



NEWSLETTER

BUILDING ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Bucks Beautiful rounded out 2023 with many noteworthy accomplishments, which inspire our work going forward.

- We provided fifteen **Grants** throughout the year for sustainable plantings including restoration of local native gardens, school programs and community horticultural projects.
- Our trademark **Bulbs For Bucks** program was enhanced with the installation of an additional 20,000 daffodil bulbs. Before long, the welcoming sight of these bright yellow flowers dotting the landscape will signal Spring is near!
- Through our **Replant Bucks** initiative, 102 new native tree species were planted county wide in areas hard hit by storm damage and disease. Partnering with landscapers and community groups, 1830 trees have been installed in 37 locations.
- Our **Membership** Program grew 25% to 415 members. Multiple levels of involvement include Individual, Business and Non-Profits who engage in a number of ways. Benefits can be found on our website- pass this along to friends and colleagues.
- Two new **Directors** joined our Board, Michael Flanagan and Kevin Juchno, each bringing new expertise both professionally and personally to our strong leadership team.
- Bucks Beautiful captured top honors as "**Best Local Cause**" in **Bucks County Herald's Best of Region**, and for the 2nd consecutive year was nominated for "Best Charity" in Bucks Happening's Bucks County Best.

Planning is underway for the 2024 **Spring Fling**, to be held at The Inn at Barley Sheaf on Friday April 19th. Proceeds from the event will benefit our beautification, education and reforestation efforts county-wide. Back by popular demand will be the optional VIP Cocktail Hour. Details are forthcoming, with invites hitting your "inbox" soon. This prelude to Spring is sure to be another sell-out celebration, so RSVP early and bring some friends--reserve a table!

The popular **Kitchen and Garden Tour** fundraiser will take place on June 9th. Last year's Tour drew over 1000 guests to visit impressive properties graciously hosted by their owners. We continue to feature an amazing selection of homes and spectacular gardens gracing the landscapes of Bucks will be featured. Please plan to join us!

We continue to augment our Educational Programs through a new Green Scene Series in partnership with Doylestown Township Parks and Recreation.

All this is only made possible by your involvement and ongoing support. For that, we are most grateful. With your commitment, active participation and support, we will be better positioned to advance our mission and continue to take our beautiful County to the next level!

All the best,

Gary Mathern, President, Board of Directors

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GROWING MINDS AND GREEN THUMBS



Among our favorite projects this past Fall was a student activity day at Afton Elementary School in Yardley, where students helped plant daffodil bulbs on the school grounds. This served as the kickoff project for Afton's Green Team called the Environmental Protectors Club (EPC). Comprised of students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, the Club meets after school every Wednesday to work on ventures to share with others the importance of protecting our environment and conserving our resources.

Students received a lesson on how to plant bulbs properly prior to the planting of the bulbs. The students are excited because only the 30 kids in the club know the bulbs were planted. They are looking forward to the spring when the Afton Community gets to see the plants emerge from the soil. In conjunction with Gale Nurseries' crew, Bucks Beautiful also bedded an additional 2,000 bulbs to beautify the property each year. We can't wait for the dazzling daffodil display to emerge as a Spring surprise!

Photo Credit: Kristin Slota, K-5 Spark Teacher, Afton Elementary



A SEED SHARE GROWS IN BUCKS COUNTY

By Jean Kuhn

The Bucks County Seed Share has its origin in the time-honored gardening practice of saving and sharing seeds. As gardeners know, plants are generative and their seeds stay viable for years when stored properly.

My co-founder, Heather Guidice, and I are both lifelong gardeners who live in Lower Makefield Township. For years, we'd swapped seeds among ourselves and our gardening friends and wondered what it would look like to extend this sharing. That's when the idea for the seed share took root.



