

THE DIGGERS

Dorchester Garden Club

February, 2013

Mark Your Calendars

February 2013

20 Judges Council Meeting at Chartwell Country Club, Severna Park, MD

March 2013

3-10 Philadelphia Flower Show "Brilliant!"

5 Chartwell Garden Club Annual Bus Trip to Philadelphia Flower Show

6 District I Annual Meeting

8 DGC Annual Meeting – Cambridge Yacht Club

15 *Ginza* Ikebana International Baltimore Chapter 118 Vollmer Center at the Cylburn Arboretum 4915 Greenspring Ave. Baltimore, MD 21209

25 Optional Pre-gala Dinner

26 84th Annual Meeting hosted by District IV at Turf Valley. The program will be *Improvise* a creative, innovative and inspirational use of flowers presented in workshop and demonstration format. Installation of new officers. Special guest Shirley Nicolai, National Garden Clubs President.

31 Easter

31 Tulips and Windmills River Cruise Contact Marilyn Potter 301-829-9216

April 2013

5-7 Art Blooms at the Walters *Beaux Arts Bouquets*

6 Somerset County GC Daffodil Show at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Princess Anne, MD.

8-10 District II Daffodil Show, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Severna Park, MD

16-17 Maryland Daffodil Society Show at The Shops at Kenilworth, Towson. Information: patpparker@aol.com or jrl0408@gmail.com

19 11:00 a.m. Ikebana International Baltimore Chapter 118 *public welcome* Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum 4915 Greenspring Ave. Baltimore, MD 21209

23 *Be-Dazzled* A Garden Symposium and Luncheon presented by the Talbot County Garden Club

Note: registration information for all programs sponsored by other clubs can be found on the State Website:

http://www.fgcofmd.org/Calendar_of_Events.html



You Won't Want to Miss Our Annual Meeting in March

This meeting marks the beginning of our new program year and we will be handing out the new Yearbooks. The March program will be largely devoted to explaining the programs for the coming year.

In an attempt to keep it lively, we have asked all Chairmen to send their reports electronically prior to the meeting.

Additionally every two years we elect our new officers. The Slate of Nominations for 2013-15 is shown below. At the meeting there will be a brief installation ceremony.

- President - Mary Jo Papin
- First Vice President - Jeanne Bernard
- Second Vice President - Alison Buczek
- Recording Secretary - Pamela Behrens
- Corresponding Secretary - Judy Slaughter
- Treasurer - Julia Berman

Start planning ahead for your horticulture as we have a class featuring forced branches – see the instructions for how to do this on page 2.

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Get a Jump Start on Spring!

Follow these easy steps to force branches to bloom indoors



Forsythia



Flowering Quince

Forcing is a term that means you are encouraging the plant to bloom earlier than normal. In this case by cutting them and bringing them inside to a warmer climate the branches think it is spring.

For a winter bouquet, here is a list of spring-blooming shrubs and trees that can be **forced to bloom indoors**. (The trees tend to be stubborn and their blossoms may not be as rewarding as those of the shrubs.)

The numbers in the chart below indicate the approximate number of weeks that the branches will take to flower.

1. Select medium-sized branches with lots of buds, preferably buds that are beginning to open.
2. Remember to cut branches on the diagonal.
3. It helps to "bruise" the cut ends: Crush the stem ends with a small hammer; they'll soak up the water faster.
4. Once you're inside, set the branches in warm water for a few hours.
5. Keep in a cool place and mist frequently.
6. Change the water every few days.
7. Once blooms appear, display in a warm area and enjoy!
8. Source: <http://www.almanac.com/content/forcing-branches-bloom-indoors>

Buckeye	5 weeks
Cherry	4 weeks
Cornelian dogwood	2 weeks
Crab apple	4 weeks
Deutzia	3 weeks
Flowering almond	3 weeks
Flowering dogwood	5 weeks
Flowering quince	4 weeks
Forsythia	1 week
Honeysuckle	3 weeks
Horse chestnut	5 weeks
Lilac	4 weeks
Magnolia	3 weeks
Pussy willow	2 weeks
Red maple	2 weeks
Redbud	2 weeks
Red-twig dogwood	5 weeks
Spicebush	2 weeks
Spirea	4 weeks
Wisteria	3 weeks

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Meet the 2013 Plant of the Year

By Colleen Plimpton

Each autumn a ballot from the [Perennial Plant Association](#) lands in my mailbox, requesting my semi-learned input into selecting the best perennial of the year. The PPA, that worthy group, is composed of growers, retailers, landscape designers, educators and others professionally involved in the herbaceous perennial industry. Since I don't hold a degree in horticulture and don't run a large business, I feel honored to be included among them.

However, I don't know all the plants in Christendom, and deem myself a bit inadequate to the task of choosing the very best one for a particular year. Criteria to be proclaimed the Perennial Plant of the Year include possessing a wide range of climate hardiness, simplicity of care, availability, multiple season interest and ease of propagation.

