

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

May 23rd through June 30, 2017

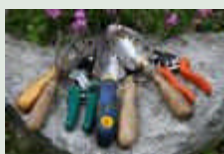
The objectives of the New Meadows Garden Club shall be to foster knowledge of home gardening, decorative arrangements and an interest in civic projects.



It's Lily of the Valley time once again! Legend has it that these flowers sprang from Eve's tears when she was exiled from the Garden of Eden.

Lily of the Valley is native to the cool, temperate Northern Hemisphere areas of Asia, Europe and North America. In the "Language of Flowers", Lily of the Valley signifies "return to happiness". Lily of the Valley is actually a member of the Asparagus Family. While we find asparagus quite yummy, it is quite curious to note that all parts of Lily of the Valley are extremely poisonous! So these are not good candidates for your next stir-fry! I can remember my Mom telling me when I was very young never to drink from a glass ever used to display Lily of the Valley! That said, because they contain some beneficial compounds, Lily of the Valley was often used in the past as an antidote for gas poisoning, especially during World War I, in treatment of heart disorders, epilepsy, skin burns and to induce sedation. Still, today, the root, underground stem (rhizome), and dried flower tips are used to make medicine used by herbalists for a variety of conditions. And, historically, the leaves were cultivated to produce green pigment. For me at this time of year, there are few things better than visiting my Lily of the Valley patch daily, and when the time is right, snipping a few generous bouquets to bring inside so that I can fill our home with their delicious scent! A magnificent treat from this season of awakening..

May 22



Our club will plant the Veteran's Memorial Garden at the Pine Grove Cemetery in preparation for Memorial Day at 10 am. The rain date is Tuesday, May 23rd, same time. Please don't forget your gloves, trowels, kneelers, pruning shears and a fillable bottle to water our seedlings. And, be sure to sign up with Sandy Whelan for your week to primp the garden during the summer!

May 23



Our Horticulture Meeting for this year will be held at the Gould Barn at 6:30 pm. Cheryl Connors' husband, Larry, will be telling us all about Backyard Beekeeping. He is a member of the Essex County Beekeepers Association, and will bring locally made honey for sale. In addition, Donna Ryan and Cheryl Connors will be preparing tasty morsels made with honey for us to enjoy.
A special meeting not to be missed!

► Hostesses: Mary Connor, Linda Mann and Penny Rogers.

► Don't forget to look for the donation basket for Helen Gaffey's memorial shrub, to be planted on the Linebrook Road Island. And a reminder that members who would like to share memories of Helen with the club will have an opportunity to do so at this meeting.

May 24



A Strawberry Festival succulent workshop will be held at Rose Ann Waite's home at 10 am. Please bring three 4 inch plants and a nifty container.

June 1



A Strawberry Festival herb and annual basket workshop will be held at Rose Ann Waite's home at 10 am. Please bring three 4 inch pots of herbs or annuals, along with any 10 to 12 inch baskets you might have.

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

June 10



It's Strawberry Festival time once again! This is always a fun day for all who attend, and is the venue for our most important fundraiser of the year. So, we will need the help of each and every one of you to make our table a smashing success this year. Donna Graves has volunteered to coordinate our effort and has lots of great ideas for sale items, as you have already noticed from her recent e-mail messages. Every member is expected to bring items that can be sold at the table. This year, there will be two workshops held at Rose Ann Waite's home to

prepare... a succulent workshop on May 24th and a herb and annual basket workshop on June 1st, both at 10 am. You can attend these workshops and enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow members or you can prepare your items at home. And, as always, potted perennials from your gardens are welcome. Please dig them up now, and plant them in pots with fresh potting soil. Bringing plants you will share from your garden in attractive containers will entice even more buyers! Please deliver your items to our table by 8:30 am on festival day. If you need assistance getting your items to our table, please contact Donna Graves. And, Donna is still looking for those 4 inch tin cans. Let her know ASAP if you have any!

