



Garden Club of Darien

Gardenclubofdarien.org



Monthly Newsletter

December 2012

Volume 4, Issue 4

From the President

Dear Fellow Garden Clubbers,



Article II, Section 3 of GCD's by-laws states: "The first VP shall be responsible for civic activities and awards". As such, Susie Brewer will be coordinating this activity for our club this year. She will be taking any and all suggestions for our civic outlays and hopes to complete the process sometime in January. Please email or call Susie with your ideas. She will prepare them for presentation to the Board on February 4th.

On another front, following Dr. Dosmann's "Tale of Twenty Trees" presentation at our November meeting and the questions in the Q&A session about how few "native" species were included in his talk, I asked if he had a point of view on the subject of exotics versus natives. His thoughts are summarized below.

While it might seem 'easy' to put things in black-and-white terms (e.g., Native vs Exotic), it is not an easy thing to act upon pragmatically, and in reality, nature loves a continuum – i.e., lots of gray. Species (plants and animals) move around, sometimes on their own, and sometimes with a lot of help. 10,000 years ago, ice covered New England. Once that ice retreated, the species we now call 'native' had to invade from other parts of North America. This is a natural process called succession. Sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*, is an example of one such invader that became quite successful. And there are still native species that are invading. *Betula nigra*, the river birch, is a great example. Species' ranges are not fixed.

Many of our 'common' plants are those that we brought with us (apples for instance) or those that hitchhiked as weeds. Most of

our ornamentals and nearly all of our vegetables do NOT come from New England. So, we plant exotics all of the time. Also, because species' ranges are not fixed, there are many things we like to call native and plant them in our landscapes for that reason, but in reality, they are not. Good examples are the oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) and bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*), which are presently native to the South-east.

The term "invasive", as currently defined, is typically used for organisms that cause either ecological or economic harm. Indeed, one should be very careful in planting species that possess invasive characteristics, particularly in or near natural areas. Bradford Pear, for example, should never be planted along a country road near natural woodland. A visit to VA and MD confirms how aggressive this invader is and how harmful it is to natural areas

City lands are very different from what they were 500 years ago. Because of altered soil (pH, compaction, drainage) and local environmental conditions (in particular temperatures), many organisms that once were indigenous cannot survive and I believe a non-native tree with the positive traits of narrow form and high stress tolerance can be part of our palette.

Looking forward to our Christmas get-together!
Janet

GCD Calendar

Monday, December 3rd

Board meeting at the home of Audrey Cadwallader, 84 Five Mile River Road, 8:45 coffee, 9:00 meeting

Thursday, December 6th

Annual Christmas Greens Workshop, Boy Scout Cabin, 9:00-12:00

Tuesday, December 11th

Christmas Tea at the home of Janet Sargent, 1 Dorchester Road, 12:00-2:30

Monday, January 7th, 2013

Board meeting at the home of Susie Brewer, 98 Ridge Acres, 8:45 coffee, 9:00 meeting

Tuesday, January 8th

Membership meeting, DCA, 9:30 coffee, 10:00 meeting. Joint meeting with DCA.

Monday, February 4th

Board meeting at the home of Cindy Ryan, 3 Harbor Road, 8:45 coffee, 9:00 meeting

Tuesday, February 12th

Membership meeting, DCA, 9:30 coffee, 10:00 meeting.

Wednesday-Friday, October 2nd-4th -birdsong

GCD Flower Show at the DCA



Flower Arranging

Gwynne Tibbetts and Kate Kane



Thank you all for entering our November "Birds of a Feather" in-club competition. The arrangements were beautiful and varied.

Winners (with entries pictured) were:

1st: Emily D'Andrea



2nd (Tie): Kate Kane shares it with Danielle Leinroth



3rd: Lisa Brickman



HM: Cindy Ryan



Emily D'Andrea is busy this season, arranging and holding the **Thanksgiving Centerpieces workshop**. As always it was a fun event for everyone, and the flowers as usual were gorgeous.

