



President – Joe Raggio 49 Darroch Rd., Delmar, NY 12054 \* (518) 439-7569

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<http://www.gardenclubofthecapitaldistrict.org>

(Serving the greater capital region)

Celebrating **85** years of service to our community

**VOLUME 84 NO. 5**

(First Chartered 1936)

**May, 2021**

**DATE & TIME:** Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm

Members and non-members are encouraged to attend any of our events

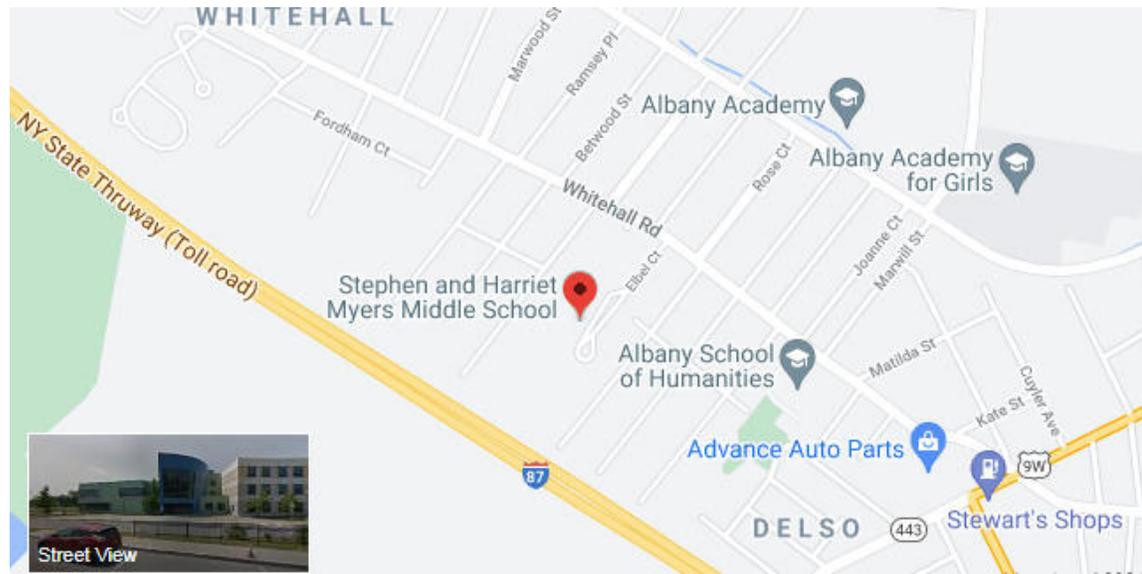
**Program:**

The Garden Club of the Capital District will visit the Vegetable Project's home base school garden at Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School in Albany on Thursday, May 27, at 6:30 p.m., and learn about one effort to bring gardening into school programming.

The school and the garden at the school can both be a little tricky to find. The school address is 100 Elbel Court, Albany 12209. [Click on this link to Myers Middle School](#) GPS systems do not always lead there, as Elbel Court is really just an interior road on school property. The school is set back from Whitehall Road in Albany about halfway between Delaware Avenue and the Albany Jewish Community Center.

The school building wraps around the garden. Enter the school property, drive past the front door and hug the perimeter of the building until seeing parked cars where the paved surface runs out.

Or call **Bill Stoneman**  
at 518-728-6799!





Dear Friends,



The Men’s Garden Club of Albany has stood the test of time, having brought gardeners together in friendship and fellowship and offered service to the community since 1935. Like other organizations, however, its future is brightest when its spirit reflects the community it is a part of. Therefore, with keen understanding that ideas about community change, the club’s board of directors believes that it is time to embark on a new and important journey:

With leadership of our president, **Joe Raggio**, board members agreed in December 2020 to propose to club membership removing the word “Men’s” from the club’s name and to welcome women, really already valued partners, as formal club members.

