

THE GARDENER

Newsletter of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club



<http://www.bcgardenclub.org>

The aims of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club shall be to promote interest in and develop skills in gardening through cooperation, joint efforts, and good fellowship.

June 2010

Next Monthly Meeting

By *Neil Potash*

The next Garden Club meeting will take place in the multi-purpose room of the Bowie City Hall, 2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie, MD 20715 on Tuesday, June 29, 2010 at 7:30 PM.

This will be a special meeting to discuss club business and payment of annual dues. There will be no formal program. If we do have time we should discuss committee work and the old adage of founder Jonas Bassen's idea of "Required Volunteering". We would like to ask more people to help maintain the club! At the last board meeting we had just four members attending. The BCGC also needs to select a community project, discuss mentoring of officers, address payment of dues, create a new Membership Packet, and encourage new people to join. Just be prepared to help the club keep going!

If we have time after the business meeting, we can gather up the Master Gardeners to answer any serious garden questions.

Next month Dr. Grande, a chiropractor, will teach us how to spare our muscles and limbs while gardening.

Don't forget our annual picnic to be held on Saturday, June 12 from 3-7 p.m. at Highbridge Park.

President's Comments

by *Jesse Terres*

At the last meeting I got several questions in regards to growing tomatoes. Particularly how much to feed them. My stock answers are either nothing or not much at all. Years ago I remember seeing pictures of well-fed tomato plants along side poorly fed plants. The difference was significant. The well-fed plants were large, bushy, and dark green with few tomatoes. Beautiful plants. The poorly fed plants were scrawny, but loaded with tomatoes. I guess it's whether you want beautiful plants or lots of tomatoes.

When I set my plants out I normally sprinkle about a tablespoon of granular fertilizer in the planting hole. Usually 5-10-5, 10-10-10, or a fertilizer just for tomatoes. I also throw in about a tablespoon of limestone. The limestone contains calcium that prevents blossom end rot. Better yet, I also sprinkle in a handful of pulverized eggshells for the calcium (I have my wife trained to save eggshells throughout the year.). A month or so later I may feed them again, but not much. Perhaps a handful of fertilizer sprinkled 10

to 12 inches from the plant. If the plant seems to be doing well I usually leave it be. I borrowed a page from the British and am constantly improving my soil. Therefore they really don't need to be fed all that much.

This year we have to be vigilant for early arrival of late blight. Last year early arrival of late blight put an early end to a lot of tomato growing. The only fungicide I'm aware of for the prevention of early blight is Daconil. You can wait until you see signs of the blight before using Daconil and hope you catch it in time or begin now with weekly applications of the spray. Daconil comes ready-to-use or in concentrated form to be mixed that in the long run is probably the least expensive way to go. For organic growers liquid copper fungicide is recommended but if you water overhead or it rains reapplication will be required immediately afterwards.

My understanding is that a grower has already detected early blight in his greenhouse so keep a good watch on those tomato plants.

Meeting Minutes, May 25, 2010

President, Jesse Terres, called the meeting of the Bowie Crofton Garden Club to order at 7:35 p.m.

Minutes could not be approved, as there were no minutes in the last newsletter.

Neil Potash, 1st Vice President for Programs, spoke briefly on the BGE rebates for trees. He stated he had success with receiving money from BGE. The deadline is rapidly approaching.

PROGRAM

Neil introduced our speaker, Mr. Courtland Lee, owner of Boxlee Azalea Farm. Boxlee is home to two Historic Sites in Prince George's County and is situated on 10 acres in Glenn Dale, MD. It is one of 10 nationwide nurseries selected to reintroduce Glenn Dale Azaleas. He discussed planting, watering, fertilizing and care of azaleas. Mr. Lee also showed and discussed several azalea slides. After the presentation, there was a question and answer session.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Installation of officers was as follows:

2nd Vice President, Membership: Brian Swetnam (Brian had resigned and then was "coerced" into serving another term)

3rd Vice President, Plant Exchange: Eleanor Leshinsky

4th Vice President, Public Relations: Karen Woolfley

Treasurer: Joan Walker

Secretary: Janelle Dietrich

Field Trips: Karen Anadol

Member Garden Tours: Kent Winterson

There was a discussion whether to hold a June meeting. There was a motion, discussion, seconded and passed that there would be a June meeting at Bowie City Hall on June 29, 2010. This meeting would serve to remind people to renew their membership. Rich Dodson will speak to Don, webmaster, about a June newsletter being published. The October meeting has been moved from Bowie City Hall to North Bowie Community Center.

