

**A POSY PICKER'S PAPER**  
**New Meadows Garden Club**  
**Topsfield, Massachusetts**  
**March 24th through April 30, 2015**

*Happy Spring...or maybe not!*



*Parsley is the herb for March, and was believed by the ancient Greeks and Romans to prevent tipsiness from too much wine, if eaten between courses.*

**March 24**

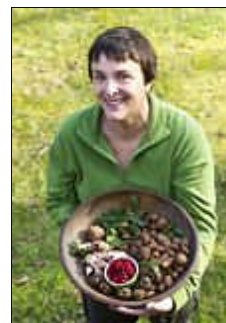


Our March regular membership meeting will be held at the Gould Barn, Topsfield at 7 pm. As seen on "The Victory Garden" on PBS, this month our Conservation Committee Co-Chairs, Gerrie Bunker and Linda Mann, are pleased to invite us to a program presented by Bill Holt, owner of Willow Mist Grasses in Stratham, NH. From his web site at willowmist.com, ornamental grasses are "casually elegant and virtually carefree. Nothing will invite more compliments nor give you more pleasure than our field grown and area-proven ornamental grasses." Learn more on the web site, and do plan to join us at this special event. Your guests are welcome.

**\*\*Hostesses: Claudette Poor, Agnes Salvatore and Linda Mann.**

**April 13**

**Horticulture Morning** will be held at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA at 10 am. **Ellen Zachos, NY Botanic Garden Teacher**, will present her program **"Backyard Foraging."** You will learn what backyard ornamentals are edible and how to recognize plants we should never eat! The donation is \$5.00 for garden club members and \$10.00 for non-member guests.



**April 14**



The North Andover Garden Club has invited C. L. Fornari, author and host of the weekly radio program GardenLine, to present her program **"Success with Vegetables"** at 7 pm at St. Michael's Church, 196 Main Street, North Andover. You know that produce right from the garden always tastes better, and here's your chance to get some tips on newer ways to grow your own food, even in the smallest of spaces. Guests are always welcome.

**April 21**

Our next board meeting will be held at home of Joline Yeaton, 43 Batchelder Road, Boxford at 10 am.

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

April 24 to April 27



Greek God,  
Dionysos

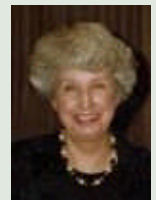
*Art In Bloom will be held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Our club will continue its participation in this exclusive event once again this year. **Margo Maione will be our designer** and Mei Schuster, last year's designer, will assist. The design will compliment Dionysos, the Greek God of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine. Also known by the Romans as Bacchus, he reigns over the museum's Greek Classical Gallery and is the last God to be accepted into Mt. Olympus. What better way to spend a day than to take in this event and have lunch out with your friends? Mark your calendars!*

April 29

*The Northern District Annual Meeting will be held at the Andover Country Club, 60 Canterbury Street, Andover. A Continental Breakfast will be served, and the morning session will feature Farmer Dave, who will tell us all about Community Sponsored Agriculture (CSA). To follow, there will be lots of boutique shopping, raffles and a nice light lunch. The afternoon session will start with floral designer Bert Ford's presentation "Spring Forward." Then the District Awards will be presented. **New this year will be the first presentation of the Georgia E. McHugh Mentor Award, established and sponsored by our club in Georgia's memory.** This is an important event for our club and we are encouraging as many members as possible to attend. The cost for the day is \$40.00. For your convenience, **a registration form is on the next page.** The deadline for your completed form is April 15, 2015...yes tax day!*



*The Georgia E. McHugh Mentor Award is a pewter tray, which will be presented at the Northern District Annual Meeting and passed from one worthy recipient to the next.*



April 30 to May 2



Claudette Poor's rose  
design Art In Flowers 2013.

*Our meeting, Art in Flowers, will be held at the Topsfield Library at 6:30 pm. Please note that this is a Thursday evening meeting. Members will create designs to coordinate with the stunning art collection at the library. Artistic Co-Chair Rose Ann Waite reports that there is still time to volunteer a design, so if you would like to do so, she and her committee would definitely welcome your call! For those who are participating, there is a planned trip to the flower market in Boston for materials on Tuesday, April 28th, and an opportunity to join other participants at Rose Ann's home prior to the meeting to create your design on entry day, Thursday, April 30th. **This year's event will be dedicated to the memory of our dear member, mentor and friend, Georgia McHugh, who will certainly be there in spirit.***

