



GREEN TIMES

January 2009

Volume 8 Issue 4

Master Gardener Meeting
Tuesday, Jan 27, 2009 at 7pm
Totowa Business Center
930 Riverview Drive, Suite 250
Totowa, NJ

Meet us for an early dinner at 5pm
Miranda's Café
Route 23 North, Wayne NJ
Allow 15 minutes to get to the meeting

“What Tree Should We Choose?” with Dr. Edith Wallace

Every home is enhanced when there are trees on the property, but tree selection is difficult because the tree should be there longer than you will own your house. Many northern New Jersey lawns feature weeping cherries, saucer magnolias and Bradford pears. There are many other choices of flowering trees, some in bloom almost every month of the year. Dr. Edith Wallace will give an illustrated talk "Trees in Bloom: February through November".



DUES DUES DUES

The deadline for paying your dues of \$15 and reporting any changes to your personal information for our new directory is 1/31/09. Your dues ensure that you will be included in the new directory, continue to receive Green Times, and be considered an active master gardener. With your cooperation, we hope to issue the new directory earlier in the year. Please send your dues to Mary Ann Sytsma, 179 Beverly Rd. Hawthorne, 07506 through January. After that, they should be sent to our new treasurer, Joan Kaynak, 51 Bridge St., Lincoln Park, 07035.

TIME SHEETS

Send your 2008 time sheets listing your volunteer hours to one of our new vice-presidents: Jo-Ann Pituch at her office, or Mary Ann Sytsma, 179 Beverly Rd. Hawthorne, 07506. Elaine Barbour needs them immediately to complete her 2008 report for Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

MGAPC CALENDAR ON YAHOO

The MGAPC calendar is located online at <http://calendar.yahoo.com/mgapcnj>. Please visit this site at any time to get a complete listing of scheduled events of interest.

MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Our annual plant sale is scheduled for May 16, 2009. Mark your calendars!

ELAINE'S CORNER



To do in January

- ◆ Try to stay off the frozen lawn with cars, walking, etc. The crown of the plant may be crushed.
- ◆ Broadleaved evergreens may need a second application of an anti-desiccant in mid-January. The air temperature must be above 40 degrees.
- ◆ Allow tap water to warm to room temperature before watering indoor houseplants.
- ◆ Push perennials that have heaved out of the soil gently back into the ground.
- ◆ Cat litter makes an acceptable de-icer. Some cat litter has charcoal and may stain light-colored carpets. Use a floor mat both inside and outside the entrance door.
- ◆ Try spraying the snow shovel with vegetable oil cooking spray. The snow slides right off!

Is it spring yet?

Award winning plants have been named by a couple of prestigious groups. The Perennial Plant Association selected their "plant of the year" - *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'. This ornamental grass has a bright yellow foliage color, is hardy to Zone 5, is cascading — 12" tall x 18" wide, shade tolerant, and prefers evenly moist soil. I have been growing this plant for three years in a shady rock outcropping. Definitely not drought tolerant but very deer resistant.

The All-America Selections winners are a Viola 'Rain Blue and Purple' (purple, white and blue Johnny jump-up), eggplant 'Gretel' (white fruit 3" long), melon 'Lambkin', (a sweet, white-fleshed Christmas melon), and squash 'Honey Bear' (an acorn squash with exceptional eating quality and powdery mildew tolerance).

Learning and Volunteer Opportunities

Please take advantage of flower shows during the winter months, either as a booth volunteer or participating in a guided tour. It is a truly uplifting experience during the stormy winter months.

Thank you for your good thoughts, cards and prayers

A surprising need for spinal surgery kept me away from the office for three weeks in December. I apologize to all of the Rutgers Master Gardeners who I didn't get to personally thank at the Awards dinner for all of their valuable service to the Master Gardener program. My three herniated cervical (neck) discs have been removed and replaced with hip bone. Four neck vertebrae are bolted with a lovely titanium plate. I walk, talk and eat well. Driving is limited. I feel better every day. Thank you for concerns and good wishes. It's working!

Elaine Barbour

Assistant County Agricultural Agent

SKYLANDS MANOR LEASE EXTENSION

As reported December 17th in *Suburban Trends* by Teresa Edmond, "the State House Commission tabled the decision on whether to add another 10 years" to Mansion Caterers 20-year lease of Skylands Manor. The current lease was signed in 2004. Many of us attended and spoke at the public hearings in August and September and wrote letters to the members of the State House Commission. Apparently the commission members heard us as the decision on lease extension has been postponed from December to the February 2009 meeting "because it has to weigh the public's concerns about the lease extension."

Mansion Caterers has provided the New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands Association with a schedule of dates for our use of the manor in 2009 that shows further restrictions on availability and prevents us from planning more than three months ahead.

