

From the Potting Shed

June 2024

www.mgofbc.org



At the Hermitage . . .



Photo by Bernadette White, Class of 2021

Ed Drennen, Class of 2019, and Marie Scotti-Bosworth (2023) take a break from weeding. They're standing in front of the Hermitage's 1700s smoke-house looking toward the site of an in-progress vegetable garden where an Eagle Scout will erect a fence. Join the volunteers! Hours are Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:30 am-noon. The address is 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus. Contact [Bernadette White](#), site coordinator, for more information.

From the President's Desk

By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016

The MG of BC is about to go on its summer hiatus. Our next meeting/presentation is Sept. 17. If you're looking for a volunteer opportunity that uses your brain power and keeps you out of the heat, consider volunteering as our alternate delegate to the Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey (RMGANJ). For more information, please contact [me](#). Have a happy, healthy, safe, and wonderful summer.



What's inside

Page

Webinars	2
In the News	2
Events	2
Volunteer Site News	3-5
Farmers Markets	5

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

MG of BC picnic is June 26

You're invited to our MG of BC picnic Wednesday, June 26 from noon-2 pm in Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus.

The meeting place is Pavilion I (eye), north of Walden Pond on the road heading south to Howland Avenue. There's a parking lot next to the pavilion and restrooms nearby.



The MG of BC will provide sandwiches and beverages. If you're able, please contribute a side dish or a dessert for about six people based on the first letter of your last name.

- A to K: Bring desserts.
- L to Z: Bring salads/appetizers.

Click [here](#) to RSVP by June 20, subject line "picnic." *We must have your response so we can order the sandwiches and buy the beverages.* No need to reply if you can't attend. In your email, please confirm whether you'll bring a dessert or salad/appetizer.

This event is for MGs, MG alums, Class of 2024 interns and interns from previous classes still working on their certification. We hope you'll join us before we break for the summer!

WEBINARS

All times are Eastern.

June 5, 7 pm: Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum sponsors Botanic Gardens from Coast to Coast and What We Can Learn from Them. Fee: \$5 non-members. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

June 5, 9-10 pm: Los Angeles County Public Works Department sponsors Introduction to Composting. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

June 6, 3-4 pm: Los Angeles County Public Works Department sponsors Water-Wise Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

June 12, 12:30-1:30 pm: Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station sponsors Bring Out Your Inner Green Thumb Through Houseplants. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

June 12, 2-3 pm: Rodale Institute sponsors Ancient Wheat: The Old Grain with Prospects. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

June 13, 2-3 pm: Los Angeles County Public Works Department sponsors Small Space Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) to register.

Visit us on social media

- **Facebook:** Visit Master Gardeners of Bergen County | Hackensack NJ | Facebook. A pop-up box will appear requesting that you log in or create an account. If you don't have a Facebook account, click on the "x" in the upper right corner of the pop-up box to close it, and you'll have access to the MG of BC Facebook page.
- **Instagram**



IN THE NEWS

2024 update on ticks

What kind of a tick season will New Jersey have this year? Click [here](#) to read a story from NJ.com.



Bee hotels

Hotels for bees? Yes. New York City is placing "hotels," similar to the one at left, around the city to protect smallish native bees. Click [here](#) to read the story in The New York Times. If you're not a Times subscriber, you're limited to the number of articles you can read each month.

Benefits of gardening (but you knew that)

Here's a reminder about the physical and mental benefits of gardening. Click [here](#) to read the story in The New York Times.