And last, but certainly not least, we will need lots of hands at the table during the day...there's set up to do, selling to do, and breaking down to do at the end of the day. Please see Donna Graves to volunteer. She says that not many have signed up for work in the afternoon, so jump right in and do your part!

► All workers at our table are requested to don their club aprons!

June 13

You should have received your Membership Renewals for the club year 2017-2018 in the mail recently. Just a reminder that your dues payment and completed renewal form are due back to Membership Chair, Janet Hanson, by our Annual Banquet June 13th.

June 13



Our Annual Banquet and Meeting will be held at the Captain's Quarters at the Danversport Yacht Club, 161 Elliott Street, Danvers at 6:30 pm. The room is located to the left on the ground level as you face the main building. We have been cordially invited by our Hospitality Co-Chairs, Gerrie Bunker and Linda Flynn, who have planned a delightful dinner buffet for us including appetizers, a dinner featuring Salmon and Chicken, dessert and coffee. The cost is \$50.00 and should be paid by check made to the New Meadows Garden Club and forwarded to either Gerrie or Linda with your response by June 1st. Please join us for what promises to be a very enjoyable evening to cap off our club year.

June 30

Members who are holding receipts for reimbursement by the club must submit these to Treasurer, Mary Leahy, as soon as possible, or before June 30, 2017.

July 11
Summer bonus

Another design workshop is in the planning stage to be held at Shirley Holt's home in the late afternoon or early evening. Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details!

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

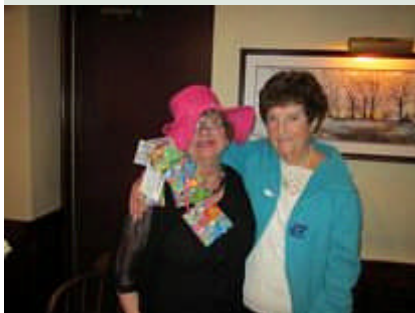
Saying goodbye to Helen Gaffey, past Co-President, loyal garden club member, and friend to all.



From the first moment Helen joined New Meadows Garden Club in 1990, we knew that we would be in for quite a ride! Things were never dull when Helen was around. A few adjectives to describe her that come to my mind are that Helen was warm, kind, congenial, definitely lighthearted, generous, adventurous, exuberant, spontaneous and witty. Perhaps some of you who knew her might add to this list. Helen always had a smile on her face, and was beautiful both inside and out. She was at the very heart of our club, never resting from her desire to introduce new members, who

she hoped would love the club as much as she did. How very fortunate all of us who knew Helen are that our paths in life crossed with hers. She loved her many friends, and they loved her back. She is irreplaceable and will be missed always.

Remembering Helen



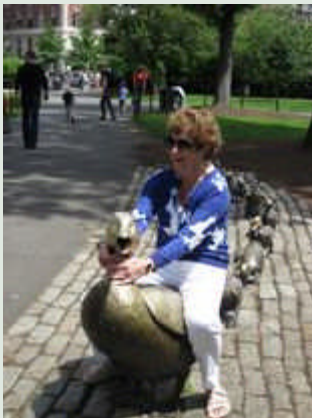
Helen with Sandy Duffy at our Annual Banquet June 2015



Helen on vacation 2013



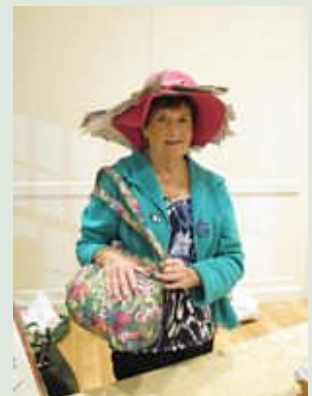
Helen with Mary Connor Art In Flowers April 2015



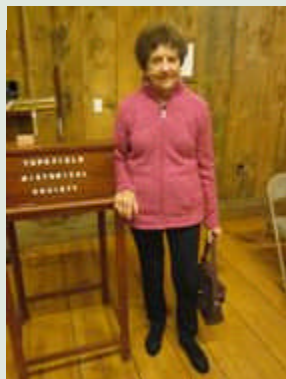
Helen at her best at the Public Garden May 2013



