

# THE GARDENER

*Newsletter of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club*



*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.*

## March 2009

### Next Monthly Meeting By *George Cornwall*

The March 31, 2009 meeting will be held at the **Bowie Community Center** at 7:30 p.m. instead of the Bowie City Hall. The Bowie Community Center is located at 3209 Stonybrook Drive Bowie, MD. We are happy to have Gene Sumi as our speaker at the meeting. Gene will be presenting *New Plants for the 2009 Growing Season*.

Gene has been the Educational Coordinator at Homestead Gardens located in Davidsonville, MD, since 2004. He manages educational programs, seminars and workshops as well as organizing the Garden Spades program offered by Homestead. He is a Maryland Certified Professional Horticulturist and is an adjunct instructor in Horticulture in the Continuing Education Division of the Prince George's Community College.

The time is right to get your gardening game plan started for 2009. So please join us at the March 31, 2009 meeting to learn more about new, exciting plants, trees, shrubs, and perennials that will give your garden an extra special look this year.

**Note: The March 31, 2009 meeting will be held at the Bowie Community Center instead of City Hall.**

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### Presidents Comments by *Jesse Terres*

Damn the torpedoes-I mean the weather! Full speed ahead to the Philadelphia Flower Show, and what a great trip and show it was. Many thanks to Ellen Brous for her excellent planning and Eleanor Leshinsky, the Galloping Gourmet of snacks, for those delicious treats. Those two make a team second to none. Then when we arrived at the show the first thing we saw was a huge arrangement of roses. I said to my sister in law who accompanied me they looked so good my first thought was they must be artificial, but their fragrance immediately proved me wrong. Throughout the day it was one mesmerizing attraction after another.

We attended a talk on seeds by George Ball of Burpee seed Company that caused me to purchase a pack of Burpee's new Sweet Seedless Tomato seeds and Early White Vienna Kohlrabi seeds. I have never grown or eaten Kohlrabi before, but according to George you can eat them like apples. I'll keep you posted.

One thing I couldn't get over was the number of woman on our bus that were interested in worm composting. Imagine that. Woman and worms! Just remember not to use manure from horses that have been wormed or you'll be kissing your worms goodbye.

My only disappointment was the number of tomato plants with no tomatoes, but my disappointment was soon overcome when I found this great book "You Bet Your Tomatoes" by Mike McGrath, host of public radio's you Bet Your Garden, and former Editor-in-Chief of Organic Gardening. I've read it cover to cover and am now into my second reading. The little bit I learn makes it all worthwhile.

My thanks again to Ellen and Eleanor for planning a great trip.

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## Meeting Minutes, February 24, 2009

The Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bowie Crofton Garden Club was held at the Bowie City Hall.

Jesse Terres, President called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Philadelphia Flower Show:**

Ellen Brous reviewed the logistics for the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Flower Show bus trip to Philadelphia. Ellen asked for an additional \$25.00 for refreshments and it was approved.

### **Program:**

Jesse Terres introduced Bob Stewart, Master Gardener. Bob spoke on the "Art & Science of Pruning." He explained that pruning is one of the lost arts of horticulture. His talk was very informative and very well received. Bob answered numerous questions.

### **Bonsai Class:**

Jesse Terres informed us of a Bonsai Class. It's a free 12-week beginner's bonsai class. It will be taught at the Bowie Senior Center starting April 3, 2009. The class will meet from 9am to 11am on Friday's. The class size is limited to no more than 10 students so that you can receive more individual assistance. For more information, call 301-809-2300. The class instructor is Akey Hung, retired USDA scientist and founder of the Bowie Bonsai Club.

