



# NEWSLETTER

## Bucks Beautiful: A 2021 Perspective

As we enter the last quarter of 2021, it's the perfect time to give thanks for all that we have accomplished through a very challenging year. With Covid restrictions continuing, and the many uncertainties that we face for the unforeseeable future, we are indebted to the on-going community support that has kept Bucks Beautiful strong. We are most grateful for the contributions from our 200+ Charter Members, a program launched earlier this year which continues to grow. Your commitment to our mission, and passion for enhancing the Bucks County landscape, will take us well into 2022 and beyond—**thank you!**



### Some Recent Successes:

- We planted an additional 40,000 Bulbs for Bucks throughout the County including 10,000 at Kutz Elementary School in Doylestown. This “Daffodils for Dominic” event, honoring a student who lost his battle with cancer, featured students, family and friends hand-planting 500 bulbs around the flagpole.
- New locations for bulb and native tree plantings are continuously in the works.
- We partnered with Delaware Valley University (DVU) to offer Bucks Beautiful members a 10% discount off tuition for classes in Continuing Learning in Retirement (CLR).
- Bucks Beautiful sponsored a “plant swap” at DVU, which encouraged new gardeners to engage and learn from seasoned gardeners. This well attended event will be repeated in the future.
- Enhancements to our website include a purchase feature to order daffodils for home gardens or to give as gifts. Please visit: [bucksbeautiful.org](https://bucksbeautiful.org) for more on gift items and membership options.

As we continue to advance our mission, the team is busy exploring ways to expand our current programs and to evolve with new ones.

Sadly, this year we lost two of our dedicated Board Members: Bob Byers, Sr. our Founder and Benefactor and most recently, Bill MacDowell, a long-time member and champion of Bucks Beautiful. Never forgotten, their legacies live on.

I wish to express sincere gratitude for each of our members, business sponsors, board members and friends for their generosity. Without you we would not be here! Your continued support into 2022 is vital to our efforts to positively impact all of Bucks County.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!

Gary Mathern  
President, Bucks Beautiful

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## Bucks Beautiful Beginnings: Garden Fairs

by Bryce Sanders, Board Member

"The garden fairs! They were so good!" Many long time Bucks County residents share that sentiment. How did they come about? The story begins in the early 2000's and ran for 12 years. In 2001 several Bucks County landscapers and nurseries were exhibiting annually at the Philadelphia Flower Show. They would create entire gardens in their defined area at the show. Bucks Beautiful board member Chuck Gale and other exhibitors had an idea: "If we have all this plant material on display and it's too early to plant, why not recreate the garden show exhibits in Bucks County!"

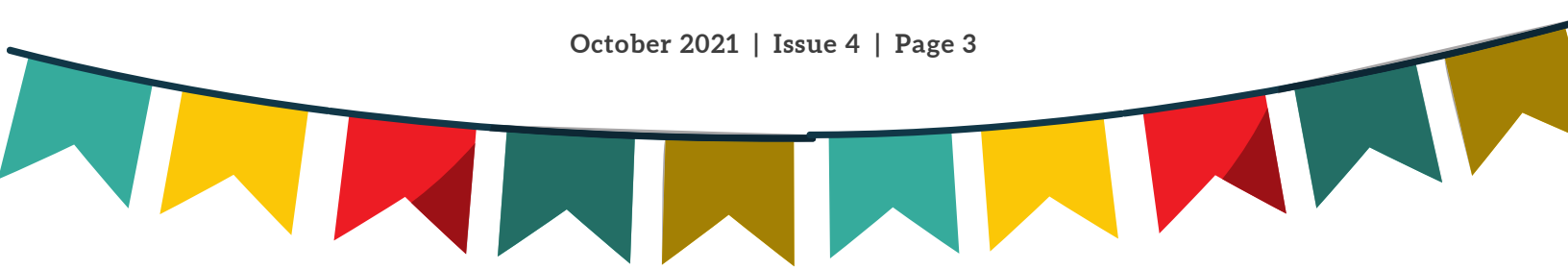
The Bucks Beautiful Garden Fair was born. It took place at Delaware Valley University. They had ample space in their gymnasium. The garden exhibits were dismantled after the Philadelphia show, shipped to DelVal, and reassembled. These major exhibitions were supplemented with exhibitor booths from local garden centers, equipment companies, garden clubs, and other environmental organizations.