Shopping at the Joint Meeting November 2013



Modeling our sale items Joint Meeting November 2015



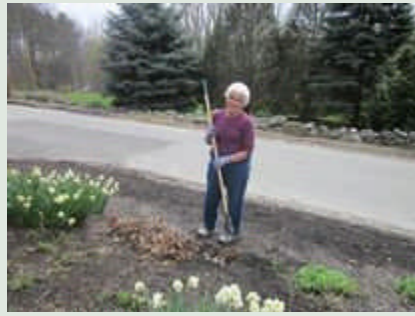
Always so willing to pose for me, here's the last photo I took of dear Helen at our September 2016 meeting.

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

...Bits and pieces...



Children at Steward School celebrate the new Dogwood Tree donated by our club with the help of Eastgate Garden Design.



Nancy Emmons tackles spring cleanup at the Prospect Street island.



Rose Ann Waite demonstrates flower design at a recent Topsfield Council On Aging morning breakfast.

Art In Flowers April 2017 Spectacular Creations!



...Green Thumb follows...

Green Thumb Corner

Since the topic for our Horticulture Program on Tuesday will be “Bees,” here are a few Victorian beekeeping facts for you:



- Honeybees were an emblem of the Bonaparte Family.
- Victorians kept bees in a basket known as a skep, which was useful as a moveable hive. But, it was difficult to get to the honey without killing the colony. Then in 1851, Lorenzo Langstroth, an American from Pennsylvania, invented the modern hive. These hives allowed the honey to be extracted without harming the colony. For this reason, he is known as the Father of American Beekeeping.
- In his retirement, Sherlock Holmes became an avid beekeeper on his small farm.
- Leo Tolstoy had an obsession with beekeeping according to his wife's diary.



Did you know that most plants we call “annuals” are just “perennials” that are hardy only in the tropics? In the Northeast, these plants are meant to be enjoyed only one season, and are expected to die at the end of it. With that in mind, we should try to get the most from these plants in their very short life spans, don't you think?

But, that said, have you ever noticed that your annuals bloom so beautifully in the spring only to fizzle out by midsummer? Well, here are a few tips that might keep your annuals looking spectacular all season:

First and foremost, do a little research and choose the right plants for your growing conditions. Once you've made your choice and purchased your plants, get them in the ground as soon as possible. This will give them a chance to get accustomed to being in the ground or new container while they are still young plants and actively growing. Water them immediately.

Next, be sure to keep your plants from forming seeds. The nature of these plants is to sprout from seed, grow, bloom and then set seed for the next generation. For us in the Northeast, there is no next generation possible, so there is no need for the plants to waste energy setting seed. Makes sense, don't you think? But the moment a bee comes along and pollinates the flower, the seed creation starts. So, the object is to interrupt this process, and you do this by snipping off spent flowers...deadheading. When you deadhead, your plants will continue to produce new buds in an effort to produce seed, and the cycle start anew. So, don't blow-off the deadheading process if you want lovely color from your annuals all summer!

Moving right along, for continuous bloom, your annuals will need continuous feeding. You can use a liquid fertilizer, either synthetic or organic. There are many brands available. Liquid fertilizers penetrate instantly, which is a good thing. But, if liquid fertilizer isn't the way you wish to go, there are nutrient-rich, slow-release fertilizers that can be used instead. Osmocote is an example of this type of product, and will feed your plants for up to four months, and also will not burn your plants. By all means, don't miss this step!

