

## New and improved in Teaneck



Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011

Sixteen volunteers pruned, sawed, and raked at the Mary S. Topolsky Garden, part of the Hackensack River Greenway Through Teaneck, March 12. The Hackensack River is in the background. See page 4 for more photos.

## Editorial

### Entering volunteer hours is easy peasy

It goes without saying — but we’re saying it anyway — that being a Master Gardener and maintaining your certification comes with responsibilities like earning volunteer and education hours. Then comes the “paperwork” of entering your hours into Better Impact so you can remain a certified MG.

Why enter hours? Well, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) requires it. It’s part of being a certified MG. Here’s what those hours mean: RCE reported that in 2022 volunteers recorded 82,393 hours statewide. RCE calculates a dollar value that MG volunteers provide by multiplying the 82,393 hours times \$32.39, which is the hourly wage of volunteers in New Jersey.

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## Meeting notice

### Kathy Sauerborn Gardening for Hummingbirds

Tuesday, March 21  
Refreshments at 7 pm;  
announcements  
at 7:20; meeting to  
follow

1 Bergen County Plaza,  
Hackensack  
1<sup>st</sup>-floor meeting room

Kathy Sauerborn, a Passaic County Master Gardener, has more than 20 years of experience in gardening for hummingbirds in her own Certified Wildlife Habitat designated by the National Wildlife Federation.



Kathy Sauerborn

Kathy will review the main nectar plants used to feed the ruby throated hummingbird in our area. Kathy will provide a handout of hummingbird-friendly annuals and perennials for both shade and sun gardens. She will also discuss types of feeders and optimal placement of them.

Why hummingbirds? “Because they are magical, fairy-like,” Kathy said. “They are the only bird that is able to hover and fly backwards.”

## SPOTLIGHT ON ... MG OF BC SPEAKERS BUREAU

*Five Master Gardeners volunteer their time for the MG of BC Speakers Bureau. This issue features Robyn Lowenthal. If you're interested in volunteering for the Speakers Bureau or have a topic to suggest, contact [Arnie Friedman](#), Speakers Bureau chair, Class of 2004. Arnie can help you structure a presentation. Check out the [Speakers Bureau](#) section of our website.*

### **Robyn Lowenthal, Class of 2011**

**Robyn's topics:** Vegetable Gardening 101; Wellness in the Garden; Gardening the Green Way.

**Robyn's back story:** Prior to enrolling in the MG program, I spent 38 years as an elementary school instrumental music teacher/band director. It was a wonderful job, but it sounded awful! As I was preparing to retire, one thing on my to-do list was to become a Master Gardener. I really did not know what that meant, but I was a pretty inexperienced gardener with a very messy garden and thought it would help.

While during volunteer work, I realized that the "job" of a Master Gardener is to help the citizens of Bergen County be more successful with their gardening pursuits through passing on excellent gardening information from Rutgers. They say a teacher is always a teacher, so my desire to pass on good information and still be a teacher led me to participate in the Speakers Bureau.

I did not grow up in a gardening family. We were not encouraged to play in the dirt and were taught that bugs and other wildlife were dangerous. Despite this early experience, I have become a lover of the great outdoors, and yes, Mom, some wildlife and bugs are dangerous.

I have been growing vegetables for about 10 years, and still feel a childlike fascination every time I harvest a carrot or garlic or radish. And relish the pure joy of tasting that first ripe tomato. And take pride in knowing that so much of the produce we eat in the summer has come from my garden. I love learning more about gardening and sharing new information with other enthusiastic gardeners.

Since retiring from teaching, I have been running a therapeutic horticulture program with developmentally disabled, medically fragile adults in a residential setting. Over the years, my clients have learned many gardening skills. This work is a source of great pleasure and satisfaction for me as well as for my clients.

Many thanks to Joel for introducing me to the field of horticultural therapy!

