

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER
New Meadows Garden Club
Topsfield, Massachusetts
January 21st through February 25, 2014



Amaryllis or Hippeastrum?

A happy, prosperous and healthy New Year to all!

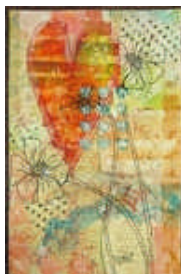
February 4

The Nominating Committee is requested to meet at the home of Sandy Duffy at 10 am.

February 18

Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Rose Ann Waite at 10 am.

February 25



Our next regular meeting will be held at the home of Georgia McHugh at 11 am. Remember the wonderful meeting we had there last year? Well, here is another, which is definitely not to be missed! This year, Georgia will present a program entitled "Artistic Expression." All you need to bring is a glue stick, a sharp pair of scissors and your adventurous spirit! Please RSVP to Rose Ann Waite by February 10th, and it is suggested that you arrange with your friends to carpool because there is limited parking.

NOTES



Copies of our newly revised club bylaws are available from Membership Chair, Janet Hanson! Don't be left out in the cold! See Janet at the next meeting for your copy.

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

Lost and Found



These pretty angels are so sad that they were left at the library after the holiday, and haven't found their way home. If yours is the home where they belong, please pick them up from Rose Ann, who is providing room and board for them until their owners claim them.

Please don't let these cuties become orphans!



And here's news about next year's theme for the holiday decorations at the Topsfield Library.



Bells will be our theme!

So, keep an eye out for bells when you are out and about this year, and give some thought to setting aside some that you might already have, which you would like to display at the Library in December.



Coming soon...Horticulture Co-Chair, Jane Cullinan, is pleased to announce that our Horticulture Meeting scheduled for March 25, 2014 will feature Ginny Ballou, who will present her program "Gardening Older/Gardening Wiser." We will learn new strategies that will enable

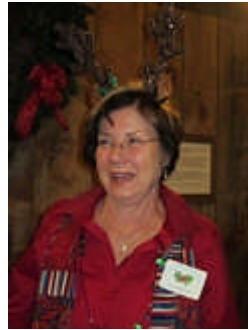
us to enjoy gardening no matter what age we admit to! A sign-up attendance sheet will be available in February, so mark your calendars now...March 25th at 10 am at the Topsfield Library.

...more on the following page...

...Bits and pieces...



Wonderfully sinful food!



*Fun on a snowy evening
at our Holiday Social!*



*Plenty of smiling faces, especially
those of Jean Bilsbury and Sandy
Duffy!*



Lots of fun and creativity at the Boxwood Tree Workshop for the Topsfield Council On Aging



...more on the next page...



*Our club's Holiday
tribute to Nat
Anderson's
Memory at the
Topsfield Library*



The Holiday decorations "breakdown crew" at the Topsfield Library!



*And your dedicated board in action
at the January meeting!*



Pretty, even after the Holidays!

...green thumb corner follows...

Green Thumb Corner

Amaryllis or Hippeastrum? Many of you may have enjoyed the beautiful show of a flowering "Amaryllis" this past holiday season, and may be wondering what to do next with it...try to bring it back into bloom next year, relegate it to the compost heap or worst yet, send it to the dump? On the other hand, maybe you have gotten past this initial quandary and have seasoned plants that, with proper care, you have



From my collection

brought back into bloom year after year. *In either case, here's something to stop you in your tracks...the plants we in North America call Amaryllis, technically aren't Amaryllis.* What's this all about? Prepare to be confused, as I was when I first heard about this. Botanists on both sides of the Atlantic haven't done much better. The confusion arises from the distinction between plants native to South Africa and plants native to South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. While all of these plants are in the same family, plants that we buy or are given to us as gifts at holiday time, have their origin in this hemisphere, not in South Africa. After centuries of back and forth, finally in 1987 at the 14th International Botanical Congress, it was decided that the genus name *Amaryllis* would be reserved for the South African variety, and the genus name *Hippeastrum* would be reserved for the South American variety. Of course, when was the last time you heard the name *Hippeastrum*? Obviously, the decision made in 1987 hasn't had much impact, even among horticulturists, and, today the names *Amaryllis* and *Hippeastrum* are used interchangeably. Have it now? So, the next time you visit your garden center at holiday time, it will technically be *Hippeastrum* you are looking for, not *Amaryllis*!



