

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

January 17th through February 21, 2012



The beauty of winter.

February 7

The North Andover Garden Club presents "Backyard Water Gardening" with Bill Frietag of Rowley's Country Gardens at 7 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 57 Peters Street, North Andover. This presentation is free and open to the public, and is geared toward the beginner water gardener.

February 14

Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Gerrie Bunker at 9:30 am.

February 13

Horticulture will be held at the Espousal Center, 554 Lexington Street, North Waltham, MA (off Route 95, Exit 27A) at 10 am. This month's program will be "Seeds Up Close: Amazing!" presented by Julie McIntosh Shapiro. Enjoy the beauty of seeds, and learn about plant conservation projects. This meeting is open to all members of our club, and there is a \$5.00 donation at the door.

February 21

***President's Choice Field Trip.** Plans are in the works for a day time trip to the Peabody Essex Museum. Please check your e-mail for details as they become available.*

NOTES

As most of you know, this is the time of year during which our club provides arrangements for the librarian's desk at the Topsfield Library. For your convenience, here from our Artistic Committee is the schedule for our remaining weeks:



*Monday, January 30th...Mary Connor
Monday, February 6th ...Rose Ann Waite
Monday, February 13th...Tammy Glasser
Monday, February 20th...Helen Gaffey
Monday, February 27th...Nat Anderson*

*Monday, March 5th ...Carol Westhaver
Monday, March 12th...Claudette Poor
Monday, March 19th...Barbara Shade
Monday, March 26th...Rita Galvin*

...more news on the following page...



Farewell to our member BJ Boland, who is settled in her California condo. She and her husband have finally been able to follow their dream of relocating to the West Coast. At left is the view from their new place...better than what I see from my window at this time of year! Best wishes, BJ!

BITS AND PIECES

Sweet memories from the past few months...



Here are the members of the Topsfield Council On Aging once again creating their boxwood trees under the guidance of President Rose Ann.



Mr. & Mrs. Right ride again at our Holiday Social!



Rose Ann Waite



Georgia McHugh



Claudette Poor

The photos above feature a view of our club's participation in the Northern District's "Topiaries, Trees & Treasures" at the Nesmith House in early December.

...more on the following page...

*Presenting our club's holiday decorations at the Topsfield Library
Many thanks to all members who participated in this annual project!*



*Expressing this year's theme,
Trees, at the library entrance.*



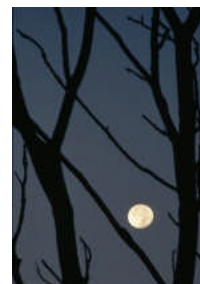
*Here is this year's Holiday
Wreath at the Topsfield Library
created by Claudette Poor.*



*Trees dress up the
library's computer desk*

Green Thumb Corner

*First the trivia...*Did you know that full moon names date back to the Native Americans of a few hundred years ago, living in the northern and eastern United States? These tribes, to keep track of the changing seasons, chose distinctive names for each recurring full moon. Their names were applied to the entire month during which each occurred. There were some variations in the moon



names, but in general, the same ones were used throughout the Algonquin tribes from New England west to Lake Superior. When the European settlers arrived, they created some of their own names, following their own customs.

With all that in mind, the next full moon is February 7th, and is called the Full Snow Moon. No big surprise, I guess! Usually the heaviest snowfalls occur during this month. Hunting becomes very difficult, and so to some tribes, this was also called the Full Hunger Moon.

*And now some serious stuff...***A new boxwood blight**, caused by the soilborne fungus *Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum* (= *Cylindrocladium buxicola*) has joined the ranks of diseases that may plague our local boxwood plants. Its origin is unknown, but it was first described in England in the early 90's. In 2002, it was found in New Zealand, and finally, in the US, has been confirmed in North Carolina, Virginia, Connecticut and Massachusetts.



The disease occurs on all species of boxwood, with American and English most susceptible. Above ground portions of the plant, including the stems, are infected. But it appears not to infect the roots of the plant. Initial symptoms appear as dark or light brown spots or lesions on the leaves. Infected leaves turn brown or tan, and defoliation quickly follows. The plant may attempt to regrow, but repeated infection and defoliation weakens the root system and can eventually kill the plant.

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Boxwood blight spreads very quickly in warm, humid conditions, and can kill plants in one season. It is carried by wind or wind driven rain. Also, it can be spread by contaminated boots, clothing and tools, and also by animals and birds. Transporting infected plants contributes to long distance spread of the disease. This may be done unintentionally because some infected plants may not have outward symptoms.

The temperature range for the fungus is 41 to 86 degrees. Blight survives in leaf debris and has been reported to survive for at least five years on composting leaves.

The following measures may help manage the spread of blight to your boxwood plants:

- 1) Purchase plants from reputable garden centers, and inspect the plants very carefully.
- 2) Newly purchased plants or cuttings should be isolated from existing boxwood plantings for at least a month, but preferably several months.
- 3) When planting, provide adequate spacing for good air circulation.
- 4) Avoid overhead watering since water helps in the spread and development of **boxwood blight**.
- 5) Since the fungus can survive in plant debris for up to five years, removing leaf debris is critical. And, by all means, do not compost.
- 6) Inspect boxwood plants weekly, if not daily. If **boxwood blight** is detected, immediately remove the whole plant from your landscape and place in a plastic bag to avoid spreading infected plant material in your garden.
- 7) A fungicide spray recommended for boxwood plants can be tried on a regular preventative schedule, although fungicides have not been particularly effective in countries which have been dealing with this blight for many years. Because of the tight nature of the boxwood plant, thorough coverage with a fungicide spray can be difficult. All parts of the plant need to be covered. Sprays should be applied until run off.

Hopefully, being armed with this information will help those among us who grow these beautiful plants to protect them from this serious disease.

...And, keep off the grass...when temperatures drop through the floor, your grass will respond by moving water to areas outside the cells. Then ice will accumulate in spaces between the cells, causing individual grass blades to become brittle. Walking on frozen grass will force the ice and cells together and can cause permanent damage to your lawn. Consequently, it's a good idea to keep off your grass as much as possible during the dead of winter.

"Winter is the time of promise because there is so little to do—or because you can now and then permit yourself the luxury of thinking so."

...Stanley Crawford...

