



Can You Dig It?

Spring 2015

Welcome to the TCGC Horticulture Committee's Spring 2015 Edition of "Can You Dig It.?"

We have officially been in the 'spring season' since March 20, but we are just now beginning to see the signs of spring here on the Eastern Shore.

The geese have finally left to head north for the summer, the osprey have returned, the snow is gone...the tips of the trees are finally showing some color...but those early blooming bulbs, crocus, winter aconite, snow drops, reticula iris...they are finally showing their beautiful little faces, late...and the daffodils are starting to bloom...too late for many of the Daffodil Flower Shows...the temperatures continue to tease, warm one day giving us hope that spring is finally here, but then the wind returns and the temperature drops...you all know the story...

As the people in Holland once told my husband and me when we were there to see the tulips in bloom, "*Spring isn't late, winter is just late leaving.*"

I would like to introduce a few new things...first of all we have added a new member to our club and to our committee, Jane Anderson. Jane jumped right in and has written a wonderful article on bees. Welcome Jane. Our second addition is a new feature or section, "*From the Potting Shed.*" In each issue we will have a short article from the "shed"...all will be new and different! And lastly, we have frequently had articles on flower arranging....these go hand-in-hand with what we do as horticulturists, because without our work...no flowers...and with three fantastic flower arrangers on our "staff," we will continue to have them contribute articles on design.

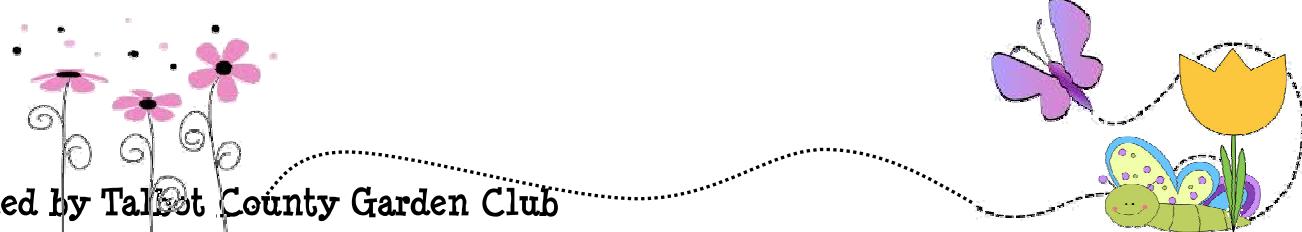
In this issue you will find a variety of articles designed to boost your spirits, get you ready for spring, teach you some new things, and maybe one or two that will motivate you to ignore the weather and get outside and enjoy this new season of awakenings. So please read on and ENJOY!

Trish Reynolds, editor

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Design and Layout.....Rebecca Gaffney



From the Potting Shed.....Sherry Burke

Which tool in the garden shed is the “must have” tool for a busy gardener? Why, the Japanese Gardener’s Knife, also called a “hori hori” is an indispensable tool. You have probably seen one, but if not, it is a steel knife about 12 inches long with a wooden handle and serrated edges on both sides of the blade. It is usually carried in a leather pouch which hangs from a belt. The pouch serves to protect the blade and to keep the user safe from the blade.



My first sighting of this Japanese gardener’s knife was at a botanical garden where I watched a woman working in the garden there. She was using the knife to dig perennials, divide the plants and then easily re-dig the hole to replant.



During my chat with her, she told me how she uses this tool for most everything in the garden except digging huge holes or pruning large limbs. For the crew at that garden, the hori hori tool was used for routine weeding, light pruning, rough sawing, dividing

and planting. A stainless steel blade is highly valued for holding its sharp edge.

Since that day I have noticed that many professional gardeners use this tool in various ways. Now a Japanese Gardener’s Knife resides in my potting shed and is my favorite tool. 🌱

Spring Ephemerals.....Trish Reynolds

Now that we have established that Spring is finally here....let's explore something unique to spring....the plants known as “Spring Ephemerals.” What exactly are they? An ephemeral plant is one marked by a short life cycle – Wikipedia defines them as “perennial plants that emerge quickly in the spring and die back to their underground parts after a short growth and reproductive phase.” We will see these growing in our woodlands and along streams before the leaves of the overhead leaf out. Many of these are overlooked because they are here for such a short time, but they are well worth exploring as

they are the first sign of spring....most welcome after the long winter months.

