

# Gardeners of the Crooked Billet Newsletter

Member of District XI of the GCFP of NGC

## June 2012

Barb Rosenzweig, Editor

**June Maintenance:** This month brings many of the same tasks as previous months:

- Weeding - no weed is too small to remove! I keep thinking that to myself every time I'm about to pass one by because it's tiny. I have to remember that they will only get bigger and more tenacious!
- Mulch or plant ground covers to prevent moisture loss and intrusive weeds. Both methods have their good and bad features. That said, I'm still favoring my myrtle (periwinkle, Vinca minor).
- Continue to deadhead to prevent the formation of seeds that will take the energy from the plant's growth, unless you want the fruit and seeds for winter interest.
- Remove poorly located "volunteers" to better locations or share them, if they are not invasive.
- Sit back and enjoy the results of your labors!



Sundrops, Oenothera, or Evening Primrose, no matter what you call them, they are stunning in the garden! Just found out (6/26) that after they bloom and go to seed, the Japanese beetles love to congregate on them in a "love fest!"

Photos by Barb Rosenzweig from her garden

### Peonies

**Barb Rosenzweig:** If you don't have peonies in your garden, you may want to consider adding them. I love the variety of colors, shapes, and fragrances! Most common are the herbaceous peonies, which die back each year. Tree peonies have a woody stem which remains throughout the year. Each has large beautiful blossoms. For those who remember Margaret Erb, two of the peonies below are from her garden (the white with the red streaks and the bottom right bold single red).



Tree Peonies are above; herbaceous peonies are below.





Photos by Barb Rosenzweig from her garden

### **Early Spring Maintenance at the Hatboro Library Children's Garden**

March 31<sup>st</sup> found our gardener volunteers busy at work on a foggy morning. Janet F, Judi S, Nancy H, Mae S, Rosie B, and Carol B did a great job weeding and beautifying the gardens!





Photos courtesy of Donna Greenberg

### **Children's Garden at Eaton Park**

**Donna Greenberg:** On April 14, our group was busy cleaning the garden while discussing the various plants and weeds that were being found. The weather was pleasant, finally appearing like a spring morning. We continued to discuss the issue of choosing a hat and apron for our members to wear. Donna G, Margie S, Margie P, Janet F, Gerry F, Carol B, Judi S, Mae S, all worked hard to create this stunning Children's Garden!





Photos courtesy of Donna Greenberg

### Great Gardening Tips Shared by our Members

**Janet Ford:** So many great tips, I can't wait to try Bayer Advanced that controls RUST and BLACK LEAF which I am plagued with. I have not used chemicals, but this I will try. And LABEL plants, mainly because even though I know the name, my brain won't recall. If I could speak, this would have been my tale: In the British Isles, you come across wheat fields that are ablaze with red poppies, a sight to behold, so I try to re-create in a small way that scene and if you pass 444 N. York Rd around June there will be a little show of red poppies. I have been trying to grow them around the War Memorial at the library, as it is the symbol of remembrance for our war dead. I fear it is too shady. That is the story of my favorite flower.

**Lori Pancione:** I also read about the problems some members are having with Japanese Knotweed. No surprise! Knotweed is a beautiful but **AWFUL** plant. Known by its scientific name as *Fallopia japonica*, Japanese Knotweed belongs to the Buckwheat Family (Polygonaceae). It is an upright, shrub-like, herbaceous perennial that can grow over 10 feet in height. As with all members of this family, the base of the stem is surrounded by a membranous sheath. Stems are smooth, stout, and swollen at joints where the leaf meets the stems. Leaf size may vary, but are broadly oval to somewhat triangular and pointed at the tips. The plant spreads very quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native vegetation and greatly alter natural ecosystems. It poses a great threat to riparian (wetlands) areas. Once established, Knotweed populations are extremely persistent.

The plant can tolerate a variety of adverse conditions including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity, and drought. Because it is frequently found near water sources such as streams and rivers, low-lying areas, waste places, utility rights-of-way and around old home sites, Knotweed can quickly become an invasive pest in natural areas after escaping from cultivated gardens.

Knotweed spreads primarily by vegetative means with the help of its long, stout rhizomes. It is often transported to new sites as a seed contaminant in fill dirt, discarded cuttings, or escapees from compost piles. The plant should never be composted. Remove all roots, rhizomes, and plant, bag the debris, and BURN. Do not release it back into the ecosystem, since it spreads like wildfire.