Still, it’s really an exciting development for fellows like me who are both proud of our first 85 years and eager to build in the years ahead. Our club has experienced some challenges in recent years. All manner of membership organizations have seen declines in participation over the last generation. Add a worldwide pandemic to that and it’s become even more difficult to keep in touch and share the joy of encouraging life from the soil around us. At the same time, interest in gardening is soaring. And few pleasures can bring people with diverse perspectives and experiences together as well as gardening can.

Thus, I look forward to many more years with our old friends and ask all of you to help bring new friends into the group!

**Memorial Garden - We will have a work session at the garden on Wednesday June 2 @ 9:00am to weed, edge and prune.**

## Becker's Farm donation - Thank You!

**The Vegetable Project**, a school gardening group in Albany led by the Garden Club of the Capital District's **Bill Stoneman**, is so grateful to Becker's Farm in East Greenbush, and especially **Rachel Patterson**, the nursery's office manager, for a recent donation of a flat of beautiful coleus plants. The plants were transformed into a hands-on learning activity as part of an event the Vegetable Project led at Stephen and Harriet

Myers Middle School from May 3 to May 14. With guidance from the Garden Club's **Russ Greenman**, students took cuttings of plants to start new plants in their own containers.

The event, Thrive Outside, was organized to give teachers at the school an opportunity to test drive teaching outdoors.

Thanks to **Russ Greenman** for arranging the donation and many thanks to **Rachel Patterson** and Becker's for supporting the **Vegetable Project's** work to expose kids to the wondrous good that gardening offers.

--

*Bill Stoneman*

Creating hands-on learning opportunities

[www.vegetableproject.org](http://www.vegetableproject.org)

[www.facebook.com/vegetableproject](https://www.facebook.com/vegetableproject)



## Follow-up to recent club activity

On Saturday, April 24, our club had the opportunity to take a guided tour of the **Pine Hollow Arboretum**, which is located in Slingerlands. It was a beautiful afternoon for everyone to explore the many acres of trails that wind through the grounds, while enjoying the blooming Magnolias and natural plantings that surround the ponds.

The Arboretum was planted over many decades from a love of nature and trees from the owner of the property, who resided on the grounds. The late **Dr. John Abbuhl** had a passion for collecting different species of plants, and decided to open up his property as a non-profit public Arboretum as part of his legacy. Some of you may know that Dr. Abbuhl was also a long-time member of our very own club.

After our one and a half hour guided tour, several club members enjoyed relaxing under the trees and celebrating the arrival of spring while munching on some snacks. The club would like to thank our tour guides, **Sandy and Gabby**, for taking the time during a busy time of year to give us insightful background information on many of the species on the grounds.

It was very nice to meet as a group again, since the pandemic has not allowed much interaction this past year or so. Those who participated in the outing were; **Bill Stoneman, Jack and Janet Meagher, Greg and Nellie Goutos, Andy Sullivan, and Russ and Maria Greenman**. Hopefully, more club members will join us on some exciting upcoming local garden tours we have planned for this summer.

*Greg Goutos*

**Join us this Thursday 5/27 to see this and more from the Vegetable Project**



### **Growing Greens Under Lights**

I must eat greens every day. Or so I've been indoctrinated. During the summer I can grow my own greens, and the lettuce, collards, Swiss chard and kale from our garden fill the bill. But in the winter, it's off to the grocery store. This winter I decided that I'd try and grow lettuce under the grow lights that I normally only use in the spring to start seedlings.

Lettuce seemed to be a logical candidate due to vertical space constraints. I would dearly love to grow Swiss chard, being my favorite, but mature chard grows too tall for my limited setup. The lettuce variety I chose was Red Fire, a loose leaf variety that I've been growing successfully outside for years.

As I would for outside transplants, I started my seeds in six packs. After maybe 2-3 weeks I transplanted them into either 4" or 6" pots (10 in total). Watering is done from the bottom using a dilute solution of Miracle Grow. Each tray holds 3 or four pots.

My grow light setup consists of six 4' LED shop lights hung from 2 shelves in groups of three. I keep the lights very close to (often touching) the lettuce plants in order to maximize the light exposure. Temperatures in our basement run about 70 degrees (the furnace and hot water heater are nearby).