— Edith Wallace

COUNTY HOLIDAYS

The County office will be closed on the following holidays:

January 19th, Monday ~ Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday

February 12th, Thursday ~ Lincoln's Birthday

February 16th, Monday ~ President's Day

ZZZZZZZZZZ

The ZZ plant is also called aroid palm. Its botanical name is *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*, hence the ZZ moniker.

This plant is a “new” houseplant and is not described in most of the houseplant books. Searching for “ZZ plant” on the Internet gives places to purchase them and information on care. They may be found at local florists and garden centers. The glossy green leaves are arranged in a fishbone pattern.

In many ways they are ideal houseplants. Pest and disease problems are rare. They will grow in almost any light, including low light, although bright indirect light is best. They may summer outside in semi-shade. They are slow growing.

ZZ plants can go months without watering. Do not over-water. Do not allow it to sit in water. A light watering once or twice a month is sufficient.

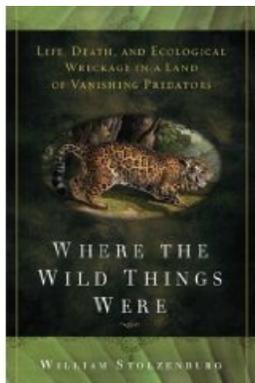
— Edith Wallace

**BOOKWORMS**

Do we have too many deer or not enough wolves? Do we have too many rabbits or not enough coyotes? Do we have too many bears or not enough mountain lions? Since humans developed the spear and agriculture we have been killing predators with abandon. In the United States we have bounties on wolves. In some states we hunt them from airplanes. We poison coyotes. We, as taxpayers, sponsor this killing. The justification for this carnage is that hoofed game are spared for the sportsmen, hoofed livestock on open-range ranches are protected, and we do not need to fear meeting a predator. What is the chance of being killed in an encounter with a mountain lion? Much less than dying as a result of a dog bite or of a fatal accident resulting from an encounter between a deer and a car. Deer/moose/elk-car accidents are so common they seldom make the news. A sighting of a mountain lion makes the headlines.

As a result of the loss of predators deer are munching their way not just through our gardens but also through our forests. Trees do not live forever. As deer are devouring seedlings there will be no replacement trees and eventually no forests, no birds and no deer. Do we want to live in a completely “tame” world? If so, move to a city where the biggest threat is from automobiles.

Is there a future for our birds, our woodlands, and even our gardens? We have Green Acres and farm preservation programs, but most of these properties are isolated. Many of our predators require large territories to support themselves. They need travel zones between refuges where they are protected from human intervention. Support programs to acquire more space/undeveloped areas.



A relatively new idea among ecologists is that large predators are essential to natural ecological processes. As a result, they are trying to change our wildlife management practices. If you share a community with predators, learn to live with them. Keep house pets inside, in fenced areas, or on short leashes. Do not feed the birds. Do not plant berry bushes that attract bears. Use “bear proof” trash containers and keep them inside until they are ready to be emptied.

Human hunters usually take the most genetically fit (biggest, strongest) while predatory animals go after the old, sick and weak. Which is better for the health of the deer population?

Read *Where the Wild Things Were (Life, Death, and Ecological Wreckage in a Land of Vanishing Predators)* by William Stolzenburg.

— Edith Wallace

UPCOMING SHOWS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ Philadelphia Flower Show - March 1-8 — For more information visit: <http://www.theflowershow.com>
- ◆ Master Gardeners of Mercer County garden symposium - March 21 — For more information visit: <http://www.mgofmc.org/symposium/>
- ◆ NJ Flower and Garden Show, Edison - February 12-15 — For more information visit: <http://www.macevents.com/show.cfm/eventID/121>

LILAC SATURDAYS AT NJBG

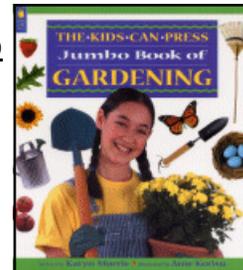
Join us on June 13th and June 20th (rain date June 27th). We begin at about 9 in the morning and end after a light lunch. Come when you will, for as long as you can stay. Bring pruners. Our work of the past years make the lilac garden look better each year.