Lori Pancione with goutweed and knotweed (Photo by Barb Rosenzweig)

Knotweed does not respond well to herbicides. It is very hard to kill and the herbicides pollute the water where the Knotweed is sprayed. One herbicide that may check growth somewhat is 25% solution of *Glyphosate* (Roundup or Rodeo) near wetlands or *triclopyr* (Garlon). Subsequent foliar applications of *Glyphosate* may be required to control new seedlings and re-sprouts. **NEVER** deliberately plant Knotweed in your garden landscape.

Source: Plant Conservation Alliance's [Alien Plant Workshop Group](#)

Called the "**Godzilla of the Plant World**" Japanese Knotweed can make even concrete bonds burst sidewalks and driveways with incredible strength. Once established, it is almost impossible to get rid of Japanese Knotweed.

### ***Garden Lore by Barbara Deer, selections by Janet Ford***

Solomon's Seal is thought by many to be the loveliest of cottage garden plants. Its unusual name derives from the markings on its stem, which when cut through, are said to resemble the seal of King Solomon. This plant is said to be the 'Husband' of Lily of the Valley, plant the two together and your garden will be filled with harmony.

Bleeding Heart is named for the blossom that resembles a heart shedding a single droplet of blood. It is a native of America and has slight narcotic properties. It was used in the past for V.D. and menstrual cramps.

Columbine, is from the Latin word *Columba*, a Dove. Look closely and you will see that it resembles a dove's head, also a Jester's cap.

The juice used from the cornflower mixed with Alum-water, makes beautiful watercolor paint.

The month of May is named after the Greek goddess *Maia*, the mother of *Hermes*.



Photo by Janet Ford from her garden

If it rains on the 8th of June, it foretells a wet harvest.

June 11, St. Barnabas Day, used to be the longest day before the calendar was changed in 1752. On this day it was customary to deck the houses and churches with roses and sweet woodruff.

June 23, Midsummer's Eve, is the night when witches and fairies are supposed to be particularly active, so hang St. Johns Wart around the house!

A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon.

### **Hypertufa Party**

**Margie Szymanski:** The party was at Margie Pitrone's home on May 5. We all let our creative juices flow, filling our Hypertufas with bird houses, plants, sand and stones. We all did a great job and had so much fun! But we did have one small mishap. In the process of gluing the decorations, Carol Golder forgot to let go, so it stuck to her finger. Not to worry Judy held her up and we pried the decoration from her fingers. We decorated about 15 Hypertufas everyone different. And we topped the day off with Margie giving us a tour of her beautiful garden. Thank you for a very nice afternoon.



Photos by Margie Szymanski

**"4 Season Plants, 4 Seasons of Interest" by Master Gardener Peggy Rastiello**

**Carol Brunner:** My favorite plant for the winter and spring is *Arum italiana*. It has beautiful leaves all winter, when my ferns and hosta are gone.

**Judi Swanson:** Peggy Rastiello is always a great speaker; her wealth of knowledge is incredible. I particularly liked her comments about designing a garden "to scale", that is, looking at dwarf versions of popular plants when you have a

small space to fill. I also like her idea about including plants with variegated foliage, and now I will plan to incorporate more variegated Hosta and Coleus in my shady areas.

I am particularly fond of my Hellebores, those hardy, late winter, early spring bloomers that really herald the change of season. I have recently split and transplanted my large Hellebore, and now I will enjoy its appearance in two different locations in my yard. I would like to look into different varieties of hellebore, to see about size, leaf color and of course the available muted pastels that this prehistoric plant may be available in. Perhaps a dwarf, variegated leaf, blue pastel bloom? You never know... how about a miniature garden with little dinosaur models in a forest of hellebores and ferns?

**Lori Pancione:** Peggy Rastiello's program, "4 Season Plants, 4 Seasons of Interest" was quite informative. I am encouraged to use more Heucheras and begin a cluster of Russian Sage in my garden.

I was also inspired to finally plant a Witch Hazel shrub that I have been wanting for some time. Now if I can find a reasonably priced WITCHHAZEL I will be very happy!



