

Gardeners of the Crooked Billet Newsletter

Member of District XI of the GCFP of NGC

June 2011

Barb Rosenzweig, Editor

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

- Weed - get them while they are still relatively small, they will only get bigger and more tenacious.
- Mulch only if you have to. Planting ground covers helps prevent intrusive weeds in bare spots.
- Deadhead to prevent the formation of seeds that will take the energy from the plant's growth. However, if you want the fruit and seeds for winter interest, keep them on.
- Remove poorly located "volunteers" to better locations or share them, if they are not invasive.
- Sit back and enjoy the results of your labors!

Annual Plant Sale

President **Carol Brunner**: Thanks so much for all of your efforts to make the Plant Sale a success!!!! THANKS TO ALL who potted your plants, brought them to the Library, helped with pricing, and helped to sell our plants. A SPECIAL thank you goes to Gerry Flynn, who was there throughout all of these phases of the plant sale and kept her great sense of humor through it all. THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!!!! Thanks also to Russells Wholesale for their generous donation! Next year, Margie Pitrone has volunteered to head the plant sale. Our profit for the sale was \$550.00. GREAT JOB!!!!



Judi Swanson, Gerry Flynn, Kathie Watkins and a Satisfied Customer



Mae Steere, Gerry F, Margie Pitrone, Judi S



Gerry Flynn and Margie Pitrone



Kathie Watkins, Carol Brunner, Barb Rosenzweig at Russell's Wholesale

Reminders:

- The dedication of two mountain laurels at the Hatboro Library will be held on **June 30th at 7 PM**. They are in honor of former members, Eloise Owens and Betty Phillip.
- Saturday, June 11 is the cleanup work session at the library.

Lush Landscapes for Small Spaces by Master Gardener Mary McKnight

Cynthia Frazer: Good information for those with smaller gardens. A smaller garden needs to be viewed as a whole and so one needs to limit the plants that will grow there. Colors need to be considered so a nice balance is maintained. Containers were also used in smaller gardens since they are mobile and they can be placed to get the look you want. Mary also provided options for having plants for our 4 seasons. An extensive list was provided to all members. Lastly adding some fun elements to your garden can be surprising to your visitors and reflect the gardener's personality.



Pat Winward with Master Gardener, Mary McKnight

Lori Pancione: Mary McKnight's talk certainly gave some food for thought as I think of ways to tackle some small spaces in my big yard or adventure out in a small garden if and when my husband and I downsize. It was interesting to find some plant material used as ground cover that I had never thought of as ground covers. She expanded shrub-like plantings as a way to handle a ground cover situation. As one ages, that is certainly something to consider.

I enjoyed the small garden pictures that Mary shared with us!

Nancy Parkton: I really enjoyed Mary's wit and knowledge. She was one of the best speakers I've seen and I hope that she comes back next year.

Installation of Officers

The candidates for next year were installed by Lee Gittens who is President of District XI.

President: Judy Swanson

First Vice Presidents: Barbara Hallar and Gerry Flynn

Second Vice Presidents: Carol Golder and Grace Beatty

Treasurer: Kathie Watkins

Corresponding Secretary: Julie Bird
Recording Secretary: Kathy Leaycraft



Outgoing Officers: Cynthia Fraser, Pat Winward, Margie Pitrone, Judith Swanson, Carol Brunner



Incoming Officers: Gerry Flynn, Grace Beatty, Carol Golder, Kathie Watkins,
Lee Gittens (District XI President), Judith Swanson (Incoming President), Carol Brunner, Julie Bird

Garden Table by Nancy Putt

Nancy is a state certified horticulturist, a golf course landscaper in her area near Dillsburg, PA, and a freelance landscaping designer. She gave an excellent landscaping presentation to our club last year. Recently she wrote, "I found this drawer in the dump at the golf course, lined it with landscape fabric, and filled it with potting soil. I have been trimming the greens for salads and it will re-grow." This is a great way to grow lettuce, so that it can be moved to the sun or shade on [scorchingly](#) hot days.



