



NEWSLETTER

Come Rain or Shine, the Show Went on!

On behalf of Bucks Beautiful's Board of Directors and Staff, I want to wish all of you a very Happy Summer.

While the season kicked off with less than summer-like weather, our annual **Kitchen and Garden Tour**, did not disappoint! In spite of the gray skies and periodic drizzle, on June 12 we welcomed over 800 visitors to 6 unique venues throughout the County. A special thanks to the gracious homeowners who opened their properties to support this event--from magnificent estates to hidden gems, all creatively designed to highlight gardens, landscapes and stunning interiors. We are also grateful to our attendees, sponsors, volunteers, and of course our staff who always go above and beyond - each of you contributed to another triumphant event!

Our guests came away with fresh ideas and inspiration to implement in their own private spaces.

As the first half of 2022 draws to a close, due to the success of our premier events - the Spring Fling Gala (returning after a 2-year pandemic hiatus) and Kitchen and Garden Tour - we have the financial support to continue our projects and programs through the remainder of the year.

Daffodil bulb and tree plantings are on schedule as well as many educational programs. Stay tuned for progress updates.

We're also thrilled to announce that our **Membership has reached a new milestone - we have exceeded 300 members!**

Be assured that we are continuously pursuing ways to expand our reach with new initiatives, some in development, others on the drawing board. Remember, ideas are always welcome.

We extend our sincerest thanks to all of our members and supporters as we advance our mission of beautifying Bucks County. Because of you, we exist!

Have a wonderful summer season!

Sincerely,

Gary Mathern
President, Board of Directors



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Why There is New Hope for Your Garden

by Bryce Sanders

Were you on the June Kitchen & Garden Tour? You might have overheard someone saying, “My garden will never look this good.” The Tour is an inspirational event. Before we talk about gardens, let’s talk about the Olympics. It’s been said people who watch the Olympic games are inspired to exercise more often and get more involved in sports. They are inspirational.

Let’s assume your garden is not perfect and has its share of issues. Here are my takeaways from the Tour that most of us can apply to our own properties:

It’s relevant. You are seeing how someone with your soil and climate achieved success in a similar environment. You aren’t wondering why plants that thrive in sunny Southern Italy are struggling in Bucks County winters.

You have the space. You do not live in a high-rise apartment with no outside space in the city. You have soil and grass that could look it’s best if it had the right plants and some attention.

Hire a pro. Skip the process of trial and error to build the perfect garden. Hire a firm to design it, another to build it and a third to maintain it, if you prefer not to be hands on afterwards. This can often be one firm, who deliver what’s called DBM.

Coexist with deer. They are often considered a nuisance (you live in Bucks County -the clue is in the name). They consider your hostas their salad bar. They stand in your garden and stare, as if saying “What are you looking at?” What can you do? You can learn from homeowners, master gardeners and landscaping professionals what plants are deer resistant. Discover which treatments discourage deer, and how netting and fencing can protect your plants.

Grow the right plants. You might think plants struggle in your soil. Maybe they do, but perhaps you are planting the wrong varieties. Learn from homeowners and onsite experts what plants are best for your property.

Maybe you have the wrong soil. There may be an unexpected solution to plants that struggle. Dig out your flowerbed and replace the soil. Your preferred plants might flourish.



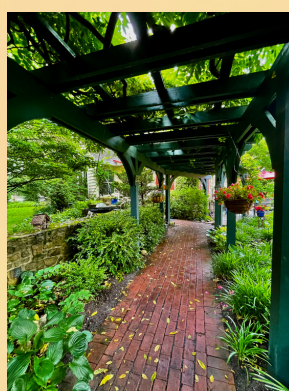
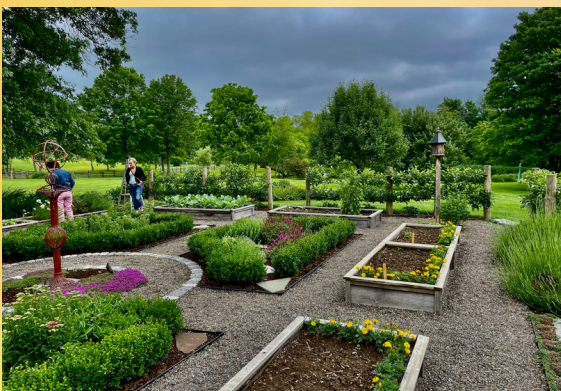


Consider containers. Maybe you do not have that much space. Perhaps your outdoor space is a deck or patio. Consider container gardening. You have the advantage of moving your plants from place to place to find the perfect exposure.

