



The GRAPEVINE

October 2016

Volume 12, issue #3

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From the President's Desk

by Marybeth Guerrieri

Fall has always been my favorite season. I love the warm colors and the brisk weather. The changing colors of the leaves seems very near a miracle. I find wisdom in the tree's seasonal cycle—leaves adapt to the changing length of day, showing their most brilliant array of colors before falling to transform yet again and nourish the ground from which the tree grows, perhaps not even knowing new leaves will sprout the following spring. And, so, too, our Garden Club flutters and shimmies toward the end of another year, the heat of summer with its Flower Show and Garden Party and museum and library gardens upkeep behind us and the promise of new growth ahead.

Memberships are being renewed. New members are joining, some active members are shifting to associates or friends, other associate members are shifting to active. Our treasurer, Luann Madary, created a great new sign-up list and spreadsheet that lets everyone put their name forward for the project that most interests them. At our last meeting, several people sprang into action, forming committees to oversee our big winter and spring projects—Christmas trees at the State House in Annapolis; a fundraiser for Choptank Habitat for Humanity's Women Build; hosting the March District I meeting here in Oxford; and the Secret Gardens of Oxford Tour along with the Garden Shed Sale. We have another busy and exciting year in the works.

The November program with Jeanne Bernard from Dorchester Garden Club promises to get everyone ready for the holidays with floral designs that can transition from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Then, December brings our holiday party where we get to enjoy each other's company in our own inimitable fashion. I am feeling grateful for and inspired by the company I've been keeping.



Programs by Carole Abruzzese

November 3, 2016 - "Transitional Designs for the Season" presented by Jeannie Bernard, Dorchester Garden Club. Jeannie will demonstrate how to transition our Thanksgiving to Christmas décor with just a few simple updates.

December 8, 2016— We will gather at the home of Marybeth Guerrieri to celebrate the holiday season. You will soon be hearing from Dorothy Williams with requests to food items. Don't forget to bring a wrapped gift (\$20.00) for gift exchange, always fun.

January 5, 2017 — "Botanical Art", presented by Lee D'Zmura. Lee will provide a botanical art demonstration including member participation.

February 2, 2017 — "Grow It, Eat It" presented by Talbot County Master Gardeners. This program is designed to help us improve our health and save money by growing fresh fruit vegetables, fruits, and herbs using sustainable practices.

March 2, 2017—"Native Plants" presented by an Adkins Arboretum speaker. Club members will learn more about conservation landscaping allowing fauna and flora to thrive and protect the quality of water, soil, and air.

Acorn Squash and Apple Soup—Better Crocker

Ingredients

1 medium acorn squash (1 1/2 to 2 pounds)
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 medium yellow onion, sliced
2 medium tart cooking apples (Granny Smith, Greening or Haralson), peeled and sliced
1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/4 teaspoon dried basil leaves
2 cans (14 ounces each) chicken broth (4 cups)
1/2 cup half-and-half
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white or black pepper

Directions

1 Heat oven to 350°. Cut squash in half; remove seeds and fibers. Place squash, cut sides up, in rectangular pan, 13 x 9 x 2 inches. Pour water into pan until 1/4 inch deep. Bake uncovered about 40 minutes or until tender. Cool; remove pulp from rind and set aside. (Can be done in microwave without water).

2 Melt butter in heavy 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Cook onion in butter 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender. Stir in apples, thyme and basil. Cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in broth. Heat to boiling; reduce heat to low. Simmer uncovered 30 minutes.

3 Remove 1 cup apples with slotted spoon; set aside. Place one-third of the remaining apple mixture and squash in blender or food processor. Cover and blend on medium speed about 1 minute or until smooth; pour into bowl. Continue to blend in small batches until all the soup is pureed.

4 Return blended mixture and 1 cup reserved apples to saucepan. Stir in half-and-half, nutmeg, salt and pepper; heat until hot. ENJOY!