Treasurer's Report: Joan Walker gave the budget report and the report on the plant sale results.

Membership Report: There are currently 112 members. A decision was made by Jesse Terres (after input from Brian Swetnam) that the “Meet Up” website would be cancelled. Only 5 garden club members have joined and there are several people who have joined that are out of the area therefore unable to attend meetings of the club.

Sunshine: Rich Dodson (for Barbara Eberstein). Frances Moyer, a music contributor to our annual Christmas party, was in an accident and is in a wheelchair. Rich asked for volunteers to help with her yard work. She is “laid up” for about a year in a wheelchair. A sign up list was passed around.

Hospitality: Gaye Williams for Eleanor Leshinsky. The annual picnic will be held on Saturday, June 12 from 3-7 p.m. at Highbridge Park. If you’d like to grill your own meat, bring a grill. A signup sheet was passed around. Also, a door prize list was passed around.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: Our guest, Michelle Forbes, was introduced.

Door Prizes went to Claudia Ploor and Neil Potash who kindly passed his door prize of an azalea from Boxlee Azalea Farm to Michelle Forbes, our guest.

The **plant exchange** took place and the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Janelle Dietrich*, Secretary

ALERT: Late Blight of Tomato

Late blight of tomato was detected in a greenhouse in St. Mary's County on May 7, 2010. The grower has taken measures to eradicate the disease. We don't know at this time whether it will spread, or if the grower will be able to contain the outbreak. We also do not know if this outbreak is related to the 2009 outbreak. The **University of Maryland Extension** has mobilized to closely monitor the situation. We are asking gardeners to contact us immediately if they notice suspicious symptoms on tomato or potato plants.

Here’s a list of steps gardeners can take this spring:

- Educate yourself: click “Late Blight” on the Grow It Eat It home page for photos, video, and Q&A: <http://www.growit.umd.edu/>
- Be observant and vigilant! Closely examine tomato transplants prior to planting. After planting, monitor your tomato and potato plants closely for symptoms of the disease.
- If you grew potatoes last year, be sure to dig up and remove any potato pieces you missed from last year’s harvest. That goes for any volunteer potato plants as well. Do not plant any store-bought potatoes or potatoes from gardens that were infected last year with late blight.
- Contact the Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) by phone (1.800.342.2507) or e-mail (“Send a Question” at www.hgic.umd.edu) if you believe you have late blight. It would be very helpful if you

included a close-up photo of suspected late blight infections. We may ask you to send in a sample of your plant.

- HGIC does not recommend that gardeners spray fungicides at this time. We will recommend fungicide applications if we begin to receive reports confirming that the disease is active in home or community gardens.

Treasurer's Reports

By *Joan Walker*

| April | | May | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Starting Balance/Checkbook | \$1,295.40 | Starting Balance/Checkbook | \$3,865.05 |
| <u>Expenses</u> | | <u>Expenses</u> | |
| Brian Swetnam-Stamps | \$17.60 | Gaye Williams/Plant sale | \$261.20 |
| Cash--Plant Sale | \$210.00 | Crofting Printing | \$38.27 |
| Cash--Plant Sale | \$200.00 | Brian Swetnam/stamps | \$8.80 |
| Bowie Florist | \$50.00 | Joan Walker/plant sale x/p | \$10.80 |
| | | Joan Walker/Speaker honoraium | \$50.00 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | \$477.60 | TOTAL | \$369.07 |
| <u>Deposits</u> | | <u>Deposits</u> | |
| 1 membership | \$5.00 | Memberships-3 | \$42.00 |
| Philly Trip--3 rebated tickets | \$66.00 | Plant sale | \$20.00 |
| Ret. Bank | \$410.00 | Plant sale | \$189.00 |
| Plant Sale | \$2,343.25 | Memberships-3 | \$34.00 |
| Plant sale | \$105.00 | | |
| Plant Sale | \$118.00 | | |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | \$3,047.25 | TOTAL | \$285.00 |
| | | | |
| Checkbook Balance | \$3,865.05 | Checkbook Balance | \$3,780.98 |
| | | | |
| <u>AVAILABLE FUNDS</u> | \$3,865.05 | <u>AVAILABLE FUNDS</u> | \$3,780.98 |

