

# From the Potting Shed

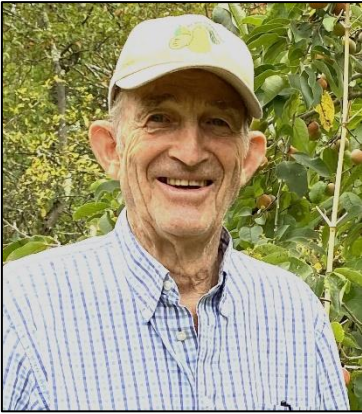
Oct. 1, 2024

[www.mgofbc.org](http://www.mgofbc.org)



**Meeting news: Tuesday, Oct. 15, 7:20 pm**

## Charlie West: Persimmons



Charlie West

If you think Dr. Charles West's name is familiar, it's because he spoke at our May meeting about pawpaws. However, he didn't have time to discuss persimmons, which were also on the agenda, because our audience was so absorbed in the pawpaw information.

Charlie will be back Oct. 15 to devote a full hour to the American persimmon, which he describes as sweet, tasty, and delicious.

Charlie West foraged for persimmons during his childhood on the family farm in Ohio. After a career as a college professor of botany and biological sciences, he turned his attention to native fruit trees, a notable one being the American persimmon. He has grown persimmons on his farm, [West Farm Nursery](#) in Branchburg, for more than 10 years. He said he has about a dozen persimmon trees of different varieties. The fruits ripening now will be finished in about two weeks, while other varieties will ripen in late October and into November.

Charlie will discuss basic persimmon history and biology for backyard growers. He'll provide fresh fruit to sample. "The American persimmon is only about an inch and a half in diameter," he said. "You just pop it in your mouth and eat it."

*MG of BC meetings are free and open to the public in the fourth-floor meeting room, 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Park in the garage or on the plaza. Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements at 7:20 pm. Charlie West will follow at about 7:30 pm.*

What's inside	Page
Webinars	2
President's Desk (continued from page 1)	2
MG of BC News	2
Volunteer Site News	3-4
Garden Club Meetings	4-5
Horticulture	5
In the Garden	6-7

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

## From the President's Desk

***By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016***

Recently, I had the opportunity to listen to a presentation by Matt Rader, president of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). I was impressed with the mission of the PHS and its work in support of the people and communities of Philadelphia — a mission in alignment with that of the Master Gardeners.



During his presentation, Matt spoke of the Philadelphia Flower Show and the educational and networking opportunities available to attendees as well as opportunities for folks to showcase their horticultural skills.

In addition to the educational and networking opportunities, the flower show is a wonderful opportunity for Bergen County Master Gardeners to showcase their horticultural expertise and artistic talents.

Anyone can enter an exhibit in the show, and there are a number of categories to choose from including individual plants, arrangements, botanical art, photography, pressed plants, and horticultural design. Click [here](#) for more information about submitting an exhibit.

***(Continued on page 2)***

## WEBINARS

*All times are Eastern.*

**Oct. 9, 7:30-9 pm:** Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors How to Create a No-Fuss Wildlife Pond. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Oct. 12, 10 am-noon:** Penn State Extension sponsors Good Gardening Saturday: Planning Your Pollinator Garden. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Oct. 17, 11 am-noon:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Creating a Successful Container Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Oct. 24, noon:** Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Shifting Boundaries: Approaches to American Landscapes. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Oct. 24, 7 pm:** Wild Ones sponsors Matrix Landscape Design. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Oct. 26, 9:30-11 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Spectacular Fall Color: Plants That Stand Out. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

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### ***(President's desk, continued from page 1)***

The next Philadelphia Flower Show is March 1-9, 2025. Click [here](#) for more information. Please keep [me](#) posted if you plan to exhibit at the flower show, or if you have an idea for an MG of BC exhibit.

**Editor's note:** Suzy Basu, Class of 2024 and Trips and Tours chair, has planned an outing to the Philadelphia Flower Show; no date has been set. The cost will be \$128 a person, which includes all-day admission to the show plus a two-hour tour beginning at 8 am before the show opens at 10 am. She's estimating the time of departure from Bergen County at 5:30 am. We'll notify you when more information is available.

Separately, the Longwood Gardens tour for December will be rescheduled to the spring.

