

# A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

April 27th through May 27, 2014



*The official flower of April is the Sweet Pea, which symbolizes delicate pleasures.*

April 22



*The Topsfield Town Library will celebrate Earth Day with the unveiling of the library's newest community resource, a seed lending library, which our club has supported with a cash contribution to be used toward the purchase of seed to get this project off and running. Learn more at the library's Earth Day Party from 12 pm to 5 pm. Refreshments will be served while they last! \*More on the program on page 3.*

April 27



*Our next regular meeting will be a trip to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts for its special event, Art In Bloom. Those who have signed up are requested to meet at the Emerson Center parking lot, Topsfield, at 9 am sharp for carpooling to Boston. We are very excited to have the opportunity to view Mei Schuster's design, as she represents our club in this exclusive annual event at the museum.*

April 28



*Here's your chance to learn everything you ever wanted to know about Hydrangeas! Horticulture Morning has invited Mal Condon, owner of the Nantucket Hydrangea Farm, to present his program "Hydrangeas For Every Landscape." This meeting will be held at 10 am at the Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston. A \$5.00 donation is requested at the door and all members and their guests are welcome.*

May 13

*The Northern District Annual Meeting will be held at the Four Oaks Country Club, Dracut, MA. It is always fun for our club members to attend together. More details are on the registration form on the last page of this edition of our newsletter. Registration is required by May 1st.*

May 15



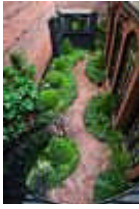
*Arbor Day ceremonies will be held at the Steward School, Perkins Row, Topsfield at 1:30 pm. Our club annually contributes to the cost of a tree to be planted on the school grounds, and participates in the Arbor Day ceremony. This year our board has voted to make a special dedication of the newly planted tree in memory of our dear member, Georgia McHugh. All members and guests are welcome.*

May 15

***\*\*\*Attention all Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs! All annual Committee Reports must be submitted to Secretary Joline Yeaton by May 15th for inclusion in her Annual Report to be distributed at our Annual Banquet and Meeting in June.***

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

**May 15**



*The Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill Annual Tour will be sponsored once again this year by the Beacon Hill Garden Club. The tour will take place rain or shine between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm. Advance tickets are \$35.00 and are available until May 7th on line at [www.BeaconHillGardenClub.org](http://www.BeaconHillGardenClub.org). Tickets are \$45.00 the day of the tour.*

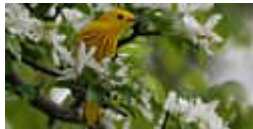
**May 20**

*Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Barbara Shade at 7 pm.*

**May 21**

*The Ruth A. Wallack Program will be held at Regis College Fine Arts Center, Weston, MA. The program will feature International Acclaimed Designer Marie-Françoise Deprez who will present her program "Floral Fantasy." Tickets are \$20.00 and are available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope with payment to GCFM and mailed to Helga Frazzette, PO Box 853, Eastham, MA 02642. More details are available on the GCFM web site.*

**May 27**



*Our next regular membership meeting is our Conservation meeting for this year, and will be held at the Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary, 87 Perkins Row, Topsfield at 10 am. Carol Decker will be our guest speaker, and she will address "Our Changing Environment."*

*\*\*\*Hostess Committee: Janet Hanson, Lorraine Erickson and Fran Laubner. Please find a replacement if you cannot serve.*

## NOTES



*Can you believe that our garden club year is almost at it's end? That can only mean that plans for our Annual Meeting and Banquet are in high gear now. This year, this event will also feature the installation of our new officers. Hospitality Co-Chair, Jean Bilsbury reports that things are right on track for our banquet, which will be held for the very first time at the Hardcover, Route 1 North, Danvers on June 10, 2014 starting at 6 pm. Here's what to expect for dinner: a garden salad bowl, freshly baked rolls, assorted cheese, fruit and vegetable crudités, choice of Prime Rib Carving Station or Baked Haddock, rice pilaf, New York Style cheesecake with strawberries for dessert, coffee and tea. The cost for all of this is \$44.00. This promises to be a very special event not to be missed. Keep tuned for further details, which will come soon from our Hospitality Committee.*

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

*The Annual Meeting of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts will be held on Wednesday, June 4, 2014 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center, 181 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA 01752. All members are welcome to attend. A registration form is available on the GCFM web site: [gcfm.org](http://gcfm.org). The cost is \$55.00 prior to May 10th and \$70.00 after May 10th.*

*\*And now a bit more about the new seed lending program at the Topsfield Town Library...the library has drawn inspiration from other libraries around the country, who already have these programs in place. "The concept of the seed lending library works like this: patrons 'borrow' seeds from the library, plant them, and bring back the resulting seeds from their harvest for others to use. The goal is for the seed lending library to be sustained by local residents after the first season, as word spreads and more and more people use the seed library. By using the seeds from Topsfield's Seed Library, patrons can do their part to promote biodiversity and nurture locally adapted plants." Stop down at the library if you would like additional information.*

*♥Save the date #1! Spring is here and Horticulture Co-Chair, Jane Cullinan, would like us to stay tuned for her call for volunteers to help with the spring cleanup of the garden at the Pine Grove Cemetery in early May. She would also like us to know that planting of the garden will most likely take place the week of May 12th.*

*♥Save the date #2! Spring is here and Island Beds and Library Urns Chair, Claudette Poor, reminds us that we will soon hear from Gerrie Bunker and Judy Connelly regarding clean up of the Linebrook and Prospect Street island beds. Please save some time and energy to lend a hand !*

*♥Save the date #3! And last, but certainly not least, please mark your calendar for Strawberry Festival Day in Topsfield, which this year will be June 14, 2014. Claudette Poor has graciously volunteered to coordinate this important fundraising event for our club this year. Details will be coming very soon. Please stay tuned!*



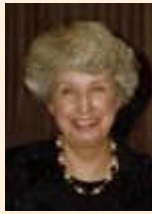
*And here are a couple of "housekeeping items" to keep in mind as our garden club year draws to a close: Membership Chair, Janet Hanson, will soon be looking for you to renew your membership in our club with your dues payment for next year, and Treasurer, Shirley Holt, is looking for any receipts members may have, which are eligible for reimbursement by the club.*

*Attention all animal lovers! There is a new GCFM garden project at the Franklin Park Zoo! The garden will provide food for the various animals in residence. Volunteers to tend the gardens in two hours shifts are needed from June through October. For more information, contact Ali Fioretti at 617-989-2017 or at [afioretti@zoonewengland.com](mailto:afioretti@zoonewengland.com). You can also volunteer on [www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0B4ACA72BA5FF2-zoonew](http://www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0B4ACA72BA5FF2-zoonew).*

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



*It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to our dear Georgia McHugh, flower show judge extraordinaire, teacher, mentor and friend.*



*Georgia was at the very heart of the New Meadows Garden Club. A member since 1970, her thoughts were always with the club, and each and every one of its members. She was a very humble woman of extremely great talent, and was an inspiration to all who knew her. How gently she shared her vast knowledge of all kinds of flower design and provided guidance to us, which was always her way.*

*There was no one like her and it is so difficult to imagine a world with Georgia not in it. She will be greatly missed by all those whose paths crossed with hers in this life. Our hearts ache for the beautiful family she leaves behind. We extend our sincerest sympathies to them at this very sad time.*

### *Remembering Georgia*



*Annual Banquet 2010*



*Georgia with her prize winning design entry at the Topsfield Fair 2010*



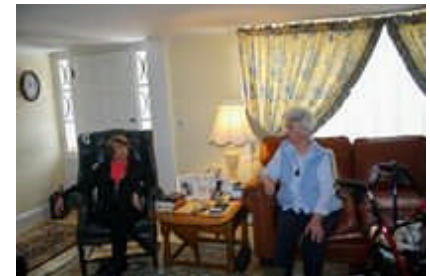
*At the Northern District Annual Meeting 2012*



*Receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award April 2007*



*Georgia sharing her design expertise with the club in February 2013*



*Sharing a moment with long-time garden club friend, Sandy Duffy 2013.*



*At the Pot-et-Fleur workshop with Rose Ann Waite March 2013*



*With long-time garden club friends at our Annual Banquet June 2013.*



*And, our last artistic event under Georgia's guidance February 2014*

*...Green Thumb follows...*

## Green Thumb Corner

*Let's face it, it was a very tough winter. As far as I am concerned, anything less than 70 degrees is unacceptable, so, you know for sure, things have been bad for me for quite a while! I can't blame any of you who can't wait to get to the garden center to get annuals and perennials, leaving the dismal winter far behind. But, not so fast! As you saw, we did have some nights this past*



*week during which the temperatures fell well below freezing. So, what to do? If the weather report suggests temperatures below freezing, you will want to take precautions if you were the first in line to purchase your annuals and perennials. If you can't bring your plants inside, keep in mind that low lying areas with little sun exposure are more likely to suffer from frost. Here's what to do: **Cover tender plants with an old bed sheet or plastic.** However, when using plastic, be sure that the plastic does not come in contact with the plants, because they could still freeze. I have purchased row cover material, and have found that this works very well. **Be sure to secure whatever you use as a cover so that it doesn't blow away!** The next morning, be sure to **remove the cover after the sun comes up if temperatures are expected to exceed 32 degrees.** These tips are the same for late last frost in spring as they are for early first frost in fall.*

*Regarding frost hardiness, plants are classified as **hardy**, meaning that they can withstand freezing temperatures for short periods without injury, **tolerant**, meaning that they can withstand very light frosts, **tender** and **warm loving**, meaning that all bets are off with these. Both of the last of these will not make it through temperatures below the freezing point.*

*Among common plants classified as **hardy** are Cornflower, Ornamental Cabbage, Primrose, Violet and Pansy.*

*Common **tolerant** plants include Dianthus, Snap Dragon Sweet Pea, Torenia, Coreopsis, Calendula and Black eyed Susan.*

***Tender** plants include Verbena, Sweet Alyssum, Statice, Petunia, Aster and Scabiosa.*

***Warm loving** plants include Vinca, Ageratum, Begonia, Celosia, Cosmos, Impatiens, Lobelia, Marigold, Portulaca, Phlox and Salvia.*

***Keep these tips in mind, and you will garden like a pro both early and late in our growing season!***




*It's always time for us garden club members to bring fresh flowers into our homes. Whether you buy them at the Flower Market or at your favorite supermarket, there is nothing like bringing living flowers inside. It instantly lifts the spirit. With this in mind, our Artistic Co-Chair and super flower designer, Rose Ann Waite, would like to pass along some tips to keep your floral material in tip top shape as long as possible.*

*Obviously, the quicker flowers are sold, the better. Their vase life is limited, so the faster they get to your home, the better. While each flower has a genetically determined vase life, things can be done to maximize the time you will be able to enjoy them.*

*So, the first step is to purchase only quality flowers and greens, making sure to inspect them for signs of disease or infection. Then on their way home, keep your flowers cool. Vase life drastically decreases as flower temperatures increase.*

*...more Green Thumb on the next page...*



Once home, unpack your flowers and **remove any damaged foliage or flowers.** Now it is time to **re-cut the stems to improve water uptake.** This is best done with a clean knife, since ordinary scissors may bruise or crush the stems. Depending on the flower, remove the bottom 1 to 2 inches, or whatever is available or unneeded. Using a diagonal cut will prevent stems from resting flat against the bottom of the container, possibly blocking water intake. **Next remove any foliage that will be below the water line.** If this is not done, your flowers may wither a lot faster than they should. Do this gently so that you do not damage the stems.