Okay let's introduce you to a few of these plants - the yellow trout lily, *Erythronium americanum*, is a lovely example. Typically you

will find this in the woodlands along a stream bank. The leaves emerge in the early spring from a tiny bulb. The flowers are yellow on the inside, but are brown/bronze on the outside. Trout lily



blossoms open in the morning but close in the evening, so you have to look early to see these fleeting beauties. The flowers are nodding and stand only about 5-6” tall.



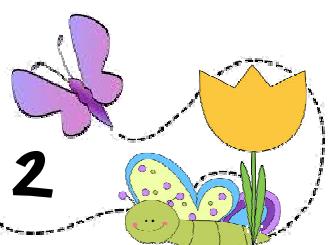
Another example includes the group known as Trilliums, These are low growing woodland flowers, with most native to the U.S. You will frequently stumble on these beauties when walking in the woods....they can be identified by their three leaves, three petals and three sepals, hence their name. These plants grow by underground rhizomes and die back in the summer months.



Another lovely example of a Spring Ephemeral is the *Sanquinaria Canadensis*, or Bloodroot, a native to eastern North America. These plants are generally found growing in moist to dry woods and thickets, often on flood plains and near shores of streams



in dappled sun. The lovely solitary flowers bloom from March to May, with 8 -12 delicate white petals and yellow reproductive parts on leafless stems that rise above the foliage from this charming plant. But if you choose to grow these in your woodland, use caution as their dark red sap and leaves can be a skin irritant.



Our final example of the Spring Ephemerals is the *Mertensia virginica*, or Virginia Bluebells. This beauty is also native to eastern North America with bell-shaped sky-blue flowers opening from pink buds on stems up to 24" tall with rounded gray-green leaves. Bluebells have been adapted and now appear in many of our spring shade gardens and as under-plantings to our shrubs. If used in your garden you need to remember they go dormant in the summer, disappearing until next spring. The plants will also thrive in deciduous shade and moist soil and they will see themselves to create a charming colony,



So now that we have introduced you to perhaps some new plants, why not take that walk in the woods, along some of the streams here on the shore and look out for these hidden and short lived beauties. There are many more examples that you can see at Pickering Creek or Adkins Arboretum, such as May-apples, cut-leaf toothwort, Dutchman's breeches, Hepatica and more....time to explore!

Finding Joy in SeedsPam Keeton

When my husband and I purchased our property in Easton three-and-a-half years ago, I immediately planned to have a large vegetable garden. We have had vegetable gardens almost everywhere we've lived, but they were usually small and tended to contain the usual mix of squash and tomatoes. So with more than five acres, I now had the opportunity to have a larger garden and try more varieties of plants.

I quickly realized that to be economical, I needed to learn how to grow veggies from seeds. Being an urban gardener with a family, full time job and little experience, I had always purchased plants at nurseries and the thought of starting tomatoes from seeds seemed a little frightening. So I began researching seed-starting and learned that while some are suitable to plant directly in the garden, others, like tomatoes and peppers, do better when started inside.

Coincidentally, in the spring of 2012 the Garden Club hosted a talk by Lisa Ziegler who claimed that soil-blocking was a fool-proof method to start seeds. I attended her talk and dutifully purchased a kit containing a soil

blocker, blocking medium, video, book and other equipment, went home and promptly began my love affair with seed starting. Lisa's promise came true and before I knew it, I had 50 marigolds and 20 each of collards, kale and three types of tomatoes sprouting in $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " blocks of soil! I was giddy. Not all survived, but for pennies I had more plants than I needed for my garden. Probably the biggest benefit for me is that this method gave me the confidence to try others.

It takes practice to make good soil blocks, but one beauty in the technique is that, like cookie dough, if the blocks don't form properly, you can throw the soil back into the mix and try again. And actually, you don't even "plant" the seeds – you simply lay them in a dimple created on the top of each block, water them and they sprout! This is especially handy for seeds that need light to germinate. And the special soil mix also contains all the nutrients necessary for the sprouts.

Soil blocking is also an amazing space-saver -- you can start 20 plants in approximately nine square inches of space! When the plants are about four to five inches high, the blocks easily break apart and can be transplanted to the garden; or, if the weather doesn't cooperate, they can be transplanted into small pots before being moved to the garden.

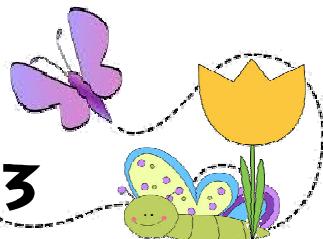
Here is my small soil blocker, which was made in England. They come in several sizes. This method is very popular in Europe because pots are not needed to start plants.



