

TRUMPET



VINE

National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania – District VII

A FREE newsletter distributed via Club Presidents to ~338 club members and via
http://www.gardenclubofmonroeville.org/trumpet_vine_gcfp_district_vii_newsletter

April=June, 2019



Jackie Stempfer, Editor

I would love to have pictures of your clubs events, meeting and activities for the Trumpet Vine. Please take some and email them to me. Also I'm sure others would enjoy pictures of your gardens, houseplants, etc.

CLUB EVENTS AND



The **Murrysville Garden Club** will hold their plant sale May 9th and 10th at the Murrysville Fire Station.

The flower show is Saturday, July 13 and open to the public.

Garden Club of Forest Hills annual Plant Sale is May 4th featuring perennials and hanging baskets - 9 am to 2 pm rain or shine at the Forest Hills Presbyterian Church on Ardmore Boulevard in Forest Hills.

May 15 - Annual Plant Auction featuring plants and shrubs from Garden Club of Forest Hills members' yards - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the Forest Hills Presbyterian

church on Ardmore Boulevard in Forest Hills.

Garden Club of McKeesport - April 6th is their Annual Rose Pruning free to the public and hands on.

May 4th is Mother's Day Tea with Hi-Tea and give aways - Cost is \$20 reservations at 412-672-1050

June 8th is Rose Day with many demonstrations and garden tours - it is free 1pm- 4pm

AWARDS



Joyce Peterson Garden Club of Forest Hills is the 2018 Forget-Me-Not Award winner in District VII.

Joyce has been a member of the Garden Club of Forest Hills for four decades,

has served as their president three times, has been editor of PETALS for over 30 years, and has been a coordinator of the club's biennial flower shows. She is equally active in District VII and GCFP as Yearbook Chairman, an accredited flower show master judge, a member of the Pittsburgh Area Judges' Council, a member of The Designer's Guild and a member of Creative Floral Arrangers of the Americas. Joyce and the other District award winners will be honored at the State Convention in Altoona in April. Congratulations Joyce. We are grateful for your contributions to The Garden Club of Forest Hills, and I am grateful for your incredible archival memory of GCFH history and for your friendship. Karen Lukas, Awards Chair



GCFP Trash to Treasure

The challenge this year is to create a flower arrangement with the theme of the four seasons. Materials must be recycled, or dried seedheads, pods or cones; no fresh plant material can be used. Judging will take place at the annual convention. If you're interested, talk to Valerie Wilson or Diana Sanner.

GCFP Convention

Seasons in Bloom This year's convention will be held April 7 - 9 at the

Blair County Convention Center in Altoona. The programs and workshop feature many design topics, from landscape design to wreath-making.

June Symposium

A symposium will be held on June 5 and 6 in State College. There will be two flower show topics: incorporating botanical arts into flower shows and design techniques for tables. More details can be found in the current Keystone Gardener. Register at www.pagardenclubs.org

Plant America grant available from Espoma The NGC Plant America program in coordination with Espoma plant foods and soils has been providing community grants of up to \$250 worth of soil and fertilizer products. Grant applications will be received through May 31. Find more information at <https://www.espoma.com/garden-clubs/>

GREENSBURG GARDEN CENTER

April 2 regular meeting will have July Schaffer show us how to grow plants in straw bales.

Annual May Mart Friday, May 3—12:00
Noon-7:00 PM Saturday, May 4—9:00
AM-1:00 PM

To name a few: Perennials, annuals, heirloom tomatoes, dish gardens, hanging baskets, pickled vegetables, preserves, exotic tropical plants. We have cookies and hot dogs, chips and soda. More details in our next newsletter.

Judy's Jottings - Asparagus and Me



My father was the produce manager for our local A&P store for many years. We enjoyed eating lots of vegetables, but I never remember my mother making asparagus. As an adult I developed a love of the vegetable.

