Summer 2018

Can You Dig It?

Well here we go again….jumping right in with the Eastern Shore heat and humidity…..Summertime and the living is easy…

Before we get into the articles our contributors have written, your editor has a few words:

Dede Hoopes is taking a break from writing to concentrate on her Flower Farming and her new home in Oxford. We hope Dede will come back for a visit, and we will look forward to seeing her farm later this year on one of our Horticulture Trips…..thank you Dede.

Lin Moeller has joined us and will be contributing periodically articles on conservation….welcome Lin.

We would also ask that any of our new TCGC members who would like to join up with us, please let me know and we can tell you what we do…basically, three articles a year, winter/fall, summer and spring…Horticulture, Design or Conservation related.

Be sure to check your new Yearbook for fun and educational Horticulture Committee sponsored workshops, trips and programs. We are hoping you will find several you would like to attend!

Trish Reynolds
Editor

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We are adding a new feature to CYDI….
A Mystery ….this will be either a plant,
a tool we don't know anything about, a place,
a plant disease…..and we will ask you,
our readers, to identify "The Mystery."

Design & Layout, Rebecca Gaffney

Published by The Talbot County Garden Club

Being Penny Wise in the Watershed of the Chesapeake Bay ❋ Lin Moeller

The Watershed of the Chesapeake Bay is huge – 64,000 square miles, covering six states from the most northern point at Cooperstown, New York, extending west across Virginia into West Virginia, and encompassing most of the Eastern Shore. The spring of 2018 has been excessively rainy throughout the watershed with many inches of rainwater falling to the ground, running off into the creeks and rivers, tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. All these trillions of gallons, except that which is taken up by the roots of plants or is evaporated back into the atmosphere, eventually flow into the Chesapeake Bay. With this, excess nutrients, sediment and pollutants are carried along.

As Garden Club members with our passions, visions and fingers directed to the land, creating our 'edens,' we each need to be cognizant of what we do to hopefully help improve or at least maintain the present water quality of the Bay. We are a part of millions of people living in the Bay's Watershed. Many of us feel that since we don't live by the Bay or creeks and rivers flowing into it, or even within 1000 feet of them, what we do individually, in our yard or our home really has no significant, impact on the Bay. Yet, does it?

You may have recently looked out from the safety of your home as a heavy, steady rains overflowed gutters, continued across the lawn, and down the driveway to the street where it combined with runoff from neighbors' lots, being amazed at all the water. But, have you considered to where it flows? Also, what is being carried along with it? Sediment/dirt can be seen. Invisible are the fertilizers (phosphorous and nitrogen) not yet absorbed by plants, pesticides and herbicides washed from plants, and pollutants from hard surfaces (oil drops from vehicles and mowers, gasoline spills, soap residue from washing vehicles, etc.). All of this accumulates in the runoff as the rain hits the land and flows to storm drains and roadside ditches, and eventually into the Bay.

If we took a dollar bill and converted it to 100 pennies – one for almost each Garden Club member – individually the surface area of one penny compared to the total is very little. Collectively with each of the 100 'Abe Lincolns' looking up as one group, it is significant. Now, imagined each of the millions of individuals in the watershed of the Bay having one penny and placing it face up to form a massive group, the impact on the quality of the Bay is equally massive.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation tracks the health of the Bay and has stated that although the Bay is improving (Star Democrat, June 1, 2018) with clearer water, and underwater grasses and oysters rebounding, huge challenges still remain. Individually what can we do to help maintain or continue the rebound?

When it comes to creating and caring for our gardens, we all know how to be 'Bay Wise': organic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides in limited amounts, ground covers and mulches to absorb and retain the rains and prevent run-off, native plantings that are also beneficial to the bees, birds, etc. But, in the day to day living within our homes, how Bay Wise are each of us? How well do we do each of the following?

Recycling – Saves natural resources, lessens energy used to create products from them, and reduces the landfill waste and chemical leaching from the landfills.

Hazardous Waste – Proper disposal of chemical products, cleaners, unused herbicides a and pesticides, car products, paints, etc., keeps then out of landfills and sewer/septic systems.

Driving – Combine errands, share rides, (bike!) as car exhaust adds chemical nutrients and pollutants to the air which falls back to the earth as 'acid rain' affecting plant and animal life. Across the watershed it is thousands of pounds.

Conserving Water – Be conscious of not wasting a valued natural commodity, to not burden community treatment facilities or home owner septic systems so they function properly and limit leaching with home septic systems.