WINTER PLANT ACTIVITIES

Below are some winter gardening activities suggested by Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

- ◆ Demonstrate how to clean a houseplant. For glossy-leaves, use wet paper towels at room temperature and gently rub plant leaves. Small or fuzzy leafed plants can be “showered” in the sink or bathtub. Cover the soil with paper towels or newspaper to prevent soil from being washed out of the pot.
- ◆ Visit a library and borrow children’s books on how to grow a garden. A good book on this subject is Jumbo Book of Gardening, by Karyn Morris. It is filled with 240 pages of ideas and gardening techniques written at a 6th grade level.
- ◆ Make a bean sprout jar. See the website <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/gbl/pubs/index.html> and click on “Garden in the City” (do not click ‘available online’) to download or view the publication. It lists the directions on pages 10 through 13.
- ◆ Study Winter Twigs. Cut off branches from different bushes and trees. Draw the shapes of the buds. Look for “U” shaped leaf scars from previous leaves. Label your drawings with time of year, location, and type of branch.
- ◆ Clean up garden tools. A stiff brush will remove dirt. To remove rust, use emery paper. After cleaning, sand and stain the worn wooden parts and apply a wood preservative. Use a dust mask if necessary.
- ◆ Toward the end of winter, sow impatiens seeds. Use directions listed on Rutgers Fact sheet #387, “How to Grow a Windowsill Herb Garden” at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS387>. Sow the seeds during the first or second week of March for a beautiful potted plant by Mothers’ Day. You can use a 16-ounce red plastic cup for the pot. Be sure to drill drainage holes in the bottom of the cup before planting the seeds.
- ◆ For catalogues and information, contact seed companies like those listed below.
 - ◇ Park Seed Company, 1 Parkton Ave., Greenwood, SC 29647, tel. 1-800-213-0076, or www.parkseed.com.
 - ◇ Johnny’s Selected Seeds, 955 Benton Avenue, Winslow, Maine 04901, tel. 1-877-564-6697
 - ◇ Burpee Seed Company, <http://www.burpee.com/ancillary/catalogrequest.do>
 - ◇ Harris Seeds, 355 Paul Road, Rochester, NY 14624 or call Toll Free: (800) 544-7938, <http://www.harriseseeds.com/Storefront/HGCatalogRequest.aspx>
 - ◇ Stokes Seed Company, PO Box 548, Buffalo, New York 14240-0548 or call toll free: 1-800-396-9238. <http://www.stokeseeds.com/cgi-bin/StokesSeeds.storefront>



Individual orders of seed packets can be grouped together in one shipment to save on shipping charges. Catalogues can also be used to make posters and cards.

For more information on gardening activities for 4-H'ers, contact James Nichnadowicz, Union County 4-H Agent, at nichnadowicz@rce.rutgers.edu.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are volunteer opportunities on February 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2009 for RCE Master Gardeners at the 2009 NJ Flower and Garden Show, hosted by Mac Events at the NJ Convention Center (Raritan Center Complex) in Edison, NJ. Full show details are available online at: <http://www.MacEvents.com>. Please contact Carolyn Morella at **908-526-6293 or 908-231-7000, Ext. 7520** to schedule your volunteer time for the RCE exhibit. They need each volunteer’s address, phone number and e-mail address in order to send them additional information as it becomes available.

This year’s event will once again highlight all of RCE in a centralized location in the convention center. RCE faculty and staff are also expected to be available to assist. Typical questions usually involve plant selection and diagnostics, soil fertility and testing - just like another Garden Helpline at the county office! Reference material, fact sheets, CD-ROM’s and other information will also be on hand to assist you.

MY FRIEND ELAINE

I met Elaine Martino at our very first Master Gardening class; we were not sure of what would come! I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?" I was prepared to find out about planting a garden, maybe behind the church, or something like that. Little did I know that in the next months I would meet the most wonderful and closest friends I would ever have! And with that I must say that in the next few minutes I am going to be very real and feeling, which most of us do try to hide, but I can not hide any longer.

My friend, Elaine, died. I want you all to know how special she has been to me, and to any who had the pleasure of knowing her. I want you all to know that she loved concerts, especially Bruce Springsteen, and how she loved baseball games. And how she loved her family: Tony, Liza, and Lori, before all else, precious. I also remember how much she loved the birds and the animals that surrounded her, and how she dedicated each day to give to each of their needs.

In each of these ways, she touched my soul, and my heart, so deeply. My friend, my Elaine.

— Respectfully, Patricia Engrissei

SKYLANDS HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

CHAIRPERSON: Elaine Martino

THE CAST: Helene Christie, Sunny Brennan, Bob Weiss, Jim McHugh, Sara McHugh, Kathleen Dubbels, Margaret Kerstner, Barbara Hegranes, Lorrie Wienbrock, Roberta Shaw, Jill Hanifan, Maureen Burns

Preparations were started in September with our first meeting at Elaine Martino's home. Discussion of our theme "A Child's Holiday" was lively. Our master carpenter Bob Weiss volunteered to make all the snowflakes we would need and the train that we would use as our silent auction item.

We met at Skylands to measure the room during the Harvest Festival. Helene Christie volunteered her home for all of the work meetings and storing all of the materials.

