



Gardenline

WINTER

2014-2015

“TO GROW A SEED IS A NOBLE DEED”

THIS QUOTE IS THE TITLE of a seed manual written for professional horticulturists by Norman C. Deno of Penn State University, but it applies to seed propagators at all levels of expertise. And, as Green Spring horticulturists Judy Zatsick and Nancy Olney would add, growing seeds is a lot of fun, too.

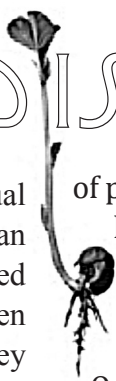
Judy and Nancy both spend a great deal of their time throughout the year propagating annuals and perennials from seed. They are assisted in this endeavor by support staff as well as many GS volunteers. The resulting plants beautify the numerous Green Spring gardens or are sold to the public in the plant shop.

ANNUALS:

Annuals are by far the easiest plants to start from seed. Annual seeds at Green Spring are sown in a soilless mix in styrofoam cups to ensure all-important sterile conditions. Most readily available soilless mixes will work, but do check the package for specific usage (e.g., you may want a special mix for succulents.) Depending on size, as many as 25 seeds may be sown in one styrofoam cup. Holes are poked in the bottom of the cups to assure proper drainage. After the mixture and seeds are added, the cups are set into a few inches of water for 15-30 minutes to absorb water, then removed and put onto trays. Judy often adds a sprinkling of sphagnum moss on top of the watered cups to help retain the moisture.

The cups are then put under a light source. The light source is vital for growing strong, straight plants, and windowsills do not provide sufficient strong, all-around light. Artificial light is needed. The home gardener can use a simple fluorescent light with timer set for the seeds' particular light needs.

Warmth is also necessary for the seeds to germinate. The Green Spring horticulturists have the use



of poly houses in which to grow their plants, but the home gardener can provide the warmth needed for seed germination via heat mats and other devices readily obtained in local garden shops, in catalogues, and online.

Once the seeds both develop a set of “true” leaves and look strong, the new plants are carefully repotted into small black plastic containers, using a moistened commercial soil mix so the plants begin to use the soil nutrients. As the plants grow they may need to be repotted to larger pots using the same regimen of soil, water, light and warmth until they are large enough to be transplanted directly into the garden.

Judy and Nancy gather seed in late summer/early fall from numerous Green Spring annuals. Some are potted right away, but most annual seeds are begun in February and March. The time needed for germination varies widely, from many weeks to four days (!) for the lettuce Nancy plants in successive sowings in the GS vegetable garden. A few annuals, including pansies, need dark to germinate, so they are covered with material as they begin the initial propagation.

PERENNIALS:

Growing perennials from seed is also rewarding, but it may not be quite as easy for the amateur gardener. One main reason is that many perennial seeds need to be “stratified”, thus requiring some extra care. In other words, these perennial seeds need to be refrigerated for a specific time period in order to germinate. The process to begin germination in this instance is similar to that of annuals except that after the seed is sown in soilless mix and watered, the containers are covered in plastic and put into the refrigerator for up to three months. The time period depends on the type of seed. After the time

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Manager's Message



What the future holds

IN OCTOBER we embarked on the first stage for a Green Spring Gardens master plan update, outlining the process for completing the plan. I am very excited about this process. In the nine years since I came to Green Spring Gardens, we have seen a growth in visitation, growth in the quantity of programming offered, growth in revenue generated, growth in our volunteer program, and growth in part time staffing to handle our growth. We are bursting at the seams for parking, program space and office space. What a great opportunity to plan for our future!

The last major planning document for Green Spring Gardens, the General Management Plan and Conceptual Development Plan, was developed in 1992. Yes, more than 20 years ago. I recently reviewed the plan, and among a proposed list of 11 items, most were accomplished. The list included major construction items such as expanding the Horticulture Center, closing Green Spring Road as a through street, implementing erosion control in the pond and stream area, and repairing and restoring the historic fabric of the Historic House.

Today, visit Green Spring Gardens on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and the parking lot is nearly full. Try to schedule a meeting or program, and the facilities are already booked. As tax revenues de-

cline, we will need to boost our revenue-generating capacity to support our programs. What new facilities might be needed? How does Green Spring Gardens meet your needs?

