

The Brooksider

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Winter, 2022

President's Letter

By Kathy Kircher, President

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your support of [Brookside Gardens](#) and [Friends of Brookside Gardens \(FOBG\)](#) last year. Thanks to your support and help, **Brookside** was able to continue with its wonderful garden displays and many special programs. One highlight for me was Children's Day last September. Watching excited children leave with big smiles, a house plant that they potted themselves, nature crowns, and sun prints, I kept thinking – there go our future nature advocates.

Although winter is not my favorite time of the year, whenever I go to **Brookside**, I enjoy walking in the gardens. I highly recommend it for everyone. I usually enter through the path that leads to the Gude Garden. When I get to the hillside, I stop and enjoy the wide vista with the Teahouse at the bottom of the hill, and everything feels peaceful. Pass by the new sculpture at Maple Terrace. It glistens in the sun. The Conservatory spring display - full of bright, beautiful colors of familiar spring favorites and tropicals - a perfect destination when it's cold and a reminder of what's to come with spring.

Thank you to the talented and caring gardeners and staff that have kept **Brookside** blooming. The gardens are always changing and being renewed. I'm

looking forward to seeing what they have planted for spring, the daffodils on the entry hill, and spring ephemerals in the fragrance and formal gardens. The Spring & Summer Cultivate, just out, has a program for every interest. I'm sure you'll find one that's up your alley and several programs are conducted by the knowledgeable and talented **Brookside** professionals. It can be [downloaded using this link](#).

2022 is an even-numbered year. That means Montgomery County is doing its every other year update to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This plan lays out the major building and construction plans for the next five years. **Brookside's** Conservatory dates to the garden's opening in 1969. A new conservatory that meets the needs of our community is part of this CIP. **FOBG** is testifying at the County Council hearings on the CIP in support of continued funding for this project. You can help. – Email your council members. Tell them **Brookside Gardens** is important to you and to our community.

Enjoy your time in nature and hope to see you in the gardens.

News from Brookside

By Stephanie Oberle, Director, Brookside Gardens

Several years ago, we met a Japanese garden consultant, who now works with us once a year to renovate and refine the Gude Garden landscape. John Powell, of Zoen, LLC., is a landscape designer who consults with private clients and public gardens around the country, such as Como Park in Minneapolis, Smith College in Massachusetts, and Garvan Woodland Gardens in Arkansas. Last fall, John joined Josh Demers and Jackie Moraes Varjao on the Gude Island to stabilize the edge of the banks. They installed flexible Trex boards held by pipes pounded into the soil. The boards resist the gentle wave action of water and the feet of geese that cause the bank edges to crumble. A tube of gravel encased in landscape cloth was installed behind the boards to resist wash-out and increase stability. The narrow edge of the board above the water creates a visually smooth contrast to the reflective water below and tumble of



plantings above. Josh and Jackie will continue to use this stabilization technique in other areas of the Gude Garden ponds to add stability to the banks. Next fall when you are in the Gude Garden, also take notice of the brilliant colors of the Japanese maples. Another strategy in our on-going work in that area is to enhance seasonal interest in fall and spring, with additional plantings of Japanese maples and flowering cherries. All of this work---the plants, materials, and John's time---has been funded by gifts of generous donors. We appreciate their support and know that our visitors enjoy the improvements that have been made in this garden area.



An Enchanting Evening at the Garden of Lights

By Nithya Raghavan, Webmaster

As the temperature drops, crisp, clear days set in and the kaleidoscope of leaves in every hue start dropping. We anticipate the end of autumn and the start of winter followed by the myriad holidays. Along with the events and hoopla that parallel the holidays, the exciting events everyone looks forward to are the winter light displays in the greater Washington area. Although there are many such displays, the one near and dear to my heart is **Brookside's Garden of Lights**. After two years of pandemic fatigue and the unprecedented cancellation of **Brookside's** light show in 2020, everyone waited with bated breath hoping for the continuation of the light show in 2021. We were not disappointed! As early as August, cherry pickers, light crews and masses of coiled lights started making their way to **Brookside Gardens**. The **Garden of Lights** was on again for its 23rd year!!