**\*\*Hostesses: Tammy Glasser, Janet Hanson and Mei Schuster**

***\*\*And, new this year, the Topsfield Town Library is planning a special reception for the public on Friday evening, May 1st to spotlight our show. The festivities will begin at 7 pm and will feature the spectacular library art collection with our Art In Flower designs, together with light refreshments.***

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

# *The Northern District Annual Meeting*

*Wednesday April 29, 2015*

***Andover Country Club***

***60 Canterbury St. Andover, MA 01810; 978-475-1263***

8:00 – 9:15	Registration
9:15 – 9:30	Business Meeting
9:45 – 10:15	Famer Dave Dumerasq– Community Sponsored Agriculture
11:15– 12:00	Boutique Shopping & Social Hour
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 –1:30	Floral Designer – Bert Ford “Spring Forward”
1:30: – 2:00	District Awards & Scholarship
2:00 – 2:30	Final Registration and Raffle

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## **REGISTRATION FORM**

*Fill in one form per person and mail in before April 15, 2015*

**SORRY NO REFUNDS – ADD \$15.00 AFTER APRIL 15, 2015**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Club \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check all that apply**

<input type="checkbox"/> Club Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Club President	<input type="checkbox"/> State Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> State Life Member	<input type="checkbox"/> State Board Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Board Member
<input type="checkbox"/> Guest (Non Member)	<input type="checkbox"/> National Board Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Former State President
	<input type="checkbox"/> National Life Member	

**Continental Breakfast, Light Lunch, Awards & Design Program** \$40.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Soup & Sandwich on whole wheat wrap with fresh fruit, dessert, coffee and tea  
*Soup will be vegetarian & gluten free and Waldorf Chicken Salad will be low fat*

Waldorf Chicken Salad \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Allergies \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to GCFM, Inc.**

**Mail to:** Laurie Peloquin  
12 Kinney Road, Middleton, MA 01949



## NOTES



How many times of late have you thought that spring was close at hand, or fantasized that it was here, only to have Mother Nature dash your optimism? Well, I think that we can safely assume that eventually spring will arrive. Until that time, however, you know that your plans for your gardens will be on hold, and the same goes for our club's plans for the Arbor Day observance at the Steward School, and our island and cemetery cleanup days. Please rest up and stay tuned for more details about these club community projects. And, here are a few words about the Arbor Day observance at the Steward School for our newer members:

our club celebrates Arbor Day each year at the Steward School in Topsfield by planting a tree on the school grounds. Down through the years, some of these trees have been planted in memory of members who have passed away. This special day features a short ceremony shared by all the children and teachers at the school, Topsfield Town dignitaries, the folks who help us plant the tree, and members of our club. All our members and their guests are invited to participate in this annual celebration of spring...which hopefully is coming soon. Stay tuned for more details as we get them.



**Happy Birthday** greetings go to our April birthday girls...Nancy Emmons, Judy Donovan, Shirley Holt, Jane Cullinan and Mary Dalton.

Enjoy your special day!



We hear that Lorraine Erickson, Judy Donovan and her husband, Dave, have been under the weather lately. We hope that they will be as good as new very soon!

We are also happy to hear that Mary Leahy's recovery from recent surgery is going well.

And we were saddened at the news that Honorary Member, Linda Harvey, has recently lost her dear brother. Our sympathies go out to her and her family.

### ...Bits and pieces...



Fun at the Boston Flower and Garden Show



...Green Thumb follows...

## Green Thumb Corner

*Oh, what should we talk about today?* As I look out my window at my still-snow and ice covered shrubs and gardens, and remember how really extreme this winter has been, and continues to be, the first thought that enters my mind is “what will be left of my plants and what should I do to bring my gardens back to respectability once spring arrives?” I am sure that many of you share my thoughts.



*What can we expect from our landscape plants when the warmer temperatures of spring finally arrive?* It's hard to tell because there are a lot of variables, some of which might be good to address today. Much of the damage that may have occurred during this past winter may not become apparent until the time we expect new growth to begin. If you have made it a practice to plant **native plants**, you might make out better than expected. **The geographic range of native plants is determined by extreme temperatures, not by average temperatures.** However, most woody ornamental plants used here are non-native species. What this means is that hardiness ratings for our area for these plants were probably considered when they were chosen for the landscape. **But, hardiness zones are classified by average low temperatures in a given region, not by extreme temperatures.** It follows that species that are marginally hardy in a particular zone may not survive if conditions are extreme. Personally, some time ago, I decided to strictly purchase plants for Hardiness Zone 3 (unless I fell in love with a plant otherwise classified), rather than for Zone 6A, which is the zone designated for our area by the USDA.