“Critters, Bitters and Glitters...” or “How I Spent My Summer” by Terry Holman

I started my gardening adventure with the typical hopeful stance. Every year I always try something new and this summer was no exception. I started out by purchasing heirloom seeds and split them with Marie. Why not share seeds to save money and have a garden buddy to compare notes? **Smart.**

Heirloom seeds of white cucumber, ‘Black Krim’ Tomatoes and zinnias were planted. I added some raised bed gardens to my side yard and planted other seeds, hoping for the best. I was also interested in doing my part to help out our pollinators. I made sure that everything I planted was not sterile in order to offer pollen to our pollinators and swore off the use of any neonicotinoids and all bug killers. **Smarter.**

Lastly, I have a strong fondness of the Black Swallowtail Butterfly, *Papilio polyxenes*. I purchased 4 large, healthy Italian Parsley plants. My good pal, Jeannie Geremia of GCNJ, spent the last two years legislating to make the Black Swallowtail butterfly the Official State Butterfly of NJ, in a monumental effort to help our Pollinator’s in Peril. These beautiful creatures require the parsley family for nutrition in the caterpillar stages. I was hoping that 4 parsley plants would be enough for my experiment. I planted 6 tomato plants to help feed the caterpillar stages of *Manduca quinquemaculata*, the Five Spotted Tomato Hornworm which morphs into a Hawkmoth.

It wasn’t any time at all before the butterflies and moths showed up.

As a child I typically got paid a dime for each caterpillar removed from my grandmother’s garden by timidly picking them off plants into a large mason jar. While I thought the money would make me rich, the coins rarely sat well in my pocket as these creatures were unceremoniously dumped into the chicken coop meeting a swift and vicious demise.

With my knowledge of butterflies in decline, I knew that I also had to try a new seed to my garden....



A seed that would grow tolerance, understanding and sharing with caterpillars. (This would not be easy)

Butterfly and moth eggs were deposited onto my tomato and parsley plants within the week after transplanting, resembling black specks of pepper. In short order the eggs became caterpillars that grew quickly, changing in size and color as they voraciously ate. I indeed had a crop of “Critters.”

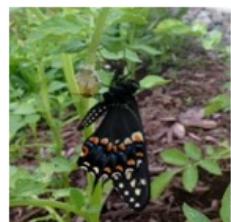


This led very quickly to “Bitters” as my plants were being consumed faster than they could grow. I had to really fight my programmed response to pluck them off to save my crop. This is when I realized that I indeed did have a crop. A healthy crop of caterpillars! This concept changed everything.

How the butterflies and moths discovered my little covey of parsley and tomatoes amidst all the houses still amazes me. I planted it and indeed they came. Soon I had an average of 12 to 20 Black Swallowtail caterpillars every week over the summer. Many created cocoons on potato plants and green tomato cages. The cocoon pictured was created overnight. This creature hatched 12 days later into a glorious glittering butterfly.

So many butterflies emerged that on some days, that’s all you could see of substance. “Glitters” of their reflective scales filled my garden in the sunlight. Beautiful. Many fluttered back to lay their eggs in my garden, my personal version of Charlotte’s Web.

I employed a new technique which saved caterpillars from a “chicken coop disaster” and allowed me a bite of a tomato every now and then. I relocated hornworms to a very fast growing, indeterminate tomato plant. This plant was saluted as I knew this was a suicide mission. It would literally give its whole life to feed caterpillars. I dedicate this article to *Solanum ‘Mr. Smiley’* for his heroic life. I had to admit that this technique worked well as I still had plenty of tomatoes for my household and many caterpillars. (Sharing wasn’t too terrible!)



Unfortunately, the Braconid wasps wiped out 80% of the tomato hornworm caterpillars in spite of my tomato plant swap technique. See above picture of Braconid wasp eggs atop small caterpillar. This wasp lays its eggs atop tomato hornworms. When they hatch they eat the critter from the inside out. Gross. Feeling some sympathy for these critters, I actually covered my “suicide mission” plant with fine net screening to keep the wasps AWAY from depositing eggs on their backs. (My grandmother would think I went crazy, I’m sure!)

I have but a few caterpillars remaining now that fall has arrived, nearly ready to create their cocoons and my parsley plants (all four plants survived) will now produce leafy crops throughout winter for me and my husband alone. This year I celebrated my successful crop of Black Swallowtails and Hawkmoths and I am richer for it, though dime-less.

Forcing Daffodils for Late Shows by Ray Rogers

submitted by Bonnie Stevens

I've forced daffodils (and other spring blooming bulbs, such as tulips and hyacinths) for many years, and up until recently I followed the usual methods and timing schedule to bring them into bloom in early to mid-March. But my late local daffodil show (Mother's Day weekend) and a May 20, 2016 show date presented some intriguing challenges for creative forcing.