Recently I bought my first bunch of spring asparagus. My local supermarket had white or green spears for \$3.99 a pound. (No purple ones offered) I chose to try the white spears, but enjoy eating any color.

NOTE- When purchasing a bunch buy only spears that are fatter than your thumb.
Thinner spears are a sign that the plants are worn out and lose some taste!

In Germany spargel (asparagus) is considered the King of the Vegetables. In April each year a formal tasting of the crop is done in the presence of dignitaries of Brandenburg. The Germans grow spargel primarily in Schwetzingen and historically it was grown only for the royal court. Being a lowly Schaffer, asparagus would have been off limits for my family. There is actually a European Asparagus Museum located in Schrobenhausen. Travel to Germany April-June and it is served everywhere.

Asparagus has an interesting history. Egypt seems to have been growing it around 3000 BC. Their high priests were not allowed to eat it because of its aphrodisiac properties.

NOTE – The Japanese people eat the most asparagus for its aphrodisiac properties.

The Romans were the first to cultivate this vegetable. They are said to have frozen asparagus in the Alps for the feast of Epicurious, transporting it by fast chariots and runners for January. Julius Caesar is alleged to like it cooked with melted butter. Around the 1700's this crop was being planted in New England. By the 1850's it was growing in North California.

I recently had my 23 and me genetic testing done. I eagerly waited to read what my \$75.00 fee would tell me about myself. (Surely I was German royalty!) I was listed as one of the 40% of the population that can smell "asparagus pee". (Whoopee!) The smell is a result of the metabolism of asparagusic acid into a sulphur compound which evaporates easily and is stinky. Not everyone can smell the urinary byproduct after eating asparagus. Can you? The next time you eat lots of asparagus and get the urge to pee, check out the result.

In the novel, *LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA*, asparagus pee plays an important factor in character development. Fermina is forced to marry Juvenal, who is very into asparagus-scented urine. Even when not in season, she must find and prepare asparagus, so that he could take pleasure in the vapors of his own fragrant urine. I recently requested this book from the public library to read. Juvenal's quirk is a strange character portrayal.

Madame de Pompadour loved to eat only the points d'amour (love tips). The finest texture and strongest and most delicate taste is in the plant's tips. (Wonder if she could smell asparagus pee?)

Have you heard of the disease, gout? Gout is linked to eating asparagus and other foods which raise uric acid levels. A patient diagnosed with gout can eat only limited amounts of this vegetable. (Stinky pee and pains in the toes – what a vegetable!)

Asparagus with its faults is still a healthy vegetable. Only 45 calories in 12 spears! It provides the body with potassium and 30% of RDA of vitamin A. It has no cholesterol and fat when consumed.

March is the best time for planting this crop. It needs well-drained, sandy soil and full sun and can be started from seed or young plants. Soak the seeds 2 days before sowing. Purchasing plants can be expensive. The Nourse Farms in South Deerfield, MA sells one year old male hybrids (Purple Passion) at a cost of \$24.75 for 25 plants. Check out their website for many more varieties.

NOTE – Male plants are supposed to grow better spears.

Plant in shallow trenches 30 to 45 cm apart. Cover with 8 cm of sandy soil. Most growers say do not do a full cutting until the plants are three years old. Planting asparagus is a long term endeavor, so set aside a portion of the garden for this purpose.

NOTE – A plant can grow up to six inches in a day.

Asparagus works well with tomatoes for companion planting. It repels root nematodes affecting the tomatoes, while the tomatoes repel the asparagus beetle.

Whether you buy or grow asparagus – enjoy it in season. Here is a simple procedure to make roasted asparagus---

Use asparagus with thick stalks!

Coat with a little olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and minced garlic.

Roast until lightly browned and tender.

Sprinkle with lemon juice and freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

NOTE – To remove the woody ends, grab the stalk at either end and bend until it snaps. It will naturally snap where it starts to get tough.

