

# Can You Dig It?

The holiday Season for 2022 is well underway..... Thanksgiving is already gone, Hanukkah starts this Sunday, and Christmas is only 10 days away...where did the time go!

In this issue we will cover a variety of things as you can see by the index.....we hope you will enjoy catching up with our writers and all they have to offer.

I would like to give a special thanks to all of them for their efforts with this newsletter and with the "Covid 19 Tid Bits" .....these are all terrific gals and have supported the Club and Horticulture Committee through some really tough times.

We started **Can You Dig It?** in 2009, so 2023 will be our 14th year. We have won National and FGCMMD recognition for this newsletter, and are hopeful we have provided you with education by sharing our knowledge of Horticulture, keeping you up to date on special projects, fostering your love of design and much more.

So please enjoy this issue! Happy Holidays, Good Health and Happiness for 2023, and spring is only 13 weeks and 6 days away.

*Trish Reynolds, Editor*

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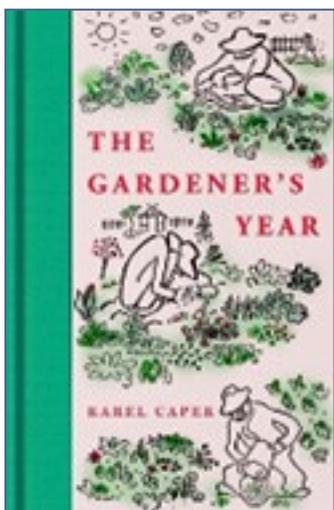
Editor.....Trish Reynolds

Design & Layout.....Rebecca Gaffney



## The Gardener's Prayer

❄ Susie Middleton



*The Gardener's Year* is a book by Karel Čapek, a Czech writer. Structured loosely around what to plant, grow or cultivate each month, Karel Čapek takes us on a rollicking journey through a year in his own small garden. His book is the source of this prayer for gardeners.

*"If it were of any use, every day the gardener would fall on his knees and pray somehow like this:*

*'O Lord, grant that in some way it may rain every day, say from about midnight until three o'clock in the morning, but, you see, it must be gentle and warm so that it can soak in; grant that at the same time it would not rain on campion, alyssum, helianthemum, lavender, and others which you in your infinite wisdom know are drought-loving plants – I will write their names on a bit of paper if you like*

*and grant that the sun may shine the whole day long, but not everywhere (not, for instance, on spiraea, or on gentian, plaintain lily, and rhododendron), and not too much;*

*that there may be plenty of dew and little wind, enough worms, no plant-lice and snails, no mildew, and that once a week thin liquid manure and guano may fall from heaven. Amen.'*"

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## Simply Creating a Holiday Wreath

❄ Lin Moeller

*'Keeping it simple'* is the key phrase when creating an evergreen holiday wreath. With that phrase in mind, I truthfully begin with a faux spruce wreath base that I recycle and use from year to year. My present wreath was purchased inexpensively many years ago at JoAnn's or Michaels. This is also an easy, fun activity to do with both friends and children. So, to simply create a holiday wreath...

1. Purchase a plain faux wreath if you don't already have one. The key to simplicity is that the faux spruce stems are wire based allowing any added greenery to be securely attached. Begin by fluffing the faux stems to give the wreath a fresh look.
2. Collect fresh greenery – a perfect excuse to wander the yard on a mild early December day. Be creative in collecting whatever you have available, i.e., holly, boxwood, pine,



spruce, arborvitae, etc. I usually use a wheelbarrow, large garden tub or small tarp to collect my clippings. To save time later, as well as the shrubs, clippings should be of a useable length of 6 to 8 inches. Always collect more than you think will be needed; the rest can be stored in a cool, protected place for later use. (I keep mine outside behind foundation shrubbery.) Grab clippers, garden tub, etc., and enjoy a wander. Once collected, if planning to hang the wreath inside, place the clippings in a tub of tepid water for a couple hours to both clean off and add extra moisture. You could also do this with a friend or neighbor and you'll have the variety of two yards!