Before I get into the creative stuff, let me review the basics of forcing: in order to bring bulbs into bloom ahead of their usual outdoor flowering time, you need to trick them into believing they've experienced a sufficiently long cold period (formally called vernalization and informally called winter). This means potting them in a suitable potting mix in fall; keeping them cold (just above freezing), moist, and in the dark for a number of weeks, and then warming them up to active leaf growth and enable flowering. The specific cold period and length of warm growing conditions are partly dictated by the plants' biology and partly by the date you want the plants to bloom. Horticulture is, after all, part science and part art.

My basic schedule for March bloom has been to pot the bulbs no later than the end of October, water them and place them in a cold, dark, accessible place (to be able to check on water and possible problems), then bring them into warmth and light throughout February. By early March, voila: cheerful, award-winning pots of flowers indoors while winter still holds forth outdoors.

But the beneficial cold and dark of winter doesn't last forever - even here in Wisconsin – and eventually potted daffodils wake up from their winter slumber and heed the urge to grow and bloom. That means something needs to be done to hold them back for later bloom dates, especially those in May. The seemingly logical place for that process is a refrigerator, with its controllable temperature and total darkness. However even my two spare refrigerators (I take this bulb-forcing thing seriously) can't comfortably hold more than ten 8-inch pots. They can, however, hold hundreds of loose bulbs in bags.

So here's my new method to produce late bloom: (1) Order pre-cooled bulbs from my supplier (at least I think they're precooled; the order form asks if I'm forcing the bulbs, so I check that box). (2) Keep them in their bags in the refrigerator set at about 36 – 38 degrees. Because frost-free refrigerators are arid places, I wrap the bulb bags in plastic bags to help prevent dehydration. (3) Pot the bulbs in January – February, depending on when I want the bulbs to bloom, then keep them in a cool to almost cold greenhouse (on the floor and covered with recycled plastic bags) for a few weeks to encourage the bulbs to root into the medium. (4) Place the pots of slightly rooted bulbs into the refrigerator. Because the bulbs are doubly precooled (once by the supplier and then by me), the pots don't need to spend the conventional 8 to 12 weeks in cold storage. As little as four weeks of fridge time has worked for me over the past couple of years. (5) Remove item from the fridge and give them warmth, light, and moisture in the greenhouse.

Important Note: the later the show, the faster bulbs wake up and begin to bloom. This is because a greenhouse is much brighter and probably warmer in April and early May than it is in February. It might take three to four (or more) weeks to bring a pot of daffodils to bloom in a (nighttime) 50 to 60 degree house in February, but that time will be cut in half in May. Any pot appearing to come into bloom too soon can be put back into the refrigerator for three or four days, even ones in full bloom. They do, however, take up a whole lot of refrigerator space once they're in full stride, so this trick as its limits.

Because my late forcing efforts these past two years were uncharted territory, I engaged in quite a bit of experimentation. Potting, cold storage, removal from cold storage, and active growth periods were done at staggered times so that I could bracket the show dates, hoping some of the pots would be on target. I'm happy to report that I enjoyed quite a few successes and only one significant bust: the jonquilla 'Golden Echo', 7W-Y, a superb garden daffodil and excellent choice for forcing for March bloom, produced skimpy foliage and not one flower under my new routine.

These performed like champions at shows in April and May this year.

One important tip: always be sure the potting medium is moist while the bulbs are in active growth. For many years I've kept the pots in shallow pans with about an inch of water in them at all times. If the plants dry out, the buds will probably blast, meaning they'll appear but not bloom.

I intend to put other cultivars to the test for next year



Update of the Rain Gardens at Oxford Community Center



Garden closest to Oxford Road



Garden beside Oxford Community Center back parking lot

I am sure you will all recognize these photos. How the plantings have matured over the last few years is just astonishing. So what does this mean to OGC members? It means that just as in our own gardens we need to continue to weed and in some cases, remove some of the plantings so that others have a chance to mature and grow.

To that end, on Monday, October 17 a group of OGC and Master Gardeners began the process of cleaning up for the fall and winter seasons. If you happen to have driven past the area you would have seen many piles of debris waiting to be collected by the Town maintenance folks. We are most grateful to Scot and his crew as all it takes is a phone call for help and they are usually there within a day or so to haul everything away.

