



Spring 2023

Can You Dig It?

Here we are in mid-May, enjoying some very lovely weather, but also hoping for a bit of rain!

With this issue we are starting our 14th year of TCGC's Horticulture newsletter, *Can You Dig It?* Times have changed over these past years, and we have added a two new gals to our membership – Myra Gons and Dana Vlk.....welcome to you both! In addition to adding our new committee members we have seen the emphasis in the “Horticulture World” change.....we are hearing more and more about climate change, sustainability, using more native plants, meadow gardens....all terms we heard little about 14 years ago.

So you will see us change a bit too....writing more about these topics in addition to others.....but our goal will always be to inform you of best practices, share our knowledge, and entertain you along the way.

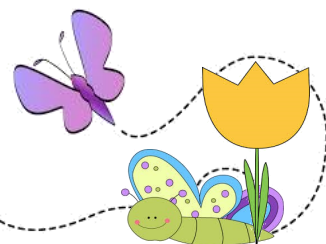
If you have a subject that you are particularly interested in just let me know.....and if you have an interest in horticulture and would like to join our committee let me or Pam Keeton know.

We hope you will enjoy the variety in this Spring issue, and we wish you happy gardening!

Trish Reynolds, Horticulture Chair and CYDI Editor

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Talbot County Garden Club – a Garden in Itself

* Lin Moeller

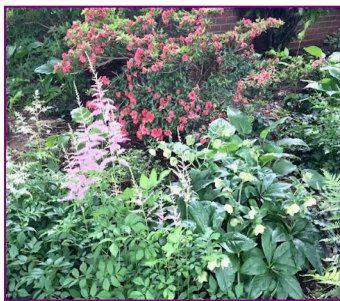
Most of us, over the past weeks of fairly mild weather have been busy helping Mother Nature nurture our gardens with the rains and lengthening sunny days, warming the soil and encouraging growth. We have been busy raking, weeding, trimming and mulching while eagerly anticipating the first blooms that each plant puts forth, the jewels of our gardens. Much of what we do from season to season, year after year is the same, but the methods, tools and plants may change



with new hybrids, methods and conservation concerns.

As an analogy, the Talbot County Garden Club itself can be thought of as being very much like a garden. The Garden Club has been a solid, vibrant part of the Talbot County landscape growing and sustaining through the seasons for over one hundred

years (1917) with its present and its future built on the accomplishments of the members who have helped sustain it. All the while changing with new ideas, methods and conservation concerns. A committee of members researched and created a beautiful book celebrating the hundred years of the club. It is a true Garden Journal showing growth and changes as well as the heart of the club through the years.



Each of the present members of the Garden Club are like the plants of the garden putting forth beautiful flowers, jewels of ability. Some with deep roots and spreading branches of grace and

steadfastness, have been a supportive framework, two for over fifty years! Others, newly planted are still settling into their niches and roles. Each plant, like a member of TCGC, provides its own special uniqueness that helps sustain the garden over the seasons and years. Like members, the collection of plants that make up the garden is the garden itself.

Pathways wind through the garden past groupings of related plants with special purposes and roles. Whether

filing a niche in the background, in a quiet shade grouping, a sunny native planting, a spring ephemeral collection, a blooming autumnal cluster, or a boarder planting visible for all to see, the plants of each group are essential. The Garden Club sustains itself like a garden through such groupings, committees with special purposes working together, forming friendships, encouraging, supporting, and sharing tidbits of knowledge. All adding special focal points to this TCGC Garden in the Talbot County landscape.

Each garden pathway leads to its center where an Obelisk stands steadfast and tall, representing eternity through the seasons and years. With the Garden Club, the obelisk is like the Yearbook which annually gives the club direction and reminds all of its purpose.

Prominently printed around the base of the obelisk are the club's objectives: enriching (*the natural beauty of our environment*), sharing (*knowledge of gardening*), fostering (*the art of flower arrangement*), maintaining (*civic projects*), supporting (*projects that benefit our community*) and encouraging (*the conservation of our natural resources*).



Throughout the garden there are also special points of reflection. A sundial noting the passage of time, birdbaths welcoming visitors from the community, a fountain giving a sense of peaceful reflection, and benches inviting all to come visit, socialize, build bonds and make garden plans with each other.

Each member should be able to mentally identify their niche, ability, interest and love in this beautiful garden of the TCGC. Each a special jewel, an integral part of maintaining and sustaining it. Finally, as the seasonal changes to the garden continue and new plants are added, a fond remembrance is needed for those firmly rooted in past seasons and no longer found in the garden. They worked, supported, fostered and helped build the garden of TCGC into the vibrant part of the community that it is today and will be into tomorrow.