In addition to growing vegetables, I have a small, jam-packed home garden of trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals. I am passionate about plant propagation and am in the midst of producing about 800 coleus plants for the Garden Club of Teaneck plant sale. In addition to gardening, I enjoy traveling, paddling my canoe, cooking, reading, visiting with friends and family, and playing with my cats.



**Robyn Lowenthal**

Since the Covid pandemic, vegetable gardening has become an extremely popular hobby. I truly believe that anyone can become a successful vegetable gardener. This belief is the impetus for the type of gardening talks I have chosen to present.

## TRIPS AND TOURS

### ***Tour planned to Leonard J. Buck Garden, Far Hills, May 11***

#### ***By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988***

In the February Potting Shed, we asked if you were interested in attending any docent-led tours to area gardens and arboretums and receive one hour of education credit. The cost of a docent would be split among attendees. Twelve of you replied that you're interested.

As a result, our first guided tour of the season will be a visit to the [Leonard J. Buck Garden](#), 11 Layton Road, Far Hills, beginning at 10:30 am, Thursday, May 11. The cost is \$10 per person, and the tour is limited to 15 people.

If you're interested, please reserve your spot:

- Mail your check for \$10, payable to the MG of BC, to MG of BC, PO Box 71, New Milford, NJ 07646. Be sure to write "T&T" (trips and tours) in the memo line of the check.
- Then send an email to [me](#) with your name and cell phone number.

Parking is limited, so please try to carpool. A suggested local place for lunch is the [Butler's Pantry Trackside](#), Far Hills.

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### 3 volunteer sites to open the week of April 3

Three MG of BC volunteer sites will open for the season the week of April 3. Visit the [Volunteer Sites](#) section of our website for a description of these and the other sites. Enjoy your volunteering!



One of the demonstration gardens within the Bergen County Zoo in 2022.

### Bergen County Zoo in Van Saun Park

**By Jeffrey Chan, Class of 2011**

April 3 is the opening day for volunteers at the Bergen County Zoo in Van Saun Park. Volunteers meet inside the zoo behind the zoo office at the demonstration herb garden at 9 am. Volunteers usually work until noon, but you can stay until the zoo closes. During hot summer days, volunteers work from 8-11 am. No registration is needed. Van Saun Park is located at 216 Forest Ave., Paramus.

On the first day, weather permitting, we'll have an initial orientation for newcomers and begin the spring cleanup.

**What to bring and wear:** Your favorite hand tools; a kneeling pad, if you have one; water and snacks (no food is sold at the zoo); sunscreen; gloves; bug repellent. Large tools and carts are provided. Wear comfortable clothing per seasonal weather conditions.

**Parking and restrooms:** Park in the lot in front of the zoo entrance. **Note:** The zoo opens at 10 am and spaces fill up fast, even on Monday. Restrooms are on site.

**For more information:** Call Jeffrey Chan, site coordinator, at 201-723-7422.

### Washington Spring Garden

**By Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008**

Washington Spring Garden is located in the heart of Van Saun Park. Our crew will gather to begin our spring clean-up on Thursday, April 6. We meet at the rear paved area of the walkway that runs along the brook. Pat [Vellas, also site coordinator] and I will be there from 8:30 am-12:30 pm, but any time you can afford is most appreciated. Van Saun Park is located at 216 Forest Ave., Paramus.

Our chores are rather unglamorous: Weeding, raking, pruning, and general maintenance work. However, we hope to be adding some plants this year. Washington Spring Garden is a beautiful, tranquil, meditative place to spend a few hours. We look forward to seeing our old friends and new faces.

**What to bring:** Water and snacks; gloves; hand tools; bug spray; kneeling pad, if needed. Rakes, barrels, brooms, and shovels are provided.

**Parking and restrooms:** The most convenient parking lot is lot 6. Restrooms are nearby.

**For more information:** Email [Suzanne Danzig](#), site coordinator, or call or text 201-218-4093.

### The Hermitage

**By Liz Gil, Class of 2019**

Hermitage volunteers will meet from 9:30 am-noon Tuesday and Wednesday, April 4 and 5. The first few weeks in April will be busy with spring cleanup. The chores are varied so you can stay within your physical capacity. We have a nice, friendly group of volunteers that vary in number from week to week. We welcome you to join us. Please reach out so we know to expect you. (Contact information is below.)

