

Bloomin' Times

May 2025



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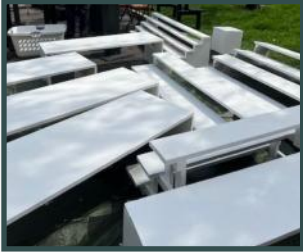
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Cover Photo
by Jeanie Pelikan

FLOWER SHOW RECAP

THE PREP

“Great news, today, all wooden properties for the Flower Show have been cleaned and re-painted by Sharon S., Joan B., Margot P., Carmen S., Jim D., and myself. We are all done!!!! Our group worked diligently and got the job completed. There is no need to have any further cleaning/painting sessions for Flower Show properties. *Hooray!*” *Carolyn Seracka*



THE WINNERS

Division I

Class 4 Artist--Linda Parker;

Designer's Choice and Award of Design Excellence.

Class 8 Dancer--Carmen Skolesky; Table Artistry Award

Division II

A2--Inge Bossert: Award of Merit

B9--Betty Round; Award of Merit

C10--Regina Kelly; Award of Merit

D14--Margot Partridge; Arboreal Award

E19--Betty Round; Arboreal Award and Horticultural Excellence Award.

F23--Phil Round; Grower's Choice Award

G29--Gayle Lechner; Grower's Choice Award

Division III

A1--Karen Fricke; Botanical Arts Artistic Crafts

B6--Barbara Spellmeyer; Botanical Arts Photography

Division IV

YouthA1 Design--Margot Betancourt, Mae Pinger, Lena Siano; Youth Award

B2 Artistic Crafts--Vivienne Betancourt, Grace Yu, Arabella Morabito

B3 Artistic Crafts--Cecily Betancourt, Grace Yu, Arabella Morabito

C Hort--Cecily Betancourt, Vivienne Betancourt

Division V Education

Sharon Shiraga; Award of Appreciation

BEST OF SHOW

Linda Parker



OTHER BLUE RIBBON WINNERS

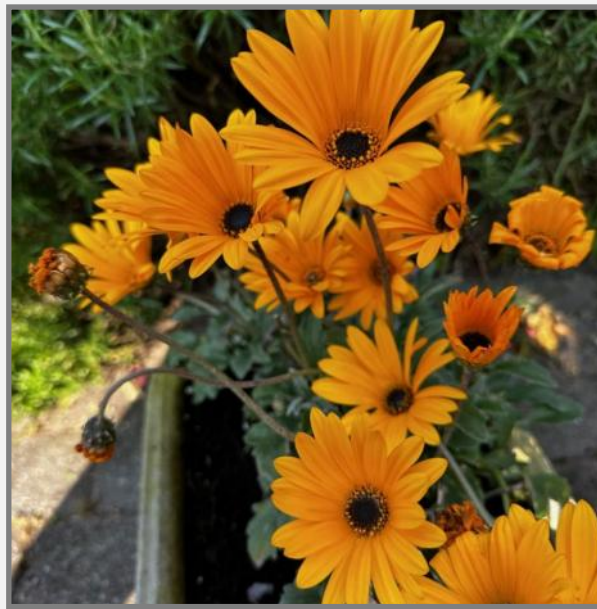
| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Joann Androconis | Adah Levin |
| Maryfran Annese | Eileen Morris |
| Jane Christiani | Maryann Pietruszki |
| Kay Cross | Carolyn Seracka |
| Irene Greenstein | Nina Sylvester |
| Elizabeth Hanscom | Sharon Tittle |
| Karen Jolley-Gates | Karen Troiano |
| Cheryl Rose Katz | Mabel Woloj |
| Diana Kazazis | |

Photos of other winners will appear in the June issue of Bloomin' Times.

CLUB PHOTOGRAPHY



Joe Da Rold



Carolyn Seracka



Richard Pelikan



Carolyn Seracka

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPH

by Jeanie Pelikan



NATIVE PLANTS

by Joe Da Rold

Native Wisteria

If you love Wisteria, but hate the fact that it can be so invasive, here is an outstanding, native alternative with outstanding bloom, but without most of the headaches.

“**Amethyst Falls**” is far less aggressive than other Wisteria, yet still produces a twining woody vine that needs substantial support.

