



## ***The Perennial***

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***March 2021***

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2020-21: Issue 6

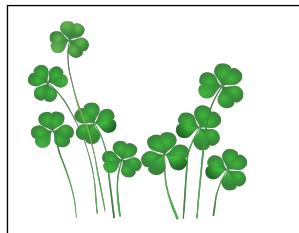
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Website: <[ArlingtonGarden.org](http://ArlingtonGarden.org)>

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Facebook: [m.facebook.com/arlingtongardenclubma](https://m.facebook.com/arlingtongardenclubma)

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***Spring is in the air***



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**March Program – Wed., March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – 10:30 am**  
*via Zoom (Zoom link will be sent a few days before the program.)*

### **“Water is Life: The Mystic River Watershed”**

Marian Miller, Education Program Manager

The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) is an environmental organization based in Arlington, which works for a vibrant, healthy and resilient Mystic River watershed for the benefit of all our community

members. Protecting water quality, restoring important habitat, building climate resilience, transforming parks and paths, and inspiring youth and community members.

Learn about some of MyRWA's initiatives that impact Arlington, including, park, plant and garden-based strategies to reduce flooding and stormwater pollution which you might have seen around town.

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## **April Program – Wed., April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – 10:30 am**

*Probably via Zoom – but maybe not: Stay Tuned!*

***Jen Kettell – ‘Pruning’***

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### **February’s Program Recap**

Some links from Charlotte Milan’s & Rachel Oliveri’s presentation

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#### **Two places to donate household goods:**

- [Householdgoods](#) Acton - currently closed for donations though
- [Restoration Project](#) – Pleasant St., Belmont (just over the Arlington line)

#### **Food scraps / composting:**

- Backyard compost bins for sale, only \$25 for Arlington residents
- 4 private companies are permitted to haul food scraps in Town: Black Earth Compost, Bootstrap Compost, City Compost, and Garbage to Garden. [DPW website](#) has details.

#### **Textile recycling scraps / composting:**

- Support Arlington Public Schools by donating your textiles at any of the Town’s elementary schools or the Ottoson Middle School. Bins are located outside the buildings and can be accessed 24/7.
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#### **Art & Recycling: Art installation on the Minuteman Bikeway**

The one-year installation is called "Persistence: A Community Responds to Pervasive Plastic." The components of the "plarn" sculptures were single-use plastic bags crocheted by numerous community members. Artist-in-Resident Michelle Lougee partnered with the Fox Library and several recycling/environmental organizations.

#### **More info & photos :**

[Persistence video](#)

## **GreenBags**

**Stephan Miller, Environment Chair**

I love dahlias. I have been growing them for years and years, but I have a problem with their culture: storing them over the winter. Over the years, I have tried different methods of storing the tubers, and none of them were totally satisfactory.



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One reason I like dahlias so much is that they bloom right up until frost. I take them to be admirable role models. The day after the first hard frost, I dig up the tubers, cut the stems off and lay them on the ground to dry. After few hours or the next day, if there is no frost, I wash off the excess soil and let them dry again indoors.

Now comes the problem: how to keep them plump

and healthy over the winter. I have a few books on dahlias, all of which recommend storage in moist sawdust or peat moss inside a paper shopping bag. When they say moist, they mean very slightly moist. If the peat moss is too wet, the tubers will quickly rot. After several winters of reducing the moisture and ending up with rotten tubers and soggy bags in the spring, I sought out the advice of an Englishman friend who grows dahlias in great profusion every summer.

His advice was to store them dry in sealed paper bags. Last year, I tried that. In the spring I opened the bags to find the tubers were very hard and dehydrated. My friend told me to plant them and they would grow. Well, about 50% of them grew and not very well at first. At this point, I decided that I would forget about storing the tubers over the winter and just buy new ones each spring.

Last summer, as I was sneaking around on the Town Hall Gardening

Brigade, I overheard Patsy Kraemer talking about using [Green Bags](#) for storing produce. These are plastic bags that are just porous enough to allow the produce to breathe but not dry out. (Similar to these, for which the writer does not receive any remuneration.)

I grow root crops every year and have always had the same problem storing them as I have had with the dahlia tubers so, in the autumn, I harvested my beets, carrots and parsnips and put them in GreenBags for storage. Wow! They lasted until January, at which point we had consumed them all.

This year, when it came time to harvest the dahlia tubers, I had a brainstorm: Why not try and store them in GreenBags this winter? I did my usual harvesting and washing, but when they dried, I sealed them in GreenBags and put them in the garage for winter storage. Our garage is under the house and the temperature within it doesn't usually drop below freezing. On particularly cold nights, I bring the tubers into the

basement if I can remember, though they are okay even at temperatures slightly below freezing.

I usually do a mid-winter check of all the stored bulbs and tubers at the end of February. If they appear to be dehydrated, I moisten them a bit. It never worked for the dahlias. This year I was delighted to find the dahlia tubers, stored in GreenBags, looking just the same as they did when I stored them in late October. In all my years of killing dahlias, I have never seen this. These results are preliminary because there are two months left before the tubers get planted, but I'm going to stick my neck out and project that they will probably be just fine in the spring.





## ***Remembering Books in Bloom .... Bringing hope!***



*Whose Garden is It?*

*Designer - Jan Ford*



*DC Women's March*

*Designer - Gerri Ritchie*



*Book of Tea*

*Designer - Fritzi Galley*

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## ***Members' Corner*** – Welcome to a returning member:

Victoria Ford

