



NEWSLETTER

THE 11TH ANNUAL SPRING FLING - A MEMORABLE EVENT!

Our 11th annual Spring Fling was held on April 19th at the iconic Inn at Barley Sheaf. We are pleased to announce that it was a “sell-out” with 154 attendees! A celebration of the season, like-minded people, all passionate about and committed to the beautification of Bucks County, gathered for a memorable evening of fine food, beverage, entertainment, auction and as always, great conversation.

This event is our major fund raiser each year. The generosity of business and individual sponsors, our members and guests is the backbone of the organization and we are most grateful. Heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

The evening began with a VIP pre-party followed by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and an opportunity to view and bid online for over 50 wonderful auction items including “bucket list” trips to places like Ireland, Greece and Africa. The Central Bucks West Spring Quintet provided beautiful background music.

Later in the evening, a live auction featured beautiful artwork, a tour of the US Capital provided by Brian Fitzpatrick, Phillies tickets in the Diamond Club, a golf outing at the exclusive Lookaway Golf Course, and a French dinner for 8 with premium wine prepared by a distinguished professionally trained chef. Overall, the Spring Fling was a special evening and by all counts, a very successful event!

We do hope to see you at the upcoming Kitchen and Garden tour, another “can’t miss” day viewing beautiful homes and gardens across Bucks.

Please keep an eye on the Bucks Beautiful website to take advantage of business sponsor “specials” as well as the many educational opportunities.

Our sincerest thanks for your continued support of Bucks Beautiful. Without you, none of this would be possible.

All the best,

Gary Mathern, President, Board of Directors



Congratulations to our Award Recipients! Michael Flanagan received the Leader Award and Glenda Childs garnered the Laurel Award. Kyle Melander, District Director for Brian Fitzpatrick, presented each with a flag flown over the Capital.

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Bucks Beautiful Kitchen & Garden Tour

Bucks Beautiful Kitchen & Garden Tour Sunday, June 9, 2024 - 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Rain or Shine

By Susan Sandor



Garden lovers, horticultural professionals and anyone needing planting or design inspiration will be thrilled to visit this remarkable property. The tour is taking place on Sunday, June 9th rain or shine. This event is guaranteed to get you oohing and aahing as never before. This is not to say that Bucks Beautiful has not provided the public with visits to other fabulous private houses and gardens over the past 28 years. But this selected property is unlike any other. Its spectacular octagonal house is perched on a hilly five acres notable for its unparalleled details and materials.

Imagine. Over 500 tons of boulders and stone were brought in to create this rocky landscape with walkways, risers, planters,

walls, pathways, fireplace, water features, outdoor kitchen and a babbling brook. This immense project was designed and built in three phases in over five years by landscape designer, Justin Bralley, of Sycamore Landscape Design Build of Doylestown, in collaboration with the home owners, Donald and Michelle Barder. The plant material is diverse and spectacular with trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, herbs, and succulents. Trees include serviceberries, dawn redwoods, sweet magnolia, Kousa dogwood, lilacs, pears and maples espaliered on a cedar arbor. The shrubs inventory is extensive including a purple smoke bush, cherry laurel, viburnum, weigela, boxwood, spirea, rhododendron, and several species of boxwood and hydrangea. There are too many

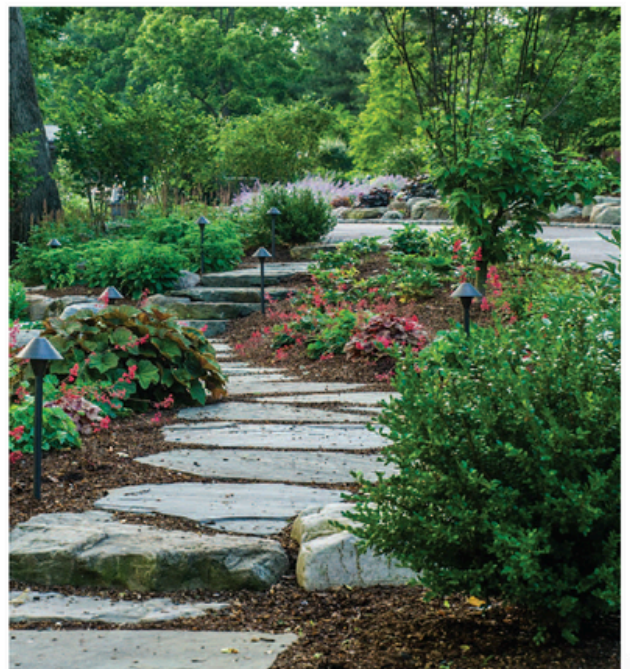
Thank you Bucks County Magazine for running this terrific story penned by our Board Member Susan Sandor.



specimens to list them all. Be assured that a surprise awaits visitors at every turn.

As with every tour, Master Gardeners will be stationed at the octagonal house as well as all the other gardens on the tour, to answer questions about the plantings. Landscape designer and installer, Justin Braley, will also be there to share in the dialogue about his multimillion-dollar masterpiece.