Soft, gray-green foliage emerges later than many plants in late April or early May, followed immediately by big bud clusters that elongate and open in mid-May revealing grape-like clusters of deep lilac to purple flowers. Unlike many imported varieties, this is a dependable bloomer.

Source: gardeningknowhow.com



Discovering Baptisias

If Baptisias look familiar, that's because they are in the same family as Sweet Peas.

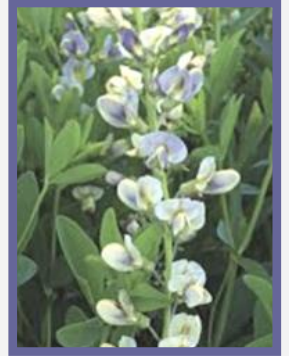
The key difference is that

Baptisias are perennial.

Twenty species are native to eastern and midwestern

North America. The plants in this family tend to be deer-

resistant, heat and humidity tolerant, and drought tolerant once established. Baptisias are attractive, low-maintenance plants. They are host plants for the larvae of several butterfly species: orange sulphur, frosted elfin, eastern tailed blue, hoary edge, and wild indigo duskywing.



Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Cardinal flower is native throughout the Americas, and thrives in moist areas. Individual plants are short-lived, but they perpetuate themselves by self-seeding and sending out offshoots to quickly colonize an area. As is true of other species in the Lobelia genus, the cardinal

flower is toxic to humans and to pets. Uniquely free of common pests and diseases, the foliage is sometimes targeted by snails and slugs. The Cardinal flower prefers full sun but should be planted away from intense, late-day summer sun.



Source: thespruce.com

Liatriis (*Liatriis Ligulistylis*)

Liatriis is a native American perennial that thrives in a variety of conditions. Since they are prairie plants in their native habitat, the more sun, the better. Also known as “Meadow Blazing Star” and “Gayfeather,” the plant attracts pollinators such as bees and a variety of butterflies. This is the #1 species to attract monarch butterflies. They continue to visit the flowers throughout the summer, often in large numbers. Seed packets are often available at garden centers.



Source: thespruce.com

GARDEN POTPOURRI

NURTURING YOUR INNER LAZY GARDENER

Plant cut-and-come-again plants for small spaces and big savings. There are vegetables that regrow at least once after harvesting. Cut the leaves off, leaving the crown intact in the soil. Plants will sprout new leaves in a few days. Amaranth, Cress, Kale, SwissChard, lettuce and green onions will all work in this way.

Greens or the leafy tops of vegetables may also be harvested for use and will regrow. Carrots, turnips, collard, beets and mustard are delicious greens. Super veggies broccoli and asparagus may be cut several times during the growing season. Many of your favorite herbs can be harvested over and over with no ill effect as it grows more leaves and stems.



gardeningknowhow.com

EASIEST HERBS TO GROW FROM SEED

All are relatively low-maintenance and thrive in the Central Jersey climate:



Basil / thrives in warm, sunny conditions

Chives / multiplies quickly; edible flowers

Mint / multiplies quickly, too quickly?

Parsley / versatile, for fish and salads

Rosemary / drought tolerant, thrives in sun

Thyme / thrives in sunny, well-drained soil

Oregano / thrives in sunny, well-drained soil

Cilantro / Parsley look-alike; popular in Mexican foods

Sage / hardy herb; thrives in sunny, well-drained soil

Dill / fast-growing; attractive garnish on seafood

Lemon balm / citrus-flavored member of the mint family

Lavender / fragrant herb for teas and sachets

WORDS TO KNOW "Secateurs"

Secateurs are essentially the same as pruners; they are both terms for a gardening tool able to be used with one hand. The word "Secateurs" is more commonly used by the British.

Both are tools that are strong enough to cut through hard branches of trees and shrubs, and are used in gardening, farming, and flower arranging.

The word evolved from the Latin 'secare', to cut, brought into English from the French.



GARDEN LIMERICK FLOWER MOON

*An abundance of flowers in May
Serve as prelude to summer's array
The Flower Moon shines
On Moonflower vines
Glowing beauty at end of the day.*



STEP INTO MY GARDEN

by Karen Troiano

A Visit to the Garden of Beth & Warren Hanscom

When you approach her front door, where Beth and her family have lived for fifty years, you are embraced by a selection of conifers buffering any noise from the street. Beth brings me to her backyard and leaves me to explore the expanse of her property.

