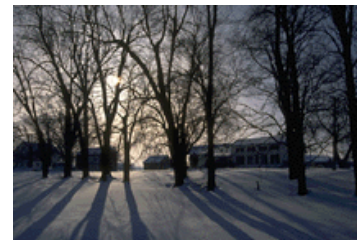


A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

November 15, 2011 through January 17, 2012



Winter is on it's way

Welcome to our new members, Linda Flynn and Joline Yeaton!

November 15



The Topsfield Garden Club will be hosting this year's joint meeting of the five area garden clubs at The Commons, 4 N Common Street, Topsfield at 6 PM. The program will feature National Garden Club Master Judge Tony Todesco, who will present "What's New in Design." This event is not to be missed, so jot the date down. And, guests are welcome. If you are wondering where The Commons is located, it is adjacent to the Gould Barn on the Topsfield Common.

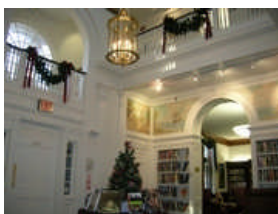
We are planning a Boutique/Hidden Treasures table at this joint meeting, which we hope will feature fashion jewelry and accessories (in re-sale condition), as well as other gift/re-gift items. So, please check through your closets and drawers for items you would like to donate for this fundraiser. Here's your chance to "downsize!" Please contact Rose Ann, Judy Donovan, Helen Gaffey or new member, Joline Yeaton, by Friday, November 11th the latest to arrange to drop your items off, or arrange to have them picked up by Rose Ann, Judy or Helen.



November 18

The Bow Making Workshop has been cancelled.

November 27



We will be decorating the Topsfield Library for the holidays at 1 pm. This year's theme is "Trees" in tribute to the many trees lost in the recent tornado in the Springfield area and also in our towns as a result of our recent unusual Nor'easter. Please bring small decorated trees and decorated branches to dress up the library. Artistic Co-Chair, Jean Bilsbury, is looking for help with this community service, so please contact her and sign up!

November 30

Our club will help the Topsfield Garden Club "dress up" the Ferris Wheel used on our Topsfield Fair Parade Float for display at the Annual

Topsfield Holiday Walk. Those interested in participating will be meeting in the morning at the home of Martha Morrison, 217 Rowley Bridge Road, Topsfield. Volunteers will also be needed the evening of the Walk, December 3rd. More details will follow by e-mail!

...more on the following page...

November 29

The North Andover Garden Club has extended an invitation to our club to join them at 7 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 57 Peters Street, North Andover, for a program featuring Priscilla Styer who will present "Holiday Decorating." Admission is free, and you will learn how to make wreaths, swags, roping and centerpieces.

December 2 to 4



Our club will be participating in the Northern District's fundraiser, "Topiaries, Trees & Treasurers" to be held at the Nesmith House, 229 Andover Street, Lowell. This event will raise funds to benefit Springfield and the surrounding areas badly damaged by the June 1st tornado. Hours are 11 am to 4 pm December 3rd and 4th, and admission is \$15.00. Members of our club will also have an opportunity to volunteer as hostesses at the House on December 3rd and 4th. If you are interested in doing this, please contact Maureen Spinney at 978-458-3722 as soon as possible.

December 6



Our Holiday Social will be held at the Gould Barn, Topsfield at 7 pm. The Hostess Committee is busy making arrangements, and you will be updated soon with their plans. And, once again, Jean Bilsbury has agreed to guide us through our gift exchange with one of her entertaining stories about Mr. And Mrs. Right! Be sure to bring a gift for the exchange, value about \$10.00. In addition, board members are requested to provide a bottle of wine for the festivities. See you there!

December 8



*President Rose Ann will once again provide expert guidance at a holiday **Boxwood Tree Workshop** for the members of the Topsfield Council On Aging at the Beekeeper's Building at the Topsfield Fairgrounds at 1 pm. Club members may also participate for a cost of \$15.00 for materials. Members interested in making a boxwood tree with the COA should forward a check in the amount of \$15.00 made payable to NMGC to Treasurer, Mary Connor before November 17, 2011. We need a count of those participating to buy materials, so please send your check promptly!*

December 13

Our club will provide 15 centerpieces for the Topsfield Council On Aging Holiday Party to be held this year at the Beekeeper's Building at the Topsfield Fairgrounds. President Rose Ann is coordinating this community service, and will have containers available for pickup at our Holiday Social on December 6th for those members who have graciously volunteered their talents. Please see Rose Ann to sign up. Centerpieces are requested to be delivered by members to the Beekeeper's Building by 10 am.

...more news on the next page...

January 2

Those members who brought holiday arrangements to the Topsfield Library for the holiday season may pick them up during library business hours 10 am to 8 pm. Plans will follow soon from Artistic Co-Chair, Jean Bilsbury, for removal of the balance of the decorations, inside the Library and out. Please be ready to lend a hand!