The Hermitage is located at 335 N. Franklin Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus. Visit the [website](#).

**What to bring and wear:** Bottled water to stay hydrated. The tool shed is full of larger tools and hand tools, but if you have a favorite set of tools, feel free to bring them. Wear sturdy clothing, gardening shoes, and gloves and spray your clothing for ticks.

**Parking and restrooms:** Park near the tool shed; a restroom is on site.

**For more information:** Call or text site coordinators Liz Gil, Class of 2019, at 908-456-5245 (cell), or Nancy Moses at 201-445-2532 (cell).

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(Volunteer site news, continued from page 3)

## Mary S. Topolsky Garden cleanup attracts MGs and Class of 2023 interns



Volunteers at the cleanup after battling the fence area that was filled with invasives (behind volunteers). Standing from left: Bruce Riede (Karen's husband); Karen Riede, horticultural assistant, Class of 2017; Larry Bauer (19); Jennifer DeLeon (23); Harriet Steiner, site coordinator (19); Marie Scotti (23); Christine Mousin, local volunteer; Jennifer Ermoian (23); Herb Arbeiter (19). Kneeling from left: Keith Mazanec (19); Peter Cammarano (23); Linda DeWolfe (23); Marie Warnke, Hackensack River Greenway Through Teaneck officer and site coordinator with Harriet; Lucy Jickling (19); Liz Gil (19); Karen Shaner (23).

*Photos by Miriam Taub,  
Class of 2011*

The Mary S. Topolsky Garden in Teaneck was suffering under the weight of invasives. This is the first season it's an MG of BC volunteer site. After the weeding, pruning, and raking, volunteers collected 48 bags of debris. The next step will be to design a thriving pollinator garden using native flowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees. The Township of Teaneck has a budget to pay for several years of planting and maintenance for this restoration project. Thank you, volunteers!



Top row, from left: Marie Scotti and Jennifer Ermoian, both Class of 2023; Harriet Steiner (19); Keith Mazanec (19); bags of debris. Bottom row, from left: Liz Gil (19); Peter Cammarano (23); Linda DeWolfe (23). The next cleanup will be Sunday, April 16 from 10 am-noon. More information to come.

*(Editorial, continued from page 1)*

(The \$32.39 comes from [Independent Sector](#), a non-profit organization.) The conclusion: Our total value to the state was \$2,668,709.27.

In Bergen County, noted Suzanne Danzig, Volunteer Records chair, Class of 2008, the MG of BC recorded 5,774 hours for 2022. Based on the value of \$32.39 an hour, the MG of BC contributed \$187,019.86 to Bergen County last year.

However, many of you entered your 2022 hours after the Jan. 31, 2023, deadline. Thank you for entering your hours and those hours will be counted toward your annual requirement, but by waiting to enter your hours, MG of BC missed the opportunity to report more than 1,100 additional hours in 2022.

**Remember, you need only 25 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours to maintain your MG certification. These are very achievable numbers.**

Entering hours into Better Impact isn't the most glamorous MG responsibility, but once you know how to do it, it's easy. There are only three screens to master: The **Login** page (where you enter your username and password) takes you to the **Home** page where you'll see your current week's hours, current year's hours, and lifetime hours.

At the top of the **Home** page, click on the "**Hours**" tab for the **Hours** page where you can log hours and see your most recent entries. Do this a few times and it becomes muscle memory. If you feel uncertain or intimidated using Better Impact, contact [Karen Riede](#), horticultural assistant, Class of 2017, who is available to give one-on-one instruction. [Suzanne](#) is available to answer questions. Suzanne suggests getting into the habit of entering hours weekly or biweekly or even monthly. Contact either Karen or Suzanne if you don't yet have a username and password for Better Impact.

