



# From the Potting Shed January 2021

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

## Virtual meeting – Tuesday, Jan. 26

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow  
See the January mid-month update  
for instructions to log in

### Arnie Friedman presents: Water in the Garden

Water has been a key element in gardens from ancient times to the present. Arnie's presentation surveys water's historic importance in the history of garden design and the lessons home gardeners can apply to their own landscape.

Arnie, Class of 2004, is a New York Botanical Garden-certified landscape designer and former NYBG instructor. He is the owner of Landscapes by Design. His design services encompass creating entire landscapes to small, intimate plantings and solving issues like excess stormwater; old, out-of-control gardens; and building features of natural stone.



Arnie Friedman

He is a past president of the MG of BC and current chair of the Speakers Bureau. He lectures around the region on landscape design, outdoor construction, and environmental issues.

Arnie has a strong commitment to the environment and tries to build gardens that are sustainable and welcoming to dwindling wild bird and native plant species. Of late he has been pioneering the replacement of lawn and turf with meadow-like environments of native, deer-proof, and easy-care plantings.

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### From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

Good riddance to 2020, and welcome 2021!

What will 2021 bring? No one knows. Whatever changes are in store for 2021, we need to welcome them and work with them. I am looking forward to returning to my favorite volunteer sites and working with my fellow Master Gardeners. I didn't know how much I could miss pulling weeds with my friends.



Effective Jan. 1, changes have occurred on the Master Gardener board. Janet Schulz has resigned her position as editor of the *Potting Shed*. Janet will continue to be active in the Speakers Bureau. Miriam Taub has graciously consented to take over the position of *Potting Shed* editor in addition to her duties already working on our newsletter and as corresponding secretary and garden club liaison.

Terri Pegg has resigned as Membership chair after four years in that position. Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016, is the new Membership chair. Terri will lead Theresa through all the ins and outs of the position. Janet and Terri, thank you for your years of service on the board. Both of you will be missed. Miriam, thank you for taking on yet more responsibilities. And Theresa, welcome to the board.

Happy New Year, and keep your fingers crossed for a better gardening year.

**Event suspensions and site closures:** All in-person events, classes, programs, MG meetings and events, and other group activities organized by or under the auspices of Rutgers Cooperative Extension have been suspended through March 31, 2021.

## HITS AND MISSES

*Editor's note: Tell us about a recent success or failure in your garden. It can be a story, like the one below, or as simple as a photo and detailed caption. Contact [Miriam Taub](#) if you'd like to share your experience.*

### Amaryllis thoughts

**By Susan Robertson, Class of 2018**

For four years as program chairperson for the Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, I've been hoping to arrange for a speaker on amaryllis in the run-up to Christmas since it has become a holiday symbol in recent years. Here's what I learned about amaryllis from our would-be speaker, Pat Czarnecki [Class of 2003].

Pat knows way more than I have to contribute here, so if we do succeed at scheduling her eventually, it will still be worthwhile for you to attend her presentation. In trying to arrange a mutually suitable date for her to come to the Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, I learned some valuable details about getting amaryllis to rebloom.

I had already put my spent bulb into the garden after the first frost in spring had passed and I was feeding it every two weeks as I'd been previously told to do. However, Pat explained that if my bulb had only two leaves, it would not bloom once I took it back indoors in the fall. Through that summer, I worked diligently to get it big enough and to produce more leaves in hopes of a rebloom the following winter.



**Photo by Susan Robertson**  
Amaryllis rebloomed with six blossoms.

I did get a third leaf to appear and had another bulb that was definitely big enough and with enough leaves to rebloom so I was hopeful. When I eventually took the bulbs back indoors after the weather turned cold, I was eager to see if I would get those promised blooms.

Sure enough, the winter dragged on with an eventual sprout in both pots. Still hoping, I fed and watered them both faithfully. By April, I finally had 10 beautiful flowers — six on one plant and four on the other. They were late to bloom because I was late to bring them into the house

and begin watering. This year, I took them indoors a full month earlier, so we shall see what happens.

My first attempts at growing amaryllis, which began 40 years ago, met with failure. By February when nothing was happening, a friend suggested I try putting the amaryllis on a radiator (not too hot). A few days later, I had sprouts in both pots and eventually, huge flowers.

Maybe you've seen amaryllis dipped in wax? This was new to me two years ago, and I was curious to learn how growing them would be different. To my surprise, they didn't require water or fertilizer, just a cool sunny window. The wax coating is flat on the bottom so the bulbs stand up without support though eventually — as the stems grow taller and become heavy with bud — they do require support. At that point, put them in a tall, clear glass vase, which will provide the proper support for the growing heavy stem and flower.

A friend who had one of these waxed bulbs told me what she discovered after it bloomed and the leaves eventually died. She neglected it through the following summer, then finally late in the fall noticed that the bulb had started to re-sprout. She put it back in her window and watched until it rebloomed as spectacularly as the first year. It's now two years later, so I'm eager to hear if it reblooms this winter.

Amaryllis are a delight to watch as they grow, especially as we have so many limitations on our activities during this lengthy pandemic. Maybe this is the year for you to try your luck with amaryllis, or to give one as a gift.



