



Garden Club News

April 2014

PO Box 3253 Teaneck, NJ 07666

www.gardenclubofteaneck.org

The next meeting of the Garden Club of Teaneck will be held on Thursday, April 10th at the Richard Rodda Center. It will start at 7:30pm. That evening Hubert Ling will talk to the club about "Shade Gardens and Wild Ferns."

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Committee of the Garden Club will be on Saturday, April 5th at 10:00 am.

Member News

Message from Pat Fromm, President

Our regularly scheduled events are quickly coming to the end of our season, albeit, with a big "BANG" as we wrap up with preparations for our annual plant sale. If you haven't marked your calendar yet, be sure to do it NOW. The Garden Club of Teaneck Plant Sale is May 3-11 with members only night on May 2nd, 5-8 pm. To support your club, spread the word to your friends and neighbors and encourage them to 'buy local'. All of the plants are from seeds or cuttings started by our members or from tiny plugs, purchased from nearby NJ growers. Stop by the greenhouse anytime between now and May 3rd to see all the lovely plants and your fellow members hard at work, or to help out. There's lots of work to be done and you are welcome to join in and help out with any group.

The April 10 meeting will be interesting to most of us in Teaneck with shady home gardens. **Hubert Ling, will present ideas on Shade Gardens and Wild Ferns** with lots of ideas about garden design and plant selection. Speaker for the May 8th meeting will be by **Gary Oppenheimer, AmpleHarvest.org, Founder and Executive Director**, who will encourage all of us to share the bounty and give us some

good ideas on how each of us can do one little thing to help eliminate hunger in our own community. Both of these meetings will be at the Rodda Center, and presenter begins at 7:30. Come early for networking and social!

There are some fun and exciting ideas in the planning stage for summer, from guided walks with Nancy Solwick, native plants expert, to a private GCT guided walk at our very own New Jersey Botanic Gardens and Skylands tour. Watch for the date when two of our new members will host a private garden tour! And I can personally recommend, don't miss it because their garden is a real secret Teaneck gem. Patrick is working on some jam/jelly making workshops, photography workshop/contests, and you can watch for notice of herb workshops as well as some fun potluck socials. Enjoy spring! Pat

Message from Len Schwartz, Greenhouse Director

This our last newsletter before the 2014 plant sale, so what follows has mostly to do with our sale. Thanks to Joe and to all of your efforts, the plants are starting to look wonderful. Most of them are now re-potted and will need TLC to reach their full potential. The sale itself will run for nine

days starting May 3rd and finishing Mother's day, May 11th. As in the past all greenhouse members are expected to attend and participate in three selling sessions of up to three and a half hours each. Two of these sessions must be weekends and the third during your normal group meeting time. Sunday groups are expected to attend three sessions also. The two main assignments during the sale are: Front room workers who will count and tally purchases, and Greenhouse floor workers who will help customers select plants. Signup sheets for the weekends will be available at our April 5th greenhouse meeting. On Friday, May 2, from 5pm to 8 pm only, there will be a pre-sale for all greenhouse and garden club members. Before that time no material may be purchased, claimed or moved from the greenhouse for personal use. During the plant sale we must reduce outside auto congestion. PLEASE do not bring your car into the access street leading to the greenhouse on the first weekend. This space will be reserved for our customers. You must park on the field east of the greenhouse or outside the enclosure on the streets. I propose that our final celebration party, last meeting, and elections be held on Saturday May 24. I hope to see everyone on April 5th.
Len

