

The Seed Pod



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

Founded 1940



Brent Russell

November 2019

Upcoming Events

November 5 Meetings
10:00 am Board Mtg.
11:30 am Members Mtg.
First Baptist Church
(see p. 5)

Seed Pod of the Month
(see p. 2)



Balloon Plant Milkweed

From the President

While waiting at a stop light just yesterday, I looked in every direction and all I saw was GREEN! Officially, they say the leaf season is running a week behind due to the record warmth in September and early October, but I think it may be more. Many annuals are still vibrant and thriving as we really have not had a sharp 'cold snap' yet, but I do know the wind chill atop Mt Mitchell last week was 5 degrees, so perhaps fall will be here by Christmas!

Speaking of fall, this is a very busy time for the club. Many of us have volunteered to help ready the Horticultural Center for the winter months. Much more work is needed and Ray will be calling for volunteers to complete the winterization. If you have not been to the center for a time, please go and volunteer and see the changes underway.

Also this month, the Nominating Committee has completed their work to secure leaders for next year. Thank you to those who answered the call to volunteer to help lead our club. We are all volunteers and we are fortunate to have so many talented members who are willing to lend leadership skills. Next year will be an exciting year!

The Board has worked this year to update the Bylaws for our club. All members have received the updated version via e-mail asking that you review and plan to vote approval at the November meeting.

We are very fortunate to have Matt Timmer, Manager at Reems Creek Nursery to be speaking at the November lunch. Matt and Reems Creek have been faithful friends, and we appreciate the opportunity to have Matt join us.

See you in the garden,
Brent

Seed Pod of the Month

This Balloon Plant Milkweed was spotted in Peter Gentling's garden – how could one walk by without noticing it? Its botanical name is *Gomphocarpus physocarpus* (previously *Asclepias physocarpa*), and it is native to South Africa but is now grown widely in the U.S. As a milkweed, it is favored by monarch butterflies and grows 4 to 6 feet high. Its hardiness zone is listed as 8, but perhaps it can winter over in the ground with good mulching.

This now brings me to the –

Unknown Seed Pod of the Month



I collect seeds from plants that look interesting – these were collected sometime earlier this year. Unfortunately, I often don't make notes of what the plant was or even looked like. This seed pod is 2-3 inches long, holds multitudes of flat black seeds, and has a six-fold symmetry in the seed pod.

This is a real contest! If someone or several of you know what it is, the prize will be several seeds to grow for yourself. I'm going to plant a few in the yard and hopefully remember to label the spot.

Tom Mills

Seed Pod Archives

Gerry Hardesty has provided some old Seed Pods, and it may be of interest to learn what was happening in the past.

November 1992 – “As reported in the October Seed Pod the board gave Treasurer Ross Parks approval to send out statements to members in November, seeking payment of dues (\$20 for regular members; \$5 for life members), with a deadline set for December 1.”

November 1995 – “Our first Fall Plant Sale held at the Botanical Gardens, on Saturday, October 7, was a success and should initiate an annual event that will provide a new source for funds. Gerry Hardesty, C. D. Williams, and Walter Peacock deserve a big thank you for a job well done.”

Dues

Members are reminded that it is the time of year when we request that you pay your dues for the upcoming, 2020, year. You will also receive an email reminder about this. Dues are \$30 and can be paid at the November lunch or mailed to:

MGCA
PO Box 63
Asheville, NC 28802

This is also a good time to review your information in the 2019 Directory for updates or corrections. If you have any, let Walt Leginski (wleginski@yahoo.com) know. We work to submit the 2020 directory for printing by mid-December. Responses by the end of November are appreciated.

Annual November Elections

As part of our annual cycle of Club business, we elect Club Officers and Directors at the November meeting. The Nominating Committee is proposing the following members for those positions. Note: nominations from the floor and self-nominations are welcome at the meeting.

President	Claude Williams
President-Elect	Warren Sproul
Past President	Brent Russell
Secretary	Leo Bjorlie
Treasurer	Bob Sharp
Membership Director	Walt Leginski
Horticulture Director	Ray Geiser
Beautifications Director	Dick Rothenberg
Plant Sales Director	Open
Publications Director	Tom Mills
Publicity Director	Bob Jones
Scholarship and Outreach Director	Mike Maxwell
Historian Director	Dave Farnsworth
Director at Large	Gerry Hardesty

Thus far, no one has expressed the willingness to serve as Plant Sales Director. If the position remains open, the plant sales will be conducted by a standing committee.