Household Cleaners – Use organic or homemade products that are alternatives to toxic products – plain soap, baking soda, vinegars, borax, club soda, lemon juice and water can be used to create cleaning product recipes, cheaper and equally efficient.

Each of us needs to honestly rate ourselves at stewards of the Bay. Each of us enjoys creating our own 'edens' and would like the Chesapeake Bay Area to be one. Therefore, each time we touch a penny, we need to think about being 'penny wise ' in the impact each of us has on the Bay in our daily life and 'dollar wise' as a garden club in the conservation of the Bay - a precious commodity.

What Came First? Chicken or "The Egg"? ❋ Samantha McCall

Move on over, floral foam, frogs and chicken wire. It's time to make room for the new chick in town.

Floral arrangers and designers alike are applauding the debut of a new, game-changing floral arranging mechanic inspired by renown floral designer Holly Heider Chapple in collaboration with Syndicate Sales.

This light-weight, plastic form can be re-used again and again and it can also be recycled which makes the growing trend of eco-conscious floral designers happy. Plastic foam is becoming less popular because of its toxic chemicals and its inability to

biodegrade back into the earth. And cut flowers much prefer to be in water rather than foam as their life span attests.

These new, must-have mechanics come in two designs of varying sizes. "The egg," which was inspired by years of molding chicken wire into egg shapes, is a must for designing bouquets – especially today's big, broad bridal bouquets.

The structure allows for easy insertion of stems to create an Asian fan shape, letting flowers be placed horizontally as well as vertically. One of the bonuses of using an egg to make a bouquet is you can put it down to do another task and it won't fall apart. No hand cramping that comes with hand-tied bouquets, and the shape allows for it to be used in an array of narrow-necked container shapes and sizes.

The other novel shape is called "The Pillow," which is similar in shape to a round disc. It sits on top of containers and with enough practice and courage, does not need to be taped down or secured with anything other than plant materials. The lightweight forms allow for easy transportation and can actually be picked up and moved to another container without losing any flowers or disturbing the design.

I've seen Holly in person actually throw finished designs around the room and they were completely unscathed. I also had my own litmus test of their strength while working on flowering Myrtle Grove for the Talbot County House and Garden Tour.

I had been working on a large mass design, using all white flowers and greens, including dogwood branches, roses, ranunculus and mock orange in a very large "Pillow." Upon completion, I asked my husband to take the finished product to the cooler in the garage. Definitely not a strange "ask" in our house.

To make a long story short, he ended up tripping en route, and fell onto my arrangement! I heard the sound of broken glass and a combination of expletives and whimpering noises and then saw my husband lying on the ground in the dark in our driveway. Thankfully, he never heard my expletives and whimpering noises.

Dutiful wife as I am, I helped him up and noticed he was bleeding. Of course my first thoughts were blood on white flowers and this accident interrupting my time-pressured work flow but I didn't tell him that. In my haste, I took the flowers out of the broken vase (one of my faves) and put them in a plastic bucket in the cooler without having time to look back.

This mishap was clearly going to mess up my schedule. After trying to dissuade my husband from going to the emergency room several times, despite the blood weeping from his hand, I finally gave in and drove him to the hospital at 11 pm. (He was, after all, my employee at the time the accident happened and I wanted to avoid any possible lawsuits or lack of cooperation in the future.)

Six hours and six stitches later across his thumb, we ambled on home, me knowing I did the right thing taking him to the hospital but I was still secretly distressed about my lost work time.

The good news is, even though I missed an entire night's sleep, when I went to check on the arrangement the following morning, it was perfectly in tact. Thank you, thank you Holly's "pillow."

Yes, a full-sized grown man had crashed down on it only six hours before and not a flower was out of place! (No blood either.) With utmost gratitude, I simply transferred it to another container as if that was my plan all along and took it on its merry way, the homeowner never the wiser.

Editor's note: As of press time, these floral design mechanics are only available through floral designers and floral wholesalers. If you want to order some, be sure to ask your local floral designer.

Indian Pinks - A Gorgeous Native Plant for the Garden * Janet Mackey

There is a marvelous native plant that is just making its way to the Big Time, and I want to let all of you in on it so you can watch for it in the nursery and add it to your garden. *Spigelia marilandica's* common name is Indian Pinks or Woodland Pinkroot. The common name hardly describes it. Had I been asked, I would have named it Maryland Fireworks!

If you were able to attend TCGC's February meeting this year, you would have heard Mikaela Boley speak about the Bay-Wise program sponsored by the University of Maryland Extension

Service's Master Gardeners. This program encourages Marylanders to undertake a range of Bay-friendly best management practices in the garden, one of which is to plant more native plants. Adding *Spigelia marilandica* to your garden is a very easy way to help the Bay!

