

The Brooksider

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June, 2013

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Spring is one of the most beautiful and busy times of the year for people who love gardens. We fill our calendars with buying and planting flowers, vegetables and herbs, and we believe and hope that each seed we plant will grow. It is a time of hope and anticipation.



In the past three weeks, several members of the Friends of Brookside Gardens and the Master Gardeners have potted hundreds of perennials,



shrubs and trees, in anticipation of the September Fall Plant Sale. Volunteers will water and tend to the plants during the summer, coaxing each one along so that it develops and grows to its fullest potential.

There is a parallel between the planting we do in our gardens and the work that FOBG does to raise funds for Brookside Gardens. When we ask

people to join FOBG, we do so with the hope that their membership will benefit Brookside as they contribute their time and money. We believe that strengthening FOBG will strengthen the programs and services of the Gardens themselves.

As I watched all of the people at the first concert of the June Twilight Concert Series on June 4th, I saw over 400 happy attendees, old and young, families and couples, relaxing and care-free, listening to the rhythms of the music, in a place that allows, for a time, everyone to dance, sing and be in the moment.



FOBG has over 800 members; wouldn't it be wonderful if we could add 400 more so that we could expand the programs we offer to the ever-increasing number of people who visit Brookside?

Are you a member of FOBG? Please join us and support one of the most popular and beautiful gardens in Montgomery County. We need you so that Brookside, like the flowers we plant, will grow to its fullest potential.

Suzanne

In this and future issues of FOBG's *The Brooksider*, we will include a new series of articles titled "Brookside from the Inside." These articles are based on conversations with the Brookside Gardens' staff horticulturists whose inspiration, skill and hard work create and re-create the gardens that we love. We will look at what drew BG staff members to a professional life in horticulture and public gardens, and how they feel about working in a changing environment that is always on display. We'll take a stab at understanding their complex jobs that require a visionary, designer, project manager – who can dig, maintain plantings and diagnose problems. We'll let them tell us about their areas of responsibility, their challenges and successes, and what they like best about Brookside.

We hope "Brookside from the Inside" will enhance your enjoyment of the gardens by giving you a new perspective on how it all happens.

Julia Horman, co-editor

Brookside from the Inside *a look at what it takes to make it all happen*

By **Julia Horman**

Behind the scenes of Brookside's public display gardens, there is a relatively secluded area of year-round activity. The space, variously referred to as "the Fritz," the propagation greenhouses, or the maintenance area, is not designed for display – the public rarely visits – yet this special place could be considered the heart of Brookside Gardens. Here, under glass and lath, in Quonset hut, and on outdoor growing benches, BG's team of Growers produces plants for the spring and fall outdoor garden displays, for five Conservatory displays including the Wings of Fancy and the Chrysanthemum Show, for



Adult and Children's Education Programs, and for other special events. During the height of their activity, when they prepare for the spring and summer

displays, the Growers may have 20,000 plants under cultivation. They are the producers of the glorious, colorful flowers and foliage that create Brookside's "flash."

Joe Kraut has held the position of Horticulturist III – Supervisor for Brookside Gardens' propagation area and its activities since 1989. In our recent conversation, Joe frequently referred to the challenges a grower faces when produc-



ing plants for a public display garden; his early experiences and education sound like they were tailor-made for that very job at Brookside Gardens. Joe's story starts with his introduction to the world of agriculture and horticulture on a kibbutz in Israel during the 1970's. He notes accomplishments including milking cows and harvesting cotton, but highlights working in the greenhouses where roses were grown for cut-flower marts in Europe. Joe says that was his first exposure to the challenges of producing a perfectly grown plant. He describes learning how to recognize perfection in a rose, watching the bud

develop until it hits its peak and the stem is ready to be cut for overnight shipping to Paris.

After his stint on the kibbutz, Joe earned his BS/MS in Horticulture at the University of Maryland; he worked as a research technician for UMD's Department of Agronomy and as a salesman for locally produced Compro. In 1986, Joe returned to growing at the Hillwood Museum in Washington, D.C., where he was Greenhouse Manager for three years before beginning his career at Brookside Gardens. Since joining Brookside in 1989, Joe has seen garden areas modified and enlarged and new programs introduced, especially the Wings of Fancy. Over the years, this garden and program expansion has led to an ever-increasing demand for plant production.

