

# South Schuylkill Garden Club

Third Tuesday of the Month at 6:30

First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill Haven

[www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com](http://www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com)

[www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com](http://www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com)



## Cultivating the Community Newsletter

### Weather Folklore for

- *If June is sunny, the harvest will come early.*
- *In June, when there is no dew, it indicates rain.*
- *a cold and wet June spoils the rest of the year.*
- *June, damp and warm, does a farmer no harm.*
- *a good rain in June sets all in tune.*
- *the north wind in June blows in a good rye harvest.*

### Bus Trip 2022 Review

The Bus trip on Thursday **May 5, 2022**, to Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve was a success with 40 plus participants. The weather cooperated with a beautiful day between many days of rain. Participants enjoyed the trip and came home with many native plants. Thank you to Carol H. and Pat W. for planning the trip.

Speaking of garden bus tours, we are looking for suggestions for the 2023 garden bus tours.

### May Meeting Review

Our May meeting's speaker was Sue Reier. She spoke on the "Personal and Social Benefits of Nature." Sue engaged her audience by providing thought provoking insights into how a breath of fresh air or a walk-in nature rejuvenates the body.

Thank you to the refreshment committee members Kathy Townley, Barbara Malewski, Pat Pitkin, Margitta Stevens .

## Plant Sale Review

The Plant Sale held May 21 at the Senior Rec Center in Schuylkill Haven was another success. Nancy Russial committee chair had a lot of support from Carol, Kaye, and Larry who played a major role again this year. Supporting club members who signed up for the Plant Sale and gave a great deal of effort included Linda Bollinger, Kim Morgan, Lillian Patten, MaryAnn Uranium, Bernice Francaviglia, Pat Wishousky, Joan Medlinsky, Kathy Townley, Jeanne Zulick, Jan Kruse, and Frank Colosimo. Thank you does not seem enough. So, a **BIG THANK YOU** goes all.

## District June 13, 2022, Meeting

District June 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting will be hosted by South Schuylkill Garden Club at the First United Church of Christ. It will be the first in person gathering for the year. Awards from the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania will be distributed, view the Trash to Treasure submission, learn of garden tours and flower shows being planned and simply enjoy the company of fellow gardeners.

Guest speaker is Cynthia Barbedette speaking on Iron Gall Ink and its amazing history.

A light lunch of quiche and salad will be provided. Fellow club members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

## June Meeting

June meeting will be for the flower lover in all of us. Sandy Hendricks from District 5 will skillfully demonstrate floral arrangement on June 21. We will start the evening with Sandy designing

arrangements. This is an evening you will not want to miss. Sandy's designs will then be raffled off.

We are opening this program to the public in hope that we can recruit more interest and membership in our club.

Refreshment committee for the evening is Kaye Moyer, Nancy Russial, Nancy Taylor, Jane Kruse, and Maris Kilgus.

## July Meeting

**July 19, 2022** is a hands on workshop. We will be making leaf cast. Dawn Blanton is the instructor. The cost will be about \$12-\$15. To reserve your spot for this workshop since Dawn does not want to have more than 25 participants, we are asking you so sign up by **July 1** with Kaye Moyer. The workshop is free to members. BUT you must reserve your spot with a Check made out to SSGC and turn it over to Kaye Moyer. When you come to the workshop your check will be returned to you. By using this method, we then have a firmer commitment of participation. If we do not fill the workshop with members, then the program will be open to the public and the club will charge outside participants accordingly.

## Desk of District II/III Director

### June

#### **National Garden Week - June 5-11, 2022**

Use National Garden Week as designated by the National Garden Club to raise awareness to gardening within your community. This week is an opportunity to encourage pride in your community, interest new members, and work with other groups to be part of those efforts.

Consider projects that can gather public attention or further the work of garden clubs. It may be a time to plant a community tree, bring attentions to community gardens, plan a youth engaging activity or raising attention to your clubs many activities.

## Schuykill Herb Society-

On June 16 herb society will be visiting Highland Acres Daylily and Hosta Farm at 6 PM. On July 14

they will be visiting Hope Hill Lavender Farm. Please contact Kathy T. for more Information.

## The Mixed Border: An Enduring Garden Style

A mixed border is a combination of annuals, perennials and shrubs that skirt a wall, walkway, or fence. Here are suggested steps for creating this type of garden.



