

March 2023

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 March

If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb.

Is there any truth to this saying? Weather folklore sayings are as colorful as our imagination. While many sayings are based on careful observations and turn out to be accurate, others are merely rhymes or beliefs of the people who came before us. So, is this one any different?

- *A dry March and a wet May; Fill barns and bays with corn and hay.*
- *As it rains in March, so it rains in June.*
- *March winds and April showers, Bring forth May flowers.*
- *So many mists in March you see, so many frosts in May will be.*
- *If on St. Joseph's day (19th) clear,
So follows a fertile year;
If on St. Mary's (25th) bright and clear,
Fertile is said to be the year.*

Where do we begin! It has been a very busy January and February as we prepare for the 2023 Club year. So here we go. Let's start with a partial list of what is happening to get us to June. - Kim

March 21, 2023

Program: **"Tools of the Trade"**



Master Gardener **Tom Reed** will cover cleaning and proper care of tools to extend usage and avoid transmission of diseases.

Bring your favorite garden tool – hoe, pruner, or weeder to speak about why you like to use this tool in your garden.

We are also having a "Pot Party" so to speak. Not the kind that some of you might be thinking. Please bring your "clean" empty pots, hanging baskets, house plant planters, and other containers to share for using at the plant sale.

Refreshments: Carol Haldeman, Jeanne Zulick, Jane Yeasted

April 18, 2023
April Membership Tea

Program: **"ENCHANTED APRIL"**



Patricia Reppert, a Certified Floral Designer, will be presenting floral design. She is from Sinking Springs, and her program is entitled "Making it Floral".

We are looking for help with the Tea. In need of **raffle items** and **food** (sandwiches using one loaf of bread and **desserts** cut to fit into cupcake liners). A donation list will be circulated at the March Club Meeting.

May 16, 2023

Program: "JJ's Woodcraft Birdhouses and Feeders"

Jack Jones salvages old barn wood and other treasures to create one-of-a-kind, bird-friendly structures. In addition to showing his creations, he will share valuable information on birds and their habitats.



Refreshments: Terri Reppy, Sue Williams, Margittta Stevens

May 11 Mt. Cuba, Delaware Garden Tour
Reservations are being taken for the bus trip to Mt. Cuba Center, Hockessin, Delaware. **Cost for the trip is \$65.00. Registration deadline is April 11, 2023.** Contact is Carol Haldeman @ 570-345-2423/570-640-7511 or chaldyjr@gmail.com

May 12 Drop off plants at Schuylkill Haven Rec Center from 10AM-2PM. **Lots of help is needed to label, arrange and set-up for Plant Sale. Notify Nancy Russial if you will be there.**

May 13 **Spring** Plant Sale 8 AM – 1 PM
Again, lots of help is needed to help customers with plants and answer questions (and clean-up at the end of the sale). Please let Nancy Russial know what times you can help.



Prepare pots of perennials, natives, shrubs and trees at least two weeks in advance of the sale for healthy looking plants. Label each and water well before dropping off plants on May 12.

Plastic trays that hold 12-15 4-in. potted plants are needed for the plant sale, also 4-in. plastic pots. Looking for those old mini blinds to cut and label for plant markers. Also, need sturdy

cardboard, shallow boxes to pack purchased plants into.

On to Other News:

Citizen Science Project --- Measuring, Recording and Reporting Precipitation

Diana Rudloff, Upper Perkiomen Valley Garden Club

How often have you experienced rain at your home only to find a friend just a short distance away had none? Or worse, no rain for your garden! As a Citizen Science Project, would you be interested in recording precipitation and reporting once a month? I will collect information from you each month and compile the data into charts for us to share. The clubs in District II/III span a wide range of elevation, topography and latitudes so the results should be very interesting. Daily monitoring also provides you as a gardener with important information for watering your personal and community gardens, especially with the erratic weather that is becoming more common each year.

I have participated in a Citizen Science Project CoCoRAHS (Community Collaborative Rain Hail Snow) since 2016. Volunteers use a standard gauge and enter readings into an on-line database that offers a variety of reports. I am not proposing that you need to join CoCoRAHS, but it is an option. The data collected is used by the National Weather Service, hydrologists, researchers, the USDA, and many others.

If this activity interests you, Email me at diana.rudloff@outlook.com. I can host a short Zoom meeting during which we can discuss how to proceed with our project.

Stream Water Monitoring

Schuylkill County Conservation District and Schuylkill Headwaters is seeking volunteers to work in pairs to test waterways. A-stream water monitoring training will be held sometime in March, and usually lasts 2-3 hours. If interested, contact the Schuylkill Conservation District Office off the Gordon Nagle Trail (570-622-3742).

Yearbooks are published and will be available at March Club Meeting.

New member:

Welcome to: Maryann Hoffman-Krammes

24 Old Forge Rd

Pine Grove, PA 17963-8885

7384@comcast.net

570-345-2585/570-294-3125

Maryann has been gardening for years with mostly perennials and would like to exchange ideas on a newly started “shade” wildflower garden and a rock gardening.