Message from Joe Papa, Greenhouse Horticultural Director

As the last remnants of snow dissipate we turn our attention to our gardens and the tasks ahead. I have installed my cold frame and will plant by April 1st five varieties of lettuce. Nevada Crisp is our favorite. I plant Kossak Kohlrabi and my peas, which I immerse in water for 24 hours before planting. Typically you direct sow your lettuce, beets and cold crops in mid April. I am also integrating sand in one bed for carrots. They like that type of loam. Most importantly when tilling only light till, no

deeper than six inches which may be amended with dehydrated cow manure and some bone meal. This will maintain the integrity of the soil food web workers; our rhizoid bacteria the nitrogen fixing bacteria and the mycorrhizae fungae which aid in root development and the absorption of water and nutrients are just two of the many classes of microorganism in a good tilth. We should not forget our arthropods, worms, spiders and beetles all interacting consuming, absorbing and releasing valuable byproducts into the soil food web. Your goal is to promote a balanced mini ecosystem, a symbiotic relationship which we and our plants depend upon. I have been reading a book, The One- Straw Revolution by Masanobu Fukuoka who devoted his life to the growing and study of rice, wheat, barley and citrus all naturally and organically, a Zen (enlightenment) approach to gardening. He wrote and I paraphrase "Successful agriculture requires not so much arduous labor as awareness, observation, connection and persistence". Take out your journals make your observations, stay connected to your garden, its complexities its wonder.

The Sun god has returned, the seeds, our plants will resurrect. Enjoy the spring. Joe

The Greenhouse Work Groups

The greenhouse work groups are the heart of our club. Here are three stories about the Monday, Thursday and Friday Groups.

Team Monday

Not everybody looks forward to Mondays, but the Monday group at the greenhouse does! We're a large group of ten, mostly retired or semi-retired men and women from various ethnic and professional backgrounds. Our oldest will celebrate his 100th birthday in September and we have a few 'forty some-things' and we proudly boast 4 Rutgers Master Gardeners in our ranks! We meet officially at 9:30 am on

Mondays but many are here by 9 am, eager to get started. In addition to our 'housekeeping chores', our responsibilities to the GCT and greenhouse committee include producing various herbs and vegetables for the annual plant sale and to propagate interesting plants for our Hawthorne School program. This year we'll nurture about 3800 plants for the plant sale. Needless to say, that keeps us plenty busy, but we also find time to do fun and educational events.

We started the year with a workshop on cleaning and sharpening garden tools to put away for winter. We experimented with various herbs from our harvests to make some very tasty herbal teas to share. Early winter we planted some tulip and narcissus bulbs to store away in the cold then in early spring, in time for the February meeting, we forced them to bloom and shared them at the Saturday committee meeting. When we began to see infestations of pests in the greenhouse, we brewed up a garlic spray to use for controlling both insects and fungal diseases. We even manage to get away from Teaneck for an occasional outing. A trip to the NY Botanical Garden Orchid show was wonderful and we're planning a trip to Van Saun County Park to explore the herb garden with one of our group who also volunteers there. We welcome all who like to work and learn!

Team Thursday PM

The Thursday PM Greenhouse group meets from 4 PM to 6 PM. The group leader is Sara Jones. Other members of the group are Dania Cheddie, Debby D'Amico, Anna Kurz, Robyn Lowenthal and Joe Papa. This season, we have produced plants from cuttings, including coleus, helichrisum, pilea, rabbit foot fern, muhlenbeckia, begonias, transcendentia, aucuba, lantana and plectranthus. From seed we have grown marigolds, ornamental millet, carex, kale and coleus. These plants are being sold to

the Hawthorne School children and for the Garden Club Plant Sale.

The members of our group possess a wide variety of interests and experience. In addition to being an experienced gardener, Sara is known as the "plant savior;" if she sees even the smallest piece of a plant in the trash or along the side of the road, she will bring it to the greenhouse, plant it and hope for the best. Dania has held almost every officer position in the Greenhouse. If you are interested in aromatic plants, she is your go-to person. Debbie, although a relatively new Greenhouse member, had a lovely vegetable garden last season. She has an insatiable hunger for any and all information about growing green things. Anna impresses us all by propagating things that seem almost impossible; how many of us are growing metasequoia? She is also an amazing photographer. Robyn's main interest is interesting foliage plants and container combinations. She is also an advocate of Square Foot Gardening. Joe is our source of information about the latest trends in horticulture; he has the patience to research methods of deterring greenhouse pests and growing our plants so they are healthy and happy. He is undoubtedly the motivating force behind the entire greenhouse process.