Of course, one size doesn't fit all seeds and soil blocking is not the only way to start seeds. While there are larger blockers for large seeds, rather than make another "capital investment" in a larger blocker, I use small peat pots for larger seeds like okra and sunflowers. They can be planted without disturbing the roots. I've also tried recycling things like egg cartons and toilet paper rolls to use as pots. And I often save the small cell packs from annuals to start seeds the following spring. I also use a grow light



The groups of blocks are arranged in Styrofoam meat trays. Each 6" X 9" tray can hold 40 blocks/plants.





Collards sprouting in soil blocks

to help strengthen the stems, although this is not essential. It's magical to see new green plants sprouting in February!

Two important points to remember when starting seeds inside – never let the seedlings dry out and, when you are ready to transplant them outside, "harden-off" the seedlings by gradually introducing them to the outdoors over the course of a week. This reduces the "shock" of leaving the coziness of the

house for the extremes of the outdoors.

I have also learned how to start seeds directly in the garden, including peas, turnips, lettuces, greens and squash, as well as herbs like basil. Basil grows so well on the eastern shore that at one point I finally had to pull out the plants, which had grown into small bushes. I planted about 8 linear feet of basil that grew, was cut, grew, and was cut again – in all, three times. When I finally pulled them out, the root balls were about eight inches in diameter! My mother and I spent a whole day making pesto and I gave away bunches of fresh basil. I have since learned moderation with basil seeds.

Starting plants inexpensively from seed also eases the trauma of losing them to pests because they are much more economical to restart than buying seedlings. I had this experience last year when all my summer squash succumbed to squash vine borer. I simply did a second planting with the leftover seeds and enjoyed squash a little later in the season. Most packets contain more seeds than I will use in one season, so I store leftovers in the refrigerator until the next season. Many seeds can be stored for a year or longer.

This new experience has also led to fun with collecting and saving seeds – especially wildflowers. Last year I collected nearly one-half pound of Black-eyed Susan and coneflower seeds, which were started from a couple of inexpensive packs of seeds, and that I hope will sprout this year into a small meadow area in one corner of my yard. Also last year I started butterfly weed from a purchased pack of seed and in the fall collected the seedpods, which I am now sprouting indoors. Two generations of plants from one packet of seeds. I've grown attached to my seeds.

This has been a learning experience that, for pennies, has allowed me to experiment with different methods of seed starting, from soil blocking to peat pots, heat mats for sprouting, grow lights and a small, portable greenhouse I have in the south facing window of one of my guest rooms. A big investment in equipment is not necessary, however, as I've had just as much success simply starting seeds in a sunny window as I have using a grow light and greenhouse. It really doesn't take fancy equipment to start many of the plants common to our area. For the frugal gardener, materials, such as toilet paper and paper towel tubes, can be used to start seeds.

I also look forward each winter to perusing seed catalogues and trying my hand at new or unusual varieties,

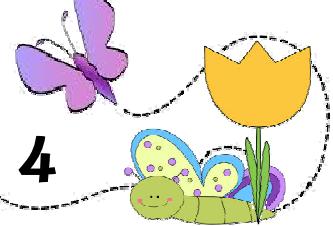


like dwarf French velvet beans and Armenian cucumbers. With seeds I am not limited to the retailers in my area.

Truthfully, however, not every variety has been successful and others sometimes leave me frustrated. Decorative grasses are expensive to purchase fully grown, so I tried starting purple muhly grass indoors from seed and was disappointed by the few seeds that sprouted. Even more disappointing was that none survived when I transplanted them outside. I had similar experiences with a couple of ground covers I tried to grow from seed.

Pepper plants often take weeks and months to sprout indoors and I have made the mistake of giving up too early and throwing the soil blocks into my houseplant pots, only to have pepper plants spring up among my philodendrons and coleus. And some seeds need special handling, such as soaking before planting. A little research and a lot of patience go a long way.

Sprouting seeds indoors has also provided an unexpected side benefit – the opportunity to see new green plants spring up in the dead of winter when our gardens are otherwise dormant and summer seems a lifetime away. There is so much joy in the birth of a seedling. 🌱