And, lastly, try to keep your annuals deeply watered. I realize that this may be a tall order when there is a ban on outdoor water usage during the growing season, which has been the case for several years now, but try to do your best with this step. Spray sprinklers and automatic sprinklers usually wet only the top few inches of the soil. This encourages the roots of your plants to remain at the surface of the soil. There is no protection, or very little, for these roots when the weather is hot and dry. Flooding your beds with water once a week would be ideal, if possible. This saturates the soil much deeper, and encourages your plants to become deeper rooted. Deep roots make your annuals resistant to surface dryness and increases the amount of food they can absorb.

So there, in a nutshell, is your key to successful color from your annuals all summer long!

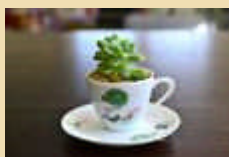
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Some years ago, while out on some garden club business, Rose Ann Waite and I discovered the Cider Hill Farm in Amesbury. Since then, I have returned several times...I'm what's known as a "regular" there now. If you've never been, it's worth a trip to see the place. They sell exquisite plants, and visitors can go out into their fields and pick all sorts of fruits and vegetables during the growing season, or buy already-picked items in their store. There are fun activities for children, and on their shelves you can find all kinds of locally made goodies, lots of interesting items in their freezers, a gift shop stocked with wonderful items, and a bakery stocked with heavenly treats. Their apple cider donuts are the centerpiece, and I actually load up my freezer with those when it is time for the farm to close for the winter. No need to suffer from donut withdrawal!



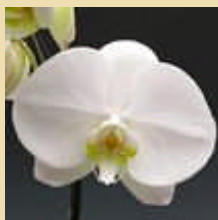
I receive regular correspondence from the farm, and I would like to share with you information from a recent message, reminding everyone that the first Friday of the month of June each year is National Donut Day. This year it is June 2nd. While this may sound like a day everyone should sit around eating donuts, there is actually historical significance to the day. National Donut Day got its start way back in 1938 as a fundraiser for Chicago's Salvation Army to help the needy during the Great Depression and also to honor The Salvation Army "Lassies" of World War I, who traveled to France in 1918 to support the US soldiers. One way to boost morale was to serve them donuts! These women became known to the servicemen as "Donut Girls", and they provided these tasty little morsels from huts near the front lines set up by the Salvation Army.

In Chicago, National Donut Day is still a fundraiser for the Salvation Army. Closer to home at the Cider Hill Farm, they will keep the tradition alive by sending dozens of donuts overseas to a unit which includes one of Amesbury's own residents! So, have yourself a donut on June 2nd to celebrate!



We've been talking a lot about succulent dish gardens lately, so I thought it might be helpful to put some quick and easy instructions down in the event that you would like to put one together. Succulents are great to grow since they can tolerate the dry air inside most of our homes, especially in winter. Okay, here we go:

Since succulents don't like standing water at all, try to choose a container with a drainage hole. If yours doesn't have one, put a layer of small rocks in the bottom. This will help keep the water away from the roots. Next, fill the container with potting soil for cacti and succulents. Be sure to leave room at the top of your container so that you can cover the soil with small rocks or sand. Plant your succulents gently, but firmly in the soil. The next step is to cover the soil with small rocks or gravel, which helps to keep moisture away from the base of the plants. The point to this is to protect against rot. Now, water lightly, and place your container near a sunny window. Don't water again until the soil feels dry. If your pot has a drainage hole, don't leave standing water in the saucer underneath! Fertilize your plants with products made for cacti and succulents. ► Note that succulents need a two or three month rest period each winter! So, once the growing season ends, move your container to a cooler location (50 to 60 degrees) and water no more than about once a month. No fertilizer at this time either. And there you have it!



For the orchid growers among us, if you have the ability to do it, your orchids will enjoy moving outdoors for the summer to a shaded, protected spot around the beginning of June. I move my phalaenopsis and oncidium orchids outside when the nighttime temperatures generally do not go below 55 degrees. Once outside, I do cover them if there is an unusually cool night expected. Keep watering and fertilizing and be on the lookout for insects, treating your plants promptly at first sight of trouble!

Another garden club year is almost complete and with that I send my best wishes to all for a beautiful and safe summer season!