If you serve asparagus as part of your Easter dinner, put lots of air fresheners in your bathrooms.



Submitted by Judith Schaffer, Pucketos Garden Club



THE MIRACLE OF MASON BEES Iris Cisarik



With Springs arrival March 20th, gardeners thoughts should turn to “Gardeners Aiding Pollinators” (BeeGap).

In 2013, six years ago NGC created a partnership with Crown Bees , a bee pollination company, to increase native bee awareness and encourage gardeners to add gentle, rarely stinging mason bees for food and flower pollination. The gardeners of Pennsylvania have been enthusiastically and actively participating in the perpetuation and propagation of the native bees. Mason bees easily gather pollen and nectar in the same flower visit. There are no less than 4,000 species of bees in North America. As we all know, honey bees are in peril. Our food supply is threatened by loss of bee pollination. NGC members are coming together to close the bee gap with gentle mason bees. By adding efficient pollinating mason bees to our gardens and yards, we change our perilous dependence on a single bee pollinator, the honey bee.

The Mason bee is an excellent supplement to the perilous situation. They out perform honey bees . One mason bee pollinates 12 pounds of cherries to 60 honey bees to doing the same task!

At last year’s state convention, 15 bee houses were sold with additional orders taken at the Bee Exhibit Display. This year I will again be selling bee houses in Altoona, so come early if you would like to purchase one. Also, remember I mentioned to you in a former article about the BuyBack system Crown Bees has, where excess bees can be sold back to Crown Bees. There is a complete procedure and guidelines ,if you have excess bees. by going online to www.crownbees.com. This can be quite profitable to those of you who have excess bees. One garden club member told me at last year’s convention that she had 2 cherry trees that were covered with native bees! Now she would have plenty of native bees to spare. For all the BeeGap participants and enthusiasts , 1 CUP OF COCOONS= ABOUT \$150.00!. This could turn into more than a gratifying hobby.



BLUEBELLS

America's favorite native wildflower is sound asleep right now, tucked in under a lovely white blanket of snow, my favorite mulch. But before you know it, the snow will melt, the ground will warm and tight little purplish-green buds of *Mertensia virginica* will be pushing their way skywards. Over the following week or two, these buds gently unfold into 12" - 24" medium green stems to reveal clusters of pinkish-blue, pendulous flower buds that burst open into the softest, pastel blue flowers. As the flowers age, they ever so slowly and magically morph into a subtle shade of light pink.

Please don't let the common name mislead you. "Virginia Bluebells" are native to just about the entire eastern half of the US and Canada - [USDA Plant Profile](#), and there are 18 different species of *Mertensia* in the US alone - [Mertensia species distribution](#), *Mertensia virginica*, being the most widely cultivated of the lot. These early Spring wildflowers will grow happily just about anywhere in the world.

Mertensia virginica is a member of the Boraginaceae (Borage) family and shares residence in that family with other popular genera such as *Pulmonaria*, *Omphalodes*, *Symphytum*, *Myosotis* etc. The genus name *Mertensia* is in honor of the German botanist Franz Karl Mertens (1764-1831).



Mertensia virginica is one of our earliest and easiest to grow Spring ephemeral wildflowers. Now, while they're still dormant and your ground is thawing, is a very good time to plant them to ensure that you will get a good bloom this Spring. Eventually we must part company with this lovely plant, but not until it sets a respectable quantity of seeds to assure that you will soon have a colony. They'll then fade away and fall back into a deep slumber until next Spring. I highly recommend [P *olytichum acrostichoides*](#) as a companion plant. Universally known as the "Christmas Fern", this versatile evergreen fern benefits from a "haircut" in early Spring, just before the emergence of the *Mertensia*. As the *Mertensia* is "bidding adieu", the [P *olytichum acrostichoides*](#) will be unfurling its new fronds and will quickly fill in any bare spots left behind by the dormant *Mertensia*.

And, as if *Mertensia virginica* didn't have enough gold star attributes, it's NOT on Bambi's menu.

