

August 2021

South Schuylkill Garden Club

Third Tuesday of the Month at 6:30

First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill Haven

www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com

www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com



Cultivating the Community Newsletter

Weather Folklore: “For every fog in August, there will be a snowfall.”

- If the first week in August is unusually warm, the coming winter will be snowy and long.
- If a cold August follows a hot July, it foretells a winter hard and dry.

New Home:

We have found a new home for our indoor meetings. It will be the First United Church of Christ on Route 61 in Schuylkill Haven. Some people refer to the church as the White Church off the road leading to the entrance of the Penn State Schuylkill Campus.

August Meeting:

August club Meeting is set for August 17. Time is 6:30 in our new home of the First United Church of Christ, 110 Route 61 Schuylkill Haven.

We will have members outside the door showing you the way into our new home.

Speaker for that evening will be Leah Zerbe. She will speak on the topic of Grass and Wildflowers. She will be suggesting grasses and other plants for the garden which are beneficial to wildlife.

A Floral Challenge is in place. Combine bark (or branches), a stone and grass, plus other items of your choice in an arrangement for display. The focus will be on the use and choice of bark.

District II/III

We are selling raffle tickets for the district “Fall Festival” meeting. The tickets cost \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Your last chance to purchase tickets for items donated by the various clubs at the District Meeting on September 13, 2021, will be at the August Club Meeting. The raffled items are accessories to enhance the beauty of a garden. Please see Kaye Moyer to purchase tickets. Thank you to those of you who have purchased your lucky tickets to support the district in their fundraising efforts.

Nancy is sharing her bounty.



Hope more of you will share photo from your gardens. Please email photo to: kamorgan11@gmail.com or text to 5706179620.

Annual District Meeting

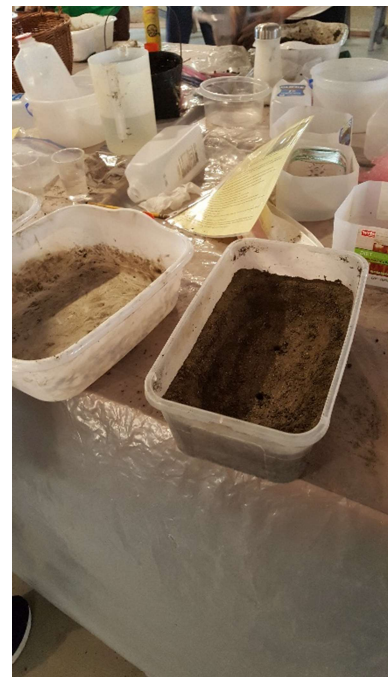
Mark Monday, September 13, 2021, on your calendar for a day in Bethlehem. The District II/III Annual meeting will be in Historic Hotel Bethlehem with a walking tour of the Miller's House Gardens and a design presentation by Darcie Garcia, creator of Philadelphia Flower Show designs. Of course, after is the opportunity to walk the historic Main Street for sightseeing and shopping. A section of hotel rooms is even reserved for those who may wish to make it a day or two. Conference cost is \$44.

Turn in your registration my September 6th. Treat yourself to a nice time. – Jane

Hypertufa Awaits

Folks came from far and wide to mold hypertufas on a warm Tuesday evening in July. Lehighton, Lost Creek, Pine Grove, brought together 25 plus people donning gloves to “play in the dirt”. Kim Morgan placed all needed supplies in a dish tub with packaged portions and detailed instructions. Homeward all went for the curing process - two months if patient, two weeks if anxious. Thanks, Kim.

Hypertufa Workshop Photo's:





Got a chuckle out of this one.



So, I started this list below and I would love if all of you experienced gardeners would send me your ideas of “*You know you are a Gardner when...*” Let us keep the ideas flowing and add to the list. Let us see how many ideas we can come up with. Just email your ideas to me at kamorgan11@gmail.com or text it to me at 5706179620

You know you are a Gardner when:

- Your gardening gloves fall out of the car door
- You have gardening tools in trunk of your car
- You develop community gardens
- Your gardens are themed
- You weed your neighbors’ gardens
- You dead head your daughter’s flowers
- You empty the dehumidifier and use the water to water your potted plants
- You sprinkle your son’s hair from a recent haircut around your plants to keep the deer away
- Pull weeds in public gardens
- Carry a small set of pruners in your back pocket
- *You are constantly checking the weather report*
- You know you are a gardener when _____.