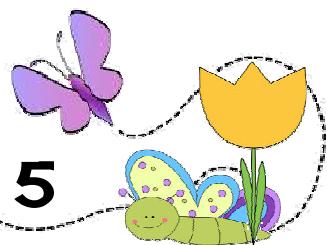
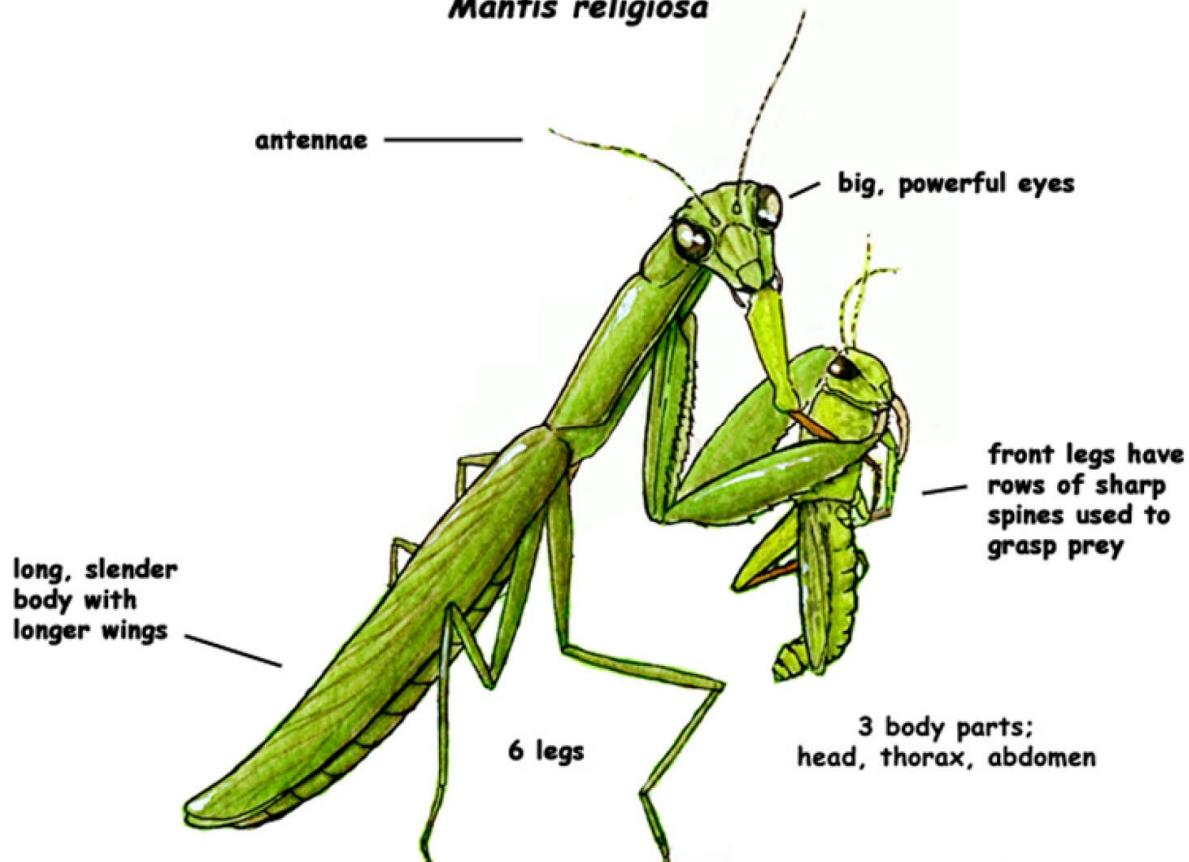




You readers may know what this garden image is. I, who have gardened for years, routinely have indeed seen this styrofoamish tan ball, especially in the early spring before leafing out on the shrubbery, and figured it was a gall? a growth? an-I-don't-know-what? then pulled it off the branch, and threw it away. The fact that I have not known what this was until recently, makes me think I should turn in my trowel! However, just in case you too have missed it, this is the egg case of the praying mantis...a garden "bug" that has an excellent reputation for being a garden predator of pest insects like aphids, mosquitoes, leafhoppers, caterpillars, flies and moths. These egg cases are sold at horticultural centers, (and on Amazon! for about \$4) as a biological control for your garden. Each egg case will hatch around 200 nymphs, which are about the size of an eyelash!

Praying Mantis

Mantis religiosa



Mantis lie in wait for their food, motionless with their spines held in a “praying” pose, and snap up its victim with its strong fore-legs. Their lightning-fast strike occurs in half the time it takes a housefly to open its wings and attempt an escape. Of the 20 species of mantises that occur in North America, the introduced Chinese mantis, at a length of 4 inches, is the largest.