Are you planting properly? You may think you dig a hole, take the plant out of its pot, squeeze it into the hole and pile dirt around it. Then you wonder why the plant didn't make it through the winter. On the garden tour you can meet experts who can advise you on how to plant and feed a tree or bush, so it survives and thrives.

Do a little at a time. You walk through a beautiful garden. Every corner looks perfect. You think of your own garden. The project seems overwhelming. No one said everything needs to be done entirely and immediately. Start off with a small, defined space that is manageable. Put in the work to make that section look great. The praise you get from your friends will encourage you to define a second area and make it look great too. Gradually, your entire garden is transformed.

Some people are discouraged when they see other people's gardens. Others are inspired and encouraged. Take away lessons and apply them in your own garden. You've heard the old saying, *the greatest journey begins with a single step.*





Business Member Spotlight

by Bryce Sanders



The Fred Beans Family of Dealerships is one of Bucks Beautiful's first charter members, but their connection to our organization started decades earlier. Beth Beans Gilbert, Vice President, explained how Fred Beans has always believed in making the extra effort to keep their business properties looking attractive. When our co-founder Bob Byers saw their Langhorne dealership, he was impressed with their beautification of an otherwise commercial and industrial neighborhood. The Fred Beans family of dealerships won one of our early garden competition awards. Bob realized people who took beautifying their business property so seriously needed to be involved with Bucks Beautiful.

Perhaps you are wondering about the origin story. How did a group with 23 dealerships, six collision centers, a car rental business and the largest Ford auto parts wholesaler dealership in PA get started? Fred Beans graduated from high school in 1957 and decided his love for cars was greater than his interest in farm machinery. Two years later, his mother cosigned a \$ 5,500 bank loan so that he could purchase a gas station. The car dealership business at the time was primarily built on established relationships. He and Bill Marsh connected in the early 1970's. Their Ford dealership was joined by a Subaru dealership and the company grew and grew.

Fred Beans and his family understood the importance of giving back to the community that made his business possible. The company is committed to the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) in Pennsylvania and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC). Both are scholarship programs. They are substantial donors to the Central Bucks Y, Lower Bucks Y and the Doylestown Hospital. Their charitable giving focus embraces arts, culture, education, health and wellness.

What makes the Fred Beans Family of Dealerships stand apart? It's a family-owned business local to our area. People interested in buying a car can often speak directly with a family member. They have an intensive hiring process. They also have a program where new car buyers earn points which convert into dollars used for charitable donations, facilitated through their donations committee. This family-owned firm helps their customers give back to the community.



To learn more about all that this altruistic company has to offer please visit www.fredbeans.com.

Beth Beans Gilbert
Vice President of Fred Beans Automotive Group



Tree-mendous Park Project

by Denise Sezack, Executive Director

Though our RePlant Bucks initiative was derailed during the pandemic, we are back on track making steady progress towards our pledge of planting 10,000 new trees across Bucks County. We were pleased to partner with Feeney's Wholesale Nursery and Public Works Director, Eric Hinz and his crew in Buckingham Township to install 50 native maple trees in May at George M. Bush Park. This brings our RePlant Bucks total to 1,618 new trees planted over the last several years.

The variety of maples replaced dozens of ash trees that died due to the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). First detected in Pennsylvania in 2007, the EAB (*Agrilus planipennis*) is a highly destructive wood-boring insect that attacks ash trees. The adult is a flat-headed slender beetle that's elongate dark metallic green, 1/2 inch-long and 1/8 inch-wide with a one or two year life cycle. Once they infest a tree, the foliage in the crown begins to thin because the larval stage destroys the water and nutrient conducting cells and tissues beneath the bark. One-third to one-half of the branches may die in one year, with most of the canopy dead within 2 years.

The scope of work performed by the Buckingham Township crew involved cutting down the dead ash trees and digging up their roots. Once the site was cleared and new holes prepared, the new maples were planted by the crew over the course of a week. The Township requested maples to create a beautiful vista of trees lining the path opposite the gazebo.

The native maples will increase the healthy environment for both Bush Park wildlife and visitors. Creating a healthy habitat for birds and other wildlife is most important as well as providing us with enhanced respiratory health by producing oxygen and improving air quality. Trees draw us to their inviting shade and cool areas for recreation and relaxation - even their green color is calming and relieves eye strain and the stresses of daily living.

To learn more about our mission, or to sponsor a tree, please visit www.bucksbeautiful.org.





