

Columbia Gardeners Fall Meeting October 15, 2025

There was a social hour between 6-7 p.m. that gave gardeners a chance to mingle and enjoy refreshments. The business meeting and speaker followed the social hour.

Board members in attendance:

Betty Miller
Amod Bhide
Carol Cannon
Diane Stack
Cleve Chick
Susan Levi-Goerlich
Kathy Jones
Joe Reyes
Betty Bensel
Alice Jackson
Sara Kaman
Mary Gold

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Betty Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She introduced herself as the President of Columbia Gardeners, thanked everyone for coming and introduced the current Board members. She explained that we would have a short business meeting, the election of officers, and a presentation by Heidi Mantzouranis (Howard County Master Gardener) on Companion Planting for Vegetable Gardens. Betty also mentioned that there would be a raffle before concluding the meeting.

Betty announced that Columbia Gardeners would be increasing the rental fee for full plots by \$5. She commented that we have been running on a deficit budget and cannot continue this. Next year, the Board will look at future planning financially. We can expect a raise in rental fees. Columbia Gardeners has savings but needs to hold on to it. No questions were asked about this.

Betty also asked if anyone had questions about anything else related to Columbia Gardeners but no questions were raised.

Betty next turned the meeting over to Heather Richardson (Nominating Committee Chair from West Side) who conducted the election of Officers.

Election of Officers

Heather thanked the two other members of the Nominating Committee (Nancy Freeman from Elkhorn and Bess Caplan from Long Reach) for their help on the Committee.

Heather explained that each year, Columbia Gardeners elects a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and a Member at Large from each of the three sites at our annual Fall meeting. She presented the requirements Board members and nominees must meet in order to serve on the Board. Specifically,

- Board members must attend at least seven of the eleven yearly Board meetings which are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except December.
- Board members must contribute to the operation and success of Columbia Gardeners, Inc. by fully participating in Board meetings, sharing views on the issues being considered by the Board, proposing solutions and voting on these issues.
- Board members must have access to email and read their email regularly to keep up to date on matters related to Columbia Gardeners.
- Board members and nominees must be in compliance with Columbia Gardeners Rules and Regulations and have no adverse rulings from Columbia Gardeners, Inc.

Heather presented the slate of officers that the Nominating committee put together. The slate included Amod Bhide for President, Alice Jackson for Vice-President, Carol Cannon for Treasurer, Diane Stack for Secretary, Ebele Onwueme for Long Reach Member-at-Large, Adele Pastor for Elkhorn Member-at-Large and Kathy Jones for West Side Member-at-Large.

Heather asked for nominations from the floor for any of the elected positions but there were none. Voting was conducted by a show of hands. People were asked to raise their hand if they approved of the current slate of officers; then people were asked to raise their hand if they did not approve of the slate of officers. The slate of officers was unanimously unopposed.

Betty thanked the Nominating Committee for running the election of officers.

Thanks to Betty Miller!

Carole Graves expressed her thanks to Betty Miller for all she has done for Columbia Gardeners over the past ten years as President and as Vice-President prior to that. All present totally agreed with Carole's expression of thanks. Betty leaves Columbia Gardeners stronger than when she came in.

Betty commented that everyone (Board members, Site managers, Committee heads, other gardeners, etc.) have been extremely helpful and supportive to her in her role as President. She feels that she is leaving behind a good Board and group of people.

We all are wish Betty well in her retirement!

Presentation

Our presentation "Companion Planting for Vegetable Gardens" was given by Heidi Mantzouranis (Howard County Master Gardener).

Heidi began her presentation by explaining that companion planting involves growing two or more plants together to boost growth, deter pests and enrich soil quality naturally.

Companion planting principles are plant compatibility, pest control, nutrient complementarity and garden space optimization.

The benefits of companion planting are natural pest control; improvement of soil fertility and nutrient sharing between plants; and enhancement of plant growth and crop yields.

Some Companion planting pairings are the three sisters (corns, beans and squash); tomatoes, basil and marigolds; carrots and onions; broccoli with oregano, cabbage, brussel sprouts, or cauliflower; cucumbers with dill, nasturtiums, oregano or radishes; corn with dill, beans, sunflowers, or spinach/leafy greens; peas with carrots, chives, grapes, lettuce, mint radishes or turnips.

The challenges and limitations of companion planting are allelopathy (certain plants release chemicals which inhibit growth of nearby plants) and space and resource competition for sunlight, water and nutrients.

Some of the plants that don't pair well together are corn and tomatoes; peppers and cabbage; sage and cucumbers; potatoes and zucchini; carrots and parsnips, beans and onions; pumpkins and summer squash; fennel and eggplant; asparagus and broccoli.

To implement companion planting in your garden, you need to determine plant compatibility; determine sunlight requirements; design for space optimization; monitor health of garden track performance and learn from results; don't be afraid to experiment.

Door Prizes and Close of Meeting

A number of door prizes were awarded and the meeting ended around 8:40 p.m.