Proposed Budget, 2010--2011

By *Joan Walker*

| Expenses | | Projected Income | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Historian | \$25.00 | Checkbook bal. fwd. | \$1,300.00 |
| Newsletter Printing | \$400.00 | | |
| Postage/P.O. Box Rental | \$400.00 | Field trip *5 | \$275.00 |
| Scholarship/UMD | \$500.00 | Membership Dues *6 | \$1,000.00 |
| Secretary | \$25.00 | Plant Sale | \$2,000.00 |
| Hospitality *1 | \$650.00 | | |
| Speaker Fees | \$300.00 | Total | \$4,575.00 |
| Treasurer *2 | \$25.00 | | |
| Sunshine | \$25.00 | *1 -- includes xmas party, picnic & Philly snacks. | |
| Membership | \$25.00 | *2 -- 100 stamps for Treasurer | |
| Community Project/s *3 | \$200.00 | *3 -- Project needs to be selected. | |
| Plant Sale *4 | \$100.00 | *4 -- Plant sale had unusual expense this year. | |
| Web Site | \$250.00 | *5 -- Profit from Philly trip. | |
| Miscellaneous | \$50.00 | *6 -- Calculated @100 members X \$11 average. | |
| TOTAL | \$2,975.00 | | |

Website Password Protection

By *Donald Sminkey*, Webmaster

At the request of the Executive Committee, the only page that is password protected on our club website is the Membership page. There has been some concern lately that the password protection has vanished from the Membership page. This is not true. The protection is securely in place, as it always has been. If you start your web browser and go to the website at <http://www.bcgardenclub.org> and select the Membership button, you will be asked for the Username and Password. Once you log onto this page, the browser may remember your logon entries. So you can go to a different website, return to the Garden Club website and enter the Membership page a second time without entering the Username and Password. This fact leads some to believe that the password protection has vanished, but that is not so.

The intent of protecting the Membership list is so that the list will not be used by outside organizations or individuals and lead to a lot of unsolicited junk mail and emails. It is not to prevent Identity Theft, as some have alleged. If that were true, then all phone books should be classified. Your identity can not be stolen using only the information on the Membership page.

Glenn Dale Azaleas

By *Rich Dodson*, Master Gardener

Those of us who attended the May Garden Club meeting received a genuine treat, when Courtland Lee, the owner of **Boxlee Azalea Farm** gave us a glimpse into the history and current status of the Glenn Dale Hybrid Azaleas.

Alas, this year's azalea season has just about passed us by, as most azalea varieties bloom in mid-April to mid-May in the mid-Atlantic. A few varieties bloom a month or so earlier and there are even a few varieties

that bloom as late as August and September. In warmer climates, some azalea varieties bloom again in the fall. This re-blooming trait is being bred into the Encore™ Azaleas for reliable fall blooming in colder areas as well.

None the less, if you plan on starting or adding to your azalea collection, now is the time to begin your homework and you have a few months to think about the specific azaleas to add to your yard/property. In your deliberations, you should not overlook the desirability of the Glenn Dale Hybrids, as they have been specifically bred to be winter-hardy in our area and we have perhaps the most complete collection of Glenn Dales available right here in our own backyard. Courtland Lee's Boxlee Azalea Farm, 6106 Hillmeade Road, Glenn Dale, MD 20769, Tel: 301-262-1135 is the premier supplier of Glenn Dale Hybrids in the U.S. (and for that matter the world).

What are Glenn Dale Hybrids?

In the late 1920's, Benjamin Y. Morrison, the first director of the National Arboretum, began an azalea hybridizing program at the USDA Plant Introduction Station, Glenn Dale, MD, with the goal of developing large-flowered landscape azaleas, similar to those which grew in southern gardens that would be winter hardy in the Washington, DC region and provide overlapping periods of bloom from April through June. Morrison used a wide variety of parent material, crossing cold hardy selections with early and late flowering colorful, large-flowered evergreen forms, that were not hardy in the mid-Atlantic region. Among these were *Rhododendron kaempferi* (Kaempfer's azalea), *R. poukhanense* (Korean azalea), *R. indicum* and parent in more than 100 Glenn Dale hybrids, *R. mucronatum*, *R. phoeniceum* and Kurume hybrids, clones of the "Southern Indian" azaleas now known as "Belgian Azaleas", *R. simsii*, and the mysterious 'Vittatum', parent in over 100 Glenn Dale hybrids. The program lasted 25 years, involved hundreds of crosses and resulted in 454 new evergreen azalea cultivars. The hybrids were distributed from 1942 through 1954 to nursery growers, gardens and individuals across the United States.

