

MG of BC meeting – Jan. 17

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

**New for 2023: Park on floors 3, 4, or 5 of the
employee parking garage**

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

Jason Grabosky: Giving Trees Space and Watching Them Grow

Jason Grabosky is a professor in urban forestry in the Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources at Rutgers University. He has been part of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences/New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station as the John and Eleanor Kuser Faculty Scholar in Urban Forestry since 2002.



Jason Grabosky at New York City's McCarren Park discussing a research study begun in 1997.

Jason teaches classes on trees. His research is generally focused on urban tree management and the intersection of the green and grey infrastructure. His research interests are urban tree management in the development and maintenance of urban landscapes; managing stormwater for urban sustainability using trees and structural soils; and root-pavement conflicts.

How did he get interested in urban sidewalk trees? "When I was transitioning from industry to graduate studies, my motivation was an applied question on getting nursery and landscape industry guarantees to hold and improving the quality of urban plantings to have the design statement actually survive to the design image rendering," he said.

"The specific-to-sidewalk and tree design developed as my research focus for the MSc and PhD," he added.

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From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

The color of woolly bears, the thickness of walnut and hickory shells, the height of hornet nests — these things and more have been used to predict the upcoming winter weather. These methods are, of course, folklore but interesting, nevertheless. Did you know that persimmon seeds can also be used to predict what kind of winter we will have?



The American persimmon tree, *Diospyros virginiana*, is native from Connecticut to Kansas and south to Florida and Texas. The persimmon fruit is a true berry, about 1-2 inches in diameter and orange when ripe. The fruits ripen in the fall and are best after a frost. The persimmon is extremely tart if not very, very ripe, orange, and soft to the point of being almost mushy.



The Fuyu persimmon: It's seedless

The word persimmon is from the Powhatan, an Algonquin language, and means "a dry fruit." Native Americans dried the fruit for preservation. They also used it to treat sore throat, indigestion, and other ailments. Many animals including raccoons, possums, deer, and birds also eat the fruit.

Persimmons can be eaten out of hand and are often used to make jams, baked goods, and puddings. The American persimmon is in the ebony family. Its wood is very hard and has been used to make golf clubs and furniture.

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Question of the month: Why?



We hate what deer do to our landscapes. Why then do we spend good money to place decorative deer *in* our landscapes? If you have an answer — humorous or serious — send an email to [Miriam Taub](mailto:Miriam.Taub@mgofbc.org), Class of 2011.

MG OF BC NEWS

Members to vote on change in bylaws at the Feb. 21 meeting

Below are proposed changes to the MG of BC bylaws, which will be voted on by the membership at our Feb. 21 meeting.

Currently, all MG of BC officers (president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary) can serve no more than two consecutive two-year terms.

If these proposed changes are adopted by the membership, the treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary could serve multiple, consecutive two-year terms. The president and vice president would be limited to two consecutive two-year terms.

Below is the language to be voted on at the Feb. 21 meeting:

Article II, Executive Board, Section 3

The term limits of officers shall be:

A. Officers shall be elected for a term of two years at the October general meeting and will take office after installation at the regularly scheduled January meeting. The election of the offices of President and Vice President shall alternate years with the election of the offices of Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary.

B. The president and vice president may serve no more than two consecutive terms. There are no term limits for the offices of Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. No one may hold more than one elected office at a time.

To review the MG of BC bylaws in their entirety, visit our [website](http://www.mgofbc.org). After signing into the Member section, click on "Documents" and then, under "MG of BC," click on "Bylaws."

If you're a certified MG of BC member who is current on dues and don't have a username and password for the website, click [here](http://www.mgofbc.org) to request them.

Dues, dues, dues, dues, dues, dues!

The string around your finger is to remind you to pay your 2023 MG of BC dues. Click [here](http://www.mgofbc.org) to visit our website, scroll down to the bottom right, and download/print the Membership Renewal Form. Mail the completed form with your check for \$20 to MG of BC, PO Box 71, New Milford, NJ 07646. Instructions are also on the form.

Openings remain for MG Class of 2023

The 2023 Master Gardener online class begins Jan. 17. Do you have friends and family who are interested? If so, have them contact [Karen Riede](mailto:karen.riede@mgofbc.org), horticultural assistant, or call her at 201-336-6788.

Anyone with an interest in gardening and a commitment to volunteer service can become a Master Gardener. No previous education or training in horticulture is required. Students must complete the online training program that runs Jan. 17-June 13 from 10 am-12:30 pm on Tuesdays. The cost of the program is \$200. A desktop or laptop with a microphone and speaker is needed to participate.

After the initial training, 60 volunteer hours must be completed at approved MG volunteer sites in Bergen County within the expected two-year time frame to become a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener.

SPOTLIGHT ON ...

Carrie Buchman, North Jersey Orchid Society (NJOS)

Carrie Buchman is a member and former president of the North Jersey Orchid Society, which is sponsoring a show and sale Jan. 13-15. (See details on page 4.) She reports that she's on track to be a fully accredited judge with the American Orchid Society this year. Carrie spoke to the MG of BC via Zoom in November 2020. She graciously provided all the accompanying photos.

