



What's Inside

A ROOM WITH A VIEW..... 1
 MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE 1
 WHAT'S IN BLOOM 2
 EVENTS OF INTEREST 3
 ASK LPI..... 3
 LPI FAMILY NEWS 4

MAINTENANCE CONTRACT CALENDAR

APRIL

- Mow, trim, edge and weed paved areas
- Slow release fertilizer with application of pre-emergent herbicide for regular treat lawns (*weather dependent*)
- Slow release organic fertilizer for organic treat lawns (*weather dependent*)
- Prune and trim bushes
- Clean, weed and edge planting beds
- Annual and perennial flower care
- Plant health care visits, including spraying dogwoods
- Rose care continues (*additional charge*)
- April 6 - Return deadline date for orders for spring and summer annuals

MAY

- Mow, trim, edge & weed paved areas
- Broadleaf and pre-emergent weed control treatments for regular treat lawns (*second application*)
- Inspect lawns for grubs; treat as needed (*additional charge*)
- Prune and trim shrubs
- Clean, weed & edge planting beds
- Annual and perennial flower care
- 1st round of gutter cleaning begins
- Plant health care visits, including inspection & treatment for pests & diseases as needed
- Rose care continues (*additional charge*)

JUNE

- Mow, trim, edge & weed paved areas
- Continued inspection of lawns for grubs; treat as needed (*additional charge*)
- Prune and trim shrubs
- Clean, weed & edge planting beds
- Annual and perennial flower care
- Plant health care visits, including inspection and treatment for pests and diseases as needed
- Rose care continues (*additional charge*)
- 1st round of gutter cleaning completed

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

Many years ago, when my family was planning to move to a house with a kitchen the size of a postage stamp, we concluded that cooking in a room too small for two people to turn around in wasn't a good idea. So we decided to expand the existing kitchen to a space roughly the size of an airplane hangar, and hired a young architect who presented us with a set of bang-up plans.

There was only one problem. No windows on the west-facing wall of the new addition. I was clueless, but my husband was adamant, insisting that there be a window in that wall. Whatever, I thought idly, ruminating about pull-out shelving.

By now you must be wondering why I'm ranting on about this, in a newsletter of all places. The answer is simple. By insisting on a window on the west-facing wall of our new kitchen, my ex ended

up providing me with one of my favorite views of the gardens that surround our house. Of course, back in 1988, when all this was taking place, I wasn't a gardener and could have cared less. But I will be eternally grateful for his persistence.

The view in question is hardly spectacular, but it looks out into both a shady area and beyond it, a sunny one as well, delineated by my wobbly cedar arbor that in past years has served as a home for robins' nests. There are some broken flagstone pavers set in the ground that lead your eye from the inner garden to the outer, through the arbor, and disappear in the distance. In the spring, I see the bank of crimson-pink azaleas and the dogwood in bloom. In summer, the back-lit grasses and tuteurs in the sunny border. In fall, everything is in a lovely, over-the-top state of decline. And in winter - as I write this - the stalks of liatris, coneflowers, salvias and those climbing structures sometimes laced with snow.

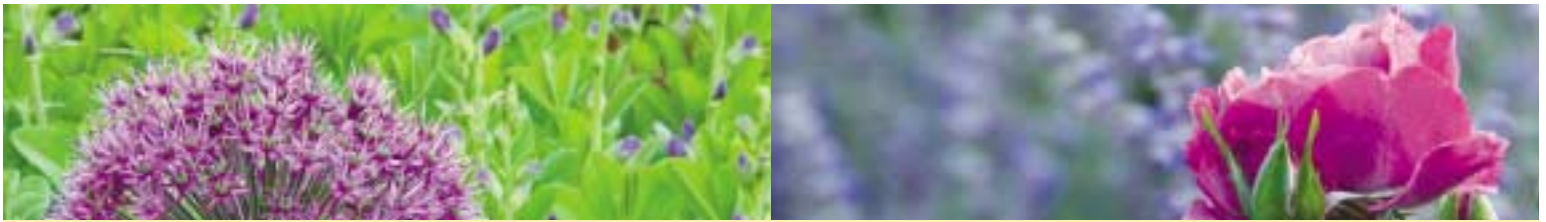
The other rooms of my house that have lovely views are my dining room and the upstairs master bathroom. Just outside the dining room is a magnificent old flowering crabapple (*Malus floribunda*) whose branches are so architecturally arresting that I've never wanted to screen them from view through the bay window, which has no curtains or any other "treatments." Even when it's not in bloom, the sight of this tree



The author's view from her kitchen window in spring.

