



The GRAPEVINE

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Programs - by Ingrid Blanton and Marybeth Guerrieri

November 1, 2018—The Oxford Garden Club invites the public to hear Dr. Bill Schindler, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Washington College and Director of the Eastern Shore Food Bank, give a talk on “Lessons from our Dietary Past”. The talk will be held at the Oxford Community Center beginning at 2:00 p.m.

December 6, 2018—Holiday party at the home of OGC member Carole Abruzzese, 29736 Amanda’s Way, Easton, MD 21601. Festivities begin at noon, don’t forget to bring a wrapped \$20.00 gift for the fun gift exchange.

January 3, 2019— Members are invited to visit the home of Priscilla Thut, 5560 Heron Point Road, Royal Oak, MD. Priscilla, a member of the MD Ornithological Society and the Talbot Garden Club. She will discuss how to attract and care for birds in your garden. The program will begin at 10:00 a.m.

2018 Flower Show Poems & Posies A Success!- by Phyllis Rambo

Well, our club did it again! We put on a fun Flower Show and got rave reviews from the judges and the public. The theme was great fun. Sandy, Alice, Dorothy, Ingrid, Marybeth and the hospitality crew all did a wonderful job interpreting it on the stage, at the front entrance and at the judges lunch. A lot of work goes into making these shows happen and as co-chairs, Dorothy and I are thrilled with the participation and enthusiasm of our members. We had 94% participation by Active members, and 41% participation by Associate members. Even though this was a tough summer on our gardens we had 63 beautiful horticulture entries, 19 exquisite designs and 12 fantastic botanical photographs. Of the 24 people who exhibited, 19 were OGC members. Congratulations to all the winners. What talent in our club! Please go to the Gallery/ Photo Album page on our club website to see some pictures (www.oxfordmdgc.org).

One goal of this small show was to give our members a chance to learn more about what it takes to put on a flower and to learn more about exhibiting horticulture and the various design types. I think we were successful, and had fun in the process. Now it’s on to the October 2019 District 1 Flower Show that OGC will be hosting!!

Here are a few photos of the Show.



The Oxford Garden Club Flower Show – Poem by Boots Michalak

The poems were sweet, the posies divine,
Judging at Oxford, a wonderful time,
the lunch was delicious, served on a green tray,
Sorry my diet caused some dismay,
But quick as a wink came my vegan plate,
Delicious it was, make no mistake
And finally, a present wrapped up so neat,
The book of poems is a wonderful treat,
So thank you one, and thank you all,

Horticulture Report – by Sue Betz

Did you know that many State Parks are not protected from commercial timbering? There is an organization which was created in Easton to help preserve such parks and forests. It is Old Growth Forest Network.

Dr. Joan Maloof is the founder and Executive Director. who recently spoke before a packed house at the Royal Oak Garden Club The organizations goal is to preserve one old growth forest in each state. She would like to see Pickering Creek Park be one of these protected parks. She stated how important it is to preserve our forests. Why is this so important?

1. There's only one percent of the Old Growth Forest left. These forests slowdown the rain by catching it in the leaves and breaking it down into a thin sheet.
2. The trees filter and clean the water as it falls thru the canopy and roots.
3. The trees prevent run off of fertilizer into the rivers, lakes, and bay.
4. The tree roots help prevent erosion and help in keeping sediment out of our waterways. The erosion and silt are detrimental to fish and native water grasses.
5. The forest is a habitat for native species and they evolve together.

An Old Growth Forest is defined by a forest with great age without any significant disturbance. It is diverse in tree structure. If you would like to visit such a Forest go to Wye Island Natural Resources, 20 acres here on the Eastern Shore. It features Hollies and Oaks in Schoolhouse Woods. (off Rt. 50)

To contribute to Old Growth Forest Network: Old Growth Network, PO Box 21, Easton, MD. 21601.

Advice from a Tree—by Ilam Shamir

Stand up tall and proud,
Sink your toots into the earth,
Be content with your natural beauty,
Go out on a limb,
Remember your roots,
Enjoy the view!



Now that the weather is getting colder, I thought you might enjoy this “comfort food” recipe.

Chicken Casserole - from Marie Davis

5 large chicken breasts (fills a large casserole)
Enough chicken broth to cover chicken in pot
1 can cream of mushroom soup, more if you like a creamy mixture
½ can milk (or a little more to dilute soup)
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
1 package Pepperidge Farm stuffing mix (use package directions)
Salt and pepper to taste (I don't use either as the broth seems to be enough)

Oven at 350 degrees for ~ 45 minutes.

