

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

April 24th through May 22, 2018

The objectives of the New Meadows Garden Club shall be to foster knowledge of home gardening, decorative arrangements and an interest in civic projects.



Together with Daisies, the exquisite Sweet Pea is April's flower. In the language of flowers,

Sweet Pea symbolize delicate pleasure and bliss. Discovered by a monk in Italy around 1699, these are one of the loveliest of annual flowers. Most selections are tall vines, but there are also short, non-climbing types, perfect for growing in borders or in containers, where they cascade for about 8 to 10 inches. In our climate, their fragrant blossoms appear in early to mid-summer in colors such as hot pink, lavender, light pink, white and purple. Because of their sweet fragrance, bright colors and strong stems, Sweet Pea is perfect for floral arrangements, centerpieces and bridal bouquets. They are also used to create romantic, aromatic potpourri!

Welcome to our newest club member, Pat Durgin!

April 24

►► **Our regular membership meeting at Pettengill Farm has been cancelled.**

April 25



The Northern District Annual Meeting will be held at the Tewksbury Country Club, 1880 Main Street, Tewksbury. The morning program will take us on a visual tour through some beautiful historical gardens, with Master Gardener, Julia Danforth and Local Historian, Michael Lally. After lunch there are two afternoon programs. The first will feature Martha Morrison and Leslie Voss of the Topsfield Garden Club, who will give us a look "Behind the Scenes at the Topsfield Fair from a member's view." The second will feature Deb Taverna of the Chelmsford Garden Club, who will showcase an exciting and successful fundraiser, "Smoking Hot Kitchen 'n Counter Tour."

April 27



Arbor Day will be held at the Steward School, 261 Perkins Row, Topsfield at 9:15 am. It's best to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the ceremony so that you have time to check in at the office. As our club does each year, a tree will be donated and planted on the school grounds. You are invited to join in the celebration of this rite of spring with the children in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

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

April 28 - 30



Designer, Barbara Shade and assistant Rose Ann Waite at the MFA exhibitor's meeting

Art in Bloom will be held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Barbara Shade will be representing our club in this very prestigious event, with assistance from Rose Ann Waite. Why not plan a day in Boston and take in the show! Here's a link for more information about Art In Bloom:

http://www.mfa.org/programs/series/art-in-bloom?utm_source=dm_monthly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mfa-monthly&utm_content=040118-mfa-monthly-offer_version_A&promo=14078

May 2



Please mark your calendar for our annual spring cleanup of the two traffic islands our club maintains in Topsfield. We will meet at the Prospect Street island at 10 am. When our work is complete there, we will move to the Linebrook Road island. With a good group of volunteers, the job is usually complete by 12 pm. Please bring your gardening gloves, a rake, a plastic trash bag or two and perhaps some clippers. There are jobs for all abilities, so please contact Shirley Holt if you can make it!

May 10



Membership Chair, Janet Hanson, will mail membership renewals to all members. Please renew your membership with your dues payment as soon as possible!

May 15

Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Shirley Holt at 10 am.

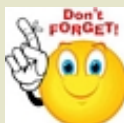
May 17



The Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill Annual Tour will be held from 9 am to 5 pm, rain or shine. Attendees will be invited behind the gates of ten to twelve spectacular private gardens of club members, to visit at their own pace. Also this year, additional gardens will be available for viewing without entry, provided by Beacon Hill neighbors who are not members of the Beacon Hill Garden Club! Advance tickets are \$50.00, and \$60.00 after May 10th.

For tickets and more information, please visit BeaconHillGardenClub.org

May 20



***Attention all Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs! All annual Committee Reports must be submitted to Secretary Joline Yeaton by May 20th for inclusion in her Annual Report to be distributed electronically in June.

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

May 22



Our regular membership meeting for May will be our Conservation Meeting for this year...an ecological, scenic, narrated boat tour on the Merrimack River, from 1 pm to 3 pm aboard the Yankee Clipper. This ecotour will introduce us to the resident plant and wildlife, while we learn about the area's natural, economic and maritime history. The boat has a cover, so our tour will proceed, rain or shine. Your guests are welcome to join us. The approximate cost is \$20 per person. Water and snacks will be provided by our hostesses.

The Yankee Clipper boat docks just 500 feet north of Market Square at the Waterfront Promenade Park, just down river from the Black Cow Restaurant. Metered parking is available nearby. Considering our New England weather, layered clothing would probably be best and come prepared to take lots of photos.

►► It is important to respond by May 7th with your check in the amount of \$20.00 made payable to NMGC to either Judy Donovan or Penny Rogers.

Our hostesses for this meeting are Gerrie Bunker and Linda Flynn

NOTES



► A reminder from Treasurer, Mary Leahy! The club's fiscal year will close on June 30th and she is now looking for any receipts members may have, which are eligible for reimbursement by the club. She needs these very soon, so she can close her books at the end of our garden club year! So please get them to her as soon as possible.



Help Wanted! We are looking for volunteers to help coordinate our fundraising table at Topsfield's Strawberry Festival, June 9, 2018. There are jobs for everyone...this is a club effort! Our treasury, which provides programs for you and also supports our community projects, depends on your help at this event. Be on the look-out for your opportunity to sign up soon!

