willow Weaving, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. Participants will make one of two basket designs: the Really Random Basket or Garden Sphere. Materials, continental breakfast and light lunch included. \$160 members; \$175 non-members. Registration required by November 17. **CP**

• **December 6: Holiday Workshop**, 1 – 3 pm. Create your own holiday decoration. Choose from: evergreen wreath, boxwood tree, evergreen center piece, evergreen/boxwood kissing ball or outdoor centerpiece. \$8 adults; \$4 children under 12; plus cost of materials. Bakers Acres, 1104 Auburn Road, North Lansing. 607/533-4653.

ROCHESTER

REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

7th District Federated Garden Clubs New York State, Inc. meets the first Wednesday of the month. 7thdistrictfcgcnys.org.

African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Rochester meets the first Wednesday of each month, September – May, at 7 pm, St. John's Home, 150 Highland Avenue, Rochester. All are welcome. Bob or Linda Springer: 585/413-0606; blossoms002@yahoo.com.

Big Springs Garden Club of Caledonia-Mumford meets the second Monday evening of the following months: September – November, January – May. New members and guests welcome. 585/314-6292; mdolan3@rochester.rr.com.

Bloomfield Garden Club meets the third Thursday of the month (except May, July & August) at 11:45 am, Veterans Park, 6910 Routes 5 & 20, Bloomfield. New members and guests welcome. 585/657-4489; kjonrad@frontiernet.net.

Bonsai Society of Upstate New York meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Brighton Town Park Lodge, Buckland Park, 1341 Westfall Road, Rochester. 585/334-2595; bonsaisocietyofupstateny.org.

Creative Gardeners of Penfield meet the second Monday of the month at 9:15 am (except July & August), Penfield United Methodist Church, 1795 Baird Road, Penfield. Visitors welcome. Call 585-385-2065 if interested in attending a meeting.

Fairport Garden Club meets the third Thursday evening of each month (except August and January). Accepting new members. fairportgc@gmail.com; fairportgardenclub.org.

Garden Club of Brockport meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7 pm, Clarkson Schoolhouse, Ridge Road, east of Route 19. Speakers, hands-on sessions. Kathy Dixon: 585/431-0509; kadxon@excite.com.




Apple torte

Serves 4-6

- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (pecans, almonds, walnuts or macadamia)
- 1 cup peeled and chopped apples

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Butter a 9" pie plate.
2. Beat egg and sugar in a medium sized bowl.
3. Add remaining ingredients in the order listed. Stir well with a spoon.
4. Spoon into pie plate and bake 30 minutes.
5. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Recipe courtesy Marion Morse, Allyn's Creek Garden Club.




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*
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*
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Stump the Chump

Do you recognize this plant? It is a low maintenance dioecious specimen with sensitivity to drought. In autumn, bright multi-colored leaves produce a scent of burnt brown sugar. Branches are weak and require some shelter from natural elements. The leaves will drop at the first onset of frost.

The first person to answer correctly, genus and species please, will win an *Upstate Gardeners' Journal* mug! Please call **585/301-7181** or email **megan@upstategardenersjournal.com** to guess. We will accept guesses starting **November 15, 2015**, in order to give everyone a fair chance. Good luck!

The last issue's stumper was *Stewartia koreana*.

Calendar

ROCHESTER cont.

Garden Path of Penfield meets the third Wednesday of the month from September through May at 7 pm, Penfield Community Center, 1985 Baird Road, Penfield. Members enjoy all aspects of gardening; new members welcome. gardenpathofpenfield@gmail.com.

Genesee Region Orchid Society (GROS) meets every month from September through May at the Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester, on the first Monday following the first Sunday of each month (dates sometimes vary due to holidays, etc.). GROS is an affiliate of the American Orchid Society (AOS) and Orchid Digest Corporation. geneseeorchid.org.

Genesee Valley Hosta Society meets the second Thursday of the month, April – October, at Eli Fagan American Legion Post, 260 Middle Road, Henrietta. 585/538-2280; sebuckner@frontiernet.net; geneseevalleyhosta.com.

Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club meets the first Friday of the month at 6:30 pm, Adams Street Recreation Center, 85 Adams Street, Rochester, except in summer when it tours local ponds. president.gvpkc@gmail.com; gvpkc.shutterfly.com.

Gesneriad Society meets the first Wednesday of each month, September – May, at 6:30 pm, St. John's Home, 150 Highland Avenue, Rochester. All are welcome. Bob or Linda Springer: 585/413-0606; blossoms002@yahoo.com.

Greater Rochester Iris Society meets Sundays at 2 pm, dates vary, St. John's Episcopal Church Hall, 11 Episcopal Avenue, Honeoye Falls. Public welcome. 585/266-0302; thehutchings@mac.com.

Greater Rochester Perennial Society (GRPS) meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm, Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 1200 South Winton Road, Rochester. 585/467-1678; rochesterperennial.com.

Greater Rochester Rose Society meets the first Tuesday of the month, April through November, at First Unitarian Church, 220 Winton Road South, Room 110, Rochester. July meeting is a garden tour. 585/694-8430; 585/621-1115; rochrosesociety@gmail.com; Facebook.

Henrietta Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of the month (except May-Aug & December) at 6:30 pm, Main Meeting Room, Henrietta Town Hall, 475 Calkins Road, Henrietta. *November 11: The Sharpest Tool in the Shed.* Guests welcome. 585/889-1547; henriettagardenclub@gmail.com; henriettagardenclub.org.

Holley Garden Club meets the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm, Holley Presbyterian Church. 585/638-6973.

Ikebana International Rochester Chapter 53 meets the third Thursday of each month (except December and February) at 10 am, First Baptist Church, Hubbell Hall, 175 Allens Creek Road, Rochester. 585/872-0678; 585/586-0794. ikebanarochester.org.

Kendall Garden Club meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, Kendall Town Hall. 585/ 370-8964.

Newark Garden Club meets the first Friday of the month at 1 pm, Park Presbyterian Church, Newark. Guests are welcome.

Pittsford Garden Club meets the third Tuesday of the month at 11 am, Pittsford Public Library, Fisher Meeting Room, 24 State Street, Pittsford, except in July & August when it visits members' gardens. *October 20: Unusual Perennials with Michael Hannen.* *November 17: Kokedama workshop, Wayside Garden Center.* *January 19: The History of Gardening presented by Jack Kowiak.* 585/425-0766; BKRU888@aol.com; pittsfordgardenclub.wordpress.com.

Rochester Dahlia Society meets the second Saturday of the month at 12:30 pm, Trinity Reformed Church, 909 Landing Road North, Rochester, except July – September. Visitors welcome. 585/865-2291; djohan@frontiernet.net; Facebook; rochesterdahlias.org.

Rochester Herb Society meets the first Tuesday of each month (excluding January & February) at 12 pm, Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, Rochester. June-August garden tours. New members welcome.

Rochester Permaculture Center, meets monthly to discuss topics such as edible landscapes, gardening, farming, renewable energy, green building, rainwater harvesting, composting, local food, forest gardening, herbalism, green living, etc. Meeting location and details: meetup.com/rochesterpermaculture.

Seabreeze Bloomers Garden Club meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, except January, in East Irondequoit. Some meetings feature speakers and some are visits to local gardens or special events. All are welcome. President, Pat Plunkett: 585/342-5477; grandmapat294@yahoo.com.

Stafford Garden Club meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, Stafford Town Hall, 8903 Morganville Road (Route 237), Stafford, except December and January. Plant auction in May. All are welcome. 585/343-4494.

Valentown Garden Club meets the third Tuesday of each month; time alternates between noon and 7 pm. Victor. Kathleen Houser, president: 585/301-6107.

FREQUENT HOSTS

BRI: Bristol's Garden Center, 7454 Victor Pittsford Road, Victor, NY. 585/924-2274; customerservice@bristolsgrdncenter.com; bristolsgardencenter.com & Facebook.

RCGC: Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, Rochester, NY 14620. 585/473-5130; rcgc.org.

