



NEWSLETTER

MARVELOUS MEMBERSHIP

At the Fall 2020 meeting of the Bucks Beautiful board, newly elected member Bryce Sanders asked an interesting question “Has Bucks Beautiful ever considered a membership program for supporters and friends?” This simple inquiry took root.

Supported by the full board, a committee was immediately assembled, and they started to meet under the leadership of Bryce to develop a plan. The resulting program was formalized, announced, and then launched in January 2021 with over 200 Charter members in that first year. Over subsequent years, the membership program has evolved and grown to the current membership of 470 comprised of individuals, families and businesses. Our year-end goal is 500!

A few highlights of membership:

Members enjoy complimentary and/or discounted tickets to events and programs, free promotional opportunities on our website, in this newsletter plus event programs, participate in educational programs and lectures; members can engage in networking and so much more!

A great opportunity to learn more...

On November 14th, from 4-7 pm, Members are invited to Bucks Beautiful’s Gratitude Party graciously hosted by board member Tom Hebel at Bucks County Gardens in Doylestown. This annual event features delicious hors d’oeuvres, premium wines and great conversation.

This is an excellent opportunity to meet with other members, renew your membership and make new friends and connections!

This year, we are encouraging you to bring a friend or neighbor who shares your passion for the beautification of our amazing County, embraces our mission and wants to be part of this dynamic community group. Please help us reach 500 members strong by year-end!

We hope to see you and a friend or two on November 14th! Please email Jen Finelli jennifer@bucksbeautiful.org if you need more information.

Happy Fall!

Gary Mathern, President, Board of Directors

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Student Pollinator Garden Project -2
- Members’ Capital Adventure - 4
- Fall into the Garden - 6
- Supporter Spotlight - 7
- Creature Feature - 9
- Member Party - 10





Student Memorial Blooms into Pollinator Garden Project

By Jennifer Finelli, Community Engagement Manager

In the Fall of 2023, the Central Bucks Athletic Association, a nonprofit youth sports organization serving 3,000 children in the area, purchased bulbs from the Bucks Beautiful Bulbs for Bucks fundraiser. These bulbs were planted in memory of a 2010 intramural player, Maddie Antunes, who tragically passed away in 2022. Maddie was a 5th grader at Groveland Elementary, an acting and piano student, and a fearless defender on the soccer field. The CBAA family wanted a perennial reminder of Maddie's energy and light and hoped the daffodils blooming every Spring where she played soccer with her teammates would honor her life.



When the clusters of sunny, yellow daffodils bloomed at the beginning of the following Spring of 2024, the otherwise desolate garden at Herbst Sports Complex on Durham Road in Pipersville appeared invigorated and welcoming to the local basketball, lacrosse and soccer players.



As the daffodils faded, the newly-formed garden committee at Herbst convinced the organization that those daffodils would be a great segway to establishing a pollinator garden there at the field. The plans began for renovating a 35-foot-wide circular garden which had become mostly thistle and bindweed, despite a few attempts by the organization and parents to plant and keep the weeds at bay.



The garden committee enlisted student assistance in the Girls 2010 Buckingham United soccer team. The girls used bulb planters and augers to install the 75 daffodil bulbs for Maddie and returned in the late Spring and Summer to help the garden committee battle the thistle and relentless bindweed. The larger plan was to eliminate the invasive species and gradually add native perennials that would thrive in the space.

In preparation for this project, the committee members grew many plants from seed to defray the cost of purchasing all mature plants. They also applied for a Bucks Beautiful matching grant to enable them to purchase additional native plants for immediate visual and pollinator impact.

