

# The BAILEYAN



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



Cornus Kousa

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.

## Volume 50, Number 10

### From the President's corner

Greetings Fellow Gardeners:

The cool weather has finally caught up to us and combined with the start of Daylight Savings Time it's time to realize winter is just around the corner. I hope the unusual warm sunny Fall has enabled everyone to make great inroads in their garden clean up chores. Our dahlias have all been dug up, separated and put to rest and most of the gardens cleaned. Our progress was somewhat slowed by needing to empty the greenhouse so a new foundation could be put in. The plants are now on a large trailer that has to be pushed into the garage each evening to avoid the frost and pushed out into the sunlight each day. Hopefully we will be able to replace the plants in the greenhouse in the near future if all goes well.

Elke Scofield, Ken Devine and I met at the Farmer's Market Berm to prepare it for winter. After weeding, pruning and mowing back overgrowth it looks much neater. We still need to move the Liberty Hyde Bailey Club sign to a more visible site but there is a no rush to accomplish that.

Our thanks once again goes out to Ed Cobb for ordering the mixture of bulbs for the Hospice Care Facility and overseeing the planting of them. This year's group of planters included Lisa (the Hospice gardener), Ed, Beverly H and myself.

Remember that in addition to sharing holiday goodies, our December meeting is devoted to making Christmas Decorations. Think about what you wish to make so the necessary materials can be acquired. Determine how many and what size wreaths you will require so they can be ordered in time for the meeting and begin collecting pine cones, etc.

In a much as this year is the 50th anniversary of our clubs charter, our November meeting will include election of officers and a special Historical review of club activities by Ruth Doll our club Historian with a major assist by Ed Cobb.

Hope to see you all on November 9th.

Regards,

Bob Hillman, President

### Save the Date!

**November 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Election**

Horton Room

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



Woodland Path

**December 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Holiday Decorations**

*\* All Photos are courtesy of Ed Cobb*

# November'10 Meeting Minutes

By Ed Cobb

A harvest dinner was the focus of the October meeting. There was a grand selection of delicious dishes for all to enjoy. We gathered at 6:30 PM for a delicious dinner.

After dinner, a famed *Dahlia* grower Roger Miller from Candor spoke about his favorite topic, *Dahlias*. Roger has won many prizes with his *Dahlia* flowers. He explained how to dig, store and propagate *Dahlia* tubers.

Helen will look into the installation of a bike rack for Ithaca Falls. Bikes have been locked to the handrail making the rail impossible for pedestrians to use. The club is willing to pay for an appropriate rack.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, Beverly Hillman, Bob Hillman and Ed Cobb joined Lisa Miller at the Ithaca Hospice on East King Road to plant Spring flowering bulbs.

We need members to serve as officers of the club. Please contact Bob Hillman if you are interested in serving.

## Slate for the 2010 Election

President: **Ed Cobb**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-president: **David Hiner**

Secretary: **Anna Stalter**

Treasurer: **Helen Swank**

Editor: **Arnaud Germain**

Historian: **Ruth S. Doll**



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

January 12<sup>th</sup>: Meeting cancelled

February 9<sup>th</sup>: History of the Cornell Conservatory Greenhouses – Ed Cobb (Beverly Hillman)

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

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

May 11<sup>th</sup>: Plant Auction Horton Room (David & Arnaud)

June 5<sup>th</sup>: Tour of the local natural area – Anna Statler (Ed Cobb)

July 13<sup>th</sup>: Cancelled

August 10<sup>th</sup>: "Ornamental Grasses" – Jim Mack (Elke)

September 14<sup>th</sup>: Plant exchange at the Horton Room (Don Williams)

October 12<sup>th</sup>: Dish to Pass Dinner

November 9<sup>th</sup>: Election (Beverly Hillman)

December 14<sup>th</sup>: Holiday Decorations (Ruth Doll)



## Cornell Extension Activities

<http://cctompkins.org/calendar>

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

### Fall Worm Composting Class

**Saturday, November 13, 10:00 am - Noon**

Learn all you need to know to set up and maintain a worm composting bin. Everyone leaves with a starter bin and worms. Children are welcome with an accompanying adult. Fee: \$10 (sliding scale). Register early at 272-2292. Space is limited!

### Local Meats Education & Tasting Fair

**Sunday, November 14, 2:30 - 5:30 pm**

*Women's Community Building, 100 W. Seneca St. Ithaca, NY 14850*

Consumers can meet livestock producers from across the Finger Lakes, learn about their farms and products, and taste samples. There will be presentations on how consumers can process a whole chicken into smaller cuts, recipes for unfamiliar cuts, and other information on buying local meats. Producers of beef (grass-fed and natural grain/grass fed), pork, lamb, goat, chicken, rabbit, turkey and duck will be present, and some meats will be available for sale. Admission is \$5/person. Tickets will be available at the door but **please register in advance** by calling Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County at (607) 272-2292 so that our caterer can prepare an appropriate amount of samples. For additional information, contact Matt LeRoux at [mnl28@cornell.edu](mailto:mnl28@cornell.edu) or (607) 272-2292.

