

The Garden Clippings

Somerset Garden Club

2014



President's Message

By Arlene Blissell

Spring is my favorite season. The reasons are many, from the first warm rays of sunshine to longer days and the eagerly awaited flowers. But most of all, spring holds so much promise: promise of the perfect amount of rain, at the correct time; promise that hungry insects won't eat my roses; and promise that I won't forget to water my containers or newly planted perennials (good luck with that one!)

I love the anticipation of working outside, of planning summer activities, of looking forward to lazy evenings listening to the hum of insects and bird song. Along with ephemeral moments to enjoy are longer hours to savor.

Our club will be very busy in the next few months. In April we will plant a tree for Arbor Day. May brings the plant sale and uptown beautification. In June we'll visit the rose garden and perennial border at Renzie Park, maintained by the Garden Club of McKeesport. July will find us holding a flower show and enjoying the long-held tradition of a picnic with Johnstown's Garden Club.

We've survived a tough winter. Now on to the next season and all that means to us as gardeners. I hope to see all of you working on our community projects and at our social events, enjoying time spent with friends who "dig" digging in the dirt.

HORTICULTURE: Garden Phlox	Page 1
CLUB NEWS: Plant Sale, Meetings, & More	Page 2
Uptown Beautification	Page 3
CONSERVATION: Watering Tips	Page 3-4
Upcoming Events	Page 4
NATURE: Awakening from Hibernation	Page 5
Book Review: Weathering Winter	Page 6
March Meeting Recipes	Page 7
March Program: Wounded Animals	Page 8

HORTICULTURE – Garden Phlox

Garden phlox is one of the most recognizable and widely grown perennials in our area. Mid-summer color lasting weeks and weeks, tall columns of fragrant flowers and some of the easiest perennials to grow are just a few reasons you must have phlox, phlox, phlox. They grow quickly with full sun, and after a year or two you'll be dividing your healthy perennial clumps for our plant sale.

With its aromatic, showy, long-lasting flower clusters, *Phlox paniculata* has become a staple in today's landscapes. Not to be confused with creeping phlox, *Phlox subulata*, garden phlox is the backbone of the summer perennial border or any open sunny location. The striking and fragrant trumpet-shaped flower clusters deliver a spectacular display of color, including hues of lavender, pink, purple, fuchsia, salmon and scarlet.

Many cultivars have contrasting colored eyes or bicolor blooms. One popular selection, the famous David, is mildew resistant and yields huge billowing clouds of pure white flowers as a delightful contrast to all that color.

Blooming plant height varies widely, ranging from 15 to 48 inches; at maturity, garden phlox forms clumps 24 to 36 inches wide. Phlox prefers locations with moderately fertile, well-drained soils, not performing well with poor drainage or in soils that remain constantly damp. Although garden phlox prefers full sun, it also grows well under partial shade.

Phlox are easy to grow and deer resistant, requiring only a few maintenance activities, including occasional deadheading of spent flower clusters. The occurrence of powdery mildew can be reduced when the plants are planted in areas with good air circulation and not crowded. Avoid overhead irrigation and wet foliage.

This fragrant, colorful native American perennial attracts butterflies and hummingbirds into the garden. Phlox makes an excellent cut flower, offering a long vase life and making it perfect for summer arrangements.



CLUB NEWS

Meeting Place and Schedule

Monday, April 14, 11:00 am; Dressler Art Center; program on floral design to prepare for July show

May – Plant Sale Saturday, May 10; no meeting

Monday, June 10, time, place and program TBA

Club Plant Sale

Our annual plant sale/flea market, chaired by Sandi Wirick, is fast approaching. It will be held on Saturday, May 10, at the Dressler Art Center on Tayman Avenue, beginning at 9:00 am and ending at noon. This is an all-member project, so please be prepared to donate potted plants from your garden or to spend time working the sale. Transplant your perennials early enough that they have time to develop a good root system and aren't wilted or otherwise stressed looking. They should have a tag naming and describing the plant, along with bloom height, color and bloom time. Pictures are great. We will price the plants as they are delivered.

On Friday, May 9, at 1:00 pm we will set up the tents for the sale. Volunteers are needed for this and for setting up tables with covers, pricing and organizing plants, as well as getting ready for the flea market. If you are spring cleaning or downsizing, please donate your unwanted possessions to the flea market, but no clothing.

We have a good time interacting with our fellow gardeners, so please try to attend. Help is always appreciated. The sale begins at 9:00 am, so you should deliver plants/flea market items the day before, if possible, or beginning at 7:00 am on sale day. We use the money raised for our uptown beautification projects and for scholarships.