The winner needn't be something with a long Latin pedigree, but rather one with beautiful yet pedestrian values we dirt gardeners appreciate.

So what was chosen for 2013? The envelope please!



Variegated Solomon's seal is shown here in bloom. Relatively easy to care for, it's also a beautiful plant.

(Full disclosure: ... I've never grown this pretty plant and thus didn't vote for it. But having now seen it I know I'll squeeze it in somewhere come spring.)

In order to write intelligently about the champion I had to go searching and when I found it tucked into a rocky nook in [Lynn Hyson's](#) wooded Redding property, I was entranced.

The arching, olive-green, 3- to 4-inch leaves, borne on reddish stems, are narrowly edged in crisp white. In spring, creamy bell-like flowers dangle from each leaf axle.

They give off a scent reminiscent of lily-of-the-valley, to whom Solomon's seal is a kissing cousin. Leaves turn a golden yellow in autumn, and being a herbaceous perennial, die completely to the ground in winter.

This beauty grows only 18-to 24-inches tall and spreads non-aggressively over a period of years to colonize a favored spot. Like its larger brethren, it requires full to partial shade and prefers moist soil.

It will grow in drier spots, but should be watered well for the first year to establish deep roots. This North American is hardy from zones 4 through 8 and its care is relatively simple.

Old foliage should be removed before the new emerges. For optimal results divide every two to three years in early spring; the thumb-sized horizontal rhizomes lie just below ground and can be easily removed and propagated for additional plants. An annual scattering Plant-tone will suffice for fertilizer.

Variegated Solomon's seal comports well with other shade-loving perennials such as arum; small ferns such as Christmas and Lady fern; and other plants such as brunnera, toadlily, astilbe, carex, small azalea, hosta, and acorus. Diseases and pests are rare, but slugs may be problematic. If so, disperse organic slug bait such as Sluggo or Escar-Go.

As the 2013 Perennial Plant of the Year, variegated Solomon's seal will available in many local nurseries as

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well as by mail order. But for a special treat to view it in person, consider a mid-springtime jaunt to the Variegated Foliage Nursery in Eastford, Conn.

(http://www.variegatedfoliage.com/nursery_info.htm)

This unique horticultural hotbed, established 13 years ago by owner [Stan Megos](#), specializes in all manner of variegated plants, from giant trees to tiny hostas. They carry not only the PPY winner, but two other types of variegated Solomon's seal as well, 'Double Stuff' and another cultivar adorned with streaked leaves. Call ahead (860-974-3951), as the nursery opens in spring only on Mother Nature's schedule, not that of the calendar.

For devoted gardeners the unveiling of the Perennial Plant of the Year is always a rush. Some choices are terrific, some not so much, but this year's winner hits on all cylinders. It's great in shade; it's native, well-mannered, attractive to hummingbirds, and fragrant. For a wise choice in the shady garden, you can't go wrong with variegated Solomon's seal.

Garden communicator [Colleen Plimpton](#) writes about, teaches, lectures on and coaches gardening. Visit her website and sign up for her monthly newsletter at www.colleenplimpton.com.

Read more: <http://www.newstimes.com/news/article/Meet-the-2013-Perennial-Plant-of-the-Year-4136144.php#ixzz2Ktn7FsCp>



February Garden Tips from Maryland Extension

Here are some Garden Tips for February from the Maryland Extension System Home and Garden Center

Lawns

- Late February through the end of March is the second best time (the optimum time is late August through mid-October) to over-seed your lawn to make it thicker or to cover bare areas. The freezing and thawing of the soil this time of the year helps the seed to get good soil contact.

Woody Ornamentals

- Trees and shrubs can still be pruned now. You may notice excessive sap bleeding from pruning cuts on elm maple, birch, dogwood, beech, walnut, magnolia, tulip poplar and redbud. This bleeding is harmless to the tree.

Ornamental Plants

- Avoid the temptation to start seeds too early. Check seed packets for detailed information on starting various types of flowers.
- Spring bulbs are slowly emerging this month. Exposed leaves may be burned a little by very cold temperatures, but the spring flower display will not be diminished.

Vegetable and Herb gardening

- If starting seeds indoors, set up florescent grow lights, and gather needed materials: pots, trays, soil less mix.
 - Consider purchasing some floating row cover material to protect crops against insects and promote early growth. A floating row cover is a light weight spun fabric that permits light and water to enter; traps the soils natural heat and keep out pest insects.
- Fresh tarragon, rosemary, and mint sprigs can be purchased in food markets and rooted indoors in a soil less mix to be grown under cool white fluorescent bulbs. The new plants can then be set outdoors in pots or garden beds in May. Wildlife.
- Continue to feed wild birds through the remaining winter weeks. Black oil sunflower seeds and suet cakes are a good choice for a wide variety of birds. Keep bird feeders clean and provide your wild birds with fresh water.

<http://gardening.mwcog.org/2011/01/february-garden-tips-from-maryland.html>