



*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.*

## November 2009

### Next Monthly Meeting

By *Neil Potash*

The meeting will be held on November 24, 2009 at the Bowie City Hall in the General Purpose room at 7:30 pm. The speaker will be Esther Mitchell, coordinator of P.G. Master Gardeners via the University of Maryland. Her topic is "*Composting with worms: Black Gold in Small Spaces.*" Don't scream anybody. The presentation will last about a half hour with a small demonstration. BCGC scholarship student, Nancy Harding (I hope not the Ice Skater) will meet and greet after the meeting.

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### Presidents Comments

by *Jesse Terres*

At the last meeting we decided to raise our scholarship contribution to UMD to \$1,000 and have our Treasurer mail a check. This action has been carried out. The increase in the scholarship has thrown our budget out of whack ( not that it wasn't out of whack to begin with.) Consequently, the budget shall be the main topic of discussion at our November meeting. In my opinion prioritizing is the name of the game. If we do this there shouldn't be any problem. To date we have just begun to dip into what we have budgeted for.

Our request for room 204 vice the MP room permitting food and drink at our October, 2010 meeting has been requested. Pending any conflicts we expect approval.

Sheila Brown, our point of contact at UMD for scholarships retired about six weeks ago. Our new point of contact is Tim Laponne to whom our scholarship check has been sent and receipt acknowledged.

I belong to an organization called Seed Savers Exchange. Every year I receive a catalogue about one inch thick listing seeds of plants from days of yore up to the present and their availability from members across the nation. Four publications for members only that provide a lot of gardening information are: Yearbook/January, Spring Edition/April, Summer Edition/July, Harvest Edition/October. Anyone interested in joining can find information at <http://www.seedsavers.org> or by calling 563-382-5990.

I have been reviewing and studying a list of horticultural myths written by Linda Chalker-Scott, Associate Professor and Extension Urban Horticulturist, WSA Puyallup Research and Extension Center, Puyallup, WA,

provided to me by Gaye Williams. So far I agree with all, but would like more information on a few. Wouldn't this make a great presentation and topic for discussion? I can just imagine the fistfights!

## Meeting Minutes, October 27, 2009

The Tuesday October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bowie Crofton Garden Club was held at City Hall.

Jesse Terres, President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. The September minutes were unanimously approved.

**Program:** Neil Potash, VP Programs introduced the speaker, Matthew Perry. Mr. Perry is a marine Scientist at Patuxent Wildlife Preserve and a natural explorer who has traced the migration of ducks throughout his life.

He has spoken to the club many years ago and his presentation last night was again atheistically received. His talk tended to center around the migration of ducks and birds, polar bears, and living conditions in Churchill, Manitoba, population 500 -- a great place to visit if you want something out of the ordinary. However, I'd recommend reading his book *Churchill, Manitoba: Birds, Belugas, and Bears* before purchasing a plane ticket, and plan on renting a guide with a gun.

**Business Meeting:** In the absence of our Secretary your President is preparing these minutes.

### Committee reports:

**Membership** – Rose Arslanian introduced new members, Mr. and Mrs. Walter and Magestic Jourdain. Welcome to the club! Also, Joan Walker provided them with copies of our new Welcome package.

**Hospitality** – The Christmas party will be held at St. Mathews on December 6th.

**Program** – Dr. Madison, a MG and Master Composter, from UMD will be the speaker in November and Nancy Harding, a recipient of our scholarship will give us some information about what she is doing at UMD.

**Field trips** – Ellen Brous was not present, however, after the meeting Karen Anadol, who joined our club last month, said she was interested in helping out with the Garden Club field trips. I cleared it with Ellen and Karen submitted the following proposed list.

- Doepkens Flower Farm on Rt. 424 in Davidsonville.
- Hill Wood Estate in Washington, D.C.
- Brookside Gardens.
- A local artist's studio who could talk about landscape painting
- Longwood Gardens
- London Towne in Edgewater
- The National Conservatory in D.C.
- Dumbarton Oaks in D.C.
- Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens.
- River Farm.

**Garden tours** – About 30 people attended Jesse's garden tour of his blooming exhibition chrysanthemums. An apparent success, but he promised to do an even better job next year. No tours were scheduled for November or December.

PS: Jesse won two blue ribbons at the Mum show at Merrifield Gardens in Virginia. Best in show next year!

**Old Business:** - In spite of our unbalanced budget the membership decided unanimously to raise the scholarship to \$1,000.00. The President stated how he had been Googling "Balanced Budget" and found that our Federal Government has only balanced the budget once in 40 years -- in 1999. Consequently we decided not to get excited over it. This subject will be discussed in greater detail at a future meeting.