IN THE BEGINNING, MARRIAGE IS LIKE A DECK OF CARDS –FIRST YOU NEED HEARTS AND DIAMONDS – THEN YOU WISH YOU HAD CLUBS AND SPADES



Anise hyssop has been named the 2019 Herb of the Year™ by the International Herb Association.

Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) is useful in borders, wildflower gardens, herb gardens, butterfly gardens, and meadows. It can also be an excellent addition to containers. Other common names for this plant include blue giant hyssop, fragrant giant hyssop, licorice plant and lavender giant hyssop. Despite these names, anise hyssop is neither anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) nor hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*). Although, like hyssop, it is a member of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*).

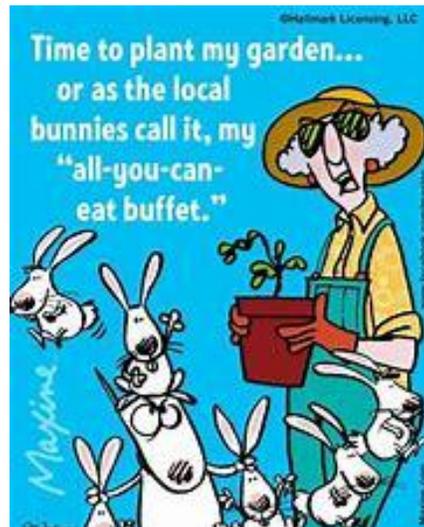
Anise hyssop is a perennial plant in the USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 4-8. It prefers well-drained soil in part sun to full sun. The plant grows from two to four feet tall. It should be noted that these plants will spread by rhizomes (underground, horizontal roots) and will easily self-seed in optimum growing conditions.

The plant has the square stems characteristic of mint family plants. Although the leaf scent has been described as anise, the chemical anethole, associated with anise or licorice, is not found in high amounts in the plant. Leaves have a scent more akin to basil or French tarragon. It blooms from June to September with bright lavender unscented flowers.

Deadheading spent flowers can bring additional blooms.

There are a number of different hybrid varieties available that feature different flower colors, such as pink, creamy white, powder blue and red-violet. Some varieties have dark green or lime green foliage.

Anise hyssop is an important addition to pollinator and butterfly gardens as it provides nectar for bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies well into the fall season. Birds may eat seeds left on the stalks. The aromatic leaves can be used to make jellies and can be crumbled in salads. The seeds can be added to cookies or muffins. The aromatic dried leaves are a good addition to potpourris. Flower spikes can be an attractive addition to fresh cut or dried arrangements.



There are times when my greatest accomplishment is just keeping my mouth shut.

Spring Flower Show: Gardens of the Rainbow



Phipps is bursting with color this spring, and you won't want to miss it! Delight in a stunning spectrum of floral hues as you stroll through a sea of show-stopping tulips, hydrangeas, snapdragons, and more. Adorned with captivating prisms, eye-catching topiaries, and interactive experiences for all ages:

Marvel at the **giant topiary peacock** in the South Conservatory, dramatically showcasing nature's breathtaking colorful patterns;

Stroll along a **winding rainbow road** of spring floral favorites and stunning prisms in the Serpentine Room;

Look and listen as the **sounds of chirping chicks** accompany bird-themed plants in brilliant red, orange, yellow and peach in the Sunken Garden;

Make water jump and dance among **captivating prism sculptures** through a giant interactive fountain in the Victoria Room;

Look through the eyes of bees and butterflies as **supersized sculptures** show how flowers appear to them;

Experience the rare spectacle of **Himalayan blue poppies**

Participate in a rainbow

scavenger hunt, engaging “prism play” and suncatcher craft-making activities through daily free-with-admission kids **Discovery Programs**;

- And much more!

Spring Flower Show: Gardens of the Rainbow runs March 23 – April 21 only.



Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits they become character;

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

