

From the Potting Shed

Dec. 16, 2024

www.mgofbc.org



Holiday Open House at Skylands



Photo by Maria Bushman

Cynthia Drennan, a member of the MG of BC HOH team, shows off her table display. This year the MG of BC decorated the Withdrawing Room and Octagonal Hall for the Dec. 5-8 event. See photos on pages 5-6.

We wrap up the year with ...

- Paying your 2025 dues; see page 3.
- Recording your 2024 hours; see page 3.
- Volunteering opportunities; see page 4.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 21 via Zoom

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

From the President's Desk

By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016

It has been a busy and productive year for the MG of BC. We welcomed 10 newly certified MGs to the county and received approval to add the Bergen County Rowing Center in Lyndhurst as a new volunteer site. This brings the number of MG-supported sites to 15.



In addition to our volunteer sites, MGs supported a number of county events, like Earth Day, Family Fun Fest, and the Fall Harvest Festival, providing gardening and horticultural education to the community.

In addition to the education we provided at our volunteer sites, the MG of BC offered a variety of opportunities for the public and MGs alike through our other educational programs.

First, our continuing education program provided eight lectures from highly qualified experts in their fields who spoke on these diverse topics: Tree bark, microgreens, small-space gardening, succulents, pawpaws, hazelnuts, persimmons, and floral design.

Second, our Speakers Bureau's four MGs traveled around the county to present educational programs and activities at the request of community organizations.

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The Hermitage aglow

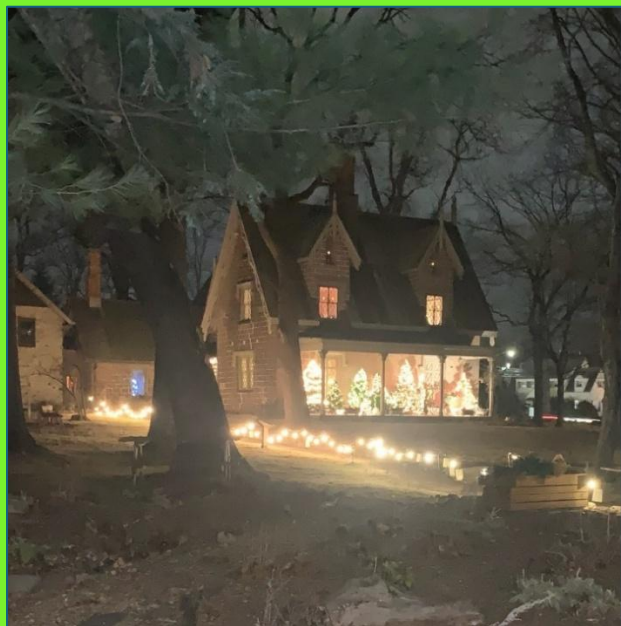


Photo by Bernadette White

The veranda of the Hermitage illuminated during a recent candlelight tour. Indoors, each room was decorated with images from different scenes of Tchaikovsky's 1892 ballet "The Nutcracker." Cynthia Drennan, with help from Donna Picheria, beautifully crafted many of the characters and decorations on display. (Alas, the upcoming tours are sold out!)

(President's desk, continued from page 1)

And third, our revitalized Trips and Tours program provided educational and team-building opportunities for MGs and included an autumn eco-exploration of Rutgers Gardens and a Hackensack River eco-cruise.

It wasn't all work and no play this year. We celebrated the spring equinox together with our first in-person meeting for the year where we shared good eats, vegetable seed packets, and gardening reference books. We got together again during the summer picnic and, most recently, for the holiday party at the Bergen County Zoo Education Center where we had a gardening tool/book swap.

Finally, thanks for all the great work, energy, passion, and commitment you bring to the county and your volunteer sites. Have a wonderful and joyful holiday season. Here's to a happy and healthy 2025!

TRIPS AND TOURS

3 exciting trips to sign up for now

By Suzy Basu, Trips and Tours chair Plant-O-Rama, Brooklyn Botanic Garden

990 Washington Ave., Brooklyn, NY
Jan. 28, 9 am-4 pm. General admission free; click [here](#) to buy tickets for the panel discussions and/or keynote speakers. If you're going, notify Suzy at mgofbc.trips@gmail.com so you can plan to meet.