Do you want to have a voice in the master plan process? Do you have ideas for what Green Spring Gardens should be tomorrow and into the future? There will be opportunities for helping to shape the vision for the future that we will publicize through our website, in the Horticulture Center and through our email distribution lists.

In the meantime, here are some other projects to follow. The renovation of the gazebo patio should be well underway by the time you read this. With funding from Virginia Tech, we are renovating the fruit garden area. You will want to see what new fruits you might grow in your garden. The bridge across Turkeycock Run will be replaced about a year from now with major impact on our paths and gardens. More on that project in 2015.

This quote from Margaret Wheatley, expresses the master plan process so well, "[A]ll change, even very large and powerful change, begins when a few people start talking with one another about something they care about." We know you care about Green Spring Gardens. Let us hear from you. ♻️

Mary Olien
Park Manager

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Gardenline

MANAGER:
Mary Olien

EDITORS:
Sunny Greene, Susan Voss

DESIGN AND LAYOUT:
Don Christian

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The editorial staff would like to hear from you.

Please contact us through

Gardenline
Green Spring Gardens
4603 Green Spring Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-642-5173
TTY: 703-803-3351

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703-642-5173

or write:

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4603 Green Spring Road
Alexandria, VA 22312
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If accommodations or alternative formats are needed, please call 703-324-8563 at least 10 working days before the event.

Grow a Seed

Continued from page 1

period elapses, the containers are removed from the refrigeration. The propagation process then follows that of annual seeds.

Both Judy and Nancy emphasize that both annual and perennial seeds have specific requirements in order to germinate. A few need to be planted as soon as they are harvested; most can be kept for longer periods. In order to keep seeds fresh if they are not germinated right away, keep seeds in a cool place—at Green Spring seeds are kept in refrigerators!

Sources for annual and perennial seeds are numerous. Both Judy and Nancy seek seeds year round, through seed exchanges, specialty plant societies, numerous catalogues and now, of course, via the internet (Judy notes finding unusual seeds on etsy and ebay sites).

Both Nancy and Judy eagerly encourage gardeners to try annual seed propagation. Easy annuals include zinnias, marigolds, petunias and numerous others. Nancy says that vegetables are the easiest and among the

most satisfying seeds to work with. Judy suggests the gardener try cactus, partly because the result of the germination is an exact teeny replica of the adult cactus itself.

There is a vast body of information on seed starting. Nancy Olney highly recommends the books of Nancy Bugel, a number of which are available for referencing in the Green Spring library. Nancy also suggests an internet site:

<http://theseedsite.co.uk/>

This is a British site but has an enormous amount of information useful to seed propagators everywhere. Both horticulturists stress the need to check the labels of seed packets, too. Following instructions for your seeds' specific needs is all important for success. And if you have further questions, feel free to contact a Green Spring master gardener or a Green Spring horticulturist.

So if you're thinking about an enjoyable and rewarding activity during the long winter months when you can't work the outside soil, try plant propagation from seed. You'll be glad you did! 🌱

Sunny Greene



“LADY LIONEL” COMING TO GARDENERS HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Fashionably dressed in pink, “Lady Lionel” is a real steamer and a show stopper! She will be featured along with other operating vintage electric trains at the Gardeners Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 7th beginning at noon in the Horticulture Center.

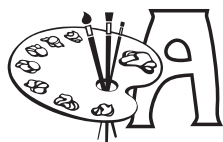
Aimed at marketing trains for little girls, the Lionel Corporation introduced its first “Girl’s Set” in 1957 at a list price of \$49.95. This electric train set included a pink 2-6-4 steam locomotive and coal tender with a matching pink gondola holding four white canisters, a robin’s egg blue boxcar, a buttercup-yellow boxcar, a lilac hopper car, plus a sky blue illuminated caboose.

Expecting the Girl’s Set to be a favorite toy among girls, Lionel soon found that girls didn’t want pink engines and pastel-colored cars. They wanted their own train sets to be like the real thing. Because only a small number of these sets were sold in 1957-58, collectors find them extremely desirable today.