In 2021, we set out to establish the Bucks County Seed Share and were inspired by the support and enthusiasm we encountered. Diane Hughes, the head librarian at the Morrisville Free Library, hospitably made room for our seed drawers. Being in a library allowed not only proper humidity and temperature control for the seeds, but also good public access to the resource. Research Librarian Jeannie Kim, who already had a seed program at the Southampton Library, was also a great support to the project, willingly sharing her experiences with us.

Gardening friends and national seed companies donated thousands of seeds to the project. We made binders with information about each seed offered, created labels for all the varieties, and hand stamped the BCSS logo onto each envelope.

Volunteers made packing all of these seeds possible. We were lucky enough to have dedicated home volunteers as well as people who came to our seed packing events.

The Bucks County Seed Share launched on a rainy evening in February, 2022. Over 100 people stood in line and browsed the binder catalogs, waiting their turn to choose their four packs of seeds. In that first year, 2,600 packs of seeds were distributed. The following year, Jeannie Kim invited us to take over the Southampton Library seed program so now the Bucks County Seed Share had two locations. In 2023, output tripled to donate 7,824 packs of seeds to eager gardeners.





BCSS offers four categories of seeds: Annuals, Herbs, Pennsylvania Natives and Vegetables. All of these are open-pollinated seeds which means that they reproduce true-to-type, versus hybrid seeds which revert back to their parent varieties. Because our seeds produce true-to-type, many gardeners harvest and return seeds to the seed share.

In the Spring, we offer a Seed Starting Kit and in December a Winter Sowing Kit. These kits are made of sanitized, recycled containers, include soil and are available while supplies last.

Volunteering is at the heart of the seed share. If you'd like to get involved, come out to one of our seed sorting and packing events.

Donated seeds are always appreciated. Some gardeners share extras from their store-bought packets; others harvest extra seeds from their gardens and share with us that way. If you'd like to contribute the envelopes or labels we use to pack the seeds, contact us. We'd be happy to receive them.

There are many ways to get involved. Last summer, some friends offered their yard to grow out Aji Charapita peppers for the seed share. This allowed the peppers to grow at a proper distance from other peppers and avoid cross-pollination. This tiny, fruity Peruvian pepper packs a heat similar to a cayenne pepper and thanks to these volunteer seed stewards, you can find Aji Charapitas (pictured below) in our 2024 collection.



Ping Zebra Beans donated by Bucks Beautiful Member Nancy Ondra of Hayfield Seeds



Jean Kuhn is cofounder of the Bucks County Seed Share and a lifelong Bucks County gardener. She enjoys inventing, problem-solving, sewing, and building cool stuff. While raising her three sons, Jean was a frequent contributor to *Highlights For Children*, publishing scores of articles for youngsters on how to make their own toys and games using common, often recycled materials.



BCSS Co-Founders Jean Kuhn and Heather Guidice in Morrisville Library

Follow @buckscounty_seedshare on Instagram or Bucks County Seed Share on Facebook.



Supporter Spotlight

by Bryce Sanders,
Membership Chair



Bucks Beautiful is fortunate to have a diverse base of supporters, both on the individual and corporate level. I recently spoke with Dan Townsley, owner of Living Care Home Services.

Who is Living Care Home Services?

Sean Lynch began this caregiving service in 2001, initially operating out of his home. As this family business expanded, they needed additional employees. The business grew by word of mouth -there was no advertising, ever. Today, the first caregiver hired is still there, 22 years later.

In 2023, the original family owners decided it was time to pass the torch. Daniel Townsley and his wife Jennifer, both Doylestown natives, bought the business with the intent of keeping intact the inspiration that grew the business. Instead of becoming part of a national corporate organization, the business remains family owned and operated.



What does Living Care Home Services do?

This local business offers personalized care for clients on their own terms. They provide compassionate professionals who can deliver varying degrees of help dealing with the practical aspects of life as we all get older. Although they cannot physically put medication in a client's mouth, they can do almost everything you can imagine up to that point.

