



From the Potting Shed January 2018

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

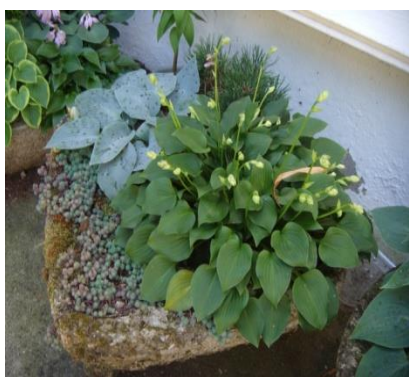
SAVE THE DATE

MG meeting – Jan. 23

1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack
1st-floor meeting room

Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements
at 7:20 pm; program to follow

Learn to make hypertufa troughs



Tired of the same old ceramic and plastic flower pots? Looking for a planter that will be a conversation piece as well as show off your rock garden plants this spring?

Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, will present a slide show demonstrating one of the ways to make a hypertufa

trough for a natural-looking addition to your garden. Hypertufa is a mixture of peat moss, perlite, and Portland cement. When mixed properly and molded, you can make a container/planter that can be left outside during the winter with no fear of cracking. Hypertufa has great porosity allowing air to the roots.



Janet has been making troughs for at least 20 years. Still using most of her originals and adding more over the years she probably has 10 to 15 different troughs located in various parts of her garden. Janet will discuss the reasons for making hypertufa troughs as well as how to plant your trough and how to winterize your trough. She'll provide printed instructions for making your own hypertufa planter

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Links are clickable and are noted in [blue](#).

From the President's Desk



I thought I was done as president, but the change actually happens at the first meeting of the year (Jan. 23).

I'm thrilled to announce the first inductees as Lifetime Master Gardeners of Bergen County. This designation is given to members who have been certified MGs for 20 years and have volunteered more than 1,000 hours. Congratulations to Janet Austin, Cliff Gerenz, John Grill, Barbara Johansson, and Robert (Bob) Schneider.

A huge thank you to Albina Daukantas and her helpers who created and organized the 30 floral arrangements for our holiday party. After the party, the centerpieces were sold, and \$470 was raised for the Center for Food Action.

Although I don't know the exact amount raised during the Skylands Manor Holiday Open House, it was reported that more than 1,000 visitors showed up on Sunday alone breaking previous attendance records. Two videos have been uploaded to the web featuring the volunteers and the decorations. Go to www.MGofBC.org for a peek. A special thank you to De Trezza, Laura De Flora, Barbara Johansson, and all the MG members and students who made this event such a success for our very own New Jersey Botanical Garden.

Lastly, the 42nd annual Rutgers Home Gardeners School has been scheduled for Saturday, March 17 in New Brunswick. This year there are 38 lectures/workshops plus two keynote presentations. I've been going to this event for more than 10 years and highly recommend it. It's a great way to get six educational hours and meet garden enthusiasts from around the state. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

Wishing you a happy and healthy New Year.

- Joseph Cooper

MG OF BC NEWS



Lifetime MGs: From left, Janet Austin, Cliff Gerenz, and Barbara Johansson were named Lifetime MGs at the holiday party in December. John Grill and Robert Schneider, not pictured, also were named Lifetime MGs. All received certificates.

Meet Mark Penchinar, Class of 2016



By Miriam Taub

Mark Penchinar was a boy at PS 221 in Brooklyn when he had his first gardening experience: He grew radishes in the school's small garden and recalled how joyful he felt at his success.

However, it would be almost six decades before Mark resumed growing vegetables, this time in the Teaneck Garden Club greenhouse.

While a lot happened to him in between those experiences, almost none of it had anything to do with gardening. Mark, who is 69, grew up in Brooklyn and Franklin Square, Long Island – and in the Key Food supermarkets that his father owned.

Maurice Penchinar, now 94, owned five Key Food stores in Brooklyn and Queens. At 6, Mark learned to candle eggs. Later he stocked shelves and learned the

butcher's trade, training that would come in handy down the road. (He admitted to being "terrible" as a checker, aka, cashier.)