3. Assembly –spread some newspaper and assemble items: faux wreath, clipped greenery, pine cones, ribbons, etc. Begin at the top, working right or left (or both ways) by stuffing the greenery stem end into the faux wreath and then wrapping one of the faux wired stems securely around each piece of greenery, first clipping to fit if a bit long. Randomly select types of greenery. The goal is to have the faux wreath well hidden. Periodically, like an artist step back and look at your progress, re-arranging Extras – once the faux wreath is essentially hidden beneath the natural clippings, add a ribbon and other decorations: pine cones, ornaments, holly berries, etc., securing each with florist's wire.



4. Extras – once the faux wreath is essentially hidden beneath the natural clippings, add a ribbon and other decorations: pine cones, ornaments, holly berries, etc., securing each with florist’s wire.
5. Be creative – Use a variety of greenery as shown, or just one type of greenery such as boxwood or holly.

Finally, as a post script, the wreath can be freshened as needed. If any of the attached natural clippings begin to look sad, use the left-over, stored greenery to freshen your wreath. Simply remove the ‘sad’ clipping and attach a fresh one. Also, WILT-PRUF can be sprayed on the wreath prior to adding the extras. At the end of the holiday season, simply remove the greenery and extras from the faux wreath and store for the next holiday season.

This also makes a nice, inexpensive, homemade holiday gift. The one shown is adorning an elderly friend’s front door.



## *Container Planting for the Holiday*

❄️ **Trish Reynolds**

One of the first things we see when we drive up to our family home is the front door .....and at this time of year it is usually adorned with a lovely Holiday/Christmas Wreath. In addition to the wreath I like to have my front porch containers also “dressed” for the holiday!

In the spring I will have my containers filled with bulbs....you all know how I am with bulbs, and with pansies ..... but that is for another time.

Fortunately I am able to go out on our property and cut greens, and twigs, pick up pinecones, to assemble in my containers.

The next step is to clean out the container removing the top layer of old potting soil, but not disturbing the spring bulbs. Then I add a layer of fresh potting soil and some water. I don’t expect the twigs and branches to take root, but I do need the soil to be moist enough to hold the material that I stick in the container.



Next I start by inserting the red twig dogwood branches that I had cut....and add a few evergreens standing up.....this gives the container some height. My next step is just layering the evergreens into the container so that the stems are secured in the potting soil.

Once all the greens have been layered in I added a few ornaments for the season.

The greens in the container can be refreshed depending on how long you want to keep you winter container going. New ornaments can be added....say gold and silver balls for the New Year, or Valentine ornaments...just have fun with your container!

## Winter Checklist

### ❄️ Kim Eckert

Many gardeners struggle to keep themselves busy through the winter months. Typically, we are advised to look through catalogs, read books and plan for the next season. For many of us, that is not enough. In researching what else can be done to get a head start on spring and avoid the winter blues, I have created a list of possibilities. It includes some reading, real hands-on tasks, and self-care.

There are so many subjects to delve into with regards to gardening and often you will find that the research leads to hands on tasks. You may choose to explore the idea of creating a habitat suitable for overwintering beneficial insects, like bees. A great resource for that is <https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/18-014.pdf>.

Another enlightening, although somewhat nerdy subject, is learning more about our USDA Zone on the Eastern Shore. We are designated as Zone 7a, meaning our lowest winter temperature should be between 0-5 degrees Fahrenheit. If we experience temperatures below 0 degrees for 3 or more days, which is likely to happen, you will need to know what you can do to protect your more tender plantings. Some options include providing a protective burlap wrap before the first frost or adding a bit more mulch at the base of the plant. Specific advice from Homestead Gardens in Davidsonville, Maryland includes cold-sensitive evergreens, such as Camellias and Dwarf English Boxwoods can be protected from winter damage if covered over loosely with cut needled evergreen boughs. Evergreens such as conical arborvitae, can be wrapped with twine in a spiral wrap that gathers the branches in to prevent accumulation of snow that may seriously splay out the branches

More traditional hands-on activities are helpful throughout the winter months. Some that come to mind are:

- Clean your garden tools with a wire brush and apply a light coat of oil to protect them from rusting. Sharpen edges of spades and the blades of pruning tools. Lightly sand handles and then apply a coat of linseed oil or paint your handles a bright color like red or orange which will make them easier to spot should you lay them in the grass.
- Empty, clean and store planters where they will be dry for the winter.
- Do not use rock salt to melt ice and snow. Products made of calcium chloride or potassium chloride cause less damage to plants. For traction, sprinkle sand, kitty litter, or wood ashes sparingly.
- After frost arrives in the fall, you can apply a 1" layer of mulch around perennial plants. Do not pile wood mulch on top of the plant crowns, as this encourages rotting and root development into the mulch instead of the soil. Fallen leaves can be raked and shredded with a mower and placed around perennial plants. The leaves decompose and provide nutrients for your soil – free fertilizer!
- On any warm or temperate day, take a walk around your gardens. Being outside on any day in the winter can be invigorating.