In home care for aging or infirmed clients covers a wide range of options from surgery transition, respite or hospice to lighter assistance. Clients who may have mobility issues might want help going to the grocery store and getting shopping done. They might need help showering, changing clothing or a reminder to take their medication. At the other end of the spectrum, they might be able to do all this for themselves, but are lonely. A client might want someone to visit or play cards with them. Notice how the firm refers to people as clients, not patients.

How does the firm differ from others in the field?

When dealing with a larger firm, you might be presented with a menu of services. You choose one, which may (or may not) meet your needs. Living Care Home Services takes a customized, bespoke approach. Conversations start with "What is it that you need?" They aim to fit their firm to your model instead of you fitting your needs to a provider's model. You might require someone to come into your home for an hour three or four times a week. Someone might need round the clock care. They can tailor their service to meet your conditions.



Caregivers do not simply show up. They are formally introduced before a future assignment, to confirm the client will be comfortable with the caregiver. They never send a person to your home you have not met before, and they would never send a caregiver to your home that they wouldn't send to their own home. It's important to note their phone is answered by a live person, 24 hours a day. There is always someone on call.

The importance of passion.

The purpose of a business is to make money while providing a service, but passion and enthusiasm are important. When The Townsley's decided to leave the corporate world to own their own business, they wanted one that made them feel good. They recognized for the first time in U.S. history, older adults are projected to outnumber children by 2035, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. About 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 years old every single day. As they age, people prefer to live independently as long as possible. Living Care Home Services makes this possible, so they bought the firm. While many look forward to the weekend as a time to "switch off," Dan and Jennifer look to Monday as the day they can resume pursuing their passion.

How did Living Care Home Services get involved with Bucks Beautiful?

Original owner Sean Lynch joined Bucks Beautiful as a business member, having seen the importance of our mission. Daniel and Jennifer, the new owners, agreed to continue this support.

What's the bottom line?

Many of us count ourselves in the "sandwich generation," having cared for our children until they left the nest and started their own lives. In the meantime, our parents have gotten older and now need care. Sometimes we can provide that care ourselves. Other times we need to bring in outside help. When that time comes, you want to know the person standing in your place will be caring and compassionate, regardless of the need at the moment.

Living Care Home Services
875 N. Easton Road, Doylestown
www.livingcarehomeservices.com
215-348-4008



WINTER PRUNING

by Kevin Juchno, Bartlett Tree Experts / Board Member

Pruning trees and shrubs is both a science and an art. From an artistic perspective, a discerning eye is needed to evaluate a plant then determining what (if anything) must be done to achieve the desired appearance. From a scientific perspective, knowing the when, where and how of pruning a plant is equally, if not more, important. However it isn't necessary for a gardener to be an artist or scientist to achieve quality results.

Reasons to Prune: Primarily, it's prudent to remove growth that risks a plant's health, such as dead, diseased, dying and damaged branches. Other benefits include increasing air circulation and sunlight penetration, improve flowering and fruiting, and to prevent storm damage. One may also wish to prune to create a desired shape or remove unwanted growth outside desired perimeter.

