

**Plant Swap and Sale - Saturday, May 7, 2-4 at Linden Farm
Come join us for fellowship with or without plants.**

On Saturday, April 2nd, 2011, SCA hosted a barn full of members and interested citizens for our annual meeting. Officers and board members were elected and there was a review of past issues and pending concerns. These concerns include the many new cell tower applications in the Agriculture Reserve. Please check our web site sugarloafcitizens.org for current information and dates of upcoming hearings. According to Park and Planning the proposed hearing dates are likely to be changed due to the latest balloon tests.

Francoise Carrier, Planning Board Chair, gave a very informative talk on the issues that related to the Agriculture Reserve during her first year as Chair. Two staff members, Leslie Saville and Callum Murray were there also to help answer questions for the audience. SCA is grateful to Chair Carrier and her fine staff for giving up so much time to us on a precious Saturday morning.

Ms. Carrier agreed with SCA that enforcement is one of our biggest challenges. A good example of poor enforcement is the Melody Butler Landscaping business on Peach Tree Road. In October 2010, The Maryland Court of Appeals reversed the Circuit Court and affirmed the Board of Appeals decision against Melody Butler Landscaping Design. The neighbor's attorney and SCA in separate letters informed the Montgomery County Permitting Office shortly after this decision was issued. The Permitting Office was formally notified in February that this business must be shut down. Now in April this business is still operating and the owner is asking for delays through the end of May. What are the procedures for punishing a business that is operating illegally? If the penalty and power is not available to the Montgomery County executive branch, then we need to have a legislative solution. Further cause for concern is the pending re-write of the zoning laws that would permit landscaping companies to exist in the Ag Reserve by right. SCA intends to work against this liberalization. A re-write of stricter requirements is needed such as a wider buffer to protect the surrounding neighbors from the inherent adverse affects of this business.