Cook chicken breasts in broth until tender. Shred or cut into bite size pieces; place in a prepared casserole dish, I use a 9” x 13”. Cover chicken evenly with soup/milk mixture; then cover with cheese and finally the stuffing mix. Bake uncovered so that stuffing mix doesn't get mushy.

Tips – be sure to use package directions on the stuffing mix and don't just use as is, it is too dry that way. This dish can be prepared ahead of time and frozen until needed. Also, you can add a vegetable such as peas or corn, add a salad and you have a hearty dinner. ENJOY!

Conservation Committee Report - by June Middleton

Fish - Shad is one of the anadromous fish species stocked in Chesapeake Bay tributaries. Anadromous fish are those that spend most of their adult life in oceans but return to native rivers to spawn. These fish were once abundant but overfishing, dam construction and pollution have taken a toll. On the Susquehanna River a multi-million-dollar fish lift was installed in 1997 at the Conowingo Dam, but this year less than 7,000 shad passed over the lift. Heavy spring rains and cool temperatures may have contributed to the low migration. Regionally the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers are showing strong East Coast shad runs while the James and York runs were very low. Shad is a stocked species; this year only about 9 million (down from 36 million in 2000) were released regionally due to funding cuts. Locally the Maryland DNR released about 1.5 million larva and about 0.5 million juvenile shad into the Choptank. (Source: Data from VIMS are reported in Bay Journal)

Wildlife Refuges - Last spring Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge was threatened with closure due to funding cuts. There are 560 refuges nationally which are charged with protecting wildlife habitat. EN NWR is a 22,000 acre tract at the confluence of the Chester River and the Chesapeake Bay enjoyed by hunting, fishing and bird watching enthusiasts with 70,000 visitors each year. Funding was restored to hire a new manager after the intervention of Sen. Chris Van Hollen who wrote a strong letter of support citing the negative economic impact the closure would have on Kent County. Meanwhile, Rep. Andy Harris, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, declined to intervene stating that earmarking funds violates congressional rules. The system now receives \$100 million less in funding than it did in 2010. The Trump budget sought to cut another 2.7% from the NWR system. This budget was supported in the House, but the Senate approved an alternate version. This is now in conference. (Source: Bay Journal)

Oysters - Chesapeake Bay oyster populations are currently at 1 -2 % of historic levels. An oyster can filter 50 gallons of water each day removing N (as algae or small organic matter) and depositing the N in shells or releasing it to the atmosphere as nitrogen gas (a normal component of air). Over the past seven years the Maryland Oyster Project in Harris Creek, a Choptank tributary, has rebuilt 350 acres of reef in Harris Creek at a cost of \$28 million from state and federal sources. Approximately 2.5 billion hatchery spat have been released on the restored reef. Recently VIMS and UMCES released a computer model study report of this project. The restored reef has the capacity to remove 100,000 pounds of N annually. This is equivalent to the reef filtering all the water in Harris Creek (about 10 billion gallons) in less than 10 days during the summer months. Other filter feeders (mussels, sea squirts) which colonize the reef remove up to 40% of the N. Unfortunately, 95% of the N in the creek is returned from the Bay with each high tide. The reef costs about \$300 for each pound of N removed. This is more than the cost of controlling farm run-off but much less than the cost to retrofit city and suburban storm drain systems. (Source: Bay Journal)

Phragmites australis - The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center conducted a meta-analysis reviewing 104 papers reporting on invasive species in coastal ecosystems. *Phragmites australis* is classified as a native species because it displaces native plants that are critical to the reproductive success of many waterfowl and shorebird species. However *Phragmites* may be helpful in fighting climate change. It has been found to enhance the storage of blue carbon (carbon accumulated and stored in oceans and marshes). As *Phragmites* grows it sequesters C at a faster rate than native plants and then stores C below ground in soil for millenia. This study found that there is 40% more stored C in wetlands invaded by *Phragmites* compared to those populated only by natives. If an invasive plant shares the same function as the native plant it displaces (food, shelter) there is up to a 117% increase in stored C in the ecosystem. This finding is for salt marshes only. In other types of wetlands (mangroves) other invasives decrease stored C. (Source: Bay Journal) \\\



Master Gardener Basic Training— by Mikaela Boley

The basic training for the M.G. program will take place at Chesapeake College. Training will be held on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings beginning February 22nd 2019 through April 21, 2019. The cost is \$200.00.. For more information or to register for this program, please contact Mikaela Boley, Urban Horticulture/Master Gardener Coordinator, Talbot County, 410 822-1244 ext. 1002.