Let's meet up at Plant-O-Rama, the ultimate symposium, trade show, and career fair for gardeners and horticulture professionals. Hear from engaging speakers about naturalistic gardening, harm-free practices, and bridging history and art to horticulture. You can explore the trade show for the latest gardening tools and plants, join a guided garden tour, swap seeds, and browse opportunities at the job fair.

Philadelphia Flower Show Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA

March 1. Fee: \$125 for a two-hour tour and admission; transportation, meals, optional lodging extra

Step into the [Philadelphia Flower Show](#), where the 2025 theme, "Gardens of Tomorrow," invites you on a journey into the future of gardening. This inspiring theme envisions a future where our actions today nurture a healthier planet, highlighting the transformative power of plants. The day will begin at 8 am with a two-hour guided tour providing an in-depth look at the exhibits. Afterward, enjoy time to explore the show or attend the "Know to Grow" speaker series.

Bask in Spring Beauty at Wave Hill Wave Hill, Bronx, NY

May 3. Cost: \$25 for a one-hour tour; transportation and lunch extra

Join us for a 1 pm private guided tour of [Wave Hill](#), a serene and inspiring public garden overlooking the Hudson River. This outdoor tour will guide us through stunning spring blooms of bulbs, flowering trees, fragrant shrubs, and delicate perennials, blending natural beauty with horticultural artistry. After the one-hour tour, we'll enjoy lunch as a group at the Wave Hill Café.

Contact Suzy at mgofbc.trips@gmail.com to reserve your spot for the Philly Flower Show and Wave Hill. Guests are welcome to join you.

MG OF BC NEWS

2025 dues are due

By Dineen Policano, Membership chair

It's time to renew your MG of BC membership for 2025. Membership provides a number of benefits including quality lectures to meet your continuing education requirements.

Annual dues for 2025 are \$20. Please make checks payable to MG of BC and mail to: Master Gardeners of Bergen County, PO Box 824, Saddle River, NJ 07458. Donations are always welcome. If you'd like to make a donation along with your membership dues, please indicate "2025 annual dues plus donation" in the check's memo line.

The annual membership drive is an opportunity to provide contact information for the online Member Directory. The directory is accessible to MG of BC association members only and is not for distribution outside the MG of BC. If you don't have access to the "Member" section of the website [where the directory is located], send an email to info@mgofbc.org for a username and password.

To ensure we have up-to-date contact information for you, please click [here](#) to fill out the MG of BC Membership Renewal and Directory Update form online. Or, if you prefer, you may print the membership renewal form [sent with the Potting Shed], complete it, and enclose with your check. Thank you!

To do list: Enter hours in Better Impact

By Suzanne Danzig, Volunteer Records chair

Here's a friendly reminder to enter your volunteer and continuing education hours into [Better Impact](#) ASAP. It takes just a few minutes to update your hours and it's always best to enter them as you go.

While many of our members far surpass the required number of hours to maintain their annual certification, you are only required to log 25 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours per year.

For our newly certified members: Going forward please keep an eye out for any webinars listed in the Potting Shed as they can be counted toward your CE hours.

(Continued in next column)

At the holiday party



Photo by Maria Bushman

Thanks to Chris Kozar, Hospitality chair (in plaid shirt) for organizing our holiday party Dec. 10 at the Bergen County Zoo. Chris is with Lisa Yoler, MG of BC vice president. Chris was assisted with the setup by Suzanne Danzig, Karen Riede, Janet Stofkoper, Bernadette White, and zoo employees. Thanks to Joel Flagler for arranging the location. "People were very generous with desserts," said Chris. "The cheesecake and carrot cake were a big hit. Wonderful cookies!" This was our first holiday party since 2019. In the background from left: Peter Cammarano and Harriet Steiner; at far right, Paul Sisko.

Two additional reminders:

- When entering our MG of BC public meeting as a continuing education hour, there's a separate "drop-down" item for "MG of BC monthly meeting," which does not require you to fill in the details about the speaker, etc.
- When entering other continuing education hours, be sure to provide all the required information in the information box: Name of speaker, title, organization, location, and format (in person or webinar).

As always I am available to answer questions or provide assistance, suzannedanzig@gmail.com. Happy holidays!

(MG of BC news, continued on page 4)

MG OF BC NEWS

MG of BC behind the scenes

By Theresa Schneider, MG of BC president

As we move into 2025 there are three important tasks we must accomplish:

1. Elect a treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary;
2. Review and update our MG of BC Bylaws to ensure they are current, they meet evolving needs of the association, and they are up to speed with technology.
3. Hold a vote Jan. 21 for the membership to approve the updated Bylaws. [See related story at right.]