Fine Figs

by Melissa Palmer



My earliest memory of a fig was when I was six years old in my Grandmother's kitchen garden. She picked a ripe, brown fig from the tree, handed it to me and said "take a bite." My Grandmother's garden was a small plot next to her Philadelphia row home. It was paradise, an oasis to lose yourself in, and eat anything that was growing on vine or stem.

I remember biting into that fig and the sweetness was amazing. It was warm and juicy and like nothing I had tasted before. From that moment I was hooked on gardening and growing food, and decided I must have a fig tree in my kitchen garden! When I purchased my Brown Turkey Fig Tree, I realized there is much to know about keeping fig trees healthy.

There are over 700 named species of Fig trees but most are useless to the home gardener. The varieties fall into four types; Caprifigs, Smyrna, San Pedro and Common figs. Common Figs, such as my Brown Turkey, are the types usually found in home gardens. They do not need another fig tree to pollinate them. Which means they do not need an insect or wasp to help produce their wonderful treats.

Here is where it gets really interesting! Even though Common Figs don't need insects for pollination, they do require a little help from them. Other species require a special Fig Wasp to pollinate them. Yes, there are unique Fig Wasps that only pollinate that particular Fig species - amazing!



Fig Wasp.

These wasps are so tiny they pretty much go unnoticed. The two species of Fig native to the United States that require their own special wasp are *Ficus Aurea* (Florida Strangler fig) and *Ficus citrifolia* (shortleaf fig also called giant bearded fig or wild banyan tree). Figs have a very small opening that allows a pollinating wasp entry to the internal flowers. These wasps are completely dependent on the fig for sustenance and reproduction: the ingredients for a strong obligate mutualism that directly impacts reproductive success.

A fun fact about figs is that they are not a fruit. They are actually an inflorescence, which is the complete flower head of a plant including stems, stalks, bracts, and flowers. So actually, we eat the flower of the fig tree!

See next page for care tips >

Fig Tree Care

Plant new fig trees outside when they're dormant. The best times are late fall or early spring. While some types do well in cooler temps, most varieties thrive in USDA zones 8 through 10. Please consult your garden center where you are buying your fig tree for any suggestions.

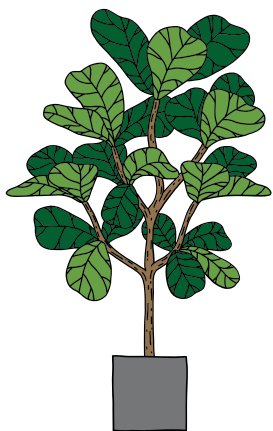
It is essential to keep them safe from cold wind and frosty conditions. Therefore in many zones you'll need to make them portable by growing them in half barrels that can be moved inside a building or garage for their dormant time. Edible figs need about one hundred hours of chilly weather to grow and set fruit. In the case of my Brown Turkey Fig, I trim it down in late fall, then cover it thoroughly until Mother's Day. In hindsight, the moveable pots would have been much easier. But I do love my Fig and will do what it needs to see another season!

Your soil should be loamy, fertile and well drained with a pH balance of approximately 6.0 -6.5. Clay and heavy soil is a death sentence to a fig tree, so be sure to add plenty of compost or well-rotted manure to your soil before planting.

Newly planted trees should be pruned back by about a half- this may seem upsetting, but it will give the young tree the ability to concentrate on establishing strong roots. Your fig will not bear fruit until the second or third year so this early pruning provides a strong start. Pruning every year allows the tree not to grow so big. Covering a large tree like mine can be a task to say the least!

In closing, I encourage you to try something new in your garden that will last for years and give you something back every season. My fig is definitely part of the family and loved.

Suggested Visit: The Fig Man of New Jersey, 329 Old York Road, Flemington NJ 08822. Bill specializes in Fig's grown in pots and is a wonderful source for anyone interested in buying and raising a Fig Tree.



Melissa's mom Claudette harvesting figs.

sarah cornwell

J E W E L R Y

Coneflower Necklace



***10% of proceeds
donated to
Bucks Beautiful***

**Hand crafted in Sarah's
Doylestown Studio, which was
featured along with her home on
this year's Kitchen & Garden Tour.**



Thank You to our Tour Volunteers

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Virginia Wallace-Mele



Watch Video Highlights of the Tour on
Bucks Beautiful's You Tube Channel



*Recommend a Home
for the 2023 Tour!*



Do you have, or know of, a home that you believe would be a grand addition to a future Kitchen & Garden Tour? Here is your opportunity to submit an entry for consideration.

Please email us at info@bucksbeautiful.org with the address and owners name if known. A committee representative will contact you and/or the homeowner to explore interest.



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