### **Riversdale House Museum's Garden Party:**

Jesse Terres informed us of the Garden Party. Members of the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club are cordially invited to Riversdale House Museum Garden Party, a celebration of gardening past and present. Begun in 1801, Riversdale was home to Rosalie Stier Calvert and her husband George Calvert. Rosalie enjoyed a lifelong love of gardening, a legacy that has been treasured and preserved. Share this legacy as you learn

about the new projects and endeavors taking place in Riversdale's interpretive garden. Mingle with fellow local gardening clubs as you take part in specialized tours of the house and the Memorial Garden and enjoy a foodways demonstration in the open-hearth dependency kitchen. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP by Monday, May 11 to 301 -864-0420 with the number of members attending. Details: Sunday, May 17th at 3 pm, 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park, MD 20737

### **Annual Plant Sale:**

The annual plant sale will be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lynne Snyder did exhaustive research and discovered that May 2<sup>nd</sup> is the best date to hold our plant sale. The traditional date (the last Saturday in April) had too many conflicts.

### **June Picnic and June Meeting:**

The June Picnic will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup>. In the past, a meeting was not held in June since we had the Picnic. However, we will now have a June meeting in addition to the picnic. Lynne Snyder explained that the June meeting was necessary for the continuity of the membership renewal.

### **Nominating Committee:**

Jesse Terres and Joan Walker will form a nominating committee to fill executive committee openings. The Club is looking for volunteers to serve. The volunteers will be announced at the March meeting and the voting will take place at the April meeting.

### **Highway Clean-up:**

Linda Snow will work with Rich Dodson to organize the next Highway Clean Up.

### **New Business:**

March 25 will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bowie Crofton Garden Club. To that end, it was decided to celebrate the Anniversary at our March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. The March meeting will be held at the Bowie Community Center. Since food is allowed, we will have refreshments and celebrate our Anniversary. We also hope to advertise this special meeting in the Bowie Blade News and hope that we'll recruit new members in the process.

**Committee Reports:** None

### **AV Equipment:**

The Club needs its own AV equipment. Rich Dodson has to beg and/or borrow for each month's meeting. Perhaps the Club will raise enough money at the Plant Sale to support this expenditure.

**Door Prizes:** Names were drawn and door prizes were awarded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm and plants and gardening goodies were shared.

Respectfully submitted, *Kathleen Beres*, Secretary

## **Hospitality Committee Report**

By *Eleanor Leshinsky*

The snow didn't keep us from going to the Philadelphia Flower Show, although 10 people who signed up didn't make it. Sorry Folks! We had an enjoyable time in spite of the weather. A big Thank You to Ellen Brous for all her time and effort in planning this trip. And thank you to Gaye Williams for bringing a cooler for our drinks, and also for the candy and seed packets in our snack bags.

Our next big event is the Club's 25th Anniversary party on Tuesday, March 31st at the Bowie Community Center. If anyone would like to contribute anything to the refreshments please give me a call at 301-262-0328.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for our annual summer picnic, which is slated for Saturday, June 13th. I was lucky to get the second Saturday in June this year. The first Saturday in June is the Bowie Festival at Allen's Pond. So I am looking forward to seeing more of you at the picnic this year.

## **Membership Report**

By *Lynne Snyder*

I recently spent several hours going through all of my notes and emails, to be sure that the database is as accurate as possible. If you have previously asked to be taken off the hard-copy mailing list and get this newsletter in the mail, either I never got the message or no longer have the note or email. I apologize if I missed your request or correction and ask that you please give it to me again, either by emailing [LynneinMD@gmail.com](mailto:LynneinMD@gmail.com) or telling me at the meeting. If you do not have email and are unable to attend the meeting, please feel free to give me a call at 301-464-4642 to update your preferences or to let me know if your address, phone, or email address has changed.

The Garden Club currently has 35 families and 72 individual members in good standing. Of those, only 28 members/families are currently reading their newsletters online. This month we are mailing 77 hard-copy newsletters out to club members. Of those 77 members/families, 53 have an email address listed in our database and have access to the online version of the newsletter.

We spend a lot of money to mail newsletters to many members who could just as easily read the newsletter online. I will be bringing this topic up for discussion at the meeting, and suggesting that all members with email addresses on file be removed from the hard-copy mailing list unless we have a special request from the member (vision problems, no printer, etc.). If you have strong feelings about getting the newsletter via hardcopy rather than reading it online or printing it, please plan to attend the meeting and participate in polite discussion, or send an email to me or to Jesse Terres with your comments and we will share them at the meeting for you.

