

The **Brooksider**

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Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc.



August, 2012

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Think cool! It's not too early to start getting ready for fall gardening. With some careful planning, you can take advantage of the best time of year for planting.

With that in mind, it's time to get ready for your visit to the much anticipated Friends of Brookside Gardens Plant Sale. It will be held on Saturday, September 8 on the lawn outside the Visitors Center. Come see what committee chairs Joan O'Rourke and Taffy Turner have selected this year to tempt you.

In addition to the wonderful selection of plants, we will hold a raffle of beautiful container gardens created by Joan. Also on display will be a sample of the holiday greens that will be available for pick-up on the first Saturday of December. You can pre-order at the plant sale to reserve your boxwood wreath, centerpiece, or mini-tree and receive your special discount. Brent and Becky's Bulbs catalogs and information on the Bloomin' Bucks program will also be available. Look for them at the membership table. Please remember Brookside when ordering from Brent and Becky's Bulbs, as FOBG receives a large percentage on your order.

One of your benefits as FOBG members is the chance to shop in the 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM timeframe reserved for Friends before the sale opens to the public. As a current member, your FOBG membership expires at the end of October; you will receive your membership renewal notice at the beginning of that month. But if you have a friend or neighbor who would like to take advantage of the early admission to the sale – and other member benefits – we will have

a membership table set up near the plants. As a special benefit, new memberships after 7/31/12 will be valid through October of 2013.

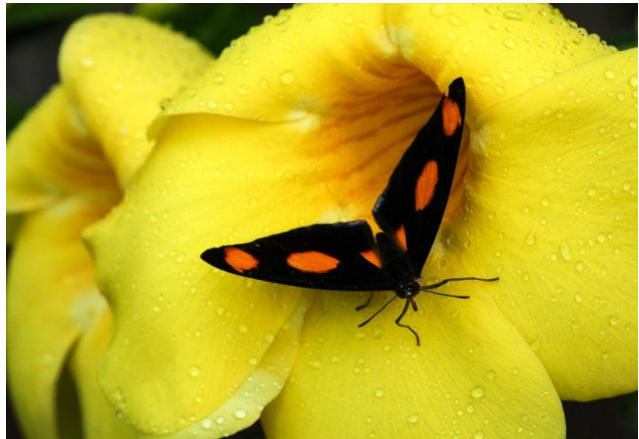


As many of you know, Brookside Gardens continues to face a very challenging financial situation. At the same time, Brookside Gardens needs to move forward to implement the master plan to refresh and improve the gardens. We would like to increase the annual FOBG contribution to Brookside by means of your membership and donations, as well as receipts from our various fund-raising events. The majority of the Friends' income comes from your memberships. In addition, for the second year, the Behnke Nurseries Garden Party raffle has raised supplemental funds. Upcoming plans for 2013 fund-raising events include some innovations – a silent auction and a rare plant auction. Our annual membership campaign kicks off in October, and I urge you to mail your dues back quickly. You might also encourage a friend or two to join! Please read your renewal membership carefully as some of the benefits of membership have changed.

Mark your calendars for the FOBG annual meeting, which will be held at the Brookside Visitors' Center on Sunday, November 4. You'll receive details about the event in a coming *Brooksider* and with your membership renewal information.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the plant sale and at the annual meeting.

Barbara



HERE IT COMES! THE 2012 FOBG PLANT SALE!!

Get out those green markers, and circle Saturday, September 8 on your calendars! This year's FOBG plant sale – our 16th – promises to be one of the most interesting yet. As always, the plant sale's aim is to help you make your garden as beautiful in the fall as it is in the spring. You'll find brilliant accent color of late-blooming flowers such as coreopsis in that wonderful blue, rich tones of low-massing ground covers like heuchera, and elegant forms of small ornamentals to place against a backdrop of mature trees.

Each year our plant sale czarina, Joan O'Rourke, spends months scouting for the most appealing plants. Then, late in August just before the sale, she selects only those in the finest condition. Offerings at the sale depend on two key criteria: what's meets Joan's high standards and what you tell us you want for your gardens.

WHAT'S NEW & WHAT'S SPECIAL?

This year, the sale showcases dwarf conifers. Come see the cryptomeria, false cypress, gold mops, and others. Perfect for small gardens or a special area in a larger landscape, these slow-growing gems offer a wide variety of shapes, growth patterns, and color tonalities. They can be arranged in groups or paired for dramatic effect with Japanese maples. In perfect harmony with a water element – pond or fountain – these shapely dwarfs can also be used to stunning visual effect with a “stream” of polished black river stones or near a rock garden.

Some of you have townhouse or condo gardens; others reserve just a small portion of the yard or your deck or patio for special plantings. To satisfy such needs, this year we are offering many stunning perennials such as unusual hostas and ferns as well as hellebores in hard-to-find red or yellow.

If you have an interest in native plants, which by nature can be more successful in our climate, this year you'll find echinacea in a number of surprising colors. There's also drought tolerant

gaillardia and heucherella, some with characteristic markings in contrasting colors. How will you know what's what at the sale? You can ask Joan O'Rourke, who always seems to be everywhere at once, or any of the other knowledgeable volunteers who'll be there to help you.

PLANT SALE HIGHLIGHT:

TAKE YOUR CHANCES ON A CONTAINER GARDEN RAFFLE

Joan O'Rourke's container garden workshops at Brookside always sell out, and she has earned an immense following of fans. For this year's plant sale raffle, Joan has agreed to create several containers with unusual specialty plantings. One will feature tiny evergreens for year-round enjoyment, and another will be a “spring surprise,” planted now for a profusion of color after winter's monotones. The raffle will be held at the center of the sale at 1:00 PM. Just look for the sign, and be sure to be there for a chance at one of Joan's superb miniature creations.

