

November 2024

South Schuylkill Garden Club

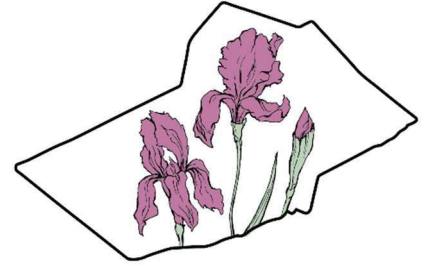
Third Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 PM

First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill

Haven

www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com

www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com



Cultivating the Community Newsletter

FUN FACTS ABOUT NOVEMBER

November 1 is All Saints' Day.

November 2 is Sadie Hawkins Day.

November 3 at 2 A.M. is the end of Daylight-Saving Time. Set your clocks back for one hour on Saturday night at bedtime.

November 4 is Will Rogers Day.

November 5 is Election Day. Don't forget to vote in state and federal elections! Every vote counts.

November 11 is Veterans Day and Remembrance Day (Canada).

If you're fortunate, you may experience an "Indian Summer" in November, but according to the traditional definition, it can only occur between November 11 and 20!

November 28 is Thanksgiving Day.

The day after Thanksgiving, November 29 this year, is known as Black Friday.

November's full Moon is traditionally called the Beaver Moon. Why this name? In the Colonial Era, this was the month to set one's beaver traps before the swamps froze and beavers retired to their lodges, to ensure a supply of warm winter furs.

If there's ice in November that will bear a duck, there'll be nothing after but sludge and muck. November takes flail; let ships no more sail. If trees show buds in November, the winter will last until May.

There is no better month in the year to cut wood than November.

Ice in November brings mud in December.

November 19, 2024

Program: "Winter Greens Kissing Ball"

Workshop to create and take home a kissing ball for the holiday season. Here is a video on how to assemble a kissing ball --
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjENT9Ue_xwM

Bring your own special decorations, hand pruners and scissors.

Note: If you can, please bring winter greens that are cut to approximately 6 inches. Looking for holly, box wood and other evergreens. Please prepare the greens by harvesting them the day before and placed in a bucket of water.

Refreshments: Dana Glunz, Pat Wishousky, Nancy Russial

County Country Christmas

Sweet Arrow Lake
Sunday, December 22

1- 4 PM

Free Admission

Family Fun
Holiday crafts
Chocolate Chip Cookie Contest
Scavenger Hunt
Winter Hike
Santa and Mrs. Clause
Hot Chocolate/Warm Cider

The event listed above is one that I hope members will help me with. As a participating organization, we will have a table at the event and will make a simple birch base evergreen decoration. I have gathered the supplies and Kaye's husband, Dale, has graciously made the bases. If you can help with this Sunday afternoon program, I am very appreciative.

More information about the event can be found on Facebook at:
"Friends of Schuylkill Parks and Recreation"

Note: We have a number of good bakers in the club, and if you are interested, there is a Chocolate Chip Cookie Contest. More information can be requested by contacting misshickchick@gmail.com

Our October Meeting was Presented by:

Quiet Hill Lavender Farm from Palmerton, who took us on a journey of their lavender operation. What started out as a hobby has emerged into a business operated by Chris and Sheri Anthony.

Thank you to: Pat Pitkin, Regina Freiler, Pat McKinney, and Kim Morgan for refreshments.

Pine Grove Autumn Stroll
October 19

Thank you to all who contributed to the Autumn Stroll. We had a lovely day with lots of jams and jellies, baked goods, dried floral decorations and house plants. It was a very successful day with almost a total sellout - not much to clean up and take home. Again, Thank You to those who donated their time making jams and jellies and baked goodies. Thank You to all who made dried decorations. Finally, Thank You to all who worked the stand.

Christmas Gathering

Birds in the Christmas Garden

Wednesday, December 11



Summit View Restaurant

83 S. Route 183, Schuylkill Haven, PA

5:30 - arrival and appetizers

6:00 - 7:30 buffet dinner

Menu: Salad, Chicken Marsala, Glazed Ham, Penne Primavera Alfredo, Mashed Potatoes, Glazed Carrots and Desserts

7:30 - gift exchange activity

The gift exchange is voluntary. Please bring a \$10 wrapped gift if you would like to participate.

The cost is \$13 per member which includes dinner, desserts and nonalcoholic drinks. Tax and gratuity included.

Guests will pay full price of \$37.

Reservations (with payment) are due to Regina Freiler by November 19.

(Regina's address is: 700 Schuylkill Avenue Pottsville, PA 17901)

Handicapped parking is available in the rear of the restaurant.

Membership Renewal for 2025

Please contact Kaye Moyer if you haven't received your renewal form at the September/October Meetings.

Renewal of \$18 Membership Dues with a check payable to SSGC and your completed renewal form is to be turned into Kaye Moyer by December 31, 2024.

(Kaye's address is: 754 Mountain Road
Pine Grove, PA 17963)

Why Less is More When it Comes to Fall Cleanup



There are good reasons to cut back or slow up your fall cleanup. Spare a thought for the beneficial bugs and birds who need shelter over winter and are our garden allies. Here are seven ways to strike a better balance—and make our fall cleanup a bit easier on our backs as well!

1. Leave Some Leaves

We rake, mow, and leaf blow away every leaf and bit of nature. Do we really need to rake every leaf? The answer to this question is NO. Here are the tips:

- Leave a few out-of-the-way leaf piles in the corners of your yard and allow leaves to remain under shrubs as a natural insulator. You may not realize it, but you provide safe harbors for overwintering pollinators.