Elections

If you think you may be interested in serving on the MG of BC Board as an elected officer, but have questions before you put your name on the ballot, please contact me at mgofbc.board@gmail.com to discuss the duties of these offices. The only requirement to serve is current certification as an MG. The hours you serve as an elected officer count toward your annual volunteer-hour requirements.

Here is a quick description of these positions from our Bylaws:

- **Treasurer:** Prepare an annual budget; maintain receipts, checkbooks, and bank statements; file the appropriate reports and/or fees with government agencies.
- **Recording secretary:** Take attendance and record the minutes at the Executive Board meetings and record any action items from the general membership meeting.
- **Corresponding secretary:** Handle both internal and external correspondence and communication.

Bylaws

If you need some volunteer hours, and have some skill with proofreading, writing, editing, or AI, consider volunteering to help update the Bylaws. You can do this from the comfort of your home this winter. Contact me at mgofbc.board@gmail.com if you are interested.

Members to vote on change in Bylaws at our Jan. 21 meeting

Editor's note: In November 2022, the MG of BC board approved a change to the Bylaws to allow treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary to serve multiple, consecutive two-year terms. The proposed change needed approval from the membership before it could be effective.

The explanation of the change and the new language were included in the January 2023 Potting Shed, and the change to the Bylaws was voted on at the Feb. 21, 2023, MG of BC public meeting. However, we have neither a written record of the vote nor were any changes made to the Bylaws themselves. Therefore, we must go through the voting process again.

Below is the proposed change to the MG of BC Bylaws, which will be voted on by the membership at our Jan. 21, 2025, meeting.

Explanation: Currently, all MG of BC officers (president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary) can serve no more than two consecutive two-year terms.

If this change is adopted by the membership, the treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary could serve multiple, consecutive two-year terms. The president and vice president remain limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

Below is the language to be voted on at the Jan. 21 meeting:

Article II, Executive Board, Section 3

The term limits of officers shall be:

A. Officers shall be elected for a term of two years at the October general meeting and will take office after installation at the regularly scheduled January meeting.

B. The president and vice president may serve no more than two consecutive terms. No one may hold more than one elected office at a time.

To review the MG of BC Bylaws in their entirety, visit the "Member" section of our [website](#). After logging in, go to the "Documents" section and then click on "Bylaws."

If you're a member of the MG of BC association and don't have a username and password for the website, click [here](#) to request them.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AT SKYLANDS MANOR

Trees, garlands, wreaths, ribbons, plenty of glittery gold

The MG of BC Skylands Manor team and volunteers did a great job of transforming the manor's Withdrawing Room and Octagonal Hall into a gilded botanica based on the 2024 HOH theme of "A Gilded Age Holiday."

"We felt that the 'A Gilded Age' theme was an excellent choice as it provided a rich, visually captivating backdrop for creativity," said Maria Bushman, a member of the HOH Skylands Team, which designed and managed the decoration of the two rooms. "The luxurious yet opulent atmosphere resonated with our guests and allowed us to showcase the period's grandeur in a modern, accessible way," she said.

"From the decor to the ambiance, everything came together beautifully, and the feedback we received made it clear that our efforts were well appreciated."



Photos by Maria Bushman

Seated from left: Debbie Higgins, Laura DeFlora, and Josie Ko. Standing: Lisa Yoler, Maria Bushman, Sue Sheridan, Deb Sweet, and Cynthia Drennan.



"Before" the decorations: From left, Charlene Mariano, Mary Orlando, and Susan Petrillo assemble a tree.



The mantel all glitzed and glamourised up.

(Continued on page 6)

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AT SKYLANDS MANOR

Designers, set-up, and docent volunteers all pitched in for this special event

(Continued from page 5)

The MG of BC HOH Skylands Team consists of the designers who meet year-round. They are Laura DeFlora and Sue Sheridan (the committee chairs) plus Maria Bushman, Cynthia Drennan, Josie Ko, Sandy Pancrazi, Deb Sweet, and Lisa Yoler.



Josie Ko with the makings of a garland.

This year's set-up team was made up of Maureen Caban, Karen Clemments, Debbie Higgins, Charlene Mariano, Mary Orlando, Susan Petrillo, and Lynne Proskow. The docent team consisted of Suzy Basu, Linda DeWolf, Debbie Higgins, Seana Kirk, Charlene Mariano, Mary Orlando, Susan Petrillo, Jennifer Polidori, Penny Readie, Noel Schulz, and Paul Sisko. Paul was also in charge of transportation and helped haul all of the decor to Skylands and back home.