In college, Mark pursued his interest in people by majoring in anthropology. He chose Hofstra University, he said, because it had one of the foremost anthropology departments around. After graduation in 1970, he found there were no jobs available in the anthropology field, so he pursued a second field of interest. He enrolled in night classes at City College where he studied mathematics, a subject in which he'd always excelled, while three days a week he worked as a butcher at a Sloan's Supermarket in Manhattan. Two years later he got his first information technology (IT) job at the Reader's Digest in Pleasantville, NY.

At the time, (the 1970s), IT jobs were plentiful, he said. "I changed jobs a lot because I wanted to get promoted a lot." The work was creative, and he loved designing algorithms/mathematical formulas. After 20 years of working for others, Mark started his own IT consulting business, which he operated before retiring in 2013.

Mark recalled that for the first two years of retirement he was bored, until "all of a sudden it hit me." He recalled his early experience with gardening and joined the Bergen Bonsai Society and then the Teaneck Garden Club, where he's the program director and, recently, took on the role of treasurer. He was told the extra job would "only" take two hours a week, he chuckled.

One of Mark's goals was to secure a potting bench in the Teaneck Garden Club greenhouse and an accompanying garden plot. This perk is available to members who've worked a minimum of three hours a week for three months and participate in the club's annual plant sale, mainly by propagating plants. By late 2016 Mark had earned his bench where he germinates vegetables to grow in his club garden plot. He grows winter squash, garlic, onions, eggplant, romaine, tomatoes, and jalapeno peppers. (He bottles his own pineapple jalapeno sauce.) While Mark also grows some vegetables in his Teaneck backyard and on his deck, he admitted that both flowers and shrubs in his yard have died under his watch.

It was during a visit by MGs to the Teaneck greenhouse that Mark learned about the Master Gardener program. As a result, he enrolled in the Class of 2016. He has volunteered at the butterfly garden in Overpeck Park, the Skylands Holiday Open House, and the Hermitage where he said "me and the women" did the heavy lifting of logs and boulders while clearing the property. Recently, he became the community outreach chair of the MG of BC.

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Mark and his wife, Michele, a retired special education teacher, have been married for 40 years. They met by happenstance at one of his father's supermarkets in Brooklyn. In fact, he pointed out, other family members knew Michele before he met her. Michele was a cashier on a day Mark came in to work as a butcher. While no words were initially spoken, Mark recalled that "when our eyes met," he knew she was the one for him, while she predicted to her coworkers that "he's mine."

Mark and Michele have three children: Heather (an occupational therapist); Ellen (a social worker); and Sean (also a social worker); and two grandchildren. Mark proudly pointed out that all three children followed their mother into the social work field.

In his spare time, Mark enjoys managing the financial portfolios of several family members and selling items on eBay. As for gardening, this coming season Mark plans to plant only those vegetable varieties recommended by Rutgers as ideal for the Northeast.

FROM THE GREEN SIDE

Recently I have been involved in a very lengthy online discussion of the benefits and detriments of regular applications of mulch and how it might help or harm plants during the winter. In trying to understand the truth about mulch, you need to understand root systems first. I was guided by a colleague to read the article about tree roots (below), which first appeared in Northern Woodlands magazine, winter 2007. It sheds light on what happens below ground during the winter. This should help everyone see how different winter weather can have very different effects on our trees. Reprinted by permission of the author and the magazine.

- Arnie Friedman

What do tree roots do in winter?

**By Michael Snyder
Chittenden (VT) County forester**

Tree roots are inscrutable. While their importance to the above-ground parts of trees and forests is well appreciated by forest scientists, tree roots have always been notoriously difficult to study obscured as they are by duff, soil, rocks, and darkness. And that's just in summer. The problem is only exacerbated by winter's snow and frozen soil. Consequently, while researchers literally have been pondering roots for centuries, there is very little direct documentation of tree root activity in winter.

