

From the Potting Shed

July 2023

Master Gardeners of Bergen County www.mgofbc.org

Get ready to have a blast!

Volunteers: We need your help July 13 at Teaneck Creek Conservancy and July 20 at Garretson Forge & Farm to participate in a special group project (our "blast").

A group of MGs can make a big difference at one site in one day all the while meeting other volunteers, working as a team, and earning volunteer hours. See below for the details of each project. Then click [here](#) to register. Be sure to specify at which site(s) you plan to volunteer.

July 13, Teaneck Creek Conservancy

Teaneck Creek Conservancy is located at 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck. Come any time from 9 am-1 pm. Work in the Peace Labyrinth to get the weeds under control and keep this garden healthy and looking its best. Bring gloves, bug spray, small hand tools, water, and a snack/lunch. Work as many hours as you can. Park in the lot in front of 20 Puffin Way. Bathrooms are located in the building.



Partial view of the Peace Labyrinth.

July 20: Garretson Forge & Farm

Garretson is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Come from 10 am-2 pm with a break at noon and work as long as you can. After lunch, enjoy a tour of the house and gardens. Come to weed and relocate plants. Bring gloves, pruners, and something to eat and drink. Large tools are supplied. Parking and bathrooms are on site.



See pages 6-7 for photos of the MG of BC picnic in Van Saun Park.

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From the President's Desk

By Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016

What is an heirloom vegetable? Heirlooms are open-pollinated varieties that have been passed down for generations. Open-pollinated cultivars grown from seed will be true to type and resemble the parent plant. But there's no consensus as to how old a variety must be to be considered an heirloom.



Some say that a variety must be 50 years old; others say 100 years. Others classify anything grown before 1951 as an heirloom because the interest in and the practice of hybridizing vegetables became a priority after World War II.

Many heirlooms can trace their ancestries for hundreds of years back to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Heirlooms often have superior flavor to hybrid varieties but may not have the keeping qualities of commercial hybrids and may be more disease prone.

Heirlooms can become hyper-local and especially suited to a particular microclimate as the seeds are passed down from year to year, generation to generation.



Photo by Liz Scholl, Class of 2011

Heirloom seeds are available at Garretson Forge & Farm.

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HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO DO
HEAT STROKE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High body temperature (103°F or higher) • Hot, red, dry, or damp skin • Fast, strong pulse • Headache • Dizziness • Nausea • Confusion • Losing consciousness (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 right away-heat stroke is a medical emergency • Move the person to a cooler place • Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath • Do not give the person anything to drink
HEAT EXHAUSTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy sweating • Cold, pale, and clammy skin • Fast, weak pulse • Nausea or vomiting • Muscle cramps • Tiredness or weakness • Dizziness • Headache • Fainting (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a cool place • Loosen your clothes • Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath • Sip water <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are throwing up • Your symptoms get worse • Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour
HEAT CRAMPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy sweating during intense exercise • Muscle pain or spasms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop physical activity and move to a cool place • Drink water or a sports drink • Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cramps last longer than 1 hour • You're on a low-sodium diet • You have heart problems
SUNBURN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful, red, and warm skin • Blisters on the skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals • Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath • Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas • Do not break blisters
HEAT RASH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in a cool, dry place • Keep the rash dry • Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash



Weather report: Be mindful of the heat

We all need to be mindful about heat-related illnesses, our body's response, and risk factors when working outdoors this season. Above is the CDC's Heat-Related Illnesses chart with the symptoms of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, sunburn, and heat rash and what to do for each heat-related illness.

Drink plenty of water, and don't overdo it during the peak, hot temperatures of the day. If you're feeling dizzy, weak, and tired, tell someone, rest, and go indoors if you can.

Please keep an eye on each other and look out for some of the symptoms listed in the chart, such as a hot, red face with or without sweating, spasms, etc.

Take care and stay well!

**- Joel Flagler, Bergen County ag agent,
Karen Riede, horticultural assistant**

FARMERS MARKETS AND FAIRS

Edgewater Farmers Market, Veterans Field front parking lot, 1167 River Road. Sundays, 9 am-noon.