Overall, the event was very well attended, Maria Bushman reported. "While we won't receive official attendance counts for a few weeks, early indications suggest a strong turnout," she said. "Visitors were consistently enthusiastic about our room, with many sharing that it was their favorite. Numerous comments highlighted how warm and inviting the space felt."



Photos by Maria Bushman

From left: Cynthia Drennan, Lisa Yoler, and Ed Drennan after a job well done.



Sue Sheridan between the trees.

WEBINARS

Need CE hours? Here are some ideas

You need 10 continuing education hours annually to maintain your MG certification. If you're lacking in CE hours or simply want to get cozy with a webinar, here are some recorded webinars that you might enjoy.

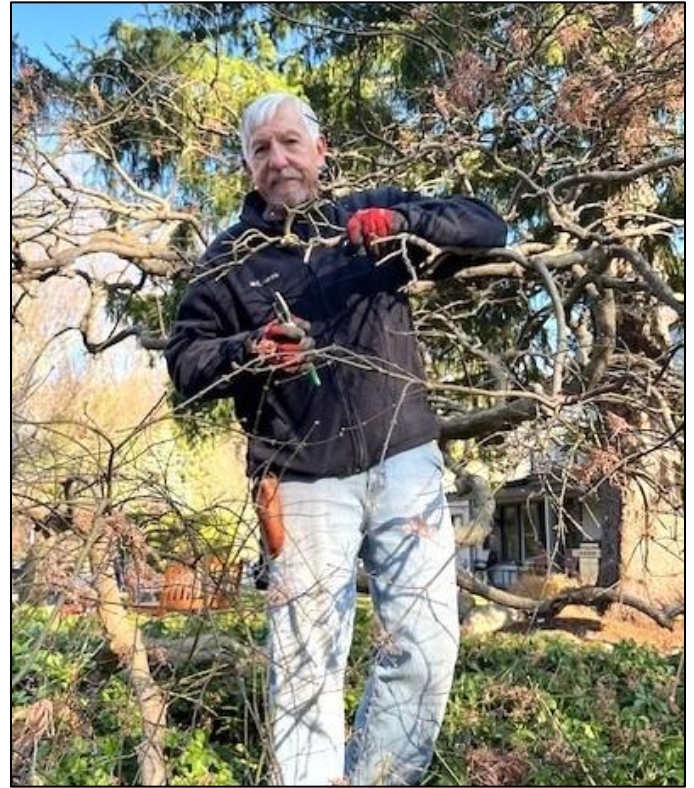


Smithsonian Gardens has a library of recorded webinars from its "Let's Talk Gardens" series. The webinars are about an hour in length.

Orchid lovers? Click [here](#) for Care for Orchids at Home. For indoor plant lovers, click [here](#) for An Engineer's Approach to Houseplant Care. Click [here](#) for Beautiful Winter Gardens. If you're rethinking your garden for 2025, or starting from scratch, click [here](#) for Choosing Plants with Design in Mind.

The National Garden Bureau offers recorded webinars, generally about an hour, too. Click [here](#), then scroll down to the section labeled "Webinars from 2024" for the names/descriptions.

IN OUR GARDENS



Paul Sisko pruning his Japanese maple.

When and why to prune Japanese maple

By Paul Sisko, Class of 2021

About every two to three years, I give my 50-year-old Japanese maple a physical check-up. That's not to say I don't look at it yearly, but now I look more closely for dead and crossing branches as well as pruning some latest growth for shaping purposes. I find this stimulates new branches, which encourages new leaf growth giving the tree a beautiful full look in the following growing seasons.

Unlike many shrubs that require rejuvenation pruning such as viburnums, azaleas, burning bush, mock orange, hydrangeas, etc., Japanese and low red maples do not send up a large array of new shoots from ground level that have to be internally pruned for good air circulation. While all of this pruning can be done in late winter or early spring, I wait for a couple of good frosts and do some of my pruning now.

Mild weather for a 'blast'



Photo by Paula Leibowitz

Blast volunteers in Teaneck Creek Conservancy's Peace Labyrinth Nov. 20. From left: Bill Hoffman, Sue Truesdell, Lynne Proskow, and Jeanne Etter. They were instructed on how to ID native plants and on proper pruning techniques.