Currently Joe's propagation team consists of three Growers in the position of Principal Greenhouse Technician – Shari Adams, Humberto (Bert) Zeitler, and Xiao Qi Yu – and three Greenhouse Aides. Joe says that this very talented team does all the hands-on work in the propagation area. Throughout the year, his Growers receive crop requests from 11 or 12 sources – the lead Gardeners, the Conservatory staff, and Adult and Children's Education Program Managers. The crop requests are made nine months to a year in advance of their "need date," which is a targeted two-week window. The Growers will divide up all the displays, with each Grower taking the lead for particular areas. They contact the requesters, confirm schedules and special needs, do the research to find out how the plants should be grown and determine the best start method – cuttings, plugs, seeds. Just think about it: at any one time, there will be plants growing for three or four overlapping programs, including new starts, six-week old seedlings, others already in flower. The plants may have very different cultural needs.

Communication and coordination are essential in a propagation area where challenges abound! Joe quickly lists them – the artificial environment, space constraints, conflicting cultural requirements, the impact of water on the health of plants. Joe smiles as he commends his Growers for their watering skills – then he picks up on the special requirements for

Wings of Fancy plants. For that exhibit, all the plants must be clean when they are moved down for the show – no insects in any stage, no diseases. Since chemicals can be absorbed by the plants, the Growers must avoid any systemic insecticides and use only the foliar-contact types that would be harmless to butterflies. Disease prevention is also an issue. The Growers search for new, improved disease-resistant cultivars and juggle space to ensure maximum light and air movement within the growing environment.



Joe, as Supervisor of the BG Propagation area, focuses on coordination of effort. He ensures proper communication; anticipates and heads-off problems, such as conflicts between the cultural needs of various plants; does the ordering, and manages the department's budget. Joe says that he is concerned about having enough time to get everything done, but that his concern is tempered by the things that seem to be working well. He feels that he has learned the art and value of delegating authority, and is quick to recognize BG's very competent Growers as the key to success in that area. Joe also acknowledges a lot of help from the Parks Facility Management Division in the physical maintenance of his area.

Looking to Brookside's future, Joe hopes to see a new propagation greenhouse built within the next several years. He says that additional production space and improved technology would translate into enhanced growing conditions and program expansion potential. In response to my question about the name "Fritz," Joe ran through a brief history of plant propagation in Montgomery County. He said the county's first production site was a lean-to

greenhouse in which Jules Fritz grew plants for Montgomery County parks. Brookside's south Conservatory was built in 1969, and it became the production greenhouse for Brookside Gardens. In 1976, the current propagation greenhouse was built. It was named "The Fritz" after the original Montgomery County grower.

The smooth operation of BG's Propagation area allows Joe to wear another hat in the Montgomery Parks organization. In October 2010, Joe was named Supervisor of the Pope Farm Nursery which supplies trees and shrubs for all Montgomery County Parks. At Pope Farm, Joe focuses on diversifying the collection, removing inferior crops, and adding new, improved varieties. Joe chuckles as he describes BG's Phil Normandy walking the rows at the farm, looking for something that might be up to his standards for planting at Brookside. Joe says that in addition to trees and shrubs, Pope Farm grows perennials and annuals. Last year he brought on volunteers from Chesapeake Natives; they are now growing "native" natives – plants that are indigenous to Montgomery County – in addition to those native to a broader area. The Farm supplies plants for reforestation and storm-water management projects, as well as for newly built or renovated MC parks.

