Daffodils!  This time of year, daffodils are pushing foliage and flowers out of the earth.  Have you ever wondered what daffodils are and where they came from?  Daffodils are members of the Amaryllidaceae (amaryllis) family, and are members of the genus *Narcissus*.  Common names of members of this genus (which includes 50 species) include not only daffodil, but daffadowndilly, narcissus, and jonquil.  Members of the genus *Narcissus* have flowers with six petal-like tepals, topped by a cup- or trumpet-shaped corona.  *Narcissus* flowers are generally white or yellow, but also include orange or pink in garden varieties.  The tepals and corona can be uniform or have contrasting colors.  *Narcissus* are predominantly spring perennial plants, which means that we are seeing them now in the ground, and in stores!

Here’s a bit of *Narcissus* history and lore.  *Narcissus* were well known in ancient civilization, having appeared in the Late Oligocene epoch (33 to 23 million years ago) in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) and in adjacent areas of southwest Europe.  This genus is one of the oldest cultivated bulbous ornamental plants in the world.  *Narcissus* are native to meadows and woods in southern Europe and North Africa.  These plants naturalized themselves throughout Europe centuries ago, and cultivars were introduced into the Far East prior to the tenth century.  *Narcissus* have beneficial medicinal
In a previous article, I discussed two gardens that conduct trials of perennial cultivars, Mt. Cuba Center and Chicago Botanical Garden. Mt. Cuba Center just completed an evaluation of phlox species and cultivars. The report is located at the following website: https://1x848d9mftq5g9wx3epiqa1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/MtCuba-Phlox-Report.pdf

Per the previous article these evaluations are very relevant to our area as Mt. Cuba Center is located in northern Delaware and shares similar growing conditions as Maryland. While the evaluation covers various Phlox species, I am going to focus on the Phlox paniculata portion of the evaluation. Phlox paniculata is native and butterflies are often drawn to the flowers, but the foliage is susceptible to powdery mildew. Phlox paniculata were evaluated for horticultural performance and butterfly attraction. The top ten cultivar performers were: ‘Jeana’, ‘Glamour Girl’, ‘Delta Snow’, *Phlox × arendsii* ‘Babyface’, ‘Lavelle’, ‘Robert Poore’, ‘Dick Weaver’, ‘David’ (Perennial Plant of the Year 2002), ‘Ditomdre’ (Coral Crème Drop), and ‘Shortwood’.

“Jeana’ was the highest rated *P. paniculata* due to its powdery mildew resistance and was by far the best at drawing butterflies. ‘Lavelle’ was second in drawing butterflies.

The relationship between horticultural performance and butterfly attraction should not be a surprise. Healthier plants produce more nectar. Keeping the plants healthy is a challenge with powdery mildew. *P. paniculata* will grow better in a diverse gardening environment where the disease cannot easily spread from plant to plant. This factor was a major concern during their trial evaluation where hundreds of these plants were clustered.

Another factor in powdery mildew resistance is the proper site. Plants prefer moist, fertile soil for their natural environment which naturally is found along river courses and flood plains.

Another website for cultivar evaluation is the Chicago Botanical Garden website. While not the same climate as the Mid-Atlantic Region, I don’t believe their climate is that...
drastically different. Their evaluations for *P. paniculata* are located at the following website locations:


https://www.chicagobotanic.org/downloads/planteval_notes/no13_phlox.pdf

The Chicago Botanical Garden recently conducted a 9 year evaluation to compliment a much more limited four year evaluation. ‘Shortwood’ was the only 5 star rated cultivar from the most recent evaluation. ‘Jeana’ was inadvertently removed before completing the evaluation and was not rated. There were numerous 4 star rated cultivars including some that overlapped with the Mt Cuba Center evaluation. ‘Lavelle’, ‘Robert Poore’, and ‘Delta Snow’ are three common top performers from the recent evaluations in addition to the ‘Shortwood’. ‘Katherine’ was the best performer in the earlier evaluation and was a 4 star rated cultivar in the recent study as well. ‘David’ did well in the earlier Chicago Botanical Garden study and the Mt. Cuba Center study. No study will absolutely determine how well the cultivars will perform in your garden conditions, but these studies should help in selecting cultivars to meet your need. Plants that perform well in multiple studies are more likely to perform well in your yard.