It was an early spring day in March when Beth and I strolled through her garden imagining what changes spring might bring. Wandering through flower beds where white snowdrops and yellow crocus are just beginning to bloom, I walk through a large wooden arbor and imagine the bright orange flowers of the trumpet vine covering it and the many hummingbirds it must attract. Then there is a pond. Walk over the bridge that leads to the lovely cottage, the office of her husband Warren...*the ideal commute!* Continuing to stroll through the one-acre plus property, I am in awe of the dappled sunlight reaching through a Bamboo 'forest' and listen to the music of the tall reeds knocking together in the spring breeze.



Beth points out her favorite tree in the garden, a Dawn Redwood, now reaching its long skeletal branches high to the sky. Beth exclaims that a nearby sycamore tree is "the bane of our existence" because of its peeling bark and twigs that litter her flower beds. It is in these flower beds that she nurtures her stunning collection of astilbe. How did she come to grow so many beautiful astilbe you might wonder. Beth explains that in this area, she tried planting other flowers to no avail and looked and saw how well her astilbe were doing. Then she would replace her sad little plants each time with another astilbe. "There were many sad little plants" she exclaims! To the left is a garden area surrounded again by a beautiful collection of evergreens. The real secret to her garden

she confides, is her son Thomas, an expert conifer gardener, and her husband Warren, who plants flowers, often surprising Beth as she strolls through the garden and unexpectedly finds something new.

As an accomplished cellist, Beth invites her orchestra friends to gather here in the summer to play music. How lovely for her neighbors!



