

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

November 1st through December 15, 2015



It's all about Chocolate!

November 1



It's here!!! Our club's fall fundraiser this year will be a Chocolatefest, which we will host at the Gould Barn, from 1 pm to 4 pm. To make this event as successful as our previous one, which was held in 2011, we will need help from each and every one of you! Chefs and bakers, come one, come all with your most decadent chocolate recipes in tow. Many of our members have already volunteered to bring their favorite bite size chocolate treats, but there is still time for those who haven't already done so to join in the chocolate frenzy! Food Chair, Linda Mann will be looking for members to bring what they will contribute to this club effort on serving pieces ready for display...glass, silver, pedestal dishes, whatever presents well. These can be dropped off at the barn any time after 9 am but definitely before 12 pm.

Also we will need plenty of help setting up, serving, cleaning up, and in all the functions that make for a successful event. Many hands will be needed for all of this, so please leave your day free for us! The barn will be open for set-up from 9 am on, so come as early as you can to lend a hand. Extra added attractions will be a presentation by Michael Cross entitled "Chocolate, The Perfect Indulgence," a table of pressed-flower creations by Jacqueline Harrington and a silent auction of some pretty nice items! This promises to be a fun way to raise funds for our civic projects!

Important last minute reminders:

*****Treats should be bite size!*

*****Treats containing nuts should be clearly marked!*

*****Please label the name of your treat for the convenience of our guests!*

*****Don't forget your club aprons for serving our guests!*

*****Continue checking your e-mail messages during this week for updates!*

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

November 5



Ruth Loiseau in the White House Rose Garden.

The Boxford Village Garden Club will host the Annual Joint Meeting of the Tri-Town Garden Clubs at the First Church Congregational of Boxford, 4 Georgetown Road, Boxford at 6:30 pm. This year we are so very fortunate to be treated to a presentation by Ruth Loiseau, a nationally recognized Master Floral Designer, who served at the White House for over 28 years! She created floral designs for special events including Congressional barbecues, the visit of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, the NATO Summit, State dinners and two visits from Queen Elizabeth II. Ruth was presented the Certificate of Appreciation by Hillary Clinton in 1998. Her credentials are much too expansive to mention here. Suffice it to say that we in the Tri-Town

Garden Clubs are in for a real treat! In addition, as many of you might remember from years past, this meeting serves as a fundraising opportunity for the five clubs. Co-President Helen Gaffey will once again “work the crowd” in our now-famous scratch ticket hat, while we sell raffle tickets...for the contents of the hat, not Helen! Every member has been requested to contribute \$5.00 in Massachusetts Lottery scratch tickets for this effort, and if you haven’t gotten your tickets to Helen as yet, please do it as soon as possible.

November 5



Horticulture Morning will be held at the South Church, 41 Central Street, Andover from 10 am to 12 pm. The guest speaker will be John Forti, who will present his program “Growing Gardeners: Children, Schools and Gardens.” This program will show us how to teach our children to be enthusiastic gardeners. His goal is a garden for every school in our state. This meeting is open to all garden club members for a \$5.00 donation and their guest for a \$10.00 donation.

November 10



The North Andover Garden Club will present “Holiday With Style” featuring award winning floral designer Sue Kaplan, who will show attendees how to fashion designs for various locations in their homes, including centerpieces for the Thanksgiving holiday. The meeting will be held at the St. Michael’s Church, 196 Main Street, North Andover, from 7 pm to 9 pm. This event is open to the public.

November 17

Our next board meeting will be held at the home Gerrie Bunker at 10 am.

November 29



Our club will decorate the Topsfield Library for the holidays at 1 pm. As usual, this year we will be decorating the outside of the building. Artistic Co-Chair Rose Ann Waite reports that the committee has decided to try something a bit different inside the building this time around. There will be no theme as we have had in past years, but just simple, beautiful and joyous decorations very tastefully placed throughout the interior of the building. Helping hands will be needed, so watch your e-mail for further details. Unless I miss my guess, Rose Ann will be very happy to hear from you with the news that you will be part of her team that day!

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

December 15



Once again this year, our Holiday Social will be Brunch and a Yankee Swap at the Bradford Tavern, 87 Haverhill Street, Rowley at 11:30 am. Stay tuned for further details about this year's festive occasion.

NOTES



Our Horticulture Committee is back to thank the team of volunteers who helped with the fall clean-up at the Prospect Street Memorial Island, the Linebrook Road Island and the Veteran's Memorial Garden at the Pine Grove Cemetery last Tuesday. Because so many of you generously donated your time, the job was done beautifully and in a jiffy! Maintenance of these places around our club's home town of Topsfield is our club's gift to its community. This project couldn't have been done without you who lend your support. Thanks again.

Art In Bloom at the Museum of Fine Arts

We have great news to pass on to all of you! Club member, Jane Cullinan, has graciously volunteered to represent our club at Art In Bloom at the Museum of Fine Arts next spring. Her assistant will be Artistic Co-Chair, Rose Ann Waite. The dates for this special event are April 30th to May 2, 2016. Word has it that our April meeting may be a bus trip into the MFA for this event! Our club has been a participant in this show at the MFA every year except for one since 1984. Thanks so much, Jane, for carrying our torch, in spite of your very busy work schedule!

...more on the following page...