*And, what about snow cover and soil temperature?* Snow provides natural insulation that can actually protect our plants and especially their roots. Roots of plants are less hardy than their shoots. Soil is also a good insulator. The temperature of the soil is relatively constant once it is frozen, at least at depths greater than 6 inches. This is good news for the plant. But, the feeder roots at the surface are much more vulnerable, especially if the soil is sandy and un-mulched. It is not unusual for some of these roots to die during winter. It is the extent of the damage in a winter like this one that is the unknown, but will become apparent in spring.

*Frost heaves represent another hazard to our plants.* A plant's roots can be broken apart by the lifting of soil which occurs when it freezes.



*And now for the parts of our plants that we can actually see...what can we expect there?* Usually, winter damage within the plant does not become apparent until the time in spring we expect plants to start growing once again. What is immediately apparent is damage to shrub branches from snow, ice buildup, especially if you had your roof shoveled, and wind. As the

ice and snow cover melts, it is a good idea to check for damage. A drooping branch might be a sign that something is amiss. It could be that the branch is just bent from all the weight, so you can try gently nudging it up. However, it may also be broken and in need of removal. Take hold of the branch and follow it back to its origin. If it is broken or torn at its point of origin, or anywhere in between, it is probably best to remove it, making sure that all damaged tissue is removed. If another branch, bud or twig is emerging from the damaged branch, as an alternative, you can prune at this point. If the branch is not broken all the way through, you can try tying it in place with the hope that it might heal. I have successfully done this in the past. Just be sure that you use a soft tie for this purpose...maybe some of those old pantyhose in your drawer! If the branch does not leaf out or grow, off it comes. It's worth a try. While we are on the subject of pruning, it has been found that cuts on a plant heal quickest if they are clean and unpainted. So, pruning paint is not necessary.

...more follows...

Once you have removed all the damaged branches, take a look at what you have left. Your shrub might need a bid of reshaping at this point. But do keep in mind that, for spring flowering shrubs, the more you prune now, the less blooms you will have. For these shrubs, you might want to do this last reshaping pruning job after flowering time. One last point is that Junipers, Hemlocks, Pines, Spruces, Firs, Arborvitae and False Cypress do not have live buds on old wood, which means that these branches will not re-sprout when pruned. It is best to remove the entire branch if broken.

Okay, so let's get back to damage to our plantings that might not be so apparent. You might not be aware that anything is wrong until spring. Winter damaged plants are sometimes slow to start their growth. They may show distorted growth or dieback of branches, or the leaf and flower buds might appear dead. Among the plants most likely to show this kind of damage



are Arborvitae, Boxwood, Juniper, Rhododendrons, Roses, Yew and a variety of perennials. What to do? There are not too many options. You can prune out dead portions of the plant, followed by mulching and a good watering program to eliminate as much stress as possible. Fertilizer is not needed because pruning will shift shoot to root balance in favor of the roots, meaning that more energy will go to the roots. This should support new growth if the root system itself hasn't been too damaged.

And, some final thoughts: don't be hasty about giving up on damaged trees and shrubs. They have remarkable powers of rejuvenation. They may take a couple of years to look normal once more. Also, there are opportunities here. Some shrubs benefit from more than casual pruning, which brings them back to more manageable size, and encourages healthy new growth. Also, removing winter-damage shrubs and trees altogether can give you an opportunity to open up your landscape and let the sun shine through. Then you can plant species that you never could before because you were surrounded by shady conditions. If you find yourself replanting, don't be tempted to replant with fast-growing material. As a general rule, the faster a tree grows, the weaker its wood and the more likely it will be damaged in future storms.

Good luck to all of you with your gardens. I hope we will all be rewarded after this dreadful winter with a glorious spring!



Do you hate ants crawling all over your kitchen counters? I do! So, when our Rose Ann Waite passed on this hint to me, we both felt that all of you should be in the know as well. It's as simple as taking that bottle of Peppermint Extract out of your spice cabinet...or running down to the supermarket for some, if you don't have it on hand. Peppermint oil works as well. All you have to do is mix 2 to 3 tablespoons to a quart of water, preferably distilled, and spray away. Adjust the proportions for a smaller portion. And, it's always a good idea to do a spot test first on the surface you need to treat.

"A life is like a garden. Perfect moments can be had, but not preserved, except in memory.

Live long and prosper."

...Leonard Nimoy's last tweet, February 23, 2015...