

THE GARDEN GATE

FGCNYS District IV Newsletter: Spring 2010

www.nydistrictIV.org



Director's Message

Spring has finally arrived. Trees and shrubs are budding and flowers are ablaze with vibrant colors. The sun is higher in the sky and the pleasant warmer weather motivates gardeners to begin the work of making their home landscapes and gardens, as well as those within their community, places of beauty. Gardeners appreciate this season when we can get our hands into the soft warm earth and watch as the beautiful flowers, the end result of our hard work and planning, come to life. This is the season of renewal that brings us happiness and a real appreciation of nature. Bless the gardeners who beautify our lives.

The Schuylerville Garden Club has been extremely busy planning the Spring District Meeting and Luncheon. Thank you to their members for making this possible for all of us. We recognize and appreciate your hard work, and we look forward to enjoying this day.

District IV is extremely busy this spring. Along with Districts V and VI, we are sponsoring Course II of Flower Show School in Oriskany, NY, May 20–21. The test is scheduled for Saturday, May 22. This is a marvelous opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a flower show judge to get the required course work. It is also an opportunity for all those who have an interest in horticulture or design to advance their education and their skills. Please consider joining me for a day or for the entire course.

On June 21 we are sponsoring the second annual district-wide trip. This year we will be going to the Mount, which is the home and gardens of Edith Wharton, and to the Berkshire Botanical Garden. This trip promises to be an educational experience and an opportunity to trade gardening experiences and stories with others who share this common interest. The bus is full, but we are starting a waiting list, and we will hire another smaller bus if our numbers warrant it. Therefore, it is extremely important to make reservations as soon as possible so that we will have the best chance of accommodating all those who are interested in this fabulous trip.

July 13 is the date for the District IV Summer Board Meeting. All Board Meetings are open meetings and I encourage you to join us. This meeting will be held at my home in Hague. I will be serving lunch with a lake view in hopes of encouraging more of you to join our Board of Directors. Please let your club president know if you plan to attend. She will have driving directions and other particulars pertaining to the day.

May you all have an opportunity to go outside and enjoy the blue sky and bright sun light. Let the beauty of the gardens bring you pleasure and comfort. Enjoy the fruits of the season ahead.

Pat Wania, FGCNYS District IV Director

The Garden Gate

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District IV Officers

Patricia Wania, Director

Pat Leonard, First Assistant Director

Meri Rees, Second Assistant Director

Mary Leonard, Recording Secretary

Heather Cushing, Corresponding Secretary

Sue VanOmmeren, Treasurer

Berkshire Garden Tour

Two great tours are planned for this year's district bus trip: The gardens at The Mount (with lunch on the terrace) and the Berkshire Botanical Garden. In addition there will be some time to do as you wish in Stockbridge following the tours. The cost of the trip is \$70, with a pick-up point at Aviation Mall in Queensbury (7:30 a.m.) and at Wilton Mall next to Dick's sporting goods store (8:00 a.m.). It is important to be at the pick-up spots on time.

The bus is full, but there is a stand-by list. If there are enough people on that list we will look into additional transportation. Registration forms are available from your club president or contact Barbara Millington (bmillington2@verizon.net or 518-587-3085).

Martha VanPatten

World Gardening 2010

Last year just over half of the clubs in District IV contributed to the FGCNYS World Gardening Project. The selection of the project, Water for Sudan, was made late in the year when many clubs had already recessed for the summer and, as we all know, the economy is poor. Nonetheless, this was a disappointing level of participation. In other years 100 percent of District IV clubs made a contribution.

Notification has been received that FGCNYS will again be supporting Water for Sudan in 2010. The needs of the Sudanese people are as great or even greater this year as the drought continues and many areas of the country are in a state of war. Salva Dut's work is progressing but very slowly. Even modest contributions will make a difference. For more information on this important project, please see <http://www.waterforsudan.org/>.

One club regularly and painlessly contributes more than \$100 to World Gardening every year. At each meeting for almost fifty years a "Mite Box," actually a small flowerpot type can with a lid that has a slot, is passed. This is named for the biblical story about the widow's mite in the New Testament. A mite, the smallest of Roman coins, was all she could give. At club meetings, each member throws in a quarter, fifty cents, or perhaps a dollar, whatever they have to give that day. It really adds up by the end of the year.

The deadline for the 2010 campaign is February 1, 2011. It would be wonderful if every club in the district or perhaps even in the state started passing a "Mite Box" and with 100 percent of club members helping the Sudanese people have a healthier and safer life. Please send your club's contribution to this chairman at 763 Charlton Rd., Charlton, NY, 12019.

*Catherine Caine
District IV World Gardening Chairman*

Youth

This chairman is happy to report that District IV is becoming more involved in youth projects.