For those of you who have signed up for the **Winter Outdoor Pots Workshop**, it starts at 9:30am at Emily's (90 Hamilton Lane) on Tuesday, Dec 4th. Cost for the Outdoor Workshop is \$90. Remember your clippers and bring your outdoor container if you have one. There will be a plastic container to take home with you if you can't bring your own. All other materials will be supplied.

The traditional **Christmas Greens Workshop** will be held at the Scout Cabin on Thursday, Dec. 6 at 9am. Please bring any greens from your gardens, if you can, and otherwise just bring yourselves and some clippers. We will assemble small arrangements in the prepared tuna cans to spread some holiday cheer to others.

Thank you to Peggy Peoples and Lynn Reilly for the lovely fall themed vegetable and flowers Tea Table arrangement. Everything was so artfully placed in a beautiful rustic basket!



Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Christmas Tea at Janet Sargent's house.

Horticulture

Carol Caulfield and Bridget Rudner



January Par Competition

For our January meeting we will have a par competition. There will be one submission per entrant to be judged individually against perfection. A par class includes anything that grows, container plants, vegetables, terrariums, bulbs, parent and child etc. The entry must be owned by the exhibitor for at least 6 months (GCA Yellow book page 56). An entry should be in a clean pot with a compatible saucer, all dead leaves removed and free from pests. All entries (with accompanying cards) must be in place for judging by 8:45 am.

Shirley Meneice Conference

Lady Bird Johnson said, "Wildflowers and native plants are as much a part of our national heritage as Old Faithful and the Capitol building." Sustainable landscapes, gardening education and community inspiration were the themes of the Shirley Meneice conference in Austin, Texas last month. The conference featured a tour of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. The center is the largest resource for information on natives. Their website, www.wildflowers.org, features 209 Connecticut natives and has a blog feature where an expert (Mr. Smarty Plants) will answer your questions. One of the speakers at the conference was particularly inspiring: Robert Hammond, who was the visionary that turned a mile long abandoned elevated freight train track into a signature NYC park featuring native plants. To use another Lady Bird quote, the High Line is "harmonizing the needs of people with the needs of nature." There was much discussion at the conference about the need to keep our children educated about horticulture. They are our future gardeners so maybe think about giving a child you know our Propagation handbook as a gift this season!

A big thanks to Bridget Rudner for attending and bringing this information back to share with us!



Herb Garden

Charcky Armstrong and Susan Massamillo



Recipe from chef Marcella Hazan courtesy of Joan Barksdale. This dip was a clear hit at the Herb Garden Ladies Night Out. Just in time for the holidays:

Marcella's Fava Bean Spread

- 1 1/2 cups fava beans (canned beans available at Whole Foods)
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3T finely chopped fresh mint
- 2T finely chopped fresh basil
- 2T lemon juice
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 tsp salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

In food processor combine the beans, cheese, oil, mint, basil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper. Process, scraping down the sides of the work bowl several times, until smooth. Adjust the seasoning. Serve immediately or cover tightly and hold at room temperature for up to two hours. The dip is best if never refrigerated.

Happy Holidays from Susan and Charcky!

Photography

Danielle Granath and Tracy Drippé



Congratulations and thanks to all who participated in our "Tree Tales" competition. Our panel of judges and our speaker were extremely impressed with the quality of the photographs and talent we have in our club. We had 2 classes and the top photograph in each class is shown below. We hope you were able to view all the photographs at the meeting as they were all winners. Our next competition, Focus on Light, is in April.

Profiles

- 1st: Pam Clark
- 2nd: Susan Balloch
- 3rd: Susan Massamillo
- HM: Susan Cator
- HM: Gigi Garnett
- HM: Gwynne Tibbetts



Close ups

- 1st: Danielle Granath
- 2nd: Emily D'Andrea
- 3rd: Linda Goodyear
- HM: Tracy Drippé
- HM: Debby McLean
- HM: Deb Murray



Congratulations also to Amy Cholnoky. Her two National Geographic quality photographs are included below. She entered Viewpoint, the Greenwich Garden Club photography show. It was juried, so your photo had to get chosen as one of 6 in a class. She submitted two and they both got through. She won a first for her dahlia photo, macro lens, and a second for a photo of the Patagonia mountains at dawn. Amy is clearly an inspiration to us all. If you have not attended one of her judging workshops in the past please look for the next one as it's fun and a great way to learn.