Ornamental Grasses and Social Graces – by Terry Holman

At our last flower show we included a section of cut ornamental grasses. Many of our club members cited that they didn't have ornamental grasses in their landscape to enter! What a shame. There were some terrific ornamental grasses on display. Ornamental Grasses can add great value to your landscape. The late Kurt Bluemel, a Maryland nursery owner, thought typical landscape plantings around homes to be quite boring in the 1960's. He found most homes to have only a few flowering annuals around a fence with a tree or two complete with a hedge around the house and a cut lawn as the base. Kurt Bluemel felt that ornamental grasses and perennials could bring nature, life and movement to residential landscapes. He bred and grew many new cultivars of ornamental grasses. So great was his passion that Walt Disney hired him create an entire African savannah in his Animal Kingdom resort which ended up with 4 million grasses.

While many of us aren't aiming for the African savannah look, we can still add great drama, architecture, texture and color to our landscapes using ornamental grasses. Thanks to Kurt Bluemel's efforts, our Baldwin, MD. perennial Grower, we have a multitude of grasses (10,000+) from which to choose from based on your garden needs and the sunlight it receives.

There's a poem I learned from an unknown author that always helped me identify the three basic types of ornamental grasses; "Sedges have edges, rushes are round, grasses have knees that bend to the ground." Landscape ornamental grasses can basically be broken down into three main groups. Sedges are in the Cyperaceae family and typically have triangular shaped culms (stems). A culm cross section will quickly demonstrate the triangle shape and these stems are not hollow but solid. The sedges are not officially listed as true grasses but considered ornamental grasses in the landscaping industry. Rushes are from the Junceae Genus and they typically have a round shaped stem that is hollow. The Grasses are in the Poaceae family and have over 300 specimens. The knees referred to in the poem are actually nodes and if pinched, will bend to the ground.

Ornamental grasses can add great interest to your landscape. Some taller varieties can make terrific screens to hide an unattractive view. Some are true ornaments feature specific forms that can create a sculpture-like presence. Shorter varieties can make excellent edging plantings along walkways and can soften hardscape edges. Grasses come in a variety of different colors with spectacular seed heads in the forms of spikes, racemes and panicles that can look gorgeous in a garden. Many offer spectacular leaf color changes once the weather cools in fall. Ornamental grasses give texture to a garden as well as one of my favorite things; movement and sound. Grasses are often considered essential components of the sensory garden. Left uncut, the seed heads can provide nourishment and protection for birds and offer great interest for winter views.

Ornamental grasses do have a dark side, however. Many grasses brought into our country over a hundred years ago lack certain graces. Currently *Miscanthus sinensis* grasses are listed as an invasive plant. When I contacted Susan Palmer, our FGCMD, Inc. State Flower Show Scheduler Reviewer, to inquire what cultivars were included, she told me, "ALL of them." *Miscanthus sinensis* were brought over from Asia in the early 1900's. They are spectacular in the fall with their silver midribs and striking plumes of seed heads. The problem is that they spew windblown seed everywhere and grow in disturbed areas. Some *Pennisetum* cultivars also self-seed with reckless abandon. I've learned from experience to avoid planting anything in my landscape that "self seeds readily." This invasive trait is why this type of grass is not allowed to be exhibited in any NGC Standard Flower Show in Maryland.

So, you really need to be careful and studied when preparing to plant any ornamental grasses, sedges and juncus. We need to take a critical look at plants that will add beauty to our landscape and not take over the farm. We need ornamental grasses with good manners and good social graces. A good ornamental grass will not readily self-seed, will grow slowly with minimal fertilization and should easily handle shade, drought and poor soils like a champ. It should not require too much in the way of trimming but add movement, texture and grace to your garden.

How do we decide what ornamental grass to plant? I recommend checking out the FGCMD, Inc. Invasive Plant List on their website: www.fgcofmd.org. Avoid planting any plant on this list and we recommend removing these invasive plants from your landscape. These documented invasives displace native plants and help wipe out ecosystems of native critters. (Not good!) Next, determine what you want from an ornamental grass for the specific areas of your landscape. Consider the size it will grow to, consider if it will spew grass seed into your lawn and if it has interesting colors, seeds and interest.



Pennisetum orientale

Ornamental Grasses and Social Grasses (cont'd.)