Hawthorne Farmers Market, library parking lot, 345 Hawthorne Ave. Sundays, 10 am-1:30 pm through Oct. 29. Click [here](#) for Facebook page.

Oradell Farmers Market, post office parking lot, Oradell Avenue and Kinderkamack Road. Sundays, 10 am-3 pm through Nov. 19. Click [here](#) for flyer.

Ramsey Farmers Market, Main Street train station. Sundays, 9 am-2 pm through November. Click [here](#) for a list of vendors and other information.

Ridgewood Farmers Market, west side train station lot. Sundays, 8:30 am-2 pm through Oct. 29. Click [here](#) or call 201-445-2600 for more information.

River Edge Farmers Market, 215 Continental Ave. Thursdays, 3-7 pm through Oct. 5. Click [here](#) for Facebook page or call 917-974-8892 for more information.

River Vale Farmers Market, municipal complex parking lot (adjacent to tennis courts), 406 Rivervale Road. Thursdays, 1-6 pm through October. Click [here](#) for more information.

Rutherford Farmers Market, Williams Center Plaza, Park Avenue. Wednesdays, 11 am-4 pm through Oct. 25; Saturdays, 8 am-2 pm from July 8-Oct. 28. Click [here](#) for flyer or call 201-460-3000, ext. 3114.

Teaneck Farmers Market, municipal parking lot, Garrison Avenue and Beverly Road. Thursdays, noon-6 pm through Nov. 16 and noon-6 pm Nov. 19. Click [here](#) for Facebook page.

Westfield Garden State Plaza Farmers Market, Garden State Plaza, Paramus, next to Chili's. Sundays, 9 am-2 pm through Oct. 29. Click [here](#) for more information.

Funnel cake and corn dogs anyone?

New Jersey's county fairs are in progress through September. Bergen County's Fall Harvest Festival is actually the last of the fairs (Sept. 22-23). Click [here](#) for the schedule of county fairs on the Rutgers NJ 4-H web page. The New Jersey State Fair/Sussex County Farm and Horse Show is Aug. 4-12 at the Sussex County Fairgrounds in Augusta. Click [here](#) for the fairground's website for more information.

HOME AND GARDEN

If you want it done right, do it yourselves

By Miriam Taub, Class of 2011

If you want something done right, do it yourselves!

That's the philosophy that Debbie Higgins, Class of 2017, and husband Terrence (Terry) Higgins followed when creating their Glen Rock home and garden from scratch.

The two had lived in Ridgewood and wanted to move to a retirement-friendly home but didn't want to leave their neighborhood and friends. Fortuitously, they found a property in Glen Rock that ticked off all the boxes: It was three blocks from their current home; the property was large yet wasn't a corner lot; the yard faced south, a priority for a vegetable garden; and the price was right.

The property contained a cottage and garage. After they bought the property in 2011, they rented out the cottage while Terry, a general contractor at the time (since retired) drew the plans until they were ready for construction in 2020.

They both wanted a brand-new house, they explained. Terry, who said he knew from the time he was 4 years old that he wanted to be a



A small slice of the 29-by-33-foot south-facing vegetable garden.



Terry and Debbie Higgins. Behind them are the wrought iron gates from two West Village brownstones that Terry renovated. Behind the gates is the "secret garden."

builder, starting building houses when in college. He described them as "McMansions in Alpine and Saddle River."

However, for themselves they wanted a "super, super efficient" home with an old person's floor plan, that is, the master suite on the first floor. They wanted a home that was energy efficient with little reliance on fossil fuels. The result is a home with heating and a/c systems that are small relative to the square footage of the home, which has 1,800 square feet on the main level and second floor as well as a 1,200-square-foot finished basement.

"Maintaining both comfortable temperature and humidity year-round with a small system is one of the benefits of High Performance/Passive House design and construction," Terry explained. "An extremely tight, well-insulated envelope (walls, roof, windows, and doors) is essential to creating a successful energy-efficient structure."