How did you get started with orchids, and how many do you own now? In 2020, before you spoke to the MG of BC, it was almost 300.

My collection is still about 300. During Covid, I decided to learn how to grow Phalaenopsis and even had one named for me by my friend Norman Fang, owner of Norman's Orchids and world-renown Phalaenopsis grower and breeder.



Carrie Buchman

Phalaenopsis Carrie Buchman is a primary hybrid of Phal. Mannii crossed with Phal. Bastiani. Even the most experienced orchid grower has failures. Some plants just fail to thrive; some are just genetically weak; some are

just picky about their environment, and they're just not a good fit. There is always attrition. My problem now is that many of the seedling I purchased over the past few years have grown vigorously and they are in pots two to three times larger, so I am running out of room!



Phalaenopsis Carrie Buchman

Do you have a favorite orchid?

Of course, I'm very fond of Phal. Carrie Buchman, but truth be told, I get very excited about whatever is growing or blooming well.

At what point did you add the greenhouse?

We added our year-round sun porch in the late 1990s. Every year I improve it a bit. This year I got an automated humidifier with a five-gallon tank to maintain 75% RH [relative humidity]. I scrub the greenhouse from top to bottom every summer to control mold, fungus, and bugs. It's an unpleasant but necessary job. I also have an orchid case for many of the mounted orchids. It has a humidistat and fogger to maintain 90% RH.



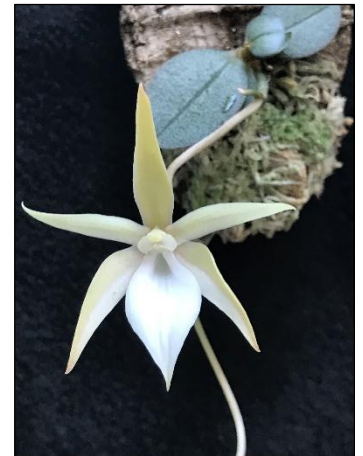
Catlianthe Japanese Beauty 'Sakura'

What explains the orchid mystique?

Species often have very exacting cultural conditions, so there is a significant challenge and great satisfaction with success; hybrids are much more tolerant. I have such a sense of accomplishment when something is growing well. And when they bloom, well what's not to love? They aren't grown like regular houseplants, which adds to their mystique and reputation for being fussy.

How do you get started if you've never owned an orchid?

To get started, I recommend attending an Orchid Society meeting. You don't have to join but meet like-minded people who are growing in conditions similar to yours. [North Jersey Orchid Society](#) meets at the Hanover Manor in East Hanover and the [Ramapo Orchid Society](#) meets at Flat Rock Brook Nature Center in Englewood. Check their website for specific days.



Aerangis punctata

When purchasing orchids, the temptation is to purchase something small and inexpensive, but you will be much more successful buying a mature, well-established plant.

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(Orchids, continued from page 3)



Brassidium Nittany Gold 'Dr. John'

When purchasing, ask lots of questions to make sure you select something that can grow in your environment. Many people say Phalaenopsis are the easiest, but for me it is Cattleyas and Cymbidiums. I also often recommend Maxillaria tenuifolia, the coconut orchid, as it is an easy grower for many.

What are the biggest mistakes people make with orchids?



Cymbidium Sara Jean 'Sukura'

Overwatering! Even after almost 40 years of growing, I still find it easy to overwater.

Is it OK to buy an orchid at the grocery store? Absolutely buy from the grocery store. It's a great way to get a beautiful plant and gain confidence in your growing skills. Select a plant where you can see the roots (most come in clear plastic pots, sometimes inside a ceramic pot). Healthy roots are everything!

Most of them will come in moss, which many people find difficult because it holds so much water, and over-watering is the most common cause of failure. There are a few tricks to keep you on the track:

- Water when your plant needs it, not by the calendar.
- Water when the pot is very light, the roots are silvery, and/or the moss is dry in the center of the pot. (Use a wooden BBQ skewer to test for moisture.) This might be once a week in winter or once every three weeks in summer.

- Phalaenopsis are low-light plants. The leaves will get sunburn; avoid direct mid-sun always. Early morning or late afternoon for a few hours is great. You can also grow under light. Phalaenopsis are sensitive to getting water in their crown, which is the top of the plant where the leaves come together.
- In nature, they grow with the crown facing down so water just runs off. If you get water in the crown, just wick it out with a tissue. Having good air movement helps. A small fan works well.
- Feed your orchids a balanced fertilizer (three numbers same or close) that is urea free. Orchids cannot process the nitrogen in urea, and it can build up in your media to toxic levels. Feed at half or quarter strength every two weeks in spring/summer and reduce to every four weeks in fall and winter.
- Do not repot an orchid when you first get it; wait for it to adjust to your environment, and it should be in active growth (new leaves and/or new roots) to allow it to adjust quickly. And don't drastically change the type of growing media: If your Phalaenopsis is growing in moss, don't change it to a bark/moss mixture on the next repotting if bark is your preference. Orchids roots adapt to the media and don't like sudden changes.

