



BLACKSTONE VALLEY GARDENERS

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February 2006

Volume XII - No 2

FEBRUARY MEETING

Thursday February 9

Lydia Taft House

Quaker Highway, Uxbridge

7:00 PM

Ten Steps To A Low Maintenance Garden

Barbara Gaudette

Our very own Charter Member/Designer returns to offer us ways to garden without killing ourselves!

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes are posted on the website
www.bvgardeners.com. Take a look.

THANK YOU For January Treats

Barbara Griffiths, Brenda Rosborough, Sandra Rosborough

And to all who generously contributed to the bounty of wonderful treats, adding to the enjoyment of our meetings.

Looking Forward to February's Fine Fare Thanks to

Carol Bowen, Jackie Kollett, Midge Wyman



OUR FIRST PUBLIC PLANT SALE

Our long time member, and friend, Barbara Hall, closed her Tapestry Gardens business last summer, and has kindly offered to let us dig, divide and pot up many of the plants left in her perennial field. She has also offered to supervise this operation and let us use the space available at the nursery.

The Board felt like that this would be an excellent opportunity to hold our first public plant sale as a fundraiser! We are hoping to do this one Saturday in early June and are currently working with the Uxbridge Selectmen to clear a date and time to hold this on the Common there.

This is a great opportunity for us, but it will take the combined effort of all club members – if we all help and do a little instead of a few doing everything, we feel this will be a great success, an opportunity to learn, have fun, and a time to enjoy each other's company as we work!

Our first task is to find some chairpersons for the following committees so we can get organized:

- Set up
- Plant transport
- Seeking donated items for Silent Auction or to sell
- Publicity
- Money handling
- Clean up

Please volunteer to head up one of these committees.

Contact Carolyn at 508-529-3340 or carovoss@aol.com, or any other Board member-names and numbers are in the directory. Thanks!

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS!

If we need to cancel our monthly meeting because of inclement weather this winter, we will post this cancellation on our website – www.bvgardeners.com at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. So please check this if you are in any doubt. If you don't have access to a computer, feel free to call Carolyn at 529-3340, or any other member of the Board listed in your directory.

FLORA IN WINTER

Our entry at the Flora in Winter exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum last week was truly wonderful! Ann's interpretation of the painting by Gilbert Stuart was incredible, and drew many OOOs and AAAhs from the visitors in attendance. The composition, colors and overall affect were delightful. Thank you, Ann, for all your effort, planning (including many trips to the Boston Flower Market), inspiration and talent that went into making this a very special event for our club. Thank you, too, Ginnie Deselms for helping Ann and being there as a partner on the "big" day.

A group of 15+ members and friends visited the museum on Friday and had a wonderful day viewing the many entries, most of which were remarkable, and acting as our own panel of judges! Of course, in true trek fashion, we enjoyed lunch in the museum restaurant.

Go to our website for photos taken that day by Cissy Henderson, so you can see for yourself why we are so proud of Ann and our club!

www.bvgardeners.com

NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL

Due to the increase in postage cost and in an effort to save a little, an email was sent to all members who have provided us with an email address asking if they would like to receive their BVG newsletter via email.

37 emails were sent out
17 responded with a yes
1 responded with a no
12 did not respond
7 returned for bad email address

If you would like to get your newsletter sent to your inbox just email Joan O'Brien at joanob@usadatanet.net and let her know. The newsletter is a Microsoft 2000 Professional word document.

STUFF TO DO IN FEBRUARY

If and when we get that first soft, warm day that makes you feel that there is an end to winter, and you JUST HAVE TO GO OUTSIDE, chopping down all the frazzled grasses and perennials is a timely alternative to suicide. I use the hedge type shears and chop into bits from the top down, leaving all the bits for a blanket until real spring cleanup. Now is also the time to begin pruning (shape shrubs and trees/remove damaged wood), especially plants that bloom on new growth. I prune first the plants that can be brought inside to force into bloom, such as forsythia, Cornus mas, pussy willows, fruit trees, Japanese quince, Abelfolium disticum (wrongly called white forsythia), and winter-flowering jasmine (Jasminum nudiflorum). Place the branches in tepid water out of direct sunlight (add a few drops of Chlorox to prevent bacteria from forming, or plan to change the water frequently). Hasten bloom by keeping plants warm, or, retard it by putting plants in an unheated room. The closer to the plant's natural bloom time you cut, the more quickly the flowers open. Watch for pussy willows to show their paws (usually some time in March), then cut and keep DRY if you wish to stop the kittens from turning into cats. Peek through the leaf litter to see if the Hellebores are blooming yet (sometimes they're right under the snow!). Small woody shrubs, such as Cotinus (Smoke tree), and trees you want to keep small and shrublike, such as yellow Catalpa, should be "stooled" (cut to the shape and height of footstools or barstools) to prompt the brightest color in their new leaves, and to orchestrate the desired verticality in your planting beds.

In the greenhouse/cold frame/or under grow lights, begin striking cuttings of plants you want for summer massing (such as coleus/pelargoniums/ivies/salvias, etc.) in sand and peat moss. Order seed you want before they're sold out, but don't start them too soon (read the package for timing), or they will be leggy and weak before frost free nights allow you to put them outdoors. Start leaf cuttings of fuzzy leaved plants (Gesneriads) that have grown too crowded in their pots (and divide and repot the parent plant as well (give extras to Lydia Taft House!). Do you have a favorite/unusual plant to propagate for the Silent Auction table at the BVG plant sale? Start it now!

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