Now, all this being said, I must add that whenever I have greeted a mantis in my garden, I was pleased and took care not to harm him. Upon my research to tell you of this egg case revelation...which I considered helpful and a GOOD thing, I have discovered that there are 20 species of mantises. All but one are non-native, and these non-native critters cause problems for the native ones to the extent that the natives are rare...like maybeNOT AROUND here! They eat ALL garden bugs: butterflies, bees, caterpillars, and other beneficial insects! These would be insects that we need for pollination, soil improvement and clean up, and further predation on other damaging garden pests. An informed gardener says he pulls all egg cases from plants and buries them, to prevent harm to the beneficial insects! Furthermore, there are images showing that these large mantises will wait on a hummingbird feeder and oh-my-gosh CATCH hummingbirds and devour them! (I wish I'd discussed this with Mr. Tallamy, entomologist, who spoke to our club in February.)

These introduced Chinese species of egg cases are what is

sold by biocontrol distributors amid glowing reports of its function as an insect eater. The University of Wisconsin advocated: the purpose of buying these insects purely for release in the home garden is not recommended. The insects in most gardens are not abundant enough to satisfy their needs, so they may eat each other or leave the area. They eat a number of beneficial species as well as pests. This idea of bringing a generalist predator to your garden is unwise.



I have to tell you that I intended to impart information to expand our garden stewardship ... and protect these critters.... merely by identifying a

praying mantis egg case. However, in the spirit of horticultural journalism, I must report the later accounts of this unrestrained predation. Is this garden POLITICS?? Personnally I am now somewhat paralyzed on the subject and will probably just live and let live. But I CAN now identify a mantis egg case!

To Bee or Not to Bee

Jane Anderson



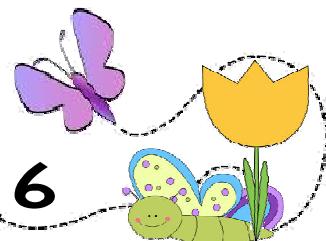
Beekeeping sounded like a rather passive avocation when my husband presented to it me two years ago. Bill had surrounded himself with information of all types, including his Uncle Martin's bee library from North Carolina. We had been eating his honey for years. It was deep and rich from the pollen of tulip trees and cotton plants. We've sorely

missed it almost as much as our sweet white-haired uncle since he passed on.

First came the bee classes, followed shortly by the researching of the hives flat or pitched roof, deep sections or “supers” and how many. Then came the frames, wax or

new improved plastic foundation on which to build comb. Last came the bees - a “package” or a “nuc” from our local Master Beekeeper, Mike Embry. Of course bee suits and veils and gloves and smoker and the very critical hive tool had to be sought as well. At last it all came together and two wonderful hives were erected behind the forsythia hedge facing south.

The bees multiplied and flourished until one hive decided to divide and the largest part of the bees decided to follow the queen and swarm into a nearby peach tree. My personal beekeeper was, of course out of town for the day. I called him in a panic. He called his bee-buddy (a recurring theme) and the bee-buddy arrived with his bee costume and a large cardboard box. He climbed up the ladder, sawed off the limb along with the swarm and carried the whole mess to the big box. There were still bees in the old hive, so the swarm had to go into a new hive in a new location. Then there was the wax moth scare



and the constant patrolling for signs of small hive beetles or, God forbid, Varroa mites. Bill is a conscientious beekeeper and only wax moths have shown their nasty evidence. Soon there were more bee-buddies and a plan was hatched to make a batch of mead. That's another story, but fun.

As in evidence, beekeeping is not very passive. After an entire year which included wrapping the hives and surrounding them with vertical hay bales for the first winter, the first honey harvest was a big success. Light and floral, it was heavenly honey. There was another swarm event, this time in the forsythia.



A third hive was created and the bees were celebrated by Bill and his bee-buddies. And so it went until this fall. Extra simple syrup with an infusion of "Honey bee healthy" home brewed including herbs and essential oils and candy board and fondant were variously inserted and applied to the hives in

hopes of staving off winter starvation. In winter the bees must keep the queen and the hive warm by clustering and vibrating their little bodies in place to keep the queen at 91 degrees all the time. They tag team this effort and stagger to the honey and beekeeper goodies to replenish their strength. This winter had Bill and all his bee-buddies worried and fretted. It was wet and fiercely cold. Finally, with the first 50 degree afternoon, he was able to open the hive. No beetles, no mites and no moths, but all the bees had died.

Beekeepers all over the area have suffered major hive losses this year. One beekeeper, near Salisbury, lost nearly 900 colonies. Thermal extremes seem to be the only cause. My beekeeper is crushed but determined. He has ordered more bees to fill our hives again and he will start all over in April. Bees and pollinators are so critical to all of us. We have planted a few acres in red clover out by the field and I'll over-seed it with wildflowers for the region. I'll plant even more indigenous flowers and shrubs to try to help. I can always tuck some Helianthus or Joe Pye weed in the back of the beds or out by the vegetable garden.