Jeff Patterson, Landscape Supervisor and Manager of the light show at **Brookside Gardens** has managed 19 of these events. You can see his interview about **Brookside's Garden of Lights on Youtube**. The event installation takes place from late July to early November with constant tweaking and troubleshooting. This year's display started on November 19, 2021 and continued until January 2, 2022. Due to pandemic regulations, **Brookside** sold timed entry tickets to the Garden of Lights via Eventbrite for the first time to limit overcrowding and close contact in the gardens.



Visitors arrive at the parking garden illuminated by twinkling lights and vividly colored trees. Following their entry through the Visitor Center, a multicolored caterpillar guided the visitors to the gardens' light display with over a million LED lights. This year's display

boasted 454 forms - flowers, animals, birds, insects and other natural elements including the display's favorite Nessie and baby Nessie!! It was Jeff's project when he started with the light display and continues to be a fan favorite still. There were dragonflies, butterflies, sun and the moon, spiderwebs and rainbows – but no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. However, there was great imagination and lots of sparkling lights to hold the interest of both the young and the old! In the last few years, a computerized light display was added on the lake near the Japanese tea house (Gude Garden) where bright lights were timed to dance to the music!! It was a mesmerizing display that made one reluctant to move from that serene spot.

Have you ever wondered about why our favorite Gardens is called **Brookside**? Yes, there is a brook alongside the gardens and hence the name!! This year's display had the brook running along the lawn parallel to the real brook and it had frogs and dolphins in it!! With a little more imagination one could almost hear the babbling brook! Across from the brook, we had



the illuminated Saguaro cactus garden transplanted from the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. It was breathtaking with cacti forms lit with hundreds of green lights and a "cool" desert floor made from orange LEDs. In addition, **Brookside** introduced two color wraps, color-themed gardens and a butterfly display near the butterfly garden at the conservatory.

Walking through the boardwalk lights adjacent to the conservatory directed the visitors to the trial garden and an African safari-themed display with giraffes, lions, fire ants and other exotic creatures.

To take a break from the visual extravaganza, one could rest amidst the cool and calming splendor of the Wisteria arbor lit in its entirety in cool purple/pink lights. A walk past the arbor drew one to the formal



garden with a very cute Nessie and baby Nessie transporting us to Loch Ness in Scotland or to the maple terrace on the other side with its large luminous metal sphere (see below) glowing like a sapphire orb in an enchanted forest. The elegantly illuminated wedding gazebo and the display at the fragrance garden preceded the riveting computerized music and light display at the lake. Following the buzzing bees at the

beehive (up on the tree) led the visitors back to the Visitor Center and the warming food truck with hot cocoa/cider and small eats to squelch those hunger pains that started after the “illuminating walk” around the gardens!! On the way out to the parking lot, the Gift Shop exhibited a full display of holiday gifts, sparkling baubles, jewelry, clothing and everything to make the holidays even more enticing.

We did miss the other special events that went on previously with the Garden of Lights at **Brookside Gardens** – the fabulous model railroad display in the South Conservatory by the Washington, Virginia and Maryland Garden Railway Society (WVMGRS) and holiday concerts and concessions in the auditorium. Although the coronavirus curtailed many of these activities, it could not and did not curb the human spirit for enjoying what was available and to anticipate next year’s display with hope and joy. THANK YOU **Brookside Gardens**, for shining a million lights in our lives and helping us through this holiday season with hope and sparkle amidst the darkness of the pandemic! We look forward to another enchanting display in 2022.



New Sculpture will Honor Tree Seeds

by Anne Roland, Vice President

Nature meets art along the main pathway to the Trial Garden at **Brookside**. A landmark Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) stump is being carved into a majestic sculpture. The tree, which was over 50 years old, was diseased and dropping limbs. Rather than remove it, **Brookside** staff saw an opportunity to give the tree new life and new purpose as a piece of art in the garden.

The artist is “Carving Colin” (Colin Vale), a local sculptor who lives in Olney, Maryland (in the photo). He works primarily with an electric chainsaw but does use a variety of carving tools. The sculpture will honor

the magnificence of tree seeds in his carving. The seed forms featured are a pinecone, an acorn and maple seeds (called samaras). According to project leader Keely Shaughnessy, the sculpture “...has symbolism in rebirth and embodies small acts growing to create great impact.”