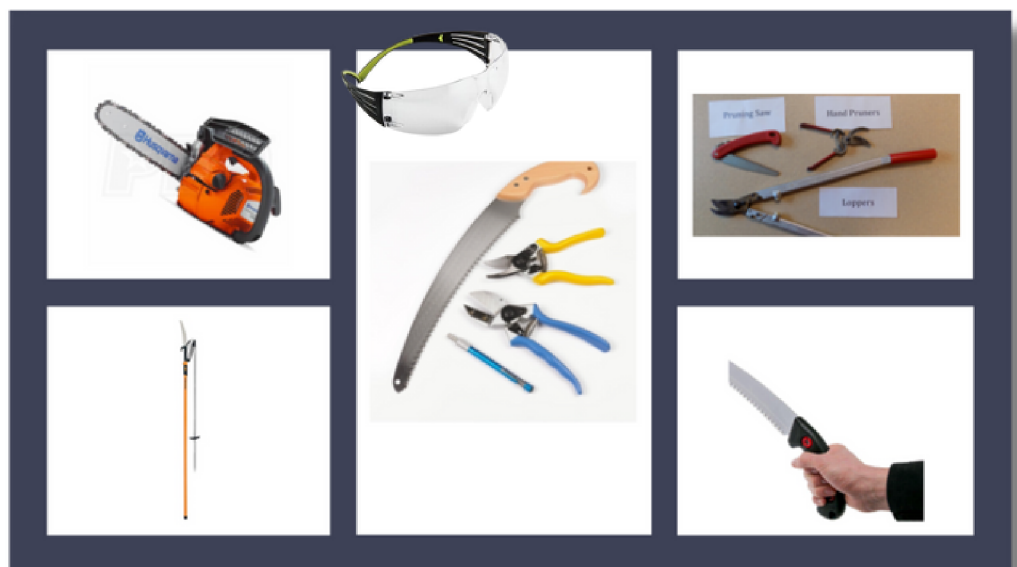
When to Prune: Wintertime is beneficial for disease and insect control. All species of woody plants can be pruned in this season. This can cost you spring blooms but may be necessary for pathogen control. Some species that should only be pruned in the winter include: Oaks, Pears, Apples, Cherries and Elm. Pruning in the Winter also allows you to see the architecture of the tree for structural pruning.

Spring is considered the least desirable time to prune trees as the bark and cambium tissues are easily damaged, and it may stimulate excessive epicormic (water sprout) growth or may reduce tree overall vigor. This can invite early season pathogens and insects into the plants plus cause an excessive amount of bleeding.

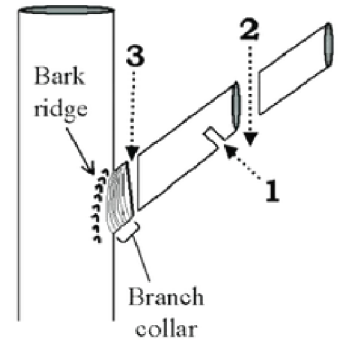
Fall can be a good time to prune late summer bloomers. Other benefits of Fall pruning are that diseases and insects go dormant, and it can be a good time to target fungal issues. This is also an opportune time to prepare for storm damage.

Tools of the Trade: Swiss tools will cost a bit more but are of excellent quality. Kinsman Company makes a blade sharpener that is easy for homeowners to use and reasonably priced. **Safety goggles are a must!**

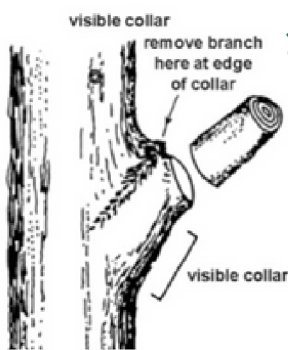
Clean tools after using to prevent spreading disease. Use a 10% bleach solution or at least a 70% concentration rubbing alcohol to spray tools and wipe dry or allow to air dry.



When pruning limbs, a proper cut is made 1-2 inches out from the trunk. The tree can self seal a stub. Avoid making cuts at the branch collar as you may impede the tree's ability to heal itself and you may invite pathogens. When making a heading cut as pictured below, take care to cut back to the node, not in between nodes. Lastly, It's important that you do not cut back to less than a third, or the tree/shrub will grow like a bush. If you're not sure if a branch is live or dead, try bending it - a live branch will bend, while a dead one will snap.



The Three Step Pruning Method is a widely-recognized way to ensure proper closing of pruned wood. The undercut in step 1 (above) is a safety gap measure that prevents the bark from ripping down the trunk. If the bark peels, the tree may suffer decay. The cut in step 2 reduces the bulk of the weight of the limb before the final cut (3) is made.

