

From the Potting Shed

Nov. 16, 2024

www.mgofbc.org



Meeting news: Tuesday, Nov. 19

Thomas Cawley: Floral design for the holidays



Photo courtesy of Thomas Cawley

Be prepared to be awed. Thomas Cawley will create a holiday floral arrangement, such as a magnolia and holiday greenery wreath using a metal wreath form, at our Nov. 19 meeting. MG of BC meetings are free and open to the public in the fourth-floor learning center, 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Park in the garage or on the plaza. Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements at 7:20 pm. Thomas Cawley will follow at about 7:30 pm.

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Holiday party and 'swap meet'; RSVP by Nov. 30, please

How about fun and food before the crush of the holiday season?

Master Gardeners, interns, and alums are invited to the MG of BC holiday party Tuesday, Dec. 10 from noon-2 pm in the Bergen County Zoo Education Center, Van Saun Park, 216 Forest Ave., Paramus. The MG of BC will supply hot food, dessert, and beverages.

RSVP, RSVP, RSVP, RSVP, RSVP

We need to arrange the catering for the holiday party, so click [here](#) to RSVP by Nov. 30 to Chris Kozar, hospitality chair, with your name and class year.

Bring your garden books, tools, and seeds

Everyone has at least one gardening/horticultural book or tool that you no longer need or use. Bring your book and/or tool to swap for another. The tool should be in good shape, clean, and, if appropriate, sharpened. The book should be in good shape, too. You can also bring seeds that are labeled — all to exchange with other party guests. Leave the party with a present for yourself!

IN THE GARDEN

Tips for removing large pot-bound plants without the backache

[Editor's note: Do you have any large root-bound plants stuck in large containers? Paul Sisko has these suggestions to "unstick" them. All photos by Paul Sisko.]

**By Paul Sisko,
Class of 2021**

The plant that you see (at right) is 'Rubrum' purple fountain grass in a container. It's a beautiful annual grass reaching 3-4 feet high with outstanding plumes. Mixed annuals were planted around the edges of the planter that were relatively easy to pull out, roots and all.



Since 'Rubrum' is an annual grass I just discard it and, if I choose to replant the same thing in the spring, I will purchase a 6-inch pot of it.

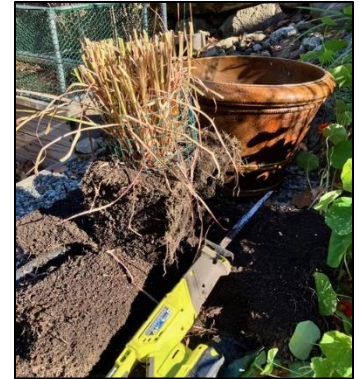
How to remove from the pot: Start by cutting back or pulling out plants that can be removed easily. I leave about 8 inches of a large planting to function as a handle to pull the plant out.



Next, put a tarp on the ground and tilt the container on its side so you can slide the root ball out. The root ball (above right) weighs about 40 pounds

and the planter weighs about the same. *Don't try to lift it unless you like back pain.*

Next, use a hand saw, or in this case a Sawzall (at right), to cut the root ball into manageable parts that you can carry and dispose of.



If you have containers with a substantial amount of soil in the pot, cover the pot with a plastic bag or piece of tarp secured with a bungee cord or twine so water does not enter the pot, freeze, and crack your pot.

If there's no soil in the pot, just flip the pot upside down (at right), and you're good to go.

Happy gardening for the fall cleanup!



I do love purple fountain grass and usually buy at least four per year. Some go into the ground directly and some in pots.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

'Blast' volunteers needed at Teaneck Creek

Come to Teaneck Creek Conservancy to cut back, trim, and generally clean up in the Peace Labyrinth to ensure it's just as beautiful in January as it is in July. This volunteer "blast" will take place Nov. 20 from 9 am-noon, 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck.



These cairns have mysteriously appeared at Teaneck Creek.

Volunteers will learn what plants to cut back, and where, when, and why to prune. Click [here](#) to register.

Bring hand tools, gloves, water bottle, and snacks if you want them. Teaneck Creek will supply large tools and water for your refillable water bottle. Dress in layers.

MG TRAINING

Get a jump on 2025 education hours

The annual North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Symposium is scheduled for Jan. 7-9 at the County College of Morris, Randolph. Jan. 7 is Tree Day, and Jan. 8 is Turf Day. Once again, Joel Flagler, our Bergen County ag agent, is the program chair for Landscape Day Jan. 9.

This is the 64th annual symposium sponsored by Rutgers Cooperative Extension Agricultural and Natural Resources faculty and staff.

The program runs from 8:30 am-3:30 pm each day. Register by Dec. 13 for \$75 a day, which will include continental breakfast and lunch. After Dec. 13, registration is \$90 a day and doesn't include lunch.

See the brochure sent with the Potting Shed for the schedule and registration information.

