



# Garden Club of Darien

Gardenclubofdarien.org



Monthly Newsletter

February 2013

Volume 4, Issue 6

## From the President

### REFLECTIONS.....



The final “birdsong” schedule is imaginative and stunning: it is a tribute to the hard work of those, under Debbie and Lisa’s leadership, who participated in its production. The quality of the effort is reflective of the spirit of GCA women who have for 100 years devoted themselves to nurturing America in all phases of horticulture, conservation, the environment, and civic improvement.

As in the past, the gifts our current Flower Show will bring to our Community will be many – beauty, education, entertainment, awareness. Indeed, our club’s archival records recount details of the numerous Flower Shows, educational efforts in the schools, and important civic and environmental projects undertaken over the years.

In a recent questionnaire required of all sitting GCA presidents in this Centennial year, we were asked to name the three most interesting members in our club’s history. A tall order indeed! I’m sure many would agree that (1) the Club’s illustrious founders, (2) the venerable Louise McLean, who conceived and developed the antique rose and herb garden at the Historical Society, and (3) Helen Haskell, a daffodil expert famous for her knowledge and collection of rare daffodils, warrant consideration. But so many others stand out as well, particularly in the horticulture and flower arranging areas. With imperfect knowledge then and a list too long to cite here, I will limit myself to the above three.

There is one person, however, who is unique in our club and Darien in terms of community involvement and effort.

Recognized as a Woman of Distinction by the YWCA at a luncheon last May, **Betty Jewett** was honored as one who spent over 40 years leading efforts to increase and improve Darien’s open space and encourage the appreciation of nature. She has been involved in nearly every environmental group in Darien, often as founder, including the community gardens at Cherry Lawn, the development of Tilley Pond Park, and establishment of the Darien Nature Center. She has served on many boards, including the Darien Audubon Society, Darien Beautification Commission, Darien Parks and Recreation, Darien Land Trust, and Friends of Woodland Park. Betty was also highly instrumental in getting The Green Team off the ground and has been involved in many Garden Club projects, too many to list here. Hats off to Betty and to all who contribute so much to our club and the community and enhance the goals of the GCA!

Hope all are enjoying the beauty and structure of the winter landscape.

Janet

### February Program

Please join us for our February meeting on Tuesday, February 12th at 10:00 at the DCA house. Our speaker will be Sarah Cedar Miller who has been the photographer for the Central Park Conservancy since 1984 and the historian since 1989. As the historian, she appears on radio and TV as a Park spokesperson, conducts specialized tours, and lectures. She has written a book titled *Central Park, An American Masterpiece*.

### GCD Calendar

#### Monday, February 4th

Board meeting at the home of Bridget Rudner, 5 Nolen Lane, 8:45 coffee, 9:00 meeting

#### Tuesday, February 12th

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

#### Monday, March 4th

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

#### Wednesday, March 13th

Membership meeting joint with New Canaan at Waveny, 9:30 coffee, 10:00 meeting

#### Thursday, May 23rd

Field trip to NYC in celebration of GCA Centennial

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

GCD Flower Show at the DCA

### Membership

Reminder to sponsors, seconders and supporting letter writers for potential Provisional members!! Please get your letters to me by the end of this month, if not sooner. Thank you.

Pat van den Broek  
15 Linda Lane  
Darien, CT 06820

### March Newsletter Deadline

Monday, February 25

[gcdnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:gcdnewsletter@gmail.com)



## Flower Arranging

Gwynne Tibbetts and Kate Kane



Please join us for the  
THE MONTH OF LOVE!  
FEBRUARY 12th IN-CLUB COMPETITION

It is an interpretation of a quote. There are no size restrictions on the arrangement.

"Where there is love, there is life."

-Mahatma Gandhi

This is one of our most popular events!  
So please join in the fun! Let us know you are coming  
so we can provide you with the space you need.

### Tea Table Thank You

Thank you Pam Clark for the exceptional winter white floral arrangement, whose inspiration was the popular PBS series, "Downton Abbey"!



## Horticulture

Carol Caulfield and Bridget Rudner



The Dowager Countess Lady Grantham of Downton Abbey revealed last episode that she has a dismissive attitude to gardening. Who knew? Poor Lady Edith. Well, enough about this TV show that I am obsessed with, we have a lot of January winners to celebrate, activities to chronicle and upcoming February events to announce. As I am writing this it is a blue bird New England winter afternoon, full of sun. An indoor gardening day at its best!