In addition to the operating trains, there will also be operating accessories for “children” of all ages to enjoy. Engineer Dan will be on board to operate the trains and to answer your questions.

All Aboard! Come meet this rare lady and all her friends on December 7! 🌱

Dan & Eileen Rollyson



ART SHOWS YOU'LL WANT TO ENJOY

Ring in 2015 with the Vienna Arts Society mixed media exhibition throughout the Horticulture Center and Historic House. The display begins December 29, 2014 and continues until February 23, 2015. Reception: January 4, from 1:00pm–3:00pm in the Horticulture Center.

From February 23 to April 27, 2015 delight in “Cherry Blossom Awakening”, oriental brush paintings throughout the Horticulture Center and Historic House produced by Sumi-e Society of America. This is the first Green Spring exhibit for the Society. Reception: March 29 from 1:00pm–3:00pm in the Horticulture Center.



FROGS Talk

Susan Voss, FROGS President

FROGS began the fall season with the annual Fall Garden Day on September 13. Despite the drizzle, we had over 1200 attendees and experienced one of our most successful fall events. This year's Silent Auction with over 120 items contributed, netted almost \$7,000 (\$2,000 more than last year!) to be used for the renovation of the gazebo. An enormous thank you to Eileen Rollyson and her team, as well as to the more than 50 individual and 35 business donors. (See list of donors below).

Next on the agenda was our annual meeting on Monday evening, October 27 with detailed reports not only of what FROGS has done this year, but also plans for the future.

One of our most popular events will be the annual Gardeners Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 7 featuring a gingerbread house contest, handmade ornaments and homemade breads for sale, a Lionel train display, a doll collection in the Historic House, trackless train rides and a puppet show. We look forward to seeing you and your families there.

Of considerable importance to FROGS is the annual appeal. Last year's annual appeal which was dedicated to the renovation of the gazebo raised an all time high of \$21,000. That project is now underway. This year we have designated another important project-- the purchase of a new Cushman work vehicle to augment the aging four vehicles now in use. Without these vehicles much of the gardeners' heavy work would be impossible. We hope our supporters will agree that this is a worthwhile project and contribute as generously as in the past.

Looking ahead, in 2015 the long awaited Master Plan Review for Green Spring Gardens will begin. This is an opportunity for both FROGS board and our members to be involved in their vision for the future. (See the Manager's Message on page 2 for more details).

Thank You!

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Michael & Belinda Straight, Part 1

Living at Green Spring

Michael and Belinda Straight, the last private owners of Green Spring Farm, were expecting their first child and began looking for a 'country home' in which to raise their family. They purchased the Historic House and the 33 acres surrounding it in March of 1942.

Michael Straight had recently resigned from the State Department as an economist to become the editor of The New Republic magazine, which was founded by his parents and was still being financed by his mother, social activist and philanthropist Dorothy Payne Whitney.

Soon after they acquired the property the Straights hired historic architect Walter Macomber, an expert on colonial revival architecture known for his work at Colonial Williamsburg and Mt. Vernon, to rehabilitate and update the dwelling. Changes resulted in the addition of east and west two story wings and a complete colonial revival style renovation of the interior. While the construction was going on the Straights lived in the nearby Spring House. At the same time Michael Straight's mother contacted Beatrix Farrand, one of the most renowned landscape architects of her time and the only female among the eleven founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Beatrix Farrand was working at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C. when she designed and supervised the installation of a family garden area for the Straights. Her preliminary sketch design shows a boxwood hedge planted in a semicircle behind the house. The Straights moved to the big house in late 1942 with their first child, David. (The Straights raised 5 children at Green Spring.)

In a matter of months, Michael Straight was enlisted for Air Force duty and served as a B17 flight instructor during World War II. Belinda went to stay with Michael's family in Long Island and eventually moved to New York to enter medical school. While away, the property was rented out until the Straights' return in 1948. Caretakers John and Carmella Quast lived in the Spring House throughout the Straights' ownership.

Upon their return Michael Straight took over as publisher of The New Republic magazine and also concentrated on writing novels. He was also very interested in developing the property. The Historic House has many of his landscaping sketches, and he did a lot of manual labor and numerous plantings in the area of the ponds along with John Quast.

