

The BAILEYAN

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/LHBGC/>

The Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club of Ithaca meets each month on the Second Tuesday at the Horton Room in the Floriculture Greenhouse, Tower Road Cornell University Ithaca, New York. The Club is open to all gardeners. Visitors are welcome.



Save the date!

March 9th

**Vegetable variety selections
for the Ithaca area**

Ruth Doll

Horton Room

The Board of Directors will meet at 6:30 PM. The regular meeting will begin at 7 PM



April 13th

Gardening with edible fruits

Marvin Pritts

** All photos are courtesy of Ed Cobb unless otherwise noted*

Volume 50, Number 3

From the President's corner

Dear Members,

In as much as the Philadelphia Flower Show starts by the end of February, Arnaud suggested we send the March newsletter a bit earlier than usual so you can be made aware of the dates and travel opportunities.

As cold as it has been it is hard to focus on planning next summer's garden but spring is coming and it is time to consider ordering seeds. In view of this our March 9th meeting will feature veteran gardener Ruth Doll offering her wisdom and experience as to her favorite and most successful seed purchases. If any of you have had unusual success with a particular crop, please share your secret so everyone can benefit.

Please think about Ray Fox's suggestion that we rent plots to raise vegetables for food kitchens. We must make a decision as to whether we want to undertake this endeavor and if so, what vegetables we should plant, fencing needs, labor commitments, etc. All ideas and suggestion are welcome and will be considered at the March 9th meeting. If we undertake this project and do a really good job, we will probably attract new gardeners who might be interested in joining Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club.

Looking forward to seeing you March 9th.

Bob Hillman, President

Dues are past due: if you have not done so yet, please send your check a.s.a.p. to our treasurer, Helen Swank - P.O. Box 6523, Ithaca, NY 14851



February '10 Meeting Minutes

President Robert Hillman called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm, with eighteen members present. Bob commended members Arnaud Germain for his work on the newsletter and David Hiner for webpage maintenance, as well as Ruth Doll, LHBGC Historian, and Ed Cobb, Program Chair.



After giving a brief Treasurer's report, Helen Swank reported on the progress of the railing project at Ithaca Falls. The committee, composed of Helen, Olivia, and Dave, had a successful meeting with Bill Gray of the City of Ithaca's Board of Public Works. The railing will be installed as soon as weather permits. The city will make use of materials left over from other projects. When the project is complete, Beverly Hillman will write an article for the paper.

Regarding other projects, Bob asked that members make suggestions for additional plantings at the Farmer's Market berm, which the club has maintained for several years. Ray Fox asked if members would be interested in growing vegetables for donation to a local food pantry. Several members expressed interest and will look into the details of renting a garden plot.

In other new business, Bob proposed that each meeting begin with a question and answer session. Please consider sharing your garden hints and challenges at upcoming meetings!

Ed Cobb then gave an informative presentation, including many images from the Cornell archives, on the history of the Bailey Conservatory, which will be completely renovated in 2010. Club members are welcome to visit the conservatory on Saturday February 13, 8 am – 4 pm, or during normal business hours Monday-Friday.



The next LHBGC meeting will be held on Mar. 9. Board of Directors will meet at 6:30 pm; general meeting to follow at 7 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club 2010 Meeting Schedule (and refreshments)

January 12th: Meeting cancelled

February 9th: History of the Cornell Conservatory

Greenhouses – Ed Cobb (Beverly Hillman)

March 9th: Vegetable variety selections for the Ithaca area – Ruth Doll (Ray Fox)

April 13th: Gardening with edible fruits – Marvin Pritts (Ken & Ruth Devine)

May 11th: Plant Auction Horton Room (David & Arnaud)

June 5th: Tour of the local natural area – Anna Statler

July 13th: Picnic? Tour of Ithaca Falls?

