



Garden Club News

March 2013

PO Box 3253 Teaneck, NJ 07666

www.gardenclubofteaneck.org

Calendar: March 2013

The next meeting of the Garden Club of Teaneck will be Thursday, March 14th, 7:30 – 9:00PM, at the Teaneck Rodda Center. Our own Joe Papa will be our guest speaker that evening. He will speak to the club about soil.

The next meeting of the Greenhouse Committee will be at 10AM on Saturday, March 2nd.

There are still seats available on the bus to the Philadelphia Flower Show. Please contact Aura Altieri at 201 923-7028 or email Bus.PhillyShow@yahoo.com for payment and departure details

Member News

Message from Debbie Morgan, President

I will see you all on March 14th. Yours in gardening. Debbie

Message from Len Schwartz, Greenhouse Director

Even though winter still has a few more weeks left, our 2013 season is off to a strong start.

As we all know, Joe Papa has started picking up this year's plant order. The geraniums and herbs have been potted. The rest of the order will be coming in each successive week during March. Our plan is to spread the deliveries to match the maturation times for each plant type. This also spreads out the time that we put into potting, so that the work isn't as rushed. It is also important that the work be spread evenly and fairly among our groups. Jon Ross has made a major contribution by preparing all of the six packs. Now is the time that our insect pests will become most active. We are planning to use very small parasitic wasps to

control white flies. This precludes spraying our members own plants with any insecticides.

Olga Newey says that our Hawthorne School Program is ready to start March 4th. This is a major program for the Greenhouse. It effects over 270 second, third and fourth grade students. Classes meet on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday with Olga Newey, Helen Humphreys and Cynthia McKay as teachers.

Cynthia McKay's Thursday morning class is in need of adult help. If there is anyone interested in joining her please contact Cynthia (at 201-837-3399, or mckay42@aol.com) or see her at the Greenhouse meeting on Saturday.

We will be doing some new things this season with our outside gardens. One full plot will be used by the new Junior Garden Club lead by Nancy Cochrane and Olga Newey. At least one of the plots alongside the greenhouse will be divided into four for members who want a smaller garden. There is one full open center plot available to anyone who already has a plot but would like to switch. There is a sign-

up notice to the left of the greenhouse doors for anyone wanting to be in the lottery for this plot. There is also additional room in the outside garden for new people.

Finally, the maintenance group has been working on a completely new overhead watering system used for the hanging baskets. The new system will keep the center aisle free. I will see you all at the March 2 meeting. Len

Message from Joe Papa – Horticulture Director

The doves and robins are pairing up; the star magnolia buds are getting fuller each day as the daffodils begin to break through the soil. The sun has returned, as the length of daylight will increase one hour and fifteen minutes over the next thirty days. The garlic planted in the autumn has emerged. I will lightly till the soil in the bed that I will be using for my cold frame. I will be planting my lettuces around the vernal equinox, the first day of spring. I will plant my peas on March 10th one week earlier as Zone Six last frost date has moved up one week. As the days warm up, I amend my beds with compost.

The propagation of our plants has been proceeding with great success. We have encountered some infestations of whitefly and aphids, which are being addressed. We have developed teams who will monitor the watering and the fertilization of the plants. Please do not water the plants unless asked by a team member, for each plant has unique watering needs and moisture levels. I would like to recognize Jon Ross who throughout the winter made over 300 trays of planting medium. This greatly expedited the replanting process. Thank you all for your cooperation with the plant propagation. I am looking forward to a successful sale thanks to all your efforts. Joe

Message from Susan McGibney, VP of Membership

On behalf of the Teaneck Garden Club, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members: Risa Marlen, Barbarann & Tracy Wacha, Tomiko Sakazume, Miriam Taub, and Angela Cozzolino. We have already put some of them to work- Risa has been planting plugs in prep for our annual plant sale. Barbarann and Tracy worked on the lovely Valentine's Day flowers for our February meeting, as well as create and help develop the upcoming flower arranging workshop. Tomiko, Miriam, and Angela are interested in volunteering and currently exploring available options.

