

The Seed Pod



The Official Newsletter
of the
Men's Garden Club of Asheville

Founded 1940



Brent Russell

June 2019

Upcoming Events

June 4 Monthly Meetings
First Baptist Church
10:00 am Board Meeting
11:30 am Lunch Meeting
(see p. 3)

Seed Pod of the Month
(see p. 2)



Comfrey

From the President

Gratitude, appreciation, fellowship, expertise, planning, execution, fun, hard work, sharing knowledge, love of plants and satisfaction are all words that come to mind when looking back over the last month. Generally I try to think and look ahead to the next month when penning my thoughts for the Seed Pod; however, this month we must cherish and remember the efforts and successes over the last month.

May was the month that a year of planning and organizing came to fruition and although the final results are still being confirmed, I can tell you that the leaders and volunteers in so many ways achieved a great success. There are so many people to thank and applaud for all of the hard, smart work. Hours and hours of planning, organizing and executing are needed to plant, identify, gather and move hundreds of plants and display them in an attractive manner for public sale. At both the Botanical Garden and Black Mountain sales, we were successful in every manner and teamwork was the number one ingredient.

Every member should be proud of the excellent results of our clubs most important activities that gives us a chance to work together and brings public attention to our club and activities. I was so proud to hear customer after customer come to our plant sale and say they look forward to seeing and buying from our club each year. In addition, many returned to see a member or ask questions about plants. Believe me, the experts were in full force!

THANK YOU to all who work so hard and give so much time and effort to our club every day. Thank you to all who cheerfully volunteer with muscle, knowledge and laughter. Well done to all!

See you in the garden,
Brent

Seed Pod of the Month

A year ago, I bought a small plant of comfrey, an herb I had heard of but knew nothing about. This year I have a 3' by 3' vigorous plant and have learned a good bit about it. In particular I know to stand back because it's gonna grow.

Comfrey is somewhat a confounding plant. Although it's an herb, it is generally considered as toxic and should be used only topically for a variety of purported healing benefits. Herbal use of comfrey otherwise should be done with the greatest of caution. The seed pods are interesting with a prickly case, but comfrey grows bigger by large spreading fleshy roots and can be divided readily. Seeds are available commercially.

It's an attractive, though somewhat ungainly plant with plenty of pretty blue or pink flowers. The bumblebees certainly love it. A testament to its vigor is that organic gardeners grow it for composting the massive amount of vegetation it produces. I'm planning to grow it as a clump surrounded by grass.

Tom Mills

From the Editor

This month's newsletter is later and shorter than usual because many of us are recovering from the massive efforts for the spring sales. As noted by Brent, many hands working over many months made the sales very successful.

Member sales receipts are still coming in, so the final figure of income is incomplete. However, the general estimation is that net income will cover costs of raising the plants and the two scholarships.



Planting March 9



Selling May 18 at Black Mountain

Biltmore Garden Tour

Our May 7 field trip to the Biltmore Estate gardens was enjoyed by perhaps 40 members, spouses, partners, and guests. Parker Andes, Horticulture Director, and Bill Quade, Senior Horticulture Manager, led us through the beautiful gardens and related the way the historical garden design is being maintained in modern times. On our own we toured the magnificent conservatory and were wowed by the amazing collection of tropical plants and orchids. It was an outstanding chance to see Asheville's main attraction.



Parker Andes



Bill Quade

June Members' Meeting

Our June luncheon meeting will be held on June 4 at 11:30 am at the First Baptist Church. The speaker will be Alison Arnold, the Agriculture Extension Agent - Consumer Horticulture in Buncombe County.

Alison will be speaking and answering the question, 'What is wrong with my plant?' She states that this isn't always straightforward given the many factors that can affect plant health. Plant problems can be made by humans, environmental or caused by insects or diseases. In addition, problems often start with the wrong plant in the wrong place, improper planting or tough site conditions. Please join us for this presentation to learn the various steps to diagnosing plant problems.

Among other duties, Alison leads the Extension Master Gardener program in Buncombe County. In university, Alison studied horticulture under famed horticulturist Michael Dirr. A little-known fact is that the eponymous variety of oak leaf hydrangea was named after Alison.

We will assemble for fellowship at 11:30 am, eat lunch at noon, and have the program following lunch. Club members will be contacted regarding luncheon reservations. Cost of the meal will be \$12. Contact Gerry Hardesty at gerry327@charter.net if you have not been contacted.