



## SAVE THE DATE

**MG meeting - Tuesday, March 28**

**1 Bergen County Plaza**

**1<sup>st</sup>-floor meeting room**

**Hackensack**

**Refreshments at 7 pm**

**Announcements at 7:20 pm**

**Program to follow**



Chris Rubino from Monrovia will introduce new plants for 2017 and review highlights of 2016. Chris is a native of Buffalo, NY, and a graduate of Cornell University.

His relevant work experience includes retail nursery sales; landscape design, installation, and maintenance; golf course maintenance; research on nutritional deficiencies of vegetable crops; the American Rose Society test garden, Buffalo, NY; Cornell Plantations (now known as Cornell Botanic Gardens); Walt Disney World Co. Epcot Center; Walt Disney Animal Kingdom; Universal's Islands of Adventure; and Monrovia nursery sales in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, New Jersey, and New York.

He currently travels extensively to domestic and international gardens looking for new and improved plants to introduce to American gardens.

Start preparing the soil in your garden because there's bound to be at least one new plant you must have this year. Chris will also detail the best places to research — both online and in the field — the plants that are being introduced.

Contents	Page
Save the Date	1
MG of BC News	2-3
Media Reviews	3
Shows and Conferences	3
Trips and Tours	3
Volunteer Site News	4-5
Garden Club Grapevine	5-6
Plant Society Grapevine	6
Links are clickable and are noted in blue.	

## From the President's Desk



As many members know, Master Gardeners take on different forms of volunteerism including organizing, physical labor, research, speaking, training, and other tasks. Over the years we have had the good fortune of members in our organization taking on several volunteer roles. I am pleased to add two more names to the distinguished list: Dennis Gretchen and Melody Corcoran.

Dennis Gretchen, Class of 2011, has been a helping hand with the 4-H/Master Gardener Fair, Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum, and other projects, and I'm pleased to announce he has agreed to be our Sunshine News chair.

Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016, has been a workhorse at the Hermitage and Garretson Forge and Farm. I'm happy to announce she has agreed to be our Site Coordinator liaison.

Thank you both for all you have done for the Master Gardeners of Bergen County, and congratulations on becoming our newest board members.

A special thank you to Karen Pennell, who started as our first Site Coordinator liaison three years ago. She has also served in the positions of Community Outreach chair, vice president, and president, and she will remain on the board as the Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey delegate.

Happy gardening.

- **Joseph Cooper**



Dennis Gretchen is the new chair of the Sunshine News. Email Dennis at [dennisgretchen@gmail.com](mailto:dennisgretchen@gmail.com).

## MG OF BC NEWS



### Meet Laura DeFlora, Class of 2011 By Miriam Taub

Laura DeFlora credits her interest in all things “flora” to growing up in Lynchburg, VA. Separating her backyard and that of her maternal

grandparents was a creek bottom. She grew up with the creek, the woods, and the mud, she explained. Summers, she said, were spent on her paternal grandparents’ farm in the Spencer’s Mountain area of neighboring Amherst County. “Walton country,” she called it, referring to the 1970s TV show.

At Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA, Laura majored in biology with a concentration in botany. It was there she met her future husband, Frank, who was raised in Bergen County. (His family owned Closter’s Garden Gate Farms, which closed in the 1960s.) A day after their marriage, they loaded her stuff, including house plants, into a U-Haul headed for an apartment in Lodi.

Laura took a job as assistant manager at Ann Taylor, while Frank worked as a stock broker. Two years later they bought their first home in Glen Rock. On the day they moved in, Laura had their first son Pat, now 30. “New baby, new house,” she said. Two years later their second son, George, now 28, was born.

When they needed more room, Laura and Frank embarked on a wild adventure by bidding on a house at a sheriff’s sale. The house sat on a builder’s acre on the Saddle River in Ridgewood and seemed to have potential although the windows were boarded up so they could not see inside. However, once they were handed the key they found, among other things, that half the kitchen, including the stove, was gone, and the radiators had to be replaced.

They learned from neighbors that the house had been vacant and local kids had used it for parties. “It was a completely depressed property to be tackled one section at a time,” Laura recalled. The yard also hadn’t been attended to. Several years’ worth of leaves needed to be raked and the double row of hemlocks needed attention. “The first thing I did was spray the woolly adelgid,” she said.

Ultimately, it was all worth it. With the river, a pool, and the large property, “We were *the* house” to which the neighborhood kids gravitated, she said. “We gave a gift

to our kids that not many people could give. They never came home dry or clean.”