Uptown Beautification

May 22 is our scheduled work day for planting in Somerset. Beginning at 8:30 am, several groups will plant different areas around town. Bring work gloves, trowels, kneelers and any other tool you like to use to stay comfortable. If you own a garden club t-shirt, please wear it. Brooms, dust pans and garbage bags will be needed by those planting on the Diamond or in the lamp post baskets. Workers at the courthouse or Dressler Art Center will need shovels or forks to loosen the soil. The borough will be on hand to water after we finish, but bring your own water to stay hydrated.

If it rains more than a sprinkle, Arlene will email a rain date. This is another all-member project, but if the area you are assigned to requires too much physical activity, check in town where the raised planters and baskets may be easier to work.



Photo courtesy of Joyce Brandt, SGC

"Fortunately for the gardener, there is enough of Eden in the mortal earth that despite the vagaries of the weather, the miracle of life erupts and blossoms year after year." - Robert Pogue Harrison

CONSERVATION

Watering Tips for Lawn and Garden

Conserving water is important even in our area where we typically get sufficient rainfall, but wasting water is never wise stewardship. When setting up lawn sprinklers, be as mindful of water as possible. Try not use them on windy days because the wind carries off water before it even reaches the lawn. If sprinklers are set up so the water falls on or runs off onto the pavement, water is lost and wasted.

Water early in the morning to reduce evaporation and allow the grass to dry as the day warms up. Watering at night makes the grass stay wet, increasing the chance of diseases such as rust, mildew and rot. The best time to water the lawn is when you notice that the grass does not spring back after the lawn has been walked on. This is called "footprinting."

There is a wide variety of portable, hose-end sprinklers, including stationary types that look like rings and oscillating, rotating and impulse sprinklers. When choosing a sprinkler, look for one with a coverage pattern that closely matches the area that needs to be watered. The sprinkler's package details should list the shape and size of the area the sprinkler will cover.

To water effectively with portable sprinklers, know how fast water penetrates your soil and the delivery rate of your sprinklers. One inch of water moistens about a foot in sandy soil, seven inches in loam and four to five inches in heavy clay soil. To figure the ideal delivery rate, place a rain gauge or small can at regular intervals outward from the sprinkler and see how long it takes to fill it with an inch of water. Avoid shallow watering. If the soil is moist only in the first one or two inches, you have not watered enough. Shallow watering encourages

roots to stay near the surface, making the lawn susceptible to drought. Shallow watering of your flower or vegetable garden is also not recommended. Water thoroughly and deeply so plant roots grow down far into the soil where more moisture is likely to be.

Hose timers are convenient tools that can be used with any type of garden sprinkler or watering system, such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses. They fit between the tap and the hose. Most hose timers turn off the water after a predetermined time, but the more sophisticated computerized hose timers can also turn on the water. These timers allow you to irrigate plants and lawn areas while you are away by programming water times and duration in advance.

Water is a precious and costly resource. Conserving it makes both economic and ethical sense.



UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

GCFP 84th Annual Convention

The Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania is holding their annual convention at the Double Tree by Hilton Philadelphia, Monroeville, PA, April 6-8. The theme is "Pittsburgh--Our Fair Lady." The Trash to Treasure theme this year is "A Bee in the Bonnet." Hope to see you there.

Phipps and Botanic Garden

Phipps Conservatory Spring Flower Show is March 22-April 20. Used bulb sale: April 5, 19 and 26 from 10 am to noon \$5 per bag; bring your own bag.

Pittsburgh Botanic Garden Town and Country Garden Tour June 22. See website for details at pittsburghbotanicgarden.org.

On Saturday April 12 doors open at 11:30 at the **Greensburg Garden Center**; tea served at noon for \$25. Call 724 837-0245 for reservations.

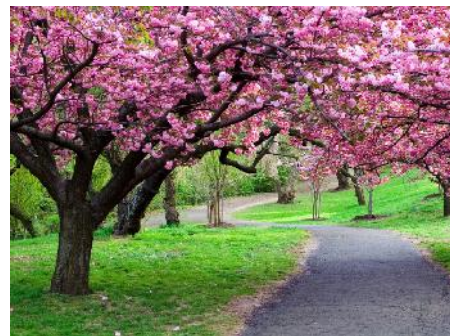
May 24 **Connellsville Geranium Festival** 9-4.

Somerset, Ligonier and Springs **Farmers Markets** coming soon.

Symposium and Marketplace

The 19th annual Garden & Landscape Symposium of Western Pennsylvania, presented by Penn State Extension and Shady Side Academy, will be held Saturday, April 12, 8 am to 4 pm at the Hillman Center for the Performing Arts in Fox Chapel. Cost is \$120.

The Garden Marketplace is free and open to the public. The Marketplace features unusual and hard-to-find perennials, annuals, shrubs, natives, terrariums, garden accessories and botanical artwork. A new attraction this year is the annual Daffodil Show, hosted by the Daffodil and Hosta Society of Western Pennsylvania.