## **Membership Renewal for 2009-2010**

It's not too early to think about renewing your membership for next year. Since we will be having a meeting in June, at the end of our fiscal year, all membership renewals are due by 30 June so Karin will be able to get the taxes done in a timely manner. You can renew your membership at any meeting, the Plant Sale, or the Picnic. You can also mail a check to the club's PO Box (the return address on the newsletter).

## Treasurer's Report March 2009

By *Karin Banta*

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Starting Balance/Checkbook | <b>\$2,772.68</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|

| <b>Expenses</b>                        |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Crofton Printing/                      |                   |
| February Newsletter                    | \$56.74           |
| Pennsylvania Horticultural Society     | \$1,233.50        |
| Dillon Bus Service/Flower Show         | \$1,146.00        |
| Ellen Brous/for Bus Driver Tip         | \$100.00          |
| Ellen Brous/Favors /Bus trip           | \$26.50           |
| E. Leshinsky/Supplies/Flower Show Trip | \$25.00           |
| Guest Speaker/Febr. Meeting            | \$50.00           |
| Rose Arslanian stamps 2 months         | \$58.50           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>\$2,696.24</b> |

| <b>Deposits</b>                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Membership                       | \$22.00        |
| Refund from X-mas party supplies | \$18.81        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>\$40.81</b> |

|                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Checkbook Balance      | <b>\$117.25</b> |
|                        |                 |
| Library Escrow         | \$0.00          |
|                        |                 |
| <b>AVAILABLE FUNDS</b> | <b>\$117.25</b> |

## March 2009 B-CGC Highway Clean-Up

By *Rich Dodson*

Linda Snow, one of our more active volunteers (plant sale, etc.) has graciously volunteered to head up this BCGC quarterly activity and we all should get behind her and volunteer an hour or two four times a year to help make it happen.

Our area of responsibility extends from Old 450 (by the Brady Building) up to Rockledge School. In the past six to eight of us have been able to cover that whole distance in less than two hours.

Linda will have enough bags to go around for all who show up, and trash "grabbers" for those who may have difficulty bending down to pick up trash and/or to reach into those bushes and places where trash tends to hide. Linda's goal is to make these quarterly events an opportunity for club members to get together to do our "Civic Duty" in a spirit of camaraderie. We hope to see you at our next Saturday morning Clean-Up!

Well, it appears that March is going to occur in April this year! Seriously, because Linda Snow is tied up with out-of-town guests and family on the previously scheduled Clean-Up date (March 14th), we are currently looking at April 4th, as being the date that we do our next Clean-Up.

That will also allow us to make an announcement at the B-CGC March meeting on 31 March. Since we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Garden Club, who knows, we may even interest

some new members in getting involved in the Clean-Up! It has been suggested that we may want to have Cisco Román show his slide show of the previous Clean-Up in November 2008, when we had 11 “Loyal Clean-Up Folks” come out to help.

What we need to know is can you join us on April 4th? So far only about half of the 11 from November 2008 can make it that day; e.g., one of them is having back surgery (Anything to get out of doing the “Clean-Up!”).

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the 25th anniversary meeting on March 31st!

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## **Annual Plant Sale**

By *Lynn Snyder and Gaye Williams*

The 2009 Plant Sale will be on May 2nd this year, as voted by the membership at the February meeting. We will have an update at the March Meeting, so if you plan to be involved with the sale, please try to attend on the 31st or contact me at LynneinMD@gmail.com or by phone at 301-464-4642 or 443-306-8920. If you have extra pots or plant markers to share, please bring them to the March meeting. Watch for full details in the April Newsletter.

As recent ice and snow fade from memory, it's time [yes, now] to start producing many of the plants for this year's club sale. More information will follow, but today's take-home message is: **START NOW!** We need to be able to offer good quality plant material, which is well rooted, potted appropriately, and accurately labeled. In other words, sell what you'd want to buy.