As carving proceeds, expect to see the trunk of the tree covered in scaffolding. Once completed, the sculpture will be coated in boiled linseed oil to preserve it for as long as possible. The **Brookside** staff hope it will be a feature enjoyed for many generations to come.



Photo by Keely Shaughnessy

Garden Guardian

By Dr. Dick Hammerschlag, Master Gardener, Howard County

To Prune or Not to Prune? If that is the question, now = late Winter is a very good time!!!

Pruning woody plants is performed for a variety of fairly obvious reasons. One is to maintain or improve the plant's shape. A second is to remove dead or diseased branches/limbs. A third might be to limit or manage its size. Sometimes limiting growth is done to keep a plant in scale with the rest of the garden, or simply to keep plants from growing into each other. Another reason might be to reduce the mass of growth so as to provide less 'sail' during heavy winds or even heavy snow. Yet another reason could be to 'lift the tree's skirt' -i.e., remove lower branches to reveal the trunk or to provide open space for space's sake or to grow understory plants.

Late Winter is an optimum time for pruning for a number of reasons. The plant is dormant. The silhouette/scaffolding of the plant is easy to see (not obscured by leaves). What else would you be doing in the garden this time of the year? One caveat requires being familiar with the plant being pruned. There are a number of plants which form flowering buds on the 'summer' wood which would then be exposed to Winter pruning removal. Those plants that produce flowers on Spring growth would be OK. The best way to tell, if unsure, is to inspect some branches and see if there is more than one bud form. Flower buds are often fuller and larger than leaf buds...and generally in different locations. One does want to prune BEFORE the sap starts moving. Once the sap is moving, pruning can lead to 'bleeding' which is actually loss (waste) of vital energy material needed to support plant growth.

So, some of the things to look for when pruning are crossing branches – really want branching structure to be radiating outward. Often there is excessive twig growth in the interior of the plant which needs to be opened up to let in more light to penetrate the plant and improve its silhouette. Or maybe, there are 'sprout' shoots (epicormic suckers) which do not contribute to the plant's form. Another situation is when there are two main stems (co-dominant) in young plants, it is desirable to remove one, especially if the crotch is more 'V' shaped than 'U' shaped. 'V' shaped crotches are prone to splitting.

A little more on the technical side: when pruning, do not leave stubs. Dead stubs just provide avenues for decay and disease. Look to see if the plant has a branch collar which is a raised area along the main branch. If so, prune right up to the outside of the branch collar. This will allow good 'wound' closure by the tree. If no evident branch collars, just prune close to the main limb or trunk. When removing a large limb, one should really commit to three cuts. Remove the limb mass by cutting the branch above and below some distance from the trunk and then go back and make your 'flush' cut of the remaining stub as described above for smaller branch removal.

By the way, much of the above applies more to deciduous plants. Pruning conifers is trickier and often requires selected bud removal as well similar branch management.

So, sharpen up your Felco bypass pruners and go to 'work'. Have fun in the garden as always!!!!

In this and future issues of [The Brooksider](#), we will provide a listing of upcoming FOBG sponsored events and Brookside Gardens adult programs. The list will be updated as information becomes available. We hope this will be helpful in planning how you can take advantage of all that Brookside Gardens has to offer. Additional offerings, such as children's programs, art exhibits and excursions can be found at: [Cultivate](#).