Continued on page 2





All photos © Melissa Clark unless otherwise noted

Cover story continued from page 1

“All through the long winter, I dream of my garden. On the first day of spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.”

Helen Hayes

is a gift I can't do without. And the view from the “master bathroom” (with its tiny shower and miniscule dimensions) is beautiful because it looks down on my two surviving flowering dogwoods and a lovely, muted shade garden, as well as my neighbor's shaded property.

Every gardener should think about views. Not every room you inhabit will have a stunning view, but many will provide an opportunity to give you a look at something that will lift your spirits, suggest something waiting around the bend, or dazzle you in one or more seasons. When I design for clients, I ask them about important views, but you can do the same for your own spaces. So make sure there are windows where you want them, if you're planning new spaces. If you're working with what you already have, think about what you'd like to see on a daily basis, even if it's only a lovely curved shape of a bed or a tree or shrub that's striking in two or three (or four) seasons. And you'll have what I have - a room (or two) with a view.

Melissa Clark, APLD

WHAT'S IN BLOOM IN OUR LANDSCAPES

Spring is a feverish riot of color, welcome to everyone after the subdued hues and quiet landscapes of winter. Shouldn't I be writing about glorious bulbs, roses, flowering dogwoods or clematis for this issue? Well, there will be other chances to sing their praises. This time, however, I'm going for a plant that is a lovely little workhorse in my garden. While it earns its keep year-round, in the spring its blooms, especially where it's planted en masse, are a wonder to behold.

Ladies and gentlemen, behold the self-effacing but infinitely valuable Epimedium (whose common name is the dull-sounding ‘barrenwort’). Allen Armitage, the renowned perennials expert, terms it “a genus whose time has come with plenty of attributes and very few faults.” They are used as woodland groundcovers in light shade, thriving where they have good drainage and humus-enriched soil. Clump-forming, not running, they can be slow to establish. Some varieties are semi-evergreen in our area. While they can tolerate dry shade better than most plants, they will flourish in evenly moist soil. I have a number of clumps of Epimedium ‘Lilafee’ (see photo) as a groundcover under a Japanese snowbell tree in my back yard. This area gets watered by hand only during times of drought, but the epimediums have thrived.

Some varieties have yellow flowers (‘Sulphureum’), others pink or white. ‘Lilafee’ has lavender and white flowers; like its cousins, the blossoms look a bit like columbine. Clip the winter-damaged foliage to the ground in early spring so you won't miss the show when the plants bloom. If you want extras, divide established clumps in the spring, after the flowers are done.

Melissa Clark, APLD



Epimedium ‘Lilafee’ in bloom in April

REMEMBER
that orders for spring and summer annuals are due by April 6th. Please contact us if you have any questions about your orders. Thanks!





Ask LPI

EVENTS OF INTEREST IN THE AREA APRIL–JUNE, 2009

GREEN SPRING GARDENS

Growing Wildflowers

Saturday, April 18, 10 – 11a.m.

Virginia is famous for its spring wildflower displays, from trout lilies to bluebells and more. Witness the glory of these beauties in the Native Plant Garden. Learn their names, how to incorporate these beauties into your garden design, and which ones to use in replacing exotic invasives. \$12

Workshop: Propagating Woody Plants

Saturday, May 30, 9:30 – 11 a.m.

Increase the number of your cherished woody plants without visiting a nursery. Work alongside Mary Frogale, Green Spring's propagator, to learn a new skill. She demonstrates several propagation techniques for ornamental woody plants and provides you with a small part of Green Spring to take home. \$28

BROOKSIDE GARDENS

The Advanced Shade Gardener

*Wednesday, June 10, 10 am to Noon,
McCrillis Gardens*

Remember when gardening in the shade meant little more than planting hostas? These days, nurseries offer myriad herbaceous and woody species to enhance shady areas. Take a leisurely walk at McCrillis Gardens and enjoy the broad selection of plants available to the shade gardener.

