

# The Brooksider

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Winter, 2023

## President's Letter

by Anne Roland



Early January brought temperatures in the 60s, encouraging my daffodils to peek hopefully out of the ground. Despite the balmy weather, we still have a lot of winter to go. **FOBG** is off to a great start, with the [GreenScapes Symposium](#) "Designing with Purpose" taking place on February 17. This online symposium explores the latest topics related to landscape sustainability and the environment. This event appeals to an audience ranging from landscape architects and designers to master gardeners, horticulturalists, and urban planners. **FOBG** is pleased to be a presenting sponsor of this highly regarded event.

Two longtime **Brookside** staff members retired at the end of 2022. *Kathy Stevens*, Conservatory Manager, oversaw the **Wings of Fancy Live Butterfly Exhibit**, and designed the colorful seasonal plant displays in the North and South Houses. She was also our speaker at the **Membership Gathering** last November, delighting us with her knowledge of chrysanthemums. *Humberto (Bert) Zeitler* was a Greenhouse Technician involved with

plant production especially for the spring, summer, and fall displays for the conservatory and outdoor gardens and compost program. He supported **FOBG** by helping before and during the plant show and training the **FOBG** volunteers in various aspects of plant cultivation, grooming, and disease management. Best wishes to Kathy and Bert. You will be missed.

**FOBG** is planning a great year of activities in 2023, so don't forget to renew your membership if you haven't already done so. In addition to **GreenScapes**, our schedule includes a spring **BloomBox fundraiser**, the **speaker series** (live and in person), **GreenFest**, the **Summer Concert series**, **Shakespeare in the Garden**, **Children's Day**, and of course, the **Plant Sale**. We are also planning a fundraiser in November. Details to follow.

I hope you will take advantage of these activities. Be sure to visit the gardens often this year to enjoy what is on display each season.



# *News from Brookside*

By Stephanie Oberle, Director of Brookside Gardens

Even on the dreariest of winter days, there is always some cheerful flower to see in the Garden which helps us to look forward to the brighter days of spring. As I write on this wet, chilly morning, I look forward not only to the flowers of spring, but to the potential of gardening made possible by a renewed workforce. As you may know, we've had a number of vacancies amongst our staff. And we've been hiring new talent to fill those gaps. I'm very pleased to say that for the first time in two years, the outdoor Horticulture section is fully staffed! Led by the new Assistant Director for Horticulture, *Christopher Elenstar*, our gardeners are eager to plan, prune, and plant their way to fabulous landscape displays. When you're visiting, please say hello to *Joshua Demers*, *Jeanette Proudfoot*, *Nancy Woods* (at McCrillis Gardens), *Beto Diaz Galvan*, *Keely Shaugnessy*, *Thomas Crawley* and *Kristin Davey*. We are very grateful to the [Friends of Brookside Gardens](#) for their annual gifts to [Brookside Gardens](#) that directly support garden maintenance and plant purchases. One example of this generosity is the native azalea garden that is being developed near the Ginkgo Canopy. This new garden area features native azalea species and cultivars complimented by native groundcovers. Major planting took place last fall, and more will continue this year. This garden expands our curated collection of azaleas and highlights lesser-known native azaleas and their companion plants, creating a great opportunity for learning.





# Membership Gathering and Chrysanthemum Tour

by Nithya Raghavan

Since its founding in 1996, **Friends of Brookside Gardens (FOBG)** has committed over \$1.7 million to **Brookside Gardens** for plantings, internships, education programs, performing arts, and equipment. Starting with a few charter members interested in helping **Brookside Gardens**, it has now grown to almost 900 members! It was very exciting to plan a member gathering event for 2022 so that **FOBG members, FOBG Board, and Brookside/Montgomery Parks staff** could meet one another and enjoy a few hours of camaraderie on a beautiful fall day.

Since people were enjoying social get-togethers after the pandemic lockdown of 2020 and 2021 (virtual member gathering via Zoom), the **FOBG Board** decided to hold its 2022 membership gathering in person, followed by a tour of the chrysanthemum display at the **Brookside Conservatory**. The event was scheduled for Wednesday, November 2, 2-4 pm. Since chrysanthemums are the stars of the fall season, the event theme and colors reflected the vivid hues of the mums! Chrysanthemums also symbolize friendship, happiness, optimism, and well-being, and it was indeed appropriate to headline this theme for the **FOBG** member gathering