There are other opportunities for all of us to help in one way or another. There is much to be learned about the use of native plants and how they thrive in their native environments. Also, it is interesting to see how the seeds and seed pods dry and supply a food source for our wildlife critters.

Museum/Library/OCC Garden Clean up: The clean up is scheduled for November 18th, 9 am - noon. This is the date we will all meet at OCC and divide into teams. Some will go to museum and library gardens for cleanup, others will remain at OCC to weed, etc. in the front gardens area cleaned out this summer, around sign and skipjack, by handicap ramp. Pat J. will lead the museum/library crew and Chris Marie and PR will lead the OCC folks. The expectation is that everyone who is able will participate in this effort.

Unusual vine found in the rain garden.— by Sylva Kaufman

I finally identified the vine growing in the rain garden at OCC. It is *Melothria pendula*, Guadeloupe cucumber. It is currently listed as an endangered species in MD so I contacted Chris Frye, the state botanist, about it and here was his response,

"Yes, that is *Melothria pendula*. The conservation status of this plant will change in 2017. Right now I have it flagged for delisting. Although demonstrably a native species (appears in the Colonial flora pre-1690) the habitat associations are unremarkable and this species appears to be expanding its range. A few years ago I found the species on the UMD campus growing amongst planted shrubs and also observed the species growing over the concrete barrier at the intersection of Route 50 and I95. Finding this species in very disturbed or otherwise anthropogenic habitat seems to be a trend. If you have the opportunity collect a specimen for the herbarium. Alternatively, I could just come by and collect one."

I hope to pick up a plant press at Adkins Arboretum on Monday and I'll collect a sample for the UMD herbarium sometime later this week. Since it is fairly unobtrusive, I think you might want to leave some of it in the rain garden. I believe it's an annual, so it should come back from seed next year. Here's some more interesting information about it, <http://www.eattheweeds.com/creeping-cucumber-melothria-pendula/>.

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Seed Collecting and Storing. Why collect seed? Collecting and sowing your own seeds can be a fun and gratifying experience for the home gardener. At first, the details may seem overwhelming, yet as you gain experience, and are rewarded with new seedlings, you may find yourself inspecting your flowers closely in anticipation, and seed saving could become second nature to you. Home gardeners can collect their own seeds from their own plants. Information that is normally found on commercial seed packets can be located in books or websites. While your choices are limited by how many plants grow in a particular garden area, joining a seed exchange group increases the availability of saved seed for your future planting. The joyful thought of watching seeds magically sprout next year, or the great disappointment if they fail, encourages us to look into best practices for collecting and storing plant seeds.

How to Collect Seed. The first step is to choose healthy plants with high quality seedpods and fruits for seed collection. Healthy plants show vigorous growth, exhibit resistance to pests and diseases, produce good quality fruit, and produce high yields. As the chosen plants finish flowering, look for swelling seedpods or ripening fruit. Wait until they are fully mature. It is important to collect only fully mature or ripened seed. Sometimes, nearly mature seeds may ripen off the plant, if they remain in their seedpods. If picked too early, the embryo will not survive the drying out process, or if picked too late, the wind may blow away the seed. Fine, nylon-mesh bags work universally well for collecting seeds and seed structures. Paper bags work well for seeds, cloth bags for panicles or dry fruit, and open baskets for fleshy fruit but be sure not to squash the fruit. Do not let seeds become hot or moldy.

Seed propagation preserves and promotes genetic diversity. The result of the sexual union of flower parts (male and female). Each contains an embryo, a packet of energy and a protective coating. Some annual flowers and vegetables have been developed to come as true to type as possible from seed, others will result in a wider variety of offspring types. Plants reproduce either by seed or by vegetative parts. Asexual or vegetative propagation duplicates exact copies or clones of a given plant resulting in no genetic variation. Vegetative propagation includes layering, division, cuttings, grafting, budding and tissue culture.