"Spring drew on . . . and a greenness grew over those brown (garden) beds, which, freshening daily, suggested the thought that Hope traversed them at night, and left each morning brighter traces of her steps." -- Charlotte Bronte

NATURE

Waking After Hibernation

Does sleeping away the winter sound good? Now it's time to wake up, but not all hibernators wake at the same time. The length of hibernation varies by species and habitat. What rings their alarm?

Many animals sense when it's time to hibernate or wake up by the temperature or the amount of light. Bears might spend the winter in a hollow beside a tree or in a shallow cave, leaving them partly exposed to the weather. Bats are well-known for wintering in caves or attics.

However, an animal in a dark burrow can't feel warmer temperatures or sense longer days, so the signal to wake up comes from inside. Hibernators have an internal clock, a series of chemical reactions controlled by the hypothalamus of the animal's brain.



External signals set the clock. Take a groundhog, for example. The shorter days and cooling temperatures of autumn set its clock to time zero. The animal goes into hibernation, then wakes up about 180 days later. When its central nervous system sounds the alarm, a hibernator starts to shiver, which uses energy and generates heat. It's pretty clear that groundhogs are not ready to wake up naturally on February 2, and Punxsutawney Phil could easily sleep until April.

When animals hibernate, their metabolic rate slows way down to conserve energy. A hibernating groundhog, whose body temperature drops from 98.6, same as humans, to around 32 degrees, uses so little energy it can live for six months off the body fat that would last little more than a week in its waking state.

Hibernators have a kind of fat that isn't burned for energy during hibernation. This brown fat is used to generate heat when the animal gets cold, or after a big meal. Hibernators aren't the only mammals who use their brown fat in this way. When you feel hot after eating a big meal, it's partly from the generation of heat by your brown fat cells.

All known deep hibernators arouse periodically during their hibernation to get rid of the metabolic waste that has built up. For the ground squirrel, it's about every week. It re-warms for about three hours, then re-enters hibernation.



Whereas parts of the Midwest and Northeast have been buried in snow and shivering in cold this winter, that's not the case in many communities in Nevada and northern California this year. An abnormally warm, dry winter spurred black bears and other animals to halt their hibernation and head out for food.

We had no fear of early arousal here in western Pennsylvania, where bitter cold and snow lingered well into March. Now that it's April, we can be assured that both warm-blooded and cold-blooded creatures will awaken.

What Kind of Gardener are you?

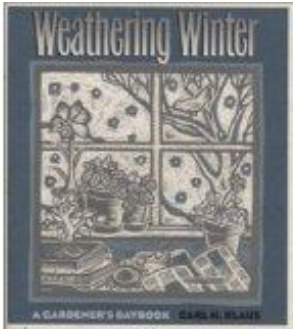
Before you start to plan a garden, you need to decide what kind of gardener you are. As far as grandma was concerned, there were three kinds of gardener:

1. Those who garden for the fun of it,
2. Those who garden for work (cash crops), and
3. Those who garden for the fun of work!

From *Old-Time Gardening Wisdom* by Jerry Baker

BOOK REVIEW

Weathering Winter by Carl Klaus



At the March meeting Linda DeLia reviewed *Weathering Winter* by Carl Klaus, founder of the nonfiction writing course at the University of Iowa. It chronicles each day during the three worst winter months in Iowa, whose weather is very similar to ours in western Pennsylvania. The book is a companion to his *My Vegetable Love*, a daybook recording the nine months of the year from planting to harvest. Both books are available to borrow from Linda or for purchase from Amazon.

In winter, when the only things growing seem to be icicles and irritability, what pleasures exist for a gardener or for anyone who lives in a northern climate? We've been asking this question daily during this particularly bitter winter. In his distinctive daybook, *Weathering Winter*, Carl Klaus reminds readers that the season of brown twigs and icy gales is just as much a part of the year as when tulips open, tomatoes thrive and pumpkins color the brown earth. From the first cold snap of late December 1994 to the first outdoor planting of onion sets and radish seeds in mid-March 1995, Klaus kept track of snow falling, birds flocking, soups simmering, gardening catalogs arriving, buds swelling and seed trays coming to life.

Gardeners, lovers of the out-of-doors and weather watchers will recognize themselves in the ways in which Klaus has come to terms with the harsh

climate and chilly truths that winter embodies. His constant, careful checks on the temperature and on the geraniums overwintering in the attic, his contentment in the basil- and garlic-flavored tomato sauce he cooked up from last season's crops and his walks with his wife in the bitter chill of starry January nights reflect the pull between indoors and out, the contrast between the beauty and the cruelty of the season.