Glenville Hills Garden Club, always active with youth, is having their annual spring clean-up in coordination with sixth-grade students. The club will be sending four lucky students to Camp Colby this summer.

Lake George Community Garden Club had eighty-eight students of Washington and Warren counties participate in the poetry/prose contest. Everyone who entered will receive a treat from Ben & Jerry's. One youth will be attending Camp Colby and a scholarship for college for two to three seniors is being worked on.

Ballston Spa House & Garden Club had forty-four posters submitted for the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl contest. One has been sent on to CAR. The club will host a reception for all of the artists on May 18 at 4:30 at the high school. Two Girl Scouts will be working with the club on different beautification projects. This will be the first year for the club to send a youth to Camp Colby.

"Bee Nature's Partner ... Plants & Pollinators" is a project offered by NGC School Gardens. Any club can sponsor a local school in creating a diverse, native garden on school grounds. Emphasis needs to be on native plants using organic methods to attract bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. There is a monetary award offered at the regional level and certificates for all clubs and schools. More information can be provided by Carol M. Bullard, NGC School Gardens Chairman at 662-561-2348 or carol.m.bullard@gmail.com.

Barb Millington, District IV Youth Chairman

The Glenville Hills Garden Club of Saratoga County

This club has had a busy winter and, like gardeners everywhere, members are all now anxious for spring. The club currently has forty-one members, three of whom are honorary members and three are state life members.

In February, club members enjoyed a tea-cup floral arrangement workshop led by Phoebe Hunt-Fontaine. The small arrangements were delivered to Meals-on-Wheels recipients (several of the club's members are drivers for the program).

The club is preparing for its annual Memorial Day plant and pie sale and hoping for good weather. This is the club's biggest fundraiser with the proceeds paying for community activities, the most important of which is the sponsorship of campers to Camp Colby. Last year, thanks to a matching grant from a local trust



for non-profit organizations, the club sent four students to the camp. The campers came to a club meeting to share their experiences, and their enthusiasm was wonderful. The club plans to send four campers again this summer.

The club is planning a joint meeting with the Charlton Garden Club (a neighboring club that is not federated) on September 15 at the Ballston Town Hall on Charlton Road in Ballston Spa. This meeting, which is open to the public, will feature Dave Burdick from the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Mr. Burdick is an expert on ferns and daffodils. All are welcome to attend.

The club continues its recycling efforts and collects donations for the local food pantry at each meeting.

Catherine Caine, President

Lake George Community Garden Club

In January, those members who do not choose to be "snowbirds," spent an hour visiting the Galapagos Islands with member Betsy Birchenough and her distinctive digital images. Her presentation featured brilliant colors and most unusual flora and fauna of the islands. Definitely a learning experience.

After the club's annual covered-dish luncheon, the program was a tutorial on starting and maintaining an organic lawn. Did you know that you should *not* fertilize a newly seeded lawn?

Ornamental grasses was the topic at the February Perennial Planters meeting. Members are now savvy as to which of these grasses are proving to be hardy in this zone.

Club members may have been rushing spring during the first week of March, but the residents of Westmount Nursing Facility were very happy they did! Several members delivered a potted grape hyacinth in bud to each of the eighty sweet, gentle, and thrilled residents.

Now is the time to get busy with seed-starting equipment. Thelma Hack, a Washington County Master Gardener, was brimming with helpful hints as she spoke to the club on the art of starting seeds.

The Perennial Planters held a discussion on "the successes and failures" of last season's gardens. This was a successful meeting! The spirited group wanted to share their "wonderful" ideas and to find out what went wrong with their other plants. Try this topic, it will be met with enthusiasm.

Member Carolyn Rudolph demonstrated how to plant, arrange, and maintain a dish garden. She advises that it is easy if you use the correct medium for moisture control.

At an upcoming meeting, David Wick, Director of Warren County Soil and Water, will provide club members the facts about the Lake George/Westbrook conservation project. Many members have been hearing about this volatile issue regarding the former Gaslight Village in the media and are hoping to become better informed.

Debbie Hoffman, President
Nancy Cathers, Correspondent

Carillon Garden Club

The Carillon Garden Club completed the year 2009 with its annual gift to the community by presenting "Holiday Magic," an elegant reception following the Annual Champlain Valley Chorale Christmas Concert. Approximately two hundred people attended and not only enjoyed lovely refreshments prepared by club members but also admired a gallery lined with festive holiday wreaths fashioned by club members. Wonderful holiday collections and floral arrangements were also on display that generated many *oohs* and *aahs*.

Since many members are away during the winter, the first regular meeting of the New Year was in March. This was the first year that the club skipped getting together in January and February, making many members especially happy to see one another again.