Can You Dig It?



Give Your Houseplants a Summer Vacation

* Susie Middleton

Most of our houseplants are from the tropics, areas known for hot and humid climates. Sounds like Easton in the summer doesn't it? Exactly, so let your houseplants go out for the summer. Here are some tips to make sure they stay healthy.

Temperature: It's safe to move your plants outside when the outdoor temperatures stay consistently above 50°F. Pay attention to the weather report. If nighttime temperatures are set to fall below 50°F, bring your plants in for the night. Bring them back outside when temperatures rise.

Sunlight: When you're transitioning houseplants outside for the summer, it's a good idea to make the transition gradual, starting with just a few hours outdoors in a shaded area. Leave them outside for a couple of hours longer each day and bring sun-loving plants gradually into direct light. After about a week, they should be okay to leave outside for the rest of the season. A shade-loving plant is never going to thrive in searing sun, so position accordingly. Stress will hinder the plant's growth, and leaf burning might result. When in doubt, err on the shady side.

Rootbound Plants: Although houseplants usually don't complain loudly when their roots are cramped in winter, summer is a different story. In plain air, they will dry out frequently if their container is filled with thirsty roots. Check the root system before bringing a plant outside. Repot if necessary. Graduate slowly—a 2-inch promotion should do it.

Watering: Outside your plants will have heat, wind and sun, so they may dry out quicker. It helps to position plants where you'll have access to a hose. Find a high-visibility place where watering is easy. Let the water run before giving a drink. If a hose is sitting in the beating sun, it can easily hold a stream of scalding water. Don't aim that at tender foliage; send the initial trickle elsewhere and test the water before letting it loose on your plant's tender leaves.

Drainage: When placing your plants outside, remove them from the saucer so the water can flow freely from the bottom of the pot during any rain showers. Ensure that your container has proper drainage. Many indoor containers are designed so they can sit on your furniture so may not have drainage holes. Drill holes if necessary. If that's not possible, transplant.

Fertilizer: Fertilize regularly, especially if there has been quite a bit of rain. Too much rain can leach nutrients out of the soil. Plant food will quickly replenish any lost nutrients. Follow the instructions and always make sure the soil is damp before applying fertilizer.

Information courtesy of <https://bloomscape.com/plant-care>,
<https://ocsucculents.com/highlights/houseplants-to-bring-outside-in-summer>
<https://www.finegardening.com/article/can-all-houseplants-go-outside-in-summer>



Be Bay Wise in Your Garden

* Pam Keeton, Certified Master Gardener, UMD Extension Program

Most people on Maryland's Eastern Shore live within a mile of a storm drain, stream or river that feeds into the Chesapeake Bay. What they do on their land directly impacts the Bay.

The University of Maryland Extension offers homeowners, businesses, and others a free education program called Bay-Wise to help them practice bay-friendly landscape practices.





A rain garden can trap and filter run-off before it gets to the Bay.

The University of Maryland Extension offers homeowners, businesses, and others a free education program called Bay-Wise to help them practice bay-friendly landscape practices.

Among the most common problems affecting the Bay are the misuse of pesticides and fertilizers. Combined with excessive run-off, those chemicals end up polluting the Bay. People routinely use fertilizer without knowing if it's needed. A simple soil test will tell you what, if any, fertilizer you may need to improve your lawn and gardens.



Natives such as Milkweed provide habitat for pollinators.

Additionally, planting non-natives or, even worse, invasive plants like Bradford Pears rob native plants of nutrients and do not provide adequate habitat for insects, birds, and animals.

Information and Answers

Do you have problems with drainage? Would you like to plant more pollinator-friendly native plants but don't know where to start? Do you have questions about plant diseases? Do you have shady areas in which you cannot get anything to grow? University of Maryland trained Master Gardeners can provide information and answers through the Bay-wise Program.

Simply contact your local county extension office to request a consultation. A team of trained, friendly Master Gardeners will arrange to visit your property, consult with you, and provide a report with recommendations to address your concerns and desires.



Challenge.....Become a Bay-Wise Certified Property

You can take it a step further by requesting that your property be certified Bay-wise. The team will walk you through a checklist of Bay-wise practices and when you have completed the necessary adjustments to your landscape, it can be certified as Bay-wise – which is both a source of pride and a sign that you are doing your part to conserve the Chesapeake Bay.