Finally, take the time throughout winter to include self-care in your routine. Exercise at any level you are comfortable with so that you will be in top gardening shape in the spring. Be sure to pamper yourself, your mind and body. Whether it is yoga, massages, or a fun exercise class with friends, take care of yourself this winter. Spring will be here soon enough.

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## A Bucket List of Garden Day Trips

### ❄️ Pam Keeton

We are lucky to live within a couple of hours of many wonderful gardens and arboretums. I've been to several, but there are so many I have yet to see, as well as some I'd like to visit again during a different season.

Washington, DC, contains some of the best kept secrets when it comes to lovely gardens and historic mansions. Hidden from view, many are the former homes of some of America's most famous people.

One could spend several days touring the acclaimed gardens around Wilmington and the Brandywine Valley. This is where the du Pont family had a hand in creating spectacular mansions and gardens.

Here's a bucket list I'm going to work through in the coming years.

### United States Botanic Garden

100 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington DC

Nestled on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, the U.S. Botanic Garden includes a 28,955 square foot glass conservatory, outdoor gardens, and the Bartholdi Fountain and Gardens. It



was built in 1933 and contains more than 11,000 plants from around the world. I've heard the holiday display at the U.S. Botanic Garden is especially noteworthy.

### **Ladew Topiary Gardens**

3535 Jarrettsville Pike, Monkton, MD

Ladew is said to be one of the ten most incredible topiary gardens in the world with 22 acres of award-winning designs. Our Club took a tour of Ladew several years ago and I found it fascinating. It was developed by Harvey Ladew, an avid fox hunter from Long Island who "heard great tales of the wonderful hunting in Harford County." Just the drive through the



countryside is enough to warrant a trip! The property also includes Ladew's manor house, which has some very interesting rooms and collections, a butterfly house, and a café.

### **Hillwood Museum and Gardens**

4155 Linnean Ave., NW, Washington, DC

Hillwood contains the gardens and mansion of Marjorie Merriweather Post, the heir to the Post cereal fortune. The gardens contain more than 3,500 varieties of plants and trees, a restored Japanese garden with a waterfall and bridge, a rose garden, and greenhouses containing more than 5,000 orchids.

### **Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens**

1550 Anacostia Ave., NE, Washington, DC

Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens is referred to as an oasis in an otherwise uninspiring part of Washington, DC, along the Anacostia River. It's run by the National Park Service and features acres of ponds, numerous water gardens, and historic greenhouses. It's also home to the Lotus and Lilly Festival in July.



### **Dumbarton Oaks**

1703 32<sup>nd</sup> St. NW, Washington, DC

Dumbarton Oaks is sixteen acres hidden in historic Georgetown with gardens and a museum. The gardens were designed by Beatrix Farrand, and the museum features a world-class collection of Byzantine and Pre-Columbian art.

### **Longwood Gardens**

1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square, PA

I toured Longwood at Christmas a few years ago and would love to go back in the spring. The gardens, fountains, and architecture were the vision of Pierre S. duPont, and are simply stunning. Longwood also offers classes and workshops, which some of our members have taken.

### **Chanticleer**

786 Church Road, Wayne, PA

Chanticleer is described as a study in textures and forms where foliage is the star. Seven horticulturists handle design, planting and maintenance using Integrated Pest Management and other environmentally friendly practices.

## Winterthur Museum Garden and Library

5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur, DE

Located in the Brandywine Valley, Winterthur was a du Pont family home. The estate features a 175-room mansion, 60-acre naturalistic garden, 1,000 acres, and a collection of nearly 90,000 pieces of American decorative art.