CLASSES / EVENTS

• **Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.**

November 3: Garden Talk – Holiday Centerpiece, 12:15 – 12:45 pm. Master Gardeners will explain how to create a floral centerpiece for the holidays. Bring your lunch. Free. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Genesee County, 420 East Main Street, Batavia. 585/343-3040; genesee.cce.cornell.edu.

November 7: Putting the Garden to Bed, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Christine Froehlich will cover what to divide and how to do it, cutting back and what to leave for winter interest, fertilization, recordkeeping and cleaning and putting away tools and equipment. Outdoor session. \$22 members; \$32 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

• **November 9: Create a Fairy Garden,** 6:30 – 8 pm. Sue Lang and Joe Gallea will guide participants as they create this indoor garden for any age. Includes pot, soil, 2 plants and 1 fairy garden accessory. \$35; free for children accompanying a registered adult. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 10: Make an Everlasting Wreath, 6:30 – 8 pm. Sue Lang and Sheryl Roets will guide participants in creating an everlasting wreath using a base of salal (lemon leaf) and baby's breath (depending on availability) to embellish with dried, fresh and/or silk floral materials. Materials included. \$55. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 14: Thanksgiving Centerpiece, 11 am. Use a combination of evergreens and fall accessories to make a Thanksgiving-themed centerpiece. Includes container, oasis, candle, greens, fall accessories and ribbon. \$20. Registration required. **BRI**

November 14 – 15: Holiday Sale, 9 am – 5 pm. Seasonal floral arrangements and wreaths, fully decorated holiday trees from tabletop to 6.5', swags, centerpieces and more, in all styles and color schemes. The work of several local artists will also be featured. Free. **RCGC**

November 17: Create an Autumn Centerpiece, 6:30 – 8 pm. Sue Lang and Sheryl Roets will guide participants in creating a centerpiece using fresh greens and flowers. They will discuss how to keep the arrangement looking fresh to last through the holiday season. Materials included. \$50. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 18: Collecting and Growing Seed of Native Trees and Shrubs – An Easy Way to Restore Native Vegetation, 6 – 8:30 pm. Jim Engel will cover how and when to collect seed of various native plants, storage and stratification techniques, planting methods and strategies to improve germination and survival under natural conditions. Samples of seeds will be available for hands-on demonstration. \$22 members; \$30 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 19: The Sharpest Tool in the Shed, 6 – 8 pm. Nellie Gardner and Christine Froehlich will discuss which garden tools they have found to be most useful, where to get them, plus tips on cleaning, oiling and sharpening those tools. Participants may bring their garden tools to sharpen in class. \$22 members; \$32 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 21: Advanced Professional Floral Design Certificate – Sympathy Arrangements, 9:30 am – 3 pm. Instructor Alana Miller will focus on free-standing easel sprays, large one-sided arrangements for visitation and altar, religious and theme wreaths. Students will take home all arrangements created during class. Prerequisite: *Intermediate Professional Floral Design* program or floral shop experience. \$150 members; \$225 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

November 24: Thanksgiving Canded Centerpiece, 7 – 9 pm. Design a lighted centerpiece featuring fresh seasonal flowers, embellishments and candles in this workshop with floral designer Alana Miller. Materials included. \$37 members; \$47 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 1: Outdoor Holiday Welcome Arrangement, 6:30 – 8 pm. Instructors Sue Lang and Sheryl Roets will guide participants as they design a custom arrangement using fresh greens and decorative materials in a holiday pot that will last outside through

the holiday and winter season. Materials included. \$55. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 2: Make a Knock-out Holiday Wreath that Lasts All Winter, 6 – 8 pm. Nellie Gardner will guide participants in creating their own wreath using an assortment of mixed greens embellished with natural materials including herbs, chili peppers, rose hips, pods, dried flowers and cones. \$38 members; \$48 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 5: Boxwood Wreath Workshop, 10 am – 12 pm. Alana Miller will share how to fill a rectangular form with boxwood to create a wall hanging or tabletop decoration. Participants may add their choice of holiday embellishments. Materials included. \$40 members; \$50 non-members. Both workshops (see *Boxwood Christmas Tree*, below): \$65 members; \$80 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 5: Holiday Centerpiece, 11 am. Create your own centerpiece using fresh greens, winter berries, twigs, etc. Includes container, oasis, candle, fresh greens, accessories and ribbon. \$20. Registration required. **BRI**