There are many current breeding efforts to create new ornamental grass cultivars which have better landscape manners. Many universities have ongoing breeding efforts to find sterile or nearly sterile ornamental grass cultivars. They are listening to gardeners and landscapers to find grasses that are more compact and more suitable for container growing. This is a win-win for both the growers and the gardeners. Growers have the added challenge of creating new vegetative propagating techniques for specimens that don't produce viable seeds.



One such new sterile cultivar is *Miscanthus* 'Bandwidth' which features a compact green and gold banded ornamental grass which grows 3 feet tall in a container, pictured left. *Pennisetum setisetum* 'Rubrim', pictured right, is a sterile ornamental grass grown as a tender perennial in the Northeast of U.S. This plant has burgundy foliage and lighter burgundy spikes. The North Carolina University has just come up with the Etouffee series of grasses with pink foxtail-like plumes; a bunching grass with graceful arched leaves and sterile seed heads with 3 foot and 6 foot tall cultivars of burgundy grass blades.



Not all of the newest ornamental grass introductions are sterile. Some new *Carex* cultivars have better than average manners and can be planted in areas where you can't get anything else to grow, i.e. the dreaded dark shade areas. There are some great new showy *Carex* cultivars. One new cultivar is *Carex scaposa* (Cherry Blossom Sedge), pictured left. This *Carex* has wider leaves and cherry-pink flowers that blooms double duty in both spring and fall! It was developed by Hoffman Nursery and they donate 10 cents for each plant sold to the U.S National Arboretum to support plant exploration and conservation efforts. Additional new *Carex* cultivars were developed at Fitzgerald Nurseries with their Evercolor Series. One interesting new cultivar is the *Carex oshimensis* 'Everlime'. This new series offers bright interesting colored *Carex* which can grow as a perennial sedge in dark, shady areas (even dry shade) and they bring on new fabulous bright colors to brighten the dreary dark spots in your garden.

Do yourself a favor and really do some homework on grasses before planting them in your garden. Check for sterile cultivars or for those that behave better than average. Try to remove any invasive ornamental grasses and replace them with well mannered ones. A great garden guest should have good manners. Likely you can easily discover the perfect garden ornamental grass guest that will beautify your landscape without crowding out our native plants.

Resources:

“‘King of grasses’ Kurt Bluemel, 81, who recreated a savannah for Disney, dies” [The Washington Post](#), Andrian Higgins, June 10, 2014.

“New Sterile Ornamental Grasses – One Solution to the Grass Invasion” [Greenhouse Growers.org](#) Janeen wright, May 11, 2018.



Don't Forget to Change Your Clock, Saturday November 3rd, 2018—from the Internet

Daylight saving time in the United States is the practice of setting the clock forward by one hour during the warmer part of the year, so that evenings have more daylight and mornings have less. Most areas of the United States observe daylight saving time (DST), the exceptions being Arizona (except for the Navajo, who do observe daylight saving time on tribal lands), Hawaii, and the overseas territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. The Uniform Time Act of 1966 established the system of uniform daylight savings time throughout the US.

“Make Every Day Earth Day” – Program presented by FGCMMD, Inc.



On Tuesday, October 23, at Cylburn Arboretum the following presenters provided talks on the various elements of protecting our precious earth. Special thanks to Linda Harris, FGCMMD, Co-chair of Conservation and Environmental Awareness for procuring these speakers. Marie Davis, Chris Myles-Tochko, and Phyllis Rambo from Oxford Garden Club participated and recommend that you attend future Earth Day programs

Dr. Sara Via, Professor and Climate Extension Specialist, University of Maryland spoke about “Climate Change: Already in a Neighborhood Near You”

Nancy Lawson, author, speaker and garden habitat consultant spoke about “The Humane Gardener: Nurturing Habitat for Wildlife”.

Susanne Pittenger-Slear, Environmental Concern, spoke about “Understanding Wetlands: One of the Most Productive Ecosystems in the World”.

Diane Miller, Environmental Concern, spoke about “Managing Stormwater on Your Property”.

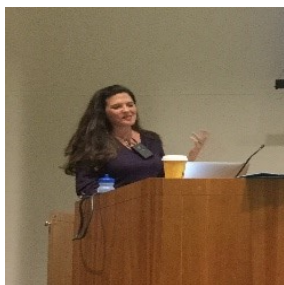
Susie Creamer, Director of Urban Education and Conservation at the Patterson Park Audubon Center, spoke about creating bird-friendly sanctuaries particularly for migratory birds.