### Harvest Dinner at West Haven Farm/Kestrel Perch Berries

**Sunday, November 14, 4:30 - 9:00 pm**

Chefs Jen Irwin and Stan Walton from Just a Taste Wine & Tapas Bar will prepare a gourmet dinner, sourced and served at West Haven Farm / Kestrel Perch Berries in Ithaca. Specialty brews from Ithaca Beer Company will accompany the meal. Proceeds benefit the "Healthy Food for All" program, a collaboration between CCE-Tompkins and local farms, that provides subsidized CSA shares for over 100 low-income families in our community.

Reception at 4:30pm, Dinner at 5:45pm. Tickets are \$75/person all-inclusive and may be purchased online or by check. Visit: <http://www.healthyfoodforall.org> for more information.

### Free Guided Tree Walks

**Saturday, November 20, 2:15 - 4:15 pm**

*Stewart Park, Gardner Parkway, Ithaca, NY 14850*

Join Akiva Silver, tree lore raconteur extraordinaire of Primitive Pursuits, and kindle your own passion and appreciation for the world of trees. If you want to go beyond simple tree identification and learn their edible, medicinal and utilitarian uses, then this is the walk for you. For adults, and children with supervision. *Pre-registration is not required, but is recommended in the event that we must cancel the walk. Please come dressed for the weather. Participants should keep left when entering Stewart Park and meet by the pond.*



## Cornell Plantations Fall Lecture Series

*Lectures in the series will follow on alternate Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m in the Alice Statler Auditorium, Statler Hall. The complete 2010 schedule is as follows:*

**November 10:** Spirit of John Muir, American Naturalist; Lee Stetson, actor, interpreter, educator.

Cornell Plantations is the arboretum, botanical garden, and natural areas of Cornell University, and is a member of Ithaca's Discovery Trail partnership ([www.discoverytrail.net](http://www.discoverytrail.net)). Gardens and grounds are open dawn to dusk, seven days a week. For more information, visit [www.cornellplantations.org](http://www.cornellplantations.org).

## A Few Chores Before the Freeze

Courtesy of David Hiner

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/04/garden/04fallgarden.html?\\_r=1&ref=garden](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/04/garden/04fallgarden.html?_r=1&ref=garden)

In the spirit of full disclosure, I have to admit the garden has not looked so good lately. I lost control of it at the end of the summer when I took a vacation to Cape Cod. It seemed like an extravagance to hire someone to water and weed, and anyway, I figured, the flowers could withstand a few weeks on their own.

The plants that survived did so spectacularly - the Datura Belle Blanche, six feet tall and nearly as wide, muscled its way through the garden gate, while the dahlias produced a second, tangled burst of flowers. But the Japanese anemone withered and the large rhododendron, planted for winter color, dropped half its leaves. I am not sure if the problems were caused by an insect, my being away, or something in the soil.

There are mysteries all summer long, but in the fall you have to put them aside. The shorter days and cooler nights and the prospect of the first frost shift your attention to a whole new set of garden chores.

For advice on these late-fall tasks I turned once more to Barbara Pierson, the nursery manager at White Flower Farm in Litchfield, Conn., who has been a steady guide through my first year in the garden.

We surveyed the area on a mild, rainy Tuesday. Clearly, there was much work to be done. Ms. Pierson, as always, was gracious, nonjudgmental and patient in answering my questions.

### Should I cover the roses to protect them in cold weather?

The best way to get roses through winter is to choose varieties adapted to your climate zone. That said, if you live near a rose's cold limit and you garden on an exposed site or in an area with rapid temperature fluctuations, you should mound two shovelfuls of garden soil, composted manure, shredded leaves or compost over the base of the plant in late fall - ideally after the ground freezes. I especially love oak leaves as mulch, because they don't look awful, and they do the work. Pull the material away as new growth emerges; the big mistake people make is mulching too early in the season and then not removing it in early spring.

### Should plants be cut back after the first frost?

I enjoy seeing the fall color of perennials and shrubs, and like to let most plants die down naturally. The green leaves are still sending energy down into the crown of the plant that will form the "eyes" (yes, like a potato) for next year's growth. If you remove the top growth before it has gone dormant, you are robbing the crown of energy for next year.

### That's fine, but what if the garden starts looking unruly?

Any perennial that has translucent leaves or very yellow stems and leaves can be cut back. Hostas go downhill early, and I like to remove the unsightly foliage when it becomes transparent. Lilies go dormant; when the stems and leaves turn yellow, cut them to within a few inches of the ground. Peonies also go dormant, and removing the brown leaves is a good way to prevent next spring's flowers from getting gray mold. And usually by now, the phlox is looking mildewed and haggard. Remove the seed heads now, wait for the leaves and stems to turn yellow and cut them right to the ground. Monarda is a bully - spreads easily - so it can be cut now and will do fine. As for echinaceas, it is best to remove flowers that may have emerged late, but leave the foliage untouched.