It was decided to change the meeting place for October, 2010 from the Multi Purpose Room to Room 204 at City Hall, so that we can have food and refreshments for our Halloween party.

Canceling a June meeting is under consideration.

Door prizes were awarded, and donated plants were given away. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted, *Jesse Terres*, President, acting for the Secretary, Kathleen Beres

## Treasurer's Report

By *Karin Banta*

### November, 2009

Starting Balance/Checkbook	<b>\$3,482.67</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Crofton Printing/	
October Newsletter	\$40.76
Rose Arslanian/Labels & Stamps	\$18.48
P.O. Box Rental	\$96.00
University of Maryland/Scholarship ****	\$1,000.00
St. Mathews/Hall for Xmas Party	\$150.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,305.24</b>
<b>Deposits</b>	
Membership	\$22.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22.00</b>
Checkbook Balance	<b>\$2,199.43</b>
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>	<b>\$2,199.43</b>

### BUDGET

	Proposed	Oct. 07/09
	2009-2010	2009-2010
Historian	\$25.00	\$25.00
Newsletter Print	\$650.00	\$600.00
Postage/P.O. Box	\$400.00	\$400.00
Scholarship	\$500.00	\$500.00
Secretary	\$25.00	
Hospitality	\$1,000.00	\$900.00
Speaker Fees	\$300.00	\$300.00
Treasurer	\$25.00	
Sunshine	\$25.00	\$25.00
Membership	\$25.00	\$25.00
Community Projects	\$300.00	\$100.00
Plant Sale Expenses	\$100.00	\$100.00
Misc.	\$250.00	\$200.00
WebSite	\$250.00	\$250.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,875.00</b>	<b>\$3,425.00</b>

#### Projected Income

Membership  
Plant Sale

2009-2010
\$900.00
\$2,000.00
<b>\$2,900.00</b>

## Membership

Note: Since the resignation of the V.P. of Membership, Lynne Snyder, Don is maintaining the membership database, and Rose Arslanian is filling in for Lynne until a new V.P. for Membership is elected. All changes to the membership list should be sent to Don at [gardener@bcgardenclub](mailto:gardener@bcgardenclub) with a copy to Rose at [rjarslanian@att.net](mailto:rjarslanian@att.net). Here are the latest membership statistics, including the new members: Total families with paid dues for 2009--2010: 74. Of these 74 families, there are 24 spouses for a total membership of 98.

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## Comments on the October Meeting Program

By *Neil Potash*

At the October meeting Dr. Matthew C. Perry presented a 45- minute slide show that summarized his 18 trips to Churchill, Manitoba with fellow scientists from Annapolis and all over the world. His tall stripling sons and other adventurers were shown. The flight to Winnipeg on the North Dakota and Canadian border was followed by a three day train ride north to the Hudson Bay on the Arctic Circle. There was perma frost that was sinking deeper ever year by melting underneath. They arrived in the late summer ahead of Maryland ducks and terns and geese. Beluga whales, the biggest whales in the world arrived -- some a 1/2 a ton. Some bears were photographed sleeping in the woods. When it gets colder the bears wake up, huge foxes abound, and there are gorgeous plants everywhere. There were about 500 people, mostly Innuite (The Innuite are called aborigines by the Canadians), and dog teams prepared for the tourists. Dr. Perry watched for his ducks and observed their mating rituals. Then he fought off guardian terns, foxes, and weasels to count the egg production. When the huge white and brown bears awake they prowled among deer, elk, and tourists. Everyone visiting wanted to see bears, so every tour group had a rifleman, a guide and supplier of foods and comforts.

By then the meeting had to finish and Dr. Matthew fast forwarded the slide show through sunrises and sunsets that you wouldn't believe.

Afterward, Council Woman Diane Polangin thanked us for our many city activities and told us she often spent vacations in Northern Maine, but she felt really cold after seeing the slide show.

The membership approved \$1,000 for a scholarship for the Agriculture Department of the University of Maryland. We have sponsored 22 students in ten years since it was granted. One will be coming to the next meeting to visit us.

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## Annual Holiday Party

Our annual BCGC holiday party will take place on 6 December, at St. Matthew's Methodist Church on Rt. 450 in Bowie. Festivities begin at 4:00 p.m. However, the army of volunteers can appear from 2 p.m. on to set up tables, decorate, arrange room, etc. We'll also need an all-volunteer army for clean-up. Sign-up sheets for volunteers and food will circulate at the November meeting, see also contacts below.

There will be a (\$10 dollar max) gift exchange for all who wish to participate. "Bring a gift, get a gift." This is a favorite part of the festivities. Please make sure items are garden-related.