Team Friday

The Friday Group is a happy bunch of greenhouse members. There are about seven of us in the group and we have been together for many, many years. We concentrate mainly on propagating plants for the school children, and we also experiment propagating new plants we did not have. Of course we also greatly contribute to the transplanting of plugs, water them and administer tender-loving-care until the plants are ready for sale in early May. The Friday group members are as follows: Aura Altieri, Ho Wan Ching, Elyse Constantin,

Stella Franco, Jane Furman, Deborah Morgan, and yours truly, Christina Mackensen, being the group leader. We meet Friday evenings at 6:00pm, and extend a hearty welcome to anybody who would like to join us. Please call 201-694-7707.

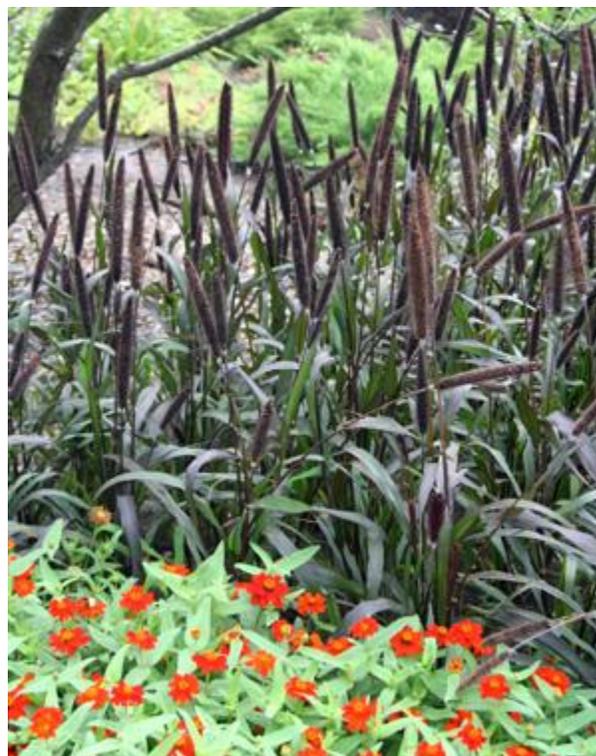
Plant of the Month

By Robyn Lowenthal

Ornamental Millet “Purple Majesty,” (*Pennisetum glaucum*), is a unique annual for adding height, texture and color to borders and containers. The corn-like four to five foot plants – they stay about two feet in containers – have one to three main stems and secondary shoots covered with deep purple foliage. The twelve to fourteen inch cat-tail like flower plumes are attractive to birds, bees and butterflies. They make great cut flowers and are easily dried. Ornamental Millet thrives in high heat and unremitting sun; the foliage is deepest purple in full sun. It is virtually untroubled by pests and diseases and is easy to grow from seed. It has an extensive root system that makes it drought tolerant. They do not self-seed, as the seeds cannot survive our cold winters. The plants do best in light, well-drained soil. They are best grown in clumps or masses rather than individual plants.

Pennisetum glaucum, sometimes called cattail, bulrush or pearl millet, is one of the world’s oldest cultivated grains. The original “Purple Majesty” was developed from mutations found in a millet breeding program at the University of Nebraska, where it stood out among the normal plants with green foliage.