Tickets will be on sale at bucksbeautiful.org for \$35 through May 31st and \$40 thereafter. Think about making this a gift for Mother's Day. You also have the option of becoming a Bucks Beautiful member and getting free V.I.P. Kitchen and Garden Tour tickets, which allows early access to the gardens. Just one of the many benefits. Check the website for detailed information. Proceeds from ticket sales help with the beautification, education and reforestation efforts by this non-profit organization. ❖



THE KIND MASON BEE

By Melissa Palmer,
Beekeeper / Master Gardener



The Mason Bee is also known as the Blue Orchard Bee, or technically named the *Osmia lignaria*. This lovely petite bee is dark blue in color and the size of a common house fly. You can miss them as they buzz about considering they resemble other insects.

There are 420 species of Mason Bees in the United States and all of them are native. They are a wonderful pollinator addition to anyone trying to go native in their gardens!

Mason Bees are not like honey bees or bumble bees. They have no queen, don't make hives and do not produce honey. They rarely use their stinger as they have nothing to protect. Therefore, they are safe to you, your children and pets, and interesting to observe up close.

These bees come with impressive benefits! They are excellent pollinators- about 120 times more effective than the honey or bumble varieties. Since they aren't supporting a hive, they operate independently. The pollen easily clings to their hairy bodies, and they only require enough for themselves and their offspring. They collect lots of pollen from flower to flower, which then transfers it to each flower that they land on. There are some good attributes in staying dirty!

Another advantage of the Mason is that they are early risers. They emerge at the beginning of Spring when temps are too cold for other bees. Not only don't they mind the cold, but they're not bothered by rainy and dark days either, giving them more time to pollinate gardens and early blooms. Fruit trees such as apple, cherry and pear benefit from these lovely ladies.

Mason bees build their homes in small holes and cracks in walls, wooden fences, eaves of a doorway, etc. These holes are usually made from abandoned nests from other insects. They just clean them out and use them. Female mason bees live about a month and lay 1 to 2 eggs daily. Males have a shorter lifespan, with their only purpose being to impregnate the female.





Nesting holes for a mason bee should be 1/4 to 3/8 inch in diameter and at least 6 inches deep. Why do you suppose they need such specifications? The answer is pretty neat. The female lays females first, in the first 3 inches then packs mud to the next cells where then she lays males in the last 3 inches. If the length of the tube or crevice is short and not 6 inches she will lay only males. This is not ideal as the males hatch first then wait outside the nest, awaiting females to hatch to mate with. It's an amazing process.

A mason bee and it's nest. Photo by CrownBees.com

It's easy to make your own home for these ladies! All you need is a can and some specialized "bee tubes" or "bee nester tubes." The can will protect the cardboard bee tubes (a PVC pipe works well too). Female bees need moist clay or mud for their nest. If you don't have clay soil, set out a container or small pile of mud and wet half of it.

Hang or place these homes under an eastern or southern facing position, so that they receive some early morning sun. Make sure that there are spring flowering plants nearby to provide a nectar and pollen food source.

In late May and June, adults have stopped feeding and the young bee larvae are developing inside the cocoons. Mud-capped tubes can stay outside, but more bees may survive if the tubes are moved to a protective area. I always keep my bee houses in a box in the garage (larvae like it colder than warmer with steady cool temps around 40 degrees) then move them outside each Spring to hatch when the temps consistently reach 52 degrees at night. Once they all hatch- with empty tubes, this is the time to replace them. Your tubes need replacing each year to keep clean and disease free for your Mason bees.

For your free bee tubes contact us via info@bucksbeautiful.org and we will provide you with a few!

Seasons Garden Center in Washington Crossing also carries Mason bee homes for sale.

Guide to Building & Managing a Mason Bee Hotel:

<https://colinpurrington.com>

Mason Bee House Using PVC Pipe:

<https://www.justiowahoney.com>





SYCAMORE LANDSCAPE DESIGN • BUILD

by Bryce Sanders, Membership Chair

Garden and tree plantings come to mind when you think of Bucks Beautiful, therefore it's only natural that landscape firms see their mission aligning. One of our newest business members, Sycamore Landscape Design Build, is a good example. I had the opportunity to talk with owner Justin Braley to learn more.



What is Sycamore's mission? If you could only use three words, they would be "turnkey outdoor living." The business started in 2016 with the objective to design and build timeless outdoor living spaces for families to cherish for generations. Justin feels the homeowner has already created the ideal environment inside their home. His firm is brought in to extend that personalized environment into outdoor rooms for the homeowner to enjoy.

Justin believes the garden should include focal points framed by the windows of the house. This creates living artwork to be enjoyed inside looking out, and also by opening your door and walking into the picture. He wants people to create memories in the spaces he builds.

What is Sycamore's origin story? Justin discovered his passion for landscaping upon receiving his first paying job in the industry in 1999. He started at the entry level, working his way into a supervisory role. Justin discovered he received satisfaction looking back on what he accomplished after a hard day's work. Around 2010 he learned the landscape design and sales aspects of the business, and went on to earn his certification as an arborist.