Thanks to all who inspire us with your talent in capturing the beauty around us.

Danielle and Tracy

Entering Flower Shows and Photography Competitions

Joanne Shakley and Susan Brewer are available to our club membership to encourage and help enter competitions outside our club. While our in-club participation is high, our outside entries need some support. Each month, various shows from the GCA calendar will be published and we hope all of you will consider picking a competition and entering it. If you have questions or would like a partner for this, please contact either Susie or Joanne and they will help you.

February 21-22: Fields, Forests, Rocks and Streams, Cleveland OH - photography entries close January 15, 2013

March 13-17: Seeds of Change, Boston, MA

March 20-22: Al Fresco, Dallas, TX – photography entries close January 14

June 14-15: Celebrating the Past, Toasting the Future, Litchfield, CT

September 24-26: Seeds of Rye, Rye, NY

October 18-20: Lenox Garden Club, MA

October 28-30: Middletown Garden Club, Middletown, CT



Conservation

Gigi Garnett and Margaret Smith



This month's native plant is nature's Christmas decoration.

Aronia arbutifolia
Red Chokeberry



This deciduous shrub has it all! Fruit for the birds, nectar for insects, cover for wildlife and multi-season beauty. Clusters of spring blooming pale white to pinkish flowers provide nectar for early butterflies and other pollinators but it's the dense clusters of glossy red fruit that makes this the December newsletter plant to highlight. Glossy foliage turns brilliant red in autumn, making a terrific alternative to non-native invasive burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*).

Easy to grow, it is tolerant of a wide range of conditions including wet or poor soils and full sun to part shade. Growing 6-10 feet tall along the coast from Newfoundland to Florida, it looks best in group plantings and can be expected to spread 3-5 feet. Best of all, its beautiful red berries will stay long into the winter since the berries do not become palatable to birds until they have been frosted several times.

Pleasure Through Plants

Susan Doelp and Audrey Cadwallader

The day of the impending Nor'easter, with a wary eye on the weather, enthusiastic Garden Club of Darien members arrived at the Darien Senior Center to mingle and arrange flowers with the senior participants.

With Thanksgiving colors and fall foliage in mind, 11 laughing and chatting senior citizens selected from among cattails, wheat, crystal beaded garlands, oak leaves, pinecones, flowers and greens to create 11 very different and striking arrangements. Many chose to decorate their glass vases, as well, and, amid good-natured teasing, several animatedly declared their own the best.



The appreciative thanks and heartfelt holiday wishes of the senior participants made the Garden Club members glow and reinforced why all Pleasure Through Plants members eagerly anticipate the opportunity to interact with those at the Senior Center.

GCD Flower Show - "birdsong"

October 2nd-4th, 2013

Debbie Bussey and Lisa Brickman

We plan to have our outstanding show schedule items completed by December 10 to submit to GCA's National schedule readers for final approval.

Should anyone need to view the show space at the DCA, please contact either of us as we must schedule a visit with both the DCA staff and Selden Catering. This is a requirement by the DCA.

The Silent Auction Committee is looking for donations – a summer house, a cocktail cruise, a themed basket...let your imaginations run wild! Please contact Robin Stineman or Clare Hare with your donations.

We will begin meeting with each committee individually after the first of the year. We hope you all enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

Birdsong Preview Party Invitation List - Deadline

We are compiling a mailing list for the preview party for birdsong. **Every member is required to submit 5 names** (Mr. and Mrs.) and addresses for the mailing list. Please feel free to add more names if you would like. These should be non-GCD members, but people whom you believe would support the flower show by attending the event and or making a financial contribution. **The deadline for submitting these names was December 1st.** If you have not already done so, please either mail or email your form to Debbie Murray, 100 Stephen Mather Road or gcdbirdsong@gmail.com as soon as possible. Please include your name and email address with your list.

January Newsletter Deadline
FRIDAY, December 28
gcdnewsletter@gmail.com

