

# 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](https://www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com)



## Cultivating the Community Newsletter

### Weather Folklore for October

- *When it freezes and snows in October, January will bring mild weather. If it is thundering and heat-lighting, the winter will resemble April in temper.*
- *A good October and a good blast, So blow the hog-acorn and the mast.*
- *Warm October, cold February.*
- *As the weather in October, so it will be in March.*
- *If October brings much frost and wind, then January and February will be mild.*
- *When birds and badgers are fat in October, a cold winter is expected.*
- *Much rain in October, much wind in December.*

### Timely Garden Tips for Fall

#### *Gardening Doesn't Stop Just Because It's Fall*

- Continue to water plants although their thrust will wane as temperatures cool.
- Plant pansies for a dash of fall color. They'll die down over winter but return to bloom again next spring.
- Add seasonal bloomers like mums, asters and colorful ornaments like kale and cabbage to containers.
- Start to plant bulblike tulips, muscari, daffodils, crocus, hyacinths, snowdrops, and glory of the snow.
- No need to pull declining crops if they still produce. Take what you can from them

until they die down. Then clear beds of plant debris.

- Dispose of diseased plants in the trash but compose good healthy plant parts.
- Prepare for spring planting, test your soil's pH now and add amendments like lime if indicated.
- Rejuvenate the lawn, but core aerate it first. Seed once a week and water lightly every day until it's 3 inches tall.
- Transplant and divide spring and early-summer perennials and ground cover. Don't distribute late-season bloomers until spring. Fall is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Wait until trees in area have dropped their leaves. Water well and apply mulch.
- Finally, keep on top of weeds. Pulling them up by their roots before they set seeds will reduce the number next year.

### Pine Grove Autumn Stroll

**Autumn Stroll** will be held **October 15**, at the Union Canal Park from 10 AM to 4 PM, and our stand is next to the SSGC Butterfly Garden. We will be well organized for this event, but since it is before our next club meeting, we need to schedule your help in the following areas:

#### **We need:**

- Baked goods
- Dried floral materials
- Volunteers to work the stand
  - Set-up 8 AM to 11 AM

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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Operation 11 AM-2 PM
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  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Operation/Teardown 2-4 PM
  - \_\_\_\_\_
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## October Meeting

We have a real treat on tap for our next meeting on October 18, 6:30 at the church. "Pawpaw's: The Forgotten Native Fruit" will be presented by our own Larry Moyer and Carol Haldeman.

The Program will be by power point along with a hands-on presentation. Learn how to grow a native and once commonly used fruit and experience a fresh fruit flavor and baked goodies.

**Refreshment Committee:** Bernie Francavilla, Joan Medinsky, Helen Moyer and Pat Wishowsky.

**Horticulture:** Dried plant arrangement.

## September's Club Meeting

Our September 20 monthly club meeting was held at the church. Program was to be Essential Oils. Unfortunately, the presenter canceled at the very last minute (Monday evening). So, with some last-minute planning a demonstration on making a crescent floral arrangement with fresh flowers from the garden was presented. Below is an accompanying information sheet on how to make a crescent arrangement of your own.

## Crescent Flower Arrangement

*Information taken from Kathy Shumac, Penn State professor in plant science. She demonstrated this arrangement at Ag Progress days and stated that she thinks anyone can do it.*

Crescent presentation

- Line Design which means the arrangement doesn't have flowers along the back or the top, only along the front.
- Design works well on a shelf or serving table where one side of table is used.
- You will need:
  - Wet floral foam – keep floral foam wet as arrangement will last longer
  - Bowl – if the bowl is decorative, you will want to arrange the greens, so the bowl is visible. A plain bowl should be arranged with greens covering bowl.
- Greens
  - Can be ferns, tree leaves or hosta leaves.
- Main purpose of arrangement is to cover about 75% of the foam so concentrate on flowers with less focus on greens.
- Height of flowers should correlate to the size of the bowl and should be about 1.5 to 2 times the length of the bowl.
- Leave space between flowers so that each flower can be seen.
- Start by placing a flower at each end point of the shape and one at the middle
- Connect the dots with flowers.
- Focal point should have the biggest flower with the best color.
- Mix your various flower types and colors throughout the design.
- Pick up the arrangement and look at it from all angles.
- Once the greens and flowers are placed, filler plants like golden rod and baby's breath can be added.
- Floral arranging is all about personal preference and you should use flowers and designs that you will enjoy.