There's always a little more room to help my beekeeper and his heavenly bees.

The Birds of SpringtimePriscilla Thut

Ah, the anticipation of spring in the birding world! After a long cold winter, we really need warmer weather and the melodious songs of our returning feathered friends. The first wintering birds to leave were the Tundra Swans, followed a few days later by the Canada Geese. By now, most of the geese have left the Shore, although there are still small flocks on some fields. One day last week, we counted over 4,500 flying due north over the house in high "V" formations. They wait until the wind has switched to the south and then, seemingly in one day, they send out



the call, and off they go. Just about the same time, the osprey return and begin to assess the damage done to their nest sites by the harsh winter winds. Now spring is really underway!

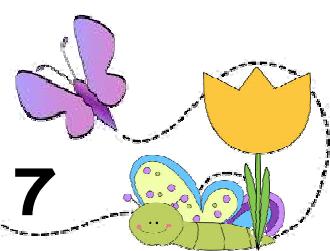
Around the birdfeeders, there is still activity. The Juncos, the White-breasted Nuthatches, and the Eastern Towhees are still hanging around. White-throated Sparrows are flocking up but have not left yet. Cedar Waxwings are eating the last of the native berries in the trees and the Brown Creepers are still going up and down the trees in the woods, searching for bugs under the bark. These birds will all soon leave for their breeding grounds further north.



Resident birds are preparing for the breeding season.



Pileated Woodpeckers are heard frantically pounding out nest holes and the Eastern Bluebirds are flying from box to box, singing all the while.



The small Brown-headed Nuthatch who lives in our yard because we have loblolly pines, drills a small nest hole in a soft, rotten tree and carries the chips away one at a time. Wood chips on the ground below the nest would leave hints for predators that there is a nest above. The ever-present American Robins are chirping away and the Blue Jays shout their loud, raucous calls. Last summer we had



over a dozen species nesting on our property.

The migrant nesters will return soon. I am anxiously waiting to see if the Barn Swallows who built the most spectacular

nest in our front doorway last summer will return and use it again. It was fascinating to watch these mud-daubers work their magic. Both the male and the female took part in the construction process. They first brought a small mud ball and deposited it on the growing nest. They then brought small pieces of straw-like grass from the driveway and poked in half-inch sections so they stuck in the mud. The building process took almost a week. Each evening I would think they must be finished, but the next morning, another layer would be added. The result was a true masterpiece. Five eggs were laid and the prospective parents took turns sitting on the nest. When the eggs hatched, both parents fed the babies. Swallow babies stay in the nest longer than most species, usually up to three weeks. Since swallows live life on the wing, the babies must be able to fly on well-grown wings when they leave the nest. Landing on the ground or a nearby tree branch is not an option for swallows. They need to be strong enough to fly and catch bugs when they leave the nest. Believe me, when all four (one died) of the birds were trying to balance on the edge of the nest at three weeks of age, it was quite crowded! What a joy it was to witness this event right on our own front porch. By the way, the Carolina Wrens slept in the nest on cold winter nights!

The beautiful little warblers will pass through our area in late April and early May. Most will continue on to their nesting grounds in New England but



they throw quite a show on their way through. The early morning (just after first light) is the best time to see them, and Pickering Creek Audubon Center is a good place to go. There are huge numbers of warblers that go through Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC and there is an organized walk every morning if you are interested. This requires a very early start! I can provide information if anyone would like to make the trek over the bridge. It is well worth the effort.

Enjoy the spring birds in your yards. Remember to keep birdbaths clean and filled and to keep feeders clean if you provide food all summer. We do provide food year round and suspect that the fact that we keep the bird activity high helps to ensure that we have nesting birds on our property. Also remember to plant for the birds, using lists of native trees and shrubs that are available on the Internet. Adkins Arboretum would be glad to provide help when planning a native garden. Happy Birding! 🌸

Less Common Fruit Trees for Talbot County Gardens

.....Chloe Pitard

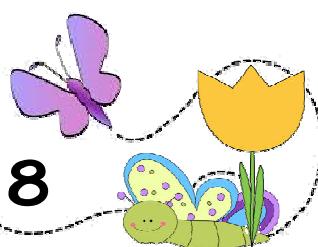
It's spring....finally! Oh how glad we are. One of the best and most welcome signs of spring is the blooming of fruit trees. Fruit trees grown for their bloom are everywhere; crabapples, pears, cherries, plums and many others grace our gardens in the spring with their lovely if ephemeral blossoms.