Message from Pat Taaffe, VP of Programs

The Flower Arrangement Workshop begins on Tuesday 2/26 and will continue for 4 weeks at the Teaneck Flower Shop. I thank all club members who have signed up early to participate. It should be a fun learning experience. Any member who is interested in a particular topic for a workshop, please contact me at programstgc@gmail.com or 201-931-6394.

Joe Papa will be speaking about "Soil" at the March Garden Club meeting. He will help us understand how important healthy and nutritious soil is to growing vegetables and flowers in our gardens. Spring is right around the corner and we will all be starting to work in our gardens, so this topic is very timely.

Outside Greenhouse Gardens By Nancy Cochrane

If anyone is still interested in an outside garden, or changing their current garden, please contact me ASAP at msnancycochrane@yahoo.com or come to this Saturday's Greenhouse meeting. There are still smaller garden plots (1/2 and 1/4

size) available for those who do not want a full size plot. Final assignments will be done after the March 3rd meeting. Those who are not keeping their garden, please have it cleaned out by March 2nd. Happy gardening to everyone. Nancy Cochrane

Junior Gardeners & School Program by Olga Newey

Junior Gardeners Program

Sunday was our second session of the Junior Garden Club of Teaneck. Nancy Cochrane and I have planned a program to teach gardening to two groups: grades K-2 and 3-5 twice a month. Nancy teaches the younger group, and I do the older children. We meet on Sundays from 1-2 for the K-2 group and 2:30-4 for the older group.

This past Sunday, our unit was seeds. We discussed the function, parts and different types of seeds. We planted seeds: parsley, cabbage for our garden, and experimented with papaya, pomegranate, and other seeds from fruits that we cut open to investigate with a magnifying glass. The students are curious and excited about what we are doing. One parent works right with us and exclaimed that she is learning so much!

I want to thank you all for your encouragement and support. Visit us anytime or let us know if you would like to share a special skill you have with our young students.

School Program

We have over 750 plants sprouting all over the greenhouse for the Hawthorne School students. We expect 270 second, third and fourth graders. Their program begins on March 4th and end on April 4th. It will be nice to show the students the greenhouse with all the new plants growing in preparation for the Plant Sale. I am thinking of holding a raffle for each fourth grade class. If you have a plant you would like to donate as a raffle prize, just put it on the

middle bench with a label. I thank you all for the beautiful plant you have propagated for this program. Olga

Garden Club History by Patricia Libutti

Annual Spring Plant Sale

Over many years, the Annual Spring Sale has been publicized by our Greenhouse members with handouts, emailed messages, and ads in papers, maps and posters. A famous map graced the work, with all points' depicted leading to the Greenhouse. This publicity was spread across Teaneck and neighboring towns. Several recent posters catch my memory and my eye. Anna Kurtz, graphic designer for a number of our posters, has artistically rendered several in 2011 and 2012. Another member, Bob O'Brien, also a designer, produced these works in 2011 and 2012.

Anyone who has old posters and publicity can share them. Please contact Patty Libutti, Libutti@gmail.com and she will scan them for inclusion on our web site. Thank you all. Patricia O'Brien Libutti

Gardening Events in Our Area

By Robyn Lowenthal

From the Northeast Organic Farming Association Winter Conference (*Because of the length of this article it will be presented in 2 parts – this month and next*)

I. Designing the Kitchen Garden – Ellen Ecker Ogden

1. Beds don't have to be square. Even raised beds can be built in interesting shapes.
2. Paths can be made of gravel, brick, bluestone, bark, grass, salt hay. Put in stepping stones where there are no paths, to avoid compacting the soil.
3. Gates and fences functions as a "picture frame" for the garden.

4. Every garden needs a bench of some kind.
5. Use a tree or some other tall element as a focal point.
6. Plants – her favorites include arugula, troutback lettuce, and butterhead lettuce. Her favorite heirloom tomatoes are Persimmon and Green Zebra. Try garlic and shallots. Rainbow or Ruby Chard is beautiful, but Fordhook is more productive. Edible flowers include borage, “Lemon Gem” marigolds, chive blossoms, nasturtiums, violas and pansies. “Mokum” carrots are very tasty.