A limited number of Ornamental Millet “Purple Majesty” will be available for purchase at our Plant Sale



A Seed Exchange: The Time is Now By Pat Fromm

What is a seed exchange? It is just what it says: we exchange (or swap) unwanted/used viable seeds. Seed exchanges give us the chance to save money on seeds—we usually don’t need every seed in a pack and you can trade those unused seeds for someone else’s unusual seeds. Exchange involves little or no cash (except small donation, 25¢, for envelopes)

How it works: Members who have seeds to offer: put your seeds (10-15 seeds perhaps) in provided envelope and write on envelope:

1. The name of the seed (Cherokee Purple Tomato, for instance)
2. If it’s Organic (OR), Hybrid (HY) Heirloom (HE)
3. If it’s disease resistant VFNTA (on the package)
4. What YEAR the seed was packaged
5. Short instructions for planting

6. About how many seeds are in the envelope (estimate).
7. Your name

Hand them in to the Seed Keeper, at greenhouse committee meeting, April 5th, or at the Garden Club meeting April 10th (the one with a box, pencils, envelopes and records and seeds.)

What Happens Next: Take an envelope of seeds that you want. **Donate 25¢ for each one you take to pay for the envelopes.** Repeat as often as you have seeds to exchange. Feel free to donate seeds to the Exchange. They will be used in the future in future Exchanges. Think how many varieties you can plant without the usual price shock! Your donated seeds should have been kept in cool, dry place for storage.

Spring Events of Interest

From Nancy Cochrane - We are planning a Herb Garden planting on Saturday, May 17th (rain date 5/31) from 9 am - 12 noon for anyone who is interested. We are hoping to clean the garden, get all the plants into the garden and enjoy the morning. People can come whenever they want during that time and stay for however long as they can. Please bring gloves and a trowel. Thanks, Nancy

From Robyn Lowenthal - Please join members of the Garden Club of Teaneck for a tour of Rutgers Gardens on Wednesday, May 28, 2014. The tour will be led by Bruce Crawford, director of Rutgers Gardens. The cost of the tour is \$10.00 per person. Plan to bring your lunch, as we will be able to picnic on the Garden grounds. We will be

leaving the Greenhouse around 9:30 AM. Our tour will last about two hours. The tour is limited to 20 people, so please contact Robyn Lowenthal at 201-287-1970 or Catboat3@gmail.com, by May 20

From Carolyn Iglesias – The Leonard J. Buck Garden, in Far Hills will have a plant sale on April 26th and 27th.

From Anna Kurz – The University of Connecticut offers a soil testing service for \$8. You get back sheets and sheets of data, showing what level your sample(s) hold of various minerals, organic matter etc. along side with what is a normal level. The data also includes what you need to do (e.g., "add 1 lb lime/ 100 ft. sq in spring") to improve your soil.

From Jane Furman – The Garden Club of Tenafly will have an afternoon with Carl Lemanski – one of the country's leading floral designers, on Wednesday, on April 9th at 11:00am at the Knickerbocker Country Club. The cost is \$50.00 per person. Lunch will follow his demonstration. All those interested please call 201-568-6067.

Final Word

As our house comes alive with green and sings with color it is good to put faces to some of those good people whose efforts ensure our success. Marty Steeil



George



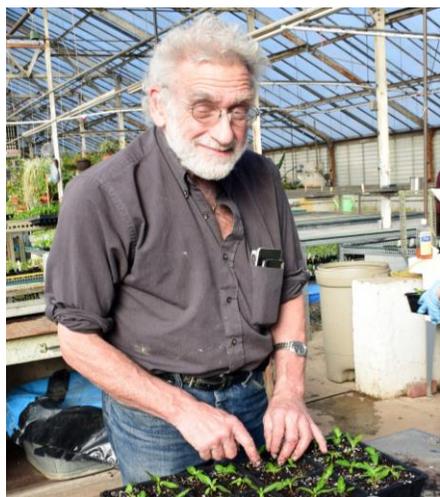
Amelia, Merle and Yolunda



Aura



Anne



Len



Tai

Rufus

Lou

Carol



Sara Anna



Robin Myriam



John



Denise



Donna



Elyse Aura Ho Wan Christina



Miriam Robin Nancy Olga



Fred Merel Amelia



Robyn Sara



Jan



Elyse



Aura