EVENTS

'Arts in the Garden'

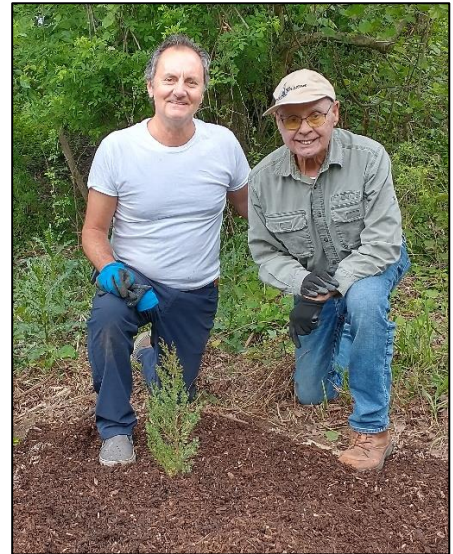
June 8, 10 am-4 pm: The Hackensack Garden Club will sponsor Arts in the Garden at Johnson Park, 444 River St., Hackensack. Enjoy a day of art, crafts, and products from local artists and artisans. You'll find paintings, wood carving, jewelry, photography, glasswork, and metalwork for sale. Rain date is June 9. Visit the club's [website](#).

A native plant lesson and a discount

June 20, 7 pm: Want to learn more about native plants? Elaine Silverstein, co-chair of the Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of New Jersey, will speak on the topic of Easy-to-Grow Native Plants. The location is Rohsler's Allendale Nursery, 100 Franklin Turnpike, Allendale. No registration is required. Attendees will receive a 20% discount on purchases of native plants.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

The Mary S. Topolsky Garden has come a long way



From left: Karen Shaner, Class of 2023, battling the weeds; Harriet Steiner (2019) picking up debris; Dan Coviello (2024) and Peter Cammarano (2023) displaying one of the three eastern white cedars that they planted.

By Liz Gil, Class of 2019

Sometimes when we work at our volunteer sites it feels like the plans that we have and the changes that we make to the gardens don't happen quickly enough.

As gardeners, we want everything to be as perfect and as lush as what our mind has imagined. We want the weeds that we've pulled to remain pulled and the pests that are nibbling on the leaves and flowers to just go away. But that's not how it happens. Life in the garden can be chaotic. Our plants don't always cooperate, sometimes they want to take over and other times they don't want to show up at all. And our native plants, well, they unfold on their own schedule. But once they do, they grace us for years to come.

The Mary S. Topolsky Garden, nestled on the Hackensack River in Teaneck, is being restored. The invasive plants that have been swallowing up the land for years are slowly being eliminated. There are plans in the works to plant waves of native flowers that lead the eye down the rolling hill to the river.

Harriet Steiner, Class of 2019 and site coordinator, is considering a selection of plants that grow low enough not to block that spectacular view. Salvias, monardas, asters, coreopsis, just to name a few, have been researched.

On paper the garden is spectacular. In reality, there is still much work to be done.

But a lot has been done already! Last year a mountain of knotweed and other invasive plants were removed. The garden where the flowers are going to be planted has been weeded and solarized with cardboard. Some of the taller-growing native plants were dug up, divided, and replanted on the side of the garden bed so that they won't block the beautiful view. A row of beautiful clethra plants is thriving where the invasives had once been. Several trees were planted on the slope closer to the river. The list goes on.

Over the years, the volunteers did a lot of work and made some significant and lasting changes. And when you look back to where you were and see what you have now, it was a beautiful journey but a journey that continues because is a garden ever really complete? Come help Harriet and her dedicated team to continue with this restoration. The team meets Thursday from 10 am-1 pm at 640 River Road, Teaneck.

The Topolsky garden is just one of 13 beautiful gardens on our [volunteer site list](#). Come out and visit one and bring your trowel.

(Volunteer site news, continued on page 4)

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS



Photo by Jeffrey Chan, Class of 2011

One section of the demonstration herb garden maintained by MG of BC volunteers.

Bergen County Zoo

It's a lot more than animals

[Editor's note: Ralph Pearson, former Bergen County ag agent, brought the MG program to Bergen County in 1984. McFaul Environmental Center was the first volunteer site to be established and Van Saun was the second.]