## **Upcoming Local Plant Sales and Events**

Contributed by *Lynne Snyder*

This is not all-inclusive as it was gleaned from online searches, but if you feel the need to shop before or after our BCGC Plant Sale May 2, check these out:

- Apr 11 -- Daffodil Show at Brookside Gardens, Sponsored by the Washington Daffodil Society, 2pm-5pm
- Apr 12 -- Daffodil Show at Brookside Gardens, Sponsored by the Washington Daffodil Society, 9am-4pm
- Apr 25 -- The Daylily Society Spring Plant Sale at the National Arboretum. Sales are open to the public, 9am-4pm.
- May 1&2 -- Baltimore Flower Mart; Mt. Vernon, MD
- May 2 -- Brookside Gardens -- Dahlia Tuber Sale sponsored by the National Capital Dahlia Society, 10am-2pm or until sold out.
- May 2&3 -- Azalea Show Sponsored by the Brookside Gardens Chapter of Azalea Society Sat 1-5pm and Sun 9am-4pm
- May 9 & 10 -- Audubon Nature Fair; Chevy Chase, MD -- William Paca Garden Plant Sale
- May 9 -- Adkins Arboretum 2009 Spring Native Plant Sale
- May 9 -- Brookside Gardens Annual Silver Spring Garden Mart Sponsored by the Silver Spring Garden Club, 9am-1pm
- May 16&17 -- Woodstream Orchids' Ninth Annual Open House and Sale
- May 17 -- Azalea Sale Sponsored by The Brookside Gardens Chapter of the Azalea Society, 9:30am-2:30pm
- May 23 -- Baltimore Herb Festival; Baltimore, MD; Saturday, May 23

## SPRING IS HERE! (Well, Not Really, BUT...)

Contributed by *Rich Dodson*

### Winter Pruning

If you suffer from "Cabin Fever," this is the time of year to do a few things in your garden to get ready for warmer weather. As the purported "Prince" of Butterfly Bushes in the Garden Club, I have the late Jonas Bassen to thank (or blame!!!). I remember a visit to his home on Fleming Lane, before he and Lillian moved to Oak Crest Village in Parkville, MD. We admired Jonas' **Buddleia davidii** (Butterfly Bush) and admitted we knew little about how to care for those in our yard.

Taking pity upon a couple of novices, Jonas shared the "Secret" of growing a healthy and robust Butterfly Bush. He said it was really quite simple. Each year, no earlier than February 1st and no later than March 1st, you should cut back your Butterfly Bushes to rejuvenate them and to encourage them to be stronger and more "Bushy," as opposed to becoming tall and "Spindly!"

Jonas would prune his Butterfly Bushes back to 6" - 8" above the ground. When I asked him how long it would take to recover to the beautiful 7-foot specimen we had been admiring, he said, "I don't understand your question that is this year's growth!" So, the bottom line is that Butterfly bushes grow very rapidly and can attain heights of 7' - 8' in a single season. Furthermore, the more they are pruned, the more they will bloom, as they bloom on new growth!

### What Is The Story Behind Pruning?

Large shrubs, such as the Butterfly Bush, often give gardeners fits when it comes to pruning. The important thing to remember is these are tough plants. There is almost nothing wrong you can do. You can prune anytime. If you prune hard during the growing season the worst that can happen is you will cut off your flowers for a while. But, they grow fast and you will have them again soon. Our area is historically USDA Zone 7, but the climate is evolving and many of our plants and shrubs "act" as though they are in Zone 8. In zones 8 and up, this bush will remain evergreen and can be pruned to the ground or in any configuration that suits your garden. Nonetheless, it may pay you to add a 3" - 6" mound of mulch on the crown of your plants to protect against freezing and thawing, which may cause the plant to "Heave" out of the ground and thus subject the tender root area to freezing winds and possibly ice & snow damage.

### Starting New Plants from the Old

When pruning, why throw away healthy plant material? Good Question! As anyone who knows me realizes, it is against my religion to throw away healthy plant material. Therefore, whenever I prune back our Butterfly Bushes, I start at the extreme tip and cut back a foot or so at a time, until I find "Live wood" that still has a green cadmium layer. I then prepare the cut material and plant them in pots in order to grow them for sale at the Annual Bowie-Crofton Garden Plant Sale, which will be held this year on May 2, 2009.