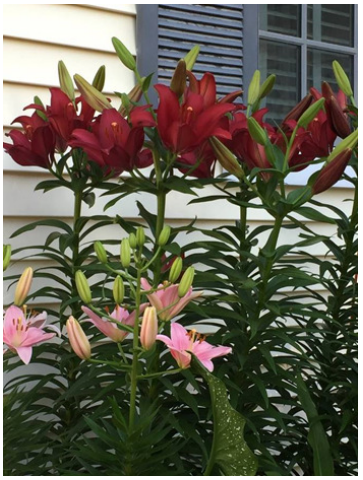
Spigelia has tubular red flowers with a bright yellow interior that open to a star-shape that seems to burst from the red flower. It is a target for hummingbirds, and the deer avoid it – how's that for a great plant? It grows in full shade to part sun, and it flowers heavily in June during that lull between spring and summer exuberance. Then it flowers occasionally for the rest of the summer. The plant is about a foot tall, and it forms a clump about a foot wide. It is native to the east coast from Maryland down to Florida.

Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware appears to be enamored of the plant. When I visited in early June, there were large swaths of *Spigelia* planted along the meadow edges and in numerous shady spots along the paths and in the parking area. Plus, the fresh arrangement on the desk in the entry featured it as a cut flower.

Perhaps you are asking yourself the reasonable question: Where has this plant been all of my life? While I can't provide that answer, I can suggest that you to ask for it at nurseries and give it a place of honor in your garden.

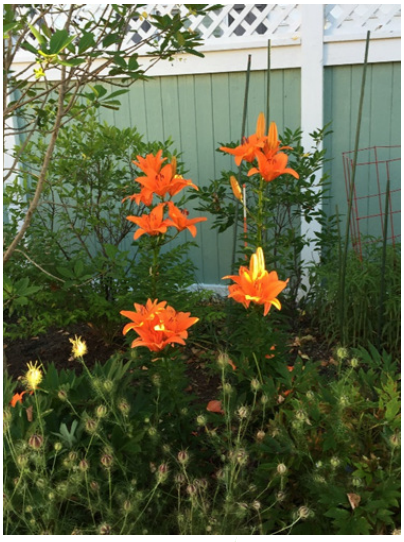
The Lilies Are in Bloom
* Chloe Pitard

The lilies are in bloom! Beloved by humans, hummingbirds and wildlife, they are a joy in the garden. Blooming from mid-June well into September they bring grace, great color variety, motion and sometimes swooning aromas to the garden. The colors range is huge, from white to red and yellow and any combination of these colors on the spectrum; almost anything but blue. Some are solid colored but many have a center blotch or spots or stripes, perhaps to guide pollinators onto the pollen laden stamen.



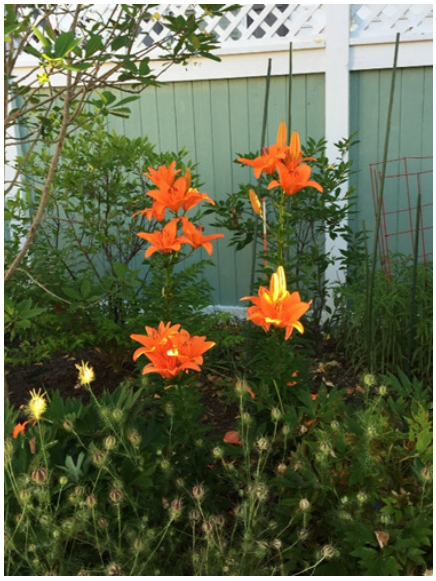
They like sun, but some shade is fine. Given good drainage, an absolute must, they are long lived and gradually increase in breadth and height over the years. They are also wonderful, long lasting cut flowers either individually or a whole stem lasting up to a week in the house.

The bulbs are readily available in great variety by mail order, especially from specialty growers in Oregon. The catalogs demonstrate the enormous variety of types and varieties with descriptions so delicious that the challenge is to restrain yourself. The bulbs can be pricy! I usually plant them in the fall, but spring planting is an option as well. Some lilies can be 6' or more. The flowers can be upright facing, Turk's cap or trumpet shaped but with petals that may be recurved. They seem to originate in the four corners of the earth. Lilies begin their bloom to fill at an interim time in the spring bloom cycle. They come after the iris, peony and early spring perennials and bulbs are mostly over but before the full show of annuals and sun flowers. They continue through the summer into early fall.