The show grew in popularity, attracting 2,000+ visitors in a single weekend. It expanded into tented space to accommodate lectures on various aspects of gardening. Renowned in their fields, Board members and presenters Chuck Gale, Carter van Dyke, and Renny Reynolds were local favorites. Other noteworthy speaker were Tom Silva and Roger Cook from This Old House, Mike McGrath from Rodale Press and Roger Swain from The Victory Garden, all presented to packed audiences. The space was also used for The Master Gardeners Studio gardening workshops on topics from propagation and composting to attracting bluebirds to your garden. The Bucks Beautiful tent was provided by the Fermier family at Bucks Mont Party Rental.

The garden fair had it's share of challenges and humorous stories. Chuck Gale explained how unlike a Philadelphia exhibition space, the gymnasium at DelVal wasn't designed with large doorways. The largest opening was a set of double doors, about 8x8 feet. All the exhibitors needed to get their trees, shrubs, hundreds of plants, and pallets of paving stone through that one opening! In Bucks County style, everyone was gracious and accommodation to other exhibitors.

Now it's time for the Curious Case of the Donated Hot Dogs. As the Garden Fair gained in popularity, Wegmans of Warrington donated a huge quantity of hot dogs and buns. Now the Garden Fair could offer free hot dogs. *Cont...*





This was incorporated in the publicity, which went out through The Intelligencer, The Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce magazine W4, New Hope Gazette and other area publications. It succeeded beyond anyone's expectations! It seemed every parent and child in the County turned up! The almost unlimited supply of hot dogs was gone by 11:00 AM!

The families enjoyed events such as the elementary school children's floral competition and the Gardening with Kids popular hands-on workshop where every child got to take home their completed project.

The Garden Fair added an after-hours gala. Bob and Joyce Byers, co-founders of Bucks Beautiful sought a way to thank the many exhibitors and volunteers who made the event possible. They decided on a casual dress gala, with guests encouraged to wear gardening attire. The event had a nominal cost to cover the food and setup expenses. The informal evening event had many vendors donating items for a successful live auction. Eventually this evolved into the Bucks Beautiful Spring Fling, still our most important annual event fundraiser. But that's a story for the next newsletter.

**Order online**  
**[bucksbeautiful.org](http://bucksbeautiful.org)**  
**215-340-3639**

***Bulbs for Bucks***

*Fall is for  
planting  
daffodils*

**EB**  
**BUCKS BEAUTIFUL**

***Fundraiser***



# Introducing "Bucks Beautiful Bits"

by Denise Sezack, Executive Director

We're happy to announce an addition to our educational program. Introducing Melissa Palmer, an enthusiastic gardener and florist by trade, who will spearhead a fun educational offering for all.

Melissa is a floral instructor at Longwood Gardens, as well as a frequent speaker at the Philadelphia Flower Show. She has lectured at Delaware Valley University for our partners, the Henry Schmeider Arboretum and the Center for Learning in Retirement (CLR). She also teaches classes on beneficial insects specializing in Mason Bees at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Additionally, Melissa is a Master Gardener (Mercer County) and a Master Beekeeper trained in British Columbia.

Throughout the year Melissa will be broadcasting brief "Bucks Beautiful Bits." These short clips will highlight memorable moments with people, places and plants unique to our area.

Melissa will report on the wonderful work Bucks Beautiful, and our partners are doing to beautify Bucks County. Throughout the year Melissa will introduce us to the fascinating members of our community, fun public and private places to visit, and share great gardening tips.