To successfully propagate woody trees/shrubs, you must scrape the woody part off a limb no thicker than a pencil (although I have had success with Butterfly Bush Cuttings up to an inch in diameter). You may want to "Start" quite a few cuttings, as success rates may vary. You will need to scrape the first 6-inches of the cutting to expose the light green cadmium layer just under the bark. **Do not** scrape off this green layer and further expose the woody material of the cutting, as this light green layer is the food and water "highway" of the plant. It is also the material that sprouts the roots that will feed your new plant, when it 'takes root.'

When the Cadmium Layer has been exposed, plunge the cutting into a pot containing a sterile soil mixture

and then water them well. When rooting Butterfly Bush Cuttings, I find that they are more forgiving with regard to the sterility of the soil and I usually use compost straight out of my compost pile, as that seems to be sterile enough for the job. Some folks "Swear by the use of Rooting Hormone," but I have never found this necessary when dealing with Butterfly Bush cuttings. Having prepared a pot of "Potting Medium" (whatever works for you), you'll want to use a dibble (a pointed tool used to make holes deep enough to accommodate your cutting; I use an ordinary trowel for this purpose) to make a hole in the soil. If you are using rooting hormone, using a dibble to make the hole for your cutting will minimize the loss of the Root Tone™ during the planting process. Once you plunge your cutting into the pot, you will want to press down the soil to enclose the cutting and cause it to make maximum contact with the soil.

Initially, you may want to plunge the pot into a bucket of water to ensure complete saturation of the planting media. Subsequently, you will want to keep the mixture "Constantly Moist," but well drained (not supersaturated), as this would keep your plant from getting the naturally occurring air needed for plant health. On the other hand, never let the potting mixture to completely dry out, as this will cause any roots that have started to form to "wilt away."

If possible, keep your cuttings from severe temperatures extremes. This can be accomplished by starting them in a Cold Frame to protect them from even light frosts, by covering them with a light cotton sheet or commercial "Row Cover" material (**not plastic that comes in contact with the plant**) and/or by piling leaves around the pots to minimize temperature swings.

If the cutting you are rooting has leaves that have wintered over, reduce the number of leaves down to just a few remaining leaves. This will allow the cutting to direct its energy toward root production and NOT in trying to save the remaining leaves. Some leaves may wilt and fall off, while others may not; this does not mean that your cutting is dead or dying, it is just shedding leaves to cope.

If all goes well, small roots will develop in 1-2 months; it takes a little while, so be patient. Even when you SELL your rooted cuttings at the B-CGC Plant Sale, I always advise the purchasers to keep the new plant in the pot's for another 1-2 months, although they can plunge the whole **undisturbed** root ball into the ground, if necessary. The new plant will need all the roots it can muster, before being "Manhandled" or moved, so leaving it in the pot as long as possible is advisable. Above all, this is not rocket science and a little common sense and observation will go a long way toward successfully starting new plants, so don't get discouraged if you don't achieve 100% success the first time you try.

**For a General Reference on Winter Pruning Ornamental Shrubs, See:**

<http://extension.missouri.edu/xplor/agguides/hort/g06870.htm>

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## **Things to Do In March**

Contributed by *Neil Potash*

1. If you have seeds coming up inside the house or garage (I have beans for instance) then you have to get your garden plot ready.
2. Start the BIG DIG. You will need a rototiller, or do one area at a time.
3. Use up all your last year's mulch in your leaf bin to raise the beds. I also like to load up on Lowes torn re-bagged sales on 50 lb. mulch --sometimes \$2.00 a bag.

4. By the end of March you should have started a vegetable garden. I also like to plant marigolds around the garden. I have always believed it keeps out nasty insects.
5. This is a good time to feed roses too. Don't put fertilizer too close to the plants. You can still cut back dead canes.
6. Remove old mulch from perennial beds. Spring is here so you open up the garden.
7. Lime is good for everything. Does anyone know the Philadelphia founding father who first packaged lime and made his fortune selling it?
8. Plant some great perennials. I like cornflower, snapdragons, alyssum, and cannulas,
9. Start Canna Roots in a warm place and think about something for the BCGC upcoming plant sale.