Here's a link to the instructions for the Salad Box/ or table.

<http://www.hgic.umd.edu/media/documents/hg601.pdf>

Biltmore Trip

Cynthia Fraser: Grace, Lois, Pam, Carol, Pat, and I recently enjoyed a bus trip to the Biltmore Estate Home and Garden Tour in Asheville, N.C. The 250 room mansion features 33 family and guest bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, 65 fireplaces, 3 kitchens, and an indoor swimming pool and bowling alley. We toured through this magnificent house and saw how the Vanderbilts lived back in 1895, when this home was completed after six years of construction. Since we are gardeners, we especially enjoyed seeing the flower beds that are arranged in patterns. There is a rose garden with 250 varieties of roses and also a conservatory that provides the current flowers and plants that are used in the Biltmore House. We had a wonderful experience!!

The trip was sponsored by the Four Lanes End Garden Club.

(Photos are courtesy of the Four Lanes End Garden Club and Cynthia Fraser.)



Grounds for Sculpture

Marge Dempski, Carol Brunner, Grace Beatty, Lois Keil, Mary Ann Binns, and Barb Rosenzweig attended the final District XI meeting at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. Our President Carol, read her final report that summarized our recent and future club activities. Many of us stayed to enjoy a very informative tour of this unique sculpture garden.





A Pair of Brown Bloomers by Guest Contributor Jim Miller

Two of the most fascinating flowers that bloom at Graeme Park in the springtime escape notice by most visitors. They are neither showy and nor pastel-pretty; in fact, they are brown!

One of them, the flower of the **skunk cabbage** plant, is made even more difficult to find because it grows in low, wet places. On the Nature Trail at Graeme Park, there is plenty of skunk cabbage near marker #11, labeled "wetlands", but you will need to wander from the trail to find it. Boots are recommended. And you need to do it early in March. The plant has a remarkable metabolic ability to generate heat, allowing it to emerge from frozen ground. Chances are that flies and other pollinating insects will have found it, a flame-shaped, toast-brown hood growing close to the ground, before you do. By Saint Patrick's Day, however, it is one of our most eye-catching plants at the site. The bright green leaves of the plant start to open, bringing a conspicuous hope of Spring to an otherwise bleak landscape.



As its name implies, crushed leaves of skunk cabbage stink. Nevertheless, early settlers found medicinal uses for it, especially in treatment of respiratory problems.

Another brown-flowered plant is much more accessible. It is the **wild ginger** that can be found in the physick garden tended so generously by Gardeners of the Crooked Billet. The stake near it bears the number **39** and it is located near the summer kitchen. You can recognize the plant by its pretty heart-shaped leaves but you will need to bend close to the ground and push the leaves aside to view the flower, which is sometimes referred to as a "little brown jug". The flowers appear from late March to May, but it is possible to find lingering blossoms all summer long.

Wild ginger is not at all related to the tropical true ginger plant, but the underground parts share a common flavor and fragrance. We now know that the leaves and flowers are carcinogenic, but strong teas boiled from the roots and rhizomes (underground stems) found early uses in pumping-up colonial dishes and for disparate applications ranging from deodorants and insecticides to contraceptives!

The article above originally appeared in the Graeme Park Gazette, the newsletter for Friends of Graeme Park. The herb garden at the historic site in Horsham is maintained by Gardeners of the Crooked Billet. Jim is a retired biology professor and a frequent tour guide at Graeme Park, where one of his favorite stops on his tours is the herb garden for interpretation of colonial uses of the plants.

Children's Garden at Eaton Park Cleanup

Carol Brunner (the photographer here), Janet Ford, Mae Steere, Margie Pitrone, Donna Greenberg, Gerry Flynn, and Kathie Watkins all did a great job pruning, weeding and getting this lovely garden back in shape!



