

From the Potting Shed

March 15, 2024

www.mgofbc.org



A wonderful workshop



Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011

Lynne Proskow, member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau and Class of 2022, presented a workshop on how to grow microgreens as part of the Teaneck Public Library's "Makers Day" March 10. Kids watched Lynne demonstrate how to plant peas and sunflower seeds, which she had soaked in advance. Then it was time for the kids to plant their seeds and have a mini garden to take home. Lynne distributed all 30 of the kits she had prepared for children. A few adult participants went home with kits to grow microgreens.

Her signage included a QR code (who needs paper?) taking visitors to resources on sowing seeds and microgreens. She also brought her laptop; a scale to weigh the seeds; sprayers and misters; labels and markers; soil pucks; and biostrate mats, which are soilless alternatives for growing microgreens. She brought her AeroGarden to demonstrate hydroponics; 20 varieties of microgreen seeds; and a tub displaying mature microgreens. Great work, Lynne!

What's inside

Page

Open Forum (continued from page 1)	2
From the Executive Board	2
Volunteer Site Openings	3-4
Volunteer Site News	5
Garden Club Meetings	5
Events	5

Links are clickable and are noted in [blue](#).

Meeting news: Tuesday, March 19

Open forum with the MG board followed by Anthony Bracco Small Space Gardening

*1 Bergen County Plaza, 1st floor
6:30 pm 'meet and greet'; announcements at
7:20 pm; program to follow*

Join us March 19 for the first-ever open forum with MG of BC board members. Bring seeds for a seed swap. Then grab a snack and decorate a seed packet for the seeds you'll take home. Afterward, speaker Anthony Bracco will discuss gardening for small spaces. Read more about Anthony on page 2.

"We're looking forward to celebrating the equinox with everyone during our interactive meeting on the 19th," said Theresa Schneider,

MG of BC president and Class of 2016. "If you have any spare seeds from your garden or volunteer site, please bring them to swap with fellow Master Gardeners. (I'm bringing zinnia and milkweed.) You'll also have a chance to show off your artistic skills while decorating seed packets to bring seeds home with you."



Take home free organic seeds from Paul Split, our February speaker.

(Continued on page 2)

(Open forum, continued from page 1)

Need a ride? If you need a ride to the MG of BC meeting, send us an [email](#), and we'll try to connect you with an MG in your neighborhood.

In addition, Paul Split, our February speaker, provided organic seeds that will be available, too.

"If you have any questions for the board or would like to make suggestions for the board to take action, please join the open forum discussion that will begin at 6:30 pm," Theresa said.

Added Chris Kozar, hospitality chair and Class of 2020: "We're also looking forward to welcoming the Class of 2024 as well as all other classes of Master Gardeners. Please join us and reconnect with your gardening friends. Coffee and treats will be available while we enjoy each other's company."

About Anthony Bracco



Anthony Bracco

Anthony Bracco's talk, Small Space Gardening, is for people who don't have traditional backyard spaces for their vegetable gardens. You don't need a backyard to grow vegetables, he said. Using spaces such as decks, balconies, stoops, and verandas can be just as productive and rewarding as a backyard space.

Anthony and his family live in Cedar Grove. After running a graphic design business for 30 years, in 2009 he and his wife bought a 25-acre farm in the "Black Dirt" region of Pine Island (Orange County), NY.

The Braccos followed simple, time-honored, sustainable farming techniques, such as removing weeds by hand; picking vegetables only when ready; and not using chemicals, fertilizers, irrigation, pesticides, herbicides, or glyphosate. Instead, they allowed the beautiful Black Dirt soil to naturally regenerate each season. The result, he said, was a shocking abundance of produce noticed by chefs for the dramatic difference in taste.

Visit [Bracco Farms](#) for more information.

From the Executive Board

Hey, we need volunteers!

By Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004

I'm writing to all my Master Gardener friends again. Unfortunately, we did not get a response to our recent request for volunteers. We have openings in our organization for many jobs that are vacant or need replacement members for those who are retiring, moving, or have family that needs their time.



Arnie Friedman

In the January Potting Shed, I appealed for help with one-day events *and not one person responded*. We're a group whose main purpose is to provide outreach into our community. We're not just weed-pullers. We're trained horticultural volunteers here to spread knowledge from Rutgers about best practices and good ecological stewardship. If we can't provide tables at multiple fairs and events, if we can't send MGs out to lecture or advise on gardening we have failed in our mission.

