



Summer, 2020

## *President's Letter*

By Kathy Kircher, President

I hope this newsletter finds you well and calm amidst everything going on around us. There's no doubt about it – **It's Summer. And it's HOT!**

I want to start by thanking all the fantastic, creative, and hard-working people at **Brookside Gardens**. Each time I am there I see someone working on the grounds or helping visitors. The gardens look fantastic even though they are being used by all of us more than ever. It's a big job to keep this restful and relaxing oasis running. I hope you have had time to enjoy the wonderful plantings throughout the gardens. There is beauty and interesting sites everywhere. The hydrangeas are the best I have seen them – I admit to saying that every year – but this year truly is exceptional. If you took advantage of the recent online classes and lectures, you saw how very quickly and professionally the staff transitioned from the onsite classes to virtual ones. Here's the link to Brookside's website where you can watch the [Perfect Plant Marriages](#) class (You need to scroll down to find it). Try searching for **Brookside Gardens** or **Montgomery Parks** on YouTube and watch some of the online videos. They are a little taste of Brookside and parks from home.

The big news for FOBG is that **we ARE having our Annual Plant Sale** in September. There are changes this year so make sure to read the article later in the newsletter. Thank you to **Joan O'Rourke** for ordering lots of new varieties of plants and ferns, to **Nithya Raghavan** for implementing our online shop (a huge job), and to **Taffy Turner** for organizing our volunteers. Special thanks to the Brookside gardeners for helping care for the plants when our volunteers were not allowed. Please pass the word to your friends and be sure to buy plants. Our "Friends Together" T-Shirt Sale was a great success. Thank you to **Anne Roland** who had the idea and made it all happen. I hope to see you wearing one someday soon.

Please sign-up to get Brookside Garden's new e-Newsletter. Here's the link: [e-Newsletter](#). Friends can send you [The Brooksider](#) but we cannot sign you up for the e-Newsletter because of county privacy regulations.

Thank you to our wonderful members. Your contributions keep helping **Brookside** be special for everyone. And thanks for wearing masks and following the safety rules for the park. It's one other way you demonstrate how much we care for each other and for this special place.

# *News from Brookside*

By Stephanie Oberle, Director Brookside Gardens



Despite all the changes in our lives due to COVID-19, one thing that hasn't changed is the beauty of [Brookside Gardens](#). Even with the Visitor Center and Conservatory closed to the public, there has been a significant increase in visitation in the past four months. As County residents seek safe places to practice physical distancing, **Brookside Gardens** is one of many Montgomery Parks sites to fill that need. A bright, sunny summer has followed a cool, wet spring, and the summer annual displays are bursting with color. Spring weather also brought an abundance of weeds, which are also growing merrily this summer. Due to revenue shortfalls and budget cuts, seasonal staff hours were cut, leading to an overall reduction in

regular garden maintenance. We are very grateful to the [Friends of Brookside Gardens](#), who support the seasonal gardening staff in their annual gift. Programming staff have adapted scheduled adult education classes to use on-line platforms for learning. Our children's programming staff have worked closely with **Montgomery County Public Schools** to develop on-line content to support summer learning programs which we expect to continue into the fall. So, like you, we continue to adapt to the changing situation, with the knowledge that it will get better! And while we wait, we have a lovely Garden to engage our senses and raise our spirits.



# FOBG PLANT SALE 2020

By Joan O' Rourke, Taffy Turner and Nithya Raghavan

Photography by Nithya Raghavan and Kathy Kircher

**\*ONLINE Sales begin in August** (*check the website In August for details*)

**\*CURBSIDE PICKUP DATES** (*may be subject to change*)

Saturday, September 5, 2020 & Sunday, September 6, 2020

Saturday, September 12, 2020 & Sunday, September 13, 2020

**YES, there will be a FOBG Plant Sale this year** and remember – fall is the best time for planting! It is still going to be one of the biggest perennial plant sales in our area! COVID may be curtailing our lifestyle but who says we cannot plant a garden? However, we had to make a few changes in keeping with the times. Our *Plant Sale is going VIRTUAL this year*: **ONLY ONLINE SALES** with a **CONTACTLESS** credit card payment online and a **CURBSIDE PICK UP** at the Brookside Gardens service hill area on Fernmont Lane. You will be able to start shopping as early as August and will have a choice of at least 4 curbside pickup dates in September. We still have over 90 varieties of perennial plants, shrubs and a few trees this year. Shop early online starting August and start your perennial garden collection!