The Straights converted the ice pond into two ornamental ponds where Michael Straight, being an artist and admirer of the arts, displayed the statuary he had inherited from the estate of his father, Willard Straight, (who had been Consul-General to China). Many other outdoor areas displayed art pieces that he purchased as well. Next to the ponds a tennis court was installed, since Michael Straight was an avid tennis player.

At Beatrix Farrand's suggestion, Michael Straight and John Quast planted the area behind the Beatrix Farrand - designed garden with a large variety of azaleas to transition the area into an informal garden. Unfortunately many of these were lost during the droughts of the 1980's.

The Straights added stairs and a bridge across Turkeycock Run

to the ponds, which were used for swimming, fishing and winter ice-skating by neighborhood children as well as the family.

Farming in Northern Virginia was coming to an end, and changes in the character of development would make the region part of the social and economic system centered in Washington. The only farming operations now consisted of the raising of Hereford cattle. The Straights purchased yearlings, which were kept at the farm for fattening and resale as two-year-old beef cattle. A variety of other animals were kept on the farm, but these were mainly pets of the children. In addition to their horses and dogs they included a goat received from noted journalist Eric Sevareid, a mule from SPCA, and a flock of Canadian geese, which became the subject of a special Audubon Society Bulletin, noting that they were not migrating birds. The porch housed many snakes and turtles belonging to their oldest son.

Changes and updates were also made to the outbuildings on the property. The Straights had a barn (now torn down) renovated into a laundry and two apartments for their household help. A log cabin (located near the Roses and Companions Garden but later torn down) acted both as a guest cottage and a home for the Straights' oldest son.

More on the Straights and their ownership of Green Spring in the next issue of *Gardenline*. 🌸

Dotty Stahl
Chair,

Historic Green Spring Committee

Summer Intern Experience

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THIS SUMMER I got an awesome opportunity to do a horticulture internship at Green Spring Gardens. I worked on Nancy Olney's team. I am supposed to write about what I learned. This is tough because I have learned an enormous amount. I would like to start by thanking her for her patience.

1. Plan Ahead. Understand by the day, week, month and year, the garden calendar to know what grows when. What needs to be planted, pruned, weeded, or mulched? When do seeds need to go in or be potted into 2-inch pots or larger? When do we need to take cuttings or move those to larger pots? When do plants need to be inside and when can they be maintained outside? What do I need to buy and what can I propagate and have ready for the next season?

Especially challenging is the edible garden. When I taught fifth grade, my class once built a garden to see how much land and effort it may take to grow enough food to allow a colony, like Jamestown, to survive. I learned this summer that with better planning we could have layered in many more plantings and harvests over the year. Our colony's small garden could certainly have

GROWING UP, my father was a religious gardener. Every weekend he would go out into the garden that he grew in the backyard and tend to it as if it were another child of his. Whenever he finished working, he'd come out of the garden with a huge smile on his face and grab me and my siblings to take us out there and show us all that he planted. Through watching his appreciation of the environment and agriculture, I gained the love that he possesses for the environment and agriculture. From a young age I decided to make it my mission to be an advocate of the earth.

I currently attend George Mason University as an Environmental and Sustainability Studies Major with

grown quite a lot more than corn, beans, and squash if I had known more about planning and growing vegetable gardens.

2. Don't Waste Money. The volunteers daily use clippers, loppers, trowels, scrapers, and saws in the garden. These need to be kept track of and returned to the bucket so others can use them tomorrow.

3. Be Neat! This is a public garden!

4. Work Together! There is a wonderful team of horticulturists here at Green Spring Gardens. Each is at the top of their field. They do not make a big thing about it. They just make sure that each gets what they need done. They quietly solve mysteries together and help each other to create this amazing place.



Photo by Kathy Trichei; all rights reserved

a concentration in Environmental Policy. Eventually, I hope to be able to go into the field of Environmental Law and then after decades of working with the politics, go into teaching. I have worked as a tutor for children of all ages for five years and this summer internship at Green

Continued on page 7

5. Take Care of the Volunteers.

Last but not least, there is quite a large group of volunteers that make it possible for all the work to get done here. They do best when they feel appreciated and not taken advantage of. Nancy has taught me to make sure when people show up to help they have things that are appropriate for them personally to do. Everyone feels appreciated and everyone learns from Nancy.