### Do the grasses need special attention?

Grasses are beautiful in the winter (even though they sometimes bend with the snow), and ideally they should not be cut back until the spring when the new leaves emerge from the crown. However, if you think the grasses make the garden look messy, it won't hurt to cut them back earlier, as long as they're dormant.

### Should I clear the leaves and pine needles out of the garden?

Pine needles are suffocating for a garden. They are acidic and will affect the pH, so it's best to remove them when you can. I like leaves for mulch. The tricky thing is not having the leaf layer be thicker than an inch or two, or it will hold water. The crowns of the plants will rot if there is too much water in the leaf layer.

### Is there any way to discourage pests from eating my bulbs?

There is no surefire solution for this, but our head gardener adds crushed oyster shells to the soil, which small rodents like chipmunks do not like to walk on or deal with around bulbs. And any vole hunting done in the fall will also cut down on the damage, if you have the stomach for it.

### What are the steps for overwintering dahlias?

Wait a few days after the foliage is blackened by frost before digging the tubers to store for the winter. If plants are in a frost-free area, dig by mid-November. Cut the stalk to 4 to 6 inches tall, rinse off the soil, and allow the clump to air-dry under cover for 24 hours. Line cardboard boxes or terra-cotta pots with newspaper and layer the tubers with barely moist sawdust, sand or peat. Do not store in plastic. Keep the boxes cool (40 to 50 degrees) and dry for the winter in a dark spot, and check for rot or shriveling on a monthly basis. If shriveling occurs, mist the packing material lightly with water. Our Web site, [www.whiteflowerfarm.com](http://www.whiteflowerfarm.com), has complete directions and a video that will help guide people doing it for the first time.

### Any final chores before the ground freezes?

For late fall, I am sure to keep weeding! Remember that every weed that is there now will only get bigger and stronger next spring. I love spring-flowering bulbs such as narcissus and crocus, so despite the voles I will plant bulbs at this time of year. If you know where your bulbs are planted approximately, this is the time to spread bulb food. It's good for most plants, so I don't worry if I'm a bit off with my spreading. Also, be sure all your plants have labels while you can still see the plants. Knowing where everything is planted is very important for garden design and early spring chores. You don't want to end up weeding something that is an ornamental plant in the spring because you weren't sure what it was.

### What if I'd rather just sit by the fire and read?

At the end of the day, if you did nothing other than rake, you'd probably be O.K. That's the beauty of fall. Really, less is more. It's time to let the garden rest, let it root in, let things die naturally. Nature really takes care of itself.





## Fall Activities (courtesy of Ed Cobb)

**Question: Gardening keeps me so busy in spring! What can I do in fall that will save me time in Spring?**

**Answer:** I also prefer to get as much done in the fall as I can, because spring chores are often time-critical, especially in the vegetable garden, in order to get a crop in our relatively short growing season.

In the flower beds, pull all annuals after a hard freeze kills them. Cut back most perennials, except for those with basal rosettes of foliage, such as coral bells (*Heuchera*), or those with semi-woody stems, such as lavender, sage or Russian sage. Cut all the green foliage off bearded iris to remove iris borer eggs. Leave the stems on hardy mums and Japanese painted fern, because it helps protect them over the winter. You can cut back Christmas fern and Lenten rose foliage in December and use them in holiday decorating.

In the vegetable garden, pull all the dead plants. If they were not diseased, they can go in the regular compost pile. Diseased plants should be segregated in some fashion, perhaps in a designated compost pile that won't be used in the veggie garden in the future. If the soil isn't too wet, you can incorporate the old mulch from this growing season, with a spading fork or rototiller. However, if you have clay soil like most of us, it is probably too wet to do so now. I have had almost 7 inches of rain since Sept. 30 myself. Better to wait until spring than to ruin the soil's tilth by compacting it when it is wet.

Be sure to protect the bark of the trunks of your young trees, especially fruit trees or their ornamental relatives such as crabapples, from rodent, rabbit and deer feeding damage. You can use either cages of hardware cloth or plastic spiral trunk protectors (the plastic spirals need to be taken off during the growing season). In addition, many young trees will require wire cages to prevent deer browsing on branches and buds. Young trees of all kinds with tall bare trunks may also be damaged by bucks rubbing the velvet off their antlers. If this has already occurred, cut off the shreds of damaged bark to make a clean-cut wound. Do not use pruning paint; just protect the trunk (as explained above) to prevent additional damage over the winter.

The most important chore of all, which will pay dividends for years to come, is to weed! You will find weeds hiding under the skirts of your perennials, or next to your frost-killed veggies. Many of these may be "winter annuals," hardy weeds that live all winter and go to seed in spring, before you notice them or get to them. Pull them up now while they are small and save hours of weeding next spring and for years to come.

**This Ask A Gardener article was written by Patricia Curran, horticulture program manager at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. The column appears weekly in The Journal during the growing season.**



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