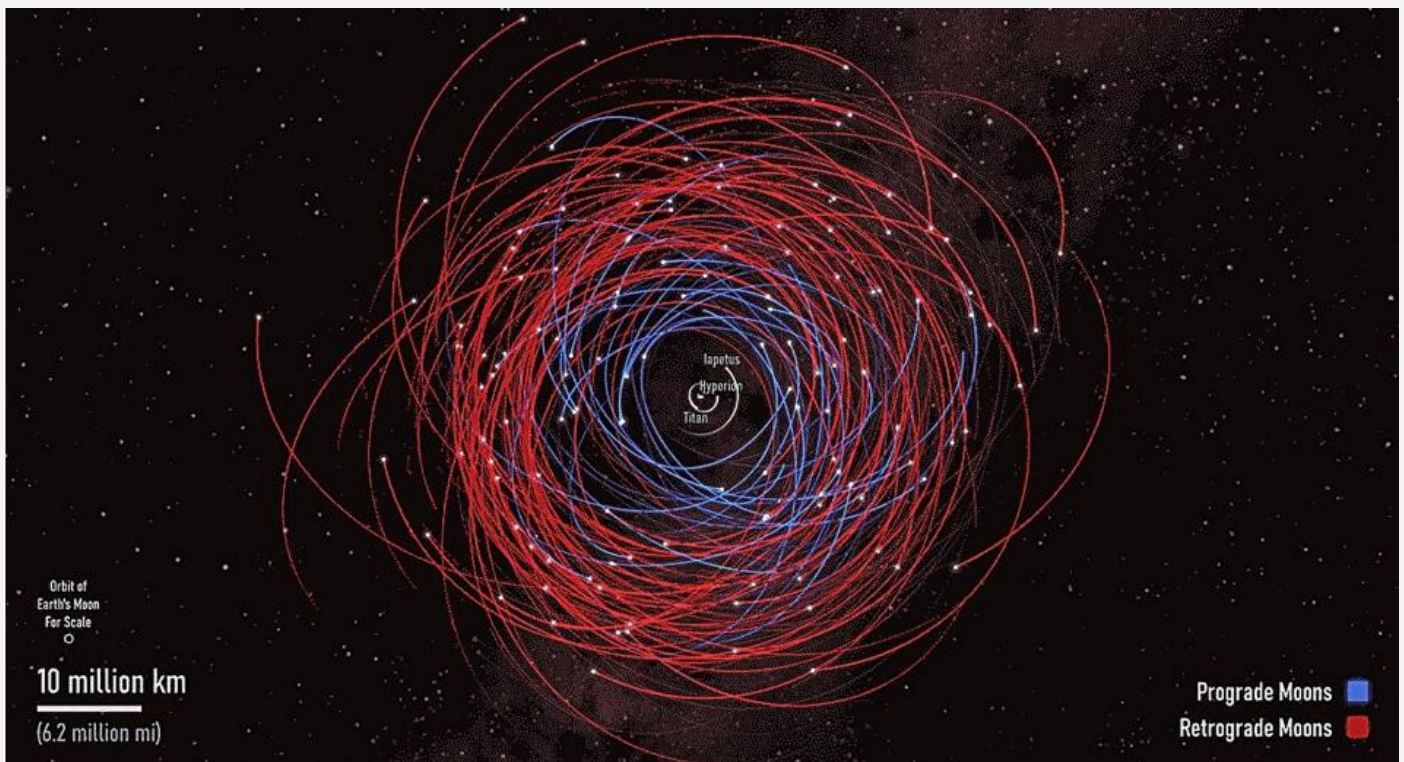
SKY WATCH

MANY MOONS AGO

SATURN, THE MOON KING



With 146 moons, Saturn had already surpassed its closest competitor, Jupiter, which has just 95. The discovery of 128 more has pushed Saturn's total to 274, further cementing its title as the "moon king." That is nearly twice the combined total of all other planets. "Sure enough, we found 128 new moons," said the study's lead researcher, Dr. Edward Ashton. "Based on our projections, I don't think Jupiter will ever catch up."



The moons were detected between 2019 and 2023 using the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope in Hawaii. But they were not officially recognized by the International Astronomical Union until March 11, 2025. Some are less than 2.5 miles (4 km) across. In comparison, Saturn's largest moon, Titan, measures about 3,199 miles (5,150 km) wide. However, all have verified orbits around Saturn. This is a key requirement for an object to be considered a moon.

The newly-discovered moons are "irregular." This means their orbits are tilted compared to the flat plane of Saturn's rings and larger moons. With these additions, the planet now has 250 irregular moons. They are grouped into three families based on their orbits: Inuit, Gallic, and Norse. Most of the new moons belong to the Norse group, which orbits Saturn in reverse — opposite to the planet's rotation.

The researchers think these moons are fragments of larger space rocks that collided and broke apart less than 100 million years ago. The pieces were later pulled into orbit by Saturn's gravity. A closer examination could provide insights into the early Solar System, when such collisions were far more common.



BIG DAY FOR BIRDERS

On May 10, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Team Sapsucker" will travel to the **Kenai Peninsula** for their annual birding quest. The goal? To find as many bird species as possible in 24 hours. The peninsula is a major stop-over for birds on their last push north to America's Arctic.

Millions of birds, including songbirds like American Tree Sparrows, elegant shorebirds like Whimbrels, and long-distance champions like Arctic Terns rely on Alaskan habitats to nest, raise their young, and fuel the next generation.



SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH

"Shrimp look an awful lot like bugs. Shrimp are not bugs. Bugs—or, more properly, insects—are technically a form of crustacean.

Biologists of many different sub-disciplines categorize life in a field called systematics. Living things of all sorts, both extant and extinct, are constantly being compared and evaluated to build what we so commonly think of as the tree of life. The addition of new species and novel analyses are constantly reshaping that evolutionary tree, and sometimes the category changes shift more than just a few twigs but entire evolutionary branches. Birds are now known to be dinosaurs, for example, whales are technically hoofed mammals called artiodactyls, and, thanks to a 2023 study in *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, insects have been shifted into the same group as shrimp and crabs called pancrustacea.

The realization that bugs were close relatives of crustaceans took almost a century of curiosity to uncover."

Source: Riley Black, Smithsonian Magazine, April 2025

EATING INVASIVE ANIMALS

[WARNING: Do not read this article if you have a weak stomach.]



Asian Shore Crab

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is attempting to control an invasive rodent by recommending that people add them to their dinner menu. Nutria are native to South America, but they have spread widely along the Gulf Coast, Southeast, Atlantic Coast, Pacific Northwest and California.

The Department offers recipes for nutria gumbo, nutria jambalaya, and "heart healthy Crock-Pot nutria" and promises that it "tastes like rabbit." The Department advises that since nutria look similar to native beavers and muskrats, it is important to ensure you have properly identified the animal before killing it.