These are some of the things I have learned this summer at Green Spring Gardens. I have lots more to learn, but it is a great beginning. Thank you Friends of Green Spring, Mary and Nancy for this great opportunity.

*Holly Miller
Horticulture Intern*

Spring Gardens really solidified my desire to teach later in life.

Working at Green Spring Gardens has taught me a lot about how important it is to educate the up and coming generation about the environment at a level that they can easily understand. Working with children I have learned to be more receptive of new techniques in teaching and be more creative with the ways I go about educating them. This internship supplied me with knowledge that I know I could not have learned anywhere else and for that I am forever grateful to have been given this remarkable experience.

*Zeinab Saft
Children's Education Intern*

I AM A RECENT GRADUATE of Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment. I earned a B.S. in Environmental Resource Management and a minor in Forestry. I was an active member of multiple clubs in college, including the VT women's water polo team and the VT Environmental Coalition. In the past I've worked for the U.S. National Park Service at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts as a Natural Resource intern.

I started working with Brenda Skarphol at Green Spring Gardens



Photo by Kathy Trichei; all rights reserved

as a Native Plant intern in May. The Virginia Native Plant Society, with whom I worked once per month, funded this internship. As a person who appreciates learning new things, I have really enjoyed how much I've learned about horticulture this summer! Since my studies and past internships have focused more on very broad, all-encompassing resource management projects, this internship has been a wonderful way to learn about the more delicate and careful aspects of horticulture. I've spent most of my time working in the Native Plant Garden, but I've also had a chance to work on various other projects including invasive plant removal and plant propagation. I truly appreciate the opportunities I've been given by Green Spring Gardens, Brenda Skarphol, and the Virginia Native Plant Society.

*Allie Hay
Virginia Native Plant Intern*

AS A HORTICULTURE MAJOR at Virginia Tech the idea of working in a public garden for the summer sounded like a perfect job. What I learned was that it wasn't just working in a public garden that made it perfect, but also the fact that I was working at Green Spring Gardens.

Growing up in a family that was very driven by gardening and flowers, my passion for horticulture developed quite early. As I go into my senior year at Virginia Tech as an Environmental Horticulture major I know I made the right choice of major. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work on my own research project during my time at Virginia Tech and even present my research last summer at a few science conferences.



Photo by Kathy Trichei; all rights reserved

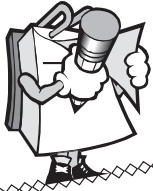
Because this was my last summer before graduation I decided it was time to explore some other horticulture opportunities, so I looked for an internship in public gardens. When I read about the internship in propagation at Green Spring, it seemed like a great opportunity. Since working at Green Spring I have learned so much, not just about horticulture but also working in such a tight knit community. I have been lucky to do a little bit of everything, from propagating to planting to maintaining the gardens. Whether it is weeding in the rock garden, mulching the gardens, or working with volunteers, there is never a dull moment. I loved getting up and coming to work every morning and working with such a great group of people. Green Spring has taught me to go out of my traditional approach to garden designs and have a new perspective on use of tropical and annuals in the same garden to create an outstanding visual impact. I also have a greater appreciation for the time and effort that goes into making these gardens look so spectacular and think the staff here at Green Spring really makes this a magnificent place. I thank Judy, Heather, and Diane for passing along their knowledge to me, and I know it will be such a great asset to my future.

*Victoria Neff
Rock Garden Intern*



Gardenline

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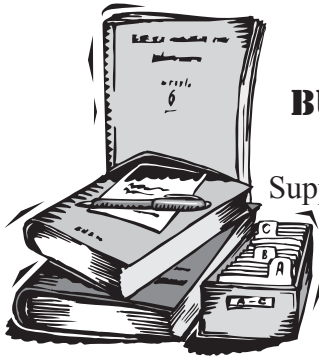


SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 15
Green Spring Gardens
Third Annual History Symposium

“Food in America: Highly Seasoned by History”
Noted speakers and a special guest appearance by
“Julia Child”
9am–3pm including lunch.

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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes

Program Code 290 183 3101.
For more information call 703-941-7987.



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