### Seeds from Shirley Meniece

At the February meeting we will distribute the seeds that I brought back from the conference. The goal of the project is to connect garden lovers from all over the country, to emphasize the planting of native plants and get us in the spirit of propagation.

### Dahlias

It is time to order your dahlias! When you are ordering keep in mind classes 9-13 of our flower show schedule and try and order a variety of different sizes. We hope to get a

lot of entries from our club. The source that we find is the best is Swan Island Dahlias ([www.dahlias.com](http://www.dahlias.com)).

### Tuesday, February 12: Club Meeting

The terrarium competition has quite a few members growing and arranging their little worlds under glass. Terrariums are among the hottest trends in both gardening and interior design worlds. We can't wait to see the creative spectrum of all the entries.

**February Terrarium Competition:** There will be *three classes* of terrariums **all measured inside by width/diameter at the base:** Class 1: sizes under 8"; Class 2: terrariums 8" to 12"; Class 3: terrariums over 12" not to exceed 24" in diameter/width. One entry per member **per class**. Terrariums must have been made by the entrant and planted with a minimum of three different species or cultivars of rooted plants. Accessories will be allowed. 4 x 6 key card required. To be viewed from top and three sides. To be judged 30 points for quality and condition, 25 points for suitability of material, 25 points for design and arrangement, 15 points for grooming, 5 points for key card. All terrariums must be in place (with accompanying entry cards) for judging by 8:45 am. Key card must be a white, unlined card completed in black waterproof ink or typed and enclosed in plastic or laminated. A photograph with identifying numbers may be included on the key card.

### How to grow a standard workshop

We will have a workshop on growing standards on February 5th from 10am-11:30am at Terrain in Westport. We do not have a cost yet but will send that out in an eblast as soon as we know. This should be a fun activity and hope that we see you there!

### Results from the par competition

Congrats to the participants and winners of the par competition. I love the concept of the par competition. It is not my plant versus your plant but my plant versus the ideal for that plant. Kudos to all who participated and kept their plants thriving in spite of holiday distractions!

### Grown by Exhibitor (order by photo next page)

2<sup>nd</sup> Debby McLean, Philodendron

1<sup>st</sup> Susan Cator, Ficus deltoidea, Mistletoe ficus

1<sup>st</sup> Janet Sargent, Gesneriaceae saint paulia, African violet

1<sup>st</sup> Lois Baylis, Agave schidigera 'Black Widow'

1<sup>st</sup> Judy Rodriguez, Agave variegata 'Tiger'

2<sup>nd</sup> Carol Caulfield, Aloe barbadensis



- 1<sup>st</sup> Pat Van Den Broek, *Tolmiea menziesii*, Piggyback plant  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridget Rudner, *Pelargonium* 'Prince Rupert variegated'  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sandy Drimal, Gesneriaceae saint paulia, African violet

### Propagated and Grown by Exhibitor

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sandy Drimal, *Ficus deltoidea*, Mistloetoe ficus  
 1<sup>st</sup> Debbie Bussey, *Ficus deltoidea*, Mistloetoe ficus  
 1<sup>st</sup> Carol Caulfield, *Ficus deltoidea*, Mistloetoe ficus  
 1<sup>st</sup> Emily D' Andrea, *Begonia*  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Bridget Rudner, *Begonia solimutata*  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Debby McLean, *Begonia*



### Photography

Danielle Granath and Tracy Drippé



We had a wonderful outing to the Metropolitan Museum of Art this month to see the exhibit "Faking it" - their first major exhibition devoted to the history of manipulated photography before the digital age. We saw over 200 photographs created between 1840 and 1990 about art, politics, news, entertainment and commerce. Included here is a photograph manipulated for political persuasion. Not a beautiful garden or landscape but interesting to see what was being done before photoshop! We are having our first manipulated class in June as members of our committee have been asking to try this and it's done with great success at GCA shows. Please consider entering the two upcoming competitions by emailing Danielle at [danielle515@gmail.com](mailto:danielle515@gmail.com).



Tuesday, April 9th

Class: Focus on Light - where light is a major element in the photograph.

Speaker: Stacy Bass — is a contributing photographer for At Home and her work has appeared in Westport Magazine, Greenwich Magazine, Garden Design as well as several others. She has exhibited her work in 2007, called "First Light"

at Gallerie Je Reviens in Westport. She is author of the book "In the Garden."

Tuesday, June 11th

Roses: Digitally manipulated or not. We will have at least 2 classes for this competition for those that wish to experiment with the photos and those that do not.