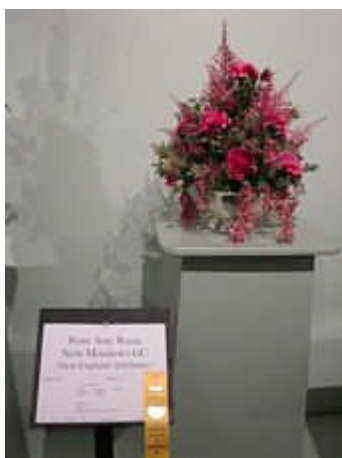
Toppsfield Fair News



Getting ready to roll from the Toppsfield Common!

Once again this year our club collaborated with the Toppsfield Garden Club, Valley View Farm, Chipmunk Farm and D. W. Philpot Co. to create a prize winning float for the Annual Toppsfield Fair Parade. This year, the float won Second Prize in The Grand Theme Float category in the annual parade held Saturday, October 3rd! Although cloudy, cold and somewhat drizzly the day of the parade, the weather held and a good time was had by all! We spotted member Cheryl Connors among the spectators along the route!

Toppsfield Fair Standard Flower Show



Rose Ann Waite's design entry in Class 3, Massachusetts. 1st entry day.



Rose Ann Waite's door design entry, Class 4 Connecticut, 2nd entry day.



Mei Schuster's design entry in Class 3, Massachusetts, 2nd entry day.

...more Toppsfield Fair on the next page...



Topsfield Fair News Continued...

The competition doesn't stand a chance when our member, Donna Ryan, enters a contest! Here are her Pumpkin Whoopie pies with salted caramel butter cream, which won her the First Prize in the Favorite Pumpkin Dessert Contest!



...Bits and pieces...

Fall clean-up time at our civic project spaces around Topsfield



Horticulture Chair, Jane, strikes a neat pose with our sign!

Pine Grove Cemetery Garden



"Posy Picker Pic a must" describes Horticulture Chair, Jane, who snapped this photo of yours truly!



The team busy at work.



Fall clean-up at the Prospect Street Island.

Thank you one and all!



Fall clean-up at Linebrook Road Island.

...Green Thumb follows...

Green Thumb Corner

What would our life be like in a world without chocolate? It can't even be imagined! No chocolate cake, no chocolate bars, no hot cocoa, no chocolate Whoopie Pies, no chocolate Martini's or Brandy Alexanders, no chocolate covered cherries, no M&M's...totally unimaginable! The world would be a very sad place, indeed. These days, we take the presence in our lives of this magnificent treat for granted, but did you ever wonder how we got from

this



to that?



As many of you might already know, chocolate in one form or another isn't a recent invention. Anthropologists from the University of Pennsylvania suspect it's existence could date back as far as 1400 BC! But, for ninety percent of chocolate's long history, it is strictly a beverage. It is generally believed that "way back when," the Mayans and Aztecs made a drink called "Xocoatl" from the beans of the cocoa tree. But don't think "Hot Chocolate!" Theirs was a pretty bitter drink which, in many cases, was used to treat ailments such as angina, fatigue, dysentery, gout, and even dental problems. These people believed that the cocoa bean had magical and even divine properties, suitable for use in their most sacred rituals of birth, marriage and death. Cocoa beans were considered valuable enough to use as currency. Montezuma is said to have used chocolate concoctions before visiting his wives. Hmmm....It is clear from historical research that chocolate was cherished from the start.

Then the conquering Spaniards arrived in America, conquered, and returned to their country with various items from the American cuisine, including chocolate. The drink, however, did not appeal to the folks at home because it was very bitter. Enter, honey and cane sugar, which made for a much tastier drink! Very quickly, the chocolate drink became popular throughout Spain, with all of Europe not far behind! Casanova was especially fond of the stuff!

Wheels were turning, and the first chocolate bar was created by English chocolate-maker, Joseph Fry, in 1846 and by 1868, Cadbury was selling boxes of chocolate in England. Nestle got into the act a few years later when they created a product called milk chocolate. And the rest is history.

And now some educational, "green thumb" stuff...cocoa beans are usually grown on small plantations within 20 degrees north or south of the Equator. With this in mind, you will not be able to grow a cocoa tree in your back yard! The trees take five to eight years to mature. One mature cocoa tree can yield about five pounds of chocolate a year. They are usually planted in the shade of larger trees, such as bananas and mangos. After the pods are harvested, they are split open and the cocoa beans are removed and left on trays covered with burlap for about a week until they are brown. Then they are sun dried for about three days. After they are cleaned the beans are roasted at 250 degrees F for about two hours. The shells are then removed and what's left...the nibs...are crushed to form the raw material from which all chocolate products are made. Today, chocolate manufacturing is a more than 4 billion dollar industry in the US, with the average American devouring at least half a pound a month! I am sure I've got that beat!

And now, my parting thought on the subject: A nice box of chocolates can provide your total daily intake of calories in one place. Isn't that handy?

And, one more quick thing...it is time to pot up an amaryllis bulb for dramatic winter-time flowers! Here's what to do: Plant the bulb in a container only a couple of inches larger than the bulb's diameter. Place it so that the top third of the bulb is above your soil level. Water it well and place the pot in a cool (about 60 degrees) spot until you see some green emerging from your bulb. Move the pot to a bright windowsill, keeping the soil lightly moist, and fertilize every two weeks. Your beautiful blooms should appear 6-8 weeks after planting. Good luck! ☀