## MG OF BC NEWS



*Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*

**At left, Theresa Schneider, MG of BC president, presents a garden tool to Karen Riede to mark her retirement.**

### ***Karen Riede retires from RCE job***

Karen Riede, Class of 2017, has retired as Bergen County's Rutgers Cooperative Extension horticultural assistant after seven years on the job.

Karen said that it was a pleasure working with the MG classes from 2018-2024; Bergen's RCE faculty and staff members Joel Flagler, Alyssa Glynn, and Monique Bliss; and all the dedicated and hard-working volunteers from the MG community.

"Continue to be the good in this world," she said. "Each person can make a difference." Karen intends to remain active in the MG of BC.

**Editor's note:** Karen, we'll miss you on the other end of the RCE phone and at the MG of BC board meetings. *Best wishes on your retirement!*

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### Volunteers needed for the 2024 Holiday Open House

**By Maria Bushman, Class of 2019**

Preparations are under way for the annual Holiday Open House (HOH) at the New Jersey Botanical Garden at Skylands Manor in Ringwood. This year we'll be celebrating Skylands' 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the theme is the Gilded Age.



*Photos by Lisa Yoler,  
Class of 2019*

**Cynthia Drennan, Class of 2019,  
displays flower decorations.**

MG members are busy working to transform the Withdrawing Room and Octagonal Hall into a gilded botanica. The Withdrawing Room will become a Victorian Christmas-inspired family space.

The Octagonal Hall will become a Victorian garden gazebo/folly [a gazebo for show only and not to be used] complete with views of the garden.

The MG of BC team works yearlong on this project. The overall theme (this year's is the Gilded Age) was decided by a group vote of all of the design teams (garden clubs) on the last day of the 2023 HOH event. The MG of BC kickoff meeting was in February, and we continue to meet regularly and to plan and update our vision.

Volunteers are needed for the setup, which will take place Monday, Dec. 2 and Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 10 am-approximately 4 pm. You're welcome to come when you can and stay as long as you want while there's work to be done.

In addition, volunteer docents are needed during the event Dec. 5-8 from 10 am-5 pm. Volunteer shifts run a minimum of two hours, but we can typically accommodate volunteers who'd like to stay longer. Docents are assigned to a room where they monitor the décor, answer questions, and take family photos during the tour.

The Holiday Open House is an enjoyable way to get into the holiday spirit or to finish required volunteer hours.



Please consider helping out at this most important event. Call me at 201-981-8012 to volunteer or with any questions.

**The HOH team creates decorations. From back to front  
Laura DeFlora, Class of 2011;  
Sandy Pancrazi, 2010; and  
Josie Ko, 2013.**

### ***Garretson's vegetable bounty***



*Photo by Lida Gellman, Class of 1999*

Volunteers in Garretson Forge & Farm's "old kitchen" display the day's harvest of hops (in straw basket), Swiss chard, and hot peppers. The produce is donated to a local food bank. From left: Paulette Reilly, Garretson member volunteer; Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016; Terry Cohn, 2020; Nora Hamawi, 2009; and April Barth, 2017. The hops will be sold at Garretson's Fall Festival Oct. 13 from 10 am-4 pm at the farm, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. See story on page 4 for details.

***(Volunteer site news, continued on page 4)***

## ***Team Thielke prepped for the annual fishing derby***



*Photo by John Lulkin, Thielke steward*

Thielke volunteers pruned and cleaned up around the pond in preparation for the annual fishing derby held Sept. 22. The derby is usually held at the end of June, but it was rescheduled the past two years so an algae bloom could be treated. From left, John Thielke, Class of 2023; Herb Arbeiter, 2019; Barbara Pisacane, 2009; and Cheryl Wardrop, 2018. The pond was stocked a few weeks before the event and 40 kids attended (two sessions of 20 each). Herb Arbeiter, site coordinator, reported that two good-size, large-mouth bass were caught. Kids in the early session caught a lot of fish while kids in the later session were not as successful. Herb concluded: "The early worm catches the fish."

### **Site coordinator liaison named**

Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli, Class of 2024, who was recently certified as a Master Gardener, is the new site coordinator liaison, an MG of BC board position. She'll be working with the MG of BC site coordinators.

## **Garretson's Fall Festival is Oct. 13**

Garretson Forge & Farm's annual Fall Festival will take place Oct. 13 from 10 am-4 pm. Take a trip back to the 1800s to see re-enactors in period costume; watch open hearth cooking; tour the historic house and gardens; and enjoy hands-on children's activities.

