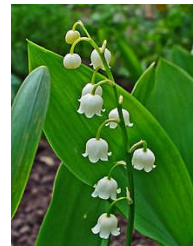


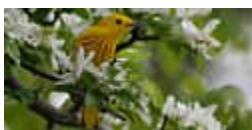
A POSY PICKER'S PAPER
New Meadows Garden Club
Topsfield, Massachusetts
May 27th through June 30, 2014



The official flower of May is the Lily of the Valley, which symbolizes the return of happiness.

A warm welcome to new member, Pat Gagnon!

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, renown environmentalist, will be our guest speaker, and she will address "Our Changing Environment." Carol will speak promptly at 10 am, so, if you would like some refreshment beforehand, come a bit early. Our business meeting will follow the presentation. We are invited to spend time on the beautiful 1954 acre grounds following the meeting. All-in-all, it sounds like a beautiful day! Don't forget to RSVP to Mary Leahy if you are attending.

June 6—June 7



The Concord Museum is holding its 25th Annual Garden Tour from 9 am to 4 pm. The museum is located at Cambridge Turnpike and Lexington Road, Concord. This self-guided and self-paced tour will take you through Concord area gardens. Tickets are \$35.00, and can be purchased at www.concordmuseum.org, or by calling 978-369-9763 x 216.

June 10



Hospitality Co-Chair, Jean Bilsbury reports that things are still right on track for our Annual Meeting and Banquet, which will be held at The Hardcover Restaurant, 15A Newbury Street, Danvers starting at 6 pm, with dinner served promptly at 6:30 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, and promises to be a very special event featuring the installation of our new officers, and a very special tribute to our dear Georgia McHugh. To participate in this most special event of our garden club year, please send your check for \$44.00 payable to NMGC to Jean Bilsbury by May 31, 2014.

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

June 14



Strawberry Festival time is almost here! As all of you know, this exciting event is held annually on the Topsfield Green. It is a fun day for all ages, and a perfect venue for our most important fund raising effort of the year. And, this year, we are trying some new ideas to make our booth the best ever! Once again, we will need the help of each and every one of you to make our day a great success. Here's what we need:

Each member is requested to bring either a small annual or herb basket or container, suitable for display on a deck or patio, and, of course your potted perennials. Please drop these off at our booth by 9 am. If the timing is inconvenient, please call Claudette Poor, who will make arrangements for someone to transport your items to our booth for you.

Please note that, because our space is limited and we wish to make sure that we display your beautiful baskets, containers and potted perennials in the most enticing manner for our customers, we will not be including the Green Elephant Sale, as we have the past few years. Please do not bring these items to our booth this year...hold onto them until another time.

And last but certainly not least, we will need lots of hands at the booth...there's set up to do, selling to do, and breaking down to do at the end of the day. You will have a chance to help by signing up through an e-mail message Claudette will be sending very soon. Please be looking for it, and mark your calendars for our special day... June 14, 2014!

June 19



Open Garden Day 2014 will be held from 10 am to 4 pm. The gardens are all local in the towns of Topsfield and Boxford, and admission is free. Once again we are invited to enjoy and share these gardeners' "love, passion and craziness for gardening." Here is the list of open gardens for this year:

*Anne Minnehan
20 Proctor Drive, Topsfield*

*Alexandra de Buy Wenniger
136 Perkins Row, Topsfield*

*Maureen McAllister
17 Cedar Street, Topsfield*

*Darcy Fulton
13 Rowley Road, Topsfield*

*Paula Guilbault
396 Ipswich Road, Boxford*

*Anna Plucinska
35 Lawrence Road, Boxford*

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

NOTES



The Horticulture Committee extends its sincere thanks to those of you who pitched in to successfully complete the spring clean-up of both the Prospect Street and Linebrook Road traffic islands and the planting of the exquisite Veteran's Memorial Garden at the Pine Grove Cemetery. And a big thank you in advance to all those who have signed up to care for these public places over the summer. Your many helping hands make these community service projects a joy for our club to offer and the public to behold.