The results? Fantastic! The Red Fire plants grow like weeds in this environment and I'm able to harvest several lettuce leaves every day without the supply running low. As insurance I'm starting additional seedlings every four weeks, assuming that the original plants will eventually run low on gas.

As mentioned above, I used 4" and 6" pots. As you can see from the photo below, the 6" pot at the top of the photo produces a much larger plant. In fact the plants in the 6" pots are about as big as they get in the garden.

I'm excited by my success (living through a pandemic definitely lowers the 'excitement' bar), and will be experimenting with other greens. I'm considering Asian greens such as Mizuna and Pac Choi as well as cress.

Finally, a note on harvesting. Harvesting the outside leaves works best, encouraging the plant to grow new leaves. But even using this regiment I find those outside leaves tend to wilt very quickly and I need to remove them periodically.



**From the Al Miller archives:  
June Garden Reminders**

**Downsize Large Containers**

If you have a very large container, such as a half barrel, you don't need to fill the whole thing with soil. A depth of 1 foot is enough for most container plants. Set plastic pots upside-down in the bottom of the barrel, then cover them with a false bottom of thin plywood or another sturdy material. Then you just need to fill the top half with soil. I've also used Styrofoam peanuts to take up space, but invariably they mix with the soil and it gets messy when you try to clean out the container and add fresh soil the following year.

**Use Water-Absorbing Crystals**

To reduce watering, incorporate water-absorbing crystals into the potting mix when you plant. It's hard to add them afterwards. Since clay pots dry out faster than plastic, use plastic pots set inside clay pots to help hold in moisture. Grouping pots together also will help reduce moisture loss.

**Support Large Containers**

Use clay or metal "plant feet" underneath large containers to help with drainage and to keep pots from staining wood decks and steps. For heavy indoor plants that you summer outdoors, use plant trivets with four casters to make transporting them less backbreaking.

**Set Up Plant Supports**

Support plants that tend to flop over now, while they're still small. Use wire rings and supports, or make your own by placing sturdy branches in the ground in a ring around the plant. Then loop twine from stake to stake to encircle the plant. Or you can wrap the twine around each stake and the one across from it, to make a criss-cross pattern for the plant stems to grow through. If you set the cages in place now, the foliage will soon hide them. In contrast, trying to tie up toppled plants is frustrating and usually ends up looking ridiculous.

**Control Tent Caterpillars**

Check apple, cherry, and other fruit trees for nests of tent caterpillars. Blast low-lying nests with water to destroy them, or knock them to the ground and destroy them. A spray of Bt will kill emerging caterpillars but is not toxic to beneficial insects, birds, or humans.

**Seeking Candidates for the Joe Herman Memorial Scholarship**

**Seeking Scholarship Candidates**

The Scholarship Committee is currently accepting applications from college students for a \$500 scholarship to be awarded by our club. The scholarship is available to a full-time student currently enrolled, or accepted to begin a college program, with the intent to pursue studies in a horticultural-related field; such as landscaping, agriculture, environmental studies, ecology, forestry or natural resources management. It is open to both male or female applicants of any age, preferably with home residency in the seven-county area of the Capital Region.

Perhaps you have a relative, neighbor or know someone in your circle of friends that would deserve to be given this stipend. The committee will recognize those candidates that have a direct connection to our club, and whom also meet all the application qualifications.

For more information, or if you would like to request an application, please contact **Greg Goutos**, Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Call **Greg** at 518-495-0148, or contact him by email at [ggoutos@nycap.rr.com](mailto:ggoutos@nycap.rr.com). The application deadline is June 15, 2021.

# GARDEN TALK

## WATER CONSERVATION

By

**JOE HUTH (Past MGCA President)**

When I offered to write an article for the DIRT I thought water conservation in the garden would be an appropriate topic. Since the we've had plenty of rain, too much in terms of getting the garden worked up and planted. However, I'm writing this in May and things will probably change by mid-summer. My suggestions will also help in terms of weed control.