August 10th: "Ornamental Grasses" – Irene Lekstutis?? (Elke)

September 14th: Plant exchange at the Horton Room (Don Williams)

October 12th: Dish to Pass Dinner

November 9th: Election (Beverly Hillman)

December 14th: Holiday Decorations (Ruth Doll)

Cornell Extension Activities

<http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins/events/index.html>

Unless another location is listed in the entry, events are held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca NY

Garden Educators Network Gathering

Tuesday, March 2, 6:00-7:30 pm

Mama Goose. 430 W. State Street, Ithaca

Geared toward any formal and informal educators interested in garden based education. Presentations from fellow educators on a variety of topics, share resources and curriculum ideas, and work on strategies to spread gardens in the community. Contact Josh Dolan with questions or presentation proposals at

jd285@cornell.edu, 272-2292. *Meets again on Tuesday March 30, 6:00-7:30 pm.*

Winter Worm Composting Class

Saturday, March 6, 10:00-12:00 Noon

This hands-on class teaches all you'll need to know about "vermicomposting," an indoor composting system that is easy and produces particularly rich compost for your garden and houseplants. Fee: \$10 per household. *Each paying household will go home with a working worm bin.* Register early, space is limited

Community Food Growing Series: Soils & Bite Prep Techniques

Monday, March 8, 6:00-8:00 pm

Healthy soil is the basic building block of healthy vegetables. This session will cover organic sil management and a selection of techniques used to prepare your soil for gardening. Instructors: Pat Curran and Josh Dolan. \$5/session or \$20 for the entire series. Pre-registration required. Contact Josh Dolan at sapsquatch7@gmail.com or call 607-272-2292.

Community Food Growing Series: Food Gardening Panel Discussion

Wednesday, March 10, 6:30-8:30 pm

Don't miss this panel discussion by several experienced food gardeners! Master Gardeners and others with years of food growing experience will highlight some advanced ways to maximize your crop and extend the growing season. This workshop will assume that attendees have had some growing experience. For a more basic discussion of how to get started, go to the Feb. 25 class described above. Fee: \$5/class or \$20/series. Pre-registration recommended; call 272-2292.

Community Food Growing Series: Composting Techniques

Monday, March 15, 6:00-8:00 pm

Master Composter Volunteers will present a variety of small to medium scale composting methods and a Question & Answer session. \$5/class or \$20 for the entire series. Call 607-272-2292 to preregister.

Community Food Growing Series: Seed Starting

Monday, March 22, 6:00-8:00 pm

In this session, we finally get our hands dirty! We will be sowing the first seeds of the season such as tomatoes and cabbage, and learning how to make our own potting soil. Instructors: Pat Curran and Josh Dolan. \$5/session or \$20 for the entire series. Pre-registration required. Contact Josh Dolan at sapsquatch7@gmail.com or call 607-272-2292.

2010 Beautification Brigade Volunteer Training

(2) Tuesdays, March 23 & 30, 6:00-8:30 pm + volunteer work, in Spring & Summer

Volunteer with the Beautification Program and help make Ithaca more beautiful while learning useful gardening tips and techniques. The Brigade plants and maintains spring and summer flowers on city traffic medians and the Ithaca Commons. FREE dinner is provided at each training session. FREE and open to anyone who wishes to volunteer with the program. Contact Dan Klein at 272-2292x123 or dek22@cornell.edu for information or to receive 2010 Training announcements. To learn more about the program, see "Community Beautification" under "Yard & Garden" at csetomptkins.org.

Summer Bulbs: More Color, More Fun!

Thursday, March 25, 6:30-8:30 pm

Lilies, cannas, callas, tuberous begonias, dahlias, caladiums – the list of summer-blooming bulbs is long! Some like lilies are winter-hardy; some need frost-free warm weather but bloom for months. Some like it hot! Others flourish in dappled shade. Come explore the wide variety of fun summer bulbs we can grow. Fee: \$5. Pre-registration is recommended; call 272-2292.

Community Food Growing Series: Training for Garden Mentors & Site Coordinators

Monday, March 29, 6:00-8:00 pm

For gardeners who would like to help their community grow more food, this session will orient new Community Food Growers into our Garden Mentor program, and explore the many resources and considerations for managing existing gardens and establishing new ones. Instructor: Josh Dolan. \$5/session or \$20 for the entire series. Pre-registration required. Contact Josh Dolan at sapsquatch7@gmail.com or call 607-272-2292.



Chosen News and Articles from other Garden Clubs

❖ **Why Local Nurseries?** Submitted by Patti Herrmann (The Spreader, Men's Garden Club of Syracuse)

How Do I Count The Ways

Like some catalogs, your local nurseries may specialize. For Example, Maple Hill Nursery is noted for perennials and shrubs (many natives) and will order if what you want is not in stock. Gravina carries seasonal merchandise; in February that means houseplants and seed stock.