### Save the dates: MG of BC 2021 meetings

Feb. 23, March 23, April 27, May 18,  
Sept. 28, Oct. 19, Nov. 16

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## HORTICULTURE

### Looking for an evergreen perennial?

**By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988**

If you're looking to add an evergreen perennial to your garden, look no further than arum. *Arum italicum* is a species of flowering herbaceous perennial plant in the family Araceae, also known as Italian arum and Italian lords-and-ladies. It's native to the Mediterranean region (southern Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East).



Arum emerges in the late autumn and is evergreen during the winter and then goes dormant. The spathe-like flowers appear in early spring.

The seed pods are quite attractive and add another dimension to the garden. If allowed to ripen the chipmunks, squirrels, and other critters will plant them around for you. Arum is usually available in most bulb catalogs.



**Photos by Janet Schulz**  
Arum seed heads poking through hosta leaves.

### What can you do for your garden in January? Plenty!

Are you itching to get out in the garden or at least prepare for when you can begin gardening? The following sources have suggestions, tips, and to-do lists for January and other months and seasons.

Among other things, [Better Homes & Gardens](#) suggests using sand — instead of salt — on your sidewalks to help melt the snow. Sand won't hurt the plants.

The [New York Botanical Garden](#) offers a list of winter garden chores including checking for frost heaving on perennials and covering with extra mulch if necessary.

[Today's Homeowner](#) suggests oiling and repairing garden tools and taking your lawn mower in for maintenance.

The [Fine Gardening](#) January to-do list includes planning, ordering seeds, and checking on tubers and bulbs.

Use a warm day to pull out the wild onions, according to gardening tips from [Morning Chores](#).

### Hellebores toughed it out

**By Susan Robertson, Class of 2018**

These two hellebores were purchased at Trader Joe's in January 2018 to grace our dinner table. I planted them near the end of that month during the proverbial January thaw. Since they were at risk from the heaving and thawing of winter, I mulched them with discarded Christmas tree boughs and pine roping, about a foot deep. They didn't do anything after that winter except stay alive. I noticed one of them alive in the summer of 2018. The following winter [2018-2019] I mulched again.



**Photo by Susan Robertson**  
Two hellebores – only one in bloom.

Last summer I was amazed that they had survived another winter [2019-2020]. In November, I was shocked to see this one in bloom! Its partner is still alive and healthy — just not blooming. I can't give up on it since its buddy [above] has surprised me by breaking all the rules by surviving a January planting, two traumatic winters, and blooming as well.

## WEBINARS

**Jan. 6, noon-1 pm:** Ecological Landscape Alliance (ELA) sponsors The Green Industry's Black Thumb - Pollution from Our Use and Disposal of Plastic Plant Pots. Fee: Free to members/\$10 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information, to register, and to join the ELA.

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**Jan. 8, 3-4 pm:** Duke Farms sponsors Growing Your Own Microgreens. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Jan. 11, 3 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Home Food Preservation. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Jan. 12, 7-8 pm:** Jersey-Friendly Yards sponsors Getting to Know the Good Guys - Beneficial Insects in the Landscape. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Jan. 14, 8 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Creating a Backyard Oasis for Wildlife. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Jan. 14, 3 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Let's Cook at Home for Weight Management. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**More webinars to come in the January mid-month update...**

### 'Prepare for a blossoming spring'

That's the theme of the Rutgers Home Gardeners School @Home, a half-day event from 8:30 am-12:30 pm Saturday, Feb. 20.

The fee is \$75, and you can choose three workshops from the following list on the day of the event:

#### Session 1: 9-10 am

- Shade and Small Trees for NJ Gardens
- The Pollinator Victory Garden
- Designing and Planting an Herb Garden

#### Session 2: 10:15-11:15 am

- Early Spring Vegetable Gardening
- Seed Business: Plants that Do Best When Grown from Seed
- Wildlife Gardens and Citizen Science: Let's Bring in the Birds

#### Session 3: 11:30 am-12:30 pm

- Raised Bed Vegetable Gardens
- The Year-Long Gardener: Tips and Chores Throughout the Year
- It Ain't Just Dirt: Soil Science Basics for Gardeners

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## THIS AND THAT



Photo by Joseph Cooper

An overhead view of Skylands Manor.

### Skylands in winter – on video

Take in an aerial view of the New Jersey Botanical Garden-Skylands, thanks to Joseph Cooper, Class of 2008. Click [here](#) to view his video on YouTube, which is accompanied by the Blue Danube Waltz.

## HORTICULTURE GRAPEVINE

*Deadline for the Horticulture Grapevine is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the prior month. Submit information about garden club meetings that are open to the public to [Miriam Taub](#).*

**Jan. 12, 7 pm, Ramsey Area Garden Club via Zoom:** Speaker: Janet Schulz, Class of 1988. Topic: Hints for a Successful Garden. Click [here](#) to join the Zoom meeting.

**Jan. 14, 7 pm, North Jersey Orchid Society via Zoom:** To attend the virtual meeting, send an email to [njorchids@gmail.com](mailto:njorchids@gmail.com). You'll receive a Zoom link a few days before the meeting.