II. Weed Control in the Organic Garden – Jacqueline Ricotta, PhD. Delaware Valley State College

1. If your cultural practices are good, insects and diseases will be kept at bay, but weeds will flourish.
2. Never let a weed go to seed. One pigweed will produce 100,000 pigweed seeds.
3. Stay on top of weeds at the beginning of the season
4. Plan for weeds – think about weeds as you plan your garden.
5. Direct seed vs. transplant? Transplants will help prevent weeds. Direct seed – weeds will grow at the same rate or faster than the seeds germinate, and provide competition for the newly emerging seedlings and make it more difficult for the gardener. Consider growing transplants for crops usually grown from seed, i.e., beets and corn.
6. Mulch vs. bare ground? Mulch will help suppress the weeds.
7. Spacing – consider space to use tools. Plant a little closer together so that the canopy will shade the ground and prevent weeds. This works well with brassicas, but not with crops that need

- better air circulation, i.e., tomatoes, peppers, eggplant.
8. Crop rotation – rotate from crops with easy weed control (green beans) to those that are difficult to control (carrots and parsley).
9. Rotate by families – legume to root to fruit to leaf.
10. Cover crops for weed control – alleopathy - some plants release chemicals that are harmful to weeds – rye, buckwheat, oats, and barley. Buckwheat – let the soil warm up and sow shallower. Cut it at full bloom before seeds form. On line resource – Buckwheat Cover Crop Handbook from Cornell University.
11. Living Mulch – cover crop planted between rows of cash crop, i.e., clover between broccoli. Some other cover crops grow too tall and will need to be mowed. Grass alleyways can be used between planting beds.
12. Organic mulches – straw, sawdust, leaves, and grass clippings (if you know where they came from) can be used in rows and between rows.
13. Plastic Mulch extends the season, leads to cleaner production, provides weed suppression, and can be used with straw mulch – plastic in rows, straw in middles.
14. Landscape fabric provides a thick barrier that completely prevents weeds. It is expensive to buy, but lasts a long time.
15. Mowing/Weed Whacking is a temporary solution and can prevent weeds from going to seed.
16. Flaming weeds – propane flames effectively kill smaller weeds. There are hand held and tractor pulled units. Check out “Weed Dragon Propane Torch Kit.”
17. Hand weeding – often necessary for direct-seeded crops. Check out the

- many varieties of hoes. Be sure your tools are sharp.
18. Stale Seedbed Technique – gets rid of weed seeds in top few inches of soil:
 - a. Prepare bed for planting
 - b. Irrigate
 - c. Allow weeds to germinate
 - d. Till very shallowly
 - e. Repeat one to two more times.
 19. Organic herbicides – use only when other methods don't work. They are no for selective weed removal, rather for burn down of everything in the bed.
 - a. Greenmatch – Marrone Organic Innovation – effective on small weeds.
 - b. Hidura – Vinegar and Clove Oil
 - c. Acetic Acid – stronger than commercial vinegar
 - d. Citric acid, Clove Oil, Thyme Oil and Cinnamon Oil have not had much commercial success.
 20. Pre-Emergent Organic Herbicides
 - a. Corn Gluten Meal – inhibits the root formation of germinating plants. Don't use it when it is too wet.

Robyn

Where do Little Plants Come From

By Anna Kurz

Have you ever wondered where our Plant Sale plants come from? On Friday afternoon, January 22nd, Joe Papa, Len Schwartz and I set out to go to van Vugt Growers in Pompton Plains to pick up our plant plugs destined to become the grown plants for the Garden Club of Teaneck's annual Plant Sale. We are a small customer. That day we are picked up some 1,700 plugs while van Vugt is accustomed to processing multiple orders of 20,000 plugs. Nonetheless, we were treated with courtesy and consideration. After a brief stop at the office, we were led into cavernous unheated space containing a cart holding our plugs of basil, thyme, cilantro and two types of parsley. Joe

and Len inspected the plants, and asked the owner John about care and fertilization. They decided that the thyme would benefit from another week at van Vugt's. All the other flats we loaded into Len's car and taken them back to the greenhouse. That very evening, a team of 11 Garden Club and Greenhouse members planted all 1,100 plugs in a record 90 minutes.

Last Word

The team effort that has been demonstrated by the membership has been fantastic this year. The following pictures just hi-light the process and the people that make it all work.





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