~Bill Fritch 2014

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**Getting Back Outside Consider Joining Statewide Eyes**

Do you hike, ride, bird, camp, fish, or otherwise recreate in state parks, forests or wildlands? Lend YOUR eyes to help Maryland’s biodiversity! Did you know? Maryland has over 1200 rare, threatened or endangered native species, of the more than 15,000 species recorded in the state. Unfortunately, habitat loss and invasive species threaten our native species, even the common ones. One of the best ways to protect Maryland’s native species is to remove invasive plants and restore invaded sites. To tackle the problem quickly and efficiently, we need more information about how much of which invasive plants grow where. That’s where you can help!

**What are invasive species?**

An invasive species is a species that:

- Did not evolve in the habitat where it is found;
- Has or can have a negative environmental or economic effect, or adversely affect human health.
- Shows a tremendous capacity for reproduction and distribution throughout its new environment, and
- Was introduced to its new environment, accidentally or on purpose, by people.

For more information, see our [Invasive Species page](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/statewide_eyes.aspx).

Here is the text of [current Maryland law defining invasive plants](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/statewide_eyes.aspx), as it was passed.

**Calling all Citizen Scientists!**

The Maryland Natural Heritage Program designed [Statewide Eyes](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/statewide_eyes.aspx) to allow volunteers and researchers alike to collect more information about invasive plants on state lands quickly. Volunteers
(like you!) use a free mobile application called the Mid-Atlantic Early Detection Network (MAEDN) to identify, photograph and map the location of invasive plants, focusing on ecologically significant sites.

The data are sent to the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System or EDDMapS, a nationwide mapping system, to be freely displayed and available for download and analysis. The information gathered allows Department of Natural Resources scientists to:

1. Analyze the greatest invasive plant threats on state land to plan and implement effective, efficient control efforts;
2. Identify newly emerging invasive plants before their populations increase beyond our capacity to control them;
3. Provide up-to-date information to the state Invasive Plant Advisory Committee, which ranks ornamental plant species as Tier 1 or Tier 2 and removes them from commercial trade (Click here for the regulations regarding Tiered species)
4. Cooperate with partners in Maryland and across the region to identify, understand and address comprehensive invasion situations, such as the location of the “invasion front” of a species.

Be Our Eyes!

Are you ready to help? If so, then please sign up here, via Google for a day-long training session to learn species identification, and how to use the MAEDN app to collect and report invasive plant data. This training session is a qualified ADVANCED Master Naturalist training; Master Naturalist hours spent on this project count for both your host training site AND for the Department of Natural Resources.

The sessions will be held from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and will include both classroom and field work. Please bring a bagged lunch, your smart phone or handheld device, and the right clothes to head outside for part of the workshop.

If you have questions, e-mail paula.becker@maryland.gov

UME Annual Training Conference

The UME Master Gardener State Office will not be hosting the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Annual Training Conference in 2018.

We hope to resume the event in 2019. If you are interested, please read this brief letter from Jon Traunfeld, State Master Gardener Coordinator, that explains our decision.

If you are looking for other options to complete your 10 hours of continuing education, please take a look at the list of horticulture webinars, online classes, and other events that we compiled.
Spring Lecture Series 2018, Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, MD
April 11, 2018, 10:30 a.m. – City Green: Public Gardens of New York with Jane Garney
Public horticulture in New York City is rich and diverse. Many public gardens, such as the New York Botanical Garden, the High Line and Wave Hill are well-known. Others remain relatively undiscovered, including Green-Wood, Louis Kahn’s Four Freedoms Park on Roosevelt Island, the Chinese Scholar’s Garden on Staten Island, and community gardens that started their lives as dangerous, garbage-strewn empty lots. In addition to a wealth of different design styles that range from traditional to contemporary and naturalistic, public gardens play an increasingly significant role in the quality of urban life. They also reveal a fascinating history, having been nurtured, preserved, and sometimes literally saved by the passionate efforts of individual citizens and visionary gardeners.