Fee: \$5; registration required
McCrillis Gardens. For directions,
call (301) 962-1455.

US BOTANIC GARDEN

Lecture: Moving Toward Native

Friday, April 10, 12-1 pm

How do we integrate native plants into the designed landscape? A new age of planting design is upon us with a need to reduce negative human impact on the environment. By using more native plants we will decrease the need for watering, maintenance, and fertilizers, and increase the diversity of plants, animal habitat, and the return of bees, birds and butterflies. Sandra Clinton, of Clinton & Associates,

ASK LPI

Dear LPI: Last year I planted a large holly tree in my yard for winter interest. However, to my disappointment, it produced no berries this winter, although it looks healthy. What's wrong?

Answer: Garden owners are often surprised when the American holly they buy for their garden establishes itself in their yard like a champion but never berries. There are a number of possible reasons for this phenomenon. First, the plant may not get enough sunlight to grow fruit (did you plant it in a shady spot?) Second, soil, pest or water issues could be adversely affecting the tree. Third, an untimely frost or freeze could have damaged flowers so the tree did not set fruit. Each of these problems can be rectified or are one-time issues. There is another explanation, however: you may have planted a male holly that does not produce berries, or a female that can set fruit only if there is a male "mate" in its vicinity. Many species of the holly family (Ilex) are "gendered" - the male plant flowers,

producing only pollen, while the female's flowers (once fertilized) produce berries.

The holly family includes a number of species which are "gendered." For example, the Verticillata group includes a number of female cultivars, such as 'Sparkleberry' or 'Red Sprite,' which can be fertilized by certain male lines ('Apollo' will fertilize either of the two female cultivars just listed). Male pollinators broadcast their pollen to the wind so you need relatively few of them to get good berry production. Using "gendered" plants is a good way to get and maintain genetic variety while keeping seed production up. Have room for only one holly tree but still want berries? Go with a variety like a Foster holly (Ilex x attenuata 'Foster No. 2'), which has male and female flowers on the same plant, insuring good berry set on its own.

Scott Jenkins, Plant Procurement Specialist

"To garden is to harness time."

Penelope Lively, The Letter

will discuss integrating native plants into the designed landscape followed by a description of her favorite native plants for the Mid-Atlantic Region. Fee: \$10 (\$5 for Friends). Registration required.

NATIONAL ARBORETUM

Friends of the National Arboretum Garden Fair and Plant Sale

*April 24, Members-only day
(Friends of the National Arboretum)*

April 25, 9:00am-4:00pm

All types of garden supplies for all types of gardeners are on hand at the annual Garden Fair. You'll find unusual plants, tents full of garden supplies, live family entertainment, and food vendors. National Arboretum staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer all of your garden questions. Free.

GREEN SPRING GARDENS

4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, VA.
Phone (703) 642-5173

BROOKSIDE GARDENS

1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton MD, 20902.
(301) 962-1400.

US BOTANIC GARDEN

100 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC
(202) 225-8333

US NATIONAL ARBORETUM

3501 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, D. C. 20002-1958
(202) 245-2726





What's Inside

A ROOM WITH A VIEW.....	1
MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE	1
WHAT'S IN BLOOM	2
EVENTS OF INTEREST	3
ASK LPI.....	3
LPI FAMILY NEWS	4

CONGRATULATIONS to the Rayamajhi-Abert and Mostrom families! Both have had new additions since our last newsletter. On January 12, 2009, Tejas Rayamajhi Abert arrived to Kripa and Michael's family, joining his brother Shrey (who is now two years old). Tejas weighed 7 lbs., 13-1/2 oz. and is reportedly a good sleeper already. The



Tejas Rayamajhi Abert



Dustin Field Mostrom

Mostroms welcomed their third child, Dustin Field Mostrom, on February 21st, weighing 8 lb. 10 oz. Mark and Vicky Mostrom say their other two children, Ashley and Carter, are helping out and everyone in both families is doing fine.

