

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

February 25th through March 25, 2014



Snowflake beauty

February 25



It's here! Our next regular meeting will be held at the home of Georgia McHugh, 439 Linebrook Road, Ipswich at 11 am. Georgia will be presenting her program entitled "Artistic Expression." Those who have signed up to attend are requested to bring a small pair of sharp scissors, a pin cushion or container with pins, and your adventurous spirit! And it is suggested that you arrange with your friends to carpool because there is limited parking.

***Please check your e-mail messages for time change in the event of inclement weather! For driving directions, please see last month's Posy Picker.*

March 3



Horticulture Morning will be held at the South Church, 41 Central Street, Andover at 10 am. Betty Sanders, garden-keeper of the Massachusetts Society's bountiful vegetable garden at Elm Bank will present her program "Vegetables For Your Garden." This meeting is open to all club members, and their guests, and the donation is \$5.00 at the door .

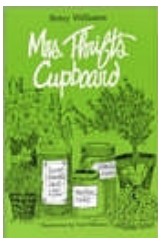
March 12



The Boston Flower and Garden Show will be held at the Seaport World Trade Center from March 12th through March 16, 2014. The North Reading Garden Club is having a bus trip by motor coach to the show on Wednesday, March 12th. They will be leaving the Walmart parking lot on Rt. 28 in North Reading at 5:15 p.m. and depart the flower show at 9 p.m. when it closes. The cost for the bus, ticket to the flower show, and refreshments (wine, cheese, crackers and goodies) on the bus is \$33 per person.

If you are interested in attending with the North Reading Garden Club, contact Karen Vitale at katill8@verizon.net or call Karen at 978-664-4162.

March 13



Mrs. Thrift, aka Betsy Williams, will "cook up a storm" at the Topsfield Library at 7 pm. Some of you might know Betsy, especially from a program she presented to our club many years ago about Fairie Gardens, but for those who haven't crossed paths with her, you are in for a treat. You will love Betsy's bubbly personality. She is very active in the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, and also teaches, lectures and writes about living with herbs and flowers. This program should be very enjoyable for all those who will attend!

March 18

Our next board meeting will be held at the Topsfield Library Meeting Room at 1 pm. If you wish to bring a beverage, please make sure it is in a covered container!

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

March 25



Our regular meeting will be held at the Topsfield Library at 10 am. The meeting 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! More details will be coming soon from Horticulture Co-Chair, Jane Cullinan, as well as an RSVP request, following our February meeting.

March 27



The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts will hold it's 12th Annual Civic Development Workshop from 9 am to 12:30 pm at the Espousal Center, 554 Lexington Street, Waltham. The cost is \$15.00 and space is limited, so registration is suggested asap. The form is below.

Please complete the form below and mail it with a check payable to GCFM, Inc. to:
Louise Sironi, Civic Development Chair, GCFM, P.O. Box 2123, Hanover, MA 02339-8123
Email: sironied@verizon.net Ph: 781-826-8421

CIVIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP, MARCH 27, 2014, 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Name of Garden Club: _____
Name of Attendee: _____
Ph: _____ *Contact Email: _____
Street Address: _____
State & Zip: _____
*Please include contact Email to receive program updates & scheduling information.

NOTES



♥**Save the date #1! The Northern District Annual Meeting will be held at the Four Oaks Country Club, Dracut on April 16, 2014. More details will follow soon. Plan to have a nice day out with your garden club friends! They say that the meeting will have something for everyone.**

♥**Save the date #2! Our April regular meeting has been changed! The new date is April 27, 2014 rather than April 22nd, and, instead of the Spring Door Arrangement workshop that was scheduled, we will be going to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston to visit their special event, Art In Bloom. We will be meeting at the Emerson Center parking lot at 11 am for carpooling to Boston. Rose Ann Waite requests that you RSVP to her by April 15th, if you plan to attend. (Don't forget that's tax day, too!) She is also looking for drivers, so please contact her if you can drive! This will be a splendid opportunity to see Mei Schuster's design, as she represents our club in this annual exclusive event at the museum.**

♥**Save the date #3! And, The Ruth A. Wallack Fund will present "Floral Fantasy" presented by the Internationally Acclaimed Designer, Marie-Francoise Deprez on May 21, 2014 at Regis College. Tickets are \$20.00, and may be purchased from our Northern District Director, Lisa Bourgeois at 978-957-3922, lisa.bourgeois@lowellgeneral.org.**

...more on the following page...

******Okay, time to listen up! For the last several years, our Hospitality Chairs have told us that the hostess committees appointed for our regular meetings have not been functioning as smoothly as they should.***

Here for your information is a quick review of the club's present routine and expectations regarding the hostess committees for our monthly meetings:

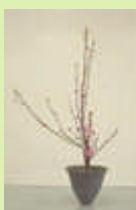
At the beginning of each club year, the Hospitality Committee Chairs are responsible for appointing hostesses for each of our monthly meetings, as appropriate. These hostesses are listed in each new program book. The first hostess listed is considered the "head hostess" and is responsible for coordinating with the other members listed to provide refreshments for the meeting.

Since most members will be assigned to one of these hostess committees during the year, it is requested that, at the beginning of each year, all members examine the new program book to take note of the date she is assigned.