What is not to love! Well, there is the issue of wildlife, especially rabbits and deer. Lily shoots, like tulips, are tender, juicy and evidentially delicious. The flower buds seem to be so as well.

You can protect the growing shoots from the bunnies and then as your now 5' to 6' lily is full of



buds and about to bloom the deer discover it. They are seemingly grateful that you have brought the delicious bud to just the right height. In my down-sized garden I am blessed with a deer- and rabbit –proof fence that protects these precious of garden blessings. Lacking such a barrier, try to plant them off the deer's usual pathway and use the anti-wildlife sprays.

Like peonies, they get better every year. A mature patch of six foot beauties can be breathtaking!

[1 & 2 from Chloe's Garden] [3 & 4 from Bobbie's Garden] [5 from Trish's Garden]

Beauty and the Bulb

* Bobbie Brittingham

When planning your summer pots bring a little surprise to them by adding some summer bulbs. Many of the summer bulbs that we often plant in the garden are very effective in a planter. There are many varieties for both the sun and shade and many can tolerate a little of either. They add drama, height, and contrast to the design.

Some can even go to the garden in the fall after the season is over, although most can be left in the pots and stored for next year, or removed and stored by themselves. Keeping them in a cool, dark place is usually best. Let them dry out some and then cut back any leaves or flowers. I completely stop watering them and shove them into my garage and there they sit until late April or May. I bring them to the outside world when danger of frost is over. It won't take them long to start doing their thing all over again.

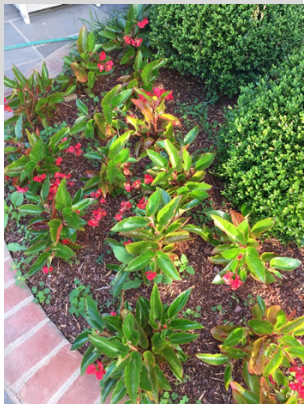
Think about the staging of your pots and containers. Groupings can create instant landscaping appeal, and elevating them also adds visual impact. Containers can hide something unsightly or direct people along a path or steps, or just be BEAUTIFUL .....

Here are some bulbs to try in your summer planters:

***Agapanthus*:** A great source of bold strap like leaves and tall balls of bright blue trumpet shape flowers can be used singularly one with other plants. They like to be root bound and can be left bit the same pot of several years; however they will become so tight in a container that removal might be a challenge. Separate every few years to prevent the loose of a container trying to get them out.

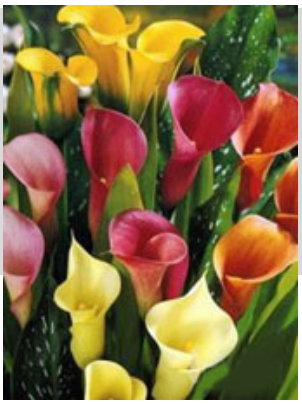
Amaryllis: You can buy a few extra when you order them for the winter and also use the one that you have stored from last year. So often I have several amaryllis that I have wintered over in the same pot as they grew during the winter and have developed small ones with them. These smaller ones are great to use in a summer pot as this gives them a chance to develop more and also give some power to the container.

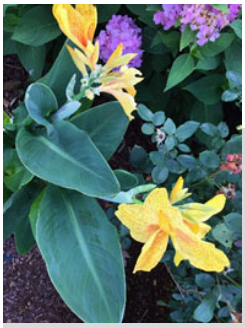
Begonia, tuberous. These come in an array of dazzling colors - many are great for the edges since they tend to hang over a bit. They are best for the shade and don't like to be too wet.



Caladium: Great change of form with a variety of colors and leaf patterns to add lots of interest for the shadier containers.

Calla Lily: A wonderful bulb for both containers and the garden. They can take mostly sun but don't want to be fried. They can winter over in our gardens now.



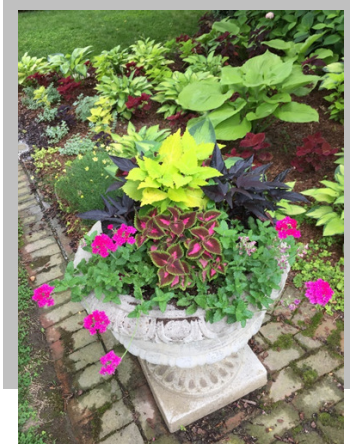


Cana: A wonderful strong growing bulb with both excellent leaf form, color, variations, and the flowers are tall and have amazing colors. Plus the seed pods are a bonus for designers. They are considered a weed and nuisance in Mexico. Glad we get the benefit.