Decorating the hall was such fun with all the talent and creative juices of our group so evident. The tree was decorated with snowmen ornaments painted by first graders at Washington School in West Caldwell, as well as red and green felt mittens, ribbon, and snowflakes made by the Master Gardeners.

The train was filled with wrapped packages, ornaments, greens, lights and a Santa Teddy Bear. The final silent auction bid for the train and its contents was \$250.00. Skylands was very happy to receive the donation.

The staircase was decorated with garland, ornaments, lights, ribbon, a large wreath, a tree and train quilt, Santa and elf figures, and a teddy bear tea party.

Red poinsettia, dolls, teddy bears, wrapped packages, a train and many other creative ideas filled the rest of the room to make the vision of the opening statement in the brochure written by Lorrie Wienbrock come to life:

THE STAIRCASE AND HALL "Remember back to being a child and waking up on a cold winter's morning. Snow is falling softly outside your window, lining the hemlock branches. You creep quietly down the wide staircase to the Great Entry Hall and behold a magical sight. The holiday tree is ablaze with lights and toys are everywhere - trains, dolls and teddy bears! And what wonders are hidden in those gaily wrapped packages? Come in - and be a child again."

Members of our group volunteered to staff the entrance hall for all the daytime hours of the open house.

Because of the generosity of our cast we only used half of the budget allotted. We also recycled our materials. The snowmen were given back to the children who graciously painted them. We also sent a mitten to each one as a thank you gift. The snowflakes were used as gifts for the Master Gardener Christmas party. Wrapped packages and poinsettias were also used as decorations for the party.

A great big THANK YOU to all the wonderful talented Master Gardeners who said "yes" and made this a great experience!

- Sunny Brennan

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

By Barbara Sanford and Edith Wallace

Just as 2008 has been a rocky year for our country, this is also true for us as Passaic County Master Gardeners. There will be no class of 2009; one of our most beloved projects, the Holiday Open House, may be no more. Both Jo-Ann and Elaine have had health problems and we wish them a speedy recovery and health and happiness in the New Year. We have had many positives, with our plant sale being one of the most profitable ones yet. The Friendship Garden is growing beautifully with the help of the class of 2008 and special thanks to Jim McHugh. We have added books to the Helpline Library and begun organizing so books will be easier to find.

Our projects continue to be better and stronger than in the past. Shelter Our Sisters is now planting and harvesting their own crops. The zucchini and yellow squash and other vegetables did their part as did Jill Hanifan the project coordinator. Jill's work was recognized at the October MGANJ meeting.

The Lilac Garden at Skylands is holding its own with approximately 500 visitors on Mother's Day, more than any single day in our memory. Master Gardeners of Passaic County truly made this a spectacular site. Edith Wallace and Frank Dyer co-ordinate the lilac garden restoration project. Frank also does a beautiful job in the Moraine Garden. Maintaining the woodland setting of the Skylands Wildflower Garden is an ongoing challenge, but we as master gardeners meet this challenge with guidance from Darlene Nowak and Nancy Bristow who have much plant knowledge.

This year over 40 master gardeners volunteered over 4,000 hours in Laurelwood Arboretum learning and working alongside the horticultural manager Joan Scott-Miller. Bonnie Joachim is also president of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum. Many thanks to these two and all the master gardeners who volunteer there.

Our children's programs included the Clifton Boys & Girls Clubs under the direction of David Obsuth and Joan Kaynak who have taught many young minds of the wonders of planting. We are sorry that Anita Murski and Leigh Brower will no longer be involved with the Butler Library and their budding gardeners. There is still time to take on this project.

Our Horticultural Therapy program is going strong serving Van Dyks in West Milford, Lakeland Health Care in Wanaque and Oak Ridge in Wayne with Barbara Sanford, Patricia Engrissei and Renate Gudat as key organizers. Dial in Clifton is another site for MG horticultural therapy. Our horticultural therapy teams received recognition at the Awards of Excellence program at the Master Gardener State meeting in October.

We, as Master Gardeners, have plenty to be proud of and have accomplished much in 2008. We thank Mary Ann Sytsma and the entire committee that organized our Holiday Awards dinner. We really appreciate the large poinsettias we took home. They gave our homes a truly festive air this holiday season. Thanks to each and every one of you.

Wishing you all a very happy, healthy and green 2009!

Contributors: Elaine Barbour, Sunny Brennan, Ray Edel, Patricia Engrissei, Jo-Ann Pituch, Barbara Sanford, Mary Ann Sytsma, Edith Wallace
Editor: Regina Imperato

Master Gardener Association of Passaic County Officers

Edith Wallace & Barbara Sanford, Co-Presidents
Raymond Edel, 1st Vice-President
Jo-Ann Pituch, Mary Ann Sytsma, 2nd Vice-Presidents

Joan Kaynak, Treasurer
Patricia Engrissei, Recording Secretary
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