Rutgers Environmental Stewards is registering its 2025 class

Go beyond your MG training. The Rutgers Environmental Steward program trains volunteers on important environmental issues in New Jersey and how they can make a difference in their community.

Environmental Stewards is a certificate program offered through Cooperative Extension, a unit of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. The program fee is \$325. Most classes are online with approximately five scheduled in person by region. They begin Jan. 21. In addition to classwork, students must complete a 60-hour project of their choice. Click [here](#) for more information and the registration link.

EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Garretson wreath-making workshop

Space is still available for Garretson Forge & Farms' wreath-making workshop Dec. 1 from 1-4 pm at the farm, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Fee: \$25 Garretson members; \$30 non-members. Create a holiday wreath to take home. Click [here](#) to register.

Crazy composting year-round



Photo by Janet Schulz, Class of 1988

Lynne Proskow, Class of 2022, and member of the MG of BC Speakers Bureau, discussed the Bokashi method of creating compost indoors during the winter. She uses a 5-gallon bucket with a lid and effective microorganisms to produce "black gold," a gardener's best friend. Lynne spoke at the Closter Nature Center recently. Click [here](#) to visit the Speakers Bureau section of our website for the list of speakers and topics. Want to know more about becoming an MG speaker? Contact [Arnie Friedman](#), Class of 2004 and Speakers Bureau chair. He can help you set up a presentation.

You can also join other MGs at the event to make wreaths that will be sold at Garretson's Dutch Christmas Dec. 7. No experience is necessary, and there's no charge to make a wreath. Bring your imagination.

If you have questions about either option (make a wreath to take home or make a wreath to be sold), contact [Lida Gellman](#), Class of 1999 and site coordinator.

Interested in bonsai? Arnie to speak at GC of Hackensack meeting Nov. 21

Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004, will speak on the topic of Bonsai for Beginners at a meeting of the Garden Club of Hackensack Nov. 21 at 7 pm, Hackensack Recreation Department, 116 Holt St., Hackensack.

Click [here](#) to register via Eventbrite.

Thielke Arboretum's tree team



Photo by Terry Cohn, Class of 2020

Oh, the satisfaction of removing an invasive! From left, Mike Fioravanti, Class of 2024; Jean Epiphan, Thielke Arboretum land manager; and Janet Stofkoper (2023) after taking down an invasive osmanthus as part of a fall program to remove invasives, prune, mulch, and generally clean up. Volunteers are on site Tuesday and Saturday from 9 am-noon year-round, weather permitting. The address is 460 Doremus Ave., Glen Rock. Contact [Herb Arbeiter](#), Class of 2019 and site coordinator, for more information.

WEBINARS

Nov. 20, 7-8 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Know Your Natives: Groundcovers. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Nov. 21, 7-8:30 pm: New Jersey Forestry Association, the NJ State Forest Service, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension sponsor How to Love a Forest with Ethan Tapper, forester and author. Free. Click [here](#) to register. [See book review at right.]

Dec. 4, 7-8 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Know Your Natives: Winter Wanderings. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

BOOK REVIEW

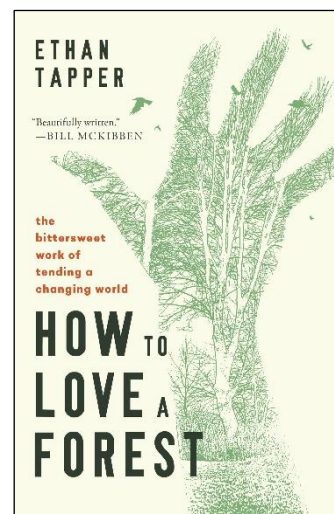
'How to Love a Forest'

By Suzanne Danzig, Class of 2008

With the holidays coming up you might be looking for a gift idea for the nature lover(s) on your list. I have just the thing: "How to Love a Forest" by Ethan Tapper. Ethan is a forester in Vermont, among other things.

I had the privilege of attending a weekend workshop on sound forest management and wildlife stewardship where Ethan was one of the speakers. He was a dynamic speaker but turns out to be an even more dynamic writer, if that is possible.

"How to Love a Forest" is a love story about his personal forest as well as the forests all around us. He walks us through his struggles with how to manage his forest to bring it back to a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem and what we all need to consider when it comes to preserving our ecosystems. Our forests provide a vital habitat for so many organisms; it is imperative that we look at our forests from a slightly different lens.



Although I know I will pick up this book many times to reread his suggestions, it is not just another reference book that we keep in our gardening-book library. This is a beautifully written and very enlightening read. Hope you enjoy it.

[Editor's note: To see endorsements of this book from one of our favorite authors and speakers, Doug Tallamy and others, click [here](#) for the publisher's website. Scroll to the bottom of the page for the "endorsements" section. Doug Tallamy is the author of "Nature's Best Hope" and other books. Visit Doug's website, [Homegrown National Park](#), to see what you can do to save the planet.]