

### Virtual meeting – April 26

**Note the early time**

**Announcements at 4:50 pm; program to follow.**

Click [here](#) to join the meeting at 4:45 pm.

Meeting ID: 926 9258 8641; password: 692429

### Kerry Ann Mendez: Heavenly Plants for Tough Spots and Hellstrips

Landscaping in challenging sites can be an exasperating exercise. Even experienced gardeners can have spots in their landscape where plants just don't flourish. This presentation by Kerry Ann Mendez, an award-winning garden educator, author, and design consultant, features superhero plants that thrive in dry shade; hot, sandy locations; wet areas; on slopes; and in hellstrips between sidewalk and street curb.

No matter where you plant them — in challenging locations or great soil — they make landscapes beautiful both for gardeners and pollinators.



**Kerry Ann Mendez**

Kerry Ann, who calls herself a “passionate perennialist,” is the owner of [Perennially Yours](#) based in southern Maine. She has written four gardening books, the most recent is “The Budget-Wise Gardener.” Other titles are “The Right-Size Flower Garden,” “The Ultimate Flower Gardener’s Top Ten Lists,” and “Top Ten Lists for Beautiful Shade Gardens: Seeing Your Way Out of the Dark.”

In addition to local design consultations, she also offers virtual design services to those in USDA hardiness Zones 3-7. In recent years she has presented more than 400 lectures to more than 40,000 gardeners in 21 states.

Among her topics are Gardening for Beauty and Wellness, Inspired Garden Design Lessons from Magnificent Gardens, and Small Landscapes with Big Attitudes.

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### From the President's Desk

**By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016**

Spring has arrived! Hurray! Our gardens are starting to come to life and that includes the weeds. Weeds are a constant in any garden. Should weeds be pulled? Pulling weeds disturbs the soil, disturbing the soil can awaken any weed seeds hidden in the soil, and then you end up with more weeds.



Should weeds be cut at ground level and recut every time they reappear in hopes that the weeds will eventually give up? How about vinegar or a propane torch? There are many methods of weed removal. None of them is a permanent solution.



**Hairy bittercress in Melody's yard.**

No matter what method you use to get rid of your weeds, have you ever considered eating some of them? Many common garden weeds are edible as long as pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals have not been used in the area. Weeds can make tasty and colorful additions to a meal.

Dandelion greens can be eaten raw or cooked; they have a bitter flavor similar to endive. Dandelion flowers and roots are also edible and can be used to make tea. Violet flowers are a beautiful addition to a salad and the flowers can be candied. Violet leaves can be cooked like spinach. Chickweed leaves, stems, and flowers are all edible and are mild tasting compared to other greens.

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***(President's Desk continued from page 1)***

Purslane, hairy bittercress, wood and sheep sorrel, garlic mustard — all these weeds are edible and can be used to spice up salads, smoothies, omelets, and more.

Before you eat any weeds, the Rutgers [weed gallery](#) can assist in identifying your edibles. Then weed your garden and enjoy your harvest!

**HORTICULTURE**

**What I've learned about bonsai**

***Editor's note:*** Did Arnie Friedman's talk at our March meeting spark your interest in bonsai? Here are his suggestions and resources to learn more.

***By Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004***

I have learned from my studying and practicing the art of bonsai that bonsai is not a hobby. It is a philosophy, an art form, and a journey.

It begins with learning to look at plants in detail, studying their form and habits until you can find a vision of what a plant could be. It is a journey to bring out a plant's potential from that raw specimen, to grow the plant over time, refining its branches, encouraging its growth in ways to make it follow that vision of an ancient tree, bending and wiring to find the right form.



*Photo by Arnie Friedman*

**Arnie's black pine: A (bonsai) work in progress.**

It then — after a long time of growing and nurturing — is the slowing of the plant's growth and placing it in the right pot to advance your vision of an ancient, living organism miniaturized and brought into your life. You travel for some years with this plant, nurturing it, providing nutrients, pruning its roots and leaves to sustain its health and miniaturization but also realizing that this is only a short span of time in the life of a good bonsai.

Trees that are healthy and well cared for can live centuries. We are just the caretaker while we live. I

realize I need to start planning for the next generation — maybe training my children to care for my bonsai when they inherit them.