And just a repeat of a couple of "housekeeping items" mentioned in last month's edition, as our garden club year draws to a close: Membership Chair, Janet Hanson is looking forward to receiving your membership renewal and dues payment for next year, so, if you haven't gotten it to her yet, please do it soon. Also, Treasurer, Shirley Holt, is looking for any receipts members may have, which are eligible for reimbursement by the club. The deadline for these receipts is June 30, 2014, the end of our fiscal year.

As many of you are aware, books are donated to the Topsfield Library by our club in honor of members who have passed away. We are pleased to announce that, since Nat Anderson was employed at the library in the Children's Room for many years, your board decided to donate two books to the library in her memory. The books are now in circulation, and here are the titles: "The Sibley Guide to Birds, Second Edition" by David Allen Sibley, and a children's book, "The Pigeon Needs a Bath" by Mo Willems. Bookplates are included in these books designating these memorial tributes to Nat.

Congratulations are in order for our club as a whole, and for two members of our club individually, for awards received at the Northern District Annual Meeting on May 13, 2014. First, President Judy accepted a certificate for our club's 55th anniversary as a federated club. Then the excitement continued when our member, Jean Hampton, was awarded the Katherine Suozzo Award for her outstanding horticultural contributions as a member of our club. As if that wasn't enough, Linde Martin was awarded the district's Lifetime Achievement Award. It was a very good day for our club, indeed. Many thanks to our Awards and Scholarship Co-Chair, Barbara Shade, who worked with the district to secure these awards for our two members.

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

...Bits and pieces...



*Spring cleanup
and planting at
Linebrook Road
and Prospect
Street islands and
the Pine Grove
Cemetery.*



*Arbor Day at the
Steward School,
this year,
dedicating the
newly planted Red
Maple Tree to the
memory of
Georgia McHugh.*



*The Northern District Annual Meeting
May 13, 2014*



*Aqua was the color of the day for
Shirley, Sandy, Mary, Helen and ND
Director, Lisa Bourgeois.*



*Linde, Barbara and Jean show off
our awards!*



*Our club received a gold star for the
highest attendance at the meeting!*

...Green Thumb follows...

Green Thumb Corner

So, today, at Horticulture Co-Chair Jane Cullinan's suggestion, we are going to talk about *Trailing Arbutus* or the *Mayflower*, which is...drum roll please... the *Massachusetts State Flower*. If you have paged through your program book, you will see this listed on page 2! This plant is a member of the heath



family, and is also the provincial flower of Nova Scotia. This evergreen, low-growing and creeping shrub, with its waxy fragrant pink or white flowers in spring, is native throughout eastern North America, from Labrador to Manitoba and south to Florida and Mississippi. *Epigaea repens* is its botanical name. The Mayflower has been on the endangered list since 1925, and is difficult to find at plant nurseries, though it is available commercially. It is considered to be one of North America's most attractive wildflowers. The dainty trailing arbutus was the earliest flower to greet the Pilgrims after their first fearful winter at Plymouth and so they named it "Mayflower" for their ship, The Mayflower. For this reason it was chosen to be our state flower.

That being said, the plant is rather tricky to grow, and is exceptionally difficult to establish in a home garden. It is difficult to transplant and propagate, and does best if it is not disturbed. Mayflower is intolerant of drought or flood, and grows very slowly. It is thought that the plant requires a symbiotic relationship with fungus in order to survive. It does not do well in the face of grazing...think deer! You will need well-draining, humus-soil in shade or partial shade, and some luck, to grow it.

And now for a bit of confusion...there's always a catch, isn't there? Mayflower, *Epigaea repens* or trailing *Arbutus*, should not be confused with plant in the same family, which goes by the name *Arbutus*! Remember that the Mayflower is a low creeping, evergreen shrub. The *Arbutus* is a broadleaved evergreen tree sometimes called a "madrone" from the Spanish name for strawberry tree. It is Canada's only native broadleaved evergreen tree. These are two different plants!!! With this in mind, it might be a good idea for us to review the name we are using for the Massachusetts State Flower in our program book going forward! Oh, well, enough said about that.