What about trees that you grow for their fruit? With the plethora of choices of fruit available in the supermarket and the roadside markets it seems somewhat redundant to use precious garden space growing apples, peaches, apricots, cherries or even pears. There remain quite a few



fruits that are easily grown here that are not readily available or at their prime at the market. I suggest you consider three less common three options.

Primary among these is the fig tree, *Ficus carica*. Figs are wonderful to eat: fresh, baked, in wine or in preserves. You can purchase figs occasionally at a farm stand, but they are best when picked fully ripe off the tree and eaten immediately. The varieties are endless. Don't settle for the small but ubiquitous 'Brown Turkey' that is usually the most



available in this area. Look for some of the newer varieties that are larger and tastier. The best way to get one is to find a friend with a tasty tree, take a couple of 12" cuttings, dip them in Rootone and stick them in the ground in the fall. Next spring 3 out of 4 will sprout, and you are on your way. Fig trees bear the second year you plant them, but they take a few years to be prolific.

Another wonderful fruit that is not readily available is Kaki, the Japanese persimmon, *Diospyros kaki*. They are delicious to eat and easy to grow. Unlike our native persimmon, which is very astringent, Kaki are sweet and tasty. I find them best eaten uncooked. Again it takes a few years for a tree to bear fruit, but when it does it is beautiful with large, orange globes hanging for a month or so in the early fall. They are delicious to eat.



You rarely see them in the market. When you do they look very sad compared to what you grow in your own garden.

My other favorite tree to grow at home is Quince, *Cydonia oblonga*. It is a

small tree with beautiful flowers in the spring. They are usually white and a little larger than those on the ornamental flowering quince. The fruit looks like fuzzy giant green apples. It is hard, rock hard, and much too astringent to eat out of hand.

They are full of pectin though and make the most marvelous jelly. If you never make anything at all, they are worth growing for their aroma. Pick a bowl and put it in your house. They will perfume the whole room 



Spring Flower Arranging.....

Samantha McCall

Claude Monet once said that he must always have flowers. "*I must always, always have flowers,*" said the father of Impressionism.

And I couldn't agree more!

Especially this time of year when the signs of renewal and rebirth are all around us! How quickly the ephemeral bulbs are prepared to spring into action as soon as the days become longer and the earth gets warmer.

Indeed, this is one of my favorite times of year to play with flowers because there is just so much to choose from. Spring flowering branches, bulbs and precocious perennials like hellebores are among the seemingly endless palette available to flowers lovers.

In the last issue of "Can You Dig It?" I made some suggestions for relatively easy but stunning floral

arrangements for the winter season. In this issue, I hope to do the same but with an emphasis on spring.

Here are a few ideas for bringing spring into your home that are fresh



and energizing but take little effort.

First, this is the time when we should be outside with our red Felcos in hand and cutting branches of forsythia, quince, redbud, lilacs, crabapples and magnolias for forcing inside.

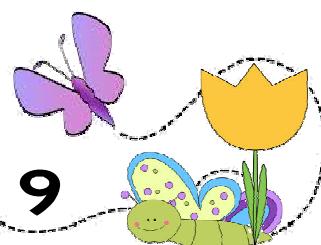
Pick one type of shrub or small flowering tree and cut as many branches to fill your container of choice. This could be an old antique pitcher, a clear glass tall cylinder or a favorite vase. Fill the container with water and insert the stems in a pleasing design. Be sure to clean off any debris, buds or leaves on the branches that will be submerged below the water line.

Keeping the water clean is essential as nothing brings flowers to an early demise quicker than bacteria. It is said that if you don't want to drink the water that your flowers are in, your flowers don't want to either!



Can You Dig It?

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The weather is warming up quickly so the branches should bloom in a matter of a few short weeks, if not sooner. Forsythia, of course, is the first to pop out in bright yellow finery for a spring party followed by quince which comes in a range of colors including red, salmon, orange and pink and single or double petals.

One tip worth practicing is misting the branches daily with a fine spray of water until the flowers bloom. The humidity inside our homes is too much for the buds and they will be more successful blooming if kept hydrated.

Within a matter of days, you will have an elegant display of flowers to put in your entryway, on your coffee table or kitchen counter. If you're feeling crazy, buy a bunch of tulips to arrange around the branches for an added pop of color and depth.

Forcing branches in spring will become as annual a practice as planting amaryllis and paperwhite bulbs at Thanksgiving.