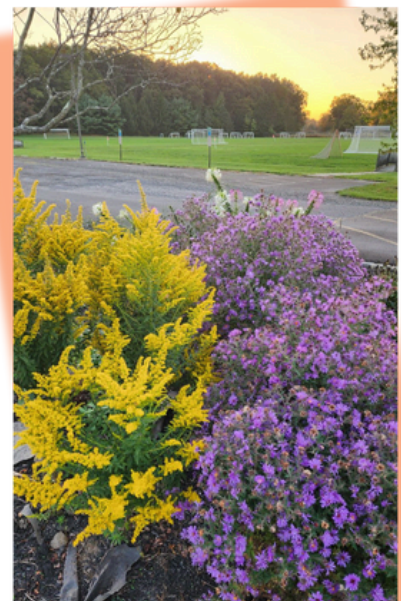
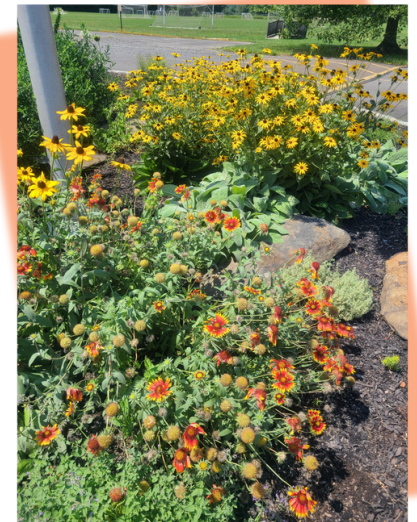
Over the course of about 6 months, the Herbst garden is now boasting some robustly blooming native pollinators, such as asters, butterfly weed, clematis, echinacea, gaillardia, goldenrod, joe pye weed, liatris, mountain mint, obedient plant, phlox, rudbeckia and yarrow.

Thanks to the efforts of the committee and the girls, as well as the additional funding made available through the Bucks Beautiful grant, this small space is now alive and buzzing with pollinator activity.

The beauty of planting this space with mostly natives is that they should continue to grow and thrive once they are fully established without much maintenance.

It is profoundly gratifying to see a space transformed from a mostly barren patch with no insect activity to a bustling garden with new colors emerging each season, along with the bees, butterflies and birds that follow. If you build it, they will come!

Finished Grant Project at Herbst Sports Complex, Pipersville



Bucks Beautiful Members' Capital Adventure

By Michael Flanagan,
Bucks Beautiful Member

My faith in humanity and political honor has been restored. In September, I had the honor of visiting Washington DC with friends and family, including fellow Bucks Beautiful Members William Hughes and Beth Snyder. The highlight of our trip was a private tour of the Capital with Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick and his staffer Sophie Toya. This extraordinary opportunity was a live auction item that we won at Bucks Beautiful's Spring Fling fundraiser in April. To say many of us were humbled by the experience really is an understatement.

Throughout the tour, we expanded our understanding, discovered new insights, and developed a deeper respect for the workings of government. The focus was not only on the Capitol building and its contents but also on the history that underpins our United States and the reasons behind its functions. We had the chance to engage in one-on-one conversations with Congressman Fitzpatrick, who answered our questions and posed some of his own. What struck me most about this experience was his honesty and connection to the issues. Congressman Fitzpatrick truly exemplifies focus and dedication.

A few quotes from our group:

"I am honored to have been included in this tour. The information they shared regarding the Capital and also the tour itself made for an incredible day!"

- Maureen Flanagan, Akron OH



"I imagine there is never a bad time to tour the Capitol, but it seemed especially poignant to tour ahead of this election. Representative Brian Fitzpatrick and his staffer Sophie provided an excellent tour, which to me highlighted the amazing history, beauty and function of our democracy. The tour inspired me to listen more and do the hard work of supporting our democracy, regardless of party affiliation. "

- Renee' Hagan, Nazareth PA

“The experience renewed faith in democracy. That it does not have to be about party lines but what’s right, and it truly does take all of parts to make this country run. We do have a voice; our votes! Thank you Congressman and Sophie- you raised the bar for me!”

-Michael Flanagan, Doylestown PA



“The Capital tour was an awesome experience with a very knowledgeable and welcoming staffer who conducted the tour until Brian was able to join us. Brian escorted our group to places that the general public cannot access such as the Speaker’s balcony. The balcony had spectacular views of DC and the part of the Capital where inaugurations take place. They are actually setting up for the upcoming inauguration so that was nice to see!”

-William Hughes, Doylestown PA



“As an immigrant who has become a US citizen, I walk into the Capitol with a special degree of respect for the democracy it stands for. While visiting recently, the images of January 6 came to mind, highlighting the worries about a peaceful transition in future elections.”

-Maria Rieders, Jamison PA



Fall into the Garden

by Jennifer Finelli, Community Engagement Manager

As the hot weather wanes and some of our summer blooms begin to fade, there's no need to lament that the gardening season is drawing to a close. For many, gardening has become more of a full-year pursuit. Rather than thinking about September and October as just clean-up time, gardeners can use the fall season for exploring cool weather vegetable crops and late season perennials. Fall is also an excellent time for planning next year's garden while this year's challenges are still fresh in our minds. Even a chilly winter day can be a gardener's opportunity for seed starting and winter sowing as we await another spring day.

