



# GROWING TOGETHER

Plantation Lakes Garden Club, Millsboro, Delaware

A Member of National Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs, and Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs

## FEBRUARY 2024

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM

PAGE 2

### ACTIVITIES

PAGE 3

### NEWS FOR MEMBERS

PAGE 4

### THIS AND THAT

### *February Celebrations*

February 7<sup>th</sup> Mary Balasi

February 19<sup>th</sup> Donna Williams

### PUBLIC EDUCATION SERIES

February 21<sup>st</sup> Story Hill Farm at The Landing  
**Reservations required! [info@plgardenclub.org](mailto:info@plgardenclub.org)**

### PENNY PINES



**Donate your coins for the National Garden Clubs' Penny Pines project – saving forests \$68 at a time. Please contact Mary Balasi, PLGC Chair, to add a name on the “in honor of” or “in memory of” list for our next certificate purchase.**

<https://www.gardenclub.org/penny-pines>

[www.plantationlakesgardenclub.org](http://www.plantationlakesgardenclub.org)



### FEBRUARY PROGRAM RECAP

#### Spring Garden Preparation

Jay Millman, Bella Terra Garden Center

February 1, 2024

Members and guests responded enthusiastically to the presentation expressing interest in the valuable insights shared, and the practical tips and strategies provided. The positive atmosphere in the room was fueled by the presenter's passion and expertise, leaving all inspired and ready to apply the newfound knowledge to enhance our spring gardening experiences. No doubt each of us are looking forward to the upcoming gardening season with enthusiasm and confidence. Don't forget to use your 10% off coupon at Bella Terra by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

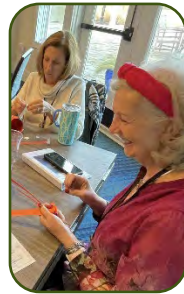
# Activities

## May Basket History

At the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, First Vice President and Program Chair, Pat Minnigh, presented the history of May Baskets as a rich tapestry woven with cultural, historical, and social threads, showcasing its enduring appeal and significance across different eras and regions. Members actively engaged in the hands-on workshop contributing to the success of the program, offering a tangible and interactive learning opportunity for garden club members.



Pat Minnigh, presented the history of May Baskets as a rich tapestry woven with cultural, historical, and social



## Public Education Lecture Series



The PLGC's Public Education Lecture Series had a successful kickoff on January 24<sup>th</sup> at The Landing, featuring an engaging presentation by Laura Brittingham. Laura shared insights into the operations of Brittingham Farms and Lavender Fields, located nearby.

During the presentation, Laura delved into the farm's history and the strategic decisions they made to transform it into a teaching farm. The primary goal was to educate the community about the significance of preserving Delaware farmland and fostering local appreciation for the farming community.

Brittingham Farms is home to Leicester Longwool heritage breed sheep, introduced to the American Colonies by George Washington before the Revolutionary War. This breed, with only about 100 breeders in the United States, is recognized for its distinctive long, lustrous wool, elegant appearance, and calm temperament. The wool is highly sought after for its



length, quality, and natural luster, making it desirable for various textile applications. These sheep can be found at Mount Vernon and Colonial Williamsburg.

Before incorporating lavender into their operation, the farm focused on rotating corn and soybeans on unirrigated land. The decision to add lavender was complemented by the establishment of an artisanal distillery, producing lavender essential oil and hydrosol. This aromatic bounty is then used to create candles, soaps, and other products. Additionally, the refined wool from the Leicester Longwool sheep is utilized to make dryer balls.



Lavender, known for its fragrant foliage and vibrant purple flowers, graces Brittingham Farms with seven different cultivars, creating a stunning purple panorama throughout the summer.

Some general considerations for planting lavender:

**Soil and Sunlight.** Lavender thrives in well-draining soil and requires plenty of sunlight. Choose a location with full sun exposure for optimal growth.

**Planting Time.** Lavender is typically planted in the spring or fall. Ensure the soil has warmed up sufficiently for spring planting.

**Spacing.** Space lavender plants apart to provide good air circulation and prevent issues like mildew.

**Watering.** Lavender prefers drier conditions, to avoid overwatering. Water the plants deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil to dry out between watering sessions.

**Pruning.** Prune lavender regularly to encourage bushier growth and prevent the plants from becoming leggy. This also helps maintain their shape and promotes better flowering.

**Harvesting.** Lavender blooms can be harvested when the flowers are in full bloom. This is typically when the color is most vibrant, and the oils are at their peak concentration.

The successful integration of agriculture and heritage breeding at Brittingham Farms showcases a holistic approach to sustainable farming and community education. More information is available on the website.

<https://www.brittinghamfarms.com>

# News for Members



## PLGC PUBLIC EDUCATION SERIES

PLGC is pleased to host another opportunity for members of the community to learn about local enterprises that are having a significant impact on our environment. These luncheon presentations at **The Landing** are open to everyone outside the garden club. Members are encouraged to bring neighbors and friends.

Sandwich selections:

- Philly cheesesteak (no peppers or onions)
- Ham and Swiss club
- Shrimp salad
- Chicken Ceasar wrap

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

**Speaker:** Helen Raleigh  
**From:** Story Hill Farm  
**Cost:** \$25 lunch including gratuity  
**Menu:** Soup or Salad, Choice of Sandwich  
**Reservations:** [info@plgardenclub.org](mailto:info@plgardenclub.org)



## DFGC MEETINGS

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

10:00 a.m. Executive Banquet and Conference Center  
205 Executive Drive  
Newark, DE 19702

Hosted by: Duck Creek and Coastal Gardeners

Program: Julia Clevett presents ~  
*A Little Bit of This and a Little Bit of That*  
 Traditional and Creative Floral Designs

Registration is required and open between March 11 and March 29. **Send \$40 check payable to PLGC to Irina Giller.**



## CAR-SGC 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

October 21-24, 2024  
The Olde Mill Inn, Basking Ridge, New Jersey



## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

### Thursday, March 7th ..... Floral Designs and Potluck

Location: Community Center North Shore  
 Time: 11:00 am pre-gathering  
 Notes: Later start time.  
 Watch for email for potluck sign up.