However, the house that worked for a couple with two children didn’t work for four adults (both sons live at home). In 2015, after 21 years in Ridgewood, the DeFloras downsized to a one-level home in Wyckoff in the Barrister Farms development (formerly the Hilltop Stud Farm property). Their house — known locally as the Hoffman House, Laura says — was the farmhouse that went with the stud farm.

It was when Laura, 59, worked at Ann’s Tag Sales in Ridgewood that a friend and coworker, Jo Browning, enrolled in the Master Gardener Class of 2010. Jo promised to work for Laura on Friday mornings (a busy time for tag sales) so Laura could take classes, too. As a result, Laura enrolled in the Class of 2011.

Laura earns most of her volunteer time at the Skylands Holiday Open House and as a consultant for area schools that want to create vegetable, butterfly, or other gardens. “Less physical work, more consulting,” she said. She works part-time as a horticultural consultant at Abma’s Farm in Wyckoff and is taking classes at the New York Botanical Garden toward a certificate in sustainable landscape design. She’s already earned a certificate in plant production. Her goal is to consult with homeowners on how to create a more wildlife-friendly landscape. At home, her garden project for 2017 is to put in an herb garden en route to the front door.

Laura also volunteers at the Depot in Midland Park, an entirely volunteer-run gift shop whose proceeds benefit Children’s Aid and Family Services, a non-profit provider of human services and child welfare programs in northern New Jersey.

### Useful Links

Many local garden centers give discounts to MGs. See the list at [mgofbc.org/useful-links.html](http://mgofbc.org/useful-links.html). Bring your membership card when shopping.

### Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office

**Joel Flagler** Agricultural/Resources Management Agent & County Extension Dept. Head 201-336-6780

**Joe Papa** Horticulture Consultant 201-336-6788

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, the State University of NJ, US Department of Agriculture, and Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension educational programs are offered to all without regard to race, religion, color, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## 2016 Hours: Have you Submitted Yours?

Submit your 2016 hours now! Information from the V&EAR are used for our Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) and Rutgers University reports as well as the annual recertification of Master Gardeners. And, RCE receives additional funding based on total number of reported volunteer hours.

You can report your hours in either of two ways:

1. Excel form: The form can be used on any PC and emailed. This is the easiest and most accurate way to track hours.
2. Paper form: The form has to be mailed; keep a copy for your records.

From the home page of the MG of BC [website](#), go to the "Volunteer Reporting Forms" section. No password is needed to access the forms. If you have any questions, contact Donna Karpel at 201-327-8835 or [donna9189@gmail.com](mailto:donna9189@gmail.com).

## MEDIA REVIEWS

*By Salvatore Lagattuta*

"Lost Gardens" (2010 DVD: BBC TV, gardening series; eight episodes). Available on [YouTube](#).

Imagine restoring some long-forsaken and almost-forgotten British gardens to their once-stately splendor using a team of gardening experts and hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers.

"Lost Gardens" showcases eight garden restorations — Gatton, Shelley Hall, Warwick, Ambleside, Perthshire, Sutton Stop, Chatham, and Penjerrick — with renowned BBC "Gardeners' World" host Monty Don, who leads the main team of Dr. Toby Musgrave, garden historian; Dr. Twigs Way, landscape archeologist; and Ann-Marie Powell, professional landscaper.

The videos feature a diverse collection of deteriorated gardens that have practically vanished. During the fast-paced, five-day restorations each site's former stature, eccentricity, elegance, and appealing charm and glory are restored. Each site is unique and shows the gardening interests and intricacies of its fascinating owners, dedicated caretakers, and numerous admirers both past and present.

The videos convey a deep sense of British societal history and gardening heritage over the past 400 years

as well as the pleasures and nuances of various gardening periods and styles. You will be informed, entertained, and even occasionally surprised when you view this fabulous series.

I really enjoyed watching these videos, which reminded me of the U.S.'s garden conservancy movement, including our own [Garden State Gardens](#). These restorations also gave me a greater appreciation of local efforts to revive and maintain our local historical gardening sites, such as the Hermitage and Garretson Forge and Farm, where I volunteer.

## SHOWS AND CONFERENCES

Monmouth County Master Gardeners' Third Annual School Garden Conference. Theme: Academics in the Great Outdoors: School Gardens and Beyond.

Friday, March 24, 8:15 am-2:30 pm. \$25 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Monmouth County Agricultural Building, 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold. Morning: Group presentations. Afternoon: Interest stations on a variety of topics and resources in school gardens and environmental education so each attendee can pursue his or her areas of interest. Professional development certificate provided. For the registration form, send an email to [pateisemann@gmail.com](mailto:pateisemann@gmail.com).