He continued: "The house is so tight that we rely on an energy recovery ventilator to ensure a healthy volume of filtered fresh air for breathing." He also installed a whole-house water filtration system, and cooking is done on an induction range. "It was easy to do when you're building a house," Debbie added. The couple met as teens at Teaneck High School and have been married 44 years.

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(Do it yourselves, continued from page 3)

To collect rainwater for the vegetable and flower gardens, Terry installed a cistern. It's a 1,250-gallon, 10-foot-long tank that he purchased used from a dairy farm. It sits under the front plantings and is accessible from the front yard. An aerator operated by a timer keeps the water from going "anaerobic" (without oxygen) during the summer. "If the water is stagnant, it smells like dirty diapers," Terry said, adding that the aerator isn't needed in the cooler months.

Drainage pipes from the roof and drains in the patio collect the water, which fills the cistern. The overflow continues to join the stormwater management system.

New houses and additions require a stormwater management system to prevent runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs, patios, and driveways, he said. "A typical stormwater system relies on tanks and gravel underground called seepage pits. The system capacity (volume) is designed for a 100-year storm, which is about 1.2 gallons per square foot of impervious surface.

"A properly designed stormwater system helps prevent flooding of our roads and streams, and it helps recharge the aquifer that supplies our drinking water," he continued. Ridgewood Water, which supplies water to Ridgewood, Glen Rock, Midland Park, and Wyckoff, "would benefit greatly if more storm water was delivered to the aquifer via these residential seepage pits," he said.

In addition, Terry designed a screened-in porch with solar panels and a roof overhang that's pitched to protect the room from sun in the summer and allows the sun to warm the porch in winter. The porch also relies on very high-tech storm/screen panels that are made with Smart Glass, he said.



Sign in Debbie's backyard.

"Smart Glass keeps high-angle summer sun out and lets low-angle winter sun in. The glass also does not let the heat from inside of the house out. These windows are also almost airtight. We can connect a small portable heater and have a New Year's Eve party regardless of outside temperature. This is a true three-season-plus porch," he added.

Meanwhile, in the backyard, every inch is efficiently used. Terry remodeled the garage into a studio where he has a workshop and where they start some of their plants under grow lights. There's a patio with grill and seating area; Debbie's pollinator garden, which backs up to the kitchen; and a small lawn leading to a "secret garden" consisting of mostly shade-loving plants. That



Photos by Miriam Taub

The secret garden revealed.

garden is separated from the lawn by a privacy screen of privet hedge, roses, and sections of wrought iron gates from two West Village 1860s brownstones that Terry had renovated. The owners, he explained, had no use for the gates, but he certainly did.

The crown jewel for those who enjoy eating fresh-from-the-garden produce is the approximately 29-by-33-foot vegetable garden separated from the studio by a walkway. The garden came *after* they removed construction debris, glass, bricks, and concrete buried in the yard by the previous owner. The garden is fenced.

To get a jump on the growing season, Terry installs a hoop house cover over part of the garden when the sun starts to heat the ground, generally in February. The result, he said, is that they're able to plant by the end of March, then remove the hoop cover in early May — to prevent overheating — when the threat of frost has passed.

This year Debbie and Terry are growing peppers, three varieties of eggplant, sugar snap peas, beets, garlic, arugula, onions, spinach, lettuce, broccoli, and seven varieties of tomatoes (five for slicing). They also have a strawberry and blueberry patch and an herb garden.

"We're overwhelmed with tomatoes in the summer," Debbie said, noting that some tomatoes are ready for picking as early as July 4, "We had to buy a second freezer to store the tomato sauce and soup." They prefer freezing to canning, she added.

What could possibly be left to do in terms of running an efficient household? "We spend a lot of money on annuals," Debbie said. "Next year we'll try to grow them from seed."

MG OF BC NEWS

Don't be shy: Better Impact won't bite

Have you entered any of your 2023 volunteer or education hours into the Better Impact system yet to retain your **certified** MG status? Certification as an MG is valid for one year only; **certified** MGs must be recertified every year by completing a minimum of 25 hours of annual volunteer service and 10 hours of annual continuing education.