The planning, spearheaded by the **FOBG** President and Marketing Committee Chair *Anne Roland*, took many months of hard work by the event committee members [Eventbrite & Graphic Design - *Nithya Raghavan*; Onsite registration - *Carole Galati, Gloria Sherman*; Food and drink - *Barbara Waite-Jaques, Joe Ann Stenstrom, Barbara Schwarz*; Decorations - *Sandy Fleming, Janet Senft*; Prizes - *Suzanne Carbone, Bob Dargel* (carved wood pens), *Angela Schreiber* and *Taffy Turner* (planted pots); Plant giveaway - *Nate Roehrich*]. The event consisted of a video highlighting the activities of **FOBG** and its support of **Brookside Gardens** while the members were gathering, socializing, and enjoying refreshments. The program started with an address by *Anne Roland*

*continued on next page*



Prize Table



L-R: Suzanne Carbone, Stephanie Oberle, Mike Riley, Anne Roland

(**FOBG President**), followed by an update of **Brookside Gardens** from *Stephanie Oberle* (**Director, Brookside Gardens**). *Mike Riley* (**Director, Montgomery Parks**) gave a riveting presentation of "What's New in Montgomery Parks." Both Stephanie and Mike highlighted how **Brookside Gardens** and the various parks and green spaces in Montgomery County helped folks during the pandemic by providing safe, outdoor spaces for walking, quiet reflection, and recreation. This event also indicated how the ongoing generosity of **FOBG** members and donors has helped in the upkeep of **Brookside Gardens** and all its programs during some very tough times. The following chart was presented showing **FOBG's** approved **Brookside Gardens** funding for fiscal year 2023.

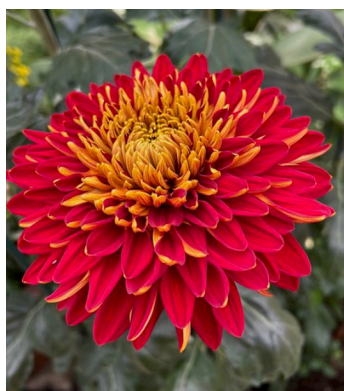
#### FOBG FY23 Grants to Brookside Gardens

Seasonal Gardening Staff	\$50,000
Summer Internships	\$16,000
GreenScapes Symposium	\$ 1,500
GreenFest	\$ 2,500
Plantings	\$10,000
Spring and fall lecture series	\$ 4,000
Children's Day	\$ 2,500
Concert Series	\$ 6,000
Shakespeare in the Garden	\$ 2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$95,000</b>

The talk, "A Brief History of Chrysanthemums and Why We Can't Celebrate Autumn Without Them," by *Kathy Stevens* (**Brookside Gardens Conservatory Manager**) was not only an audiovisual treat but chock full of information about the cultivation, types, uses, and symbolism of chrysanthemums around the world. Member participants had the option of a guided tour of the chrysanthemums at the **Brookside Conservatory** following the end of the program. A prize drawing for hand-turned pens and pottery container gardens delighted those present. All attendees also received a complimentary **FOBG** bookmark and a plant from the **Brookside Greenhouses**! Thanks to our **FOBG** members, it was a standing-room only event attended by over 150 people!!



Kathy Stevens on  
Chrysanthemums



Chrysanthemum



FOBG Members in Auditorium

## ***Garden Railway Exhibit Returns***

Children and adults alike were delighted this winter by the return of the Garden Railway Exhibit in the Conservatory. **Brookside Gardens** organized this exhibit in partnership with the Washington Virginia Maryland Garden Railway Society. It was last held in 2019. G-scale trains and custom model buildings created a unique miniature landscape of Montgomery County landmarks, including Glen Echo Amusement Park, and the **Brookside Conservatory** itself. In addition to 30 members of the Railway Society, the exhibit was staffed by 27 volunteers from **Brookside Gardens**, including some **FOBG** members. Over 13,000 visitors toured the exhibit, which ran from November 25 to January 1.



The model Conservatory at the 2023 Garden Railway Exhibit - *Photo by Elaine Dynes*

## ***Thanking Our Fundraising Partners***

For the first time, **FOBG** partnered with an online garden store [BloomBox](#) for a spring and winter Fundraiser that was successful. For a limited time, people ordered plants, garden supplies, and, in November, holiday decorations with a unique code, and **FOBG** received 15% of the sales amount. **FOBG** raised over \$1,600 with the two fundraisers. We expect to have another spring fundraiser with **BloomBox** in 2023. Stay tuned!

We also raised money in 2023 through the [Bloomin' Bucks](#) program with our long-time partner [Brent and Becky's Bulbs](#). When you order through their website, **FOBG** receives 25 percent of sales. This program is available year-round.

When you shop at these merchants, you support local business and **FOBG**!