Fall is a great time to take stock, perform proper sanitation of diseased plants and make some appropriate pruning cuts to ensure your garden's health and productivity. It can also be an opportunity to explore cool season plants such as mums, pansies and ornamental cabbages to re-invigorate your landscape. In pollinator gardens, some of our late season perennials such as asters and goldenrod are just beginning to come into their glory. Other native perennials like echinacea, milkweeds and rudbeckia are starting to lose their vigor, but it's a perfect opportunity for seed collection if you're interested in further propagation or seed-sharing. While sorting out those spent blooms, it's important to also leave some stems and seed pods for pollinators. Having some intact material such as dried blossoms and seed heads also provide a bit of winter visual interest, as well as winter habitat spaces.

As the last of the cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes are being harvested, it's an ideal time to prepare your soil for your cooler temperature crops. Getting rid of any weeds that have built up and making any amendments to the soil, such as adding compost, can pave the way for a solid crop of fall plantings such as brussel sprouts, lettuces, garlic and radishes. While the garlic won't be harvested until the following spring or early summer, it can be a great way to utilize what would otherwise be an empty bed. Some gardeners also make use of winter cover crops to release nutrients back into the soil for the following spring.

One additional way to stay garden-connected past fall and into winter is through seed starting. Many gardeners use basic windowsill seed starting methods and others have more complex grow light set-ups. More recently, the concept of winter sowing has grown in popularity, as it's an inexpensive and simple way to create your own greenhouse and grow your own plants from seed. There are many resources available for the home gardener to stay engaged year-round and part of the enjoyment and satisfaction is the learning process!

(This article initially appeared in Times Publishing Inc.'s September issue.)



Staging Craft

by Bryce Sanders, Membership Chair

Celebrity Realtors on Bravo’s Million Dollar Listings are not the only people using professional staging services. As a Bucks County homeowner or real estate agent, you can gain the same benefits in our local area through the Doylestown firm StagingCraft.

Nancy Vander Zwan started the business 14 years ago. A Realtor friend liked her decorating style and asked her to consult with a client. Some furniture went into the garage and other pieces entered the picture. The property that had been with another realtor for a year now sold in six weeks. Nancy realized this experience would become her business and her career was launched.



What is staging? Selling a property is a complicated and stressful process. The Internet has transformed the business. The first time a person sees a property is often online, not in driving down the road. It is important for a potential buyer to see great photos of the property, get engaged and request an in person viewing. Once in the home, they need to identify with the house, be able to envision furniture in the space and imagine the enjoyment it would bring. Home staging draws buyers’ attention to a house’s highlights. Staging involves using a home seller’s furnishings, StagingCraft’s inventory, or a combination of both to create spaces that look bright, open and appealing.

Does staging add value? Yes. It often helps the house sell quicker. An attractively staged property can get more than one potential buyer interested, create a sense of urgency and potentially bring in multiple offers. StagingCraft has helped Realtors achieve sales prices of up to 23 percent over asking price. In all sales, many factors influence the selling price, and staging helps you get every single penny out of the transaction.

Before

After



Who pays for staging? It varies, according to Nancy. The Realtor most often pays for a consultation, during which Nancy offers advice to sellers on how to prepare the house for photos and showings. In some cases, home sellers will pay StagingCraft to return with some of the company's furniture, lighting, art and décor to refresh their rooms. If the house is empty, the seller will rent furnishings from StagingCraft, which Nancy and her team will install until the house goes under contract.

How does staging enhance a house? Empty rooms look smaller because there is no frame of reference. Staging the house makes rooms look larger and more attractive, creating an emotional connection between a buyer and a property. When a house is properly staged, it looks bigger, newer, brighter, and more on trend.

How and when did you hear about Bucks Beautiful? About 10 years ago, Nancy saw a sign crediting Bucks Beautiful alongside a large bed of daffodils in Doylestown. When Bucks Beautiful developed a membership program Nancy knew this was an initiative she wanted to support.

Why did you decide to join Bucks Beautiful? Nancy believes Bucks Beautiful is a worthy cause. StagingCraft creates beautiful spaces inside people's homes. Bucks Beautiful creates beautiful outdoor spaces around the county. There's an overlap because StagingCraft will also advise homeowners what they should do to create appeal on the outside of their properties.

Before



After



“StagingCraft’s home staging adds value and an emotional pull for home buyers in any price range.”