Please don't wait until 2024 to record your 2023 hours! Enter them as you earn them. Click [here](#) for the Better Impact login page. If you don't have or don't remember your username and password for Better Impact, contact [Karen Riede](#), horticultural assistant, or [Suzanne Danzig](#), volunteer records chair.

Instructions to record hours in Better Impact are on the site's "welcome" page. Recording hours will be faster and easier if you keep a list of the date and location of your volunteer activities at official MG of BC sites and at MG-sanctioned activities, for example the upcoming Bergen County Fall Harvest Festival or Holiday Open House. However, if you still need help, send an email to [Karen Riede](#) or [Suzanne Danzig](#).

Note: If you can no longer put in volunteer hours, you can remain a member of the MG of BC and continue to receive the Potting Shed by paying your annual dues of \$20. You'll be considered an MG of BC alum, not a certified MG.

****Reminder about the travel-time policy****

Each year, travel time of up to one hour to and from each MG of BC-approved volunteer activity may be counted as volunteer hours if both of the following criteria are met:

- You've completed the 25 volunteer hours required for annual certification; and
- You've spent a minimum of two hours at each volunteer activity.

Here's an example: After you've completed 25 volunteer hours required for annual certification in any calendar year, you continue to volunteer. Your drive to and from Garretson Forge & Farm takes 20 minutes in each direction. You work at Garretson for four hours. Your total volunteer time for that day is four hours and 40 minutes (four hours for volunteering and 40 minutes for the drive).

In the Butterfly and Native Garden



Photo by Tammy Laverty

Terry Campbell, Class of 2018, pulls those weeds around the pond that otherwise might try to overwhelm our beautiful Indian pink (*Spigelia marilandica*). The season started with a survey of how well our plants and trees survived last year's drought. Spring brought lots of growth, and our native plants are thriving! Of course, the invasive weeds have started their march, too! Join us Tuesdays, 10 am-1 pm, at the garden, 40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia (behind the equestrian center). Click [here](#) for more information.

- Tammy Laverty, site coordinator Class of 2015

The following week you volunteer at the Butterfly and Native Garden for two hours. Your round-trip drive takes 30 minutes. Your total volunteer time for that day is two hours and 30 minutes. You may continue to count your travel time as volunteer hours for the remainder of that calendar year if you spend a minimum of two hours at each MG of BC-approved volunteer activity.

Note: If you volunteer at the New Jersey Botanical Garden in Ringwood, the above criteria don't need to be met. *All travel time to and from NJBG may be counted as volunteer time.*

Elvira "Bing" Prieto Martin, 1941-2023

Elvira "Bing" Prieto Martin, Class of 2017, died June 18, 2023. She was 82. You may send condolences to her daughter, Maria Martin, 166 Herrick Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666.

At the MG of BC picnic in Van Saun Park

MGs and interns brought lots of cheer, smiles, and great food to our first picnic in four years. Classes since 2020 have met online so there were lots of hugs and handshakes as people met in person, some for the first time.



Welcome Class of 2023 interns!

Dawn Giambalvo, Karen Norton, Susan Truesdell, Mary Orlando, Joanne Meltzer, Peter Cammarano, Linda DeWolfe, Dineen Policano, Karen Shaner, and Wendy Bucceri.

Photos by Gimai Ma, Class of 2021



Left photo: **Class of 2021** members Gimai Ma, Martha Carlucci, and Bernadette White, who all coordinated the setup and cleanup of the picnic, and Paul Sisko. Right photo: Paulette Dubois, Class of 2015; Melody Corcoran (2016), Donna Faustini (2012), Lynette Stewart (2017), Barbara Pisacane (2009), Miriam Taub (2011), and Janet Schulz (1988).



(Picnic photos continued from page 6)



Left photo: Class of 2019 members Lucy Jickling, Zoran Vukasovic, Caroline Newman, Herb Arbeiter, Liz Gil, Keith Mazanac, and Harriet Steiner. Right photo: Gimai Ma (2021), who took all the picnic photos, and Melody Corcoran (2016), MG of BC president.