December 5: Holiday Wreath, 1 pm. Make your own personalized wreath choosing from a wide range of accessories and ribbons. \$25. Registration required. **BRI**

December 5: Boxwood Christmas Tree Workshop, 1 – 3 pm. Alana Miller will guide participants through the construction of a long-lasting tabletop Christmas tree to embellish with their choice of seasonal decorations. \$30 members; \$40 non-members. Both workshops (see *Boxwood Wreath*, above): \$65 members; \$80 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 10: Explore Healing Herbs as East Meets West, 6:30 – 8 pm. Board certified Chinese medical practitioner Tennille Richards will explain common botanical western cousins to well-known Chinese herbs and their very specific medical uses. Learn about the care and growing conditions of these herbs and plants and gain an understanding of teas used as medical decoctions. \$40. Registration required. **RCGC**

December 15: Holiday Centerpiece, 7 – 9 pm. Floral designer Alana Miller will share tips as participants use a selection of greens, cones, ribbon, candles and a variety of other seasonal decorations to create a long-lasting centerpiece for the table. Materials included. \$39 members; \$49 non-members. Registration required. **RCGC**

• **January 9: Create a Fairy Garden**, 11 am – 12:30 pm. See description under November 9. \$35; free for children accompanying a registered adult. Registration required. **RCGC**

SAVE THE DATE...

January 30: Seed and Houseplant Swap, 9:30 am – 12:45 pm. Two talks, refreshments and an opportunity to swap seeds and houseplant cuttings. In *Favorite Hydrangeas for Northern Gardens* Tim Boebel will talk about some of his favorite hydrangeas as well as some that haven't lived up to the hype. In *Traveling through the Landscape – Design Inspiration from Around the World* Pietro Furgiuele will discuss the fundamental principles of good garden design and how different parts of our country and the world create landscapes influenced by factors such as climate, social influence and design spirit. Participants are encouraged to bring seeds and houseplant cuttings to swap but it is not required. \$15. Registration required. **RCGC**

SYRACUSE

REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS

African Violet Society of Syracuse meets the second Thursday of the month, September – May, Pitcher Hill Community Church, 605 Bailey Road, North Syracuse. 315/492-2562; kgarb@twcnv.rr.com; avsofsyracuse.org.

Central New York Orchid Society meets the first Sunday of the month, September – May, St. Augustine's Church, 7333 O'Brien Road, Baldwinsville. Dates may vary due to holidays. 315/633-2437; cnyos.org.

Gardeners of Syracuse meets the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm, Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Avenue, Syracuse. Enter from Melrose Avenue. 315/464-0051.

Gardeners in Thyme (a women's herb club) meets the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm, Beaver Lake Nature Center, Baldwinsville. 315/635-6481; hbaker@twcnv.rr.com.

Habitat Gardening Club of CNY (HGCNY) meets the last Sunday of most months at 2 pm, Liverpool Public Library. HGCNY is a chapter of Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes; for-wild.org. Meetings are free and open to the public. 315/487-5742; hgcnv.org.

Koi and Water Garden Society of Central New York usually meets the third Monday of each month at 7 pm. See web site for meeting locations. 315/458-3199; cnykoi.com.

Syracuse Rose Society meets the second Thursday of every month (except December) at 7 pm. Public welcome. Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Avenue, Syracuse. Enter from Melrose Avenue. Club members maintain the E. M. Mills Memorial Rose Garden, Thornden Park, Syracuse. syracuserosesociety.org.

Williamson Garden Club. On-going community projects; free monthly lectures to educate the community about gardening. Open to all. 315/524-4204; grow14589@gmail.com; grow-thewilliamsongardenclub.blogspot.com.