## TRIPS AND TOURS

### Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture Blue Hill Farm

Wednesday, May 17, 10:30 am  
630 Bedford Road, Pocantico Hills, NY 10591 (if using GPS, enter Tarrytown, NY 10591)  
Blue Hill Farm tour \$25 pp; buffet lunch \$40 pp

For those who do not want the buffet lunch, an alternative lunch option will be offered within five minutes of the farm.

In 2004, Blue Hill at Stone Barns was opened within the [Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture](#) in Pocantico Hills. Dan, David, and Lauren Barber helped create the philosophical and practical framework for Stone Barns Center, a working four-season farm and educational center 30 miles north of New York City. They continue to help guide it in its mission to create a consciousness about the effect of everyday food choices.

Sourcing from the surrounding fields and pasture, as well as other local farms, Blue Hill at Stone Barns highlights the abundant resources of the Hudson Valley. There are no menus at Blue Hill at Stone Barns. Instead, guests are offered the multi-taste Grazing, Pecking, Rooting menu featuring the best offerings from the field and market.

For more information, contact Josie Ko at [josie\\_ko1@hotmail.com](mailto:josie_ko1@hotmail.com).

**Save the following dates for upcoming trips and tours.**

#### June 15

[Catskill Native Nursery](#) has been inspiring gardeners since 1999 to create biodiversity and remarkable ornamental gardens using plants native to eastern North America; a 10% discount will be offered.

#### July 14

[Hollister House Garden](#) in Washington, CT, is a classic garden in the English manner, with a loose formal structure, informally planted in generous abundance.

#### August 16

[New York Botanical Garden's Native Plant Garden](#); tour led by Kim Eierman, founder of EcoBeneficial.

## VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

### Garretson Forge and Farm

Garretson will kick off the spring season with its annual Pea Day planting on Sunday, March 19 from 1-4 pm.

After that, regular Master Gardener volunteering will resume on Thursdays, beginning March 23, from 10 am-2 pm. We also meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month from 1-4 pm. New volunteers are welcome.

Bring gloves and small hand tools such as pruners and trowels; we have the rest. The group meets rain or shine since there is a small greenhouse and plenty to do even in inclement weather.

*This is a great opportunity for Class of 2017 students to earn required hours.*

On Wednesday, March 15, Bergen County beekeepers Larissa and Eric Symbouras will speak about why bees are important to us all, as well as what it's like to be a beekeeper in northern New Jersey; what you need to have, buy, and consider; and about how much the start-up costs run. The lecture will begin at 8 pm

Eric and Larissa are the founders of [We Beelieve](#), a non-profit organization that installs beehives and hosts educational programs for children in underprivileged neighborhoods, teaching everything from the science and nature of bees and bee colonies, to the logistics and business of beekeeping itself. The program is free. Refreshments will be served.

[Garretson](#) is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Contact Lida Gellman at [LB922@aol.com](mailto:LB922@aol.com) for more information.

- **Lida Gellman**

### New Jersey Botanical Garden at Skylands

#### Sunday, March 5, 11 am-3 pm

##### **Skylands Manor tours - Member Appreciation Day.**

NJBG members and visitors are invited to enjoy a special tour of historic Skylands Manor. Snow cancels. For NJBG members: Purchase a Manor House tour ticket and receive a free ticket for a guest. Non-members: Become a member on Member Appreciation Day and receive a free Manor House tour ticket. Regular fee: \$7 adults; \$5 seniors and students ages 13-18; \$3 ages 6-12; free under age 6.

#### Saturday, March 18, 10 am

**End-of-Winter Tree Walk.** Rich Flynn, head landscape designer, will lead this perennial favorite. Learn the differences between trees and how to tell them apart. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather, and bring bug spray and sun block, if needed. Meet at the Carriage House. Free.

#### Sunday, March 19, 1 pm

**Family Woodland Hike.** Join NJBG hike leaders on an easy, child-friendly hike in the woodlands. Learn about the plants, animals, and geology around you on a hike designed to fit the group. Wear sturdy shoes, dress for the weather, and bring bug spray and sun block, if needed. Meet at the Carriage House. Snow/rain cancels. Free.

#### Sunday, March 26, 1 pm

**Audubon: Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitats.** Don Torino of the Bergen County Audubon Society offers an indoor photo presentation on creating a backyard wildlife habitat, where you'll discover how to welcome birds, butterflies, and wildlife into your garden by providing native plants, water, cover, and food. You'll also learn how your yard can become a Bergen County Audubon Society Certified Wildlife Garden. At the Carriage House Visitor Center. Free.

- **Dania Cheddie**

## Thielke/Glen Rock Arboretum

Come to the Thielke Arboretum seasonal Weed Warrior Day stewardship project Sunday, April 2 from 10 am-1 pm. Local expert Elaine Silverstein, along with other knowledgeable volunteers, will be on hand to share their wisdom about weeds and other invasive plants that may be homesteading on your property. Rain date is Sunday, April 23 from 1-4 pm.