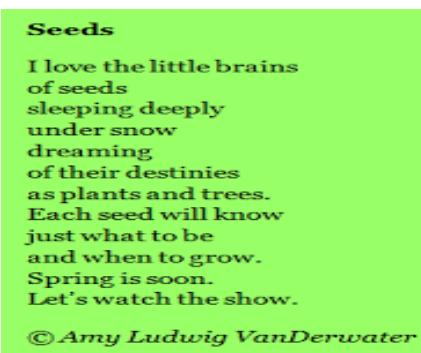
Dry seed pods. With dry seed pods, extract the ripe seeds by hanging them upside down over a paper bag in a shaded, dry, airy place and wait for the seeds to fall. An occasional gentle tap will help. Cut clustered seed heads such as those of marigolds whole and lay on a newspaper to dry. Whenever you harvest your own seed, remove as much of the chaff and other vegetable material as possible before storing. This material, if sown along with the seed, tends to rot and may encourage fungal diseases.

Moist fruit For moist fruit, such as ripe tomato or cucumber, the seed is surrounded by mucilage. When the fruit is fully colored and ripe, scoop out these seeds and wash them in a fine sieve under running water to remove the mucilage. Allow them to dry in the shade. If the mucilage is difficult to dislodge, with a gloved hand gently rub the seed against the wire mesh screen of the sieve. Once the mucilage is removed, place the seeds to dry in a single layer on absorbent newspaper in the shade. Turn over so both sides dry or dry both sides at the same time by suspending the seed between layers of mosquito netting. Label batches of seed to keep track of what is drying where.

How to Store Seed. Only clean and well-dried seed should be stored. The two deadly enemies of stored seed are warmth and moisture. So, inspect the seed one last time before it is stored. Is it the very best you could collect? Is it clean, dry, and free of chaff and other debris? To keep stored seeds cool and dry, store them in clean, airtight containers or in small paper bags so mold and rot is less likely. The cool refrigerator temperature slows down the natural respiration and deterioration of the seed. Clearly label the containers with the name of the plant and the date and place of its collection.

Cool & Dry How long seeds last in storage depends on the type and quality of seed saved and the storage conditions. Some deterioration is inevitable. Aim to use all stored seed next year or within two or three seasons from the time of collection, as sprouting or germination rates will go down with time. In general, the lower the humidity and temperature in storage, the longer the viability of the stored seed.

By Nancy Pollard, Horticulture Educator with Steven G. Canavas UIE Master Gardener, Matteson, IL.



Continuing Education

Trish Reynolds and Marie Davis completed their final two-day course of Landscape Design School. This was a very interesting course with wonderful speakers all highly qualified for their particular role in the classroom. The curriculum was taken from the book "Stewards of the Land" A Survey of Landscape Architecture and Design in America. Should you be interested, you may borrow my copy at no cost!!

Included in the last of this series, was the opportunity to critique two private gardens in Annapolis and the Helen Avalynne Tawes Garden located outside the MD Department of Natural Resources. We were provided score sheets to grade what we saw and felt about the gardens. While this wasn't challenging enough, we did it in the pouring rain. Of course no one complained, we are gardeners after all and were in desperate need of rain.



Are we having fun yet?

So what do these photos have to do with Landscape Design School. The answer: at 3:30 a.m. we were awakened by the fire alarm announcing an emergency in the facility and we all dutifully donned out rain coats, got our handbags and left the building via the stairs. Yes these are our two fearless leaders, Nicki and Suzie waiting patiently for the all clear. We returned to our rooms around 4:00 a.m. just in time to cram for the final exam next day. Fortunately no one was injured.



Oxford Garden Club New Member

Sue Betz is the newest member of OGC. Sue comes to us with a wealth of garden club experience. On her application Sue indicated her interest in helping with Horticulture and in fact has volunteered to be Horticulture Chair for the 2017-2019 term. In addition Sue also indicated her interest in helping with Flower Shows, Hospitality, and the Garden Party. Sue and her husband recently moved to Easton Village following their retirement. They formerly lived in Severna Park where Sue was part of Naval Academy Garden Club for almost thirty years. Sue has been involved in Landscape Design School activities for over thirty years, a school that continues today. Sue and her husband Fred enjoy boating and travel. They have two children and three grandchildren. Please welcome Sue when you see her at our meetings.

Oxford Garden Club Members entries in the Talbot Garden Club Flower Show



Bonnie Stevens



Ingrid Blanton



Sue Betz



Terry Holman



Carole Abruzzese and Marie Davis

OGC members also entered several of the horticulture and photography classes at the TGC Flower Show. It is important that OGC members support other Club activities as they support ours.