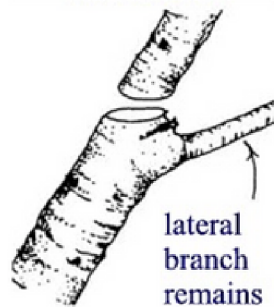


1 How to make a thinning cut

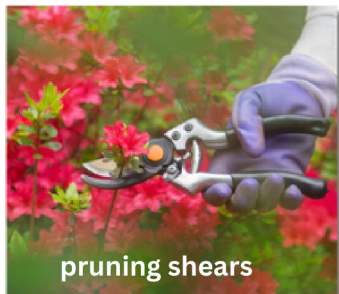
In this illustration, the vertical wood could be either the trunk or a side branch.

Illustration by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida

2. reduction



3. heading



Heading cuts are best for **Azaleas and Hydrangeas**, and one should prune back stems to just above a fat bud. Cut after the blooms are done for the season. With **Boxwoods**, power shears are the worst tool to use as shearing is messy and slowly kills the shrub. Using a long handled lopper to clip is best for the health and structure. When boxwoods get long and leggy it can create separation in the middle, which can be further damaged when it snows and the shrub can't rebound. Therefore it's best to trim wispy long ends.

When to Call a Pro: When the scope seems too big to handle, when working a great height or with large amounts of weight or when ladders could be involved- it may be time to consult a pro. Professionals have specialty equipment, expertise in technique, and knowledge of unique specimens, sick or diseased trees.

Bartlett Tree Experts (215-249-1819) offers complimentary consultations, and can develop a training and maintenance plan for homeowners that wish to prune themselves. They also perform free soil tests and can write a prescription for the appropriate fertilizer.



2nd Annual Member Reception



We had a wonderful time celebrating the support of our Members in November. We're grateful to Tom Hebel, Ryan Hebel and the entire team at *Bucks Country Gardens* for providing the festive venue. Much appreciation for Sue Rushing and *McCaffrey's Simply Fresh* in Doylestown for donating the incredible provisions.

A huge thank you to Bryce and Jane Sanders for bestowing dozens of homemade cookies plus several cases of wine for the event. Finally, our volunteers from the *National Charity League - Central Bucks Chapter* who ensured that everything ran smoothly from beginning to end.





Creature Feature

by Jennifer Finelli, Community Engagement Manager

Just because you haven't seen bees buzzing around your garden recently, doesn't mean they're no longer here. Unlike a number of butterfly species, most notably the monarch, the majority of native bees spend their winters locally in nests. Asters and goldenrods are among some of the most nectar-rich flowers that enable bees to fuel up before winter and build sufficient fat reserves. After the last blooms fade and frost sets in, bees ride out the cold temperatures of winter by entering a state of lower metabolic activity called diapause—much like an animal's hibernation.



*Mining bees (Andrena hirticincta)
on native goldenrod.*

Approximately 70 percent of all bee species nest in the ground—frequently in yards and garden beds. Small carpenter bees, mason bees and leaf cutter bees are among those that carve out their nests inside dry hollow stems and spend the winter there. Once March arrives, the first group of early pollinators begins to emerge. This is a critical period for a number of native plants and tree fruit crops.



Providing adequate winter shelter for the over-wintering bees becomes critical for successful pollination of our fruit trees—hence the persistent mantra of “Leave the Leaves and Save the Stems.”



We're thrilled to be recognized by the community for our efforts. Thank you to all who voted for us!



It's an honor to be nominated in Bucks Happenings' Best of Bucks County competition. Please support us with your vote by February 29th.



Planning is underway for our annual fundraisers. Stay tuned for ticket information. To become an Event Sponsor, please email info@bucksbeautiful.org or call 215-340-3639.

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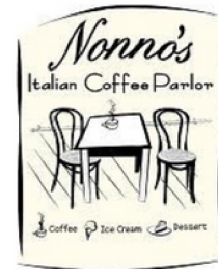


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