To Daffodils

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along.

- Robert Herrick



When to Plant

Plant spinach, beets and onions when daffodils are in bloom. Plant peas when maple trees flower. Plant bush and pole beans when apple blossoms are dropping. Plant tomatoes and eggplant when peonies flower.

From *Old-Time Gardening Wisdom* by Jerry Baker

Recipes from March St. Patty's Inspired Luncheon

Greek Salad Dressing for Emerald Green Salad

- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of salt (Daryl uses sea salt)
- 1/2 tablespoon of dried oregano (Greek or Mediterranean oregano, not Mexican)
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 large clove of fresh, crushed garlic

Put all ingredients into a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until sugar and salt are well blended, or put ingredients into a bowl and whisk. Let sit for at least an hour and store in the refrigerator. Let sit out before using so the olive oil returns to a liquid form.

Barb Witchie's Golden Irish Potato Soup

- 6 cups cubed, peeled, red potatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1 cup scraped and thinly sliced carrot
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
- 2 chicken-flavored bouillon cubes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups milk, divided
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 pound processed cheese, cubed (Velveeta or similar)

Combine first 9 ingredients in a Dutch oven and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 7 to 8 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Gradually stir 1/4 cup milk into flour, making a smooth paste. Stir into the soup. Add remaining 2 3/4 cups milk and the cheese; cook over medium heat until cheese melts and soup is thickened. Yield: 9 cups.

Linda's "Bailey's" Irish Crème Chocolate Cheesecake

Crust:

- 1 1/2 cup chocolate graham cracker crumbs
- 1/3 cup confectioners' sugar

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 6 T. butter

Filling:

- 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 1/4 cups white sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 extra large or jumbo eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup Irish cream liqueur (I use Carolans – cheaper!) (or substitute half and half + 2 T. vanilla for no alcohol)
- 2 T. brewed coffee

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl mix together the graham cracker crumbs, confectioners' sugar and 1/3 cup cocoa. Add melted butter and stir with fork until well mixed. Pat into bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes; set aside. Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees.

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Blend white sugar, 1/4 cup cocoa and flour together, then beat dry ingredients into the cream cheese at medium speed until well blended and smooth. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Mixing on low speed, blend in the sour cream, Irish cream liqueur and coffee just until combined. Pour filling over baked crust.

Wrap heavy foil tightly around bottom of pan to prevent leaks. Bake in a hot water bath at 450 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 250 degrees and continue baking for 60 minutes.

With a thin knife, loosen cake from rim of pan. Let cool, then remove the rim of pan. Chill completely before serving. Makes one 9-inch springform pan; serves 16.



Daryl Jones, Barb Witchie and Millie Will prepare lunch

Wildlife Works Presents March Program

Marcia Osborne, 10-year volunteer and Education Coordinator for Wildlife Works in Youngwood, presented an educational program on their mission for the Somerset Garden Club's March meeting. "We are dedicated to the care of injured and orphaned wildlife."

This organization is caring for the golden eagle injured and rescued last week. Osborne reported that he has a shattered bone area on his wing. He is very passive and does not want to eat, but the bird is being force fed. "It's too early to know the outcome," she said.



Wildlife Works rescues and rehabilitates injured animals. The goal is to release them back into the wild where they were found. They look for places that take crippled animals that can't be returned, but birds that can't be healed must be euthanized. "We have to consider quality of life for the animals, so it's not good to send them out to become a victim."

Another goal is educating and making people more aware of wildlife. "Citizens should never make pets of wild birds or animals," she cautioned. "You don't have to love every creature, but we must respect them because they are here for a reason."

Marcia then showed the members Grits, an albino corn snake. A constrictor, he curled himself around her hand and forearm, enjoying Marcia's warmth since he is cold-blooded, as are all snakes. The center has another corn snake of normal black and brown color called Niblet, but a third named Hominy died. Most animals are not named.

She then showed a box turtle that had been "kidnapped" from the woods by a family. After their dog injured the turtle, he was brought to the center where it is taken to schools and organizations for their educational programs.

Finally, Marcia showed a beautiful small kestrel, which obligingly sat calmly on her gloved hand as she talked about him. It has imprinted on humans, so this raptor cannot be released into the wild.

On April 6 Wildlife Works will dedicate their new raptor barn, open to the public from 2-5 pm. The building is circular inside so volunteers can observe the extent of healing in hawks, owls and other raptors as they bank when they fly.

See wildlifeworksinc.org for more information, or follow them on Facebook.



Marcia Osborne, Wildlife Works Education Coordinator

Newsletter Deadlines

Summer Issue	June 15
Fall Issue	September 15
Winter Issue	December 15
Spring Issue	March 15

Email articles to Linda DeLia at signoradelia@comcast.net