Judi Swanson and Peggy Rastiello (Photo by Barb Rosenzweig)

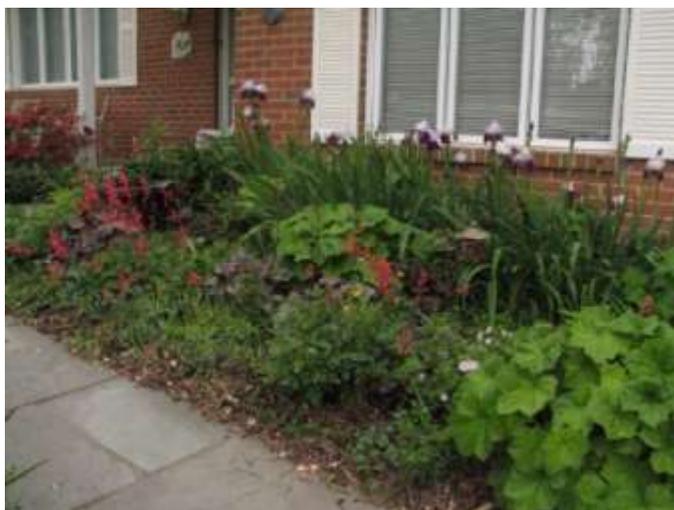
**Kathy Leaycraft:** Penn State Master Gardener Peggy Rastiello gave a presentation on "Four Season Planting." A slide show offered photos of plants, bushes and trees that provide color in many seasons, and Peggy provided handouts with information on year-round bloom gardening, as well as a list of plants and the months they provide color. Peggy also noted that our Zone has been changed from 6 to Zone 7a. I really enjoyed this presentation and vow that I will never again throw away a banana peel!!! I am already researching all the winter interest plants that Peggy listed on her handout and now have hope that I can have some color/interest in my yard during the winter months.

**Cynthia Fraser:** Peggy Rastiello did a wonderful presentation. She was very thorough and the ideas for plants to use for an all -season garden were very helpful. I enjoy a flowering shrub called Fothergilla. It has fragrant white, brush shaped flowers in the spring and in the fall its leaves turn different shades of yellow, orange, and red.

Peggy Rastiello is always a great speaker; her wealth of knowledge is incredible. I particularly liked her comments about designing a garden "to scale", that is, looking at dwarf versions of popular plants when you have a small space to fill. I also like her idea about including plants with variegated foliage and now I will plan to incorporate more variegated Hosta and Coleus in my shady areas.

### **Ground Cover Update from Barb Rosenzweig's Garden**

In only three years, all of the gardens that I had been mulching for close to forty years are now covered in the evergreen groundcover, periwinkle (*Myrtle* or *Vinca minor*). You can't imagine my relief at not having to fill wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow with many cubic yards of the mulch delivered each year to my driveway. Using shovel, pitch fork, and even my hands for around small, delicate plants, I used to deposit up to 6" of mulch to each the gardens around my home. Now, I have much fewer weeds to remove. Every so often, I have to trim the periwinkle along the edges of the gardens, although mostly, I confess, I pull it out from there and transplant it to another area. I am saved from watering, since this groundcover keeps the ground cooler and holds the moisture in.



2009 Front Door Garden with Much and No *Vinca minor* Groundcover



2012 Gardens with *Vinca minor*.



Indian Pink



Knockout Roses, Sundrops, Sedum Autumn Joy, Brunnera Heuchera Plum Pudding (above)

Variegated Loroiope, Nandina 'Firepower,' Pink Calla Lilies, Heuchera Plum Pudding (below)



Pink Calla Lilies, Nandina 'Firepower,' Brunnera, Heuchera Plum Pudding

Photos by Barb Rosenzweig from her garden

## **Plant Sale - May 19**

**Judi Swanson:** For our plant sale, the club made a profit of \$523! Simply amazing! Thanks to all who planted, potted, participated, popped in, prodded, and prayed! And took a legendary sunbath! And we did this with NO DONATED

PLANTS! Especial thanks go to Margie P, who superintended, and "worked the crowd" with her magical saleswomanship! Way to go!

**Margie Szymanski:** If you didn't get to go to the plant sale, you missed a great day! I saw a lot of people walking away with plants and a smile on their faces. There were a lot of garden club members there helping with the sale. It was nice to see. Everyone had a good time!



Photos by Margie Szymanski

## **Monarch Butterfly Waystation Update by Kathy Leaycraft**

**Kathy Leaycraft** reported that the Hatboro Cemetery donated and delivered dirt to the gardens; Fred Zoellers (Hatboro Public Works) arranged for mulch to be delivered; and the dirt was mixed with mulch. The beds are now planted with milkweed and a variety of nectars. The majority of plants were donated, and some were purchased.