**North Jersey Orchid Society (NJOS)
2023 Show and Sale**

Friday, Jan. 13: Noon-5 pm
Saturday, Jan. 14: 10 am-5 pm
Sunday, Jan. 15: 10 am-4 pm

Douglass Student Center, Rutgers University,
100 George St., New Brunswick
Free admission and parking; vehicles must be registered. Click [here](#) to register your vehicle.

Sponsored by the NJOS and Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences Floriculture and Teaching Greenhouse.

- Displays of 500+ blooming orchids grown in the mid-Atlantic area from these orchid societies: Deep Cut, Central Jersey, Southeast Pennsylvania, and Orchid RAGE (Rutgers Alumni Growers & Exhibitors).
- North Jersey Orchid Society members will answer your orchid questions and help you select the right orchid for your environment.
- Vendors!

HORTICULTURE



Photos by Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

Remember me? I'm all grown up

The photo on the left appeared in the November Potting Shed along with Janet Schulz's easy-to-follow instructions to make Pelargonium (geranium) cuttings. The photo on the right is the result: One cutting produced a bloom in a matter of weeks. Why buy plants when you can grow your own?

For a more interesting garden...



Photo courtesy of Bruce Crawford

Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, likes this winter witch hazel (*Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Jelena') to create a more interesting winter garden. Read Bruce's suggestions and to-dos in his Gardening Notes for January, which was sent in the same email with this Potting Shed.

North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Symposium

County College of Morris
214 Center Grove Road, Randolph

- Jan. 10: Turf Day
- Jan. 11: Tree Day
- Jan. 12: Landscape Day. Note: Joel Flagler will be host for Landscape Day.

Fee: \$80 per day through Jan. 8 (the online registration deadline); continental breakfast included. \$80 per day for walk-ins.

Click [here](#) for the list of speakers and topics and registration details and the link to register. Participants will receive five continuing education hours for each day of the conference.

THIS AND THAT

Joel receives distinguished service award

Joel Flagler received the 2022 Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association. Click [here](#) to watch Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, notify Joel of this award.

'State of the Birds 2022' report

The United States and Canada have lost 3 billion breeding birds since 1970, a loss of 1 in 4 birds, according to research published in *Science* in 2019. Click [here](#) to review the State of the Birds 2022 report from the US Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative ([NABCI](#)) and learn what's being done to reverse the declines.

Seeing acorns in a new light

Enjoy "becorns," creations by photographer [David M. Bird](#) who transforms acorns and sticks into woodland creatures. Click [here](#) to view the segment that appeared on CBS's Sunday Morning show Dec. 4. You'll have a new appreciation for the debris you sweep off your deck or patio.

WEBINARS

For your convenience, all times are Eastern.

Jan. 5, 1-2 pm: Deep Roots KC sponsors DIY Native Garden Design. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 12, 2-3 pm: The Garden Conservancy sponsors Small Space Gardening. Fee: \$5 Garden Conservancy members; \$15 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 14, 9:30-11 am: Penn State Extension sponsors Home Gardening Series: Successfully Growing Happy Hydrangeas. Fee \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 14, 10-11:15 am: Mountain Top Arboretum, Tannersville, NY, sponsors Gardening for Nature's Intricate Web. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 17, 6:30-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors Light Up Your Shade Garden with Colorful Plants. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 17, 7 pm: Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors From Great Estates to Public Gardens. Free. Click [here](#), then scroll down to Jan. 17 for more information and to register.

Jan. 18, 7-8:30 pm: Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors Naturescaping: Landscaping Based on Nature. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 19, 1-2 pm: Deep Roots KC sponsors Native Plants at Noon on the Road. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 23, 6:30-8 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Winter Wonderings: With Edges in Place. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Jan. 25, 6:30 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Winter Wonder at Longwood Gardens. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

Jan. 31, 2:30 pm: University of Illinois Extension sponsors Pruning. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

(President's desk, continued from page 1)



Photo courtesy of Hoosier Weather

Persimmon seeds that resemble, from left, a fork, a knife, and a spoon. The seeds are used to predict winter weather.

Using persimmon seeds to predict winter weather likely originated in the Ozarks. The seeds of locally grown persimmons are split to view the cotyledon inside of the seed. The cotyledon, or embryo, may resemble the shape of a knife, a fork, or a spoon. A knife forecasts a windy, icy, "cutting" winter. A spoon forecasts a snowy winter; the spoon resembles a shovel for clearing snow. A fork forecasts a mild winter; not much snow can be moved with a fork.

Lacking a local American persimmon, I purchased a few Fuyu persimmons just to see what the winter was going to be like wherever they were grown. But when I cut the persimmons open, there were no seeds! I didn't know that Asian varieties of persimmons, like the Fuyu, are seedless. So, if anyone has an American persimmon tree or can get some of its fruit, check out the seeds and let us know what this coming winter will bring.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County

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