*Melissa Palmer*





# Fall Foraging

## by Melissa Palmer

"A walk in the woods" with my husband always turns into some kind of adventure, where I inevitably end up collecting all sorts of treasures seemingly just waiting for me. I declare that "I'm sure to use all of my objects in some kind of project," whether in a craft, floral design or even a nature dye pot!

I believe we all have a little Forager within us. Who hasn't walked the beach to find the most perfect shell or sea glass, then placed in our pocket to bring home as a fond reminder?

As a Forager for nature's gifts, one never stops noticing their surroundings. Roadside finds are also on my radar, where I'm always scouting areas of fun flora. A highway median with a perfect plot of *Chasmanthium* (Northern Sea Oats) needing pruning, or an exit ramp with a big bush of *Celastrus Scandens* (Bittersweet) begging for inclusion in a floral design. I've discovered the best trees, such as an ancient Sycamore behind a church that drops the most amazing leaves. When I return each Fall to collect her leaves, no matter how early in the morning, the groundskeeper appears to say that I should work for him, and next time to bring a rake!



"Standing at the edge of the woods, toes dipped in,  
I can't help but wonder what adventures await within."  
-Melissa Palmer

Taking the time for quiet walks, hikes or drives during this crazy era is so important. Immersing yourself in nature is therapeutic, especially when you consciously connect with what's around you. The Japanese call it "Forest Bathing," or *shinrin-yoku*, forest bath. What a beautiful way to describe it- bathing in nature. Picking up fallen objects along the way adds to the fun. Maple samaras (also called helicopters or Pinocchio noses) can be made into a lovely dragonfly to place on a branch in an arrangement, or turned into a pin. You can even eat maple samaras - you need to shell quite a few just to get a serving but they taste like lentils.



I hope this article provided a new perspective on the beautiful world outside our door. Go out there and start seeking all of those gems! Use your imagination to create your own treasure.

### Foraging Ground Rules:



Take what has fallen on the ground rather than pick or damage something in nature.



Never take more than you need.



Always know what it is you're collecting (do some research) -to avoid picking something poisonous.



DO NOT EAT anything if you do not know what it is. Common sense is key.



## Board Member Spotlight: Tom Hebel

by Bryce Sanders, Board Member



“Everyone loves to listen to a band that loves to play.” The same sentiment applies to Tom Hebel and the Bucks Country Gardens experience he created over 40 years ago. More about that later.

The president of Bucks Country Gardens has been an avid supporter of Bucks Beautiful since the Garden Fairs at Delaware Valley University. Since many nurseries exhibited at the Philadelphia Flower Show, Bucks Beautiful came up with the idea of staging a local version of the show the week following its famous sibling. Transporting twenty-foot flowering trees from the Philadelphia exhibition to the Bucks County venue proved a challenge but the crowds loved the finished product. Just as the Olympics inspires regular people to become more athletic, the Garden Fair, through its lectures and presentations inspired people to give their home gardens more attention. Tom organized lectures and presented. He was hooked.

Tom served as president of Bucks Beautiful's board and helped guide the organization through a series of community beautification programs. The effort to build community gardens led to the daffodil plantings and the replanting of trees as the ash bore blight was spreading.

Once people find their green thumbs, they need plant material, tools and knowledge. Tom envisioned Bucks Country Gardens as a lifestyle garden center. People shop in department stores for clothing and supermarkets for food, why not a business organized into departments, providing a vision of how your dream garde could come



together. Annual and perennial plants are the first step. You need trees and bushes too. The garden might need a patio, so paving enters the picture. Next is outdoor furniture, cushions and lighting. Even linens and tableware. This “gardening department store” becomes a shopping destination. When the pandemic lockdown eased, customers came up to Tom to say how much they missed visiting Bucks Country Gardens.

Who are these customers? Many are Baby Boomers who own properties with gardens. The pandemic lockdown kept people at home and got many thinking about improving their outdoor space as a garden and entertaining venue. Tom looks to the next generation, the “Baby Boomer’s kids” as people who are starting to appreciate outdoor space. Since many might be living in apartments or condos with balconies, Tom sees a need for small space gardens. A bistro table and chairs plus a container garden can transform a balcony into a garden room.