## TCGC and the Talbot County Free Library

❁ Chloe Pitard



TCGC has a long standing relationship with the Talbot County Library. Our acclaimed Young Gardeners meet there monthly. The Young Gardeners have been a valued part of the Library's programing for quite a few years. Cordy Tucker, who led the program until recently, also collected a group of workers who planted and took care of the entrance garden. This year we upped our commitment to care for those gardens to a regular monthly workday.

Our longest involvement though has been the regular donation of gardening books. No one is quite sure how long we have done this. I checked with some long-time TCGC members who tell me we have done it "forever." Forever is at least thirty years, but it could be as long as fifty. We donate books in honor of Club presidents at

the end of their term. We give books in memory of members who die. We give books in honor of members when they become honorary. After thirty plus years this should come to a lot of books.

And it has! I went over to the library to see what was there. There is a large and diverse collection of gardening books, at least three bookcases. I pulled out books at random to check and found many with the TCGC bookplate. There were a few names I recognized; Martha Horner and Pat Lewers, both honorary members and Betsy Tuttle, a dear member who died much too young. There were many I did not know; Sally Henry Willis, Mary Jo Meyerhoff, Dorothy Goodfellow, Betty Jean Wheeler, Denise Griffin. Some of our long-time members will recognize these names.

Then there are books dedicated to non-members. Archie Sinclair has a book. He trimmed the trees in the Historical Society Garden for many years and did not charge us. Barbara Furth did not want to be a Club member but made turkey soup for the annual wreath making workshop for many, many years. There is one with her name. There are a couple of men: Werner Duehrssen.....his wife was a Club president in 1972. That is fifty years ago. Perhaps that means Mrs. Duehrssen. People went by Mrs. in those days, but it is his name, not hers. There is one dedicated to Vincent Eareckson, whose wife was not a member. I am sure there is a story there. There are no dates on the bookplates. That would be something nice to add.



We have an excellent local library, and TCGC has worked to support it over the years in many ways. The large collection of gardening books we have donated is a resource for the whole community as well as our club members. It is a great collection and growing. Check it out!



## Easton's Rail-Trail Spur is Ready for Spring!

❁ Janet Mackey

TCGC's first Project Grant from our Capital Investment Fund is set to pay off with a beautiful spring display! The trees and garden beds along the new Rail-Trail Spur have been planted. We can look forward to seeing the plants burst into growth come spring, adding natural beauty to the new portion of Easton's Rail-Trail system. When you drive through town, pull over on Aurora Street and watch for the new plantings to grow.

The Town of Easton has expanded the Rail-Trail system, adding an East-West spur that runs through town from the existing 3-mile long North-South Trail to Moton Park on Port Street at the bypass. Rail-Trails are public paths that are built along former railroad corridors where people can walk, run, and bike without sharing the space with cars.

TCGC partnered with the town to enhance this trail expansion by beautifying the first few blocks of the East-West Spur Trail, giving the trail a more park-like appearance. In consultation with the town, TCGC designed the landscaping for a 2-block segment between Aurora St. and Hanson St. We coordinated with the town's Rail-Trail Project Manager, Kody Cario, to ensure that our design would be easy to maintain by the town's crew. Our goal is to have a project that is a success for our club *and* for the town. TCGC put together a Rail-Trail Committee made up of Caroline Benson, Paige Connelly, Cindy Pease, and Nancy Thompson with Janet Mackey as the chair. The committee worked closely with Virginia Sappington and Anne Jelich who drew up a design for the area, helped select the native trees, shrubs, grasses, and perennials, and procured the plants for the club at cost.



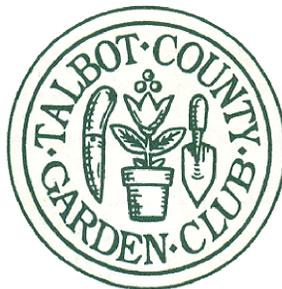
1. Creating Entrance Bed

2. Rail-Trail Committee

Front: Maribeth Lane, Nancy Thompson,  
Janet Mackey, Caroline Benson,  
Virginia Sappington.  
Not pictured: Paige Connelly,  
Cindy Pease, Anne Jelich,

3. Grass Bed





**TALBOT COUNTY GARDEN CLUB**

P.O. Box 1524, Easton, MD 21601

————— *Member of* —————

Garden Club of America

National Garden Clubs, Inc., Central Atlantic Region

The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, District I