A new project for 2010 is the start of a Community Garden at the First United Methodist Church in Ticonderoga. As an Eagle Scout project, Kevin Densmore accomplished the physical work of preparing an area for the garden. The garden is now an Outreach Ministry of the church, and Carillon Garden Club members have been asked to organize the site for individuals to garden using organic techniques. Emily Selleck from the Essex County Cornell Cooperative Extension Service opened an organizational meeting with a Power Point presentation to educate and inspire new and seasoned gardeners. There are eight 10' X 20' plots in a fenced-in area complete with water nearby. For a

small fee, the garden plots are available to Ticonderoga residents and most especially senior citizens. The plots can also be divided to meet the needs and interests of gardeners. Garden club organizers in conjunction with church officials drafted gardening guidelines and an agreement form for the participants.

Raising funds from the sale of wreaths last fall allowed for the club's Youth Committee to seek out a program suitable for the elementary school children in Ticonderoga. Beth Bidwell from the Wildlife Institute of Eastern New York State brought a fascinating and very informative program to the school featuring three birds of prey, a snake, and a turtle. Garden club members attended the program along with the children. For more information go to www.wildlifeinstitute.org.

Carillon Garden Club members have also been busy with an annual St. Patrick's Day Tea at the local nursing home in Ti. Adorned in traditional green attire, club members served fancy desserts, tea, coffee, and punch to nearly forty guests and then joined in with an Irish song fest. The residents enjoyed the afternoon complete with festive decorations, hats, and necklaces. District IV Director and club member, Pat Wania, organized the event.

Club members will be enjoying many more projects, great programs, and activities in the coming months. Plans for the Fall District Luncheon that the club will be hosting are also well under way.

Betty Rettig, President

Indian Lake Garden Club

The Indian Lake Garden Club will kick off 2010 at their April meeting with a presentation by Ellen Rathbone of the APA's Newcomb Visitor Interpretive Center on "101 Uses for Plants of the Adirondacks, Today, and Yesterday." In May members will be busy preparing thirty flower barrels for planting and distribution in the hamlets of Indian Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, and Sa-bael. They look forward to a field trip in June to The Root Glen at Hamilton College in Clinton. The Glen is maintained by the horticultural staff of the college and contains sixty-five species of trees, many kinds of shrubs, and scores of varieties of flowers. Another field trip is planned to the Merck Forest & Farmland Center in Rupert, Vermont. This non-profit environmental education organization promotes innovative, sustainable management of forest and farmland.

Pat Leonard, President

Ballston Spa House and Garden Club

The highlight of the club's January meeting was the induction of new club officers for 2010–2012 by District IV director Pat Wania. Pat presented each new officer

with a rose whose color spoke of the character of the office.

At the February meeting the featured speaker was Sue Johnson, director of Seeds for Peace International, Inc. Seeds for Peace is a non-profit organization that provides vegetable and flower seeds as well as garden tools to war- and weather-ravaged people in Bosnia, Ukraine, Guatemala, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa. The aid hasn't only been abroad, however. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the group sent more than 50,000 seeds to residents in Waveland, Mississippi. The provision of seeds enables war-weary and storm-stricken people to feed themselves, to regain human dignity, and even to work peacefully beside those they once called enemies. Learn more about Seeds for Peace International, Inc. at www.seedsforpeace.net.

Club members are pleased to announce the first one-week scholarship to Camp Colby in Saranac Lake. Thirteen-year-old Angelo Damiano won the essay contest entitled "Acid Rain in the Adirondacks."

The Assemblyman Jim Tedisco Fitness Trail in Ballston Spa was established in 2005 with grant funding sponsored by Assemblyman Tedisco, and thereby named for him. The trail is a half-mile long and stretches from the Old Iron Spring on Front Street to the Chocolate Factory on Prospect Street. In recent years, club members worked to create a garden at the Front Street end of the trail with donations of plants from local merchants and club members themselves. Each year through the spring and summer, members clean up, weed, water, add/remove plants, and provide general maintenance. This garden is just one of the proud civic contributions of this club.

Club members were pleased to celebrate the club's 55th anniversary on Saturday, April 24, at 50 South Restaurant in Ballston Spa. Special honorees included Jean Puckhaber, a founding member of the club, and Mary Ortoleva, a member for 53 years.

In April the club's meeting was held at the shop of member Corina Oberia, Corina Contemporary Jewelry and Fine Crafts, in Ballston Spa. Deb Valder, an independent demonstrator of Stampin' Up products, instructed members in making five note cards with floral designs.

Club members are hard at work planning the creation of a Pink Garden on Saturday, June 5, in honor of Breast Cancer Research, to be located at the Ballston Spa Public Library. Preliminary plans call for cleaning the property and preparing the flower beds, planting pink flowering plants, a bake sale, basket raffles, and local Girl Scout assistance with restoration of the village welcome sign on the property, and a hands-on planting of a small plant for kids to take home.