Hummingbirds and Fruit Flies

One of the most beloved garden visitors--the hummingbird--may play a role in integrated pest management for berries.



Photo credit: Pat Coolsen, Cumberland County Master Gardener

Each spring I put hanging baskets of fuchsia on my north-facing front porch to welcome the ruby-throated hummingbirds back from Central America! I usually start the hummingbird season with a small sugar-water feeder and add a hanging basket or two. Soon my native plants provide plenty of nectar for the hummingbirds. By mid-May, I put away the feeder. However, this year I’ll relocate the hummingbird feeder to my berry patch to try a new insect management technique.

You may remember *Drosophila melanogaster* from genetics studies in biology class. This little fruit fly, correctly called a vinegar fly, lays its eggs on soft, overripe, and decaying fruits and vegetables late in the growing season. It is an important member of the recycling team. However, its exotic relative, the Spotted Wing *Drosophila* (*D. suzukii*), has a very different agenda. SWD females have robust, serrated ovipositors to lay eggs into firm ripening or ripe small fruit. Egg laying damages the fruit, but after the eggs hatch, the white, 1/8-inch-long larvae feed inside fruits before harvest. Its short life cycle repeats frequently during Pennsylvania summers.



SWD larvae in a raspberry. Photo credit: Hannah Burrack, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org

SWD has devastated berry production since the insect arrived in the mid-Atlantic region in 2011. These tiny flies favor raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, everbearing strawberries, and sometimes cherries and grapes. The good news is that the SWD population is non-existent or very low early in the growing season. June-bearing strawberries are rarely infested. It's the varieties with ripening fruits later in the season that are most affected.

So, what does this have to do with relocating my hummingbird feeder? Our ruby-throated hummingbirds are limitless consumers of small insects and spiders. Tiny arthropods are their source of protein, especially for feeding their nestlings. Cornell University researchers have verified that hummingbirds do help control adult SWD in berry patches! Although hummers are unfamiliar with this new and exotic insect, when a sugar-water feeder is placed in the berry patch, hummingbirds will be attracted to the area. While there, the hummers explore the plants and consume the adult spotted wing drosophila, often before mating and egg laying occur.



Adult SWD. Photo credit: Hannah Burrack, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org

Why not just grab a spray to manage spotted wing drosophila? Insecticidal sprays will not affect the eggs or destructive larvae as these stages are inside the berries. The tiny SWD adults fly from fruit to fruit within the canopy of the plant leaves. An insecticide with a long residual effect means that it lasts for several days. You would apply this insecticide to fruits that you harvest every day or two. If you decide to use an insecticide, select one that has a short Pre-Harvest Interval, PHI, the time between application and harvest. Bifenthrin, malathion, acetamiprid, spinosad, and pyrethrin are effective. Apply at a time when pollinators are not active. Remember to follow all instructions on the pesticide label.

Sanitation is essential to manage spotted wing drosophila. Always pick all the berries cleanly, including damaged fruits. Do not allow unwanted fruits in the area where SWD reproduction can continue. Either freeze or "bake" the unwanted fruits in clear plastic bags in the sun to kill the eggs and larvae, then bury the fruit in a compost pile. Prune the canes or limbs and reduce weeds so that there is good air circulation and low humidity. Not only will this reduce disease pressure, but also limit SWD populations.

If you decide to place hummingbird feeders in your berry patch, remember that the feeder will probably be in full sun. You must replace the sugar-water and scrub the feeder often, perhaps even daily as temperatures warm. Consider a second feeder as the replacement while you clean the first.

Prepare the sugar-water solution using 1-part white sugar and 4 parts tap water. Red coloring is neither needed nor recommended.

For new plantings, select berry varieties that mature early when SWD pressure is low.

While no one likes to see tiny white worms in fruit, these larvae are harmless if we consume them. If your berry crop is late maturing, do consider using the fruit for juice or jelly rather than for whole fruit or jam. Filter the juice through cheesecloth to remove the interlopers. Those berries are too good to give up! Next year I'll add native flowers to the berry patch to attract the hummers. Adaptation is part of gardening.

Mary Jo Gibson

Master Gardner

Columbia County

Stay Safe by staying socially separated from others by at least 6 feet. Wash hands frequently and above all do not touch your face, but with clean hands.