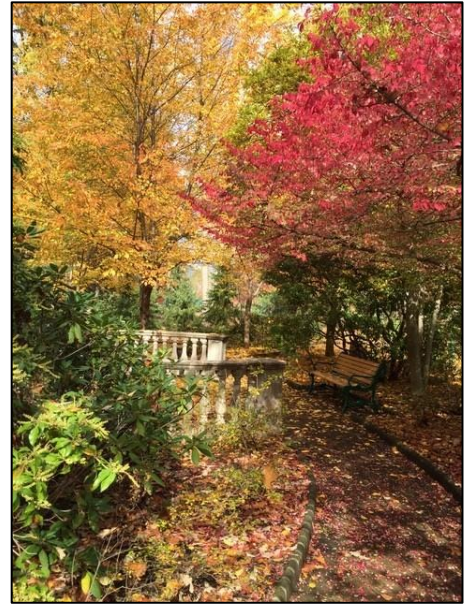
Here's what the organization needs right now:

- One or two people to coordinate one-day events. Volunteers should be good at communicating among the MG office, volunteers, and venues and be able to schedule tables and helpers at special events.
- One or two people for a committee to select, plan, and arrange trips and tours to botanical gardens and arboreturns. We have one volunteer so far.
- As coordinator of the Speakers Bureau, I need to have one or more additional speakers to help give lectures and advice to garden clubs and student groups and at library-sponsored events. Over the last several years, the number of available speakers has dwindled.
- Lastly, for now, our organization needs a person to help coordinate and schedule our monthly educational meetings and to eventually become the Program chair.

Contact [me](#) (Arnie Friedman) or any board member for more information.

VOLUNTEER SITE OPENINGS

Get ready to put your hands in the dirt at Washington Spring Garden March 21



Photos by Suzanne Danzig

An array of photos of Washington Spring Garden through the seasons. Spring volunteers will have the pleasure of seeing the rhodies and azaleas bloom.

By Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008

It looks like Mother Nature will be opening springtime early this year. That said, it's our hope to get back in action at Washington Spring Garden March 21, provided we don't see snow or record-breaking rain before then. Our hours are typically 8:30 am-12:30 pm or any time that you can provide during those hours. If temperatures are on the colder side, we'll start later. Location: Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. Park in Lot 6. "Looking forward to seeing familiar faces as well as new ones this season," Suzanne said.

Bring water, snacks, gloves, favorite gardening pruners, or gardening tools. The park provides rakes, brooms, and barrels. You'll be cleaning leaves out of the beds and picking up downed branches. Contact: [Janet Stofkoper](#) or [Suzanne Danzig](#), site coordinators. See what MG volunteers have to say about the garden, below.

"I have come to appreciate the garden's beauty and serenity. It is a lovely shade garden of azaleas and rhododendrons, wandering paths, and a babbling brook that lets you know that spring is really here. The people who come through have all expressed their delight in its beauty and their thanks for the work Master Gardeners do to preserve that beauty."



- Chris Kozar, Class of 2020

"At times, it is so quiet, I find it hard to believe I'm in Paramus. I've learned so much about pruning and cutting limbs, and I get plenty of exercise raking leaves. It can be grunt work at times, but what makes it worthwhile is when a person stops by to thank us for maintaining their favorite area in Van Saun. When the azaleas and rhododendrons bloom, it's spectacular."



- Jeanne Etter, Class of 2023

Teaneck Creek: Help beautify the Peace Labyrinth with native plants April 11

Teaneck Creek Conservancy is open for volunteering year-round, weather permitting. April 11 is the date for a “blast,” a one-day event designed to accomplish lots of work with a large crew of volunteers. Last year, Teaneck Creek held two successful “blasts” where MG volunteers cleared and dug weeds from the Peace Labyrinth. Now the labyrinth is ready for planting.



Photos courtesy of Teaneck Creek Conservancy

Entrance to the Peace Labyrinth and inside the fence. There's plenty of room for native plants.

“We are excited about the upcoming planting season especially for Phase 2 of the native plant garden in the Peace Labyrinth at Teaneck Creek,” said Stephanie Landau, Teaneck Creek Conservancy associate. “Phase 2” is the second year of a three-year program to install native plants in the labyrinth. MGs will be prepping the native plant garden for planting by moving/removing plants; clearing the labyrinth path; laying out plants; and some initial planting.