Looking Forward— Carole Abruzzese, Paula Bell, Marie Davis, Nominating Committee

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Oxford Garden Club has been filled for the term 2017-2019. In keeping with the Club by-laws, the slate of officers will be announced at the regular monthly meeting in January 2017. Active members will vote on the slate at the regular monthly meeting in February 2017 at which time additional nominations will be taken from the floor. If there are multiple nominations for the same position an election will be by ballot. Officers will be installed at the regular monthly meeting in March 2017.

Standing Committees will be filled and appointed by the in-coming 2017-2019 President. As there is need to prepare for several events, some committee chairs have already been announced. Many thanks to those who have stepped up to fill these positions.

We would like to encourage someone to take over the 2017 program chairman position AS SOON AS POSSIBLE as information about programs is essential to complete the Year Book.

Please remember that no one needs to work alone on any of these committees. However, we do need someone to take a position so that there is a contact person for each committee.

Those committees already filled are:

2016—Governors Tree Project—Susie Dial, Phyllis G., Dorothy Williams, Sandy Wrightson

2017 Garden Tour—Ellen Anderson and Ginny Wagner

2017 District I semi-annual meeting—Ingrid Blanton and Susie Dial

Standing Committees:

Awards

Conservation/Legislation

Fine Arts in Oxford

Flower Show 2018

Garden Party - 2017 Dorothy Williams home

Historian

Horticulture — Sue Betz

Hospitality

Ice Cream Social

Library/Museum Gardens/OCC — Master Gardeners

Membership

Memorial Day Celebration

Newsletter — Marie Davis

Oxford Day

Programs

Publicity — Marie Davis

Ways and Means

Year Book — Chris Myles-Tochko (would like a co-chair)

Youth Programs



As you look at this list, please consider which committee would be of interest to you or one that you might like to co-chair with someone else.. If you have questions about the responsibility of any of these committees, please get in touch with Carole, Paula, or Marie.

Garden Created by Oxford Kids Camp children — “Build It and They Will Come”

The children who were part of this project learned that you don't have to be a professional gardener to know that planting a new garden in the middle of summer is risky. The heat is brutal for people and young plants! Campers braved the July heat to install this beautiful pollinator garden. These photographs show the results of their hard work.



Children who participated in the planning and planting of the garden pictured with leader Leslie Adelman



Pollinator habitat



Cardinal vine

One month after planting, and despite record heat and little rain, the OKC pollinator garden was thriving!. Special thanks to a small group of volunteers who we have affectionately crowned ‘the friends of the garden’ (FOGS). These volunteers provided weekly TLC needed to keep these young plants healthy and growing – watering and weeding consistently throughout the summer and fall. Many thanks to Sarah Ramsey, Jessica Johnson,, Phyllis Rambo, and Chris Myles-Tochko.

For more information about this project please visit www.oxfordkidscamp.org. Also you may call or write Leslie M. Adelman, 4755 Sailors Retreat Rd, Oxford,, MD 21654 H: 410-822-6966 C: 410-310-6293

Federated Garden Clubs of MD, Inc. District I Semi-annual Meeting

Club members from all eleven District I Clubs attending the meeting on October 5, 2016 at the Talbot Country Club.

The guest speaker was Kent Russell whose bio is impressive: "My introduction to Horticulture began as a child, when I spent weekends at the family nursery, Russell Gardens, located in Bucks County PA. By the time I was a teenager my interest had focused on perennials. I soon specialized in propagation, maintenance, and sales of over 1,500 different species."

By age 19 I left the family business to establish Renny-Hortilus Farm Nursery. This now renowned property has been featured in numerous lifestyle magazines nationwide. While working at the nursery, I planted a field of 3,000 peonies in a winding ribbon pattern. The peonies continue to thrive, and many end up as cut bouquets in the New York Flower market. Before long I was asked to give my first lecture to a local herb society. Eventually I found my name being listed as a preferred speaker by the Garden club of America. This proud moment was quickly followed by lecture engagements to numerous garden clubs and horticultural organizations throughout the East Coast. Recent presentations have included the Newport and Philadelphia Flower Shows. I currently average over 60 lectures per season."



Kent truly entertained us not only with his beautiful plantings but also with showing us a selection of his Fabulous Louboutin shoes.

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