We are sorry that we cannot enjoy the good times we have had, meeting and talking about plants with each other in person as we had in the past. However, we will make sure that each and every plant you request will be carefully picked and tended for you. We are also very sorry that we are unable to offer the 10% membership discount to our FOBG members this year since Brookside Gardens needs every dollar from the plant sale during these financially hard times. We hope that you, our faithful members and public, will not mind this small gesture of generosity and sacrifice to our beloved gardens which has been our haven and oasis of hope through all these crises. This is our way of saying THANK YOU to the gardens!



*Clematis 'Sparky Purple'*

## What do members get instead?

- Each **FOBG** member that places an online order will get a **FREE perennial plant** at the time of pick up as long as supplies last.
- In place of the in-person, early preview sale, the online plant sale store will become available to the members a week before the general public.

*A membership email blast to this regard will be sent to all the FOBG members first.*



**Deer Fern (*Blechnum spicant*)**

**What is special this year?** We have a wonderful offering of 7 different **ferns** including Joan's special favorite – the **deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*)**, 29 varieties of **shrubs**, 54 varieties of **perennials** and 11 **trees**. Many of the shrubs at this sale are smaller varieties more suited to the urban gardens of today. With many plant nurseries like Behnke's closing, finding perennials is not an easy task. Every garden lover knows the joy of running to one's garden in early spring to watch for that wisp of green coming through the dormant earth! Nothing is more joyful and hopeful than a garden coming alive in spring.

Taffy Turner, our volunteer coordinator and Master Gardener will be providing garden designs for sun, shade and part sun/shade gardens once again this year. Details will be available on the **Plant Sale** page.



**Plants in the Hoop House**

Our sale this year would not have been possible but for the wonderful staff at **Brookside Gardens** who have worked hard all summer long planting (in addition to their responsibility at the gardens) since the volunteers were not allowed to work in the gardens. Once the volunteers are allowed in they will take over and ease the burden of the BG staff. Taffy Turner, with the help of the FOBG volunteers will be pulling your orders and picking out the best of the best for you! Thank you BG staff and FOBG volunteers and **YOU**, our members and public, for helping our sale become a success story by starring in it!

Please check for plant sale details at the **FOBG** website ([www.friendsofbrooksidegardens.org/plantsale2020](http://www.friendsofbrooksidegardens.org/plantsale2020)) for the complete plant list, detailed description of each plant and planting design suggestions. Make 2020 the **YEAR OF THE VIRTUAL PERENNIAL GARDEN** and experience endless joy come next spring. **See you curbside in September!!**

**\* Dates subject to change due to pandemic**



**Tricyrtis 'Samurai'**



**Brunnera 'Jack Frost'**

# *“Always Together” Online T-shirt Sale*

**By Anne Roland, FOBG Vice President**

Faced with Montgomery Parks’ closings and the cancellation of **FOBG**-sponsored activities and fundraisers, the **FOBG** Board decided to try something different. In June, we partnered with Athletic House, a family owned and locally operated business, to offer a special, limited-edition T-shirt for sale online. The shirts were available for purchase for only three weeks. Athletic House managed the online store, processed the orders, printed the shirts and shipped them directly to the buyers, for a flat rate of \$25. Proceeds from the sale of the shirts will go to **FOBG**.

Recognizing that FOBG members were together in spirit during the COVID-19 crisis, we adopted the theme “Friends Apart but Always Together,” and put this unique logo on the back of each shirt.

The sale was a success, with 146 shirts sold, and proceeds of \$1,460 going **to FOBG**. Many thanks to Athletic House, and to everyone who participated in the sale.



# ***SOUNDS IN THE GARDEN***

**By Joe Ann Stenstrom**

Now that we have endured weeks/months of isolation, have you learned more about the beauty of silence in your garden? As those first feelings of claustrophobia eventually gave way to a more settled and resigned state, one could begin to enjoy the quiet in which we found ourselves. Listening to the various bird songs and calls has brought a symphony of nature to the backyard. Not a bird lover due to a traumatic childhood experience, I have “changed my tune.” Hearing their various voices and watching them flit across the yard and among the trees has become a delight. With a cardinal pair living in the neighborhood it is a joy to see their colorful plumage; the red feathers of the male against the green foliage is somehow soothing, as are the many bird songs.

With the reduction in traffic sounds in the neighborhood, these beautiful voices are heard more clearly - waking one in the morning, adding to the enjoyment of the afternoon tea-time or evening wine tasting,

however solitary! The New York Times recently posted an article, complete with sound, featuring the 13 varieties of birds now heard in Central Park without the usual noise and bustle of the city covering these voices.

Watching animal life has been more entertaining as we have fewer distractions from the “to do” and “to go” lists that regularly pepper our lives. Chipmunks scurrying across the yard and garden and watching the antics of the squirrels as they chase one another has become enjoyable where it was once an annoyance.