January 17

Our next board meeting will be held at the home of Rose Ann Waite at 9:30 am.

Notes



Many thanks to Horticulture Co-Chair, Jean Hampton and her husband, who single handedly put the Pine Grove Cemetery garden to bed for the winter right before our nasty Nor'easter a few weeks ago! And many thanks to Island and Urns Co-Chair, Claudette Poor, and those who volunteered to help her...Rose Ann Waite, Nancy Emmons, Tammy Glasser and Jane Cullinan... for all the work done at the Prospect Street and Linebrook traffic Islands to prepare them for the winter months.



Here are Nancy Emmons and Claudette Poor (hiding behind the tree!) doing fall cleanup at the Prospect Street Island. Not pictured is Rose Ann Waite, who was behind the camera this time!



We are happy to announce that our member, Stefanie Mahr, has graciously volunteered to represent our club with a design at Art In Bloom at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The dates of this very special annual event are April 27th to April 30, 2012. Her assistant will be Rita Galvin. Stefanie is excited to be doing this and will surely keep us up to date on her plans as we get closer to this event.

...more on the following page...

And a final report from the Topsfield Fair...we all knew that Donna Ryan, our resident chef-extraordinaire, must have walked away with top honors at the Fair, and we weren't wrong! She did indeed win first prize in the Whole Grains category of Bake for the Cure for her "Fruit of the Earth" loaf. Hopefully, you caught her photo on the front page of the October 14th edition of the Tri-Town Transcript. Congratulations, Donna.

More good news...both Barbara Shade and Donna Ryan entered a recent national Harris Seeds Photo Contest, and they both came out first prize winners. Barbara entered a photo of her granddaughter, **Lucy**, in the kids category, and Donna entered a photo of a garden fresh salad.

Barbara has shared her photo with us, and, as you can see, Lucy is indeed a first class subject and Barbara is a first class photographer. A winning combination!

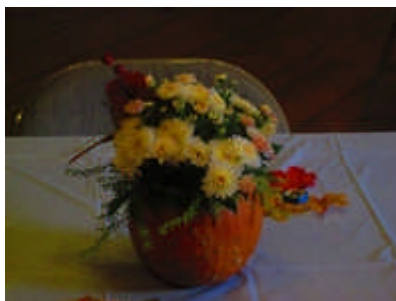


Bits and pieces...

Congratulations are in order for the entire club for an extremely successful Chocolatefest fundraiser. Thanks to the efforts of our Fundraising Chair, Carol Westhaver, and all who baked, set up, served, cleaned up, and sold tickets, we far exceeded our financial goals and have made a great start toward meeting our budget for this year. Thanks to all. Here are a few photos from that exciting afternoon!



Getting ready!



Claudette's centerpieces.



Bill and Betty Flagg stop by.



The crowd arrives.



The kitchen crew.



Linde, Jean and Rose Ann take a break!

...Green Thumb Corner on the following page...

Green Thumb Corner

With our outside gardens put to bed for the winter, or hopefully close to it, for many of us garden-club types, it is time to turn our attention to our “indoor gardens.” Plants, which we grow indoors, can certainly lift our spirits during the long, cold, dark, dreary and depressing winter months. (You can tell that winter is not my favorite season!) Just think, with a little houseplant know-how, you might be able to



turn your home into a tropical getaway. And, you can make your indoor garden as ambitious or as simple as you wish.

We have spoken about houseplant care in past issues of the Posy Picker, but today, I thought it might be a good idea to revisit the art of keeping your precious beauties alive and insect free. Prevention is the first line of defense. It's always a good idea to check houseplants closely before you buy them and isolate them for a couple of weeks after you bring them home to allow undetected problems to become more obvious. Inspect both tops and undersides of leaves. You might even want to use a magnifying glass since insects and their eggs can be very tiny. Watch for mottled leaves or honeydew, a shiny and sticky substance secreted by some insects. It is a good idea to keep an eye peeled for trouble each time you water your plants.

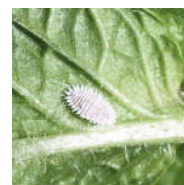
Here are some of the invaders for which you should be on the lookout and “green” methods to treat them, should they try to get a stronghold:



Spider mites are among the most dangerous pests to your houseplants. Left unchecked they can kill your plant. They are very tiny and difficult to see, and first feed on the undersides of leaves. If your plant's leaves appear mottled, you can test for their presence by placing a sheet of white paper under the leaves, tap them and then look for tiny moving creatures on the paper. As the colony expands, fine web-

bing might be able to be seen. Try washing the leaves with a soft cotton cloth dipped in mild detergent solution (1/2 teaspoon per quart of lukewarm water). This detergent solution can also be applied from a spray bottle. As an alternative, you can take the plant to the sink, spray and wash the leaves, above and below with plain water.