***Learning about bonsai***

- On YouTube watch [Greenwood Bonsai](#) and Peter Chan of [Herons Bonsai](#).
- Read books by Peter Chan and others.
- Facebook users check out "Bonsai Beginners," "No Rules Bonsai," "Bonsai Beginners Society," and "Bergen Bonsai."
- Join the [Bergen Bonsai Society](#), which meets in the Garden Club of Teaneck greenhouse at the foot of Lindbergh Boulevard, Teaneck.
- Tour bonsai gardens such as the [National Bonsai & Penjing Museum](#), Washington, DC; [Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens](#), Delray Beach, FL; and [Longwood Gardens](#), Kennett Square, PA.

**Bonus:** View a [video](#) by Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008, of the bonsai collection at the Montreal Botanical Garden.

**At the Hermitage - busy as a bee**

***By Liz Gil, Class of 2019***

While working at the Hermitage March 16, I was wheeling my final load of clippings for the day to the debris pile at the back of the property. I had been trimming a few bushes that were becoming unwieldy near the Rosencrantz house. It had been a cold, dreary, windy morning with the sun attempting to make itself known from time to time. The end of the session was finally beginning to warm, and the sun was steady.



Trudging to the back with that final load of clippings was a relief as I was ready to take a break. I dumped the clippings onto a brush pile that borders the edge of the property and runs almost half the fence line. On my way back to the shed, I noticed a hitchhiker riding on the bed of the wheelbarrow. Upon closer inspection, I noticed not one hitchhiker but two. They traveled the length of the trip to the shed and would not be disrupted. It was a spring day, and they were enamored so I placed the wheelbarrow in a spot that gave them some privacy and then . . . I proceeded to take pictures!

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*(Horticulture, continued from page 2)*

## Rutgers tomato seeds and T-shirts for sale

Planning your vegetable garden? You can order packets of 30 seeds for \$4 each of the following varieties of tomatoes from Rutgers: Rutgers 250, Ramapo, Moreton, Scarlet Sunrise, and KC-146 (aka Campbell's-146, developed by Campbell's Soup Co.). Jersey tomato T-shirts are also available at \$18 each.

Click [here](#) for the 2022 order form, which includes a description of each variety, links to tomato resources, photos of the T-shirts, and where to mail your payment.

## THINGS TO DO

### Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair

Van Neste Square is the location of Ridgewood's Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair from 11 am-2 pm, April 10. This year's theme is Act Now ... for a Green Ridgewood. Events include a petting zoo, "green" educational displays, children's activities, entertainment, and the costumed Daffy Dog Parade at 12:30 pm. The MG of BC will participate with a table and educational materials. Van Neste Square is located on East Ridgewood Avenue between Chestnut and Oak streets.

### Party for the Planet

The 14th annual Party for the Planet is scheduled from 10 am-4 pm, April 24 at the Bergen County Zoo in Van Saun Park. Admission is free. Dozens of organizations will be at the zoo with prizes, activities, and more to get the public involved in conservation efforts. Among the participating groups are the MG of BC and Hackensack Riverkeeper. Van Saun Park is located at 216 Forest Ave., Paramus.

### Hackensack River Greenway cleanups

The Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway Through Teaneck has scheduled two cleanups in April.

- April 3, 10 am-noon at Terhune Park, River Road, Teaneck, across from Terhune Street. Park on the side streets along River Road. Meet at the park's southern entrance by the Bogota border.
- April 23, 10 am-noon at Mary S. Topolsky Garden & Trail, 640 River Road, Teaneck, across from Kipp Street. Park on the side streets along River Road.

Volunteers pick up trash, free trees from invasives, and plant natives where possible. Bring gloves, loppers, and clippers, if available. Check the Greenway [website](#) for any schedule changes before coming to the event.

## SPOTLIGHT ON ... VOLUNTEER SITES

*This is the second in a series of features on MG of BC volunteer sites.*



*Photo by Joseph Cooper*

From left, Ben Weiner, Class of 2020; Melody Corcoran (2016), and Gimai Ma (2021) in the McFaul greenhouse as they prepared cannas to be stored for the winter.