Garretson's organic hard-neck garlic and shallots are ready for sale just in time for fall planting. You can also buy late summer vegetables and herbs; homemade jams; lavender sachets; and a limited number of perennial native plants and herbs. Come visit!

Garretson is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Visit the [website](#).

**- Lida Gellman, Class of 1999 and site coordinator**

### **Volunteer in the Trail Conference's native plant garden in Mahwah**

The NY-NJ Trail Conference has scheduled two Habitat Helper workdays in October when MG volunteers can work in the native plant garden and earn volunteer hours. The Trail Conference headquarters is located at 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah.

- Oct. 6, 9 am-noon; click [here](#) to register; and
- Oct. 20, 10 am-1 pm; click [here](#) to register.

Contact [Terry Cohn](#), Class of 2020 and site coordinator, for more information about volunteering in the native plant garden. Bring work gloves, your favorite garden tools, and dress for the weather.

## **GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS**

**Oct. 3, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park**, upstairs in the Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: John Beirne, curatorial director of horticulture and facilities, [Reeves-Reed Arboretum](#). Topic: Tropical Gardening in NJ: Yes It Can Be Done.

**Oct. 7, 6:30 pm: Sundial Garden Club**, Hillsdale Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave., Hillsdale. Speaker: Deb Ellis, leader, Essex County chapter, Native Plant Society of NJ. Topic: Sustaining Wildlife in Fall and Winter Gardens.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## HORTICULTURE

### Ask Arnie... about hostas

**By Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004**

*A tree from a neighbor's yard fell on our deer fence during a bad rain storm and made an opening large enough for a herd of deer to get in and eat three years' worth of landscaping. It was in a wooded area, and no one noticed. I've been told my hosta and other perennials will grow back, but how big will they be? Is there anything I need to do?*

Once the deer fence is back in place and no deer are around to feed on your plants, they will come back fine. I know this from personal experience. Deer were feeding on everything in my rear yard. Hosta, daylilies, and much more were all eaten away. Once I put up a deer fence two years ago everything I thought was toast came back strong. I can't believe all the varieties of hosta I now have and even more of some varieties.

Generally, what happens is deer eat the tops of the hostas, but the root systems remain. Once they have a chance, the hostas will flourish because of their strong root systems.

Click [here](#) to send your gardening-related questions to Arnie.

### David Hlubik: The hazelnut guy



David Hlubik

David Hlubik, the speaker at our September meeting, brought two trees and various packages of hazelnuts to view (not to taste). He's part of a Rutgers project to develop hazelnuts as a cash crop for farmers in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic region.

In fact, he said, Ferraro Rocher has a plant in

Ontario just waiting to buy US-grown hazelnuts instead of importing them from Turkey. David's "side project," as he called it, is pawpaws. Check out [Project Pawpaw](#) where David is the research farm manager.

### Definitely mum-ified



Who among us hasn't forgotten to water a pot-bound mum and it winds up looking like this? What garden "oopsies" did you commit this past season? What would you do differently for next season or never again? Send your comments/photos to [Miriam Taub](#),

Class of 2011 and Potting Shed editor.

### (Garden club meetings, continued from page 4)

**Oct. 8, 7 pm: Ramsey Area Garden Club**, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 55 Wyckoff Ave. (corner of Woodland Avenue), Ramsey. Speaker: Marc Gussen, director, Closter Nature Center. Topic: Botany 101.

**Oct. 9, 7 pm: Wyckoff Area Garden Club**, Wyckoff Public Library, 200 Woodland Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: The Making of the Gardener. Refreshments at 6:30 pm.

**Oct. 16, 6 pm: Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, second-floor meeting room, Hasbrouck Heights Library, 320 Boulevard, Hasbrouck Heights. Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Preparing Your Garden for Winter. Refreshments and greetings at 5:30 pm.

**Oct. 17, 7 pm: Ramapo Orchid Society**, Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, 443 Van Nostrand Ave., Englewood. Speaker: Cordelia Head, J & L Orchids. Topic: Growing Orchids in the Home. (She'll bring plants for sale.) **Note:** Construction on Jones Road and the exit from Route 4 may require finding an alternate route to the nature center.