Significance: Prior to the introduction of the Glenn Dale Hybrids, commonly available azaleas were small flowered, bloomed over a shorter period of time, offered few color choices and were not always attractive year round. The Glenn Dale Hybrids represent the accomplishment of an ambitious mission: landscape azaleas hardy in the Mid-Atlantic (Zone 7) region, with colorful flowers of up to four inches wide, covering the mid April - mid June bloom gap, and a large volume of cultivars produced. Almost all of the cultivars and many of the parents still exist.

The Glenn Dales also reflect Morrison's interest in flower character and quality: clean, pure colors; definite contrasts in patterned flowers; reflective or transmissive character; flower stalks (pedicels) strong enough to bear the weight of the flowers and the ability of the flower to fall off, rather than die and persist on the plant.

Morrison grasped the opportunity to incorporate a wide range of germplasm in the breeding program, using not only azaleas from important U.S. private and commercial sources, but also plants or seed collected by plant explorers in Asia, especially China in the 1920's and later.



For a complete list of all 454 Glenn Dale Azaleas still in existence, visit the Azalea Society of America website:

<http://www.azaleas.org/index.pl/glenndaes.html> where most of the names are linked to their images, giving you an opportunity to see exactly how their blooms look.

Next Spring you should also plan to visit the U.S. National Arboretum, where approximately 15,000 azaleas from the USDA Plant Introduction Station at Glenn Dale were planted in 1946-47. A sizeable number of azaleas from that original planting have survived to this date. The photo at the left shows the south face of Mt. Hamilton at the National Arboretum, with the azaleas in bloom.

You may also want to consider purchasing the 'Ben Morrison' Azalea, a truly spectacular Glenn Dale Hybrid

derivative selected by Dr. John Creech, a Director of the US National Arboretum, to honor Benjamin Yoe Morrison.

Buying and Planting Azaleas

In the South, azaleas and dogwoods are the stars of spring flowers. These two plants go well together, but it is the azalea that brings the most variety and color to your yard. Azaleas may be the most popular flowering shrubs in Southern gardens, but the introduction of Glenn Dale Hybrids into the mix allows those of us in the Mid-Atlantic area to enjoy this same beauty.

Azaleas can be planted any time of the year if proper attention is given to providing adequate water. Most people buy azaleas in the spring when the plants are blooming so they can choose the right color combinations. However, fall is probably the best time to plant, because the plants can then become better established before hot weather. You can still find out what your azalea will look like in bloom by visiting various websites to see mature plants, often shown in a garden setting with other complementary azaleas.

If considering buying inexpensive azaleas at "Box Stores," you must be aware that many of the plants they sell have been imported from Southern Nurseries and may not be winter-hardy in this area. Always buy plants that are sturdy with a good branch system. Never buy plants with weak, spindling growth; this usually means the plant has a poor root system or that plants were grown too closely spaced in the nursery. The best size to buy is 12 to 16 inches tall. Smaller plants are more likely to be injured by cold. When buying, remember also that you will get the most effective display of flowers by planting a mass of single variety instead of using many varieties and colors together.

Azaleas are usually bought as container-grown plants. They are sometimes pot-bound. This means they have a mass of roots growing around the outside of the ball of soil. Take the plant out of the container before you buy it. Make sure the roots are healthy and completely fill the pot. If you notice plants are pot-bound when you take them out of the container, massage the root ball to loosen some of the roots before planting. Also, untangle some of the roots at the bottom of the root ball. This action will help those roots to spread out and grow away from the original ball of container potting medium.

RESOURCES:

U.S. National Arboretum website: www.usna.usda.gov/

Azalea Society of America website (See above)

University of Maryland Extension Service website: www.hgic.umd.edu/_media/documents/hg51_000.pdf

BCGC Annual Picnic

Mark that calendar for the club picnic, 12 June at Highbridge Park. There will be a sign-up list at the 25 May club meeting or email Gaye at williagl@mda.state.md.us with your proposed contribution and number of people. Some giveaway plants usually appear as well.



| Executive Committee | | | From the Editor Donald Sminkey All members of the Garden Club are welcome to write an article on a gardening-related subject. Please send via e-mail to: gardener@bcgardenclub.org. Include "B-CGC" or "Garden Club" in the subject heading; or mail to: Donald Sminkey, 508 Otway Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587 Deadline, July issue: July 8, 2010 |
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