Nurseries carry plants that will do well in our area. Many grow their plants; Phoenix Flower Farm has over 5,000 with a large selection of hostas and daylilies. Cross Creek also grows their own and carries Proven Performance. At local Nurseries you can see what you are buying.

Unlike catalogs local nurseries have experts to answer questions about their stock, to help select plants for your problem areas and many provide designer services like Ballantynes. Develop a relationship with your favorite place – you will find out when new stock arrives so you'll have the best selection and they can help you solve any growing problems you may have. Just don't expect personal service when they are very busy (Memorial Day weekend!). Find out the best days and times, you will be ahead of the impulse buyer who just might live next door. Oh! When you buy locally you'll have plants when you are ready to plant them. They won't be arriving while you're on a two-week business trip or at the beginning of a week of heavy rain.

❖ **Tomato/Potato Late Blight 2010** (Romin'Gardener, Gardeners of Rome New York)

Anyone who called the Cooperative extension regarding Tomato Blight or attended last year's Herb Festival will receive a postcard with the following information: Remove all potatoes from the soil, if any germinate, remove by bagging and sending to the landfill. Be sure to use disease free seed, and plant disease free varieties. Some that are recommended are Mountain magic, Plum Regal, and Legend. Contact the Cornell Cooperative at 736-3394 or 736-2580.

❖ **Have we lost our ladybugs?** (Taken from the Garden Gate magazine, TGOA/MGCA Newsletter #6 2009)

There are more than 400 ladybug species native to North America, but did you know that some are now considered rare? The Lost Ladybug Project is trying to find out just how many native species are left. You can help: visit www.lostladybug.org for tips on identifying and photographing these familiar insects. Submit your photos to the website. Scientists are hoping to get a better idea of just how many ladybugs are taking over and how this might affect our gardens.

❖ **Christmas Cactus Facts** (Taken from Home & Garden, How to do things, TGOA/MGCA Newsletter #6 2009)

The scientific name for Christmas cactus is Schlumberger or Zygocactus, and, since it thrives on benign neglect, it is an ideal plant for today's busy lifestyles. One of the best things about Christmas cactus is that it can live up to a hundred years and quite often is passed down generation to generation.

Over watering is probably the only easy way to kill a Christmas cactus. It is always better to underwater than over water this plant. Water when the top third of the soil is dry. Water thoroughly and then allow the plant to dry out.

Christmas cactus needs to be fertilized only three or four times per year. Christmas cactus bloom between Thanksgiving and Christmas, but gradually start to bloom earlier and more frequently each year. Do not fertilize for a month before you expect the plant to bloom. Never fertilize when a plant is in bloom, as the flowers will drop off.

Christmas cactus enjoys bright indirect light direct sun may stunt the plant's growth or burn the bracts. The plant may be placed outside in the shade during the summer. Ideal temperatures are 65-75 degrees during the day and 50-65 degrees at night. Being in darkness for 12 hours each night helps encourage a Christmas cactus to bloom.

Propagating a Christmas cactus is extremely easy. Break off three or four leaf segments; the more you use, the fuller the plant will be. Place the segments around the edge of a small pot filled with sandy soil. Do not use a large pot, as the soil will never dry out and the plant will die. Place 1/3 of each leaf segment into the soil. The new plant should root within a month.

Dead blooms should be cut off on a daily basis as this encourages new flowers. Cut back the Christmas cactus slightly when it has finished blooming. Trimming the plant encourages root growth, a fuller plant, and more buds next year.

Article brought to the editor's attention by Barbara Littlefair

Special Treatment for Common Birds

By Sue Smith-Heavenrich

Tompkins Weekly February 1st, 2010 issue, www.tompkinsweekly.com

"Science illustration depends on observation, research and creativity," says Gretchen Halpert. And when it's done right, a painting can say more than a thousand words. At least that's what members of the Finger Lakes chapter of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators are hoping.

Over the past year, 20 of the guild members have been painting portraits of common birds — birds that are found at our backyard feeders, birds that we see so frequently that we forget to think about them. In the last 40 years, though, a number of bird populations have declined, some plummeting as much as 80 percent.