No experience is necessary; training will be done onsite. Wear boots, and dress for the weather. Bring gloves, kneelers, pruners, and water though extras are available if you don't have them. Visit the [website](#) for more information and how to become a member or visit our Facebook page. The Arboretum is located at 460 Doremus Ave., Glen Rock.

- *Carolyn Gretchen, publicity chair, 201-991-8140*

## GARDEN CLUB GRAPEVINE

- March 2**      **7:30 pm, Garden Club of Harrington Park**, Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St. Speaker: Bruce Crawford, director of Rutgers Gardens. Topic: Curb appeal - design tips for the front yard.
- March 3**      **2 pm, Demarest Garden Club**, United Methodist Church, 109 Hardenburgh Ave. Speaker Hubert Ling, propagator for the Native Plant Society of New Jersey. Topic: Native wildflowers for the home garden.
- March 4**      **7 pm, Ramsey Area Garden Club**, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 55 Wyckoff Ave., corner of Woodland Avenue, across from the Ramsey Library. Speaker: Dr. Linda Rohleder, NY/NJ Trail Conference. Topic: Invasives.
- March 6**      **7:30 pm, Dumont Shade Tree Commission**, Dumont Senior Center, 39 Dumont Ave. Speaker: Captain Bill Sheehan, Hackensack Riverkeeper. Topic: The essential nature of the Hackensack River watershed and the vital role trees play in protecting the environment.
- March 8**      **10 am, joint meeting of the Wyckoff Area Garden Club and Oakland Garden Club**. James McFaul Environmental Center, 150 Crescent Ave., Wyckoff. Speaker: Don Torino. Program: Creating a certified wildlife garden.
- March 9**      **7 pm, Teaneck Garden Club**, Rodda Center, Multipurpose Room 2B, 250 Colonial Court. Speaker: Cathy Miller, floral arranger. Program: Learn to create a fresh fruit/vegetable/flower design; a fresh spring creation; and an all-dried-flower arrangement (replica of a White House design).
- March 15**     **7 pm, Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, Senior Center, 320 Boulevard. Speaker: Paul Cowie. Topic: Story of the 9/11 Memorial trees. Program in cooperation with the Hasbrouck Heights library. Registration suggested by calling the library at 201-288-0484.
- March 16**     **7 pm, Maurice M. Pine Public Library**, 10-01 Fair Lawn Ave., Fair Lawn. Speaker: Edith Wallace. Topic: Flowering trees through the seasons. Register by calling the library at 201-796-3400.
- March 21**     **7:45 pm, Glen Rock Garden Club**, Municipal Annex, 678 Maple Ave. Speaker: Walter Perry. Topic: Getting seeds and seedlings started for spring.
- March 21**     **7 pm, Backyard Garden Club**, River Vale Library, 412 River Vale Road. Topic: Ideas for our 2017 gardens; informal discussion for members to share their plans and ideas such as alternatives to lawns and deer-proof plants.
- March 21**     **7 pm, Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club**, Old Bishop House, 176 E. Saddle River Road, Saddle River. Speaker: Dail Reid. Topic: Shady ladies and sunny spaces.

**March 28**      **7 pm, Sierra Club**, Louis Bay 2<sup>nd</sup> Library, 345 Lafayette Ave., Hawthorne. Speaker: Edith Wallace. Topic: Native plants of DeKorte Park.

Contact Lucy Malka at [lhalka@optonline.net](mailto:lhalka@optonline.net) or 201-791-3562 to supply information for the Garden Club Grapevine. *Publication deadline is no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the prior month.*

## PLANT SOCIETY GRAPEVINE

**March 8**      **8 pm, Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of New Jersey**, NY-NJ Trail Conference headquarters, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah. Speaker: Frank Mortimer. Topic: The ABCs of honeybees. Directions and parking information at [npsnj.org](http://npsnj.org).

Contact Catie Farahat at [cwfarahat@scatteringlight.com](mailto:cwfarahat@scatteringlight.com) to submit information for the Plant Society Grapevine. *Publication deadline is no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the prior month.*

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The Master Gardeners of Bergen County does not share or sell its email/ mailing list to non-members or to other organizations. Our membership information is confidential and for use by members only. We ask our members not to share our list with non-members or to use it for any unauthorized purposes as it is for official MG use only. When sending an email to the MG list, address it using the "bcc" option instead of "to" in order to keep the list of recipients from being visible.

**Please share photos of your volunteer work or of your garden. We would all like to see photos of Master Gardeners at work either at volunteer sites or in home gardens.**