Still, forest ecologists are a curious and plucky bunch. They continue to build on that legacy of effort by measuring roots of container-grown trees, painstakingly excavating living roots in forests, and, more recently, using modern imaging technology to watch roots grow in place. And most have come to agree on a generalized view of tree roots through the seasons.

These ecologists describe root activity as periodic, with maximum growth in early summer — especially in deciduous species — and pulses of additional growth occurring occasionally in early fall. And complicating things further, they indicate that not all roots grow at the same time. Even within a single tree, some roots may be active while others are not.

However, by all accounts, tree roots in our region are thought to spend the winter in a condition of dormancy. This means they are not dead but rather they overwinter in a resting phase with essential life processes continuing at a minimal rate. Full-on root growth resumes in spring shortly after soils become free of frost, usually sometime before bud break.

But unlike the above-ground parts of most trees that pass the winter in a prolonged dormancy, marked by unbroken inactivity until spring, tree roots seem to maintain a readiness to grow independent of the above-ground parts of the tree. That is, roots remain mostly inactive but can and do function and grow during winter months whenever soil temperatures are favorable, even if the air above ground is brutally cold. While roots tend to freeze and die at soil temperatures below 20° F, minimum temperatures for root growth are thought to be between 32 and 41° F.

So, if soil temperatures warm to or stay above this minimum, winter roots can break dormancy and become active. This winter quiescence — where roots are resting but ready — is extremely important for the health of individual trees and, by extension, for forests in general. Indeed, it is this trait that allows evergreens to absorb soil water and avoid winter desiccation in their needles, and it is this trait that allows all species, including deciduous hardwoods, the opportunity to expand their root systems in search of water and nutrients in advance of spring bud break.

But there is an important tradeoff. To maintain this quiescence, a tree's roots necessarily tend to be much less cold-hardy than its stems and branches. This is fine so long as the soil is sufficiently insulated by a covering of snow against extremely low air temperatures.

A good early season snowfall, if it persists, can keep soil unfrozen throughout the coldest of winters. In such

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years, sustained winter root activity may replace previously damaged roots, may ready the tree for spring bud break, and may translate into excellent above-ground growth during the following summer.

Conversely, a deep snowpack coming later in winter, after the soil is already frozen, can also insulate the soil but in a different way. These late snows actually keep soil frozen for extended periods, even during January thaws and despite the heat of the earth's core. The surface layers of forest soils do commonly freeze, and when they do, it is not good for roots or the stems and branches dependent on them.

Not only do the roots remain inactive under such frozen conditions, but the freezing, heaving, and cracking of winter soils physically damage roots, particularly the fine feeder roots in the uppermost organic layers. This can trigger a cascade of effects on overall tree and forest health. By reducing a tree's ability to take up water and nutrients, particularly during spring bud break, winter root damage limits subsequent stem and branch growth in summer. In turn, this can contribute to tree mortality and may even explain pockets of dead trees.

Winter injury to feeder roots is an inherent — and natural — part of forests in northern climates. And, through its effects on individual tree health, winter root ecology is an important determinant of overall forest composition, dynamics, and productivity even though it is difficult to see and measure directly.

Conclusion from Arnie Friedman: My take-away from this article is that doing things to prevent winter damage to roots and to promote water and gas exchange, even in the coldest times, would be a positive. Putting down a thin layer of mulch (maybe 2 inches) over tree roots in fall is one of those things we can do without creating a barrier to water and air penetration. Be sure never to let the mulch pile up around the trunk, which causes bark to rot or be eaten by moles.

Don't buy mulch though. You can easily mow over fallen leaves and rake or blow the ground leaves around the trees and into your beds for a great recycled mulch that's a great win for the environment. Cut them and leave them.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Don't let your MG of BC membership lapse. Click [here](#) to download the membership renewal form for 2018. Mail the completed form with your check for \$20, made payable to MG of BC, to Terri Pegg, 54 W. Magnolia Ave., Maywood, NJ 07607. You can include an additional amount as a donation to the MG of BC. Donations are welcome!