Steps toward certification include:

- Planting native flowers, shrubs and trees
- Drainage management to prevent run-off.
- Managing pests using the principles of Integrated Pest Management
- Watering and fertilizing wisely
- Using proper mowing techniques
- Recycling yard waste
- Encouraging wildlife

Many people making small changes can have a positive impact on the Chesapeake Bay. The program is free and friendly. It's a win-win for homeowners and the Bay!





EcoBeneficial!



EcoBeneficial Tips

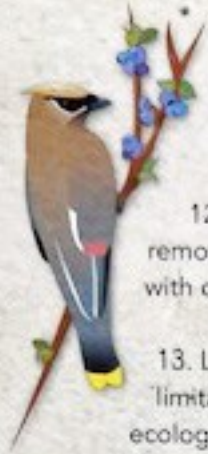
www.EcoBeneficial.com

Top 20 Ways to Create An EcoBeneficial Landscape



1. Reduce or eliminate the "Green Desert" (lawn/turf). It is an ecological wasteland.
2. Increase the health of your soil. Everything starts with the soil: healthy soil makes for healthy plants.
3. Avoid synthetic pesticides. Rachel Carson warned about them 50 years ago in "Silent Spring."
4. Limit the use of organic pesticides. Use only when absolutely necessary, and then sparingly and carefully.
5. Support beneficial insects, nature's pest control, by planting a diversity of native plants to support them.
6. Tolerate some messiness in your landscape to support wildlife. Dead logs, tree snags and brush piles are homes for many creatures.
7. Tolerate some plant damage in your landscape. Valuable insects have to eat too, and they don't eat very much.
8. Leave perennials standing through winter. They can provide food and cover for birds and insects.
9. Plant more native plants to support your local ecosystem. Native plants have co-evolved with each other and with the wildlife around them.
10. Think "plant communities" when selecting plants. Native plants don't grow in isolation. Learn which plants grow together naturally, and plant that way.





11. Eradicate or reduce the invasive plants in your landscape. Always try organic, mechanical means first.

12. When invasive plants are removed, replace them quickly and thickly with competitive, regionally native plants.

13. Limit exotic plants and know their limitations. They will not provide the same depth of ecological services as native plants.



14. Encourage biodiversity by planting diversely. Bio-diverse ecosystems are more resilient to pests, diseases and climate change.

15. Avoid double-flowered plants. They often have less nectar, pollen, and seed than single-flowered plants.

16. Select natural forms of native plants for best ecosystem dynamics.



17. Provide a water source for wildlife and insects. This is crucial, but often forgotten in many landscapes.



18. Emulate healthy local natural areas in your garden. Use nature as your reference for structure and plant selection.

19. Always plant the right plant in the right place. Some plants are flexible about where they are planted, but many are not.

20. When choosing plants, find the beauty in ecological function. As Mom said: physical beauty is only skin deep.

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www.pinterest.com/ecobeneficial





In Support of Natives

* Myra Gons

I hope everyone was able to hear Kim Eierman’s presentation in March about “*The Pollinator Victory Garden.*” She gave us plenty to think about and lots of valuable information to take outside into our gardens.

A quick review: Why Natives? Native plants benefit pollinators and wildlife, they require less maintenance, and are healthier and stronger because they are well adapted to our area and climate.

I have been frustrated shopping for natives in person because rarely do plant tags give enough information or indicate if a plant is native. I have turned to the internet for both plant lists, information, and shopping.

Here are some sources and resources I have found helpful:

Local sources (with limited sales dates):

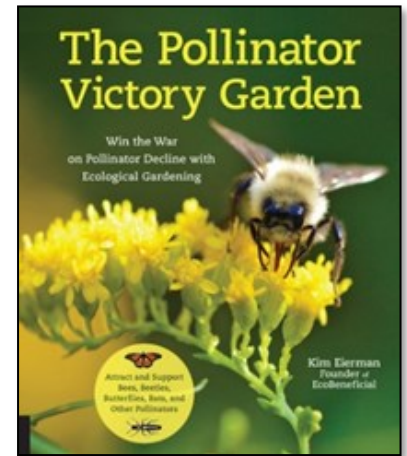
- adkinsarboretum.org
- brandywine.org
- chesapeake natives.org

Non-local websites:

- almostedenplants.com extensive native plant category
- americanmeadows.com seed mixes by locale
- gardenforwildlife.com part of National Wildlife Federation, plants, collections for your zip code
- greatgardenplants.com “shop plants > features > natives”
- prairiemoon.com plants and seeds, over 700 natives plus blog and learning center

Resources, lots of information:

- choosenatives.org lists nurseries that are 100% native (unfortunately many are wholesale only)
- karensgardentips.com Invasive plants and their native alternatives: <https://www.karensgardentips.com/category/garden-types-styles-and-designs/native-plants-garden-types-styles-and-designs/>
- Maryland Native Plant Society (mdflora.org)
- National Wildlife Federation (nwf.org) “*Native Plant Finder*” and “*Keystone Plants by Ecoregion*”



Hummingbirds Are Back—Let’s Keep Them Safe and Healthy

* Kim Eckert

I want to share an article by Dr Karen Becker. She is an amazing wellness veterinarian, wildlife biologist and licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Over the years, I have found her advice on nutrition, training and all things related to my flower girls (Lily and Daisy-my labs) to be spot on.

Dr Becker recently treated a beautiful hummingbird and was unable to save it. That event is what prompted this article.

“Warning: small rant in defense of small birds that need big help from humans. Most of you know me as a wellness veterinarian, but I am also a wildlife biologist and licensed wildlife rehabilitator. I recently treated a beautiful hummingbird, who was sick because humans fed him cloudy, polluted nectar teeming with bacteria that eventually killed him.”





I feel the same way about wildlife as I do domestic pets: it's our responsibility to know enough to do no harm. If you decide to feed hummingbirds, please do it correctly and responsibly, or you will kill them (and life is hard enough for our wild friends).

1. Do NOT use artificially colored store-bought hummingbird food 🚫❌. Commercial nectars have way too many preservatives, additives, chemical stabilizers and Red Dye #5 that's harmful to their bodies 🚫🚫🚫.



Make your own nectar instead:
1 cup plain sugar + 4 cups boiling water (filter out the impurities) 1:4 ratio means you can make smaller batches, like 1/4 cup sugar + 1 cup boiling water, if desired. Stir until sugar dissolves and let cool. Store in refrigerator and use up within a week.

❌ I love raw honey, but DON'T USE HONEY with hummingbirds 🚫🚫🚫 (Sugar

Photos above from internet sources

is 50% fructose/50% glucose, honey is 40% fructose/30% glucose + other constituents, so it's the wrong food matrix for them.) ❌ I eat organic cane sugar, but DON'T USE ORGANIC SUGAR with hummingbirds 🚫🚫. It contains more minerals (like iron) that can bioaccumulate over time.

2. Warm sugar water can quickly incubate incredible levels of pathogenic bacteria 🦠 and fungi that can infect and kill birds quickly 🚫🚫. The warmer the weather, the faster pathogenic microbes accumulate in nectar. 🦠
3. Thoroughly disinfect and refill your hummingbird feeder twice a week in the spring. Above 85 degrees, clean and refill daily. Yes, I said daily. 😊 Is this a complete pain? Yes. It's also lifesaving and crucial if you choose to feed hummingbirds. I spend 15 minutes a day taking care of my hummingbird feeders because I want the birds in my yard to not leave diseased and ill. 🐦
4. I want to be a responsible steward of the wildlife in my yard. Please do the same, or simply enjoy them without feeding them. Plant hummingbird-friendly flowers. 🌸 Better to keep them safe than inadvertently give them fatal food poisoning. ❤️

Flowers that attract and provide natural fresh nectar are: Clethra, Honeysuckle, Hemerocallis- Daylilies, Lilium, Nepeta-Catmint, Pervoskia-Russian Sage, Salvia. These plants are fairly common in our gardens, but there are many more.



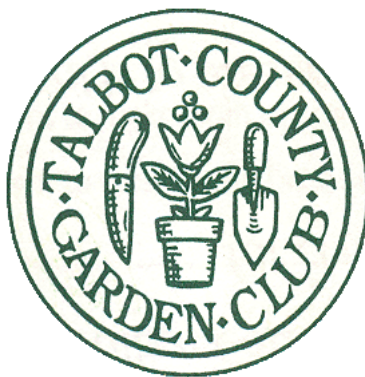
A Trip to Lavender Fields at Warrington Manor

*** Trish Reynolds**

The Horticulture Committee is planning two wonderful trips for TCGC members this summer.....our first is scheduled for July 12 to Lavender Fields at Warrington Manor in Milton, DE. There we will have a private tour of the lavender gardens and growing fields of a premier lavender farm. We will bring our own brown bag lunch and enjoy a picnic on the grounds of the farm before we begin our tour. In addition, we will have plenty of time to shop all things lavender before heading home.



So be on the lookout for more information and sign-up sheetwe will be sending a notice of our trip in mid-June.....Hope to see you there!



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