Butterflies will overwinter in a chrysalis hanging from a dead plant, will “hibernate” in the hollow stem of a bee balm plant, birds will flit around spent sunflowers, and caterpillars will roll into the seedpod of a milkweed plant. Frogs and other wildlife also need fall leaves for insulation the way we need a winter coat.

- The only area of leaf cleanup that matters is turfgrass. Tree leaves can fall but should not cover a significant portion of turfgrass. Don't cover more than 20% of your lawn, nor allow leaves to mat in layers. This inhibits growth, invites mold disease, and encourages turf damage from rodents.
- What to do with leaves? Mulch with a mower. This has many benefits, from adding nutrients and organic matter to the soil to reduce weed seed germination. This requires more frequent mowing in the fall and possibly several passes with the mower to mulch the leaves into small pieces.
- Or, if you have a lot of leaves on your lawn, why not rake them up and make leaf mold with them?!
- Add some of the shredded or whole leaves to your garden beds or other areas of your property where they can serve as a mulch and break down overtime.
- Do take the time to fish out leaves that have landed in ponds. If they sink to the bottom and rot, they will reduce water quality and impact wildlife.

2. Compost Leaves (If You Don't Already)

Of course, you can compost the leaves. Fall is the perfect time to start a compost pile in the corner of your yard to make free, nutrient-rich fertilizer for the spring. Layer your “brown”

leaves with “green” materials to mix high-carbon and high-nitrogen materials for faster composting. Keep the pile slightly moist and turn it occasionally to aerate and mix the material.

3. Clean Up Perennial Flowers

In general, consider leaving most perennials uncut through the winter. Native bee species like small carpenter, mason, and leaf-cutter bees’ nest in hollow stems. Many butterflies pupate and spend the winter on these plants as well. We can preserve these pollinating insects by leaving this plant material in the landscape for next year. There’s no real need to cut back until early spring, when new growth begins to push through. If you crave tidiness, you can always leave just one area uncut.

- Many perennials such as coneflowers, sedums, black-eyed Susan, Joe-Pye weed, and marigolds can be an important food source for seed-eating birds, like finches, during the winter. Allow their seed heads to ripen until they turn brown and split open. These seed capsules are like saltshakers full of tiny seeds. They’ll self-sow to create more native flowers.
- On the other hand, some plants should be cut back to avoid issues. Such plants as peonies, bearded irises, and lilies can be cut back to a height of 3 to 5 inches. Iris borers overwinter in/on the foliage, so removing it in the fall is a good idea.
- Of course, remove any diseased plants at once. This removes overwintering fungi and insects that can attack plants in the spring.

4. Clear Away Vegetable Crops

It’s important to clear away diseased plants and any dead or rotting plant material. Pest insects, like squash bugs, and diseases will overwinter, bridging the gap between this year’s crops and the next. Cover the ground with an organic mulch to protect it from winter weather or plant a cover crop.

For fruit trees and berry bushes, we prefer to delay mulching until the end of winter. This means that once all the leftover leaves are raked up, frost will have a clear run, penetrating down into the top

layers of soil and cleansing it of overwintering pests lurking there.

Take this opportunity to remove canes and other plant supports. Wipe or wash off any soil, leave it to dry off, and then store it inside or somewhere at least sheltered from the worst of the weather.

Also, weed! You may have thought that the weeding was over, but experienced gardeners know that fall is the most important time for weeding—even if frost has killed your flowers and veggies. Winter annual weeds like henbit, common chickweed, and shepherd’s purse will germinate in the fall and resume growth in spring. Managing them in the fall prevents weed problems in the spring!

5. Leave Grass Long

Just as we leave some perennials longer, you’re best leaving the grass to grow a little longer over the winter. Soil-enriching caterpillars and other bugs bury right down into the thatch; a close-cropped lawn doesn’t do them any favors.

For this reason, set your mower blades high for the season’s final cut. This will help protect the soil and make your turf healthier. You can also take the opportunity to give your lawn a neat, crisp finish.

Also, if you mow your lawn, use a shredding mower, as it’s healthier to return that leaf litter to the soil.

6. Support Wildlife

One of the fall tasks we enjoy is gathering shrub clippings and creating brush piles in the yard’s corners. Think of this as creating little safe houses for birds and little mammals (as well as frogs and reptiles). Place tree and shrub branches on the top of the pile for warmth and protection.

Be proactive and do all you can to help garden wildlife. Keep bird feeders topped up. Birds particularly appreciate fatty, high-energy foods during the cold months.

Establish a feeding routine, offer water, and regularly clean feeders and bird baths to maintain good hygiene.

Fall is also a good time to plant new wildlife friendly hedges. Include berry-producing species like hawthorn or shrubs like pussy willow that will support butterflies.

7. Plant Bulbs for Pollinators

Remember that those spring-flowering bulbs provide early nectar for pollinators like bees. Daffodils, crocuses, grape hyacinths, and the stunning snake's head fritillary are a few good choices.

Plant by late October into early November. Larger bulbs are best planted 8 inches deep; smaller bulbs, 4 inches deep. Bulbs are best planted in groups or beds of the same color, but you can also scatter bulbs across your perennial beds for pops of color in early spring. If deer are a problem in your area, avoid tulips. Stick to daffodils, alliums, and crocuses.

Speaking of bulbs, be sure to dig up tropical such as cannas, dahlias, elephant ears, caladium, and gladiolus before a hard freeze arrives!

Author:
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