By Jeffrey Chan, Class of 2011

I am honored to be the Van Saun Park volunteer site coordinator. I have been working at the site since I joined the MG of BC 13 years ago. At Van Saun, I had the opportunity to work with two original volunteers, Clifford Gerenz, Class of 1992, and Walter Traubel, Class of 1991. [Walter died in 2017.]

When Van Saun was designated as a volunteer site, MGs worked around the entire park, but over the years, as more volunteer sites were established, the number of volunteers thinned out.

Today we are dedicated to what's called the demonstration herb garden behind the manager's office in the Bergen County Zoo. Over the years, the lack of volunteers left the garden greatly under-maintained. But lately our dedicated volunteers have made the garden flourish.

The demonstration herb garden is laid out by the volunteers who choose which herbs are to be displayed and the plot locations. Invasive plants are removed, and the herbs (some perennials) are acquired, planted, and maintained by the volunteers. Clearing out invasive plants is a chore, but the satisfaction of the appearance and the compliments make it worthwhile.

Park crews deliver mulch, which is spread around the plants. Garden hoses are available to water when needed. This attention to details is what has made the area flourish.

With more volunteers, we could expand our work. There are a few other areas where the zoo staff has asked if we would like to perform our magic. One is an area directly opposite the herb garden that used to be maintained by a zoo staffer who retired. Two other plots are up for grabs as well as numerous planters within the zoo and three areas surrounding the zoo entrance. All could use some professional attention.

If you are an MG or intern looking for a place to call home, this is the place. Hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors walk by our garden daily and will view your work. We've received compliments on our work from zoo employees and the public.

Please think about joining our crew. We meet on Monday mornings starting at 8 am. There's lots of work to do and it will be appreciated by the county, the public, and the zoo employees. Bring your favorite hand tools, garden gloves, bottled water, sunscreen, and bug spray. A five-gallon plastic bucket would come in handy. The zoo provides long-handled tools and garden carts.

Contact [me](#) for more information about volunteering at the zoo.

(Volunteer site news, continued on page 5)

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County

Joel Flagler	Agricultural/Resources Management Agent/County Extension Dept. Head 201-336-6780
Karen Riede	Horticultural Assistant 201-336-6788

Cooperating agencies: Rutgers, the State University of NJ, US Department of Agriculture, and Bergen County Board of Commissioners. 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.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

Peace Labyrinth planting completed at Teaneck Creek

At Teaneck Creek Conservancy's most recent "blast" May 17, volunteers Terry Campbell (left), Class of 2018, and Sue Truesdell (2023) completed the installation of native plants in the Peace Labyrinth.

The plants will be maintained by volunteers as well as by Dave Chalek, owner of Sprout Farms & Gardens, who designed the native plant garden and directed the installation of the plants.

Stephanie Landau, Teaneck Creek associate, noted: "This has been a very successful project thanks to the funding support from community and corporate donors, volunteer support from Master Gardeners, PSEG, LifePower Yoga teacher training, Teaneck Creek weed warriors, and landscape design by Dave Chalek and his work crew."



Join the volunteers! Hours are Wednesday from 9-11 am. Contact [Paula Leibowitz](#), Class of 2013 and site coordinator, for information. Teaneck Creek Conservancy is located at 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck.

FARMERS MARKETS

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

Teaneck Farmers Market, municipal parking lot, Garrison Avenue and Beverly Road. Thursday, noon-6 pm through Nov. 7. Click [here](#) for Facebook page.

If you know of a farmers market in the Bergen County area, please [email](#) the details or a current link, if one is available, so we can add to this list.

What are YOU doing in the garden this year?



Did you add anything new and different to your garden this year? Did you plant any new vegetable varieties? Any vegetables at all? Did you redesign your garden? Add a new flower bed?

Send a photo of your 2024 project and a brief description to [Miriam](#)

[Taub](#), Class of 2011 and Potting Shed editor, and we'll share stories and photos in a future Potting Shed.