Ambler Arboretum Tour with Jenny Rose Carey

On Tuesday, May 24, Carol Brunner, Nancy Esposito, and Barb Rosenzweig enjoyed the delightfully informative "Spring Beauty" tour given by Jenny Rose Carey during Temple University Ambler's 100th Anniversary year.

Jenny Rose Carey, Director of the Ambler Arboretum, Temple University, has kindly shared her very special centennial event with us!

We are so excited here at Temple's Ambler campus to be celebrating 100 years.

The school was founded in 1911 as the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture for Women, by a Quaker lady from Germantown called Jane Bowne Haines.

Jane had visited gardening schools for women in England and mainland Europe. She thought that we should have a similar school here in the United States. Jane was a graduate from Bryn Mawr College and she used her connections there, as well as her contacts in the newly emerging garden club movement in Philadelphia to fund the purchase of a

seventy acre farm on Meetinghouse Road in Upper Dublin. Back then the whole area was rural, so it was a perfect place for a school to teach young ladies the art and craft of horticulture. This was a new profession for women in 1911. Until that point, women had been only admitted to a few careers such as teaching and nursing. The school was just for women for about the first fifty years. It then merged with Temple University and admitted men!

The early students wore long dresses to school. We have pictures of them climbing trees and digging in uniforms that we may wear to a ball! We have fabulous photographs - some are on the [Temple Ambler website](#). Over the years, Landscape Design and Agriculture were added to the curriculum and the hem lines were raised. We have continued to use the gardens as teaching gardens and turning out impressive Alums. Our green program Alumni have worked all over the world as Landscape Architects, Garden Designers, Horticulturists and now also as Community and Regional Planners - with a new degree that was started ten years ago.

When agriculture was taught here - cows, horses, pigs and chickens were kept on campus. Today we do not have farm animals, but we do have a series of beautiful gardens that are free and open to the public from dawn to dusk. There is a parking lot on Meetinghouse Road, off Butler Pike in Ambler. The latest garden to be re-dedicated is the central formal perennial garden which is dedicated to Louise Bush-Brown, class of 1916 and long time Director at the school. She co-authored a well-known book - *America's Garden Book*. Other gardens include the Ernesta Ballard Healing Garden, the Albright Winter Garden, the Colibraro Conifer garden, Sustainable Wetland Garden, and a formal native plant garden. Please feel free to check out our Temple Ambler website for upcoming garden tours and events. http://www.temple.edu/ambler/campus_life/anniversary.htm

One of the most exciting events will be the dedication of the artifacts collection in the Hilda Justice building on November 6th - a Sunday afternoon.

Watch the website for details. We are also working on a Centennial book to commemorate the 100 years of unique history.

I hope that you will come and visit this summer.

(All of the photos below of the Ambler Arboretum of Temple University are by Barbara Rosenzweig)



Gardeners stopped to admire a *Cornus* 'Venus' with huge white bracts and the nearby tricolor beech foliage.



View of Mountain Laurel and Rhododendron in the woodland garden from the end of the formal garden, where a fountain is surrounded by potted agapanthus.



Left: The stem of our native Wisteria - *Wisteria frutescens* - twining around the pergola in the native plant garden *Cornus 'Venus'*. Center: Dutch Iris in the Formal perennial garden. Right: View of the pavilions at the end of the formal garden, designed by Beatrix Farrand, an early female Landscape Architect.



Cornus 'Venus' with huge white bracts.



A view of the Colibraro Conifer garden showing the limestone rocks re-used from a Philadelphia Flower show exhibit.



An old-fashioned peony in the formal perennial garden



Mountain laurel in the woodland garden - our state flower

Bucks County Designer House & Gardens

Old Glory Farm, an 18th century fieldstone manor home in Doylestown, was open from May 1 to May 29. Its modern updates are well integrated in this historic home. The gardens were expansive and beautiful, while decorators did a wonderfully creative job to each of the rooms of the house. (No photographs were permitted inside the home.) This is a fund-raiser run by the Village Improvement Association of Doylestown to support Doylestown Hospital and V.I.A. Community Projects. For information for next year's tour, visit www.buckscountyledesignerhouse.org. (Photos below are courtesy of Aaron Rosenzweig.)