Photo credit: Debra Burrows

A mixed border is exactly what its name suggests: A mixture of perennials, annuals, and shrubs in a garden bed edged on at least one side by a structure, fence, driveway, walkway, wall, or other boundaries. This style of garden bed has been utilized for centuries and with good reason. It is a very flexible style that can be adapted to showcase preferences for color, texture, and height. The degree of formal structure in a mixed border is up to the gardener, with some preferring a relaxed casual style while others favor a careful arrangement of plants in lines and shaped groupings. Mixed borders can be used to soften or accent hardscape features such as fence lines, sidewalks, or garage walls and change their shapes by incorporating curves. When carefully planned, mixed borders can provide beauty for multiple seasons.

Creating a mixed border can seem like a big project but breaking it down into steps such as those described below can make it a little more manageable and more enjoyable.

## Site Selection

The first step in creating a mixed border is the selection of a site. Survey your landscape and decide where you want to place your new mixed border. How much sun does it receive? Is it usually dry or damp? The conditions of the site will play a big part in determining your plant options, so choose the site carefully. Use a rope or garden hose to lay out the boundaries, then step back and try to picture the space already planted. Adjust the rope or hose to make it larger or smaller, add curves, or change the shape until you are satisfied with it.

## Choosing a Style

Now that you have selected your site, it's time to decide on the look you want to achieve. One way to do that is to observe existing gardens. Check out those in your neighborhood and consider what you like and don't like about them. If possible, visit public or botanical gardens to get ideas. The Arboretum at Penn State, located in Centre County, has many beds, borders, gardens, and other types of plantings on display and is well worth a trip. Looking through gardening magazines and perusing garden sites on the Internet can help you picture the many possibilities for mixed borders.

Another consideration is the season of interest, which refers to the time or times of the year when your mixed border will brighten your landscape. Most often summer is the primary season of interest, but you can design your garden to be attractive during other seasons as well. This takes some planning and requires additional space but can be very rewarding. For example, adding spring-blooming bulbs, ephemerals, and flowering shrubs to the mixed border will give it color and interest early in the growing season before most perennials awaken from their winter dormancy. Ephemerals will disappear as perennials begin to take over. Bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths are a different matter, and their leaves will be present in the beds for several months as they soak up the sun's energy to enable them to bloom the following year. Wherever possible, plant perennials in front of bulbs so that, as perennials grow and leaf out, they obscure the leaves of the bulbs. Creating a planting diagram can help to document the location of bulbs so they won't be disturbed when adding plants to the border. Taking photographs with a cell phone camera can help you avoid disturbing bulbs as well. Fall blooming

perennials, such as chrysanthemums and native asters can give your garden color through October and sometimes November after the blooms of many other perennials are long gone. Shrubs are a good option for creating winter interest in the mixed border. Combining evergreen shrubs with shrubs that have berries during winter months adds color and attracts birds.



A mixed border in summer. Photo credit: Debra Burrows

## Plant Selection

The characteristics of your site determine which plants can be used. A location that receives full sun (at least six hours daily) is suitable for plants that will thrive in bright sunlight, not those that prefer shade or partial shade. Matching the plants' cultural needs with the site is sometimes overlooked, with very disappointing results. A few years ago, I visited a bright sunny landscape that had been extensively planted with hostas. The hostas, which prefer shade or part shade, were brown, shriveled, and dying. The entire area had to be replanted and a lot of time, money, and effort went to waste.

Another consideration is moisture. A hot, dry site should be planted with selections that do not require consistent moisture and, conversely, sites that remain wet or damp, should be planted with selections that prefer such conditions. One of my favorite shrubs, winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*), which enhances winter landscapes with its bright red berries, prefers moist conditions. It's a beautiful, reliable native shrub and I often recommend it to



friends, but only if they have locations with sufficient moisture.

The USDA Hardiness Zone is an important site characteristic to consider as well. Perennials and shrubs selected for a mixed border should be suited to the zone of the location. While it's often tempting to try to include an especially appealing plant that is just outside of a zone, doing so can be a recipe for disappointment.

With site characteristics in mind, you can begin creating your plant list. If you have plenty of space, you may want to include annuals, perennials, shrubs, and even small trees in your mixed border. Shrubs and small trees can add height and create a backdrop for lower-growing perennials and annuals. Their leaves or needles also bring a variety of textures. Evergreen shrubs will provide a very nice contrast for many shades of flowers. In this type of mixed border, the small trees and shrubs are usually placed at or near the back of the border, with taller perennials in the middle and shorter perennials or annuals near the front.