# Garden Guardian

By Dr. Dick Hammerschlag, Master Gardener, Howard County

## "Dienamic" Winter

OK – so winter is the time when sooo many plants die back leaving a barely pulsing garden. Despite the paucity of breathing plants, the winter garden is still a source of gardening activity and appreciation!!

First off, without the clutter of the mélange of growing season plants that we have stuffed into our limited garden space, one can actually see the garden structure and better contemplate how to move forward in the coming growing season. After all, there will be spaces where plants do not return and then there should be spaces created for improved plantings. And yes, the dead of winter is the time to be (mail) ordering new plants for the coming year. It is a very good idea to order ASAP so that you're more likely to get the plants you want before they are sold out. Above all, winter ordering plants for spring delivery does give you something to look forward to as the dreary days of winter slide by!!



Then, if you are an avid gardener, there are those few winter flowering plants that somehow perform. But just think how much joy those few bloomers bring to you and on occasional warm days provide fresh pollen for the honey bees!! The easiest and most common are the white Christmas roses, various *Helleborus niger* selections (see photo) like H. Jacob, plus other hellebore types just pushing, the early snow drops (like *Galanthus elwesii*, but sooo many others with varying bloom times), wintersweet shrub (*Chimonanthus praecox*), and Camellias (in this area, it is recommended to use ones that have *C. olifera* genes in them for hardiness). True, the "dienamics" of bitter winter will often curtail even these hardy souls but when they're "out" the joy is immense. Then, there are the other virtues of winter viewed plantings. Have you noticed the wonderful trunk and branch structure of many of the trees/shrubs? Have you selected woodies for mottled or otherwise interesting bark? Hopefully, you've got a selection of conifers many of which glow or 'purr' a vibrant yellow, or purple, etc., especially during the winter.

Moreover, you won't be fussing with weeds during the winter. Yet, if you need to be busy, it is a very good time, especially in late winter, to prune your woody plants. This often involves thinning and pruning back shrubs, while removing dead and crossing branches of reachable trees. You may not be out in the garden frequently, but when you are, the exercise and sense of accomplishment will do you good!!

Recently, a friend sent me a copy of the "Essential Earthman" (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981), a compilation of seasonal pieces by Henry Mitchell. It was definitely a hoot and a "must read" for any avid gardener. It is based on his horticultural experiences in the Washington, D.C. area!! Unfortunately, since it was issued in the 1990s, a number of the cultivar recommendations are a bit outdated.

So, the bottom line – and that's the point – of a gardener's job is never done, even in winter!!! Gardening is a year-round activity, providing different spiritual uplifts in all the different seasons. I hope you have been out enjoying your garden during the winter. It is not nearly as dead/dormant as one might think!!

# *Out With the Old and In With the New*

By Freddi Hammerschlag, retiring editor of *The Brooksider*

First, I would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy 2023! Next, I want to say farewell to **Friends of Brookside Gardens** members. I have loved serving as editor for the **Brooksider** since 2014 and look forward to a new era for the newsletter that will be edited by *James Rostron*. I would like to say thank you to *Joe Ann Stenstrom* who served as my co-editor for several years. Together we initiated many new columns. Our first was “Meet Your Friends” which included in-depth articles on the members of the **FOBG Board**. Joe Ann also introduced many book reviews and wonderful feature articles such as “Whimsical Idea on a Tree-lined Path” in the fall 2017 issue. We initiated a gardening column entitled Garden Guardian which was written by Dr. Dick Hammerschlag. He wrote many interesting and comical articles such as “Comingled Coexistence” found in the spring 2021 issue. I would also like to thank Nithya Raghavan, Elaine Dynes, and TimePoints Photography for providing the incredible photography for the newsletter. Last, I would like to say thanks to *Joe Ann Stenstrom*, *Nithya Raghavan*, *Elaine Dynes* and *Gloria Sherman* for their excellent editing. What a winning team we have been!!! We are very lucky to have James Rostron as our new editor.

## **James has written a brief bio as follows:**

I remember very well when, many years ago, before I moved to this area, a friend brought me to **Brookside Gardens** for a summer stroll. I was so impressed by the oasis of beauty in the midst of busy Montgomery County. It is still one of my favorite places to connect with nature, get some fresh air and exercise, learn about plants, enjoy the work of local artists, browse the well-stocked gift shop... and charge my electric vehicle! When I saw the call for a new editor for **The Brooksider**, I immediately thought this would be a great way to give back to this place, besides just being a member of **FOBG**. For over ten years of my career teaching high school math, I was the faculty yearbook advisor, and for two years I have been the layout editor for the quarterly newsletter of Montgomery Mutual, where I live in Leisure World. I am looking forward to my new work for **The Brooksider** and to meeting more of the wonderful people who help make **Brookside Gardens** such a unique and special place. And, here are a couple photos I've taken on my visits to Brookside...