Pam Relyea, Correspondent

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*): Your Part in Its Control

Pull It Up and Eat It!

As its name suggests, garlic mustard is a tasty plant with a garlic-like tang, both the young leaves and the roots are edible. Europeans brought this plant to America in colonial times to use as a pot herb in the winter. Unfortunately, there are no natural herbivores that eat *Alliaria petiolata* in this country but maybe humans can fill that gap? Garlic mustard is now classed as an invasive species in twenty-seven states.

Alliaria petiolata is a biennial that reproduces from seeds which stay viable for five or more years. In its first year of life it produces a basal rosette of scalloped heart-shaped leaves which release a garlic-like scent if crushed. This is the stage when the leaves taste best. The plant overwinters intact and so is ready to begin its second year of life immediately when the ground unfreezes, well ahead of other woodland flowers. It rapidly produces a stalk and cluster of flowers having four white petals in the shape of a cross, while the leaves become more sharply toothed and triangular. The plant is now one to three feet high. If the plant remains in the ground it will produce long seed pods (silques) and scatter seed far and wide. Seeds will stick to animals' feet and humans' shoes and be transported elsewhere to start new plantations in untouched habitats.



Now that you have learned to recognize garlic mustard, you will see it everywhere. It grows in a wide variety of habitats thriving in moist woodlands but equally happy on sunny roadsides, disturbed areas and your garden. Once established, it is able to chemically suppress the growth of native woodland flowers and tree seedlings* creating a monoculture that advances through a forest at 20 to 100 feet per year. Studies have shown that garlic mustard adversely alters the habitat suitability for native insects, salamanders, and mollusks which in turn affect the quality of life for birds and mammals.

Control

Garlic mustard grows in moist soil and the whole plant (including the root) can be pulled up easily. The best time is in the spring before the flowers come. The basal rosettes are a nutritious wild food that can be eaten or they can be composted. Once buds/flowers/seeds emerge the plants should be pulled up, bagged, and put in the trash. They should not be composted as the flower seeds can still ripen and be dispersed.

A Group Project

As this is a large problem, woodlands, parks, and wild communal areas need a concerted effort from groups of volunteers to help weed out garlic mustard and save the native plants. Garden clubs, church groups, scout troops, and friends groups can be enthusiastic volunteers. Patapsco Valley State Park, Maryland, has an annual garlic mustard pull celebration which includes a cooking competition for the best recipes. This site has an extensive recipe collection: <http://www.patapscoheritagegreenway.org/garlic07/index.html>. Share the following video with your group so that they understand the extent of the problem: <http://www.in-sitevideo.com/wff/garlicmustard.html>. Adopt a piece of woodland/forest edge near you to work on. It will take maybe three years to work through the seeds that are already in the ground and remove the resulting plants. Once the ground is clear, yearly patrols are still necessary. For more information go on-line to <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/garlicAbout.htm> or <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/alpe1.htm>.



*Garlic mustard is allelopathic, it contains a substance that works like an herbicide, preventing the germination and growth of the seedlings of competing species.

Photo credits: Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org (top); Leslie J. Merhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org (middle); John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org (bottom)

Liz Gee, Herb and Vegetable Garden Chair

District IV Calendar of Events

- May 8* Schuylerville GC: Plant Sale. Fort Hardy. 9-12.
- May 8-9* Schuylerville Chamber of Commerce: "A Gardener's Weekend with Lilacs and Herbs."
- May 10* Heritage GC: Spring Luncheon. Longfellows Restaurant.
- May 19* Lake George Community GC: Kerry Mendez, speaker.
- May 20-22* Districts IV, V, VI Flower Show School, Course II. Oriskany, NY.
- May 31* Glenville Hills GC: Annual Plant & Pie Sale. Galway Village Park. 9-1.
- June 5* Carillon GC: Plant Sale. First United Methodist Church Yard, Ticonderoga. 9-2.
- June 5* Katrina Trask GC: Plant Sale. Location TBA.
- June 5* Lake George Community GC: Annual Perennial Plant Sale. St. James Episcopal Church, Lake George. 9-4.
- June 14-16* FGCNYS Symposium. Holiday Inn, Binghamton, NY.
- June 21* District Bus Trip to the Mount and the Berkshire Botanical Garden.
- July 1* Elizabethtown-Westport GC: "Art in Bloom" flower show. Elizabethtown Social Center. 1 pm.
- July 10-11* Schuylerville GC : "Schuylerville in Bloom" Standard Flower Show. Saratoga Town Hall.
- July 13* District Board Meeting & Luncheon. Pat Wania's home. Hague.
- July 17* Elizabethtown-Westport GC: "E-town Days" Yard & Plant Sale.
- August 18* Elizabethtown-Westport GC: "Let's Celebrate" Fashion Show/Luncheon. King's Inn, Port Henry.

District IV Clubs

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