Volunteer hours are due; no password needed to download the forms

By Donna Karpel

Volunteer hours are due now! And, you can download the reporting forms from the home page of our [website](#); no password is needed.

You can report your hours via Excel form or paper, as explained below. The information from the V&EAR is used for our Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) and Rutgers University reports as well as the annual recertification of Master Gardeners. RCE receives additional funding based on total number of reported volunteer hours. Here are the two ways to report your hours:

- 1. Excel form:** You can use the form on any PC and e-mail it to me. This is the easiest and most accurate way to track hours. (Do not create your own spreadsheet.)
- 2. Paper form:** Paper has to be mailed, and you need to keep a copy for your records. The mailing address is on the form. Both the Excel and paper forms can be found on the home page of our [website](#) under "Volunteer Reporting Forms." You can access the forms without a password. If you haven't downloaded the new forms recently, be sure to download the current versions. The November 2017 Excel form has the most accurate list of approved sites, which are the only entries that should go under the location column.

Tips: When using the Excel form, remember to change the file name from "V&EAR Email Form" and save with your name and year of reporting. Example, Mary Smith 2017. If you need help renaming your form, please ask. Send the entire report as one spreadsheet. Do not separate your education and volunteer hours into two or more reports, and do not send two or more spreadsheets. Enter only one date per line, especially if you're submitting a paper report. (If I can't read it, I can't enter it.)

Under education hours you can include the following:

- Any MG trips and tours, workshops, and lectures at the meetings;
- Lectures, educational courses, conferences, and docent-led tours at almost any venue including, but not limited to, garden clubs, Rutgers, NYBG, NJBG, association meetings, guided tours, seminars, workshops, etc.

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Do not include any of the following under your education hours: Travel time, lunch (even for the MG trips and tours), socializing, tours of other MG gardens, Garden Conservancy open garden tours, online research, and reading (online or magazines, books, etc.).

If you have questions or need more help, don't hesitate to contact Donna Karpel at 201-327-8835 or donna9189@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

The Hermitage

Volunteers needed at maple sugaring event

Master Gardeners at the Hermitage, 335 N. Franklin Tpke., Ho-Ho-Kus, will be giving hands-on lessons in how the Lenni Lenape and colonists got their sweeteners from tree sap over President's Day weekend, Feb 17-18.

We need volunteer MGs to tap about 15 trees on the grounds of the National Historic Landmark, then collect the sap over the next two weeks. Guests will be sent home with the equipment to tap the trees in their own yards and instructions on boiling the sap into syrup. To volunteer, contact Melody Corcoran at mmegnin@verizon.net or Kathleen Sullivan at kmsrhc@verizon.net.

This year is the 240th anniversary of Gen. George Washington's three-day camp at the Hermitage with his troops and aide Alexander Hamilton during the Revolutionary War.



Dominick Badolato gets ready to tap a maple tree at the Hermitage in February with instructor Roseanne Weissel.

A month later, Noel Schulz and Melody Corcoran make the sap into maple syrup in the Hermitage kitchen.



The final product on display at Earth Day in April in Ridgewood.



New Jersey Botanical Garden

Start the year on the right foot: First-day hike

Volunteers are needed for the NJBG/Skylands Association and Ringwood State Park first-day hike Monday, Jan. 1. First-day hikes are held annually on New Year's Day at state parks across the United States. They are designed to encourage visitors to enjoy their state parks year-round and to promote good health and exercise.

NJBG volunteers will be stationed along the trails to provide assistance. Wear sturdy shoes and warm clothing (gloves, hat, scarf, etc.).

Volunteers should meet at the Carriage House by 12:30 pm. The hikes begin between 1 and 2 pm. Allow 90 minutes for the hike. Rain or snow cancels.

For more information, contact the NJBG at 973-962-9534 or info@njbgo.org.

Useful links

Many local garden centers give discounts to MGs. See the list on our [website](#). Bring your membership card when shopping.

