

South Schuylkill Garden Club

Third Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 PM

First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill Haven

www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com

www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com



Cultivating the Community Newsletter

• FUN FACTS ABOUT MARCH

March is known for two major holidays – one to find candy and the other to drink lots of beer!

- Certainly, you can guess which events those are, but there's a lot of other happenings going on in March. That, along with a rich history of course! Well here are 20 marvelous facts about March that you won't believe!
- In old Roman calendars, one year used to be ten months long, starting in March and ending in December.
- The "Ides of March" was a day in the Roman calendar equivalent to March 15th. It was considered a deadline for settling debts. It was also the day Julius Caesar was assassinated.
- If you were born in March, your birth flower is a daffodil!
- March babies are spoiled with two birthstones: aquamarine, and bloodstone which symbolizes courage.
- There are two zodiac signs in March. Pisces, which is until March 20, and Aries which is from the 21st.
- The first month of spring is March, which starts between the 19th and the 21st.
- March is the equivalent of September in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Every year, March and June finish on the same day of the week.
- March is the time of year when animals start waking up from hibernation.
- The name for March comes from Mars, the Roman god of war. It was named as such in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars.
- The Vernal Equinox occurs around March 20 or 21st. This is when the sun is directly above the equator, making the day and night equal length.
- The Anglo-Saxons called March "Hlyd monath" meaning "Stormy month" or "Hraed monath" meaning "Rugged month."
- The popular social media outlet Twitter was launched on March 21, 2006, with the first tweet going out the same day. It was posted by the founder, Jack Dorsey, which read "just setting up my twtr."
- Saint Patrick's Day occurs every March 17th, celebrated in many western countries to commemorate the day Saint Patrick died.
- Easter Sunday is another popular holiday of this month. Originally observed by Christians to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it has now become a holiday involving egg hunting, candy, and the Easter bunny.
- Statistically, March is the most unproductive month of the year in the U.S. This is the result of "March Madness" which is the season of NBA. Some companies lose up to \$1.9 billion in wages paid to workers who were not productive and instead spent company time on betting on NBA games.
- Back in the older days, March was when military campaigns would resume that had previously been put on hold for winter.
- On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell made the first-ever phone call. It was to his assistant, and he said "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you."
- The Eiffel Tower was ascended for the first time. Eiffel himself led a group of government officials and members of the press to the top. The elevators were not in operation yet, so the journey was made on foot and took over an hour.
- President John F. Kennedy founded the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961. It is a successful volunteer organization that has since sent at least 235,000 Americans abroad to developing countries to help with health care, education, and other human needs.

March Meeting:

Please bring **pots for plants** to share with club members for the May Plant Sale. Seems early to be thinking about the Plant Sale, but if we prepare containers early then the digging will be easier.

April Tea Information:

Lots of preparations are going into the Spring Tea. Committee members are reminded that, as of their last meeting held on February 15, they are to bring items to the March meeting that are to be exchanged with other club members for the upcoming Tea. See below for what is instore for club members as well as guests.

Plant Sale Information:

All plants are to be labeled with name and color before bringing to plant sale. Please see Kaye at the March meeting to pick up plant sticks for labeling your plants.

Here is a look at what is coming in 2024.

March 19, 2024

Program: *"Digging in the Dirt"*



PSU Master Gardener **Tom Reed** will present a program on making gardening easier on the body with tools and tips.

Refreshments: Carol Haldeman, Jeanne Zulick, Mary Ann Uranium, Marlene Fisher

April 16, 2024
April Membership Tea

Program: *"Fashion Through the Ages"*

A Victorian Tea with **Lucille Fala-Brennan** presenting a program on "Fashion Through the Ages." Lucille will entertain us with music, song, and stories of the past in Victorian fashion.

May 21, 2024

Program: *"Tour of Natives in Frog Hollow"*

Audrey Wells will give us a tour of the native plants through the trails of Frog Hollow. We will be gathering for an earlier start on this day set for **6 PM** at the pavilion by the creek.

June 18, 2024

Program: *"Basics of Bonsai"*

Carl Ackhammer, Jr. of Zenchaser Bonsai will enthusiastically engage all of us in a program on the basics of the Japanese art of raising bonsai trees.