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

...Bits and pieces...



Suzanne Mahler speaks to our club about shade gardening at our March 2018 meeting.



Our table at the Topsfield Garden Club's Grow Spring! Expo April 2018

...Green Thumb follows...

Green Thumb Corner

Don't get me wrong, when weather permits in this part of the world, there are few things I like better than working in my garden. But, even this favorite pastime of mine does come with challenges. I guess if I were to have to classify these challenges on a scale of degrees of annoyance, I would have to say that coming out on a sunny morning to discover that my favorite garden lovelies have been eaten by the local wildlife has to be at the top




of the list. Yes, I know that they have to eat too, but can't they pick on anything other than plants with which I have so strongly bonded? So, as I definitely get older, but hopefully even wiser, I have come to the conclusion that perhaps there is a way to solve this problem...container gardening. Of course one must make sure to place the containers out of harm's way, but at least this is an option. Another plus is the ability to move containers to places around the yard, thus providing the proper conditions for the plants as the sun changes positions during our growing season. With all this in mind, why don't we chat a little bit about container gardening today.

First of all, you can't garden in containers without containers. What to choose? The reality is that almost anything can serve as a container for plants...bathtubs, buckets, wagons, even old shoes. Of primary importance is drainage...be sure that there are drainage holes to allow excess water to drain out. One the most common containers are clay pots, either unglazed or glazed. Unglazed pots tend to dry out quickly, especially if they are small, while glazed pots are better at retaining water. Both are breakable, and may crack if frozen. Wooden pots, like whiskey barrels or window boxes, acquire character as they age, but they do decay. Metal pots also acquire character with age, but may rust or dent, and may also cause the soil to overheat, which may damage the roots of your plants. Plastic pots range in prices and can be very pretty when they are designed to resemble natural materials. They are more lightweight than the previously mentioned options, and do not weather quite as much. I prefer good quality plastic pots for my container plants, but have had a few large ones that I left outside filled with soil crack in winter. I no longer leave the pots outside during the cold winter months. ►If you love a container that has some of the shortcomings I have mentioned, a quick solution is to grow your plants in inexpensive plastic pots, and then place them in a decorative pot. Fill the space in between the pots with mulch and you're good to go.

Once you have decided on the type of pot you will use, how about the size? If you plan to plant annual flowers, which have small, compact root systems, a smaller container will do if you promise to provide adequate water and fertilizer. But, remember, any container smaller than 8 inches will dry out very quickly!

If you've decided to plant perennials, a tree or a shrub in a container, your considerations will be different because these plants will remain in your container for more than a growing season and may need to withstand winter conditions. For these

...more Green Thumb follows...



types of container plants, you will need to be generous when choosing the size, keeping in mind the mature size of the plant that will live there. Also providing winter protection will definitely be a consideration. I prefer to move these types of container plants into my garage for the winter, rather than trying to provide enough protection to prevent the plant's roots from freezing solid, or from thawing and freezing, which can cause heaving.

And, why not grow vegetables in containers? You can do it! So that your vegetables produce well, good sized containers are important. Tomatoes grow well in 5 gallon containers, while peppers and eggplant will thrive in 2 gallon containers. If you would like to grow carrots, beets or other root vegetables, make sure your container will accommodate the mature size of the root. You definitely don't want curly carrots after all your efforts!

So, what plants should you choose for your container? Containers overflowing with one type of plant can certainly be spectacular. But why not live on the wild side and combine different types of plants in your container? Just make sure that the plants you choose have similar growing requirements, most importantly similar light and moisture preferences. If you are interested in plants that bloom seasonally, you can plant cool-season plants in your container in spring and fall, and plants that love the heat in summer. And, if you would like to add lots of drama and intrigue, I'm sure that many of you have heard the expression "Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers" in reference to container gardening. ► Thrillers are big, attention-getting, movie-star plants. They are usually tall, upright plants, and they should be the first ones to choose for your container. There should be something truly outstanding about them, and they should last all season. Good candidates for your Thriller would be Cannas or some Purple Fountain Grass. ► Fillers are more finely textured and mounding plants that will surround and weave through your Thriller. Fillers add mass to your container and can hide the stems or stalks of your Thriller. Coleus and Begonias make very good Fillers. And lastly, there are the Spillers. ► The job of Spillers is to cascade over the side of your container as their branches tumble toward the ground. Be sure to plant Spillers close to the edge of your container so they can do their job. Good Spillers are Sweet Potato Vine, Nasturtiums and Bacopas.

What about color? That's totally up to you. If you are in a tranquil frame of mind, choose pastels like soft pink, lavender or pale yellow. These containers are better viewed up close, and do seem to get washed out in very bright sunlight. For a little more excitement, you can choose invigorating colors like sunny yellows, reds and oranges. These containers are good viewed from a distance and show up well in bright sunlight. Remember that you can also use pastels to tone down a container whose color is out of control, or use a more vivid colored plant to liven up a container planted with pastels. Easy, right?

Well, I guess I'm just about at the end of my story for this month. Happy container gardening in the beautiful months to come.