In addition, we will vote on approval of a revision of our Bylaws.

And again, the business portion of the meeting won't take very long and there will be a gardening speaker.

October Meeting



We enjoyed a field trip to Peter and Jasmin Gentling's garden on October 1. In addition to his incredible variety of plants, Peter's home is historic in Asheville. It was built by Edwin Grove as his own residence and later had Herbert Hoover and William Jennings Bryan staying there. An owner previous to Peter, Elwood Demmon, was the first person to bring dawn redwoods to the US, in 1947.

Peter's garden is so beautiful, it's difficult to do it justice in a few words or pictures. Some websites where you can browse his gardens are:

<https://www.southernliving.com/home-garden/gardens/fall-color-asheville-garden>

<https://juliesgardendelights.com/tag/peter-and-jasmin-gentling/>

https://wncmagazine.com/feature/lush_life

Fall Color

Randy Harter has been enjoying some brilliant early color on Japanese maples, fothergillas, and a golden larch, which he shares here:



Frost-Free Days

Two of the most important dates for any gardener to know are the frost dates for your area. The spring frost date is the estimated day of the last hard frost of winter. The fall frost date is the estimated day of the first hard, killing frost of late autumn. The spring frost date is largely considered the first day of the outdoor gardening season. After this day it is unlikely that you will get a hard frost that would kill tender plants. The fall frost date is basically the end of the outdoor gardening season for tender plants including most garden vegetables unless you use season extenders such as row covers, cold frames, etc.

My wife and I recently spent three weeks camping in the upper Midwest (northern Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota). There were many backyards that contained small greenhouses and hoop houses, which made sense when I read that several of the areas we visited had only 60 to 70 frost-free days per year and over 200 inches of annual snowfall. That would challenge even the most adventurous gardener. One example is Houghton Lake, Michigan (north-central Michigan) with an average last frost date of 27 June and average first frost date of 25 August - that is an average of only 58 frost-free days a year! The moderating effects of large bodies of water can be seen with similar data from Munising, Michigan, which is a 170 miles further north but situated on Lake Superior - Munising has an average last frost date of 13 June and average first frost date of 15 September for an average of 94 frost-free days a year.

So, what about Buncombe County? We have a diverse geography with elevations in the county ranging from 1,700 to over 6,000 feet, which makes generalizations about frost free dates very difficult. Data have been reported for Asheville, Enka, Bent Creek and Black Mountain. For Asheville, one source gives average last frost as 24 April and average first frost as 11 October for 168 frost free days per year. Another source for Asheville reports that for 50% of years the first 28° night occurs on 08 November and 50% of the time the last 32° temp occurs on 12 April. Enka, Bent Creek and Black Mountain are generally cooler and all vary from these dates by 10 to 18 days, which means frost free days in these areas are usually three weeks shorter than Asheville itself.

Give thanks that we generally have 150 to 170 frost-free days each year for gardening no matter where we live in Asheville or the county.

Phil Roudebush

November Members' Meeting

Our November meeting will be held November 5 at the First Baptist Church at the normal time of 11:30 am. Our speaker will be Matt Timmer of Reems Creek Nursery, and his talk is titled "Conifers."

Matt says, "I moved here in 1995 to attend Warren Wilson College. After a brief stint there I left to pursue a 2 yr degree in Horticulture from Haywood Community College. By 2000 I was working full time as a Landscape Foreman for a company in Waynesville NC. As my interest in plants grew, I shifted my attention to the re-wholesale side of the industry. My back and sore muscles thanked me for that move. I have now spent the last 9 years as the Tree and Shrub Buyer as well as Green Goods Manager at Reems Creek Nursery in Weaverville, NC. I have enjoyed sharing plant stories, triumphs and plant losses, as well as my passion for native plants and conifers with so many fine people in the WNC region."

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 Walt Leginski at wleginski@yahoo.com if you have not been contacted by November 1.