### April 1st – April 30th ..... 2024-2025 Dues to Irina Giller

### Thursday, April 4th ..... Field Trip to Adkins Arboretum

Location: Ridgeley, MD (carpooling)  
 Time: Tour starts at 10:30 am  
 Notes: Signup with Pat Minnigh.  
 \$10 fee for tour paid in advance.  
 TBD where to have lunch afterward.

### Wednesday, April 10th..... Dine and Donate Event

Location: Cottage Café, South Bethany Beach  
 Time: Lunch or Dinner  
 Notes: Restaurant is donating 10% of all receipts to PLGC– tell your friends!

### Wednesday, April 24th.... Longwood Gardens Field Trip

Bus Trip: Signup with Pat Minnigh.  
 \$70 without tour  
 \$75 with tour (1.5 hours)  
 Departure Time: TBD  
 Return Time: TBD  
 Notes: Lunch on your own.

### Thursday, May 2nd ..... Regular Meeting

Location: Flex Room at The Landing

### Saturday, May 11th..... Mother’s Day Luminaries

Location: North Shore Community Center and East Community Center  
 Time: TBD  
 Notes: Youth Garden Fundraising Event.  
 Volunteers needed.

### Thursday, June 6th ..Story Hill Farm Field Trip and Tour

Location: Frankford, DE (carpooling)  
 Time: Tour starts at 11:30 am  
 Notes: Brown bag lunch.



## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BUTTERFLY BUSH (AND WHAT TO PLANT INSTEAD!)

Many gardeners are attracted to the butterfly bush because of its name and signature flowers. These deciduous shrubs, known to some as summer lilacs, can grow up to 10 feet tall, making them appear quite grand in a garden. The way the butterfly bush grows, with its arching stems and flower clusters with spikes, truly draws the eye.



But despite its allure, there's a lesser-known truth about the butterfly bush. While these seemingly harmless plants do invite and provide nectar to some adult butterflies, the truth is that there are better – equally colorful and beneficial to insects – options

for gardeners who want to attract butterflies and help them through all stages of their life cycles.

The butterfly bush is not native to North America; it is a species that evolved in Asia where it was first cultivated as an ornamental. Because of this, not a single native caterpillar in North America can feed on the butterfly bush. Without host plants to feed their caterpillars, butterflies can't complete their lifecycle and their populations suffer.

Unlike the butterfly bush, many native plants serve as host plants for butterflies. A prime example of such a plant is milkweed. This plant provides a place for caterpillars to feed and grow as well as nectar for adult butterflies.

### Butterfly bush alternatives - embrace the power of native plants.

To provide the support butterflies, birds, and other important wildlife needs, gardeners are well-advised to plant native plants. There are many beautiful, easy-to-grow, native plants that will better support butterflies and other wildlife. These native alternatives to the butterfly bush can even thrive in small spaces. In our area, the following are good examples.

**Orange Butterfly Milkweed** is considered the powerhouse of pollinator gardens. Also known as orange milkweed or butterfly milkweed, this perennial presents itself with large, flat-topped clusters of yellow-orange or bright-orange



flowers. It's a fantastic option for areas with well-drained soil, requiring full sun for optimal growth. Orange milkweed grows in compact, small "bush-like" tough plants that can be clustered for maximum impact.

**Swamp Milkweed** is a striking jewel in native landscapes. Pink Swamp Milkweed is a captivating addition to home wildlife gardens. With vibrant pink



blooms, it attracts pollinators like Monarch butterflies and various bee species, contributing to their conservation. Thriving in wetter conditions, it's suitable for rain gardens and supports wetland wildlife. Low-maintenance and

adaptable, it blooms from late spring through summer, ensuring a vibrant garden for an extended duration.

**American Beautyberry Shrub** also a striking jewel in native landscapes. The American Beautyberry shrub is a captivating native plant that adds a burst of vibrant color to any garden. This deciduous shrub is renowned for its stunning display of brightly colored berries that cluster along its arching branches. Its white flowers offer nectar to native bees, and it serves as the caterpillar host plant for the spring azure butterfly and the snowberry clearwing moth.



In the late summer and fall, the American Beautyberry Shrub transforms into a show-stopping spectacle with its lustrous, iridescent purple berries. These berries not only serve as a visual delight but also provide a valuable food source for a variety of birds.

This shrub prefers well-drained soil and thrives in full to partial sun, making it a versatile choice for different garden settings. With its manageable size and bush growth habit, this shrub can be a splendid addition to perennial beds or used as an eye-catching focal point.

What are the risks when growing a butterfly bush? Butterfly bushes grow and spread aggressively, often out-competing native plants. They can disrupt local ecosystems and decrease food and habitat availability for beneficial insects. While butterfly bushes can provide aesthetic appeal due to their deep purple, pink, or white flower spikes and can attract adult butterflies, their aggressive growth can become invasive. If not planted in well-drained soil, they can get root rot. Their height can overshadow and crowd out smaller plants.

*Reference: LaVaute, Kelly, Digital Storyteller. Garden for Wildlife Updated August 10, 2023.*

*Photos: shutterstock.com*