



The Seed Pod

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

Founded in 1940

February 2021 Upcoming Events



Zoom Board Meeting
February 1 – 10:00am



Zoom Presentation
Details on following page
February 2 – 12:30pm



Valentine's Day
February 14



President's Day
February 15

BOARD MEETING REPORT

Due to your editor's oversight, reports of happenings at the December Board Meeting will now be presented with those from the January Meeting.

The Budget for 2021 was presented and approved. Despite the uncertainties that 2021 holds, Treasurer Bob Sharp is confident that the club can withstand unforeseen financial challenges. Sufficient funds were allocated to proactively meet the future needs of the Horticultural Center.

The Board agreed to send a \$100 contribution to The Botanical Gardens at Asheville which is struggling financially due to the Pandemic.

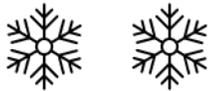
A committee of several Board members will review the club's scholarship program and formalize its purpose and operation. The program has operated for two decades on an informal basis. The committee will explore what the club should consider in addressing the needs of students, programs and institutions. Any changes to the scholarship policy will be implemented later in 2021 after this year's scholarships have been announced.



DUES DUES DUES DUES

There were the holidays, the politics, the riots, the inauguration and a few other distractions but if you haven't already sent in your dues, DUES IT!

Please show your support for the club as we anxiously await the resumption of in-person meetings. We know some of you have trouble with Zoom and others don't feel comfortable gathering, even with social distancing and masks. If paying your dues is the only way you are currently connected to the club, do it now and make plans to get together and celebrate as soon as this scourge subsides.



A number of members gathered in January at the Horticultural Center for a couple of Work Days organized by Director Ray Geiser. If you weren't there, the greenhouse received a makeover. Items in disrepair were removed, maintenance of some features was completed, and areas were cleaned and prepared in anticipation of the plant propagation to commence during February. The place looks welcoming although a theme, color palette and window treatments are yet to be determined (suggestion: rustic, white and clear plastic).

There was also news that City employees are in process of clearing the outflow pipe for the beaver pond so puddles around the Horticultural Center will become a distant memory, but don't hold your breath.



REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Our February presentation will be on February 2, 2021 at 12:30PM The topic will be two Youtube videos on Winter Sowing hosted by John Bowen of the Buncombe County Master Gardeners. I have talked to John Bowen and he will join us live for some Q&A.



WAY BACK THEN

In February, 1990, a Nurseymen's Panel (representatives from Holbrook Farms, Van Wingerden, Inc, Jesse Israel & Sons and WE-DU Nursery) presented Plant Introductions For 1990.

Twenty-five years ago, the January 1996 Seed Pod informed us that the club luncheon would be held at the Country Club of Asheville, the club added 28 new members in 1995 and dues were \$25. Seems like things have hardly changed ignoring that dues have skyrocketed an incredible 20 cents a year since then.

As the new Seed Pod editor, I wondered about its history. We currently get an issue via email but what was done before the internet. Did we have it professionally printed? Did we type it up and make Xerox copies or mimeographed copies (remember that)? Did we have a room of scribes and illuminated texts? Speaking with several members, I was provided with some but not all the answers.

It is assumed that the Seed Pod began around the time of the club's formation but the oldest copy we have seen is from 1943. Our historian, Dave Farnsworth, transfers documents to the Archives at UNCA, and relays that there are a great number of SP past issues there. A few issues are missing from here and there and some unexplained gaps like from 1950-1958 but I have not had the opportunity to visit the Archives yet.

Tom Mills gave me "A Manual for the Preparation of the Seed Pod" prepared in July of 1977 by Ainsley A. Whitman (btw, the Manual pages were meant for a 3-ring binder and came with those old white circular reinforcements). The Manual says the Seed Pod is one of the activities of the Publicity Committee and that the committee and Board have not established any directives to govern the Seed Pod (so watch out for news that's not fit to print).

The Manual suggests:

Copies of the SP be mailed by the Thursday or Friday before the monthly meeting on the following Tuesday (evidencing a great trust in the mail system). Also, the source for most of the SP information is from Board meetings held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5pm.

The procedures for preparing the copy are: Type on an 8 ½" by 14" paper taking care to measure down from the top to provide enough room for the masthead. Type in the name of the month that is the same month as the following meeting. After typing the text, cut out the masthead

from a former issue – using the BLACK copy and not the green. Tape it with Scotch tape at the top of the sheet (this is done after the typing, so the masthead doesn't cause the paper tearing in the typewriter. Check the copy for typing errors.