Date	Brookside Gardens Adult and Children's Programs	Course #
2/12/2022	Everything You Wanted to Know About Pruning	127655
2/12/2022	Crafty Valentine's Heart's-a-Bustin Workshop	127046
2/18/2022	GreenScapes Symposium 2022 ‡	128034
3/3/2022	RainScapes Session I: Rethinking Your Yard*	PBG0015 100001
3/12/2022	Introduction to Landscape Design: Session I	PBG0012 100001
3/16/2022	Tai Chi at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0029 100001
3/17/2022	RainScapes Session II: Planning the Parameters of Your RainScapes Project	PBG0015 100002
3/19/2022	Origins of Modern Landscape Design: The Wit and Wisdoms of John Brookes ‡	PBG0035 100001
3/26/2022	Introduction to Landscape Design: Session II	PBG0013 100001
3/31/2022	RainScapes Session III: Plants & Landscape Design for RainScape Gardens	PBG0015 100003
4/8/2022	Ecological-Based Landscape Design - Session I*	PBG0040 100001
4/9/2022	Strolls for Well-Being *	PBG0033 100001
4/13/2022	Behind-the-Scenes Greenhouse Tour**	PBG0003 100001
4/15/2022	Brookside Gardens Full Moon Walk**	PBG0002 100001
4/18/2021	Plant Propagation: Houseplants & Summer Annuals	PBG0016 100001
4/23/2022	GreenFest ‡	PBG0008 100001
4/30/2022	Spring Yoga Sprouts!**	PBG0026 100002
4/30/2022	Yoga at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0031 100001
5/1/2022	Half-Day Mindfulness Retreat at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0018 100001
5/5/2022	Gentle Yoga at Brookside Gardens**	PBG0030 100001
5/6/2022	Brookside Gardens Azalea & Rhododendron Tour**	PBG0001 100001
5/7/2022	Decolonizing Your Garden - Native Plants from a Native Perspective ‡	PBG0036 100001
5/7/2022	Afternoon Tea at McCrillis Gardens**	PBG0021 100001
5/11/2022	Latest Research & Trials of Native Plants & Cultivars	PBG0039 100001
5/14/2022	McCrillis Gardens Spring Tour**	PBG0020 100001
5/14/2022	Miniature Perennial Container	PBG0023 100001
5/19/2022	Native Blooms for The Summer Garden	PBG0041 100001
5/21/2022	Summer Annual Container	PBG0024 100001
6/2/2022	Ground Covers: Great Alternatives to Turf Grass	PBG0009 200001
6/3/2022	Creating Photograph Quality with Black Pencils & Watercolor on Drafting Film*	PBG0034 200001
6/7/2022	Concert Series** ‡	
6/11/2022	Sustainable Gardening Practices	PBG0045 200001
6/18/2022	Managing Pests While Protecting Pollinators	PBG0044 200001
6/20-6/24/2022	Summer Camp: Plants & Pollinators - Celebrate National Pollinator Week!	PBG0048 500001
6/25/2022	Using Informed Plant Selection to Restore Pollinators and Songbirds‡	PBG0037 200001

6/27-7/1/2022	Summer Camp: Magical Plants & Mythical Creatures	PBG0049 500001
7/9/2022	Conquer the Soil: Black America and the Untold Stories of Our Country's Gardeners, Farmers, and Grow ‡	PBG0038 200001
7/11-7/15/2022	Summer Camp: Garden Architects & Inventors	PBG0050 500001
7/12/2022	Shakespeare in the Park: Macbeth ‡	PBG0027 200001
7/13/2022	Summer Annual Container Tour **	PBG0042 200001
7/16/2022	Succulent Container	PBG0046 200001
7/21/2022	Pollinator Meadow Tour**	PBG0043 200001

* Program Meets Multiple Days

** Multiple Sessions Offered

‡ FOBG-Sponsored Program

Notices

Orchid Show Canceled for 2022

We are sorry to report that the 2022 FOBG Orchid Show and Sale will not take place due to covid concerns. **FOBG** would like to thank the vendors and orchid fans for making the show such a success in past years.

Help Wanted – Newsletter Editor

Our [Brookside](#) editor, **Freddi Hammerschlag**, has been doing this job for 7 years and would like to try something new. She has created guidelines for this position and is prepared to train the new editor.

We publish our newsletter four times a year. The [Brookside](#) focuses on **FOBG** activities at and in support of **Brookside Gardens** and updates on what is happening at **Brookside**. The editor is re-

sponsible for planning, compiling and editing articles written by **FOBG** Board members or other **Friends of Brookside**.

If you would like to know more about the job, email us at friendsofbrooksidegardens@yahoo.com

We are all volunteers, love **Brookside Gardens**, and enjoy supporting our community. And - we are nice to work with!

Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

Friends of Brookside Gardens, Inc. Board of Directors

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Think Spring I



Think Spring II