Tom credits the success and appeal of Bucks Country Gardens to his team. Many have joined the firm and stayed for decades. As a result, they make a combined wealth of knowledge available to the curious customer. Someone interested in growing tomatoes wants to know what does best in our climate, but also the best varieties within that category. For this reason, Bucks Country Gardens buys its plants from multiple suppliers who are best in their specialty category. There's always something new available at Bucks Country Gardens.

Tom realizes running a garden center is very different from running an online business. Customers are local people who come into the center and walk out with plants. Because his success was built within the community, Tom sees that Bucks Country Gardens gives back to the community. They are involved with the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce, The Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown Hospital, The Heritage Conservancy, the Central Bucks YMCA, Bucks Beautiful and many other organizations.

Tom is also a leader within his industry, attending and leading conference, workshops and encouraging the sharing of best practices among garden centers. He feels he can learn from everyone.

Bucks Country Gardens has been a supporter of Bucks Beautiful for decades. See for yourself what makes them so popular, at [www.buckscountrygardens.com](http://www.buckscountrygardens.com) or in person!





# Welcome to our newest Charter Members!

Adams Orthodontics  
Ann A. Albence  
Amy Asselta  
Shirley G. Barclay  
Christopher Beadling  
Beauty Marx Aesthetic MedSpa  
Diane Belanger  
Andrea Berenstein  
Karen and Justina Bernard  
Laura Brandt  
Kathryn Brown  
Bucks County Biotechnology Center  
Bucks County Historical Society  
Bugajewski Facility Services  
Jeff, Dawn, Ashlyn and Jake Byers  
Anthony and Amy Canike  
Carter van Dyke Associates  
Sharon Curran & Jeff Kinzer  
Michael, Alison, Madison and McKenzie  
Dalewitz  
Craig Debernardis  
Linda, ThiXuan and Elizabeth DeCaprio  
Eiseman Roofing Inc.  
Nancy Fluharty  
Fred Beans Automotive Group  
Furia Rubel Communications, Inc.  
Shelby Gaudio  
Karl and Mary Jo Gimber  
Nancy Halpin  
Nancy Hickman  
Michael and Karen Hrabowski  
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Lexi Islinger  
Jarrett Vaughan Builders Inc.  
Janice Jacobs  
Susan E. Kane  
Kellet Landscaping  
Sharon Killough  
Melissa Klipp  
Kurt and Meghan Krause  
Fawn Learn  
Marie Francois-Lewis  
Bill, Jane, Anne, Doug, Marianne and  
Ned MacDowell

Kathleen MacLean  
Cam Maio  
Malmark Inc.  
Maria's House Montessori, Inc.  
Stephen McGill  
Michael and Sarah McCafferty  
McCaffrey's Markets  
Anita McFadden  
Dale and Jane Meier  
Page Morahan  
Michael Mullens  
Jim and LeeAnn Neumann  
Donald and Joan Parlee  
Peddler's Village  
Philautia Flowers  
Graham and Linnea Philip  
Karen Pirrone  
Martin Quigley  
Camille Rainiero  
Rose Randa  
Renny Reynolds  
Jean Rollo  
Rosamond Ryan and Jeff Cogshall  
Larry, Debbie, Liz, Emily and Lisa Schorr  
Frank and Patricia Schuman  
Seasons Garden Center  
Charles and Donna Shaw  
Claire E. Shaw and Michelle Smith  
Maryann Siemers  
Neal and Virginia Sigety  
Vicki Szilagyi  
Larry and Linda Smith  
Beth Snyder, DMD & Associates  
Sterling Drive Ventures  
Kelly Stratton and Hayden Janssen  
Pat Tagliolini  
Dorothy M. Weiss and Henry Friedberger  
David and Jean Weston  
Maureen Wheatley and Mark R. Cosgrove  
Monica Williams  
YMCA of Bucks County  
Ruth Zeiner  
Dorothy Zelesko



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