Bus Trip

South Schuylkill Garden Club
Educational Bus Tour
Morris Arboretum & Gardens
Tuesday, May 7, 2024
Day Trip 8 AM – 6:30 PM
Rain or Shine Event
Cost \$65.00

For information/reservations: Carol Haldeman
570-345-2434/570-640-7511

chaldyjr@gmail.com

Registration deadline April 7, 2024

Speaking of an Educational Bus Trip

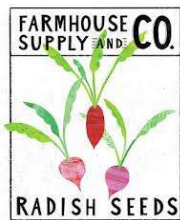
A survey will be taken at the March Meeting to see if there is interest in taking a mini-tour of the Manheim Trial Gardens. This is in Lancaster County where Penn State Gardens raise the newest varieties of flowers sent to them from seed companies. Late June and July is when the tours are given. It is a rain or shine tour as they are scheduled with the personnel. Looking to rent a minibus which holds up to 20 passengers.

District II/III News:

- March 18 is the first District II/III Meeting this year hosted as a zoom connection by the Upper Perkiomen Valley Garden Club. A wonderful speaker and photographer will be Karen Campbell and the conversion of her yard into a natural wonder. Trash to Treasure winner announced, District 2024 budget approved, and your wonderful reports will make up the meeting.
- It is time to form a Nominating Committee for District II/III officers for the next two years. Officers are District Director, Assistant Director, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. If anyone is interested in those positions, let Jane Kruse know.
- April 7-9 is the 2024 Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania Convention in Lancaster. The specifics are in the Keystone Gardener recently received. District II/III will have two tables to demonstrate our unique talents.

8 Steps for Setting Up Your Seed-Starting Journey

A fresh pile of seed packets makes gardeners yearn to get growing. Hold on tight! If you start too early, you might get up with leggy, overgrown plants that need babying until the frost disappears and the soil warms. Start too late and you'll be drooling over the neighbors while forlornly waiting for your plants to bloom. Here's how to ensure your schedule is set up for success.



1. **Decide what to grow.** Before you sow your first seed, become familiar with that plant's needs. Does it prefer warm temperatures, or can it tolerate light frost? Knowing the appropriate growing season and temperature, as well as the light and soil requirements, helps you set a schedule.
2. **Consider all seasons.** While summer offers a rich bounty, spring and fall gardens offer equally extensive harvests of cool season crops and flowers.

3. **Order seeds early.** Shop early for the best selection and to receive seeds in time to give them a great start. Most seed packets offer excellent information, such as days to germination, ideal temperature, how deep to plant the seeds, days to maturity, plant spacing, sun needs and more.
4. **Check seed needs.** For the best germination, some seeds require a bit of pampering before they're sown. These prima donnas require more time and effort on your part.

Scarification: A seed with a thick coat can be impenetrable to the moisture and gases that trigger germination. You'll have to scar the seed coat using sandpaper or a nail file to scratch the outer coating.

Stratification: Certain seeds require a chilling period before germination, known as stratification. Direct sow these in the fall, allowing the winter temperatures to provide the needed cold period.

Soaking: some seeds like a soaking to boost germination. A 24- hour bath in lukewarm water encourages certain seeds with a wrinkled appearance.

5. **Know your last frost and first freeze dates. (May 15 and October 15.)** Of course, these dates are not foolproof, but they're a good place to start with your seed starting schedule.
6. **Use a scheduling tool.** You can create your own customized spreadsheet, adding in the seeds you want to grow, time to germination and days to maturity. Many seed companies have an online seed starting calculator go get you growing at the perfect time.

7. **Add time for hardening off.** Before you add your carefully pampered, newly sprouted plants to the garden, they need to harden off, which is the process of acclimating your plants grown indoors to outside conditions.

8. **Introduce them to the outdoors slowly.**

Look for a level, partially sunny spot and give plants about an hour outside time.

Increase the amount of sun light they receive each day until they are in full sun.

Move plants inside for when the nights are cold.

Keep them hydrated.

When the weather is ideal and the plants have been acclimated to the outdoors for about 10 days to two weeks, you can safely introduce the plants to their new garden home.

9. **Extend the season with succession sowing.** Some seeds produce quickly and are ideal for direct sowing in the garden. Plant some seeds every two weeks.

Information taken from February/March 2024 birdsandblooms.com

In the spring, at the end of the day,
you should smell like dirt.

Margaret Atwood