

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

February 21st through March 27, 2012

*This winter in the Europe...are
we next?*



Photo by Matt Cardy

February 21



President's Choice Field Trip. *President Rose Ann's plans are in place, the carpools are formed and we are ready to roll! An exciting day is awaiting our club's visit to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem in the late morning, followed by our business meeting, with tea and a light lunch at the home of Stefanie Mahr, 74 Washington Square East, just down the street from the Museum.*

The Museum is featuring its show "Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art." We will be seeing a mixture of contemporary and traditional work, and experience the vitality of this art through sculpture, paintings, ceramics, textiles, photographs, videos and monumental installations drawn from collections in North America and Europe. Sebastian Smee of the Boston Globe describes this show as one of the "most thrilling shows you are likely to see this year."

March 4

The Topsfield Garden Club and The Topsfield Historical Society will sponsor a special lecture entitled "Botanical Illustration Then and Now: Science, Exploration, Power and Art." This lecture will be presented by Carolyn Payzant at 2 pm at the Gould Barn, and is free and open to the public.

March 6

The Andover Garden Club is sponsoring a special program "A Visit with Isabella Stewart Gardner" featuring acclaimed performer Jessa Piaia, at the South Church, 41 Central Street, Andover at 10 am. Our club has been invited to attend, and the admission is \$5.00. Refreshments will be served.

March 13

The North Andover Garden Club presents "Shopper's Guide to Plant Greed" presented by Carol Stocker of The Boston Globe. This program will be held at the Masonic Lodge, 19 Johnson Street in the Old Center, North Andover at 7 pm.

Sick of the run-of-the-mill plants at most nurseries? Want your garden to look different from everyone else's? Carol will discuss which local nurseries grow and sell rare and unusual plants. Lists of plants and nurseries will be provided! Admission is free and open to all.

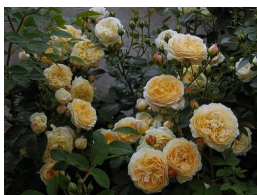
...more news on the following page...

March 14 to 18



The Boston Flower and Garden Show will be held at the Seaport World Trade Center, Boston. Hours are 9 to 9 each day, except 9 to 6 on Sunday. Want free admission? Volunteer to be a hostess at the design division for a 2 to 3 hour shift! Interested? Contact Kathy Leva at Kathy140@aol.com or Joanne Lyons at Joanne.lyons@comcast.net.

March 19



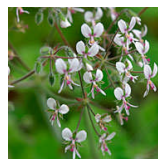
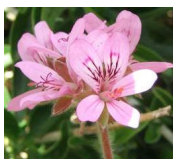
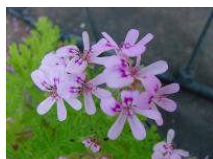
Horticulture Morning will be held at 10 am at the Espousal Center, 554 Lexington Street, North Waltham (Route 95 Exit 27A). This month's program is "Roses for the Sustainable Garden," which will be presented by "The Rose Man" Irwin Ehrenreich. This meeting is open to all club members and guests, with a donation of \$5.00 at the door.

March 20

Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Tammy Glasser, at 9:30 am.

March 27

Our next regular meeting will be held at the Topsfield Library at 7 pm. Our program will feature Jean Anderson, who will present her program "Scented Geraniums Are Not Geraniums." Hope to see you there.



NOTES



EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT...Our board has unanimously voted to make the following amendment to our bylaws:

Present wording:

Article VIII, Section 2: "The Treasurer shall not serve for more than two (2) consecutive years."

Proposed Amendment: "The Treasurer may serve two (2) consecutive terms of two years, thereafter remaining as an advisor to the treasurer-elect for an additional six (6) months."

****Discussion and a vote on this amendment will be taken at our club's regular meeting at the Topsfield Library on March 27, 2012.**

...more on the following page...

*Here's a nifty way to "go back to gardening school" with free Saturday Sessions being offered by Corliss Bros. Garden Center & Nursery. Classes are held on Saturdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am at the Nursery, 31 Essex Road (Rte. 133) Ipswich. The instructor is **Deb Lambert**, who is quite knowledgeable and was a guest speaker at one of our club meetings many years ago. **Registration is required since class size is***



***limited.** To reserve a place in any, or all, of the following workshops, call 978-356-5422, or drop by the store. You may also email gardenauthor1@verizon.net with your reservation. Here is the list of workshops:*

Sat. 2/25/12 ~ "Propagation 101" The what, when, where and how of starting your own plants from seed, layering and cuttings. Increase your appreciation of this economical, absorbing phase of gardening, and reap the rewards!