One important factor in water utilization by plants is a good root system. This can be enhanced by good, deep soil preparation, checking soil pH to adjust acidity for the kind of plants, adding organic matter and fertilizer. Most gardeners are now past this stage and the trick is to make the best use of the moisture in the ground.

The first thing that is needed is a way to cut down on evaporation. Mulching is the obvious answer. Usually appearance in a vegetable garden is less of a concern than in the landscape. Therefore, items such as newspaper(3 Or 4 pages thick), black or other dark plastic films and even old carpeting can be used to cover the ground and reduce evaporation. A more expensive plastic mulch sold as weed block has the advantage of being porous and allowing water to get through. Natural mulches such as grass clippings and compost are easy to apply and are more beneficial to use around cool weather plants such as broccoli, cauliflower and others in the cabbage family.

In more public areas bark and stone mulches will be more attractive. To weed competition, use the weed block underneath ant mulch.

In areas where mulches are not appropriate, do a good job of weeding and try to keep the surface soil loose to form a "dust mulch". This will break the capillary action that draws water to the surface where it can evaporate.

If watering is necessary, water deeply. Since water evaporates quickly from the top three inches of soil, it is important to water deeper than this. Techniques like the use of the soaker hose along the row or under plastic mulch will soak the root zone and not waste water between the rows.

These ideas plus early and frequent weeding will help make use of the available soil moisture. What other ideas do you have to conserve moisture?

# GARDEN CLUB of ALBANY CLUB ACTIVITIES

## Adopt-a-Highway - 25 years

We had a good run... We started our Adopt A Highway program back in 1994 by building a raised bed out of Hemlock and lots of rebar. Ten years later in 2004 - we built a raised bed that would last a lifetime. Unfortunately when construction started on the Exit 7 bridge off of I-90 our concrete base, block structure, soil and flower bulbs mysteriously disappeared leaving only the steel we drove down 5 feet to keep the Very thick concrete base from heaving.. **Ken Abele** during construction of our second raised bed on I-90 at Exit 7 Westbound. Built to last This was build as a Memorial to an outstanding member - **Mr. Conrad (Connie) Robert**. This project took years to get State and Federal approvals and lots of hard work from members of the Garden Club of Albany. ps. If you know who borrowed our several thousand pound raised bed - **please ask them to return it**. Perhaps someone with big boy toys on site while working on the bridge knows. Thanks!!! Built to last... Destroyed in hours



**Someone that was working on the bridge at Exit 7 of I-90 knows where it is.  
This was our Memorial to Mr. Conrad (Connie) Robert**

**Albany International Airport  
Don Wrieden – Chairman**



**Joe Herman** planting bulbs at the Albany International Airport

**Memorial Garden**

At the Albany County Cooperative Extension

**Joe Huth / Chuck Scott** Memorial Garden Chairmen

**We will have a work session at the garden on Wednesday June 2 @ 9:00am to weed, edge and prune.**



For many years, our club has maintained a beautiful Memorial Garden as a tribute to our "Gardeners Gone to Rest." The garden is located in Voorheesville on the grounds of the Albany County Cooperative Extension



**Memorial Service At CCE Albany**



**Ken Abele** drilling holes for trees

## Memorial Garden continued

Along with perennials, shrubs and trees, there are plaques that lists the names of our club members that have Gone to Rest.

A Big Thank You to **Joe Huth, Chuck Scott, Jack Meagher, and Bill Stoneman**



The early days of our Memorial Garden

for sprucing up our Memorial Garden on April 27<sup>th</sup>

Chuck Scott



## Gardening from the Heart - 35 years at the Center for Disability Services

Volunteers include: **Russ Greenman, Greg Goutos, Joe Huth, Jack Meagher, and Don Wrieden.**

35 = years supporting one location and for years, two locations Every Wednesday

4 = the (low) average number of MGCA volunteers on site

50 = sessions per year and for years 100 sessions per year (50 /site)

2 = Hours on site per session – 9:00am – 11:00am

= ~15 years x 50 weeks/year x 4 people / site x 2 sites === 6000 volunteer hours

PLUS

= 20 years x 50 weeks/year x 4 people / site x 1 sites === 4000 volunteer hours

===== **10,000 hours of volunteer's time supporting the Gardening From The Heart program at the Centers for Disability Services by members of the Men's Garden Club of Albany.** =====

Add to that, prep time, construction of a huge greenhouse and many raised beds and you'll see that the 10,000 hours is only a portion of the time our members have spent supporting this great program.