CLASSES / EVENTS

• Indicates activities especially appropriate for children and families.

Ongoing November 14 – Spring 2016: Winter Farmers' Market, second Saturdays, 10 am – 1 pm. Shop local farm and artisanal food products from top regional producers. Indoors. Baltimore Woods Nature Center, 4007 Bishop Hill Road, Marcellus. 315/673-1350; Facebook; baltimorewoods.org.

• **November 21: Scented Delights**, 10:30 – 11:30 am. Participants will gather herbs to use in creating one-of-a-kind soaps and candles. All ages, children must be accompanied by an adult. \$6 members; \$9 non-members. Registration required. Baltimore Woods Nature Center, 4007 Bishop Hill Road, Marcellus. 315/673-1350; Facebook; baltimorewoods.org.

November 29: Video Presentation - Dirt! The Movie: A Story with Heart and Soil, 2 pm. Narrated by Jamie Lee Curtis, the movie brings to life the environmental, economic, social and political impact that soil has as it shares the stories of experts from all over the world. Presented by Habitat Gardening in Central New York. Liverpool Library, 310 Tulip Street, Liverpool. hgcnv.org; ourhabitatgarden.org.

Deadline for Calendar Listings for the next issue (January-February 2016) is Friday, December 18, 2015. Please send your submissions to deb@upstategardenersjournal.com.



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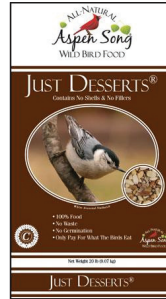
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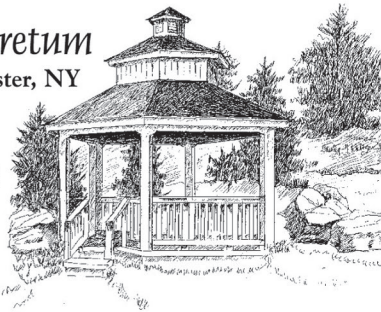
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Blocks in Bloom

by Kathy Lewis

LEFT: Jackie Graham, block captain, shows off her garden.

RIGHT: Jackie Graham's garden on planting day.

I'm old enough to remember student protesters placing flowers in the barrels of National Guard guns in the 1970s. It was called "Flower Power." This same phrase could be applied to a new "Blocks in Bloom" initiative in inner city Rochester that I started last year along with other Master Gardeners.

Blocks in Bloom uses front yard flower gardening as a tool to grow community. The basic steps are simple.

- Identify inner city blocks where at least 6 households want to start a front yard flower garden.
- Match it with a pair of Master Gardener "mentors"
- Visit each yard to see where the gardener wants to plant, and assess light and other characteristics (while teaching a few gardening principles)
- Schedule a time for each block to prepare their garden beds
- Gather donated perennial plants
- Hold a work day where gardeners plant with advice from Master Gardeners
- Master Gardeners visit periodically throughout the growing season to mentor.

The results are magical. "All of our yards look 300% better" says Reverend Cynthia Cole, block captain of her Blocks in Bloom project. "And we had fun! We knew each other already, but together we had a great learning experience and we became more neighborly as a result of this shared project."

The effort started as a seedling in 2014—two pilot blocks and two Master Gardeners. Our participants were so enthusiastic we decided to try scaling the project up. Some were skeptical that we could find enough other Master Gardeners willing to volunteer in neighborhoods known better for headlines of violence than for gardens. With the help of our sponsoring organization, Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, we inserted an appeal in the Master Gardener newsletter and made pitches at a couple of their monthly meetings. The result was gratifying—15 volunteers, including the husband of one of the Master Gardeners. Gratifying and overwhelming, since that presented the dual challenges of finding enough interested blocks and enough donated plants to supply the new gardens.