Since flowers can easily lose 5 to 10 percent of their water during transportation and storage, it is important to get through these steps quickly. The quicker the flowers are hydrated, the better the vase life will be.

**Okay, now we are ready for the water!** In most cases, use tap water at the temperature at which it comes out of the faucet. Always use fresh water, not water that has already been used, and always use clean buckets or vases. Clean is the optimal word here!

**Use of a floral preservative will help in the re-hydrating process, so this can be added to the water.** When flowers are placed in a preservative solution, they should be left to stand at room temperature for an hour or two, out of draughts and away from heat or cooling sources, out of sunlight and away from fruit, vegetables or evergreens, which emit high levels of ethylene. Ethylene prematurely ages, damages and shortens vase life, so it is best to protect your flowers from its sources. Then move the flowers to a cooler location. **All of this is known as the conditioning period, and doing this at room temperature allows the flowers to take up the preservative food and water quickly.** This process would take longer in cool temperatures. Once the 1—2 hours has passed, move your flowers to a cool room or floral cooler. **\*\*An exception to this process of conditioning is the case of handling roses. They do better when placed directly into a cool room for conditioning.** A note about flower preservatives...nearly all flowers benefit from the use of preservatives. Preservatives typically have an antibacterial effect, keeping the water fresh. They also contain an energy source, such as sugar, that provides energy to the flowers. Some even contain anti-ethylene agents. However, remember that they do not perform miracles. You must still handle your flowers with care. These preservatives are commercially available, or, if you choose, you can mix your own. Recipes are available on the following web site: <http://chemistry.about.com/od/chemistryhowtoguide/a/cutflowers.htm>

Once you have arranged your flowers for display, be sure to gradually introduce them from the cool room to a warm room, if that is the final destination. **Try not to display your design in direct sunlight. Lighting as close to natural daylight is good, though.** Place your flowers where there is good ventilation, but avoid direct draughts, which will dehydrate them.

**And now, a word about floral foams.** Floral foam is one of the tricks of the flower designing trade. Floral foams saturate best when allowed to float freely in a tub of water in a flat position. Use enough water to fill the brick and allow it to float freely when it is fully saturated. Lighter foams soak more quickly than the heavier ones. Let the blocks saturate at their own speed...no need to force them under water to speed up the process, which can actually have the opposite effect. It is a good idea to use floral preservatives in water used for soaking. **Please note that the foam is not a substitute for water!** It is a good idea to choose containers that provide a reservoir for water, even though you are using soaked foam. Foam has a wicking or capillary action, so a reservoir of water to draw from is a good thing. Your design will last much longer!

A good resource for information on flower design is the book **“Cut Flowers of the World” by Johannes Maree and Ben-Erik Van Wyk.** Hopefully, this information will be helpful when it is time for you to bring your next bouquet of flowers home!

*The garden is a love song, a duet between a human being and Mother Nature. ~Jeff Cox*



Northern District Annual Meeting  
Tuesday May 13, 2014

Four Oaks Country Club  
978-455-0054  
1 Clubhouse  
Lane Dracut,  
MA 01826

8:15am	Registration, Breakfast, and Shopping
9:15am	Welcome and Business
9:45am	John Trexler, "Historic Gardens & Their Importance"
10:30am	Outstanding Members
11:00pm	Boutique Shopping, Spirits & Socializing
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Designs from the four schools
1:30pm	Scholarship & Awards
2:00pm	Final Registration Report and Raffle
2:30pm	Adjournment

REGISTRATION FORM

*Fill in one form per person and mail in before May 1, 2014*

**Luncheon, Awards & Design Program & Installation      \$40**

☐ Baked Herb Haddock

☐ Chicken Francoise with Lemon & Capers

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

**Please make checks payable to GCFM, Inc. with Northern District Annual Meeting in memo Mail to: Laurie Peloquin**

12 Kenney Road

Middleton, MA 01949

Email lpeloquin97@gmail.com \_phone 978-777-1370