Both competitions are color photographs only. Single matted and not to exceed 11"x14". The matte size, shape and color and the surface finish of the photograph can be decided by the photographer. All photos must be delivered to Danielle the night prior to the competition or they will not be accepted. Please email me to reserve an easel and if you have any questions. We hope you'll enter!

### Conservation



Gigi Garnett and Margaret Smith

A continuation of our series, featuring native plants. . .

If you are searching for an ornamental shade tree, consider the award winning black tupelo (or black gum or sour gum) tree. The beautiful, native *Nyssa Sylvatica* not only received the Award of Garden Merit from the British Royal Horticultural Society, but also was recently named winner of the Garden Club of America Freeman Medal, which will be awarded at the GCA Centennial Annual Meeting in Philadelphia on May 1, 2013.

The Award of Garden Merit is based on extensive trials of plant performance in the UK. However, the reasons the black gum was chosen for an award there are applicable in the United States, as well. The black gum is available, decorative, hardy, does not require highly special growing conditions or care, and is not particularly susceptible to any pest or disease. All these reasons make the black gum a widespread favorite.

The Garden Club of America Horticulture Committee chose the black gum as the winner of the Freeman medal because of its "spectacular" fall color (which can vary from intense red to purple) and its attraction to migrating birds. The black gum can do well in difficult sites and provides so many wildlife benefits, the tree was deemed "worthy of greater uses in American landscapes."

The black gum flowers in May and June, with small, greenish-white clusters at the top of a long stalk, and its flowers provide honey to many species of birds. Honeybees are also drawn to the native tree, and nest inside the limbs.



## Conservation (cont'd.)

Because the black gum changes color early and dramatically in the fall, and the black gum fruit (dark blue, 2/3 inch long, and in clusters) ripens before that of many other plants, the tree also attracts and supports both migrating and year-round birds. Bird watchers would do well to keenly observe the black gum in the fall season, and spy the enormous variety of bird visitors it hosts. Further boosting the black gum's native appeal, squirrels, raccoons, and opossums use the hollow tree limbs for dens.

The black gum can grow to heights of 75 feet or taller. It is one of the longest living flowering plants in Eastern North America, able to thrive for hundreds of years, if conditions are right. While it can withstand dry and hot conditions, the black gum will then grow more slowly.

References: USDA Plant Profile, University of Illinois Extension – Selecting trees for your home, The Arbor Doctor, Royal Horticultural Society

## Herb Garden

Charly Armstrong and Susan Massamillo



Please send your tried-and-true recipes, using herbs as an ingredient, to Susan Massamillo at [smassdesigns@aol.com](mailto:smassdesigns@aol.com) Think Spring! Susan and Charly



### **Carrot Rosemary Soup (Debbie Murray)**

- 6 carrots peeled and cut into large pieces
- 2 onions chopped
- 1 potato peeled and cut up
- 2 zucchini cut up
- 1 yellow squash, cut up
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 tbsp rosemary
- 1 tbsp thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place cut up veggies in a large pot. Can be adapted for smaller or larger amounts of soup. Cover veggies with chicken broth. Add rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Simmer at low boil until veggies are tender, approximately 1/2 hour. Use stick blender or food processor to purée.

## GCD Flower Show - "birdsong"

Civic funds: Do you have a great idea for something that would benefit from the proceeds of birdsong? Think along the lines of visibility, maintenance and timing. If you do, and it can be anything, send it along to Susan Brewer at [Sudsbrew@gmail.com](mailto:Sudsbrew@gmail.com).

**October 2nd-4th, 2013**

Debbie Bussey and Lisa Brickman



The staging committee has been hard at work cutting templates for the DCA show space. With much deliberation and juxtaposing they have successfully designed a schematic for the floor plan within the DCA show space. Thanks ladies for kicking off the New Year with **birdsong** energy!



The show schedule has been printed and hard copies will be distributed at the February meeting. We hope that our members will be inspired to enter at least one class (or more) and now is the time to get a jump start and register. The show schedule is also updated and posted on the GCA website as well as our own GCD website.

Individual committees continue to meet and gather ideas. We hope that all members will continue to brainstorm for Silent Auction items and please notify either Clare Hare or Robin Stineman with your generous and much appreciated donations.

## Pleasure Through Plants

Susan Doelp and Audrey Cadwallader

The January Pleasure Through Plants gathering at the Darien Senior Center was attended only by those hardy enough to brave the new fallen snow! The participants created beautiful arrangements using pink and white stock, blue iris, white mums and a variety of greenery. Emily d'Andrea, Annie McKee and Betsy Becker served as our Darien Garden Club representatives.