Kathy also reported that the Waystation has been registered with [monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org) and we have received the official Certificate - Station # 5587. A copy of the Certificate was emailed to all members and the original will be given to Judi Swanson. We will be receiving the official Monarch Waystation sign shortly. Judi Swanson suggested that the sign be placed at the Sign Garden and another at the Waystation Garden. Kathy will create a laminated sign for the Garden which will include a diagram of the Monarch lifecycle.

The plastic fencing, which was donated, needed to be replaced with more sturdy wire fencing to protect our "babies" from the deer and this has been completed. Total cost for the fencing was \$182.12. Kathy is requesting that 1/3 of the cost of the fencing (\$60.00) be reimbursed (since her original Waystation proposal was for one 8x10 plot).

Another load of mulch was requested and received, because half of the original load was used to fill in wet or low spots for the Carnival. This was used to create a mulched "viewing" area around the Waystation. Newspaper and weedblock material (that was donated), was placed under the mulch.

As soon as the seedlings have grown a bit and the Waystation Sign has been received, Kathy will take photographs and post an article on the Hatboro "Patch." Photo below by Kathy Leaycraft.

**Judi Swanson:** I applied for, and the club received, a \$100 grant from their "Seed Money" initiative to help with the expenses of the Monarch Waystation.



## **Fabulous Bulbs Around the World**

**Barbara Saabye:** Springtime in the Netherlands.



**Susan Wermuth:** I've seen images of tulips in the Netherlands before, but they were basically endless rows of various color tulips. I never thought of Japan and tulips in the same sentence before. As one might expect, these tulips are artfully planted and really are breathtaking. Enjoy.

Tonami is a [city](#) in [Toyama Prefecture](#) of Japan where there is a beautiful [tulip](#) park and a nationally recognized tulip festival every year, which has 450 different kinds of tulips and 100,000 tulips in all.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6lIpSGv17A&feature=youtu.be>

(Let the ad start and then you can click on the lower right to "Skip ad.")

### **Work Party at the Hatboro Library Children's Garden**

In May, Donna, G, Pam H, Carol B, Margie P, Judi S, Janet F, and Mae S made a big difference in beautifying the gardens at the entrance to the library!

**Donna Greenberg:** The weather was cool, making it easier to clean up the gardens.

**Mae Steere:** The Children's Garden is always fun to work on; lots of gabbing going on while busy with our hands!!



Photos by Donna Greenbarg

### **Closing Dinner at Graeme Park, June 14**

**Carol Brunner:** We had a wonderful dinner together! The dishes were tasty and the company was grand, as always. Gardeners shared their stunning arrangements of their backyard favorites. Maria and Cynthia escorted us to the beautifully maintained herb garden, which is one of the standout features of the Graeme Park tours. Thanks to Maria, Cynthia, Lois, and Marge D, for all of your work! Also, thanks go to Maria's 3 sons who also helped to spread the mulch to get it ready for the show. Liz really got the hat project together with a color selection of wide visor hats and club pins. She gave all attendees a hat and pin as a club anniversary gift.





A list was circulated for two-week stretches for watering the **herb garden** throughout the summer. Even though the sign up is for a two-week stretch, you only need to go out every 3 days, if there is no rain. Maria has lots of time slots left. **Please help out--it is a beautiful spot to spend a few hours.** The water and hose are right on the side of the summer kitchen. Sign up at [MTBongo@yahoo.com](mailto:MTBongo@yahoo.com)





Photos by Barb Rosenzweig

### **Gardeners of the Crooked Billet Garden Tour**

We toured 5 unique private gardens in the Hatboro area. Each was very different in design, style, and size, displaying a variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Some included ponds and vegetable gardens. Because all of the gardens this year were in walking distance from each other, we could just park our cars and enjoy the tour!

### **Preview Night - Friday, June 22**

**Margie Szymanski:** Well, I don't know about anyone else, but I had a great time on the day of the Garden Tour Sneak Peek. The weather was not cooperating, but no one cared. We all went out there with our umbrellas going from house to house singing in the rain!! It was a beautiful sight. Neither rain, nor sleet or snow is going to hold back the garden club!



Photo by Margie Szymanski

## Margie Szymanski's Garden

Everyone's garden had so much to offer. I love being able to get new ideas from my fellow gardeners. I enjoy going to garage sales and getting decorations for my garden. I put some pictures on my fence; I think it dresses it up a little. Last year, I bought a doll house at a garage sale and painted it. Before I knew it, I found other little houses, so I made a little town. Looking forward to getting more ideas!