FOBG MEMBERS - ONLY PRIVILEGES

Do you have your eye on that dwarf spruce or juniper? Do you yearn for heuchera in a range of new colors? Remember that FOBG members get the pick of the sale! We open at 8:00 AM for two hours of members-only shopping. So for the very best selection – and good parking spaces! – come early. And don't forget to bring your FOBG member card for that extra benefit of a 10% discount on everything you buy. To make it easy, we accept credit cards as well as cash or checks.

IT'S MORE THAN JUST PLANTS

Sure, the FOBG plant sale is a great resource to bring fall beauty to your garden. But the plant sale has also become the primary annual fundraiser for FOBG and the main way we fulfill our mission. What is that mission? It's simple: providing a supplementary income stream to

Brookside Gardens. Why does Brookside depend on FOBG's support? Brookside's funding, which comes from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), has been reduced in recent years due to the general economic situation. Apart from its public funding, Brookside Gardens' largest private support comes from FOBG. Because we are a volunteer organization, we have minimal operating costs, so almost every dollar we bring in goes to support Brookside Gardens' plantings and programs.

What does this mean, specifically? FOBG sponsors the lecture series held at Brookside Gardens every fall and spring. We also provide funding for the popular summer concert series. We're the financial backbone of the Green Matters symposium and Children's Day. And as for

plantings, it's FOBG contributions that are paying, for example, for the new plantings in the Gude Garden. We are also studying the new master plan to see where FOBG dollars can be most effective in supporting Brookside Gardens' growth for the future.

THREE GREAT REASONS TO COME TO THE PLANT SALE

- Find perennials and shrubs to add to your garden's seasonal beauty
- Support FOBG
- Enhance the plantings and programs at Brookside Gardens

See you on September 8!



FACEBOOK FRIENDS

If you haven't yet tried using Facebook, it's a great way to communicate informally with people who share your interests. Have you visited the FOBG page? We set it up last November, and, so far, we've already attracted 390 fans! This means our "wall posts" show up on the news feeds of all those people, reaching their friends through those posts. Just to give you some statistics: 374 of our fans are in the US, and – not surprisingly – the greatest number of those are in Maryland or DC. Sixteen are from 14 different countries all over the world! Nearly half of us are between 45 and 64 years of age. Eighty percent of us are women. And 369 of us are primarily English speakers. These quick facts come from Facebook "insights."

Why does Friends of Brookside Gardens need a Facebook page? First of all, Facebook has become a primary way for individuals, organizations, and businesses to reach like-minded people. Another great reason is that it's free and it's public. And it provides an easy and quick way to share all kinds of information. For FOBG, for instance, we created calendar events for the Orchid Show and Sale, Behnke's Garden Party, and the upcoming FOBG Plant Sale. We also posted reminders on our wall for many of Brookside Gardens events, including those we sponsor, such as the Summer Twilight Concerts. So far, our most widely viewed posts are two photo albums that were shared on pages with many more fans than ours. (One was on frogs and lilies; one on the effects of the June derecho.) The most-viewed posts on our page alone were a reminder about the first Summer Twilight Concert and a link to Brookside Gar-

dens' Wings of Fancy web page.

We have "liked" more than 30 other Facebook pages including Brookside Gardens, of course, as well as many of the county's horticultural societies and most of the retailers that offer discounts to FOBG members. We share information from their pages when they post something we think our fans should know about, such as a sale or special event. They can share our posts as well, extending our reach far beyond our 390 fans or our 860 FOBG members. Facebook calculates our potential reach as 165,758! Anyone curious about FOBG can find all our vital information on Facebook. The "about" page describes who we are and lists our web address, email, telephone number, and mailing address. Our fans can also easily share information, links, and photographs on our wall.

Through Facebook, we hope to increase FOBG membership, which ultimately means we can provide greater financial support to Brookside Gardens! We also hope to reach out more broadly to all the age groups and cultures that love the gardens. Facebook will help FOBG to establish its own brand, related to but distinct from Brookside Gardens. As our fan base grows, we may also use Facebook as a fundraising tool. We're still discovering all the ways Facebook can help us. If you haven't yet visited, check us out. Tell us what else FOBG can do to serve our members. Invite your Facebook friends to like us. We welcome your comments, your pictures, and your questions!

[Click here](#) to visit FOBG on Facebook.

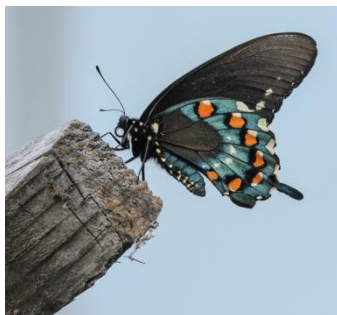


SPREAD THE WORD!

You know all the benefits that FOBG offers to members, but some of your friends and neighbors may not have heard. Here's a special reason to encourage non-members to join right now:

Any new FOBG memberships – including gift memberships – signed up before October 31 will continue through October **2013**. That could be up to two and a half extra months of member benefits – for the cost of a 12-month membership.

New members will *immediately* be eligible for all FOBG benefits including exclusive early admission and a 10% discount at FOBG's upcoming Annual Plant Sale. And don't forget about the discounts at Brookside gift shops, special FOBG rates for many of Brookside's programs, and discounts at a long list of local garden retailers. You can print a membership form from our web page (www.bgfriends.org) or pick up a membership brochure at the Visitors' Center. Look for the membership table at the Plant Sale on September 8th. Don't let your garden-loving friends miss this opportunity for extra membership benefits!



Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

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