If for some reason, a member cannot serve on the hostess committee to which she is assigned, she is responsible for finding a substitute. Some members find "trading" assigned times with other members works nicely for this.

That's the process, in a nutshell.

Our board is interested in making this process function more smoothly than it has been, and to this end will be asking for your suggestions for either improving the club's routine, or changing it completely. So, stay tuned!



Do you love Ikebana flower design? Ikebana evolved in Japan over a period of seven centuries and is the art of beautifully arranging cut stems, leaves, and flowers in vases and other containers. One of the styles of Ikebana is called Shoka, and the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Boston is giving us an opportunity to take a lesson in both Shoka Shofutai and Shoka Shimputai on March 22, 2014 at Whitcomb Hall,

First Parish Church, 50 Church Street, Waltham. The cost for the day is \$40.00, and must be paid by check to the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Boston by March 10th. If you are interested and would like additional information regarding registration, and what you must bring, etc., please contact President Judy, who can provide you with more details.

...more on the next page...

...Bits and pieces...



This winter we've seen zillions of snowflakes fall from the sky. How much we take them for granted, and sometimes moan that they are falling yet again, and must be shoveled to the side so we can get around! But, how can we deny the exquisite beauty of nature when looking at these wondrous frozen gifts from the sky through the lens of Russian photographer, Valeriya Zvereva's camera. It is said by some that all of nature is based on mathematics. Looking at the perfect symmetry of these snowflakes seems to prove that speculation correct, doesn't it?



How pathetic is this??? Didn't have fresh flowers from the garden to pop into a container, so I decided to "arrange" ice cycles in the snow!



And, on a much brighter note, I took this photo just today of my 15 year old Hippeastrum (remember, this is the correct name for Amaryllis) plant in full bloom.

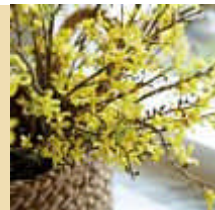
*And, very sweet memories from the club's 40th anniversary banquet in 1999 at the Gould Barn.
See any familiar faces in the crowd? I do! And, sadly, a few that we have lost.*



...green thumb corner follows...

Green Thumb Corner

About this time of year, and especially after this dreadfully cold and snowy winter, many of us are most probably fantasizing about spring, which will inevitably come! A good way to help this along is to clip a few branches from the yard and



bring them into bloom on the kitchen table. The good news is that branches like cherry and quince will not disappoint in this regard, but there is a chance that, this year, branches of the old standby, forsythia, may be a disappointment. Who would have guessed that, unless you have the correct forsythia variety planted in your yard, your plant may not be flower bud hardy, and may not bloom well or at all after a very frigid winter! This happens because, when the winter temperatures go as low as they have this winter...below zero not just once, but many times, and far below...the flower buds die, even though the leaf buds survive. This explains why, following a mild winter, the bloom on forsythias is breathtaking, probably prompting you to plant more!

***So, what to do?** Next time you have an opportunity to either replace a spent forsythia, or create a new bed in your yard, be sure to choose a variety that possesses excellent flower bud hardiness. These hardy varieties should bloom reliably each spring. Varieties of forsythia that are flower bud hardy are those that are meant for colder plant hardiness zones than ours. The plant hardiness zone for most of us on the north shore is 6a, with lowest temperatures—10 to –5 degrees F. **The varieties of forsythia that are the most flower bud hardy are meant for zone 3, with lowest temperatures –40 to –30 degrees F. Three excellent varieties to plant are Meadowlark Forsythia, Northern Sun Forsythia and New Hampshire Gold Forsythia.** All three of these varieties are rated for plant hardiness zone 3.*

As an aside to all of this, I have learned from gardening in New England for the last 42 years that it is very worthwhile when selecting plants for the garden to purchase those meant for a plant hardiness zone lower than ours, unless you will be planting in a very sheltered area. Our weather is just too undependable to assume that the lowest temperatures we will experience during winter will fall within the guidelines of the established plant hardiness zone charts. This issue with forsythia is a good example of what can happen. I'd rather be safe than sorry! It should be interesting to see what plants we grow in our gardens, and have grown for years, will survive this winter!



Snow, snow, snow...does it seem to you that we have had an endless covering of snow this winter? And it's not even over yet! Granted, it has many times been beautiful to look at, but you must admit it has been a drudge to shovel...almost

every day, it seems. But, guess what? There are advantages of lengthy snow cover during the winter! Snow, as we know, is a form of water, and, since snow usually melts and soaks into the ground slowly, shrubs, and especially evergreens, because they keep their leaves during winter, benefit a great deal from this slow source of moisture. In particular, evergreens are in peril from the sun and winter winds, which increase the transpiration rate, or loss of moisture from the twigs and leaves. Since our plants need moisture to survive, a snow-less winter, or one with little snow, can do great harm, as much as any summer drought. In addition, snow provides trees and plants a layer of protective insulation. Snow is an excellent insulator against low temperatures. The extent of protection depends on the depth, with the temperature below the snow increasing about 2 degrees for each inch of accumulation!

And, a tip from the Old Farmer's Almanac, "start cooking root vegetables in cold water, above-ground vegetables in boiling water."

"There is always in February some one day, at least, when one smells the yet distant, but surely coming, summer.

...Gertrude Jekyll