Last month the guild's exhibit, "The Sweet-voiced Bird has Flown" opened in the Fuertes Room at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. The collection of portraits includes 13 birds common to the Ithaca area, including evening grosbeaks, ruffed grouse and the common grackle. There are two portraits, a watercolor painting of the bird in its ideal habitat and, hanging below it, a sketch of the bird showing the reason for its population decline. Most of the declines are due to the loss of grasslands, healthy forests and wetlands from a variety of environmental threats such as sprawl, energy development, and the spread of industrialized agriculture. And, says a study by the Audubon Society, global warming compounds the problems.

"The advantage of this exhibit is that it is very visual," says Camille Doucet, president of the local guild. She painted a meadowlark, a bird that nests in grasslands, pastures, hayfields, and other open habitat. "Sometimes the solution is as simple as waiting a week or so before mowing," Doucet says, adding that in an agricultural area, there are no simple solutions.

Doucet hopes the guild's paintings will help people become more sensitive to the needs of common birds. "Maybe our art will make new friends for the birds," she says. Because she teaches at Cornell Plantations, her work has mostly focused on plants, and in fact, Doucet is responsible for many of the illustrations of trees and plants used on campus. The 10 months she spent sketching and painting her meadowlark made Doucet aware of the challenges birds face.

The group didn't start off to create an exhibit, Doucet explains. It just grew naturally. Last winter the illustrators decided to meet at the Lab of Ornithology for an afternoon of sketching, and were able to use the lab's collection of bird skins. The artists enjoyed the experience, so Doucet asked someone at the lab if there was a way to put their artwork to use. It was when she heard about the declining bird populations that Doucet had the inspiration for the exhibit.

Steve Kress, an ornithologist associated with the lab, offered to review their sketches. "But he did more than that," Doucet says. "He helped us all become more accurate." Kress pointed out the little details: whether a nest was in the correct shrub or at the right height, how a bird held its tail while perched — the things that transform the artwork into a learning experience. Doucet learned, for example, that when the meadowlark sits still, there is a bit of yellow on its belly.

Halpert has illustrated textbooks and material for zoos, and provided drawings for researchers, but she was still surprised at the amount of research required for her bird portrait. Her bird, the lark sparrow, is a small brown fellow with bold face markings.

"I studied a lot of photos, and did a lot of reading," Halpert says. But the thing about painting a bird portrait is knowing what's common to the species and what's an anomaly. Halpert learned that lark sparrows would rather walk than hop, and that their populations haven't declined as much as other species. But while the bird isn't on the endangered list, each year there are fewer of them to add their jumble of trills and buzzes to the summer chorus. "Especially at the eastern-most edge of their distribution," notes Halpert.

Louisa Sandvik never thought she would love the common grackle, but 10 months of painting it has changed her mind. Sandvik is an artist but earns her living at another job. In her free time, though, she paints portraits and flowers. Painting a bird portrait was a challenge for her.

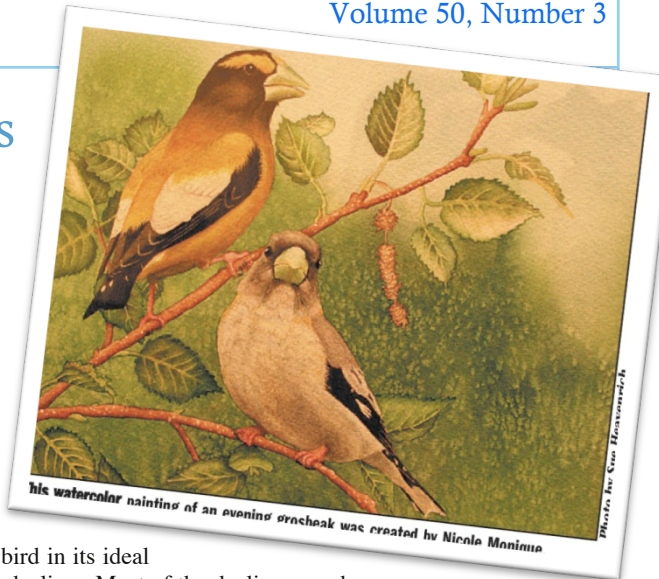
The grackle looks like a black-bird that's been stretched, Sandvik says, "but when the light hits it a certain way, all the feathers are iridescent." It was catching that iridescence that presented the challenge. Sandvik had to learn how to do a different style of layering with her watercolor paints, determining which colors she needed, and in which order, to capture the grackle's plumage.