# Brookside Gardens Adult & Children's Programs

<u>Date</u>	<u>Program Name</u>	<u>Course Number</u>
3/1/2023	Tai Chi at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0029 100001
3/2/2023	Gentle Yoga at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0030 100001
3/4/2023	Yoga at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0031 100001
3/7/2023	Philadelphia Flower Show – The Garden Electric	PBG0087 100001
3/11/2023	Introduction to Landscape Design: Session I	PBG0012 100001
3/16/2023	Beatrix Farrand: Garden Artist, Landscape Designer	PBG0088 100001
3/18/2023	Native Plants for Spring Interest	PBG0089 100001
3/25/2023	Introduction Landscape Design: Session II	PBG0013 100001
3/30/2023	RainScape Your Yard Session I: Evaluating Stormwater Solutions for Home Landscapes	PBG0100 100001
4/6/2023	Full Moon Walk	PBG0002 100001
4/8/2023	RainScape Your Yard Session: II: Plants & Landscape Design for RainScapes Gardens	PBG0100 100002
4/11/2023	Behind-the-Scenes Greenhouse Tour**	PBG0003 100001
4/15/2023	Introduction to Plant Propagation	PBG0016 100001
4/15/2023	Beyond Sustainability: Using Our Landscapes as a Source of Environmental Change	PBG0091 100001
4/15/2023	Strolls for Well-Being*	PBG0033 100001
4/22/2023	GreenFest	No registration
4/23/2023	Shinrin-yoku: The Art of Forest Bathing**	PBG0022 100001
4/29/2023	Deer-Resistant Native Plants & Gardening Strategies	PBG0099 100001
4/29/2023	Yoga Sprouts**	PBG0078 100007
5/3/2023	Azalea & Rhododendron Tour**	PBG0001 100001
5/4/2023	McCrillis Gardens Spring Tour**	PBG0020 100001
5/6/2023	Afternoon Tea at McCrillis Gardens**	PBG0021 100001
5/7/2023	Half-Day Mindfulness Retreat	PBG0018 100001
5/12/2023	Miniature Perennials	PBG0023 100001
5/18/2023	The Amazing Journey: Bringing New Plants to Market	PBG0098 100001
5/20/2023	Summer Annual Container	PBG0024 100001
5/24/2023	Gardening for Dry Shade	PBG0090 100001
5/31/2023	Rachel Carson Conservation Park Walking Tour	PBG0086 100001
6/6/2023	Summer Twilight Concert Series**	No registration



6/15/2023	Miniature Hostas	PBG0092 200001
6/17/2023	Sustainable Gardening Practices	PBG0045 200001
6/17/2023	Introduction to Botanical Illustration with Watercolors*	PBG0095 200001
6/20/2023	Pollinator Meadow Tour**	PBG0043 200001
6/24/2023	How Native Plant Cultivars Affect Pollinators	PBG0096 200001
6/26–6/30	Garden Investigators Camp*	PBG0082 500001
6/29/2023	Glenstone Museum & Gardens	PBG0094 200001
7/9/2023	Shakespeare In the Garden	No registration
7/10–7/14	Art Adventures Camp*	PBG0083 500001
7/15/2023	Common Garden Pests & Diseases	PBG0097 200001
7/17–7/21	Summer Science Camp*	PBG0084 500001
7/22/2023	Botanical Tile Casting	PBG0093 200001
7/31–8/4	Garden Investigators Camp*	PBG0082 500002
8/7–8/11	Climate Action Camp	PBG0085 500001

\* Program Meets Multiple Days

\*\* Multiple Sessions Offered

Details of all the above programs can be found at: [Cultivate](#)

To register for the classes, please visit [Active Montgomery](#)

Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

### **Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc. Board of Directors**

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**Anne Roland**, *President*; **Suzanne Carbone**, *Vice President*;  
**Barbara Waite-Jaques**, *Secretary*; **Gale Shannon**, *Treasurer*

**Directors:** Carole Galati, Freddi Hammerschlag,  
Joan O'Rourke (founding president), Nithya Raghavan, Gloria Sherman

### **The Brooksider**

**Editor:** James Rostron; **Editorial Staff:** Freddi Hammerschlag,  
Elaine Dynes, Nithya Raghavan, Gloria Sherman, Joe Ann Stenstrom

**FOBG Webmaster:** Nithya Raghavan

*Spring is Coming!*