NOTE: there wasn't enough time at the October meeting to discuss the possibility of changing our holiday party to an all-potluck affair, including the main dishes. What is your opinion of this idea? If you have strong feelings for, or against, please contact Gaye Williams at [williagl@mda.state.md.us](mailto:williagl@mda.state.md.us) or Barbara Eberstein at 301-262-4112. Vote early, vote often.

# Autumn Care of the Perennial Border

*by Melodie Likel, Potomac Perennial Specialist*

from The Behnke GardenNews, September 1998

Fall is the time the perennial garden ever so gradually sheds its summer finery to don the bold shades of the cooler season. The gardener assists in the transition by careful and thoughtful trimming, deadheading, and staking.

## **Trimming and Pruning**

Any plants that are clearly dormant, damaged or unsightly can be cut to the ground, leaving only an inch or two of stems. This makes locating the plants easier in early spring. Peonies almost certainly fall into this category, as do many lilies. However, keep plants with good looking foliage in the garden even after all blooms have faded. The extra food the plant stores will improve vigor and flowering for next summer, and, looked at from a designer's viewpoint, the foliage provides the perfect backdrop for the flowers of fall. Removing entire plants may leave the garden sparse, especially if spring and summer flowers predominated in the original plan. Study carefully before cutting.

## **Tidying the Beds**

Fall is the time for cleanup. Trim any diseased plants and discard, but do not compost. Pests such as iris borer overwinter in the debris left in the garden after frost kills the foliage. Removing all spent plant materials will go far to controlling potential pest and disease problems in the coming year.

Fall is the time to tackle weeds that have been hidden between and underneath larger plants in the garden. Take the time to dig out deeply rooted culprits such as dandelion, dock, and clover — they'll be gone forever. Doing just a superficial job in fall will ensure their survival and root growth over winter and a stronger, more obnoxious weed next spring.

Plants that may have overrun their allotted space or may have proven unsuitable for the garden can be removed or weeded back into bounds. The silver foliage of artemisia and lamb's ears is lovely in the flower garden but most varieties regularly need attention to keep the vigorous growth under control.

Fall is also the time to evaluate the garden's performance. Did plants work well together and provide good color and foliage interest? Were some plants crowded and others skimpy and lackluster in their growth? Fall is the time to reorganize and rearrange. Warm soil and cool air temperatures make fall the best time to plant a garden. Root development is rapid and the plant will be well established by spring. So if the garden needs a remodeling, now is the time to do it.

Creating the perfect garden is a puzzle that has more than one solution. Keep experimenting until the result is pleasing to you. Don't be afraid to give away or throw out plants that do not work.

## **Propagating by Division**

Early fall is the best time to divide many perennials. For example, Oriental and trumpet lilies should be divided or moved just after the foliage dies down. Peony clumps should be cut back and thoroughly watered, then lifted. The roots should be rinsed free of soil and the root mass cut or sawed into segments, each having three to five eyes. Peonies may take one to two years to recover from division but after that will bloom for years with no attention. Astilbes are best divided in fall as well. Cut back the foliage; then dig clumps and cut them apart with a sharp knife or spade. Replant and water well.

Daylilies can be divided but in early fall the warming foliage can easily be cut back to 6 to 8 inches, making the process easier. Dig the clump, wash off most of the soil and separate the new divisions by hand or with a spade. Replant in freshly-worked, amended soil and water well.

Perennials benefit from having the soil between plants gently loosened from time to time to prevent compaction. This can be done in fall when cleaning and cutting back. Mulching with a layer of compost

improves soil fertility and provides nutrients necessary for vigorous root growth during the last months of the growing season.

Decide which plants will be left standing for winter interest. Grasses, especially Miscanthus varieties, hold up well and provide structure and form in the winter landscape. Other perennials, such as Russian sage, purple coneflower, and black-eyed Susan, look lovely covered with a dusting of snow or glistening with light frost.

While you are trimming and dividing, the glorious plants of fall will be putting on a show that is unequalled in any season. Vibrant asters tumble out of bounds covered with thousands of starry flowers. Tall and elegant grasses rustle and sway, their downy flowers atop slender Autumn crocus lends its lavender-pink presence and brings memories and anticipation of spring. Japanese anemone flowers dance and flutter high above the plant's foliage and mums in many hues brighten the garden's sunny areas.

In shady corners, toad lilies proudly display their exquisite spotted flowers and plumbago sports its cobalt blooms while its foliage turns to red-bronze with the onset of cool weather.

As each year in the garden draws to a close, the gardener is enriched by the beauty of nature, empowered with knowledge of plants and gardens and overflowing with anticipation and hope for the year ahead.

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## Spring Bulbs

Contributed by *Rich Dodson*

Many spring bulbs are up and blooming long before the trees leaf out, so they can be planted under tree canopies. They can also be used effectively in containers, window boxes and planters. In fact, if you don't want to wait until spring to see these beauties, you can even "force" some varieties of bulbs to bloom inside.