### Indoors and outdoors at McFaul Environmental Center

**Volunteer times and location:** Beginning in April, volunteers will work 8:30 am-noon on Wednesdays. The center is located at 150 Crescent Ave., Wyckoff. Send an email to [Joseph Cooper](#), site coordinator, to be notified of volunteer activities.

**McFaul Environmental Center at a glance:** McFaul is an 81-acre site featuring woodland gardens, animal shelters, a picnic area, walking paths, exhibit hall, and a wetlands boardwalk and observation deck overlooking the pond. The center features many programs and

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***(McFaul, continued from page 3)***

lectures throughout the year and is well-known for its 25,000 daffodils and many flowering trees.

**What do you do during a typical volunteer shift?**

Our activities include pruning, planting, plant dividing, mulching, weeding, debris clean-up, and other tasks in the various gardens. The gardens include herb, perennial, rhododendron, the daffodil field, garden beds, ornamental grasses, and specimen trees and shrubs. Features include wildlife displays, nature trails, boardwalk, observation deck, pond, education center, greenhouse, and Sugar Shack.

Approximately 12 volunteers show up throughout the year. When we arrive for the day, I discuss with the parks director where they need help, and we work as a group. We stop for a coffee and bagel (supplied) at 10 am.

**Is the work physically demanding?** Not usually.

**What tools should volunteers bring?** Bring water, gloves, and eye protection.

**Where is the parking?** Parking is close to the environmental center building where we meet.

**Anything else that's noteworthy?** Yes. The McFaul Environmental Center is a popular walking site, and we engage in conversations with the public. Click [here](#) for a winter view of McFaul on YouTube.

**Site coordinator:** Joseph Cooper, 201-666-5111, [joseph@mgofbc.org](mailto:joseph@mgofbc.org)

*- Information from Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008*

***Weed Warriors volunteer in Teaneck Creek Conservancy's 'natural state'***

**Volunteer times and location:** Volunteers work 9-11 am on Wednesdays. Teaneck Creek Conservancy is located at 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck. Most work is done near the Fycke Lane entrance while the site undergoes a habitat restoration. The restored site is expected to reopen in late summer-early fall. Five people form our core group. We call ourselves the Weed Warriors.

**What makes this site unique?** The site is in a natural state. You never know what you might encounter — native orchids, egret, beaver.

**What do you do during a typical volunteer shift?**

Weeding, planting, pruning, and collecting garbage are our basic chores.



Weed Warriors prepare for volunteering at Teaneck Creek Conservancy. Front row, from left, Paula Leibowitz, Class of 2013; Wilma Goldenberg; Shelly Frattarola; Dave Fogarty. At rear, George Reskakis and Norm Epstein. Paula is the lone MG. All others are volunteers from the local area and beyond.

**Is the work physically demanding?** Yes.

**What tools should volunteers bring?** Bring work gloves and wear sturdy footwear/boots. Tools are provided.

**Where is the parking?** You can park in the Teaneck Creek Conservancy-Puffin Foundation lot at 20 Puffin Way.

**Anything else that's noteworthy?** Yes. The vines removed from the trees have been used to weave baskets. The large burdock leaves have been used in ceramics.

**Site coordinator:** Paula Leibowitz, 201-568-5034 [paula07631@yahoo.com](mailto:paula07631@yahoo.com)

*- Information from Paula Leibowitz, Class of 2013*

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County**

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## WEBINARS

*All times are Eastern.*

**April 5, noon-1:30 pm:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Medicinal Herb Garden. Free. AARP membership not required. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 6, 1-2 pm:** Kansas State Research and Extension sponsors Garden Hour - Pollinator Plants for Continuous Food Sources. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 6, noon:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Growing Your Own Cut Flowers. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 7, 6:30-7:30 pm:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Waking Up Your Garden for the New Season. Free. AARP membership not required. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 7, 14, and 21, 7 pm:** Wild Ones sponsors a webinar series: Native Plants for Improving Stormwater (April 7); Native Plants for Improving Outdoor Air Quality (April 14); and Native Plants for Improving Soil Contamination (April 21). Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. Registration deadlines vary.

**April 12, 3-4 pm:** Oregon State University Extension Service sponsors Plant Grow Harvest Repeat - Succession Planting. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 12, 7 pm:** Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors Our Prized Native Azaleas. Free. Click [here](#), then scroll down to April 12 in the left column for more information and to register.

