

Shoreham Garden Club Newsletter

September/October 2009, Volume XXIII, No. 5

President's Message

(Vicki McLane)



Happy Fall !!!!!

The **Ed Affatato Memorial Fund Committee** has purchased the bench to be installed at St. Anthony's in Rocky Point and we are still

waiting to meet with the church groundskeeper to select the right location for the bench.

We are planning a Member's Workshop on Holiday Greenery on November 21st. If you have some expertise in making wreaths or table decorations, please volunteer to help out. We will also need a location for the workshop, so please let me know if you are willing to let us use your house for this event.

The light problem that we had when trying to view our guest speaker's presentations at the Shoreham Village building has been solved. We look forward to trying out the solution at the meeting on September 19th. Hope to see many of you there.

2009 Executive Board

President – Vicki McLane
Vice-President – Barbara Foley
Secretary – Pat Thompson
Treasurer – Sheila Sussman
Newsletter Editor – Diana Fuchs
Program Chairs – Carol Fish & Sandy Romano

Local Garden Tour

(Sandy Romano)

Our second annual Member's Garden Tour was held on Saturday, July 18th. The weather was beautiful that day as approximately 25 of us toured some exceptional gardens in Shoreham and Wading River.

Mark and Donna Smith's daylily garden was in full bloom (as Mark promised us it would be at this time of year) and amazed us all with its abundance and variety. Anyone who saw Mark's meticulous notes understood the care and attention given to each and every bloom to make this such a beautiful display of color.

Garden Club friend, Jean Ozul, was kind enough to share her garden with us this year. The work that Jean puts daily into her lovely yard was evident in the beautiful beds, stonework, and unusual artifacts placed throughout. It was a pleasure to wander around and explore every nook and cranny.

Bill and Ronnie Schiavo again opened up their gorgeous gardens for us to browse and they never disappoint. They has added a new secluded spot in his front garden near the top of his waterfall, a peaceful retreat to sit and read.

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Shoreham Garden Club Schedule 2009

September 19	Saturday	10:30 Meeting, Christine Doctor: Fall Plantings, Shoreham Village Bldg.
October 17	Saturday	10:30 Meeting, Dan Pichney: Butterfly Gardening, Shoreham Village Bldg.
November 21 st	Saturday	10:30 Member's Workshop: Holiday Wreaths, location TBD
December 6	Sunday	Holiday Party & Annual Meeting , Diana's home, 25 Circle Dr., Shoreham, 3pm

Local Garden Tour Cont.....

The ponds always amaze us with their beauty, as does Bill with his knowledge of each and every plant he grows.

Many thanks to all who participated. Please consider sharing your own special garden with us next year as we hopefully continue this annual event into 2010.



Hummingbird Sanctuary Visit

(Carol Fish)

The trip to the Hummingbird Sanctuary was a success. Even though we did not see many hummingbirds, the weather was perfect and the views at the sanctuary were spectacular. Mr. Adam's, who owns the sanctuary, has beautiful gardens and he was kind enough to identify the different plants that attract hummingbirds.

Best of all was the large turnout of the Garden Club members. It was great to see so many fellow gardeners enjoying the beautiful landscape and sharing a delicious lunch with each other at Blackwell's. We will plan more exciting trips next year.



Member News:

We all wish Ann Kilroy a speedy recovery and a return to full health real soon.

Upcoming Events

We have our last two guest speaking events of the year coming up. On **September 19th**, **The Plant Doctor, Christine Doctor** will speak on fall gardens and preparing our gardens for winter. On **October 17th**, **Dan Pichney** will be speaking to us on Butterfly Gardens. Both of these speakers will be presenting at 10:30 am at the Shoreham Village Club.

The **Three Village Garden Club** has a trip to the Mohonk Mountain House on September 29th and have invited us to participate. The cost is \$86 and includes the bus, lunch, and tours of the Victorian Gardens, greenhouse and kitchen. The bus will leave from the Setauket shopping center at 7:45 a.m. and return at about 6:30 p.m.

If you are interested call Loretta Ruplan, 744-1034 or 312-4581 (cell).

Where Have All the Mimosas Gone?

(Jon Affatato)



As a child, the early summer air was redolent with the sweet fragrance of the soft, wispy pink blossoms of the Mimosa tree. Mimosas (also called Silk Trees or Albizia), which grow to approximately 15 feet tall with very wide drooping habits, also happened to be great for climbing, or just sitting under to escape the summer's heat. Unfortunately, however, in the late 1970s, Mimosas began mysteriously disappearing from the Northeast.

For all of their ephemeral beauty, Mimosas are highly susceptible to fungal infections from *fusarium oxysporos*, which causes fusarium wilt. The fungus is soil borne, and enters the tree through the roots, as we now know it began doing 30 years ago. Once inside the tree, it multiplies and colonizes inside the xylem (part of the plant's vascular system), preventing water and critical nutrients from reaching the leaves. Within days of the first symptoms, most trees are dead.

Sadly, there are no quick remedies for this disease. A few patents have surfaced recently for beneficial microbes that can crowd out *f. oxysporos*, however, these products are not available to residential gardeners. There is, however, some good news. Fusarium wilt has only been around for approximately 100 years, and like most infestations in nature, it occurs in cycles... and it appears to be on the decline in the northeast. Disease resistant mimosa cultivars have begun springing up, and can now be seen growing in increasing numbers serendipitously along highways and the tracks of the Long Island Rail Road (I know, since I spend most of my life staring out the windows of the LIRR during my commute!). Commercial, chemical lawn fertilizers have wreaked havoc on the natural microbiology of the soil, paving the way for fungal

infestations – which is why most mimosas today can only be seen growing in areas that have never been corrupted by years of Scott's Synthetic Obnoxiously Toxic Ultra-Florescent Green lawn products. A potted mimosa of mine was a recent victim of fusarium attack, but I was able to save it (just barely) by quickly repotting it, adding organic, composted soil and fertilizing it with a natural liquid enzymatic soil conditioner called Plant Power (available only on-line at <http://www.marketamerica.com/singlesource/product-2314/globalcare-plant-power.htm>)

If you see a wild mimosa and want to place it in your yard, be very careful when digging; they send down very deep tap roots. If this sounds like too much of a headache, you can always mix three parts champagne, and two parts chilled orange juice, and serve it in a tall champagne flute for your very own antidote to the dog days of summer: the mimosa cocktail (which was, of course, named after the flowers of the eponymous tree)!

Fun Facts About Mimosa's:

**Fusarium oxysporos* was going to be used by the Clinton administration to destroy, um, certain illegal South American crops, however, it would have technically been considered biological warfare, and would not have gone over well in diplomatic circles (not to mention Willie Nelson fans all over the world).

*The mimosa is one of the very few plants that react to human touch. If you gently touch its soft leaves, they will quickly curl up in self defense.

*The bark of one mimosa variety is used in some parts of the world as a potent hallucinogen during shamanistic rituals (perhaps we can convince Capt Bill to perform a similar ritual during next year's garden tour).

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