We owe a big thanks to **Al Miller and Tom Baker** for initiating this project back in 1984.





## Gardening from the Heart - 35 years continued

**Tom Baker** and **Al Miller** started working on founding the Gardening From the Heart program way back in 1984 but he may say that it really didn't start until 1985. Originally our club had two teams of members that would teach classes, every Wednesday, at two locations with the adults at 700 S. Pearl St. in Albany and with the children at 314 Manning Blvd in Albany, NY. COVID-19 restrictions kept us out of the building, and we're waiting to hear what the next steps are for our activities at the 700 South Pearl St. location.



### Harvest time

**Everyone takes home a bag of produce**

The cooking class does their magic with goodies found in the garden. So good!

## History – 30 years ago – by Mr. Tom Baker

### MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF ALBANY

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING JUNE 6, 1991

The regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Men's Garden Club of Albany, was held on Thursday evening, June 6, 1991 in the Cerebral Palsy Center for the Disabled.

**Joe Raggio**, President, presided over the meeting.

The Minutes of the May 2, 1991 meeting were approved as read by the Club Secretary, **Tom Baker**.

The Treasurer's Report was approved as presented by the Club Treasurer, **Fred Day**. There was a balance in the General Fund, as of May 31, 1991 of \$5, 570.61 and in the Memorial fund there was a balance of \$808.60. In the Endowment and Investment fund there was a balance of \$6,202.50.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

\* **PLANT SALE:** **Fred Day** reported that the 1990 Plant sale netted \$1,431.91 with two locations, whereas in 1991, with one location, which was in Delmar we netted \$1,492.91.

\* **PROGRAM:**

1. June 29: The club will hold a Field Trip at Seagroatt's, Commercial Rose Grower and Mineke's Meadow Lark Gardens. Full details will be found in the June Dirt. However, **Wally Dillenbeck** will be in charge of receiving information from the regular callers instead of **Al Miller**.

2. August 4: The Annual Summer Picnic will be held at the George Landis Arboretum, details in the June Dirt.

\* **GARDENING FROM THE HEART:** A major part of the Greenhouse at the South Pearl Street Cerebral Palsy Center for the Disabled will be completed in the near future.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Don Lewis** reported that **Burt Smith**, a longtime former member, has died and he, **Don**, feels that we should plant something in his memory as we do for current members. He suggested that a plant be planted at the Wellspring House where **Burt's** widow will be able to see it. **Don** also suggested that the Board develop a policy for former longtime members who pass away. No definitive solution was arrived at, at this meeting.

The Board voted that we should plant a shrub in Memory of **Burt Smith** at the Wellspring House if it is permitted by the management of the institution. The amount should not exceed \$35.00.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

The Albany Institute of History and Art is celebrating its 300th Anniversary with a Festival of Trees at Christmastide, entitled "Hudson Valley Christmas Memories." We have been invited to take part in the Festivities. The Board has agreed that this could be an excellent opportunity to become much more visible to the community at large. Therefore, the Board voted to allocate \$80.00 for this venture.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50,

Respectfully submitted by, **Tom Baker**, Secretary

\*\* Editor's note: **Tom Baker** faithfully documented our minutes since way before he had a personal computer - somehow he managed to digitize all of the minutes he had taken over the years and we now include them in our newsletter under the heading "History - 25 -or 30 years ago" Thanks, **Tom Baker!!!**

## Youth Gardening

Our Youth Gardening program has found another worthwhile program to support. Check out our very own - **Bill Stoneman's [The Vegetable Project](#) - In Person - This Thursday**



**Sweet potatoes and potatoes -  
not related at all**

# Youth Gardening continued



**Coleus donated by Becker's Farm**



Welcome to the Myers Middle School Garden

### Walking Onions

*Some Varieties: Egyptian Walking*

They're... Similar to shallots, but with a much stronger flavor!