We hastily put together flyers and sign-up sheets, and made several presentations to neighborhood associations throughout low income sections of Rochester. We announced that the first 14 blocks to turn in at least 6 sign-up sheets filled out by residents would get into the program (though we did turn away inquiries from some more affluent neighborhoods). One barrier is that it's hard in January with snow-covered yards for people to imagine starting a garden in spring. Most successful blocks had one enthusiastic champion who encouraged their neighbors to sign up. A few had staff help from a neighborhood organization committed to community-building. As soon as we received a packet of sign-in sheets from a block we matched them with a pair of Master Gardener mentors and set up an organizing meeting, wherever there was space. This ranged from living rooms to churches to fire stations.

The two pilot projects from 2014 each asked to participate again, and we set a higher bar of at least 12 participants. One of the two increased from 6 households in 2014 to 21 in 2015 on 4 contiguous blocks. "It was jealousy," says Block Captain Jackie Graham. "They'd say 'I want to have a garden like that and get those free plants'"

Each group selected a Block Captain at their first meeting and set up a date in April for an assessment 'walkabout' with a bed preparation work day in early May. We encouraged each group to continue to sign up more participants. Some groups signed up over 20 residents. Blocks in Bloom gardeners are a mix of homeowners and renters. Lack of tools did not present a problem. We asked each gardener to have a trowel. All other equipment was shared by neighbors who had shovels and wheelbarrows. Watering in a small garden can be done with a milk jug if there is no hose.

As we identified more blocks we had a rising sense of panic about finding enough plants to supply so many gardens. In one year we'd mushroomed from 15 households on 2 blocks to 150 on 18! Luckily for us, yards in the neighborhoods are small; typically 20 ft. wide by 5 or 6 feet deep, so a few plants can make an impact. Our goal was 10 – 12 plants per yard. Blocks in Bloom focuses on "tough as nails" perennials that can survive poor soil and the inexperience of new gardeners. Luckily these are plants that many gardeners have in abundance. You know the plants—day lilies, hostas, Shasta daisies, Black-Eyed Susans. We welcomed even plants that some gardeners consider thugs such as Japanese Anemone, Physostegia (obedient plant), and Lilies of the Valley. These will present future opportunities for Blocks in Bloom gardeners to divide and share with their neighbors who want to start their own gardens.

The Master Gardeners in Monroe County mount a large plant sale each year at the Lilac Festival in Highland Park, Rochester. Luckily the leftover plants mostly are the "tough as nails" perennials we wanted. During our pilot year Blocks in Bloom was able to pick and choose among the unsold plants at the end of that sale, thanks to the generosity of the Plant Sale Committee. But for 2015, it doesn't take a mathematician to figure that we were looking for at least 1500 plants, many more than the few hundred left after the sale. So, off we went with hat in hand to local garden clubs, nurseries, and our own gardening friends. Amazingly, on our distribution day at the end of the Lilac Festival we had enough plants for everyone. We also distributed zinnia seeds to fill in any gaps.

Distribution day was a bit like a three-ring circus. All of our Master Gardener mentors were there; plants were

LEFT: Block captain Diane Johnson's front garden on planting day.

RIGHT: Diane Johnson's garden in August.



ABOVE: Plant pick up day for Blocks in Bloom groups. May 18, 2015.

organized loosely into “shade lovers” “sun lovers” and “part sun/part shade”. Each block captain was assigned a time to pick up the plants for his or her block. As each arrived we helped them select the plants, using simple assessment forms we had drawn up for each garden. Later that day the Master Gardeners went to their blocks and helped place the plants in the best location in each garden. After this, the residents planted their own plants, sometimes working in pairs or small groups.

The City of Rochester is a very important partner for Blocks in Bloom. They have donated and delivered compost and mulch to each of the participating blocks, using a vacant lot as a drop-off point right before the garden preparation work day. The City also donated gardening gloves and large trash bags for yard waste, as part of their “Clean Sweep” city cleanup initiative.

As any seasoned gardener knows, planting is the middle of the process, not the end. This is a point that new gardeners often don’t appreciate. On subsequent visits the Master Gardeners talked about how to tell weeds from plants, how to pull out weeds by the roots and the importance of watering (though two wet summers helped immensely on this score). Also, gardening with perennials requires patience. Plants take off in their second or third years. Some residents wanted the instant color that only comes with annuals. A number of them filled in gaps by buying annuals—available at low cost at the Public Market—Rochester’s award-winning farmer’s market. Some scorned offers of plants that looked boring in May, only to be jealous of that gorgeous crocosmia in their neighbor’s garden in August.