**April 12, 7-8 pm:** Jersey-Friendly Yards sponsors Water Wisely. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 13, noon:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Peperomia. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 13, 1:30-2:30 pm:** University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension sponsors Tough Perennials for Sun. Free. Click [here](#) for list of Season Three Horticulture Webinar Wednesdays (HWW) and to register.

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## Season opening at Garretson: Pea planting, weeding, mulching



*Photo by April Barth, Class of 2017*

Linda Flynn, Class of 2016, with a youth volunteer reinforce the raised beds during Garretson Forge & Farm's annual Pea Day planting March 20. Below, Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016, moves the "critter screens" from the garlic beds, at right, to cover strawberry plants in the beds at left (barely visible). Volunteers cleared last year's remains in preparation for spring planting; planted the peas; and mulched.



*Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*

*(Webinars, continued from page 5)*

**April 13, 6-7:30 pm:** University of Maine Cooperative Extension sponsors Planting for Pollinators. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 13, 7:30 pm:** Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors Native Groundcovers - Sustainable, Living Mulch. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**See more webinars in the April Mid-Month Potting Shed.**

## PLANT SALES

**April 22, 10 am-4 pm; April 23-24, 8 am to 4 pm:** **Morgan's Farm**, 903 Pompton Ave. (Route 23), Cedar Grove. Native and perennial plants; 50 species of native plants in sizes from plugs to three-gallon containers. Proceeds benefit the town's non-profit historical society. Some varieties can be ordered in advance. Click [here](#) for more information.

**April 23, 10 am-5 pm; April 24, noon-5 pm:** **Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society**, Leonard J. Buck Garden, 11 Layton Road, Far Hills. Perennials, ferns, alpines, and woody, native, and deer-resistant plants.



**April 29 and 30, 9 am-4 pm; May 1, 10 am-4 pm:** **Van Vleck House and Gardens**, 21 Van Vleck St., Montclair. Annuals, perennials, vegetables, berries, herbs, hanging baskets, and more. Credit cards accepted. Visit the [website](#).

**April 29-May 15:** **Garden Club of**

**Teaneck** at the club's greenhouse, east end of Lindbergh Boulevard, Teaneck. Weekdays, 10 am-6 pm; weekends, 11 am-5 pm.

**April 30, 9 am-4 pm; May 1, noon-4 pm:** **Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum** under the tent at 353 E. Hanover Ave., Morris Township. Click [here](#) for more information and a list of plants for sale. Orders taken through April 28.

**April 30, 9 am-2 pm rain or shine:** **Oakland Garden Club**, Ponds Reformed Church, 341 Ramapo Valley Road at Oak Street, Oakland. Annuals, perennials, vegetables, flowering baskets.

**April 30 and May 1, 9:30 am-4:30 pm:** **New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands**, outside the Carriage House, 2 Morris Road, Ringwood. Perennials, small shrubs, annuals, small trees, tomato plants, and plants grown in the NJBG greenhouse.

**See May plant sales in the May Potting Shed.**

## HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

**April 7, 7:30 pm, Harrington Park Garden Club** Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: Linda Flynn, Class of 2016. Topic: The Secret Life of Herbs.

**April 12, 7 pm: Ramsey Public Library**, 30 Wyckoff Ave., Ramsey. Speaker: Dan Tawczynski, a farmer. Topic: Readings from his book of short stories. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 20, 6 pm: Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, Municipal Building, 320 Boulevard, 2nd floor, Hasbrouck Heights. Speaker: Marc Zukovich, president, Sterling Horticultural Services. Topic: Hydrangeas for Every Garden. Meet and greet at 5:30 pm.

**April 20, 6:30 pm: North Bergen Public Library via Zoom.** Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Potz 'N Around - How to Create a Successful Container Garden. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 29, 10-11:30 am: Teaneck Public Library** auditorium, 840 Teaneck Road, Teaneck. Speaker: Anthony Bracco, Bracco Farms. Topic: "Victory" Garden. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## Pets and plants – perfect together?

Do you have any funny stories to tell or photos to share about your pets and your plants? Do your pets nibble on your plants? (If so, we hope there have been no dire consequences.) Send your stories or photos to [Miriam Taub](#) to share with *Potting Shed* readers.