### **Rose Bailey's Garden**

In the area by the stockade fence (bottom right photo), when we got a lot of rain, it would create a pond until it receded into the ground. So we had to raise this garden up about 9 inches off the ground, so it could drain properly. We started with drainage rocks dirt, mulch, and then edged it with the river rock so the water could flow through gradually.

In the garden by the fountain, the *Houttuynia cordata* is a beautiful plant, but you have to watch where you put it because it trails underground to go anywhere it wants. You really have to keep up on this or put it in an area by itself so it can spread.





Sue and Robin Tafel's Gardens

Our garden includes stone paths in the beds that create and define sections, and provide focal points. Vistas are created with tall perennials.







### **Ginny and Al Zollers' Garden**

Al and I want to extend our sincere thanks to all of you for inviting us to be part of the garden tour this year.

All of the gardens were different with everyone's personal touch and all were absolutely beautiful. The train in our garden was a big hit. Al was not going to put that in until after the garden tour but his 4-year old grandson, Ben, talked him into installing it for the garden tour.

It was nice meeting so many of the members and having time to chat with Pam H, Barb R and Margie P, who were assigned to our garden.

We hope that everyone enjoyed our display and that perhaps we will be invited to participate again sometime in the future.







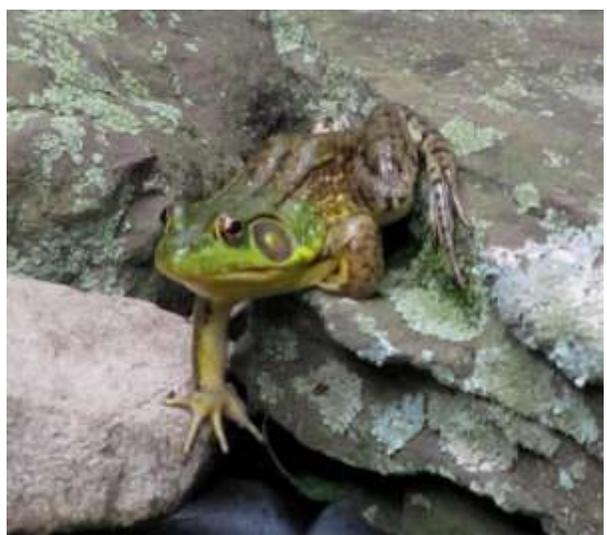
### **Lynn and Norm Smith's Gardens**

We had a wonderful experience and I am looking forward to participating and joining the Garden Club.

When we purchased the 1880 house in 1989, the yard only had two arborvitaes in the front, a big black walnut tree in the backyard and a little stream running along the property line. We were certain there were hidden treasures. As time passed, the yard came alive with tiger lilies, Rose-of-Sharon, wild strawberries, violets, quince and mock orange bushes, forsythia, iris, peonies, wild rose, and another black walnut tree. We chose to work with the existing plants and flowers and added plants native to the area. We water and feed the marsh plants and grasses with our "grey water" from each load of laundry. In turn, the marsh helps the gardens by keeping the ground moist. The addition of the pond brought us many frogs and a variety of visitors. The ducks enjoy swimming in the little stream which we learned is a branch of the Pennypack Creek, called Ten Pound Spring Creek.

Living near the historic American Revolutionary Battle of Crooked Billet site, we were inspired to grow plants and herbs of this period. Our gardens include comfrey, bee balm, lemon balm, basil and chamomile. These plants were used for medicinal, aromatic, and culinary purposes. For instance, a chamomile bath was used to reduce sunburn pain, comfrey poultice was for wounds, and bee balm tea was sipped after boycotting British tea. To show our support for the area's history and the Garden Club, Norman and I and our friends, Anita Fleck and Denis Cook from the 5th Pennsylvania American Revolutionary Reenactors, were in period dress. The ladies wore fancy gowns with laced sleeves and embroidered shoes. The men, who typically are in wool continental coats and carrying muskets, were dressed in fine waistcoats and breeches topped off with a fashionable three-cornered hat.

Thank you for visiting.





Garden Tour Photos by Barb Rosenzweig

### **Japanese Iris**

**Barb Rosenzweig:** Although short-lived, these stunning irises are a real treat in my garden! I look forward to their blooms every year and appreciate the grace and beauty of each blossom. They do well in wet or marshy areas. Perhaps you will find a spot in your garden to plant some!



Photos by Barb Rosenzweig from her Garden

**Happy Gardening!**  
**Barb**

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