- Ripened between the branching stems (like shallots) and the sheath
- Harvest their produce numerous bulbs below ground, and form a cluster of sets (bulbs) on the stalk.
- A new bulb grows under the weight of the new growth and bulbs take root near the parent plant, hence the name "walking onion."

How To Grow: Similar change to late summer and/or plant tubers that form an onion

- Like most onions, can be eaten raw or cooked for flavor a variety of dishes
- Can be used like other onions or shallots or prepared by pickling

Photo: Family & History - Classes taking with Allam Family along with kids, students, classes, and parents

• Ancient records of using onions span western and eastern Asia, though the origin unclear, with their domestication on southern

Learn more from Cornell Cooperative Extension at [ccc.cornell.edu](http://ccc.cornell.edu)



**A Very successful "test drive" of outdoor instruction.**

**Paid for by The Vegetable Project**

## DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>Today!</b>	<b>Please visit our friends that need our visits and cards</b>
Thursday, May 27 <sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm	<b>Tour of The Vegetable Project @ Myers Middle School</b>
Wednesday, June 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 9:00 am	<b>Memorial Garden cleanup - Albany County Cooperative Extension</b>
Thursday, June 3 <sup>rd</sup> @ 7:30 pm	<b>Director's meeting</b> – via Zoom Members are welcome to join in. reply to this email and we'll send you the link when it becomes available.
Thursday, June 24 <sup>th</sup> x:xx pm time TBD	Central Park Rose Garden tour

Editor: **Russ Greenman**

### **Amazon purchases can support or club**

Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

Log into your Amazon account and Select **Men's Garden Club of Albany**  
Support your favorite charity at no extra cost when you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).

**Please support research for ALS** (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis - Lou Gehrig's disease) in memory of one of our most active members - **Mr. Bill Town**

Click on this link to read his story: <http://community.als.net/teamtown>

Special thanks to **Paul Zimmermann** for our terrific website

<http://www.gardenclubofthecapitaldistrict.org/>

Go ahead - click on it - you'll be glad you did.

Thanks **Paul Zimmermann!!!**

We continue to welcome 501(c)3 deductible donations that can be dedicated to support our **Memorial Garden, Gardening From the Heart program** at the Center for Disability Services, or the **Joe Herman Scholarship Fund**.

Please send your 501(c)3 tax deductible donation to **Russ Greenman** MGCA Treasurer

Please call **Russ Greenman** at (518) 477-8321 for details

### **Membership**

**Dues are Due:** \$25 / member will cover both Local and National memberships.

Ads payments for 2020 are due – published in the DIRT, Website and at public events

Please write checks to: Men's Garden Club of Albany

Mailing address:

Russ Greenman (treasurer)

25 Worthman Lane

Rensselaer, NY 12144

Request for volunteers to interview members for DIRT articles – Our members have had very interesting lives that others could benefit from learning about.

*In Memory  
Of My  
Loving Wife, Young  
Bruce Wilcox*

*In Memory of  
Louis Meo  
&  
Richard Stankus*

*In Memory of  
Al & Barbara Miller  
Dave & Phil Harris  
Bill Barr  
Christian & Mildred Lebrecht  
Ed Tompkins  
Avrom Koblenz*

*In Memory of my parents  
John and Carrie Meagher  
They both loved Plants and Flowers  
Jack Meagher*

*In Memory of  
Grandpa & Great Grandpa  
Carroll W. Greenman  
Russ, Maria, and Carl*

*In Memory of  
Wally Dillenbeck  
and  
Don Otterness  
By Tom Baker*

*In Memory of  
Bill Town  
Joe Herman*

*In Memory of  
my Dad  
Carroll W. Greenman  
Bob*



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