THE GARDENERS OF THE CROOKED BILLET GARDEN TOUR, June 4

Here's a link to a wonderful news article by Laura Brandt about our tour:

<http://uppersouthampton.patch.com/articles/garden-group-tour-highlights-a-southampton-oasis>

Carol Brunner: Thanks so much to all who helped with the Garden Tour!!!! Everyone had a wonderful time visiting all of the gardens!!!

We sold a total of 62 tickets. Thanks go to Leroy's who sold 23 and Toby's who sold 5 tickets. After expenses, there was a profit of \$360.

We shared our love of gardening with the community and met some new gardeners! Nice job!!!

Pam Hawthorne: The garden tour was a lot of hard work, but very rewarding. Our tour guests seemed very appreciative. We had five beautiful gardens with five different personalities.
(The tour photos below are courtesy of **Dave Hower** and **Barb Rosenzweig**.)

The NGUYEN GARDEN - Horsham

Margie Pitrone: The most frequent question I got was, "Was the pond there when he bought the house or did he dig it himself?" The answer is, "It was there when he bought the house."

I learned from Luong Nguyen how to prune the maple I just planted. It's only a couple inches tall. He said to wait about 5 years and then I can start bonsai pruning it.

The best part about working at a garden tour is talking to the people you meet. Because, think about it....the people most interested in attending a garden tour are people who are interested in gardening and gardens, just like me. Also, I talk to people about our club and they become interested and want to join...that is very exciting!





Pat Winward: It is always such a wonderful experience to spend time in Luong's garden. Everywhere you look, you see amazing and unusual plants. The owner enthusiastically shares information with the hosts and the tour visitors. When we asked him why we didn't see more vegetables in his garden, he told us that he only plants veggies he can't find in the regular food stores. Everyone enjoyed looking at his graceful white swans and his colorful and gigantic koi. Several visitors asked the owner if the garden was his full time job! They couldn't believe it was his hobby. It was a joy to spend the afternoon surrounded by gorgeous red roses, all kinds of purple clematis vines, and the most beautiful bonsai trees I have ever seen.

The KRASKE GARDEN - Horsham

Nancy Parkton: Working at the Kraskes was a lot of fun. I made a new friend, their Springer Spaniel, Lily. She sat with me on the front porch when we weren't busy. Most frequently asked questions, "What's that?" and "I like the Delphinium, but mine doesn't come up the next year. What do you do?" Of course the Kraskes have the same problem. The people were friendly and fun to talk to. One couple sat on the porch with me for a few minutes. Another couple saw the Spaniel flag out back and wanted to meet Lily. Their Spaniel had died and they just enjoyed Lily. What did I learn? I now know what a Spiderwort, Delphinium, Fox Glove and Rosanne Geranium look like, and where they will do best. Our hosts, Gerri & Rick, were great and seemed to enjoy talking to the people and explaining different plants.



The BROWN GARDEN - Horsham

Ana Brown: I had a lot of fun visiting the other four gardens on the tour. I learned a few names of plants and I gained a new appreciation of my own garden after looking at other gardens.

Liz Bock: Several people inquired about the English Primroses that were in the front garden, also wanted to know about a Redbud tree that had burgundy colored leaves, as well as a variegated olive shrub. The Southern Magnolia tree was admired, as well. Quite a few people thought that having a big barn right behind the property was very neat. I was interested in a plant in the front garden and a lady attending the tour said she would get me an answer. She took my email address and kindly identified the plant as a "Dark Towers" Penstemon. All in all, the people attending the tour seemed to be having a good time and were very nice.



Lori Pancione: It was a real pleasure for Liz and me to serve as docents at the Brown gardens in Horsham, PA. The delightful afternoon weather coupled with the friendly guests to the garden made for a most delightful afternoon.

Ana's garden is a real treasure! Beautifully planted with unusual perennials and shrubs and meticulously maintained the whole property was one surprise after another.