The blast will be April 11 from 9 am-1 pm. Volunteers will meet at 9 am in the parking lot of the Teaneck Creek Conservancy, 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck. If you arrive later, follow signs to the Peace Labyrinth. Come for the entire four hours or any portion of the time, Stephanie said.

Bring your own hand tools, gloves, sunscreen, bug spray, refillable water bottle, and snacks. Teaneck Creek Conservancy will supply large tools as needed and water for your refillable water bottle. Dress in layers with closed-toe shoes and a sunhat as the area is fully exposed to the sun.

The event will be held in light rain or shine. Registration is required. Click [here](#) to register. Those registered will be notified if the event is canceled due to extreme weather. If you have questions, click [here](#) to contact Stephanie.

Volunteer year-round at Teaneck Creek

Weather permitting, MGs volunteer winter, spring, summer, and fall at Teaneck Creek Conservancy, on Wednesdays from 9-11 am. Contact site coordinator [Paula Leibowitz](#), Class of 2013, for information.



“Volunteering at TCC is special. I enjoy the opportunity to be outside throughout the change of seasons. Winter is invigorating; spring is a rebirth; autumn is colorful. In summer the native plants flowering are spectacular. The volunteers are a nice group of people to work with.”

- Paula Leibowitz, Class of 2013

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS



Photo by Terry Cohn, Class of 2020

Native plant gardens at the Trail Conference HQ.

Wanted: 'Habitat Helper' gardening leader

The NY-NJ Trail Conference is seeking volunteers who are interested in helping lead Habitat Helper workdays at its native plant garden in Mahwah.

The volunteers, known as Habitat Helpers, meet every other Sunday, 9 am-noon, from early spring to early fall to preserve the native garden through invasive species ID and management. These workdays are an opportunity to gain hands-on experience working in a native garden, and you earn MG volunteer hours. Terry Cohn, Class of 2020, is the site coordinator and leads Habitat Helpers work groups, but more leaders are needed. (Contact [Terry](#) for more information and to apply.)

The general requirements and duties of the position are:

- You're a passionate volunteer leader committed to preserving and maintaining the Trail Conference's native species garden surrounding the historic Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, which serves as the Trail Conference headquarters.
- Preferably, you have a knowledge of native gardens, invasive species management, gardening, landscaping, and/or related science fields. However, no experience is necessary. Training will be provided based on experience.
- You'll lead Habitat Helper workdays once or twice a month and, since days and hours are flexible, you may lead work sessions on days other than Sundays. The group size varies depending on the season; on average, there are three to five volunteers, sometimes more.

Topolsky Garden is open for the season

Interns and MGs are welcome to volunteer at the Mary S. Topolsky Garden. "We welcome new Master Gardeners who would like to help create a beautiful native garden that has a wonderful view of the Hackensack River and extends right to the river," said Harriet Steiner, site coordinator and Class of 2019.

Volunteers work from 10 am-1 pm Thursdays. The garden is located at 640 River Road, Teaneck. Park on Kipp Street. Send a text to Harriet at 201-741-6765 for more information.

GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

March 20, 7 pm: Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club, Hasbrouck Heights Library, second-floor meeting room (there is an elevator), 320 Boulevard, Hasbrouck Heights. Speaker: Arnie Friedman, MG Class of 2004. Topic: Landscape Design.

March 28, 7 pm: Garden Club of Hackensack, Hackensack Civic Center, 65 Central Ave., Hackensack. Enter through the big green door from the parking lot. Speaker: Editor Terzano, MG Class of 2018. Topic: Rooting a Rose from Cuttings. **Note:** In the September 2023 issue of the Potting Shed, Edith wrote about her adventures rooting a rosebush from her childhood.

April 1, 6:30 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale Public Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Arnie Friedman, MG Class of 2004. Topic: Beginners Bonsai.

EVENTS

March 16, 10 am: Tour the greenhouses at Laurelwood Arboretum, 725 Pines Lake Drive West, Wayne. Fee: \$10 members/\$20 non-members. Click [here](#) to register. Visit the [website](#).

March 17, 1-4 pm: Pea Planting Day at Garretson Forge & Farm, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. New volunteers welcome. Free. Open to the public. Visit the [website](#).