Smaller mixed borders may only have room for annuals and perennials, so you may need to limit your selections. If you have favorite "must-have" plants, this is the time to add them to your list. As space allows, include groupings of various heights, textures, and colors. Consider the mature size of each plant and plan accordingly. While a full, lush look is often desirable, an overcrowded one is neither appealing nor healthy for the plants.

Whether your mixed border is large or small, remember the importance of native plants and include them wherever possible. Penn State Extension Master Gardeners can provide you with lists and descriptions of native perennials, shrubs, and trees for your area and there are many from which to choose. In addition to being appealing additions to your borders, they will attract butterflies and bees and provide them with much-needed food and habitat.



The same mixed border in early fall. Photo credit: Debra Burrows

## Site Preparation

The site you have laid out for your new mixed border will need to be cleared of unwanted vegetation such as weeds and lawn. There are several ways to do this, including digging, smothering, and using herbicides. My personal preference is to use a method called sheet composting, which requires more time but much less effort and no chemicals. Sheet composting information is available here: [Create New Garden Beds with Sheet Composting and Sheet Mulching](#). Whichever method you choose, make certain your new bed is weed and grass-free before installing the first plant.

A soil test should also be done before planting and will help to determine if fertilizer or lime should be added. Soil test kits are available through county offices of Penn State Extension, at garden centers, and from commercial sources. Penn State also offers an online [soil test submission form](#) which can be downloaded, completed, and submitted along with payment and soil samples.

Adding organic matter, such as compost, or well-rotted manure, can help to improve soil and increase its ability to hold water and make it readily available to plant roots. It should be added to the bed and worked into the soil prior to planting.

## Planting

Now that your site is ready, it's time to decide on the placements of the plants you plan to add. Mixed borders tend to look best when plants are grouped into clusters of at least three of the same plant, with clusters repeating throughout the bed. Try to avoid planting just one plant by itself because doing so

detracts from the overall appearance of the border, giving it a disjointed quality.

It can be helpful to place your plants, while they are still in their pots, on the soil surface and then step back and observe. Picture the plants as they will appear when they are full grown. Did you leave enough space between them? Are tall plants toward the back and shorter ones in front? What about the colors? Have you placed plants in locations where their colors will complement each other? Try to picture the color and texture of the foliage of the plants when they mature. Are plants with similar texture and color too close to each other? Try to consider all the possibilities. If needed, you can do some re-arranging until you are satisfied with your layout. Then it's time to start planting!

## Authors

[Debra C. Burrows, Ph.D.](#)

Clinton County Master Gardner Coordinator

**Please share photos from your gardens.**

**Email photo to: [kamorgan11@gmail.com](mailto:kamorgan11@gmail.com)  
or text to 570-617-080**

**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](mailto:kamorgan11@gmail.com) or text it to me at **5706170808****

**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 plant by the phases of the moon
- You cover your fall plants to protect them from the first fall frost
- You count on the first frost being in November
- You cover your plants before the frost hits.
- Clean your gardening equipment before putting away for the season
- You stare looking at seed and plant catalogues for next year
- You know you are a Gardener ... When you go to the store for groceries and come home with some plants that just jumped into your cart. – Pat P.
- You know you are a Gardener ... when you can resist everything but temptation in a Garden Center. There is always room for one more. – Pat P.
- You know you are a Gardener ... when you smile YES when a gardener-friend asks you if you could use a few irises or daylilies that she is separating because they need thinning. – Pat P.

- 
- You know you are a Gardener ... when the Plant catalogs arrive in the middle of winter. – Pat P.
  - You know you are a Gardener ... when the plants in your garden have come from other gardening friends. Memories ... I plant my friends. – Pat
  - You are out on those warm sunny days looking for the first signs of spring popping up from the soil.
  - You are looking for the first robin to land in your yard.
  - The March winds blow off your sun hat when you are out in the garden.
  - You are anywhere that you see drying seed pods on a plant and you wonder if you can get away with collecting some and where you can try planting them. -Kathy T.
  - You know you are a gardener when your dog digs a hole going after a varmint and then you place a plant in it – Jeanne
  - *You know you are a gardener when you light 8 candles in your greenhouse so your peppers and tomatoes do not freeze on a cold night.- Carol H.*
  - *You know you are a gardener when*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

---

**We Love Our Garden So  
Much that We “Wet Out”  
Plants**