Our discussion of our State Flower would not be complete if I didn't pass along to you a Native American legend given to me to share with you by Horticulture Co-Chair Jane:

Indian legend tells a pretty story about that loveliest of spring flowers, the trailing arbutus. Each year when the winter spirit, Peboan, fell asleep, his discarded furs turned to icy leaves. Coming across these one spring day, Segun, the summer spirit put them in her hair. Immediately they came to life. Then Segun planted them in the earth and breathed upon them. At the touch of her warm breath, flowers appeared, flushed pink, and gave out a spicy perfume. "When the children find these," she said, "they will know that Segun has been here, and that Peboan has gone away."



Have you ever wondered about rubber mulch? I tend to walk right past it when I am in the box stores especially because I don't think it is particularly attractive, and the concept really doesn't make sense to me. I know that it is a good thing to recycle, but is this going too far? Well, here is some of the skinny on rubber mulch. It generally consists of tires that are ground up whole, after the steel

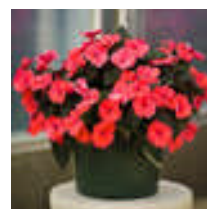
...more Green Thumb on the next page...

bands have been removed. Car, truck and trailer tires are used. **These are considered the advantages of rubber mulch over others:** for landscaping and gardening purposes, rubber mulch keeps the soil two to three degrees warmer, and, because it is non-porous, it does not absorb water on its way through to the soil, leaving more moisture for your plants. Also, it is a weed barrier and reduces fungus growth. For playgrounds, it provides an elastic, springy quality thus providing greater safety for children in case of falls. It is also more durable than other mulches, lasting up to twelve times longer.

Now for the disadvantages: rubber mulch does not enrich soil as organic mulch does. It also leaches zinc and iron into the soil, and in our local already acidic soils, this could potentially harm plants. Worse, some recycled varieties contain trace amounts of various minerals from the tire manufacturing process and other chemicals which may have been picked up during the tire's use. These chemicals, both toxic and carcinogenic, may leach into your plants when used in the garden...its probably a good idea to think twice about using this in a vegetable garden. And what about its use on playgrounds? The EPA, in a limited study found that the concentrations of materials in rubber mulch were below levels considered harmful, and endorsed its use to cushion the surfaces of children's playgrounds. The study, however, went on to say that due to its limited nature, and the large diversity of materials used to make rubber mulch, no definitive conclusions could be reached. The EPA has also given its green light to the use of rubber mulch near pets. However, pets should not be permitted to eat it!

With all this in mind, I know that I will continue to walk past the rubber mulch displays when out shopping for gardening supplies. I came across a quote on the issue, which goes like this: "It is simply the dumping of tires into the environment, but in a broken-down, partially digested fashion." I hope that I have been objective about this issue...maybe not...but you can decide for yourself!

Impatiens Downy Mildew revisited...you might recall an article in our February 2013 Posy Picker Paper about this very subject, brought to our attention by Jean Hampton! Here's an update which may be of use to you as you seek out your annuals for this year. This mildew affects Impatiens Walleriana, the basic impatiens plants...doubles as well. It is still out there! The good news is that it does not affect New Guinea Impatiens or Sunpatiens.



Just to review...downy mildew is an airborne disease which causes leaves and flowers to drop, resulting in bare stems with a few yellow leaves. Beds will be destroyed during the summer season. And there is no known treatment to prevent this. While some nurseries are still offering the Walleriana variety of impatiens, it is best to continue to avoid them. Also, keep in mind that, if you have had impatiens with this problem in your garden in the past, the disease can potentially remain in your soil for a number of years. If you must have impatiens, don't plant them in the same location. You may, however, plant your other plants there.

Some suggested substitutions for impatiens until this whole problem is sorted out would be begonias, New Guinea impatiens, Sunpatiens, or coleus. If I hear anything further on this issue, I'll be sure to pass it along. If you hear something, I would appreciate your input! It's fun to work together.

And so another garden club year has passed. My parting words last year are appropriate once again: For many of you the end of our year means "Garden Club summer vacation." Your officers and board members, however, will work throughout the summer, planning an exciting garden club year to come for all of us. As they go through this process, please be there to enthusiastically help, should they ask. Only together can we make our club the best it can be. Best wishes for a beautiful, peaceful and safe summer!