Starting Seeds in Winter

Many annual and perennial seeds require a cold period to germinate. You can provide a controlled cold environment for seedlings with these instructions.



Photo credit: Lori Voll-Wallace

What Is Winter Sowing?

When you consider how seeds germinate in nature, it makes sense to sow seeds the same way. In late summer, left to their own devices, seeds fall to the ground. They slowly get covered with leaves and other natural materials to begin their long winter in the soil. Exposure to cold temperatures and moist conditions breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate when temperatures increase in the spring.

Winter sowing is the process of planting seeds outdoors in a container during the winter months. The container remains outdoors until the seedlings emerge in the spring. The container protects the seeds from animals and harsh weather, but the exposure to colder temperatures breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate. The container also provides an ideal environment for germination in the spring.

What to Winter Sow?

Winter sowing is ideal for some annuals, perennials, and wildflowers. Check out a seed catalogue: most will have some sort of notation about a seed's germination requirements. Look for seeds that are described with the following terms: reseeds; colonizes; self-sows; hardy seeds; seedlings can withstand frost; sow outdoors in late autumn or early winter; sow outdoors in early spring while frosts may still occur; needs pre-chilling; requires stratification.

When to Winter Sow?

The best time to winter sow perennials and hardy annuals is generally December to March depending on the weather conditions in your area. These seeds require a consistent period of moist, cold temperatures before germination occurs in spring. Tender plants including annuals and vegetables can be sown later in spring (March or April) as they do not require a cold period in order to germinate.

What Are the Benefits of Winter Sowing?

When you direct sow in the ground, the seeds are at the mercy of Mother Nature. They can be washed out in downpours; eaten by critters, bugs, and birds; desiccate in the wind; or rot in the soil.

Containerized seedlings stay more compact and do not need to be hardened off before planting in the garden.

Winter sowing is ideal for those with limited indoor space for seed starting. No special lighting or equipment is required for germination.

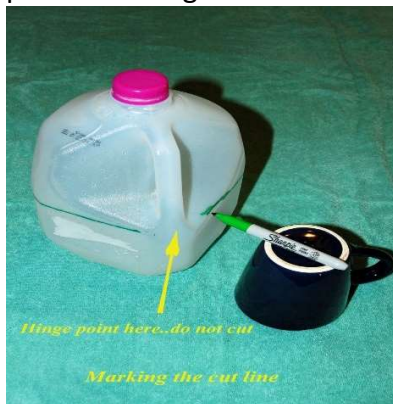


tool options for making the jug

Photos: George Schreck

How To

1. Clean container — Wash a milk jug or suitable container in warm, soapy water and rinse. Discard the top. The opening allows rain and melting snow to keep the soil moist.
2. Cut container — If not using a container with a hinged lid, insert a serrated knife or box cutter into the side of the jug, lay it on its side and cut all the way round, leaving about 1.5 inches (under the handle, if using a jug with a handle) so that the top hinges open. Tip: use coffee mug with marker placed on top. Twirl jug around to mark a perfect cutting line.



3. Create air holes — Use a knife, screwdriver or nail to poke holes for drainage in the bottom of the container. This is important-- if you don't make drainage holes, your seeds will drown! If using a container with a hinged lid, poke a few air holes in the top of the lid.

4. Add soil — Fill the container with 2 to 4" of a soilless seed starting medium. Avoid garden soil which may contain pathogens and weed seeds.
5. Water the soil — Lightly moisten growing medium and allow excess to drain.
6. Sow the seeds — Follow the directions on the seed package and sow seeds on the surface of the soil. Cover the seeds with a layer of soil and gently pat down.
7. Seal the container — Seal the cut edges of the container with light-colored duct tape. Leave the top open. Tip: rather than using tape, make holes for pipe cleaners or twist ties for easy opening and closing without the stickiness of the tape.
8. Label container — use a laundry marker (better than permanent marker) to label the type of seed and date of sowing. Place the label in the bottom of the container.
9. Set outdoors and leave! — Site the container in an area that receives winter sun. Do not place the container on a covered porch as the seeds require the moisture from the rain and snow. They should experience all the weather conditions they would in nature. Consider placing containers in a milk crate if conditions are windy. Forget about your containers until the spring when the seedlings germinate.

Lori Voll-Wallace

Master Gardner Area E Coordinator

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.
- When you are walking by the restaurant entrance and see weeds in the flowerbeds. Your husband turns to you and says, "Don't even think about it."- Linda
- When talking in your neighbor's yard and you bend down to pull weeds.
- When you are watering plants with the dehumidifier water.
- When you stop everything, you are doing to watch it rain.
- You know you are a Gardner when "you do container gardening on an elevated deck and front porch to keep plants deer safe. Deer haven't learned to do steps to date"
- *You know you are a gardener when you take apart a planter given to you and replot the plants to sale at the club's annual plant sale. -Jeanne*
- *You know you are a gardener when*
_____.

Plant Kindness & Gather Love