[Ed. Note: This is good advice in general.]

Controlling invasive species by eating them is an idea that has gained traction in many areas. Other invasive animals that are appearing on dinner plates include Lionfish, European green crabs, Asian shore crabs, northern snakehead fish, invasive carp, green iguanas and feral hogs. *TRIVIA*: Invasive iguanas are also known as "chicken of the trees."

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY REVISITED

Irish Soda Bread with Raisins

Thanks to Carolyn Seracka

(As served at the March General Meeting)

This oven baked traditional Irish soda bread with raisins or currants has hints of orange zest to add a fresh burst of flavor to the slightly sweet authentic bread.

TOTAL TIME 1 hour 20 minutes

PREP TIME 20 minutes

COOK TIME 1 hour

YIELD 1 loaf



Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, add the flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt. Stir to combine.

Measure the buttermilk into a 2-cup liquid measuring cup. Add the egg and whisk them together with a fork. Add the orange zest to the cup and set aside.

Keep the butter in the fridge until you are ready to work with it. Cut the butter into small cubes and add it to the stand mixer. Mix the butter into the flour on low speed until it has been completely incorporated in the mixture.

Slowly add the reserved buttermilk to the mixing bowl and continue to mix on low speed until the dough forms.

Sprinkle the reserved 1 tablespoon of flour over the raisins in a small mixing bowl. Toss to coat, this will keep them from sinking to the bottom of the dough while it bakes. Add the raisins to the mixer and stir to combine, the dough will be very wet. I recommend chopping the raisins to make them slightly smaller in size. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured baking mat. Knead it by hand a few times and form a round-shaped loaf. Transfer the dough round to the prepared baking pan and slice an X over the top.

Bake for 55 minutes - 1 hour or until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. The soda bread will sound hollow when you tap on it.

NOTES: Below is the way I adjusted the listed ingredients in the recipe:

- 1 1/2 Raisins (I added an extra 1/2 cup)
- 2 tsp of orange zest (I added an extra 1 tsp of zest)
- And I added 1 tsp of orange juice from the used orange which was not listed in recipe.
- The dough is sticky in end. Remember to cut and X in the top.
- If the bread starts to darken too much before the baking time is over, you may lightly cover it with aluminum foil
- The bread is most delicious the day it has been baked but will keep well for 2 - 3 days when stored in an airtight container at room temperature. Leftovers make delicious toast, the heat from the toaster improves the texture as well.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Longwood Gardens

BUS TRIP

Another fun trip with The Garden Club of Westfield

JUNE 19, 2025



Join us as we travel to Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA, one of the premier horticultural display gardens in the United States. Experience the glory of the major renovation project:

Longwood Gardens - Reimagined

A whole new experience awaits...

with stunning new buildings and wonderous new gardens.

The makeover is a must see!

BUS LEAVES PROMPTLY at 9:00 a.m. -- BE THERE by 8:45 -- from Gumbert Park, 650 4th Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090, where you can park in the lot for free. Upon arrival (about 11:00 a.m.), explore on your own with your self guided tour map. You can buy lunch at the Café. We depart Longwood Gardens at 4:00 p.m. and plan to return about 6:30 p.m. depending on the traffic.

\$140 includes bus fare and entrance fee

Please return the slip below with payment (checks payable to The Garden Club of Westfield, Inc.) to: Judy Richards, 585 Trinity Place, Unit I, Westfield, NJ, 07090.

Questions? Ask Judy: judy585a@aol.com or gardenclubofwestfield@gmail.com or phone: 908-461-0275.

Important: To confirm your reservation, we will email you upon receipt of your check.

Name _____

Address _____

Cell phone _____ Email _____

Number attending _____ Check amount \$ _____

The Union County Board of County Commissioners Presents

2025 Union County Senior Art Exhibit

Artwork by older adults 60+

April 21 – June 3

Monday–Friday 9 to 5:30 • Tuesdays to 8 pm

UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ 

1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ — on the UCVTS campus

*Coordinated by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, Department of Parks and Recreation.
Email: culturalinfo@ucnj.org | 908-558-2550*



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Made possible by funds from the
New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner
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