April 18, 2018, 10:30 a.m. – Introduction to Water Gardening with Tim Jennings
Have you ever thought about adding a water feature to your landscape, but weren’t sure where to begin? Join us as we look at site considerations, types of pools, and a sampling of some of the plants you can grow to enhance your garden.

Tim Jennings, Senior Horticulturalist at Longwood Gardens, began his gardening journey working at local garden centers and helping a family friend with vegetable gardening. In 1986, Tim joined the Professional Gardener Training Program at Longwood. Afterwards, Tim spent two years working at Chanticleer Gardens before returning to Longwood as a full-time employee. Tim has served as the curator of Longwood’s Aquatic Collection over the past 24 years.

April 25, 2018, 10:30 a.m. – From Ladew Gardens to the Grand Canyon: Protecting Historic Landscapes with William J. Cook
Historic preservation law plays a crucial role in the preservation of America’s heritage. Using recent examples and narratives, Will Cook, Associate General Counsel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will explore preservation success stories, and a few losses, through a legal lens. He will talk about both local and nationwide preservation issues and suggest creative strategies for advocates to consider.

In addition to his position at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Will is also a board member for the Valleys Planning Council, the National Preservation Institute, New York Preservation Archive Project, and the Lawyers’ Committee for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Will currently teaches preservation law at Columbia University and lectures regularly to national audiences on issues related to property, land use, and historic preservation law.

Fee: $35 http://www.ladewgardens.com/EDUCATION/Adult-Education/Lecture-Series
April 7, 2018, 8:30 a.m.  
**Performance Pruning: Shrubs, Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348**

Improve your shrubs’ and vines’ performance and take the mystery out of pruning. Proper timing will ensure optimum blooms, and accurate techniques will give your plants proper shape and habit. Try your hand at pruning specific plants like *Thuja, Taxus, Rhododendron,* and *Wisteria* within Longwood’s living collection.

Fee: $49  
https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/performance-pruning-shrubs-class-morning

April 10, 2018, 7:30 p.m.  
**Barbara Tiffany, Gardening Against the Grain, Horticultural Society of Maryland, Baltimore, MD**

Most gardeners plant for the flowers: Barbara Tiffany’s focus is on the architecture of the plant and the texture and color of the leaf, because that is what endures most of the year. Tiffany, owner of Mill Fleurs, a Pennsylvania garden that is open to the public, will share her unusual ideas about grouping plants by color and her solutions for planting a collector’s garden.

It was a challenging site on Tochickon Creek in Bucks County, with a steep hill embracing two 18th-century mills—even for furniture designers with training in space-planning and engineering. After clearing the land 40’ bamboo and rampant invasive plants, Barbara and Robert Tiffany set about planting just to hold the soil. Twenty-four years later, The Gardens at Mill Fleurs host a collection of unusual varieties of shade-loving perennials, grasses and spring ephemerals filling the spaces between. Barbara loves to share her ideas about color-grouping plants, designing a collection garden (“Just how, exactly, do you plant 1,200 cultivars of Hosta without boring people to death?”) and species preservation. The Gardens at Mill Fleurs are open to the public for guided tours from April through September. Tiffany Perennials, a rare plant nursery, offers ‘really rare’ plants imported from India, Japan, and Thailand, ‘interesting natives, and fancy weeds,’ many of which thrive in the gardens.

Fee: $10 non-members  
https://mdhorticulture.org/programs-events/lecture-series/

April 14, 2018, 10:00 a.m.  
**Garden Enthusiast Tour, Mt Cuba Center, Hockessin, DE**

Take an in-depth look at our gardens with an expert Docent, learn about notable native plants, and discover sustainable gardening techniques on this two-hour tour through the gardens. Tour guests will take home a native plant. Tours include walking over rolling terrain and mulched paths. Tickets include admission.