## How to make a flower food packet to preserved freshly cut flowers.

Here's a basic home recipe: **1 quart water + 2 tablespoons lemon juice + 1 tablespoon sugar + 1/2 teaspoon bleach.** The sugar is the food part, and the bleach will help to slow fungi and bacteria growth.



**Thank you** to the refreshment committee of Marlene F., Mary Ann U., Kim M., Linda B., and Carol H. for the evening's refreshment. Lots of refreshments to go around.

### **Desk of District II/III Director -Jane**

Greetings from District II/III,

The recent District II/III Annual Meeting "Beyond the Garden Fence" hosted by Milford Garden Club held the installation of new officer for the next two years. They are:

District Director – Jane Kruse – South Schuylkill  
Assistant Director – Gail Blasko – Hazleton Area  
Recording Secretary – Janet Hullbrink – Reading  
Treasurer – Brenda Aubert – Parkland  
Corresponding Secretary – Wendy Webber-Welsh – Bethlehem GC.

District Committee Chairs have expanded to include current topics of water, trees, citizen scientist and recycling. Reading their articles in the Buds and Blooms quarterly issues.

District educational offering on "Poisonous and Invasive Plants" is scheduled for Tuesday, October 25 at 7:00 pm. Access the Zoom account by inserting this address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84693248756?pwd=M05mdTAvOWRZckUvY0J2TmlQdC9wUT09>

Meeting ID: 846 9324 8756

Passcode: 655133

**Jane Kruse**

### **Schuylkill Herb Society**

Herb Society meeting is Oct 6 at 5:00 PM outdoors at Leah Zerbe's Potters Farm on Mountain Road in Pine Grove. Text Kathy if directions needed.

### **Master Gardener's**

Schuylkill County Conservation Day is Oct 9 at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park 10-2. Outdoor activities and info. For all ages. Natives vs. Invasives info.



## Schuylkill Haven Borough Day



**Big Thank You** to all who participated in Schuylkill Haven Borough Day. It was another success for the Club. To Carol Kaye and Linda for all their hard work making the jams and jellies and those who donated fruit, a **Big Thank You**. We had 26 varieties and 200 jars of the sweet fruits. We only have a small number of jars to "sell out" at Pine Grove Autumn Stroll.

On to other items sold at Haven Borough Day. Thank you to Kathy and Kim for their creative hands in drying and arranging the bundles of dried floral arrangements which were sold out. We have a little left-over jewelry to sell. Thank to those of you who cleaned out your jewelry boxes and donated to the cause. We sold some candles and hanging baskets. Thank you for those donations. Baked goods were also a hot seller on Saturday. Thank you to Carol, Bernie, Linda, Joan, Jane, Regina, Helen and Janie for making those delectable baked goods. There are still some left-over seasonal bows that were not sold, but Autumn Stroll is another opportunity. Thank you to all who got supplies to the stand for easier setup and tear down. Finally, to those who worked the stand at the event, another thanks you for your selling expertise. Thank you to Carol, Kim, Kathy, Linda, Kaye, Bonnie, Regina, Joan, Bernie, Janie, Jane, MaryAnn, and Porkie. **Thank You**

**It is such a pleasure to work with a group of people where everyone, and I mean everyone, helps in their own way.**

## FYI

### Walk in Penn's Woods

A walk is scheduled for 2 PM on October 2 at Frog Hollow on Stone Mountain Road outside of Friedensburg. Hosted by Schuylkill County Conservancy of which Porcupine Pat is a member. The idea is to get people out of their homes and into forest. The walk will cover mostly flat trails (with some roots and smaller rocks) that loop around the property. The stroll is expected to last an hour to an hour and a half. Trail guides will share information about wildlife, tree, and shrub species.

### Fall Road Trip

Kathy T. is organizing a fall garden trip to MeadowBrook Gourd Farm on Tuesday, October 11. The Gourd Farm, one of the largest in the nation, is in our backyard, so to speak. It is in the Carlisle area which is pretty much a straight shot down Interstate 81, making it about an hour to an hour and a half drive away, depending upon traffic. We are meeting to carpool at 10 AM in the Giant parking lot in Cressona, stopping for a light lunch and proceed to the Gourd Farm for a tour. This looks to be a great time taking in the crisp fall air in the beautiful Cumberland valley. Hope that one and all can find time in their busy schedule to attend this trip. Please contact Kathy for reservations and details.

### Dividing Irises

Dividing irises is good for the plants and will result in irises to give away to friends or increase the display in your garden.



Photo credit: Albert Dezetter from Pixabay

The tall, beautiful iris, named after the Greek goddess of the rainbow, is one of the oldest garden flowers. In spring, bearded irises unfurl their buds to reveal a kaleidoscope of color.

Irises are hardy, reliable, easy to grow, and are deer-resistant and drought-tolerant. They also attract butterflies, hummingbirds and make lovely cut flower bouquets. These perennials flourish where winter temperatures dip below freezing and allow the plant to go dormant before next year's growth.

There are some 200 to 300 species in the genus *Iris*. The most familiar irises are the tall, bearded irises, named for the soft hairs along the center of the falls. Species are separated into two major groups, rhizomatous and bulbous. Rhizomes are rootlike structures growing horizontally underground that are used as food storage. The bearded iris falls into this group. Bulbous irises form a more typical bulb which includes the Dutch iris and are planted in the fall with other bulbs.

It's important to know which irises you are seeking to divide. Division differs slightly. This article applies to the bearded iris.

As irises mature, the rhizome produces more rhizomes. When bloom production slows, about every three to five years, it is necessary to divide by removing and replanting the small rhizomes.

Divide at the right time of year, after flowering, when irises become dormant during late summer, reducing the chance of bacterial soft rot. Avoid dividing during winter when irises are trying to survive on stored energy in their rhizomes.

Snip the leaf blades to about one third of their height. This reduces stress as it concentrates on new roots, not maintaining the leaves. Carefully remove the entire clump with a spade or garden fork. Divide the rhizomes by pulling them apart with your hands. The rhizome should easily break off at a joint. If a sharp knife is needed to separate the rhizome, dip the knife into 10% bleach and water solution after each cut.

A good rhizome should be about as thick as your thumb, have healthy roots and one or two leaf fans. Large, old rhizomes that have no leaf fans should be discarded. Inspect each rhizome for iris borer (a fat, white worm). If you find a borer, destroy the rhizome. Soft, smelly, or rotting rhizomes should also be destroyed. Do not place in the compost. When planting the rhizomes, dig a

shallow hole approximately ten inches in diameter and four inches deep. Build up a small mound of soil in the center of the planting hole. Center the rhizome on the soil mound and spread out the roots on either side. Fill the hole with soil. The top surface of the rhizome should be just visible at the soil surface. It's a common mistake to plant irises too deep. Tamp the soil firmly to anchor the rhizomes.

Good air circulation is essential. For the best display, plant the rhizomes singly or in groups of three so the fan of leaves face the same direction. Space the plants 12 to 18 inches apart (closer for dwarf varieties, farther apart for taller varieties). Newly planted rhizomes should be watered thoroughly. Do not mulch. Mulching retains moisture and could cause the rhizomes to rot.

Bearded irises will thrive in most well-drained soils. The ideal pH for irises is 6.8 (slightly acidic) but irises are tolerant of less-than-perfect soils. Test your soil before making any correction.

It is important that the roots of newly planted irises be well established before the end of the growing season, four to six weeks before the first hard freeze or killing frost. New growth may be noticeable within two to three weeks and begins with a new center leaf in the fan.

Leaves carry on photosynthesis for next year's growth. Don't trim iris leaves until fall. Only snip brown tips and cut the flowering stalk to the ground at a slant to discourage rot. This will reduce the chance of overwintering pests.

Break off seedpods that form after the blooms have faded. Seed formation saps energy needed by the rhizomes, roots, and leaves. Keep your iris beds free of weeds and fallen leaves so the rhizomes may bask in the sun.

Don't be afraid to divide your rhizomes. Dividing will multiply your iris to give to friends or barter with gardening pals. Remember your supply is always growing.

#### [Authors](#)

Laura Spencer  
Master Gardener  
Columbia County



## Check out what is growing in

### Kaye's Garden



**Black-eyed Susan Vine**



**Cleome (spider flower)**

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 570-617-0808

**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 Gardner ... 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 Gardner ... 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 Gardner ... 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 Gardner ... when the Plant catalogs arrive in the middle of winter. – Pat P.

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- 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*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

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**Find Me Where the Native  
Things Grow**