

Weeders Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

Ellie Penniman presided over today's virtual meeting as President Patty has been under the weather and Vice President Karen Shepard is helping her husband through a bout of COVID, although she did manage to be present at the meeting. Ellie praised the Weeders for dealing with the continuing health crisis with good cheer and expressed sympathy for the suffering some have endured. She asked Nancy Holmes for an update on Patty's situation. Nancy said Patty has undergone testing and is thought to have an auto-immune disorder. She's now on medication and is feeling better, hoping to go home from the hospital on Wednesday. It was suggested we might try to do a dinner rotation to help out, but it was decided to wait for more news first. Nancy will be our go-between.

December Minutes: Ellie asked for a motion to accept the December Minutes. Sonya Driscoll moved to approve, Jean May seconded and the membership accepted the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Michele Bolton reported that there's not a lot happening right now and assured us that we have all the funds necessary to last through the end of the year. Karen Shepard moved to accept the Treasurer's report, Jean May seconded and the report was approved.

Committee Reports:

Fertilizer Fund: Nancy Evans said we have had 90% participation so far this year and thanked all who have contributed to this very important fundraiser. There is still time to send in a donation if you haven't already done so, as the window of opportunity doesn't close until the end of January.

Conservation: Nancy E. announced that the GCA has asked us to participate in one of two projects. The first is a project to clear storm drains, the second is a day of weed pulling this spring at Valley Forge Park.

Horticulture: Elaine Lisle reported that Alice Doering held a virtual hardwood propagation workshop in December; this month we'll be doing fern propagation. Alice will provide kits to participants for \$5 along with complete instructions for doing this on our own; there will be no virtual workshop. Diane McCallister gave the tip of the month: *Ilex opaca* 'Maryland Dwarf' is a broad, low growing native holly that spreads and behaves like a groundcover, is deer and salt resistant and is a good textural change from more commonly used evergreen groundcovers. Although somewhat expensive and not always easy to find, she recommends it for its versatility.

Program: Nancy H. reminded us that our programs will be virtual through March. The Exec Committee will discuss whether to go virtual through May and it's hoped we'll be able to do the June meeting in person.

New Business:

Beth Bartle announced a series of GCA National Judges workshops for Floral Design, Horticulture and Photography on February 2,3 and 4 to be held virtually by geographic area. The invitation suggested that anyone considering becoming a judge to think about attending. The cost for each workshop is \$25 and registration is on the GCA website.

The meeting was adjourned at about 10:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Undercofler, Recording Secretary

Program:

Nancy H. introduced our program, one of GCA's Programs on Demand, entitled "Stonegate Farm: An Original 19th Century New York Hudson Valley Estate." Matthew Benson, owner and organic food and flower farmer, designer, photographer and food writer was our host. He explained that the house, an Italianate villa, along with out-buildings designed in the same style, were all constructed in the 1850s, then went on to describe how he created his farm from woodland over a period of about fifteen years. Passing through the entrance to the property, we first explored the flower farm, next the formal herb garden, the greenhouse, apothecary, veggie farm, the CSA shed where 100 members pick up their produce, and the orchard, which grows heirloom varieties of a number of fruits. Along the way, we acquired helpful tips concerning such things as how to photograph a garden, the importance of adding rock dust (phosphate) to the soil for growing veggies, the use of fish emulsion and seaweed to discourage predators, his charming, if somewhat unorthodox, theory of supporting sunflowers and other tall plants with twining morning glory vines and finally, a recipe for a gorgeous salad of greens, veggies, herbs, fruit and flowers. A fine treat on a wintry January day!