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## **BGE "Bowie Electric Reliability Action Plan" Updates - 2008 Voucher Deadline Extended, Native Plant List accepted – by *Maria Arnold***

In response to a request by the City's Environmental Advisory Committee, BGE has extended the deadline from March 31 to May 31, 2009 for Bowie residents who have vouchers for receiving \$100 reimbursement for each qualified mature tree removed in 2008 as part of the "Bowie Electric Reliability Action Plan." Questions about the voucher program? Contact BGE's Chad Devine at [chad.s.devine@bge.com](mailto:chad.s.devine@bge.com).

Among efforts underway to "Green Bowie," BGE has approved a list of native plants--developed by the City's Environmental Advisory Committee--to use under or near utility lines. Plants listed that are less than 25' tall at maturity qualify for the \$100 reimbursement program. The list will be posted on the city's website soon. Sources of native plants can be found on the Maryland Native Plant Society's website, [www.mdflora.org](http://www.mdflora.org).

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## **NEW Prince George's / Anne Arundel Chapter, Maryland Native Plant Society by *Maria Arnold***

In February, the new PG/AA chapter hosted its inaugural event and meeting. As this group takes shape, you can find information about future events at <http://mdflora.org/chapters/pgaa/pgaachapter.html>.

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## **Bowie Environmental Awareness & Stewardship Survey by *Maria Arnold***

The City of Bowie has posted an online survey to gauge the level of citizen environmental awareness and stewardship. The results of the survey will aid the City in identifying, prioritizing, and promoting existing and new environmental policies, programs and outreach activities for the health of the community. Please complete the survey at [www.cityofbowie.org](http://www.cityofbowie.org) and share this announcement with other Bowie residents! Survey closing date TBD.

| <b>Executive Committee</b>  |   |   | <b>From the Editor</b><br>Donald Sminkey<br><br>All members of the Garden Club are welcome to write an article on a gardening-related subject. Please send via e-mail to:<br>gardener@bcgardenclub.org.<br>Include "B-CGC" or "Garden Club" in the subject heading; or mail to: Donald Sminkey, 508 Otway Road, Wake Forest, NC 27587<br><br><b>Deadline, April issue:<br/> April 8, 2009</b> |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>President</b><br>Jesse Terres<br>301-464-5914<br><a href="mailto:jessgail@verizon.net">jessgail@verizon.net</a>                      | <b>Treasurer</b><br>Karin Banta<br>301-262-0653<br><a href="mailto:k.banta04@verizon.net">k.banta04@verizon.net</a>                               | <b>Hospitality</b><br>Eleanor & Charles Leshinsky<br>301-262-0328<br><a href="mailto:leshinsky1@verizon.net">leshinsky1@verizon.net</a> |   |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> VP/Programs</b><br>George Cornwall<br>301-233-3186  | <b>Secretary</b><br>Kathleen Beres<br>301-249-1120<br>kabintospace@aol.com  | <b>Member Garden Tours</b><br>Kent Winterson<br>301-464-0386<br><a href="mailto:kwinterson@hrsa.gov">kwinterson@hrsa.gov</a>            |   |
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| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> VP/Plant Exchange</b><br>Joan Walker<br>301-262-6816<br><a href="mailto:1JoanP@comcast.net">1JoanP@comcast.net</a>    | <b>Field Trips</b><br>Ellen Brous<br>410-798-8872<br><a href="mailto:Ellen.Brous@ppd.mncppc.org">Ellen.Brous@ppd.mncppc.org</a>                   | <b>Historian</b><br>Francisco Román<br>202-262-9360<br><a href="mailto:ciscoroman@comcast.n">ciscoroman@comcast.n</a>                   |   |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> VP/Public Relations</b><br>Dorothy Bice<br>301-464-3748<br><a href="mailto:debice@netzero.net">debice@netzero.net</a> | <b>Plant Sale</b><br>Lynne Snyder & Gaye Williams<br>443-306-8920<br><a href="mailto:LynneinMD@gmail.com">LynneinMD@gmail.com</a>                 |   |   |

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