Planting bulbs is one of the easiest ways to garden. In fact, once they're planted, many varieties will come back year after year with little additional effort on your part. It's hard to image a spring without the color and fragrance of these flowering jewels, so don't let a fall season go by without adding buckets of bulbs to your garden.

Bulbs are planted in the fall to produce spring flowers like daffodils, crocuses and tulips. The first hints of Autumn have now arrived, giving us cooler evenings and shorter days, and a few of the trees have begun to show their bright fall colors in some areas. When migratory birds begin flocking in preparation for their annual trip south, along with other signs of impending Winter, you know it's time to start planting spring-blooming bulbs such as tulips and daffodils.

Spring bulbs for fall planting are available now at many garden centers. Purchase bulbs that seem heavy for their size. If a bulb feels too light or papery, it could have become dried out and may not bloom well or perhaps not at all.

Choices: Fall is the perfect time of year to plan for a spring show of bulbs. Tulips your thing? Crocuses? Irises? Lilies? Specialty bulbs? Regardless of the type, It's Time to Start Planting Bulbs Now for Spring Blooms. There are all kinds of spring-flowering bulbs. Some of the most popular are tulips, daffodils (narcissus), crocuses, hyacinths, snowflakes (leucojum), scilla, snowdrops (galanthus), grape hyacinths (muscari) and alliums. Within these categories, there is an almost dizzying array of individual varieties, each with its own color, shape and size. To get an idea of the huge selection, thumb through a book or magazine on bulbs or better yet, send away for a free mail-order catalog. You'll be amazed at the choices.

After purchasing spring bulbs, try to get them planted as soon as possible. If they cannot be planted for another week or two after purchase, store the bulbs in the refrigerator until you have time to plant them. Plant bulbs between mid-October and mid-November. For best results, plant your spring bulbs at least six weeks before the ground typically freezes in your area.

Bulbs 101: Nearly everyone can grow bulbs. Most bulbs require full sun and well drained soil. Early bloomers like snowdrops can be planted under trees; the bulbs will finish flowering and storing nutrients

before the trees leaf out.

They can be planted almost anywhere as long as the soil is well drained and there is some sunlight. If the planting soil is heavy clay, mix in compost and peat before placing the bulbs. For planting, use a shovel or trowel. To aid in digging the holes, you can use a stand-up bulb planter or there are even small augers that you can attach to your power drill to make the task easier.

The general rule of thumb for planting bulbs is to plant them, pointy end up, at a depth three times as deep as the bulb is wide. Small crocus or grape hyacinth bulbs would be planted much more shallowly than the larger bulbs of daffodils or tulips. Cluster bulbs in groups for a natural look and bigger color impact next spring.

Species tulips and those marked as perennials are more likely to flower for more than one or two seasons than some other tulips. If your existing bulbs failed to bloom this past spring, it could be that they were not planted deeply enough. If you have bulbs that did not perform well last year, Fall is also a good time to lift those bulbs and replant them to a better depth or in a new location.

Next year, after your bulbs bloom, cut off the flowers with their stems. But leave the foliage in place for several more weeks until it ripens or turns yellow and brown. During that time, the leaves are making and storing nutrients for the following year's flowers. If hostas or daylilies are planted nearby, their enlarging leaves will help hide the unsightly bulb foliage.

Got Critters? Rodents generally don't take much interest in daffodils, squills, fritillarias and alliums. Tulips, on the other hand, are their ambrosia. Some gardeners give up on Tulips. Others employ tactics that might include:

1. Planting each tulip bulb 10 inches deep.
2. Before planting, dipping tulip bulbs in a foul-tasting liquid, available at garden centers, to repel rodents.
3. Putting a layer of sharp gravel in the planting hole just over the bulbs.
4. Covering the newly planted tulip bed with chicken wire or mesh hardware cloth, anchored with pins or small sticks.
5. Spraying liquid repellent over the area in the fall and then again, repeatedly, as tulips emerge in spring.

Still need help? Join Washington Post Gardening Expert, Adrian Higgins, for this "How To" Audio/Visual Gallery that teaches you two methods (Standard & Naturalizing) for planting your bulbs.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/artsandliving/homeandgarden/features/2006/how-to/edition/bulbs/gallery.html>

No Garden, No Worries. Don't have a garden? You can still plant certain bulbs in pots, stash them away for several months where they'll stay cool but not freezing, and then bring them indoors to enjoy as flowers this winter. When shopping for bulbs, check the labels for ones good for forcing.



**Alliums, 'Summer Drummer'**



**Squills**



**Fritillarias**

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**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, January issue: Jan. 8, 2010**

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