Mealybugs are much more visible than spider mites. They look like tiny cottony clusters on undersides of leaves and where leaves join stems. They suck the sap of the plant, which results in yellow leaves, dropping leaves and poor plant growth. The method of washing described above can be used to treat these pests, but I have had great success dipping an artist's paintbrush in rubbing alcohol and touching the masses. This wipes them out immediately!



Whiteflies are easy to spot because they will flutter around when you handle or water the plant to which they are clinging. They feed on plant sap, causing leaves to yellow and drop, but this does not usually kill the plant as in the case of Spider mite. The washing method mentioned above for spider mite control can be used. However, I have also used a yellow sheet of cardboard with petroleum jelly applied near the plant to attract and trap the

flies. They are attracted to the color yellow, and the petroleum jelly attaches them when they come close. Some have even suggested carefully holding a vacuum cleaner extension over the plants, giving them a shake, and sucking the flies up as they fly into the air. I have never tried this, but it might just work!

Scale insects have a shell-like covering and look like round or oval brown or gray bumps on plant stems and the undersides of leaves. They suck the plant's sap, secreting sticky honeydew. The plant's leaves will yellow and drop. These insects may be controlled with the washing method described above.



...more on the next page...



Aphids have pear shaped bodies, are usually green, but can be black, brown, gray, yellow, red or purple, and can be easily seen. They usually hang out in clusters on stems just below flower buds or newly opening leaf buds, as well as on flowers and undersides of leaves. They suck sap, and excrete sticky honeydew similar to scale. These can be controlled by washing methods referred to previously.

...And last but not least in our discussion today, Fungus gnats!

Oh, I'm going to love talking about these! I have these little critters around the house often, and never knew what they were until quite recently. **Fungus gnats are small insects that you may have seen flying around houseplants or resting near them.** In my house they have an affinity for my eyeglasses and the inside of my nose! They are frequently mistaken for fruit flies. Fungus gnats do not threaten human health, but can spread plant diseases from one plant to another. They can also feast on the roots of



your plants. So, what to do? The presence of fungus gnats may indicate over watering. Limiting moist environments and allowing the soil of your plants to dry out between thorough waterings may help. Fungus gnats, like Whiteflies, are attracted to the color yellow. There are yellow stick cards available, which are very effective when placed horizontally near the soil. These can be purchased on line. Or you can make your own by covering any yellow cardboard or yellow plastic cup with petroleum jelly as described for Whitefly control. They will fly right onto it and get stuck! A small dish of wine or cider vinegar placed next to the plant also works...the gnats are attracted to it, and drown while investigating. Putting a layer of play sand on top of the soil helps too.

If your infestation of a particular insect is so thick that "green" non-chemical methods don't work for you, you may have to resort to insecticides to do the job. Insecticides are sold mostly in aerosol form. Some do come in granular form. Your garden center will carry them. Read the labels to make sure the product will work on the insect you are trying to eradicate, and follow directions carefully. Be sure to spray in a well-ventilated area. A Pyrethrin such as bifenthrin, which is in Ortho Rose & Flower Insect Killer, works on spider mites, scale, mealybugs whiteflies, aphids and fungus gnats. Just be sure to water your plant a day or two before you apply the insecticide. You don't want to spray a plant that is moisture-stressed. Spray the plant thoroughly, even under the leaves, and then keep it out of direct sun a full day after treatment.

I hope these tips get you a little closer to turning your winter home in into a New England tropical getaway!

And now a final word about evergreens kept in containers outside during our New England winters...*if you would like to keep a plant in year-round outdoor pots, it is a good idea to choose plants one zone hardier than normal for this area, although this is still no guarantee for success. What must be remembered is that hardiness ratings apply only to plants' aerial parts. If the roots freeze when the temperature drops below 32 degrees, which is apt to happen in an above the ground container, the plant could very well die. This doesn't happen to an in-ground plant, where the soil insulates the roots with warm*



air in the ground, which is always rising to the surface. Frozen roots account for the demise of many potted plants left outdoors during winter, especially if they are already at their limit in regards to the planting zone. So, in zone 5, which is probably ours, we can't really count on the survival of boxwoods, hollies, tulips and azaleas grown in exposed pots during winter. In addition, a plant in a pot often faces lack of water issues, is exposed to more wind, and sometimes less sun. If survival of the plant is important to you, and if it is possible, in November you might want to pull the container into an unheated garage for the winter. Things are never easy!

With this last issue of our newsletter for the year 2011, I would like to wish you and those special to you a beautiful holiday season, and a new year filled with dreams come true!

...Linde Martin, your Posy Picker Chair...