StagingCraft
Nancy Vander Zwan, Owner
8 Atkinson Drive #1288
Doylestown, PA 19801

IG, Facebook @StagingCraft
www.stagingcraft.com
215-262-7306



CREATURE FEATURE

by Jennifer Finelli, Community Engagement Manager

They may be creepy or even spooky, but spiders can be an invaluable asset in the garden as they feed on a variety of insects that might otherwise be pests. While arachnophobia is one of the most common phobias, most of the 3,000+ species of spiders found in the US are harmless to humans and plants alike. Some individuals will have an allergic reaction to spider bites, however these bites are typically not a threat to humans and the occurrence of spider bites is not that common. The only medically significant spiders found in PA are the black widow and the brown recluse, and encounters with these two are rare.

Black widows (right) are native and generally outdoors. Their bites should indeed be avoided as they can result in severe muscle pain, headache, trouble breathing and in rare cases, death. It's important to note, only the females bite and generally when you come in direct contact with their webs, especially when she is protecting her eggs. The brown recluse (below) is not native or suited to our climate, so will generally be found indoors. This typically happens when they hitchhike onto other structures like furniture and boxes, then produce multiple spiderlings. The brown recluse bite is mostly only a severe threat to the very young and infirmed.



The best way to avoid encounters with the dangerous spider varieties is to reduce the number of potential nesting sites near the home such as wood piles, lumber stacks, high weeds and human discards and to keep indoor spaces free from webs and cluttered. Additional information regarding PA arachnoids can be found at the Penn State Department of Entomology.

SAVE THE DATES

*Spring
Fling*

FRIDAY 4/11/25

*Kitchen &
Garden Tour*

SUNDAY 6/8/25

PLANT SWAP SUCCESS



A huge shoutout to everyone who joined our fabulous free plant swap on October 9th at Buckingham's Bush Park! We had a smorgasbord of sun-lovers, shade seekers, houseplants, and native beauties to pick from. Keep your gardening gloves ready for our Spring plant swap in May!



Beautify Your Yard with our Signature Daffodils while Supporting Our Mission.

- Low Maintenance
- Deer and Rabbit Resistant
- Multiply Organically
- Plant Oct through late Nov

Proceeds Benefit our Community Grant Program

It had to be YOU. And it was YOU who made our membership program a reality. We'd like to show our gratitude by inviting YOU to an exclusive, members only, Hardy Gratitude Party where you will be served *premium wines and sumptuous hors d'oeuvres*.

If you have a friend who is interested in our mission and joining our nonprofit organization, please bring them along.

Bonus: Shop and save at Bucks Country Gardens on party night with exclusive shopping discounts just for YOU!

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, you're welcome to do so at the door and have a fun evening with like-minded neighbors and business owners of our community.

BUCKS BEAUTIFUL

Hardy Gratitude Party

Free to Members
Where You are Royalty

11-14-24 | 4-7 pm
Bucks Country Gardens

Special thanks to our event sponsors:

BUCKS COUNTRY GARDENS BMRP Bucks-Mont Party Rental MCCAFFREY'S FOOD MARKETS Bryce & Jane Sanders

We're grateful to Deb and Anna Daly from the National Charity League-Central Bucks Chapter for representing our nonprofit at Quinlan Preserve's 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Holiday Membership Package

- LIMITED EDITION BUCKS BEAUTIFUL BYERS' CHOICE DOLL
- VIP KITCHEN & GARDEN TOUR TICKETS
- SPRING FLING DISCOUNT
- BUCKS BEAUTIFUL NEWSLETTER
- SELECT COMMUNITY DISCOUNTS

INDIVIDUAL = \$90

FAMILY = \$150

PHONE ORDERS ONLY: 215-340-3639



Thank You to our Sponsors and Business Supporters

President
Gary Mathern

Vice President
Michael E. Peters, Esq.

Treasurer
Michael J. Stumpf

Board of Directors

Matthew Broad
Pam Byers
Steve Darlington
Melissa Eiseman
Mike Feeny
David Fermier
Michael Flanagan
Chuck Gale
Dr. Vail Garvin
Thomas L. Hebel
John F. McCaughan
Renny Reynolds
Bryce Sanders
Susan Sandor
Jonathan Sharaf
Carter van Dyke

Executive Director
Denise Sezack

Financial Director
Susan Carr

Communications Director
Laurie To

Community Engagement Manager
Jennifer Finelli

Founders & Benefactors
Robert L. & Joyce Byers

Founding Major Patrons
Byers' Choice Ltd.
John F. & Carol McCaughan