Fee: $15  
https://mtcubacenter.org/event/garden-enthusiast-tour-3/

April 14, 2018, 10:00 a.m.  
**Daffodil Day & Follies, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE**

Celebrate the beauty of the daffodil, enjoy Winterthur’s amazing daffodil display, and see the new Follies garden exhibition! Henry Francis du Pont used his collector’s eye in assembling his collection of hundreds of heirloom daffodil bulbs arranged in cloud-like drifts on Sycamore Hill.

Children’s Daffodil Show: 10:00 am, Visitor Center (entries accepted through 11:00 am)  
Daffodil Day Craft: 10:00 am–2:00 pm, Visitor Center  
Guided Walking Tours: 11:30 am and 1:30 pm, Begins at Visitor Center Patio  
Self-Guided Tours: All day, Begins at the Visitor Center Patio  
Daffodil Tea: 2:00 pm, Visitor Center Restaurant  
http://www.winterthur.org/?p=1317
April 18, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

**Fergus Garrett, Designing with Plants the Greater Dixter Way**, Horticultural Society of Maryland, Baltimore, MD

Fergus Garrett, head gardener at Great Dixter, will enchant you with a discussion of Great Dixter’s gardens. Set in the historic property and with historic plantings, these gardens artfully incorporate meadows, annuals, perennials, tropica ls and bulbs to form bold and effusive creations.

Fee: $35 non-members [https://mdhorticulture.org/programs-events/special-events/](https://mdhorticulture.org/programs-events/special-events/)

April 21, 2018, 1:00 p.m.

**Wattle this Way**, Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348

Learn the old English tradition and ecological benefits of coppicing. Coppicing is the practice of creating straight poles (withy) for use in the garden by removing the central leader of a tree or shrub. Using material harvested in this manner, learn to wattle— weaving woody branches into an ornamental garden structure (roughly 24” long and 18” in height). The versatility, the practicality, and delightful creativity of coppice maintenance and wattling will surprise and win over new and old gardeners alike.

Fee: $89 [https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/wattle-way-class](https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/wattle-way-class)

April 21, 2018, 2:00 p.m.

**Follies Lecture**, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE

Join us for a lecture by John Dixon Hunt, emeritus professor of The History and Theory of Landscape at the University of Pennsylvania, then enjoy a walk or tram ride through the Winterthur Garden and experience Winterthur’s first landscape exhibition, Follies: Architectural Whimsy in the Garden.

Fee: $20 per non-member [http://www.winterthur.org/?p=1317](http://www.winterthur.org/?p=1317)

April 29, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

**Wildflower Celebration**, Mt Cuba Center, Hockessin, DE

Enjoy a magnificent display of spring ephemerals at our annual celebration of the season. Stroll through our native plant gardens at the peak of their glory; enjoy live music, gardening activities, family programming, and more. A variety of food selections are available for purchase and the first 1,000 families receive a free native plant.

Fee: $Free [https://mtcubacenter.org/event/wildflower-celebration/](https://mtcubacenter.org/event/wildflower-celebration/)

April 28, 2018, 9:00 a.m.

**Making a Milpa**, Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348

The traditional Mesoamerican home farm/garden plot is often referred to as a milpa in much of Mexico and parts of Central America. The term is sometimes defined as a “maize field” but is more commonly used to name a place where maize is cultivated along with a combination of nutritionally and environmentally complementary crops. Nowadays the concepts of the milpa are worked into gardens with plants from throughout the world. Learn about the wonders of pre-Columbian horticultural practices that gave birth to some of the world’s greatest civilizations and whose principles help drive popular modern movements such as permaculture.

Fee: $29 [https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/making-milpa-class-morning-english](https://longwoodgardens.org/events-and-performances/events/making-milpa-class-morning-english)
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**The Maryland Master Gardener Mission Statement**

The Maryland Master Gardener mission is to support the University of Maryland Extension by educating Maryland residents about safe effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities.