



36 Tanners Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144 \* (518) 859-0263  
[pmzimmy@gmail.com](mailto:pmzimmy@gmail.com)



<http://www.mensgardenclubofalbany.org/>

(Serving the greater capital region)  
Celebrating 78 years of service to our community  
(First Chartered 1936)

**VOLUME 78 NO. 4**

**April, 2015**

**DATE & TIME: Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 6:30 pm -  
Ladies - please join us - we need you**

**PLACE:** Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 1228 Western Ave., Albany

**APPETIZER:** Garden Salad

**ENTREE:** Chicken Parmigiana  
Eggplant Parmigiana  
Hot Roast Beef with home style gravy

**DESSERT:** Apple Pie **Price: \$ 22.00**

**PROGRAM:** Our speaker will be **Debi Chowdhury**, chair of the **Hudson Adirondack Dailylily Society**. **Debi** will guide us through the **Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden**. The Kirstenbosch Gardens, located outside of **Cape Town, South Africa**, was founded in 1913 to preserve the country's unique flora. It was the first botanical garden in the world with this ethos. Kirstenbosch places a strong emphasis on the cultivation of indigenous plants.

**RESERVATIONS ARE ESSENTIAL:**

A caller should reach you prior to the meeting for your dinner reservation and your choice of entree. If a caller leaves a message, please make every effort to return their call. If a caller does not reach you (**one week prior to the meeting**) by **Thursday, April 16th**, please call Russ Greenman at 477-8321 - Note: Callers – Please call **Russ Greenman** with your group's reservations. You are reminded that if you make a reservation for dinner you will be expected to honor your commitment.

## Membership

### Ken Abele - Gardener Gone to Rest - March 19, 2015

I'm so sorry to report that we have lost a terrific man that did so much for the communities he lived in as well as the world. Like many MGCA members he was a true gentleman and a great friend to many.



Abele, Kenneth SARASOTA, Fla. Kenneth W. Abele, 96, died peacefully Thursday, March 19, 2015, at his home in Sarasota. Ken was born in New Rochelle in 1918. He was the son of the late Frederick and Ada Wagner Abele. Ken graduated from New Rochelle High School, and after attending the [General Motors](#) Institute in Detroit, he settled in Albany, and married his wife of 63 years, the late Thelma Miller Abele. At that time Ken was employed by William Miller at Millers Garage and Machine Shop on Everett Road in West Albany. This was a business established by Thelma's grandfather in 1872; the company later would be named Abele Tractor and Equipment Company. Their company played an important role in many building projects, including the Empire State Plaza, the New York Thruway and the network of arterial highways in New York State. Ken was proud of his achievements in the farm and commercial equipment business. He was a member and past president of Eastern New York Equipment Dealer Association. With his retirement in 1983, the business was positioned to become one of the major heavy construction equipment businesses that have attained an international presence. The company that he and his family built carries on Ken's spirit. Ken and his late wife Thelma were patrons of many organizations. These include the Boy Scouts, Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and the New York State Teachers college at Albany. Ken was a long-time member of several organizations. He joined the Albany [Rotary Club](#) in 1958 and was a past president. He was a member of the West Albany Fire Company No. 1 for 72 years where he and his father-in-law, William Miller, built two pieces of fire apparatus and donated fuel for emergency vehicles. He was also a member of the **Albany Garden Club**, the Masons and Toastmasters. He served on the curriculum advisory board for the New York Agricultural College at Cobleskill and BOCES of Colonie. Ken was a trustee of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany for several years. He was also on the board of directors for many years at Camp Agawam in Raymond, Maine, a boy's camp he attended and loved in his youth that was also attended by his sons and grandsons. Ken enjoyed his retirement in Florida where he attended the Sarasota Sunrise Rotary Club and the Church of the Palms. He loved classical music and theatre. He and his wife Ruth Thelma were very devoted to their pug dogs, Harry and Charlie. In addition to his parents, his wife, Thelma Miller Abele, and his brother, Warren Abele, predeceased him. He is survived by his wife, Ruth Thelma Abele of Sarasota; sisters, Norma Abele of New Rochelle and Zelda Gordon of San Francisco; sons, Warren (Pamela) Abele of Troy and Rod (Sharon) Abele of East Greenbush; grandchildren, Janice (Eric) Cohen, Susan Kelley, Peter Abele, Matt Abele, Jeffrey (Kristine) Abele; great-grandchildren, Reece and Regan Abele; stepson, David (Robin), and stepgranddaughters, Gina and Tiffany. Relatives and friends are invited to a memorial service at Westminster Presbyterian Church located at 85 Chestnut St., Albany, on Saturday, May 16, 2015, starting at 1 p.m. Burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the West Albany Fire Company No. 1, 113 Sand Creek Road, Albany, NY 12205, Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society, 3 Oakland Ave., Menands, NY 12204 or [charity of your choice](#) . To leave a special message for the family online, visit [NewcomerAlbany.com](#).

**New Members**  
**Please welcome our newest members**

**Gerald Dwileski** - East Greenbush, NY

**Brian Hennigan** - Rensselaer, NY

**Peter Myer** - Albany, NY

**John Ryan** - Valatie, NY

**Bob Pratt** – Well - We can't get thru on his new phone # . Anyone with information about which beach he is sitting on would be greatly appreciated.

**Phil Harris** is now in room 315 of Eddy Heritage House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, [2920 Tibbits Avenue](http://www.tibbits.com), Troy, NY 12180. Please try to get out there to help cheer up our friend.

**March Program - Thank You to Doug Pratt!**

Man... This guy is terrific!!! We learned so much about the ways to germinate different types of seeds. Consistency requires control – so **Doug Pratt** has spent most of his life trying to figure out what the optimal temperature, and light requirements are and how to maintain them during the various phases of growth. I think he is having way to much fun designing all kinds of contraptions to insure that the seeds and plants get moved into the proper environment at exactly the correct time. He complained about some plants that he accidentally left in one environment for an extra 10 hours which caused those plants to be less than perfect – in his mind. **Doug Pratt** was in the very first group of Master Gardeners in Rensselaer County and is involved in things like: Farm youth, Nursery man, Landscaper, Hybrid seed sales, Master Gardener 37 years, Production manager, Wholesale greenhouse owner, Owner "IMP Seeders", and Grower for the F.B. Peck Fire Department plant sale on Waterford, NY.

**Doug Pratt** also had some interesting stories about the South Mall plantings that seemed very interesting to me.

Thanks **Doug Pratt** for a Great evening out!

**Garden & Flower Show at HVCC**

As we have for many many years, we had an Educational booth at the Capital District Garden & Flower Show. This year **Paul Zimmermann** was the chairman along with **Greg Shields** and they did a fantastic job of organizing this event. We had plants to give away that the consumers from the Center for Disability Services planted from cuttings as part of our Gardening From the Heart program. Yikes, that was a long sentence. No, not the manning of the booth... the written sentence. **Bruce Wilcox**, **Gary Woods** and **Chuck Scott** and **Greg Goutos** helped out manning the booth for three days. **Paul Zimmermann** built several bluebird houses that were raffled off each day. Paul also created a nice video that ran during the event and helped attract people to our booth. Unfortunately, we missed hooking up with our friends from the MGC of Rome NY. I was reading their newsletter and I thought I was reading the DIRT, they has a busload of people that came to the flower show and then went to Grandma's restaurant for dinner. They also talked about Albany's Tulip Festival coming up on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks to all that helped and especially to the new members that signed up at the show.

## **New Twitter Account for MGCA**

A twitter account has been set up for the Men's Garden Club of Albany. The Club account is: "MGCA\_Albanyny" (please note the "underscore"). The best way to approach this, is to set up your own twitter account.

1. To set up your own Twitter account:
  - A. You will need a unique email address, (only one Twitter account per email address).
  - B. You may have to verify the account with a telephone #.
2. Once your Twitter account is setup, next "Follow" "MGCA\_Albanyny", which is our club account.
3. By default Twitter will set you up "following" ~40 other user accounts. These other accounts may have copious feeds, and you may choose to delete them. The interface can get very busy and distracting, so you will have to learn how to manipulate the interface to reduce the distraction level. Once you learn it though, it is really quite simple.
4. Similar to the real world of gardening, the virtual world of Twitter in general can only really be learned by doing. You have to get in there and get your hands dirty. Make mistakes, and keep learning.

Twitter was set up originally for members of a company to communicate from different places and different times through essentially a "distribution list" model, or a group of people simultaneously. So, it will work from your cell phone through the "TXT/SMS" functionality of the cell phone. It will also work from a web browser (like Explorer or Firefox), and for people with tablets, of smart phones, you can install a dedicated "App." to use Twitter.

While the SMS functionality will not allow you to browse the older tweets, you can get the new tweets "on the fly", as an TXT/SMS message. It is also possible to post from the cell phone through SMS.

The more that people "follow" the account, the more attention the Club will get. This means that people we do not know will become aware of our club, and this may help bolster membership. It will also dress-up the website with the trendy Twitter logo once it is installed.

We'll follow-up in future editions of the Newsletter with other Twitter hints, and suggestions.

Thanks to **Greg Shields** for doing all the work to set this up as well as for writing this article

Thanks, **Greg Shields!**      [https://twitter.com/mgca\\_albanyny](https://twitter.com/mgca_albanyny) = click me to see the tweets

### **Seeking Candidates for Scholarship**

Do you know a deserving college student who could benefit from receiving a \$500 Scholarship from our club? This year the Scholarship Committee would like to ask all our members to consider a personal family member or friend who might qualify. Candidates can be a current college student, or registered to begin a college program this fall. Ideally, they should be pursuing studies in any horticultural-related field, including agriculture, environmental studies, forestry or natural resource management. Applicants need not live locally, and can be male or female. Perhaps you have a child, grandchild, nephew or niece, or other extended family member that would qualify? If so, please contact Greg Goutos, Scholarship Chair, at 861-6052 for application details. The deadline is May 31.

### **Seed Savers - Turnips - Gary Woods**

**Gary Woods** is another one of those real neat guys that is very knowledgeable in many fields. He brought is some 3rd generation seed in his greenhouse / garden, grown from old seed from East German Seed bank via **Dennis Sherwood**. Check our [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org) for more info.

Thanks **Gary Woods** for the nicely packaged / labeled seeds you donated to club members.

## Feature Article - Foundation Planting Blunders

Written by our very own Paul Zimmermann

In this article I'll be talking about landscaping with perennial shrubs and trees in the vicinity of your house.

### 1. Failure to plan

Showing up at the nursery and selecting plants without a plan is like grocery shopping without a list – you'll end up with a motley lot of the good, the bad and the ugly. Take some time and think through what effect you wish to achieve. Impulsiveness will not be rewarded, particularly in the long term.

There are computer programs available that can help you plan your landscaping. And your local nursery should be able to provide sound advice. Take along a picture or two of the area you wish to landscape – this will give the nursery personnel a good idea of what they're working with.

### 2. Planting the same shrub in a row.

How deadly dull! Unless you're planting a hedge (and hedges normally don't belong next to your house), avoid planting a row of the same species. Even two plantings of the same species side-by-side should be avoided. Think variety. Think texture. Think about flowering seasons.

### 3. Planting too close to the house.

I see this faux pas all the time. There should be at least a couple of feet between the shrubs (when full sized) and the house. This allows air to circulate as well as provides access to the exterior of the house for maintenance activities. Although it may look a bit strange when small plantings are initially placed, resist the temptation to plant your shrubs too near the house.

### 4. Planting shrubs too close together forgetting to account for their adult size.

Often in our haste to create a 'finished' or 'mature' look to our landscape plantings we plant shrubs much too close to each other. As they grow to their mature size we are faced with the alternative of severely pruning them to 'fit', or removing some to allow their brethren some breathing room.

### 5. Planting invasive species.

Although you might think that your local nursery wouldn't carry invasion species, don't be so sure. Check first.

A place to start:

[http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/forests/howwework/protecting-native-plants-and-animals-taking-on-the-invaders.xml?matchtype=b&creative=39155623550&device=c&network=g&src=sea.AWG.PR0.CP142.AD1384.KW10209.MT1.BU376&gclid=CjwKEAiA0O2IBRDOrPX4oJP3t2oSJACjpaHAwg31IJ\\_XhYEL5Mbn9HLqd3Gnqhy120gcwFqegnotJhoCLQbw\\_wcB](http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/forests/howwework/protecting-native-plants-and-animals-taking-on-the-invaders.xml?matchtype=b&creative=39155623550&device=c&network=g&src=sea.AWG.PR0.CP142.AD1384.KW10209.MT1.BU376&gclid=CjwKEAiA0O2IBRDOrPX4oJP3t2oSJACjpaHAwg31IJ_XhYEL5Mbn9HLqd3Gnqhy120gcwFqegnotJhoCLQbw_wcB)

### 6. Failure to follow planting directions.

As most Americans spend \$15,000 to \$30,000 on a new car and never crack the owner manual, it's not amazing that many folk buy a shrub, dig a hole, and plant it without glancing at the planting directions. Then they complain when the planting doesn't flourish. No more need be said.

### 7. Failure to take sunlight conditions into account.

Sunlight conditions play a large part in the long term health of trees and shrubs. Don't guess how many hours of sunlight the proposed site will receive – take the time to observe.

### 8. Failure to correctly amend the soil

## Feature Article - Foundation Planting Blunders - continued

Written by our very own Paul Zimmermann

The roots of most shrubs and trees grow in the top 12 inches of your soil. . Often the soil next to your house is merely backfill from construction. If you are in a quandary about the quality of your soil, have it tested. Take the time to make sure the soil is loose so air and water can reach the roots. All this may mean removing a few inches of backfill and replacing it with topsoil. Or perhaps it will suffice to dig in a quantity of organic matter (compost). Getting this step right will greatly enhance the chances that your landscape plantings will thrive in the long term.

9. Failure to choose the appropriate species for the local climate.

Be sure to select landscaping that is appropriate to your climate. If you're in zone 5a, it's ok to select plants that are hardy in zone 4 or less, but risky if the plant is only guaranteed for zone 6 plus unless you're prepared to take special protective measures in winter.

10. Planting trees (particularly evergreens) so that the house is shaded all day, all year.

Unless you're looking to endure endless cycles of moss and mildew on your house, avoid large evergreens, particularly those planted close to your house on the south side.

11. Planting shrubs that are out of proportion to the size of the house.

Think proportion. For example, if you own a straight ranch, you don't want to landscape next to your house with shrubs that grow 15' tall. Normally you do not want to block the view from your windows (although there may be exceptions to this observation).

12. Failure to plant critter resistant varieties.

If the deer and the antelope frolic in your yard, the winter day will come when they're hungry enough to feast on your precious landscape plants. However, if you don't mind the time and effort, there are effective sprays that will deter the critters. My favorite is a product called CHEW-NOT, which in my experience will protect shrubbery for the entire winter. And of course you can erect physical barriers using fencing and/or burlap. But easiest of all is to plant species that don't appeal to the critters' taste buds. Ask your nurseryman for advice.

### Harris Memorial Centerpiece

Thanks to the **Harris kids!**

Each month, the **Harris family, Phil, Dave** and their sister **Diane** design and create a beautiful centerpiece to honor their parents. Since **Phil** is in room 315 of Eddy Heritage House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 2920 Tibbits Avenue, Troy, NY 12180 he was unable to attend our meeting. Every month one of their masterpieces has been raffled off since 1980 - **YES, That's 35 Years!!!** and the money goes into our Memorial fund. The more I think about it, the more amazed I am at how much time, talent and money goes into each one of the centerpieces that **Phil** and **Dave** have been bringing, to every meeting, for more years than I can remember. What talent and generosity that family has. We can't begin to thank all of you for all you have done for us over the years. **Thanks again to the Harris kids!**



Harris Memorial Centerpiece  
Made by Dave Harris for 3/26/2015

## History - 25 years ago - April 5, 1990

### MEN'S GARDEN CLUB OF ALBANY - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Directors was held on Thursday evening, June 5, 1990 in the Cerebral Palsy Center for the disabled.

President **Wally Dillenbeck** called the meeting to order at 7:35.

The Minutes of the March 1, 1990 meeting were approved as amended by our Club Secretary, **Tom Baker**.

The Treasurer's Report was approved as was presented by our Club Treasurer, **Al Miller**. As of March 31, 1990 in the General Fund there was total balance of \$1,487.83 and in the Memorial Fund there was a balance of \$734.20. The CDs combined total has grown to \$6,287.45. One with \$5,267.45 and the second has \$1,020.00.

**Al** was concerned about the people not honoring their dinner reservation. Once again the Board voted to bill these people for the amount due.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Delmar Plant Sale: **Don Stevens** reported that all is in readiness. **Don Lewis** is expected back on April 25 and will do his thing concerning plants, those bought and donated. Also **Don Stevens** will see that the Guilderland Sale gets some of the Tuberos Begonias which he gets each year. Guilderland Plant Sale: **Don Otterness** reporting. **Don Otterness** presented the Treasurer with a bill for \$31.15 for the Sale flyers. Also **Oscar Rheingold** is going to provide a good supply of seedlings for the sale. As **Don** handed out the flyers, he requested that the flowers be colored in.

Program Committee: The next meeting will be held in the Bavarian Chalet with a choice of Roast Sirloin of Beef and Breast of chicken at a cost of \$14.00. **Oscar Rheingold** will give a talk on the Horticulture of Begonias accompanied with his own slides.

Gardening From the Heart: We are waiting for an expected grant of lumber from Grossman's. We at the Center are anxious to complete the greenhouse. **Paul Jeffers** and **Ferd Johnson** have said they will help.

Upstate NY Regional Meeting: **Bob Ireland** Chairman. The date is June 2, starting with a coffee hour at 9 am. The cost is \$10.00. More details in the Dirt.

Youth Gardening: **Lee Negus** reporting. **Lee** thanked the Board and other members who hoped to package the seeds. Distribution helpers are needed. Call **Lee** if interested.

**Don Otterness** reported on his efforts to produce a Video to be used in promoting youth sponsorship to get them interested in horticulture. This is to be National Project.

Photography Committee: **Wally Dillenbeck** reported for **Bill Philippi**, Chairman. Club members should take slides of their gardens, the best might well be shown at a regular meeting. A contest might also be held.

New Business: The Board voted to pay the Liability Insurance @ \$263.00.

Of the CD that will mature on May 15, 1990, the Board voted to put \$4,267.45 into the Endowment Fund and \$1,000.00 in the General Fund. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted by, **Tom Baker**, Secretary

\*\* Editor's note: **Tom Baker** has been faithfully documenting our minutes since way before he had personal computer - but somehow he has managed to digitize all of the minutes he has taken over the years and we now include them in our newsletter under the heading "History - 25 years ago" **Thanks, Tom Baker!!!**

# MEN'S GARDEN CLUB of ALBANY CLUB ACTIVITIES

Albany International Airport  
Don Wrieden – Chairman



## Adopt-a-Highway



**Ken Abele** – Hard at work



**Ken Abele** during construction of our second raised bed on I-90 at Exit 7 Westbound. Built to last with lots of steel, many yards of concrete, some fancy filter material that **Ken Abele** found to keep the soil from washing out between the blocks, 2" foam insulation (allows us to plant tulip bulbs closer to the edges), many blocks hauled by **Ken Abele** and many yards of nice soil from **Osborne Mills Nursery** on Everett Road in Albany. And most importantly, this was build as a Memorial to an outstanding member - **Mr. Conrad (Connie) Robert**. This project took years to get State and Federal approvals and lots of hard work from members of the Men's Garden Club of Albany.  
ps. If you know who stole this - please ask them to return it  
Thanks!!!



## Gardening from the Heart At the Center for Disability Services

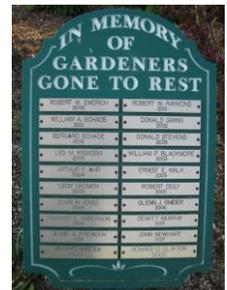


Volunteers during March included: **Tom Baker, Russ Greenman, Joe Herman, Bruce Wilcox** and our past President – **Mr. Don Wrieden**. We planted many cuttings for the Flower and Garden show as well as planting seeds for spring. We should be moving outside soon and may be replacing some of our many raised



beds. You should join us - we have a blast! Our consumers are amazing and they really help us to have a better attitude toward life.

## Memorial Garden At the Albany County Cooperative Extension Joe Huth / Chuck Scott Memorial Garden Chairmen



**Ken Abele** – Hard at work  
Or should I say, making hard work easy?

## DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>Today!</b>	<b>Please visit our friends that need our visits and cards</b>
April 23 <sup>rd</sup> @ <b>6:30pm</b>	<b>Monthly Dinner meeting - Ladies Invited</b> Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 1228 Western Ave., Albany
Every Wednesday : @ <b>9:00 am</b>	<b>Gardening from the Heart</b> Center for Disability Services 700 South Pearl St. Albany
May 7 <sup>th</sup> @ <b>7:30 pm</b>	<b>Board of Director's Meeting</b> 314 S. Manning Blvd – All members are invited
May 9 <sup>th</sup> 8:00am - 2:00pm	<b>MGCA Plant Sale - Our only fundraiser for the year</b>
May 28 <sup>th</sup> @ <b>6:30pm</b>	Monthly Dinner meeting - Ladies Invited Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 1228 Western Ave., Albany

Editor: Russ Greenman

**Please support research for ALS** (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis - Lou Gehrig's disease) in memory of one of our most active members - **Mr. Bill Town**

Click on this link to read his story: <http://community.als.net/teamtown>

Special thanks to **Paul Zimmermann** for our terrific website

<http://www.mensgardenclubofalbany.org/>

Go ahead - click on it - you'll be glad you did.

Below is purposely in small print so you will go on-line and read it

HOME    OUR CLUB    THE DIRT    FEATURES    LINKS

# Men's Garden Club of Albany

### Row Covers

Like many types of greens, Swiss Chard grows well under row covers. Especially in the spring, newly emergent greens are vulnerable to pests such as flea beetles, leaf miners and slugs. Left unprotected these unwanted garden visitors can chew small plants so severely that they die or take weeks to regain their vigor. The reason springtime is such a difficult time for young greens is that the enemies of these pests have not yet arrived on the scene. To remedy the situation, use row covers which provide a physical

## Swiss Chard - the Perfect Vegetable

No denial here – Swiss Chard is my favorite vegetable. It's the LeBron James of the garden – does it all week in and week out. Are you interested in nutrition? Well, Swiss Chard can't be beat – an excellent source of high quality protein (amazed?), dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin K, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin E, as well as minerals such as



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&  
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Miller*

*Christian and Mildred  
Lebrecht*

*Ed Tompkins  
Avrom Koblenz  
Jerry Flax*

*In Memory of my parents*

*John and Carrie Meagher*

*They both loved Plants and Flowers*

*Jack Meagher*

*In Memory of*

*Wally Dillenbeck  
and  
Don Otterness*



*By Tom Baker*



*In Memory of*



**Bill Town**

*Joe Herman*

*In Memory of  
my Dad*



**Carroll W. Greenman**

*Bob*



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*Russ, Maria, and Carl*

The following growers donated to our 2014 Plant Sale  
Please help support them with your purchases

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George's Market and Nursery  
Valoze's Greenhouses  
Troys Landscape Supply  
The Gade Farm  
Pigliaventos Greenhouses  
Krug Farms