You might be surprised to learn that our very busy Joe Kraut has a poetic side, which shows up as he talks about the areas of Brookside that he likes best. He says the Rose Garden, with the crape myrtles in bloom, is at the top of his list. Joe eloquently describes the bowl-like enclosure, defined by the pergola, the large spruce on the hillside and the yew

hedges, and how amazing it feels to be surrounded by all the color – of the roses, crape myrtle, perennials, grasses, and beeches. At the other end of the color spectrum, Joe finds pleasure in viewing the Gude Garden from the Reflection Terrace on a gray, overcast day. He adds that he likes plants that aren't too fussy – especially the Cymbidium Orchid with its big, stiff, waxy flowers that last six to eight weeks. Joe feels that the Cymbidium works well in the Conservatory's winter shows; he is working on improving BG's collection, searching out more plants that flower in December and January.

Another special thing on Joe's list is walking (incognito) through Brookside's display gardens and Conservatory and watching the public enjoy "his" plants. Considering his role in the production process and knowing what it takes to grow the plants on time, clean and beautiful, Joe says it's great to see and hear the visitors' appreciation. It pleases him to watch the people relaxing, breathing easily and enjoying all the plants and green spaces – to see firsthand the evidence of how important Brookside Gardens is to the wellbeing of the community.

Joe encourages everyone to try a bit of home gardening, but "to do as much as you can do well – don't extend beyond what you're capable of maintaining." He also feels that a well-maintained lawn area has its place in promoting the health of the Bay.

Joe sends his thanks to you, the Friends of Brookside Gardens, in a simple statement: "I appreciate your appreciation! Thank you for your interest in what we are doing."



In this and future issues of *The Brooksider*, we will provide a listing of upcoming FOBG sponsored events and Brookside Gardens adult programs. The list will be updated as information becomes available. We hope this will be helpful in planning how you can take advantage of all that Brookside Gardens has to offer. Additional offerings, such as children's programs, art exhibits and excursions are available in the [Experience](#) program guide.

<u>FOBG Sponsored Events</u>	Date	ParkPASS #
FOBG Fall Plant Sale	09/07/13	-----
FOBG Silent Auction	11/09/13	-----
FOBG Greens Sale	12/07/13	-----
FOBG Orchid Show and Sale	03/15/14	-----
FOBG Orchid Show and Sale	03/16/14	-----
FOBG Spring Lecture Series: Gardening with Deer?	06/14/13	231749
FOBG Summer Twilight Concert Series: DreamStreet	06/18/13	-----
Trio Caliente	06/25/13	-----
Children's Day	09/21/13	-----

<u>Brookside Gardens Adult Programs</u>	Date	ParkPASS #
Gardening with Deer?	06/14/13	231749
Feasting with Fireworks	06/19/13	231952
Butterfly and Garden Photography (also 6/29)	06/22/13	229308
Garden Whimsy Mosaic Totems (also 6/28)	06/25/13	231208
The Fragrant Year (Garden Demo)	06/26/13	231899
Paint Leaf and Flower Designs in Wax Resist	06/26/13	230551
Art: Open House	06/30/13	225104
Focus on Butterflies	07/07/13	229303
Fall and Winter Food Gardening	07/09/13	231152
Summer Stones (Cooking Demo)	07/17/13	231953
Focus on Butterflies	07/20/13	229304
Concrete Leaf Sculpting	07/25/13	231205
Concrete Leaf Painting	08/01/13	231206
Focus on Butterflies	08/03/13	229305
Focus on Butterflies	08/11/13	229306
Focus on Butterflies	08/24/13	229307
Focus on Butterflies	09/07/13	229399

*For additional programs, more information, registration and fees
See the [Experience](#) program guide or click this link for [ParkPASS.org](#)*

HOLIDAYS IN THE GARDEN

Saturday, November 9, 2013

5:00—8:00 PM

A Silent Auction to Benefit Brookside Gardens

Awesome Art ~ Bountiful Baskets ~
Wearables ~ Gift Certificates for Restaurants
and Services ~ Getaways, a Raffle and much **MORE!**

Brookside Gardens Visitors Center

1800 Glenallan Avenue

Wheaton, Maryland 20902

\$35 per person admission includes light
refreshments and live music
(\$25/person for FOBG members
if pre-paid by October 19)