**Oct. 28, 7:30-9 pm: Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club**, Ho-Ho-Kus Community Church, 400 Warren Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus. Speaker: Mary Birrer, NJ Audubon teacher/naturalist at the [Lorrimer Sanctuary](#). Topic: Gardening for Birds.

## IN THE GARDEN

### *Large milkweed bugs: Are they spooky or what?*

**By Edith Terzano, Class of 2018**

Egads! What's that? Just in time for Halloween, orange-and-black-striped bugs emerged on the garden milkweed.

I had to know more about these insects, so I investigated and found out that the scientific name for this bug is *Oncopeltus fasciatus*. It is a true bug (*Hemiptera*) of the *Lygaeidae* family. I smiled when I learned it is commonly known as ... large milkweed bug.



A couple of large milkweed bugs.

These Halloween-colored insects undergo simple metamorphosis (egg to nymph to adult). In mid- to late summer, adult large milkweed bugs can

be found consuming sap on leaves, stems, and pods of the milkweed (*Asclepias*) even though the milkweed sap is toxic to other predators, e.g. birds. Adults overwinter in a sheltered spot only to emerge again the next time the plant develops seed pods.

A similar looking false milkweed bug is sometimes confused with the large milkweed bug, but the false bug feeds on seeds of false sunflower, not milkweed.

On the upside, large milkweed bugs don't bite, sting, or damage the plants. In fact, the bugs have an important role in managing the overpopulation of milkweed plants since they damage or destroy some milkweed seeds before they have a chance to germinate.

On the down side, if there is a large manifestation of the bugs, the milkweed pods can become deformed and monarch butterflies, which depend on milkweed, could be crowded out by the emerging bugs.



Photos by Edith Terzano, Class of 2018

Large milkweed bugs inhabiting — what else? — a milkweed plant.

Gardeners who may want to repel the population of large milkweed bugs can try planting onions or marigolds around their plants or try knocking the bugs into a can of soapy water. Other options include dousing them heavily with insecticidal soap or hand-picking and squashing individual insects. Avoid using chemical insecticides as they can be harmful to birds and other wildlife.

Ultimately, it would be a happier Halloween for large milkweed bugs if gardeners understood a little more about them and, if possible, just let them be.

#### ***For more information...***

- ✓ University of Nebraska Extension compares [photos](#) of the large, small, and false milkweed bugs.
- ✓ Rutgers Department of Entomology offers a [list](#) of "interesting insects."

*(In the garden, continued on page 7)*

## IN THE GARDEN

(Continued from page 6)

### For your to-do list: ‘Certify’ your garden with the Bergen County Audubon Society

Here’s a fall project for you: Apply to the Bergen County Audubon Society (BCAS) to have your garden designated as a Certified Wildlife Garden.



This sign identifies a BCAS Certified Wildlife Garden.

“Just as anyone can become a member of Bergen County Audubon Society no matter where they live, anyone can apply for a Certified Wildlife Garden no matter where they live,” said Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015 and site

coordinator (with Pat Knight) of the Butterfly and Native Garden in Overpeck Park. And she’s an active member of BCAS.

To qualify as a Certified Wildlife Garden, your garden should provide at least one item from each of the following four categories:

- Food;
- Water;
- Cover; and
- Places to raise young.

Tammy noted you can apply at any time of the year.

BCAS has certified 247 gardens. Tammy said the majority are in Bergen County, though some are located in “the wider NJ area and even seven other states.” In addition to a home garden, school or church gardens also can be certified.

“Planting native plants is a win-win-win,” Tammy said. “It helps restore much-needed habitat for birds, pollinators, and wildlife, especially in our densely populated state. Native plants also provide vital food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. And if you plant it, they will come.”

Tammy noted that the BCAS Certified Wildlife Garden sign is a great conversation starter to share your ideas and facts about gardening with native plants with your friends and neighbors.

Click [here](#) for the Certified Wildlife Garden application on the BCAS website.

### Wait! What’s the name of that plant?



Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, snapped these photos of *Gomphocarpus physocarpa* (aka, hairy balls, bishop’s balls, balloon plant) during a Garden



Conservancy Open Day at Pretty Bird Gardens in Hunterdon County. It’s a milkweed and a host for the monarch butterfly. Click [here](#) for details and photos about the plant from NC State Extension.