The back gardens are accessed through two large, metal gates on each side of the house. The front gardens had lovely pink primroses featured near the entrance to the home. The covered porch was decorated with orange and blue/green contrasting Adirondack chairs, a huge planter, and a plant stand near the door. Interspersed with the primroses were pink Loosestrife, assorted evergreens, and a plant I cannot identify as of yet. Near the front entrance to the house there was a weeping beech tree and more evergreens.

Ana grew up in Columbia and you can see the influence of her early training in gardening throughout the yard.

As one enters the backyard through the gate, a magnificent variegated Willow shrub greets you. As you enter the backyard, your eye is immediately pulled to an interesting cultivar of the Red Bud Tree. The heart shaped leaves were a vibrant, maroon color that added immediate interest to the garden walk.

Beautifully planted containers about the back entrance to the home created a real sense of serenity and rich color to the "rooms" of the garden. I loved the Bougainvillea container plant near the back entrance to the house, as well as the deep purple leaved Smoke Bush.

The plantings along the back wall complemented the signature barn on the back property that really complemented the garden and provided shade and privacy to the backyard that was especially pleasing.

Iris, assorted perennials, and interesting and unusual evergreens including a spectacular Southern Magnolia tree greeted the guest as they moved through the gate on the opposite side of the house. I was also impressed with the Hardscaping Ana uses. It complemented the landscaping so effectively.

Kudos to the Browns for sharing their work of love and outstanding gardening techniques with the Gardeners of the Crooked Billet and our guests!

The FORD GARDEN - Hatboro

Mae Steere: The weather was perfect - and so was the tour! I have never seen so many happy people. I was at Janet Ford's garden in the morning. A couple showed up at 9:50. They were in awe - as was everyone who came through her garden gate - that this oasis was right behind the building on busy, busy York Road. Then they "oohed" and "ahhed" about all the beautiful flowers - roses, clematis, fox glove, evening primrose, poppies and all of Janet's little well-placed whimsies. It was a treat for me to be there and enjoy it along with all the guests who came through.



The ROSENZWEIG GARDEN - Southampton

Barb Rosenzweig: Even though the deer kindly "pruned" all of the roses from my back garden, I still enjoyed sharing gardening tips, groundcover suggestions, and the special perennials and shrubs that make me feel like this is my little secluded paradise. I hope to hear that my Hardy Begonias are enjoying their new homes in our guests' gardens! The best part, though, was meeting so many wonderful people interested in gardens! It was especially fun for me to meet former students and parents of former students from Upper Moreland Middle school.

Margie Szymanski: Loved the garden tour this year. It's nice to walk around with friends and share ideas. This year, I was lucky enough to help Barb R. greet her visitors. Everyone that walked out of her garden always had something nice

to say. And it was no surprise to me to see everyone walk out with a bag of plants. I overheard a women say it was nice that she spent the time to explain the flowers and trees. Good job Barb! See you next year!!

Carol Brunner: After visiting Barbara's beautifully arranged perennial garden, one can see why it provides her with inspiration. She also loves sharing the garden, the plants, and her knowledge to inspire other gardeners.

Mary Ann Binns: Walking into Rosenzweig's yard is like entering a secret garden. Not only did I enjoy seeing the garden, the discussions and gifts of baby plants added to the pleasure.



Covered Dish Picnic Meeting June 9

We enjoyed our friendships and good food at the final meeting of the season at the Barn in Graeme Park. Amber Zhang, from Upper Dublin High School, visited to tell us about her science project, in which she studied the effect of fertilizer and soil on the growth of corn seeds. Her experiment, entitled "The Effects of Fertilizers and Soil Type on Plant Growth," was the Montgomery County Science Fair winner. Our Gardeners of the Crooked Billet gives a monetary award to the top winners of the Montgomery County Science Fair, one from the middle school and one from the high school.



Barb's Garden: What the deer didn't eat...Yet!



Happy Gardening and have a Great Summer!
Barb