Class of 2022 members Patricia Pacheco, Lynne Proskow, Sharon La Monica, and Maureen Caban.



Clockwise from left: Paul Sisko (2021), Linda DeWolfe (2023), Martha Carlucci (2021), and Bernadette White (2021).

(President's desk, continued from page 1)

Heirlooms are also vital in preserving genetic diversity. Genetic diversity is necessary to protect our food supply if there were a catastrophic event affecting commercially grown hybrid crops.

Among heirloom vegetables, the most well-known are the tomatoes. Brandywines are an Amish heirloom that originated in Pennsylvania in 1885. Mortgage Lifter, a large beefsteak-type of tomato, is usually credited to MC Byles, a mechanic better known as Radiator Charlie, who developed the variety in the 1930s and sold the plants to help pay off his mortgage.

Other heirloom vegetables include the Cherokee Trail of Tears pole bean whose seed was carried by the Cherokee Indians along the Trail of Tears; Tennis Ball lettuce, which was grown by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello; and Bloody Butcher corn, a bright-red, dent-type corn [field corn] grown here since 1845 and used in distilling and brewing and in making flour.

There are many sources for heirloom seeds. [Seed Savers Exchange](#), [High Mowing Organic Seeds](#), [Southern Exposure Seed Exchange](#), and [Experimental Farm Network Cooperative](#) are some well-regarded sources.

Planting the planters



Photo by Suzanne Danzig

Twice a year volunteers at Washington Spring Garden fill seven concrete planters with seasonal annuals — once in the spring and again in the fall. That's Maureen Caban, Class of 2022, at left, and Chris Kozar, Class of 2019, assisting with our beautification efforts. Join us Thursdays from 9 am-noon. Contact [me](#) for more information.

- Suzanne Danzig, site coordinator, Class of 2008

HORTICULTURE

What's in a name?

By Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

A plant is always listed by its genus, species, and cultivar, but there is so much more to learn.

The next time you're in the garden center to buy a plant, shrub, or tree, in addition to looking at the overall appearance of your purchase, look at the tag. The tag can tell you more than the width and height of your plant; it might also tell you a bit about its origin or founder.

Japonica means coming from Japan. And did you know that *fortunei* is the name of a person? Robert Fortune (1812-1880) was a Scottish botanist and plant hunter who was responsible for naming more than 250 plants discovered mostly in China. Besides telling you where and who the plant may have come from, there are many other words that describe the type, kind, or characteristic features of the plant.

For instance: *Lutea* means yellow, *nana* signifies dwarf, *niger* means black, and *tomentosa* indicates hairy.

By learning the Latin or botanical name of the plant you may find out more about it than the common name tells you. *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* tells us that Boston ivy has three leaves while *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* tells us Virginia creeper has five leaves.

Native Plant Channel: Gardening for bees

Lourdes Osorio, Passaic County MG and creator of the [Native Plant Channel](#) on YouTube, talks up willows, asters, goldenrod, blueberries, and evening primrose, which provide nectar and pollen for specialist bees. Click [here](#) to view her video.

Does your club need a garden-related presentation for the 2023-24 season?

Keep the MG of BC Speakers Bureau in mind when your garden club or local library is seeking speakers. Our six volunteer speakers are proficient in topics ranging from composting to deer to herbs to container gardening.

Click [here](#) to visit the Speakers Bureau section of our website. Contact [Arnie Friedman](#), Speakers Bureau chair, for more information or to book a speaker. Remember there's no charge for a Master Gardener presentation/lecture. However, donations to the MG of BC are gratefully accepted.

Garden tour at Paul Sisko's home

MGs are invited to tour the summer gardens of Paul Sisko, Class of 2021, July 16, 11 am-2 pm. Rain date is July 22. Bring your lunch and hang out with friends near the pond and pool. Paul will provide beverages. You may bring a guest. The address is 113 Fardale Ave., Mahwah. Park on the white gravel just after entering the driveway. Contact [Paul](#) for more information.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County

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

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