Next up is one of my favorite spring arrangements to make. It is called a "pot au fleur" which means combining potted plants with the option of using cut flowers too. The menu of possibilities is endless and you don't have to worry about bacteria infecting the water quality. In fact, this arrangement will live longer than one with freshly cut flowers and you can re-plant the bulbs in your garden to enjoy outside next year.

For this spring arrangement, buy some flowering bulbs in pots. If you want to get more bang for your buck, choose

flowers that are on the cusp of blooming. Of course if you need immediate "Wow," pick bulbs in full bloom.

You can go with all one cultivar – like all daffodils – or all one color scheme of different flowers. Or you can mix it up and combine tulips, hyacinth, daffodils and grape hyacinth. There are no rules. This is not a flower show. It's supposed to be fun and beautiful.

In addition to flowers, you will need a water tight container (ceramic, wooden, glass or plastic), potting soil, moss and a whimsical figurine or two if you feel so inclined. In addition, budding branches with either blooms or leaves are great accents.

Depending on the size of the container, you can arrange the bulbs in their plastic container, remove the container and surround with a plastic sandwich bag or just plop it right in, dirt and all. Sometimes, I even leave the bulbs exposed on top for added interest. Hyacinths and tulips are particularly good for this.

After the bulbs are arranged and in place, fill in the empty spots with potting soil for support. Cover with moss and place a little rabbit, chick, bird or fun figure in for an accent. The last step is arranging branches loosely around the design.

If you are feeling inspired, you can make a spring scene, popping in bits of quince or forsythia or even cut flowers. In this photo I even added ranunculus which I inserted in plastic water-filled tubes and hid under the moss.

Be creative, water well and enjoy! 🌸

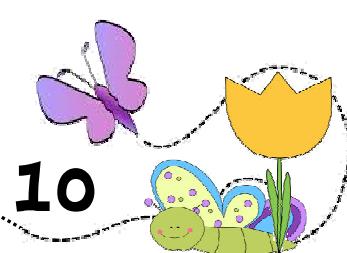
You Asked For It !!!!

.....Bobbie Brittingham

I'm sure at least a few of you remember the old TV show that was titled "You Asked For It." It was a show that gave someone something that they had wanted or asked for to see or do. Well I have heard from several members that they really enjoy the few workshops they have attended. I am very encouraged that many of you want to have more workshops, so I will give you what you asked for. The dates have not been secured, but this will come in due time. I am scheduling a workshop in mid-June. There

is a lot of material in your gardens and even along the roadside to use. We will practice designs that you can use in your own home and touch on some of the show designs too.

In the early fall there will be a workshop for appropriate design of the season. May be for a table or hall or any location you want. There will be information sent about what to collect and bring. Everyone had a great time when

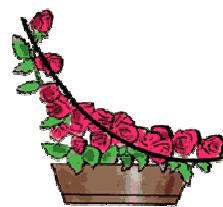


we did the Thanksgiving Table Workshop at The Tred Avon Yacht Club. This may be a repeat of that. It all depends on what you want. So let me know.

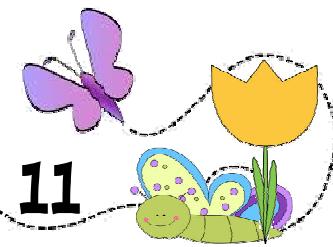
In December the Annual Wreath Decorating Day will be changed a little so that the club can create more designs to fill the need of Meals on Wheels and expand this to also include other needy and people who at Christmas-time are often forgotten. After we finish preparing our Meals On Wheels decorations, there will be a workshop to help you decorate your own wreaths that you purchase from the

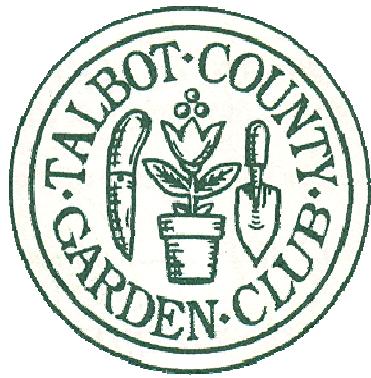
club. It will be easy to buy your wreath from the club and decorate it the same day and be that much more ahead of the season when we are all so busy.

We will have a club flower design meeting in February of 2016 and then maybe another Daffodil Flower Show next spring. All of the workshops are open to any member and also a prospective member. We should have lots of fun, and hopefully you will become more at ease with flower designing. Remember, You Asked For It! 



Can You Dig It?





TALBOT COUNTY GARDEN CLUB

P.O. Box 1524, Easton, MD 21601

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Garden Club of America

National Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Atlantic Region
The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, District I