Linda Harris, left, event co-chair and Dr. Sara Via speaker



Speakers Diane Miller, left, and Suzanne Pittenger-Slear



Speaker Nancy Lawson



Speaker Susie Creamer, left, and Lynn Walter event co-chair

History of the Jack O'Lantern – by Pat Jessup

Several years ago (30 some), I married a man from England. Over the years we've discovered many cultural differences but one surprising one was that in the London area (c.early 1980's), carving pumpkins at Halloween (and trick or treating) was not common. Stores didn't carry "Halloween" décor either. Obviously that has changed over the years and most of my British relatives & their families now celebrate in much the same way we do in the U.S., but it started me thinking about the origin of the Jack O'Lantern so I "googled" it. Here's what I found on a website of history topics at www.history.com.

"Every October, carved pumpkins peer out from porches and doorsteps in the United States and other parts of the world. Gourd-like orange fruits inscribed with ghoulish faces and illuminated by candles are a sure sign of the Halloween season. The practice of decorating "jack-o'-lanterns"—the name comes from an Irish folktale about a man named Stingy Jack—originated in Ireland, where large turnips and potatoes served as an early canvas. Irish immigrants brought the tradition to America, home of the pumpkin, and it became an integral part of Halloween festivities.

The Legend of "Stingy Jack"

People have been making jack-o'-lanterns at **Halloween** for centuries. The practice originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "Stingy Jack." According to the story, Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him. True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put it into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the Devil from changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would not bother Jack for one year and that, should Jack die, he would not claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could not come down until the Devil promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years.

Did you know? The original jack-o'-lanterns were carved from turnips, potatoes or beets.

Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word not to claim his soul, would not allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of Jack's lanterns by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them into windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack o'lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States. They soon found that pumpkins, a fruit native to America, make perfect jack-o'-lanterns".

Now ya know!!



Chesapeake Bay Herb Society (CBHS) – by Marie Davis

CBHS was founded in 2002 with the leadership of Lou Russell. Although Lou is no longer with us, her legacy and love of Herbs remains at the heart of everything we do. “CBHS was founded to share the knowledge of herbs with the local Eastern Shore community and is a non-profit organization as per IRS code 501(c) 3.”

Members meet the second Thursday of each month and the current meeting place is Christ Church in Easton. The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. with a pot-luck dinner and libation. Over the years the dinner has evolved into having a theme and using three or four herbs specifically chosen for our recipes. The Culinary Committee is very active in developing these themes for the year. They also research the origins of the herbs we are using today and how they were brought to the U.S. and if their use was in food, drinks, or for medicinal purposes etc. There are no assignments made as to what each member will bring for dinner and that’s what it makes it so much fun, it’s a true smorgasbord. If my memory serves me well, I can think of only one occasion where we had one entre’ and all the other offerings were dessert. Of course, no one complained about that!

Very early in the organization, a project was developed to create, fund, and maintain a Herb Garden and with a cooperative effort with Pickering Creek, the Herb Garden was established. This was a huge endeavor, and over the years, changes have been made as to what herbs do well and what need to be replaced. Several members have taken on the responsibility of keeping the gardens in pristine condition by weeding once a week, and this happens in all kinds of weather. Crews are also set up for watering when this is necessary. The Herb Garden is a popular stopping place for visitors and groups alike as there is a bench with lots of shade to take a break. It is also part of the annual Pickering Creek Hoedown event.

Each month there is a speaker chosen from a wide variety of sources who provide information, instruction, history, and fun experiences for the members. There are also road trips during the year that always take us to a place we may never think of visiting on our own. Lunch is always included in these trips. A summer picnic held in June and a holiday party held in December are also times when members, spouses, and guests get together to enjoy the seasons.

Several years ago a Cookbook was created as a fundraiser which proved to be a huge success. Using recipes provided by members and their friends, the Cookbook brought together culinary delights from around the world. We were aided in sales by Atkins Arboretum.

Guests and potential new members interested in learning about herbs are welcome to attend. For more information look at our web-site www.chesapeakebayherbsociety.org. Or give me a ring 410 770-5258.

Just a few photos of what is grown at the Herb Garden:.



pineapple sage



Octopus spinach



a garden spider at work in the butterfly and bee bed



Happy Thanksgiving to all

The Grapevine is published February, June, and October and is produced by Marie Davis, edited by Pat Jessup
Contributors to this issue: Sue Betz, Ingrid Blanton, Mikaela Boley, Marie Davis, Marybeth Guerrieri, Terry Holman,
Pat Jessup, Boots Michalak, June Middleton, and Susie Middleton.