Enjoy this quiet while we have it even as we look forward eagerly to a more normal existence. As we eventually return to a busier life, remember the serenity and calm that less noise brought and continue to listen for those soothing bird sounds.



# Garden Guardian

By Dr. Dick Hammerschlag, Master Gardener, Howard County

## U R Nature's Best Hope

Hopefully, most of us are at least somewhat familiar with the teachings of Professor Doug Tallamy (University of Delaware, Department of Entomology and Wildlife) which exhort (good gardening word) us to plant native species as a way of helping to sustain and promote our local ecology. The key to his thesis is that many native insects and thus dependent wildlife are not generalists and do depend on particular plant species for their survival. Clearly, these plants need be native because that's what the insects have evolved with or better said co-evolved. Tallamy's latest tome passes the torch to US – puts the full onus on us.

Public natural areas are few and far between – thus there often is a disconnect between dwindling populations of organisms – i.e. isolated from each other. This makes it harder for reproduction and gene sharing. Perhaps more importantly, isolated patches of wildlands (habitat fragmentation) can be vulnerable to random stresses and disasters which can almost purge local populations – almost to extinction!! The point being, large wildland areas are much more stable than smaller pieces. Small pieces are mostly edge and thus possess little interior habitat. In his latest book NATURE'S BEST HOPE (Timber Press, 2019), Tallamy says it is up to all of us (especially us gardeners) to plant areas of diverse native species. By so doing WE become the connecting link/the cement holding the pieces of the ecological system together (it is just not possible for public park lands to do so) – making

limited places larger. Dr. Tallamy calls this collection of backyard habitats 'Homegrown National Parks'!!! By creating these biological 'corridors', the species involved can intermingle and increase their populations. The ecological system becomes larger and more stable. For the record, 'homegrown' can include corporate areas and other such landscapes with open space. What Tallamy espouses most – after driving around and looking at our current landscaping – is to shrink the almighty low ecological value lawns!!!! He says if all of us (maybe some of us already have) just reduce the size of our lawns in half and plant with a mix of native species, we can achieve the goal of restoring our local ecology. In his book, he does point out that some native plant species are more beneficial than others and could be called keystone species. For example, he notes that the white oak (*Quercus alba*) harbors more different native insect species and more insects period than other native trees studied. Goldenrods, asters and sunflowers (OK – could also include milkweeds) are worthwhile perennials.

There are many other important issues covered in the book including pollinator insects and associated plants, problems with invasive species, ways to improve your habitat management, etc. So, go read the book and get the full story!! ...And then when you're won over, share with your neighbors. This is the way modern conservation must work.

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 can be found at: [Cultivate](#).

Date	FOBG-Sponsored Programs	Course #
9/5/2020	Plant Sale* (pick-up on 9/5, 9/6, 9/12 and 9/13)	
Date	Brookside Gardens Adult and Children's Programs	
8/24/2020	Virtual Yoga at Brookside Gardens	87657
9/9/2020	Tai Chi at Brookside Gardens*	87658
9/14/2020	Flower Buds Session I*	87443
9/17/2020	Speaker Series: Racial Equity Through Urban Greening & Agriculture	87627
9/19/2020	Behind-the-Scene Greenhouse Tour**	87629
9/19/2020	Children's Day(s) – Good Garden Vibes and Wellness!	87322
9/19/2020	Conquering Cool Season Edibles	87641
9/23/2020	Behind-the-Scene Greenhouse Tour**	87631
10/1/2020	Full Moon Walk	87655
10/1/2020	Fall Story Walk*	87445
10/3/2020	Hands-On Orchid Repotting**	87644
10/10/2020	Plants and Planting Design for RainScapes Gardens	87640
10/15/2020	Garden After Dark: Wild at Home with Hilton Carter	87622
10/17/2020	Herbal Remedies to Boost the Immune System	87656
10/18/2020	Mastering the Art of Light & Shadow with Watercolor*	87624
10/25/2020	BOOtanica Family Fun	87326
10/29/2020	Chrysanthemum Tour**	87633
10/31/2020	Speaker Series: A Beautiful Obsession – Jimi Blake's World of Plants at Hunting Brook Gardens	87628
11/3/2020	Glory of Fall Garden Tour**	87635
11/7/2020	Getting Your Garden Ready for Winter	87642
11/24/2020	Thanksgiving Centerpiece**	87646

\* - Program Meets Multiple Days

\*\* - Program Meets Multiple Times Per Day



Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

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Virtual Plant Sale with Curbside Pickup

Art provided by Peter FitzGerald & Nithya Raghavan