Dahlia: A versatile bulb with many different size and colors to choose from. The smaller border kinds do better for containers, although if you're adventuresome and can do REALLY big containers the larger ones would be stunning. They are sun loving and also like it a little on the drier side.

Elephant Ear: These large (huge) leaves are being bred now with several color and leaf variations that add especially height and drama to a container. They can tolerate both sun and shade and will develop babies for you!

Some Inspirational Ideas!



Coleus - My New Favorite and Go-To Plant

❋ Trish Reynolds

Have you ever had a favorite plant that you used over and over again….well for me it use to be impatiens or vinca….and then there were those plants that I never would use….and for me those would have been Coleus! They were too bold….too colorful….they didn't like sun, and on and on…..

Well maybe it came with maturity, or a new sense of color….now Coleus is just my absolute favorite…..and for all these reasons:

COLOR

TEXTURE

SIZE

SUN OR SHADE

MANY USES

PROPAGATION

Easy as putting a stem in water….

So, What's Not to Like about Coleus?

Just Chillin' in the Shade

❋ Kim Eckert

How do you design a garden without color? Up until the last decade, many of us struggled with this question in our shade gardens. Now, it is possible to design a shade garden with colorful flowers as well as varied foliage. Vibrant color in a shade garden has been welcomed with open arms by most gardeners, including myself. I do, however, find myself longing for the relaxed zen-like feeling of a shade garden designed with only variations in foliage texture, leaf color and a few creamy white flowers. It is a wonderful calming place to be with no distractions. One of my favorite garden designs was a secret reading garden I created for my daughter many years ago. There were several existing canopy trees, hence the shade. I added understory trees, shrubs and finally perennials, grasses and ground covers. After many more years of experience, I would change a few elements of my design but, generally my plan for a relaxing zen-like garden follows:

Carex "Everst"

As the canopy trees are in place, you will want to work with them as you add understory trees to your garden. They will provide a higher mid level layer of greenery giving you a sense of vertical privacy. When choosing these trees, consider their purpose in your garden, seasonal interest, branching habit, leaf shape and color, bloom color and wildlife benefits. Three native trees are particularly beautiful: Cercis canadensis, Cornus florida and Amelanchier. I chose Cornus florida. Whether the dogwood was in bloom to provide a white canopy or fully leafed in the summer to provide shade, it gave us a comfortable sense of privacy overhead.

Carex "Avarila"

After visiting several public and private gardens in our area, you will notice that the trees and shrubs form the "bones "of the design--what you see in the winter. Pick your shrubs with winter in mind, starting with evergreens to create the flow of the garden. Buxus americana and koreana and Taxus repandens are great choices for the Eastern Shore. These shrubs will become the walls of your private enclave. Continue with deciduous shrubs to add depth. A few of my favorites are Hydrangea quercifolia 'Pee Wee' or 'Ruby Slippers,' Viburnum dentatum 'Blue Muffin' and Cornus 'baileyi.' In our reading garden, I created a soft curved edge wall cana and an arbor entry with Taxus hicksii. As we walked down a narrow path next to the wall created by the boxwoods on our left, the mixed garden framed with Hydrangea quercifolia ' Alice' and dotted carefully with Hydrangea quercifolia ' PeeWee' and Clethra 'Hummingbird ' invited you into a semi-circle with a wooden bench.

Cornus 'baileyi'

Sitting on the bench, the dogwood provides shade overhead while looking out over a beautiful mixed garden with waves of green foliage and the occasional creamy bloom of 'PeeWee' and 'Hummingbird' which also has a wonderful sweet smell. The perennials and grasses that create the waves of foliage are comprised of various cultivars of Carex, Hosta, Hellebores and Ferns. There are several cultivars of each, many more than when I designed our secret garden. If I were to redesign the garden today, I would include Carex 'Everillo' and 'Everest,' Hosta 'Patriot,' 'Sum and Substance ' and 'Praying Hands,' any Hellebore and Ferns 'Autumn Brilliance' and 'Cinnamon.' The final touch to our secret garden was a mixture of groundcovers. The soft touch of moss on your feet gave a cooling sensation and mazus or sedum ternatum would draw your eye deeper into the mixed bed at ground level. As our garden was designed for my daughter, I placed whimsical topiary in hidden places for her to find.

Hosta 'Praying Hands'

As I walked you through the memory of this special garden, I decided to continue the tradition. I think I will design a few new secret gardens for my grandchildren. Perhaps I inspired you to do the same.

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