Sat. 3/3/12 ~ "The Well-Armed Gardener" Since "a little knowledge is dangerous," we'll provide all the basics needed to succeed with lawns, ornamentals and edibles... stressing the importance of prevention, diagnostics and clean maintenance.

Sat. 3/10/12 ~ "Pruning the Landscape ~ A Spring Perspective"... All the in-depth info we cover in fall, including timing, techniques & tools, but with an emphasis on the earliest pruning tasks.

Sat. 3/17/12 ~ "Your Landscape... on a Plan!" A little armchair gardening never went amiss! Just before the season begins, we'll review the basic concepts of a well-designed, high-functioning home landscape and help you avoid costly mistakes and "do-overs."

Green Thumb Corner

There has been a lot of fanfare recently about the long-awaited updated version of the USDA hardiness zone map, so here for your reference is a bit of the scoop!



First a bit of background information on this map...historically, the first standardized USDA hardiness zone map was put out in 1960, and then revised in 1965. Another major revision was made in 1990, which has been the map we have been using until now. The 1990 map included Alaska, Hawaii, Canada and Mexico. The new map no longer includes Canada and Mexico, but has added Puerto Rico. The temperature data for these maps is drawn from weather stations throughout the area covered. The new map for 2012 is based on temperature data from 1976 to 2005, so more recent temperature trends are incorporated into its zone demarcations.

Now the technicalities. Concentration is important now...this is deep stuff!

The hardiness zone map of the U.S. is divided into zones based on the average annual extreme minimum (coldest on average) temperature in that area. There used to be 11 zones, but with the new map there are 13. These zones are further subdivided into "a" and "b" categories. Each zone represents a temperature range of ten degrees, and each "a" and "b" subdivision five degrees. The lower the number, the colder the zone, with "a" being colder than "b".

...continued on the next page...

So, how is the new map different from the 1990 version, you ask? Well, while a few areas have been moved to cooler zones, the majority of changes reflect a shift to warmer zones, with most changes being by a half zone, or five degrees. While some of these changes are due to changes in climate patterns, some are a result of increased accuracy regarding local geography, such as changes in elevation and nearness to a body of water.

Okay, so what does all of this mean anyway? How can this map help in your garden? While the map's use has its limitations, it can be a useful tool to help select plants that will thrive in your climate, since winter low temperature is an important factor in plant survival. However, you must remember that there are many other factors to consider that will influence a plant's winter hardiness, including temperature fluctuations and their timing, soil conditions and exposure to sun and wind. Also, the map does not give information on frost dates, length of growing season, summer heat and temperature fluctuations, rain or snowfall amounts, all of which may well have some impact on your plants. And remember that, in addition to all of this, there are likely to be microclimates around your home that you can only learn about through careful observation on your own.

So, what to do? We gardeners in New England tend to pay a lot of attention to our hardiness zone ratings because our cold winters often are the most limiting factor for many plants we would like to include in our gardens. So, the zone rating for a plant is a good place to start the selection process. But, remember that there are additional factors to consider as well. Where the new map indicates changes to a warmer zone, gardeners can feel more confident including plant choices that in the past may have been considered "iffy" or not hardy at all in that particular area.

A look at the new USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map indicates that members in our club live either in zone 6A or 6B. Those of you closer to the water or more south are in warmer zone 6B.

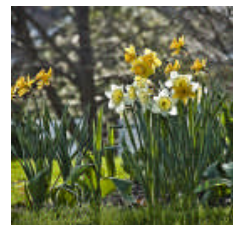
And, finally, a thought about my personal philosophy these days on plant choices for any long-lived, or even short-lived plants I now purchase and plant. In general, I don't take any chances, and purchase at the low end of our hardiness zone classification. Ideal for me is anything from zone 3 to 5. Of course, if there is a "must have" plant, I might live dangerously and take some chances as far as the hardiness zone classification is concern! Where would the challenge be if you didn't allow yourself this?

So, take a look at the new map at <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>. It has an interactive feature that lets you find your zone by entering your zip code. You can also zoom in on the map of your state to see the zone boundaries better, and you may download and print maps as well.



Whiteflies and houseplants...This time of year whiteflies can become more prevalent and attack your houseplants. Worse yet, if infected plants are moved to the garden in the spring, the whiteflies can spread to other plants in the garden. Control them now with insecticidal soap applied to the underside of the leaves every few weeks.

And, just a word about early sprouting bulbs...we have had quite a few unseasonably warm days on and off this winter, which is never a problem for me, but is it a problem for those hardy bulbs in your garden, which may peek their heads above the soil prematurely? No need to be too alarmed. Most likely, the flower buds of these bulbs are still tucked safely underground. The exposed leaves may be nipped when the temps go back down, but the plants should still go on to bloom in the spring.



Just remember, it's okay to be a late bloomer.