Blocks in Bloom gardeners are not all beginners. Some had established a garden already but wanted to expand it or improve on it. These experienced gardeners generally did better than the beginners, but in many cases they also encouraged the beginners and donated additional plants

from their own gardens. In other yards when we did the assessments we found remnants of a garden planted by a previous resident, buried beneath weeds, and were able to incorporate those plants. We also gave advice on pruning existing shrubs.

So what do the individual Blocks in Bloom gardens look like at the end of the season? Most are not showcase gardens, though some of the 2nd year participants’ gardens were awash with color in August. In my mind, our most improved garden does not look impressive. But compared to the packed, bare earth yard in May it’s beautiful, with a small, healthy lawn backed by a single row of perennials.

Perhaps the more important question is, how have the gardeners and the blocks changed? The pride and excitement in their own creations is palpable for each gardener. And for the blocks? Block Captain Jackie Graham says it all. “We’re getting a lot more people interested in home beautification—aware of their house and their street. They get out now, socialize more, and even trade plants.”

Blocks in Bloom is an initiative that could be replicated in any community. The Rochester organizers are happy to share our experiences and our materials with anyone who would like to start a similar project. And the future in Rochester? We are limited only by the number of willing volunteer mentors and donated plants. There are plenty of blocks that would like to participate as word of mouth spreads.

Kathy Lewis is a Master Gardener with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County in Rochester, NY. She retired nearly four years ago from a career managing human service programs and working on community initiatives. Rochester area gardeners who would like to dig and donate perennials from their gardens in May, 2016 can contact her at klewis50@frontier.com.

Sweet Arrangement

by Cathy Monrad



Learning to create floral arrangements seemed intimidating to me... until Carol Swallow-Wilson, member of the Country Gardeners of Webster, showed me how quick and easy it was to recreate this festive arrangement idea from countryandvictorianimes.com.

MATERIALS

About 3 boxes of candy canes, left in wrappers
Ribbon
Wide rubber band
Round container, no taller than candy canes
Roses or carnations
Pine cuttings

TOOLS

Paring or pocket knife
Lazy Susan or cake stand

PREPARE CONTAINER

1. Stretch rubber band around container, then insert candy canes under rubber band around entire circumference.
2. Hide rubber band with ribbon wrapped around container and tied in a bow or simple knot as shown.
3. Place decorated container on Lazy Susan, then add water until it's $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
4. Place decorated container on Lazy Susan, then add water until it's $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
5. Cut a few pine branches no taller than container, strip off lower needles and place in container. These will hold the flowers in place.

ARRANGE FLOWERS

1. Remove bruised petals from flowers. For roses, pinch petal near bottom and pull.
2. Determine the height of the tallest flower, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the height of the candy canes.
3. Using knife, cut stem at an angle. Woody stemmed flowers like roses also need a slit about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length cut at end of stem.
4. Remove any leaves that are bruised or will be submerged in water.
5. Place flower in center of container, utilizing greenery to hold it up.
6. Determine height of the second level of flowers, about $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance from top of candy canes to bottom of tallest flower.
7. Cut and place flowers in container, one at a time, turning the arrangement to ensure a balanced look from all angles. This level will have 5 or 6 flowers.
8. Determine height of third level, just above tops of candy canes, then repeat step 7.

ADD GREENERY

Cut pine branch and strip needles that will fall below the waterline, then place in empty space between flowers. Repeat until arrangement looks full.

ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

Add mini candy canes attached to sticks with floral wire; swap cinnamon sticks for candy canes around container; use arborvitae or boxwood instead of pine; or place arrangement on greenery cuttings.

Cathy Monrad is the graphic designer and self-proclaimed garden crafter for *Upstate Gardeners' Journal*.

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