Relive the Holiday Open House on video

Relive the enormous volunteer efforts and stunning decorations at the 2017 Holiday Open House. Volunteers decorated 19 rooms/areas for the annual event at Skylands Manor with the theme of "A Magical Holiday."

Joseph Cooper has created two videos for your enjoyment. Click [here](#) to view a video of the volunteers as they turn Skylands Manor into a fantasyland.



Photos by Joseph Cooper.

From left around table: Josie Ko, Donna Karpel, Fran Langendoen. Back row, from left around the tree: Patricia Kilbride (Class of 2018), Laura DeFlora, Kathy Smith (friend of De Trezza), De Trezza, Lynn Curtin.

Click [here](#) to view a video featuring the decorations.



Tenafly Nature Center

Full moon and owl prowl Feb. 3

New Jersey is teeming with night life, and owls are some of the state's star creatures of the night. Join a [Tenafly Nature Center](#) environmental educator for a short introduction to these raptors and a visit from a live owl from 5-6:30 pm Feb 3. Afterward, the group will venture outside in search of nocturnal feathered friends.

This program is intended for adults and children 5 and older. Children must be accompanied by an adult. In case of inclement weather, the program will be held under cover. Space is limited; preregistration required by clicking [here](#). Cost: Members \$5; non-members \$10. The Tenafly Nature Center is located at 313 Hudson Ave., Tenafly.

SHOWS, CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

North Jersey Orchid Society show Jan. 12-14

The 51st annual show sponsored by the North Jersey Orchid Society will be held Jan. 12-14 at the Douglass Student Center at Rutgers University, 100 George St., New Brunswick. Hours are 9 am-5 pm Friday, Jan 12 and Saturday, Jan. 13 and 9 am-4 pm Sunday, Jan 14.

The show will feature orchid displays by members and vendors, orchid workshops, "ask the orchid doctor," guided show tours, and shopping assistance. Each day, there will be two drawings for a blooming orchid. Show admission and parking are free.

The North Jersey Orchid Society is dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of orchids and to fostering the art of orchid growing. Click [here](#) to visit the North Jersey Orchid Society website for information about the organization, orchid resources, and more.

Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office

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

Karen Riede 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.

HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

- Jan. 4** **7:30 pm, Garden Club of Harrington Park**, Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St. Topic: Members' slide show and tell of their own gardens, gardens visited, or anything garden.
- Jan. 5** **1 pm, Demarest Garden Club**, United Methodist Church, 109 Hardenburgh Ave., Demarest. Business meeting followed by the program at 2 pm. Speaker: Jim Wright. Topic: Nature of the Meadowlands (PowerPoint presentation).
- Jan. 10** **7:30 pm, Bergen Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey**, NY-NJ Trail Conference, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah. Speaker: Tom Bender. Topic: Pruning principles and practice, a hands-on pruning workshop.
- Jan. 10** **10 am, Wyckoff Area Garden Club**, Wyckoff Public Library, 200 Woodland Ave. Speaker: Kathleen Sullivan. Topic: Plants of the 18th Century to World War 1: The Hermitage.
- Jan. 17** **6:45 pm, Hasbrouck Heights Garden Club**, Hasbrouck Heights Library, 320 Boulevard, 2nd-floor meeting room. Speaker: Donna Cornelius, club member. Topic: Whimsical flowers workshop. For more information, call Judy Mascis, 201-288-2615.

Deadline for the Horticulture Grapevine is the 25th of the prior month.

- To submit information about garden club meetings, contact Josie Ko at josie_ko1@hotmail.com.
- To submit information about plant society meetings, contact Catie Farahat at cwfarahat@scatteringlight.com.

The Master Gardeners of Bergen County doesn't share or sell its email/mailling list/membership directory to non-members or to other organizations. Our membership information is confidential and for use by members for official MG use only. Please don't share our list with non-members or use it for any unauthorized or commercial purposes. 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. When submitting photos, please identify everyone in the photo. Submit photos to janet-schulz@yahoo.com.