When he started his own business in 2016 it was a two-person firm. Today he has five employees on the payroll. The firm grows carefully because he seeks the right people, those able to develop a working relationship with the homeowner and exceed their expectations. They do a surprisingly large amount of the work themselves, bringing in partner firms in specialized areas like pool installation, electrical work, plumbing and irrigation.

The firm is located in Doylestown. Their immediate range includes Princeton, Perkasi, Chalfont and Newtown. Plans are in the works to extend to the Mainline.

How is Sycamore Landscape Design Build different from competitors? Justin started by recognizing there are many excellent firms in the field. He feels the key differentiator is the effort they put into learning about the homeowner's tastes and lifestyle by asking a lot of questions, then keeping in close communication throughout the project. He feels outdoor space is personal space, not a commodity like a common outside area at a hotel for business travelers.



He wants the outdoor space to transition from the home's interior, reflecting the homeowner's sense of style. There can be customization in every aspect of the project. How much time does it take? All projects are unique, however many projects take two weeks to three months. Some take longer due to size of the property and complexity of the project. Larger projects can be phased over years. Justin has a strong network of the best trade partners to meet the timeline demands of the homeowner.

Where do your client's come from? Because of the degree of customization of the design to the client's lifestyle, 80-90% of their new business comes by word of mouth from satisfied customer. Their reputation precedes them. Some inquiries also come through their website.

How is SLDB community-minded? Justin has two ways of giving back. Each year they identify a local nonprofit to support. It has recently been the Bucks County SPCA. Bucks Beautiful is next on their list. They also bolster the community in a quiet way. At the completion of a project, they present the homeowner with a gift card to a local business, such as a garden center or restaurant. This recycles money back into the community and brings homeowners into local businesses.



How did you get involved with Bucks Beautiful? We went on the Kitchen and Garden Tour and loved it! It is an amazing event! We bought tickets, and were really really impressed with the properties. We knew people associated with the tour because of the properties included. They connected us with the Bucks Beautiful staff, and we joined. We attended the Spring Fling Gala, and are thrilled to showcase our work on this year's Tour as a Sponsor!

CREATURE FEATURE

by Jennifer Finelli, Community Engagement Manager

Why is saving the Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) so vitally important? Adult monarchs are vital pollinators. Monarchs can be seen locally through Spring, Summer and Fall here in Bucks, but they must migrate as Winter sets in. As they migrate across the US, they perform invaluable services for many ecosystems to thrive.

Pollinators as a whole are responsible for as many as one in three bites of food that we eat. Monarchs are also an important food source for birds, small animals and other insects. Some of the greatest threats to them is loss of habitat along their annual migration route. Interestingly, in 2015, a multi-state initiative was started along I-35 across the states of Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas to catalyze conservation efforts and enhance the Monarch habitat. In this way, Monarchs serve as a flagship pollinator, bringing attention and research to the challenge of declining pollinator populations.



There are some positive steps the home gardener can take to create a more favorable environment for Monarchs and other butterflies. Provide both adult nectar sources, as well as caterpillar host plants. Butterflies also need shelter from inclement weather. A well-positioned Spicebush or other flowering shrub can offer such protection. It's also important to plant in clusters and to provide plants for Spring, Summer and Fall. Lastly, minimize use of pesticides and herbicides when possible.

For more information and inspiration, see these resources on selecting appropriate plants for pollinators:

<https://extension.psu.edu/gardening-for-butterflies>

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener/counties/york/native-plants/fact-sheets/save-the-monarch>

BUZZWORTHY DATES



Pennsylvania is home to diverse native plants, trees, insects, fish, birds, and mammals that originated thousands of years ago and thrive in mutual dependence. This native ecosystem provides us with natural resources that benefit our lives by enabling agricultural food production, recreation, fisheries, timber, and more.

As humans have increased worldwide commerce and travel, nonnative species have crisscrossed the world with us. When species are transported to areas outside their native range, they have no natural predators. They often invade, crowding out and threatening the survival of native species.

You can take steps to protect our ecosystem by planting a native species, or pulling an invasive one. Visit this website for guidance on landscaping with native plants.



The efforts of the Government of Slovenia, with the support of Apimondia, led the UN General Assembly in 2018 to declare May 20th as World Bee Day.

The date for this observance was chosen as it was the birthday of Anton Janša, a pioneer of modern apiculture. Janša came from a family of beekeepers in Slovenia, where beekeeping is an important agricultural activity with a long-standing tradition.

Bees and other pollinators are essential for our existence, sustaining agriculture and biodiversity worldwide. With over 20,000 species of bees and various other wild pollinators, they face challenges from human activities, such as habitat loss, pesticide use, and climate change.

You don't have to be a beekeeper to protect these important insects. Help the bees in these easy ways:

- Opt for Organic and Sustainable Food Choices
- Buy Honey and Bee Products Locally
- Avoid Harmful Chemicals and Pesticides
- Plant Hedgerows
- Plant Bee Friendly Flowers
- Establish Bee Houses for Solitary Bees
- Leave Nesting Sites for Ground Nesting Bees
- Join the Buzz for World Bee Day



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