Sponsored by the
Friends of
Brookside Gardens
www.bgfriends.org

For information, call 301 962-1435 or email
friendsofbrooksidegardens@yahoo.com

Gude Garden Report

By Stephanie Oberle, Director
Brookside Gardens

Beginning in mid-May, major portions of the Gude Garden were closed for the implementation of a CIP (Capital Improvement Program) project. This project is funded through the County's CIP program. The Gude Garden Renewal was identified as Phase 4 of the Brookside Gardens Master Plan, which was approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board in 2004. Since gardens are the resource on which Brookside places its greatest emphasis, and as one of the signature gardens in need of repair, it was decided that the Gude Garden renewal should be addressed early in the implementation process. With its rolling hills, tranquil ponds and the iconic Japanese Tea House, the Gude Garden symbolizes Brookside Gardens to many visitors.

Gardens staff worked closely with other Parks staff (including landscape architects, engineers and arborists), and a team of consultants to develop a plan that solves the water quality problems and is sensitive to the aesthetic and historic nature of the Gude Garden landscape. Gardens staff are very grateful to work with such a talented and dedicated team.

Construction is expected to last for eight months. During the renovations, the Gude Garden lawn, Japanese Tea House, Reflection Terrace, Labyrinth, and lower service road (a section of the Heart Smart Trail) around the Garden are closed. Construction vehicles will access the work site via the service hill and will cross the upper service road. A thick roadbed of wood chips has been put down for construction vehicles to drive on to minimize damage to the turf during construction. The whole construction area is enclosed by a 6' tall chain link fence. Signs in English, Chinese and Spanish have been posted at various points in the Gude Garden, as well as at all pedestrian entrances, the Visitors Center and Conservatory, to inform our visitors about this project.

There are four main components to this renovation project:

1. **Drain and dredge ponds.** Over the years, sediments washed into the ponds by rain, deposits of organic material (a.k.a. goose poop), and soil from crumbling banks have accumulated in the ponds. The sediments decreased the overall depth of the water, resulting in less volume of water for aquatic wildlife and water that warms up quickly and stays warm, leading to algal blooms. The ponds will be drained. Fish and turtles will be relocated to the Aquatic Garden and other nearby ponds. Excess material will be dredged out and laid on the lawn to de-water (dry out). All the dredgings will be used on-site, including filling in a portion of lowest pond to create newly contoured wetland garden.
2. **Reinforce the weirs.** The original concept behind the Gude Garden landscape was to have a series of stepped ponds linked by weirs that doubled as walkways. The water spilling over the weirs would add the sound of moving water and help manage water flow. Over time, the weirs failed and serious leaks developed, causing the water level in the ponds to drop. New weirs will be built behind the existing weirs, so as not to interfere the aesthetic look of the original weirs. The new weirs will be wider and better able to hold water. A few plants will need to be removed in order to build the weirs. The combination of newly dredged ponds plus functioning weirs will increase the depth of water by several inches.
3. **Replace the bridge.** The bridge at the base of the lowest pond will be replaced and the road alignment will change slightly. This realignment minimizes impact of construction to the adjacent woodland and stream.
4. **Rebuild the pond edges.** Many generations of Canada geese hopping in and out of the ponds have caused the banks to fail and crumble into the ponds. A variety of tech-

niques will be used to stabilize the banks and enhance the overall landscape effect. Some of the different edge treatments that will be used at the water's edge include turf, large rocks, submergent and emergent aquatic vegetation, and mixed shrub plantings. The variety of edge treatments will be both beautiful and good for wildlife in and out of the ponds.

Gardens staff have removed and stored many plants for reuse when the project is complete. A landscape plan with appropriate plant material for the rebuilt edges is being developed. With the lowest pond re-

designed as a wetland, there is an opportunity for a different palette of plants. The labyrinth will be removed during construction and the cobblestones repurposed. The site will be leveled in preparation for the future, but the installation of a new labyrinth is not part of the scope of this project.

As with any renovation project, no one is looking forward to the next few months of disturbance and mounds of mud. But we are eagerly anticipating when we get our Gude Garden back, with deeper, cleaner water and the opportunity to plant more beautiful gardens for everyone to enjoy.



Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc. Board of Directors

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