



BLACKSTONE VALLEY GARDENERS

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November 2006

Volume XII - No 8

NOVEMBER MEETING

THURSDAY November 9
7:00 PM at Lydia Taft House

"Tropical Breezes"

Barbara Hall

Our own Barbara, late of Tapestry Gardens, treats us to views of gardening in the parallel universe of Florida.

THANK YOU For October Snacks

Penny Nelson – Pat Stellato

Looking Forward To November Nibbles From

Janice Cooper – Ginny Deselms – Patty Deveau

Thank you to all who contribute to our refreshment table;
your contributions are always appreciated.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Roland & Mary LaPointe, 24 Elm St., Upton, MA 01568
508-529-3042

Apologies & Corrections

Last month two of our new members names were misspelled in the newsletter. Corrected spellings are

Cathy Berkowicz & Linda Taintor

In the membership booklet Doreen Condry should be listed at 9 River Bend Road

SORRY LADIES

PLAQUE AT TRI-RIVER GARDEN

The granite stone with bronze memorial plaque has been installed in our garden at Tri-River Health Center and looks wonderful - please go by and see it!

TREKS

Just 3 of us went to the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, Ct. for the October trek. Several people expressed dismay at the slowness of the mail, which resulted in their not knowing about the trek! Sorry! If further interest is shown, Ann will plan a return trip trek in the Spring. Let Ann know.

The canceled trip to Inez Gornall's has been rescheduled for March 9, 2007.

FLORA IN WINTER

BVG has been given a funerary sculpture of a T'ang Dynasty horse to interpret in flowers at the Worcester Art Museum the first week in February. Ann Hanscom, and assistant Cissy Henderson, have begun research at the WAM Museum and Library, to learn about art and horticulture of that period, so our design will be in keeping with the cultural ideas in T'ang China. Ann also visited the Chinese Scholar's Garden in Staten Island, New York (Google Staten Island Botanical Garden for links), and found there an excellent book "The Garden Plants of China" by Peter Valder. Research is under way

FLORAL WORKSHOPS

Ann will be holding a series of floral workshops for interested BVGers, the first of which will be on Tuesday, November 21st, between 9:00 am and noon, at (Hanscom's) Foxfire Farm (no room available at Lydia Taft). Call/email Ann Hanscom for details.

CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION

Bridget Bennett-Lewis has volunteered to take on the position of Board member responsible for Civic Beautification. We would be delighted to have her join us, and at the November general meeting, we will ask for a nomination and second from the floor, and hopefully be able to welcome her officially to the Board: Thank you, Bridget - you will be a great asset.

Upton members, Cissy Henderson, Linda Hamm and Carolyn Voss have planted 500 daffodil bulbs around the six "Welcome to Upton" signs as a continuing Civic Beautification project. The Town of Upton and the Upton Men's Club paid for these bulbs, as well as shrubs planted last Spring, and all the labor provided by Upton members of our Club. Look out for the display in the Spring!

IMPROVING NEXT YEAR'S GARDEN NOW

Sue Smith

This time of year, when the light is the amber of dandelion wine and the leaves are putting on a last hurrah of color is a bittersweet time. Glad as I am to put the lawn mower away for a winter rest, all run out of gas, and with a freshly sharpened blade, new oil and a spanking clean air filter, I am sad to see this year's garden fade away, with all the fresh new growth autumn's rains and cooler weather triggered brought down by a hard frost. Soon, the gray days will be on us, when nothing grows but the occasional brave little pansy under the snow. But, ah, next year's garden, when anything is possible and lily beetles, slugs and weeds are just a figment of the imagination... before I can curl up by the fire with a cup of tea and (last year's) seed catalogues there is a lot of groundwork to be done.

Every scrap of leaves I rake up goes through the shredder, some to mulch the woods garden, some to the compost heap, but a good share goes to the vegetable garden. Since some of my soil is a bit heavy with clay, I like to turn over the soil and leave it rough for the winter, so the freezing and thawing can break up the clods. I like to, but since it seems I never quite get to it, I'll be pulling out the big hearty weeds like evening primrose, (though we always save a few near the dining room window for the goldfinches) raking off the rest and turning the soil white with a dusting of lime, then covering the soil with a couple of inches of shredded leaves. By spring the earthworms will have turned it all in and left their black gold. The compost we are assembling now won't be ready by spring, but last year's will get spread over all in the spring. If I want a new bed somewhere there is lawn now, I'll cover it with a good layer of newspaper and pile all the shredded plant material I can spare on top of it, bless it with a little lime and pile shredded leaves over all. Wet it down well to settle everything, and by spring the sod should be dead, and I can turn the soil over (or not) and plant.

The heirloom tomato, pepper and sugar pumpkin seeds are drying on paper towels getting ready to go into the glass lab tubes I use to store them. Sometimes I save seed from dill and coriander, but I've always thought the volunteers that popped up on their own were sturdier plants. I just transplant them where I want them when they are still small.

This is a good time to evaluate this year's performance. I keep a garden notebook with notes about what I plant where and when, and how it does, and little tricks and tips I've picked up. It has become a treasured resource over the years. I use a rotation plan so that I don't plant the same thing in the same place next year, or the year after. That discourages a lot of the insects and diseases that plague the garden.

I have an idea for next year to play around with vegetable garden as tapestry. Purple cabbage is handsome, purple basil echoes it, Bright Lights kale has great foliage, various lettuces, parsley and celery foliage is lovely too. Tricolor sages, chrysanthemums to keep the bugs away, chives with their pretty flowers, are all possibilities. For a centerpiece in the parterre, I have a big old wickerwork piece I'll grow scarlet runner beans on to make a hideaway for my little granddaughter. (You can't start them too young.) She's not quite two, but she has her little gardening gloves and a tiny trowel and cultivator. She loves to help grandma plant and weed. If I can keep her interest, that will definitely make next year's garden better -- for both of us.

NEXT MEETING

Something new and different for December.

December's meeting will be back to our traditional first Thursday, December 7.

That's where tradition ends.

The meeting will be held at the Lydia Taft House starting at 7:00 PM.

Instead of the customary Greens Workshop we will invite a special guest to demonstrate the creation of a unique holiday decoration.

We will set up a table for a Santa Swap – If you bring something you can take something. The something's to bring are anything you would use in creating your own decoration, greens, ribbon, candles, etc. Please mark you calendar to enjoy this evening of friendship and holiday cheer.

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