To be clear, once you've completed the Rutgers MG program you are officially a Master Gardener. However, to maintain your "certification" and be a voting member you'll need to complete and record your volunteer and continuing education hours annually.

Let's do our best to be sure our hard work is recognized by RCE and Bergen County. We're a valuable commodity. We're hoping that by reminding you of this information, you'll see the value in recording your hours.

## MEETINGS/LECTURES

**March 16, 11 am-noon: Livingston Public Library**, 10 Robert H. Harp Drive, Livingston. Speaker: Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004. Topic: Bonsai for Beginners. Visit the library's [website](#) for more information.

**March 22, 7:30 pm: Garretson Forge & Farm**, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Brief general meeting followed by two gardening-related presentations: Speaker: Noel Schulz, Class of 2016. Topic: Deer-Resistant Landscaping with Native Plants. Topic: Pollinator and Bird-Friendly Yards. Speaker: Andrea Piazza, Fair Lawn Green Team.



**March 23, 7 pm, Garden Club of Hackensack**, M&M Building, 116 Holt St., Hackensack. Speaker: Steve Adams, forager/naturalist. Topic: A Foray into Kingdom Fungi.

**March 24, 1 pm, Bergenfield Public Library**, 50 W. Clinton Ave., Bergenfield. Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Potz 'N Around-How to Be Successful with Your Planters.

**March 25, 11 am-noon, Saddle Brook Public Library**, 340 Mayhill St., Saddle Brook. Speaker: Lynne Proskow, Class of 2022. Topic: Container Gardening in Small Places and Introduction to Self-Watering Containers. Click [here](#) or call 201-843-3287 to register.

**March 30, 7 pm, Westwood Public Library**, 49 Park Ave., Westwood. Speaker: Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004. Topic: Beginner Bonsai. Click [here](#) to register.

**April 1, 9 am-3 pm, Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)**, Student Center Theatre, Sussex County Community College, 1 College Hill Road, Newton. Fee: \$30 NOFA members; \$40 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information.

**April 3, 7-8:30 pm: Mahwah Public Library**, 100 Ridge Road, Mahwah, and via Zoom. Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Deer Oh Dear: How to Cope and Plant with Deer in Mind. Click [here](#) to register. Registration closes April 2 at 7 pm.

## WEBINARS

*For your convenience, all times are Eastern.*

**March 16, 10-11:30 am:** North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Buncombe County Center, sponsors Bountiful Backyard Berries. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 16, 11 am:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Growing a Great Tomato. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.



**March 16, noon:** Smithsonian Gardens sponsors A World of Discovery: How Science and Heart Can Make You a More Ecological Gardener. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 16, 7-9 pm:** Sussex County Chapter of the Native Plant Society of NJ sponsors Spring Ephemerals. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 20, 1 pm:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Designing an Edible Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

**March 21, 7-8 pm:** Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Invasive Species. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#), then scroll down to March 21 for more information and links to pay either by check or credit card.

**March 25, 10 am-noon:** Penn State Extension sponsors Native Plants You Need in Your Yard and Ensuring Perennial Hardiness. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 28, 6-7:15 pm:** University of Maine Cooperative Extension sponsors Healthy Gardens Start with Healthy Plants. Fee: Sliding scale from \$0-\$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 28, 7 pm:** Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors the Buffalo Style Garden: Adding Your Personality to Your Garden. Fee: \$15 members; \$20 non-members. Click [here](#), then scroll down to March 28 for more information and to register.

**March 29, 6:30 pm:** AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Starting Your Vegetable Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

**March 29, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Know Your Natives: Container Gardens. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**March 30, noon:** Smithsonian Gardens sponsors Grasses and Sedges. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 1, 9:30-11 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Creating Healthy Garden Soil. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**April 1, 10-11 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Fundamentals of Garden Layers. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Deadline for the April Potting Shed: March 25**

### Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County

**Joel Flagler** Agricultural/Resources Management Agent/County Extension Dept. Head  
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