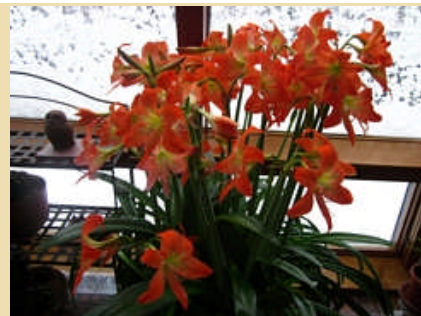
From my collection

If I haven't lost you yet, here's a bit about the culture of "those" plants! For the sake of better understanding, in this discussion, I will refer to these plants by their alias, Amaryllis. The Amaryllis is a tender bulb that will have enough energy stored in it to bloom without special treatment when it is first purchased. In some cases you might notice that the roots of the bulb have been snipped off, and because this has been done, it may not bloom for a couple of years after the initial bloom. It will be busy growing new roots instead.

Plant your bulb with the upper half exposed above the soil in a pot only 1 to 2 inches larger than the diameter of the bulb. Place the pot in a warm and bright spot. Water thoroughly, and then keep the soil relatively dry until the flower stalk appears. After blooming, cut the flower stalk, and treat the plant as any of your other houseplants, providing the brightest location indoors that you can. In the spring, when all danger of frost is past, you may bring your plant outdoors. Be sure to start by locating the plant in a spot that doesn't get direct sunlight at first so the foliage will not burn, and then gradually move it closer to a spot where you get direct sun, where it will spend the summer. Water and fertilize at regular intervals to build up the nutrients the bulb will need to grow roots and bloom again. Amaryllis should be brought in before the first frost in the fall. Traditionally, at this point, the plant can be forced into dormancy for 6 to 10 weeks by placing it in a dark location, around 55 degrees, and withholding water, allowing the leaves to dry. Then repot if necessary, or remove the top layer of soil carefully and replace it with new soil. Place the plant back to its brightly lit and warm spot in your home, water and watch your plant begin to grow once again. This completes the cycle, and may provide you with blooms at holiday time once again. *As an alternative to the process outlined above, you can try to keep your plant growing actively year-round without the traditional rest and subsequent forcing, once you have moved it inside in the fall. Do repot or top-dress annually as needed, though. When this method is used, the bulbs will probably not bloom until spring.*

...continued on the next page...sorry to be so long-winded...

*And one last point about Amaryllis...there are some species of Hippeastrum (Amaryllis) that don't need a chilling period, can be grown as houseplants, and can bloom more than once a year. What can be better than that? The photo of my plant at right was taken two weeks ago...I believe that it is **Hippeastrum Puniceum**, and I have had it for many years. A few bulbs were given to me by a friend who brought them back from a trip to the Caribbean. I believe that, where this plant is native, it naturalizes, just as daffodils do here. I give this plant no special treatment...just light, water and fertilizer. From time to time, small bulblets appear, from which new*



From my collection

plants may be started. If you would like to try your hand at it, let me know, and the next time I spy some of these bulblets, I can give a few to you. So that's the whole story in a nutshell. Now you know as much as I do about our very beautiful Hippeastrum (Amaryllis) plants. Good luck with yours! Or, if you don't have one as yet, hopefully this will tempt you to try one soon.

****One word of caution, though...as beautiful as these plants are, of all we bring into our homes during the holidays, Amaryllis seems to be the most toxic. So beware around children and pets.*



Groundhog Day is approaching, but no matter Phil's prediction, winter is still waning...believe it or not! Even though one cannot figure out how a groundhog can predict the weather, gardeners know that there are signs of optimism that we are almost through the worst of what winter has to offer. Our indoor plants have already noticed that the daylight hours are increasing. The same is true outside, and soon the sap will be flowing in our trees and shrubs causing buds to swell, hinting that soon nature will awaken, and all will be good with the world!

*So, in honor of **Groundhog Day**, here are a few fun facts about the animal:*

Groundhogs are the largest members of the squirrel family.

Groundhogs and woodchucks are the same animal.

The name "woodchuck" has nothing to do with "chuckin' wood," but stems from the Algonquin name "Wuchak."

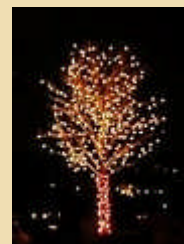
The woodchuck's diet consists of plants, fruits, tree bark and whatever you are growing in your garden.

The movie "Groundhog Day" was not filmed in Punxsutawney or even in Pennsylvania. It was shot in Illinois.

Punxsutawney Phil's accuracy at predicting the end of winter is 39 percent...worse than flipping a coin!

*Groundhogs are one of the few animals that really hibernate. Hibernation is not just a deep sleep. It is actually a deep coma, during which the body temperature drops to just a few degrees above freezing, the heart barely beats, the blood scarcely flows, and breathing nearly stops. **Happy Groundhog Day!***

***How beautiful tree limbs look when they are outlined in light for the holiday season!** But it is not a good idea to let a tree go into spring with cords still wrapped around its limbs. Branches can be girdled in just one season, and limbs can die. So, jump into action on the first sunny, above-freezing day and unwrap your trees.*



Today is the oldest you've ever been, yet the youngest you'll ever be, so enjoy this day while it lasts.