If you have a 2-page edition, the second page should use our printed green advertising paper because the advertising must be on the outside. The copy is taken to Quick Copies on S. Market St. immediately below the ABC store. They print while you wait for the usual batch of 110 copies. They print the mailing labels also.

For mailing, fold the copy (obviously in thirds or you need a BIG envelope), fasten with tape or staple. Attach mailing labels and stamps. Separate the issues by Zip code including Black Mountain addresses (don't sort other out of town mailings). January issues are sent in envelopes with invoices for the current year's dues.

If you didn't catch it, the Seed Pod used to have advertising. I can also reveal that the SP was at some point reduced to 8½ x 11, folded and mailed out at least through 1999.

NONE of the suggestions were followed in the production of this issue. Producing the Seed Pod takes some effort, but I've got it easy compared to pre-email times.



SEED POD OF THE MONTH [seed pod in left photo]



Paulownia tomentosa – (Empress Tree, Princess Tree, Foxglove Tree)

Last spring, I saw something outside sprouting up in the rotting material between two large wooden beams. I suspected a weed but opted to let it grow a little bit bigger before removing it. In two weeks, I saw several sizeable leaves emerge. I let it grow some more because I became less convinced it was a weed. Pretty soon it was six feet tall with leaves like tennis racquets. Cutting to the chase, it turned out it was a Paulownia Tomentosa that eventually grew close to fifteen feet high with leaves, 24 inches in diameter, that rivaled the elephant ear plant.

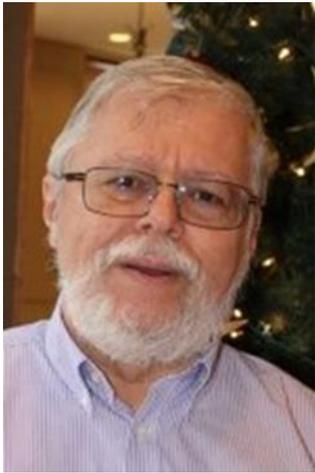
The Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources considers it an invasive species that was first introduced into North America around 1840 for ornamental purposes and for wood carving. Plantations of this tree are still grown in the U.S. for export to Japan, where the wood is highly prized.

This deciduous tree can grow up to 60 feet in height with a trunk diameter of up to two feet. Showy, fragrant, violet flower clusters bloom in the spring. Thin, pecan-shaped fruit capsules open in the fall and persist well into winter. Once a tree reaches the age of eight to 10 years, it can produce twenty million seeds that are spread by wind and water. Trees also could sprout prolifically from buds on the stems and roots, allowing it to survive fire, cutting and other disturbances. Sprouts can grow up to 15 feet in a single season (I can attest to that, see center photo). While seeing that a mature tree is quite beautiful (see photo on the right), I don't think I want 20 million seeds scattered on my property.



If You Didn't Know

Our president, Claude Williams, is serving for two consecutive terms as did another C. Williams in 1991-1992.



A
FEW
WORDS
FROM THE
PRESIDENT



Claude Williams

I am down in the foothills this week in my hometown of Morganton. It was so warm yesterday that while running errands in shirt sleeves, realized I could have planted kale and collards! Tuesday will be 71! Times are changing...

Looking ahead, NCEP shows temperatures are very likely to be above the 1980-2010 Norms until November. Rainfall will be close to normal for February, then a wetter spring. Like last year, if there is a dry spell, plant!

The year is starting off well for the Club. Folks are getting vaccination appointments, the Club coffers are healthy, and our Directory with Contact Cards will be distributed this month. There is another great big positive note this year! In early February you can bring overwintering plants, early starts, or seeds to the Horticultural Center when the heat is turned on. Come join the guys and get your green thumbs dirty!

Buncombe County is allowing reservations for COVID-19 in the 69+ group. Outside of Buncombe, please check with your county health office.

Be safe,

Claude



As you read this issue, COVID-19 vaccinations are being scheduled and administered, bringing hope that, among many wonderful things, we will once again be able to meet together in person. We need to be vigilant and cautious until that time. Be sure to retain your vaccination record slip as it may become your passport to enter some future public gatherings.