When you study a bird closely, you'll find things that you normally wouldn't notice, says Nicole Monique Carrier-Titti. Her bird, the evening grosbeak, is a bright lemony color with black and white markings. At least the male is. The female at first glance looks like a boring brown bird, says Carrier-Titti, but on closer inspection she realized that there were many colors layered in the feathers.

"I discovered pinks, golds, blues, reds, and even some shades of purple," she says. For her, watercolor was the perfect medium for layering the colors. She took many photos of the study skin, enlarged them and printed them out so she could reference them as she painted. "But feathers on a skin look completely different than when a bird is perched on a branch," Carrier-Titti explains.

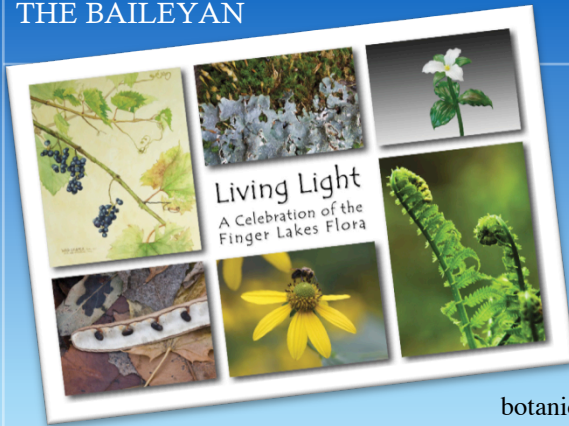
If you go: "The Sweet Voiced Bird Has Flown: Portraits of Common Birds in Decline" is on exhibit at Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology through April 2.

For questions about the lab call 254-BIRD (254-2473) or see www.birds.cornell.edu. For more about the illustrator's guild visit www.gnsifingerlakes.org.



Other links of interest suggested by Barbara Littlefair

- ❖ Birds in Urban Gardens (<http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/index.php?page=birds>)
- ❖ National Gardening Association (<http://www.garden.org/home>)



In the cold, gray months of an upstate winter, it can be heartening to recall nature's more abundant and colorful times of the year. A welcome reminder of this comes in the form of a new art exhibit, *Living Light: A Celebration of the Finger Lakes Flora*.

Hosted at the **Tompkins County Public Library** from **January 18 through March 26** and organized by the **Finger Lakes Native Plant Society (FLNPS)**, this juried art show celebrates the beauty and diversity of our region's wild plants and fungi. Fifty artists from throughout the Finger Lakes and beyond have contributed over 75 works in a wide array of media and styles, ranging from traditional botanical illustration and wildflower photography to more abstract treatments and sculptural forms.

For those interested in a more in-depth experience of plants and art, FLNPS has designed a constellation of workshops, walks, and educational displays. The exhibit and associated events are co-sponsored by the Library, with grant support from the Community Arts Partnership and the Brooks Family Foundation.

The art show was juried by a panel consisting of several FLNPS members and three prominent local artists: Camille Doucet, watercolorist and botanical illustrator; Eric Serritella, ceramic artist; and David Watkins, photographer. They, along with three professional botanists, had the complex task of screening and evaluating over 300 submissions.

Founded in Ithaca in 1997, FLNPS's mission is to teach people about native plants, the importance of conservation, and the threat of invasive species. The group regularly sponsors free lectures, field trips and special events.

For more information about the exhibit and its related events, visit www.flnps.org/artshow. To find out about other FLNPS lectures and plant walks, visit www.flnps.org or call 607-257-4853. More information about all events at the Tompkins County Public Library, as well as library hours, can be found at www.tcpl.org or by calling 607-272-4557.

Garden shows

The 2010 Philadelphia International Flower Show "Passport to the World"

Sunday, February 28th through Sunday March 7th at the Pennsylvania Convention Center 12th and Arch Steets, Philadelphia
www.theflowershow.com (215-988-8899)

CNY Blooms "Syracuse 2010 Flower & Garden Show"

March 3rd - 7th at the Oncenter Complex, 800 South State St., Syracuse www.cnyblooms.com (315-435-8000)

GardenScape 2010, the Greater Rochester's Flower & Garden Show

March 11th - 14th Monroe County Fair and Expo Center Henrietta, NY www.rochesterflowershow.com (585-455-4562)

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