



December 2020

Barcroft News

Vol 118, Issue 4

Native Evergreens for Winter Interest

By Elaine Mills, Extension Master Gardener

Winter is a time when we especially look to evergreen plants to provide interest in our gardens. Take a look at several native species which can add beauty to your home landscape while providing support to wildlife.

The familiar berry-like drupes of American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), often used in holiday decorations, remain on this evergreen tree from October into winter on female plants, providing food for 18 bird species. (A male tree is required within 200 feet to assure fruit production.) The 15- to 40-foot tree can be used



Photo by ElaineMills

American Holly (Ilex opaca) is a classic evergreen often used for holiday decorations.

in the garden as a specimen or a tall hedge, providing cover and nesting sites for birds.

A native shrub to consider is Winter-berry (*Ilex verticillata*), a deciduous holly of 6 to 12 feet. Its brilliant fruit matures on female plants from late August to September and decorates the plant into early spring, providing a winter food source for 48 species of birds. An appropriately matched male plant can be grouped with as many as 6 to 10 females within 40 feet. 'Jim Dandy' and his red-fruited mate, 'Red Sprite' can be seen at the main entrance

Continued on page 9

No December Meeting

Mark your calendar for the first meeting of the new year on Thursday, January 7, 2021, 7:30 p.m.



Barcroft News

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President's Message

By Deborah Wood

And now we begin the final month of 2020! November has seen some bright spots, including the news that a vaccine for COVID-19 that has been tested and found to be 90 percent effective. But sadly, rising levels of infection have put the brakes on holiday gatherings, beginning with Thanksgiving. However different or small your Thanksgiving celebrations were this year, I hope they provided the opportunity to appreciate what matters most and makes you thankful.

The Barcroft community continues to pull together to navigate the challenges caused by the pandemic. As I write, the Barcroft PTA is organizing to provide Thanksgiving meals and extras for families suffering financially and emotionally from lost jobs, income, and support networks. The Outdoor Committee of the PTA is seeking the community's help to improve the school yard and make it a better classroom space option for teachers and students. Scott Brinitzer and Barcroft's landscaping committee have taken the opportunity while the Community House is closed to make improvements to the lawn. Thank you to all who have participated in these and other activities, which strengthen our community spirit and cushion the blows brought about by pandemic restrictions.

Continues on page 4

Free Trees from the Tree Canopy Fund

By Deborah Wood

Ecoaction Arlington is taking applications for free trees that will be planted where you specify by Arlington County contractors in Spring 2021. The trees provided are at least two inches in diameter and four to six years old. All of the species available to choose from are large canopy trees. Applications are due by January 8, 2021

Applications are accepted from civic and homeowner associations, community nonprofit organizations, civic service clubs, school-related groups, ad hoc neighborhood

groups, individuals, and places of worship.

For more information, and to see a list of available species, criteria, and instructions on how to apply, go to <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/trees/> or call 703-228-6427. If you would like help selecting the right tree for your space or completing the application, please contact neighborhood Tree Stewards

John Stewart, at johnw.stewart@apsva.us, or Deborah Wood, at wooddeb52@gmail.com or 703 892-1243. •

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Understanding Your Flood Risk in Arlington

Flooding can be the most frequent and costly disaster in a community. The likelihood of flooding changes over time due to erosion, changing land use, changing weather patterns, and other factors. Nobody is exempt from flood risk - where it can rain, it can flood.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of updating flood insurance rate maps (FIRM) for Arlington County. The new maps reflect current flood risk based on the latest data and a more accurate understanding of our area's topography. As a result, property owners throughout Arlington will have up-to-date, Internet-accessible information about flood risk to your property.

There are several ways to view the preliminary FIRM maps on the County's website, including links to FEMA's website: <https://environment.arlingtonva.us/flood-insurance-rate-maps/>. Even if your property is not in the special flood hazard area, you are still strongly recommended to purchase flood insurance. Over a 30-year time period, you are about three times more likely to have a flood in your home than a fire, and most homeowners' insurance policies do not provide coverage for damage due to flooding. To learn more about flood insurance rates and what options are available to you, we recommend that you contact your insurance agent.

An additional resource for property

owners is www.floodsmart.gov, which provides information about the National Flood Insurance Policy (NFIP) and the costs of flood insurance. •

Artful Weekend at Fort C.F. Smith

The Arlington Artists Alliance presents its 18th annual Artful Weekend at Fort C.F. Smith Park. The show, featuring 30 top local Arlington-based artists and held in historic Hendry House at Fort C.F. Smith Park in Arlington, will be held December 4 to 6 this year. The show will feature paintings, ceramics, sculpture, and cards, in addition to bins of unframed works. Artful weekend is a much-anticipated annual Arlington event! Masks and social distancing will be required inside Hendry House. •

President's Message, continued

Continued from page 2

Please remember that although we must stay physically distant, and wear masks when out and about, we are all part of the neighborhood. If you are having a hard time, do not hesitate to reach out to neighbors, the Barcroft School or PTA, the Barcroft School and Civic League, faith communities, or wherever you want to start. You can find someone willing to help, as that is what makes our community strong. Stay safe, and we will continue to get through this! •



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Barcroft Elementary PTA December Update

By Beth Ragnauth

It's hard to believe our young learners have a full quarter of school under their belt already, distance learning style, of course. Halloween arrived, and we couldn't let the occasion pass without some festivity. PTA volunteers assembled small surprise bags with a Halloween-themed bingo card and some treats that students picked up, then opened at their class virtual celebrations on Friday, October 30. Barcroft administrators and some staff welcomed students who came to pick up lunch that day (some in festive costumes) and gave them a little candy treat as well.

Throughout the fall, families have had to keep up with the ever-changing plans for some Arlington Public Schools students to return to the school buildings. A very small number of students with special education needs are learning at school now as part of Phase 1 of APS's plan, which means six Barcroft students are back in our neighborhood school building. No additional students will be back in the classroom until Phase 2 begins, which as of now will be January at the earliest.

Our new Outdoor Committee is pursuing efforts to enhance schoolyard space in ways that will make it more conducive to spending class time outside, this year and beyond. If you have tree stumps or logs that could be repurposed for student seating, or plants you could donate to our garden, please contact Carrie Lombardi at calombardi3@gmail.com.

As the holidays arrive, we are keenly

aware that this year is tougher for many of our families. Thank you to all the kind Barcrofters who donated to our winter coat drive and Thanksgiving food distribution. Our families are very sincerely appreciative of what we are able to provide with the contributions of our wonderful community. We are working on plans to support families for December holidays, so keep an eye out for BSCL chat emails for ways you can help! ●

County Secret Santa Program

2020 has seen more Arlington households in financial crisis than ever before. You can help Arlington families impacted by COVID and economic hardship - donate to the Department of Human Services' Secret Santa Program! Gift cards are distributed to clients engaged in Department of Human Services safety net programs and other programs for low-income residents, including COVID-



impacted households, children in foster care, people with disabilities, seniors with low incomes, teen parents, and families with low incomes.

This year, the Secret Santa Program can accept gift cards and checks by mail, or online donations via secure credit card payments, any time before December 18. Learn more or make a donation at: <https://publicassistance.arlingtonva.us/secret-santa/> ●

Two Programs to Keep You Walking Through Winter

WALK FIT

Virginia Hospital Center's Walk Fit Program is active! Join walkers on Tuesdays at Fashion Centre at Pentagon City (Floor 1 by Nordstrom Café) and Thursdays at Ballston Quarter (Level M2) for a walk and stretch. The program is free and all ages are welcome. The

walking starts at 8:30 a.m. and the stretch starts at 9:15 a.m. For safety, masks are required and walkers maintain physical distance from each other. Please contact the Senior Health Department for more information: 703.558.6859 or email seniorhealth@virginiahospitalcenter.com. •



WALKING PRESENTATION

A Conversation on Healthy Living through Walking will be held on Monday, November 16, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. online.

Four health and wellness professionals will share tips for staying motivated to achieve better physical and mental health.

Register online via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-conversation-on-healthy-living-through-walking-registration-126449701461>. •

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Fall Greetings from Our Savior Lutheran School

By OSLS National Junior Honor Society

The children of Our Savior Lutheran School are excited for Christmas. Even though our students are unable to give a Christmas program for the community this year, each class is contributing to a virtual Christmas program which will be open for our school families. We are joyful that we can continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus with each other.

Each month, our school focuses on a character trait with our student body. The month of December is Humbleness. We often look at the coming holiday as a time of getting presents, but we also want to remind our children about the generosity of giving. Use this month to talk with the children around you about the importance of putting others first. What a blessing we can be to others!

Mark your calendars. Our Savior Lutheran School is holding an Open House for all prospective students and their parents on Saturday, January 16. At that time, applications will be accepted for the 2021-2022 school year for grades Pre K through 8th. Due to the unique circumstances surrounding this year, at this time, the decision has not been made on whether the Open House will be in-person or virtual. Please contact our school office at the beginning of January for more information about the Open House. OSLS was established in 1952 and has been providing an affordable, quality Christian education in Barcroft ever

since. We are fully accredited and licensed, and during normal school years we offer before and after school care. OSLS is non-discriminatory. We are located at 825 South Taylor Street.

Many of us purchase items on Amazon.com. Did you know that if you go to Amazon.smile, you can purchase the same items and a small portion will be designated back to Our Savior Lutheran School as your designated charity when you sign on to Amazon.smile. Every time after that Amazon.smile will automatically contribute a portion of your purchase to our school. It's super easy. Thank you to everyone who supports us. ●

Musical Open House

Do you like to sing? Are you ready for some harmony in your life? Potomac Harmony Chorus Invites you to our Holiday Open House.

We welcome all women ages 13 and beyond, to join us (via Zoom) on Wednesday, December 16 at 7 p.m. for a fun evening of singing some old favorite songs and learning a couple of new ones. No pressure, no commitment, just come see what we're about. RSVP to openhouse@potomac-harmony.org by December 11 and we'll send you a welcome packet including the Zoom link. ●

Native Evergreens for Winter Interest, continued

Continued from page 1

to the Glencarlyn Library Garden, while 'Winter Gold' with bright orange drupes and her partner 'Southern Gentleman' are located not far from the garden's 3rd Street entry path.

At ground level, Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), located in the Glencarlyn Library Garden's shade garden, can be used under shrubs and trees, along shaded walls, on slopes, or in woodland and rock gardens. This plant, which gets its common name from its evergreen nature and its stocking-shaped pinnae, forms a circular, cascading clump of one half to two feet that increases over time, offering cover to songbirds. In the spring, its dark green, leathery fronds are renewed with silvery, scaled fiddleheads that some birds use in nest construction.

Editor's Note: Elaine Mills gave a talk on *Climate Conscious Gardening at the November Barcroft Community Meeting*. ●



Photo by Alyssa Ford Morel

Every winter a pair of mockingbirds claim the Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) at the Glencarlyn Library Garden as their personal territory (top left). Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) keeps its green fronds all year (below left).



Photo by Elaine Mills

Girl Scouts Are Recruiting

By Denise Hart

Join Girl Scouts!

We are recruiting girls and troop leaders in Barcroft to join this year. We have pivoted to a blended format with Zoom troop meetings and camp outings (with social distancing). We know that with school being virtual many girls are experiencing higher levels of loneliness and anxiety — Girl Scouts is the answer! Please send an email to our Director of Membership, Kathryn Benison (kbenison@gscnc.org) and she can make it happen. We want you to belong to the Girl Scout family. You can also fill in the interest indicator at <https://www.gscnc.org/en/about-girl-scouts/join.html>. ●

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Neighbor to Neighbor Listings

These listings are free to BSCL members, and run on a space-available basis. The listings run for three issues unless removal, renewal or update is requested. Email listings and renewals to editor@bscl.org.

Get it dug! – My husband hates gyms but realized digging is a great workout! Have something you have always wanted dug up but never get to? He is happy to come by and give you a price. Small to semi-large projects without strict deadlines are the best. Call 703-380-6227 or email Robbets4@gmail.com to keep Rob Severn in shape!

Art Card: Want an original personalized card (acrylic, pen and ink, watercolor) for a birthday, anniversary, graduation, retirement or other event? Art major graduate can do that! Cards priced at \$7.50 to \$10. Includes envelope. Also open to painting or drawing commissions. Contact Alex at amrosenberg13@yahoo.com

Got Projects? Due to COVID canceling college, I will be around intermittently this fall for jobs that you just need someone to help get it done! Text Jeremiah at 571-357-9313 or email jwsevern@gmail.com.

Barcroft T-shirts: Just a few BSCL T-shirts left. Some blue, some red, but not all sizes. Clearance sale time, \$5 each. Call me and come by: Joan Mulholland, 501 South Taylor Street, 703-979-4719.

Barcrofter Loki Mulholland Books and Movies: His complete works available (save shipping costs!) and timely, especially the movies dealing with voting and institutional racism. Several kids books too. Call and come by: Joan Mulholland, 501 South Taylor Street, 703-979-4719. Pay by cash, check, or Venmo. Great for now or gifts later.

Knives Sharpened? Hold them until Thanksgiving and I will be happy to sharpen them when I am back from college! Contact my mom, Betsy, at 703-380-6227, or robbets4@gmail.com to get on the list. Thanks for all your support!

Virtual Private Drum Lessons in Barcroft: All ages/ levels welcome. Local professional giving instruction from Barcroft home studio on 3rd Street South. Multiple styles--rock, jazz, classical, musical theatre. Lessons are now virtual via Zoom, Duo, FaceTime, Google Meet, etc. References provided. Email Mitchell at mitchbassmusic@gmail.com. •



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How does the recent election and Covid 19 impact the recent estate market? The recent news that Joe Biden is now president-elect drew positive reactions from the real estate and mortgage industry, who see the upside for the housing market.

Biden's housing proposals include a \$15,000 first-time homebuyer tax credit and he will focus on fair housing and affordable housing issues. Overall a Biden administration will favor the housing market.

Mortgage rates recently inched up after news of a promising COVID vaccine. The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage rose and is hovering around 3%. Rates were bottoming out around 2.5% in mid-October. They nudged up slightly and were flat while investors awaited the outcome of the presidential election. Mortgage rates are still at levels that would have seemed unbelievable not long ago. Last year at this time, 30-year rates were at 3.85%.

Now is actually a great time to buy in our local area before rates climb higher, since the inventory has grown slightly, especially with condos. Townhouses and single-family homes are still in shorter supply and more popular. There is still some competitive bidding, although instead of 8 to 10 offers on a hot property, we might see 2 or 3 contracts.

Have you considered making a move? If you are thinking of a new lifestyle, I'm glad to help with some strategic planning

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