



CLAY BREAKING NEWS

MOUNT AIRY CLAY BREAKERS GARDEN CLUB

Member of National Capital Area Garden Clubs. The National Garden Clubs, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

“ Protecting the Environment “

Our club had a very busy year. Pat Hall, Marian Moreland, Sonia Johnson and I attended the District 1 Awards Meeting on March 3, 2012. I am so proud of what each of you had done this year to achieve the following Awards: Outstanding Garden Club Achievement (24 or fewer), Outstanding Garden Club Yearbook (24-29 members), Arbor House Volunteer Citation, Community Projects Citation, Education and Youth Programs and Financial Supporters Certificate.

CONGRATULATIONS

Marian Moreland's name was submitted for the Perennial Bloom Award back in August, but she did not win. However, she was among three ladies who were given the Director's Certificate of Appreciation. Danielle Brabazon, District 1 Director presented Cynthia Chesley from Tanta Cove Garden Club, the District 1 Award. Marge Stembel from Woodmoor Garden Club was given the Perennial Bloom Award, and Marian Moreland the Perennial Achievement in Garden Club Award. Each of these ladies also received a gift card from District 1.

Upcoming events: NCAGC Awards meeting is on Thursday, March 29 at 10:30 am in Fairfax, VA and will be held at the City of Fairfax Regional Library. The Club's Annual Plant Sale is scheduled for May 5 and District 1 Presidents' Meeting is Saturday June 16, 2012.

Julie Harrison, president.

COMMITTEES' REPORTS

DESIGN Linda Millette, Chairman

In September we embarked on a floral design program. Pam Smart, in my absence read the first lesson and distributed the handouts. Since then, I have communicated information- mostly from the Design Study Manual of the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. - which pertains to flower arranging for competition. The following topics have been covered through March, 2012:

Designing with Plant Materials: Preparation of material and containers; Container Grown Fruits & Vegetables, and Dried Plant Materials.

The Elements and Principles of Design: Definitions- Light and space; Form and Line; size and texture; Color.

April and May will cover: The Principles of Design: Balance and Proportion; Rhythm and scale.

HORTICULTURE Elaine Arnold, Chairman

My little "talks" are based primarily on Doug Tallamy's book BRINGING NATURE HOME. He explains in his book that there is an unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife. When native plant species disappear or are replaced by alien exotics, the insects disappear, thus impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. By favoring native plants, gardeners can provide a welcoming environment for wildlife of all kinds. For the first time in its history, gardening has taken on a role greater than the needs and enjoyment of the individual gardener. Gardeners have become important players in the protection of our environment and the management of our wildlife. Through these talks I hope to encourage our club members to continue to make wise choices in plant selection and gardening practices, and provide them with additional resources to help make those choices.

The following are ways to access native plants:

April/Spring- Old Bowie Wild Bird & Nature Store will be selling native plant seeds & plants throughout the spring (<http://www.polyxenes.com/>)

April 14, 2012 - Green Bowie EXPO. Visit all the booths , including the BG4W Habitat Team, and stay for a 30-minute talk about native plants. Kenhill Center, Bowie, MD.

Visit <http://www.bowiegreenexpo.org/>

PUBLICITY

Marian Moreland, Chairman

The following article was included in the February Publication of the Marlton Community Advocate. It was submitted by Marian Moreland. The Advocate is a monthly publication distributed to all members of the Marlton Residential Planned Community in Upper Marlboro, MD:

Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club of Upper Marlboro met on January 12, at the home of Pat Hall. The program for the evening was "Ecosystem and Plants of Brazil" given by Gregg Kearns, M- NCPPC naturalist. He discussed weather conditions in Brazil and how it affected the way they maintained their parks and trails. He showed a film of his travel to that country four years ago. We learned about the rain forest, the largest wetland in the world, and the many birds and plants that survive there.

The following article was submitted to the March Edition of the Marlton Community Advocate, however, it was not published.

The Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club of Upper Marlboro, MD met at the home of Linda Millette on Feb. 9, 2012 at 6:30 P.M. for their regular monthly meeting. Refreshments were served immediately. The decorations were outstanding. Linda used the Valentine theme and each person present received a personally selected gift from under the Valentine Tree. The program for the evening was Chesapeake Bay Update by Matt Robinson, Environmental Protection Specialist, Stormwater Management Division. Vice President Gilda Allen introduced Matt as one of her former co-workers. The Mount Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club along with many other clubs in District 1 of the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. donate annually to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Matt discussed the status of the bay and the cleanup effort that has been in progress for years. He showed a film of wildlife in the bay. Many problems still exist. As individuals we were encouraged to plant trees and use rain barrels at our homes. Improvements can also come from getting involved in our local government. Tina Wells, Director, Volunteers & In- Kind Resources from the National Center for Children and Families 6301 Greentree Rd. Bethesda, MD 20817, spoke on the need for volunteers to help in gardening areas at their location in Clinton, MD. Some members brought a heart made from natural materials from their yards.

NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

President Vickie Godwin visited the club meeting in January. She spoke in detail on the characteristics of a rain garden- her project as President. It was pointed out that the five rain gardens will be located at the U.S National Arboretum. We were reminded and encouraged to participate in the tour in France, planned for July 2012.

THE CAPITAL GARDENER

The NCAGC quarterly Newsletter has now entered a new phase. It will no longer be distributed in print form, as Spring 2012 edition was the last time for such an issue. It will now be circulated among members electronically through the President of the individual garden club. So, be mindful, and watch out for the e versions of the upcoming quarters.

PERSONAL NEWS: In December 2011, Esther Neckare had retired from the Federal Government after 24 years. We wish Esther a productive retirement.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

April 12, Grasses by Shiela Brady, from Oehme Van Sweden & Associates.

Tour of River Farm: Headquarters of the American Horticulture Society.

May 5: Annual Plant Sale.

May 12: Plant exchange & seasonal tables by club members.

June 3-9: National Garden Week.

June 14: Dinner Meeting & Installation of Officers.

Saturday, June 9: Promotion of Garden Clubs by District I & IV, at Behnke's Garden Day.

Saturday, June 16: District 1 Presidents' Meeting at the home of NGC President Shirley Nicolai.

HELPFUL HINTS

Pruning is important. Spring blooming shrubs, such as Deutzia and Forsythia, form their buds the previous summer. These plants should be pruned only after their blooms have faded. Shrubs that flower in the summer, such Butterfly Bush and Hydrangea, bloom on current year's growth. These shrubs should always be pruned in late winter or early spring, after all danger of frost has passed. Be sure to prune before new growth begins and have fun. The above mentioned was a reminder from Julie Harrison.

Fertilizer Information: ...Too much fertilizer is worse than too little. Overuse of Fertilizer will promote rampant lush foliage (and floppy, sprawling plants) at the expense of flower production. Over-fertilized plants are more prone to pests and diseases; when in doubt, use less. It is better for the environment and your garden to improve your soil with the addition of organic matter which will make the use of fertilizer less necessary. Applying granular fertilizer in late winter or early spring (see Chart) allows time for it to break down and get to the plant's root system...Taken from the "Month-to-Month Perennial & Shrub Maintenance Chart for the Mid-Atlantic Region" a Horticultural Reference produced by member of District 11 garden clubs. In the Chart a light application of (a four month slow

release fertilizer like Osmocote) or any well balanced fertilizer is recommended to be made to the following perennials among others in March & April:

Agastache 'Blue Fortune'(anise hyssop); Centaurea Montana (bachelor's button); Paeonia Officinalis(peony-herbaceous). Fertilize Aconitum carmichaeli (monkshood, wolfsbane) in April.

The chart also recommended that a similar fertilizer can be applied to Phlox paniculata (summer phlox) in March and June. Pinch back in April and thin to five stems in May.

CLUB LIBRARY: The Mt. Airy Clay Breakers Garden Club has a library of books that are available to all members. Contact Marian Moreland, Librarian, for a list of the books in stock and further information.

Nature is not governed except by obeying her. Francis Bacon.