

**A POSY PICKER'S PAPER**  
**New Meadows Garden Club**  
**Topsfield, Massachusetts**  
*February 26th through March 26, 2019*

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



*Oh, the scent of Lavender! Who can resist it? Yes, you can grow it in your garden, but, this plant is not just another pretty face. Learn all about it in this month's Green Thumb Corner.*

**February 26**



*Our February regular membership meeting will a Mid-Winter Social, to be held beginning at 12 pm at the new home of Horticulture Co-Chair, Donna Ryan. She, and her Co-Chair, Cheryl Connors, are planning a nice get-together, including delicious foods prepared using herbs and a chance for members to visit with one another and hopefully exchange some great gardening tips! In addition, Lorraine Erickson and Pat Durgin will be telling us a little about the exciting artistic meeting they are planning for us in March.*

*Hostesses: Claudette Poor and Penny Rogers*

**March 13—March 17**



*The Boston Flower and Garden Show will be held at the Seaport World Trade Center. This year's theme is "The Beauty of Balance," a key consideration in design decisions, and plant and material choices for the gardens we create. We are invited to discover new ideas for backyard, kitchen, indoor, rooftop and community gardens, while having fun with family and friends. As always, there will be lectures, demonstrations, workshops, a garden marketplace and, of course, the floral, horticulture and photography competitions and exhibits. Tickets are \$20.00 for adults, \$17.00 for seniors, children 6 to 17 \$10.00, and children under 6 free.*

**March 19**

*Our next board meeting will be held at the Topsfield Library Meeting Room at 10 am.*

**March 19**



*The Topsfield Village Gardeners have invited our members to join them at their meeting at the Topsfield Town Library at 6:30 pm. The program will be presented by Javier Marin of the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, who will tell us everything we ever wanted to know about invasive insects and how to stay ahead of them! As always, wonderful refreshments will be served.*

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

March 26



Our regular membership meeting will be held at the Topsfield Town Library at 6:30 pm. Lorraine Erickson and Pat Durgin are teaming-up to present a very special artistic program. **We will be the stars, creating our very own spring door decorations!** There will be a sign-up sheet and an instruction sheet available at our February 26th meeting at Donna Ryan's home. Please RSVP for this meeting to Lorraine or Pat by March 15th.

Hostesses: Shirley Holt and Mary Connor

## NOTES



♥ The Topsfield Garden Club will sponsor its Grow Spring! EXPO on April 13, 2019 at the Emerson Center, the Gould Barn, The Commons 1854 and on the Topsfield Green from 10 am to 3 pm. **Save the date and come see our table!**

♥ Join us at our newly re-planned conservation meeting at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem at 11 am on May 1, 2019. **\*\*Due to a change in schedule at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, it was necessary to cancel the tour our Conservation Committee had planned for our club on May 22, 2019.** The Peabody Essex Museum will provide our club with a docent-guided tour of their exhibit *Nature's Nation: American Art and the Environment*. (first exhibit tracing environmental awareness in American art over the last three centuries.) The cost will be \$20 per person (no library passes can be used) and is open to 10 to 50 persons. Here's a link for more details about the exhibit: [www.pem.org/exhibitions/natures-nation-american-art-and-environment](http://www.pem.org/exhibitions/natures-nation-american-art-and-environment). Many thanks to Judy Donovan and Penny Rogers for all their planning for this meeting. **Save the date!**

♥ Art in Bloom will be held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston April 27 to 29, 2019. We are pleased that Claudette Poor will be representing our club with a design in this prestigious show. Jane Cullinan will be assisting. A great team, indeed! **Save the date!**

♥ Our Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held on June 6, 2019 at the Ipswich Country Club. **Save the date!**

♥ Our fundraiser at the Strawberry Festival will be held on June 8, 2019! **Save the date!**

► Just a reminder to the following members who have volunteered flower arrangements and plants for the circulation desk at the Topsfield Town Library next week to the end of March: Linde Martin Feb 25th, Lorraine Erickson, March 4th, Pat Durgin, March 11th, Linda Flynn, March 18th and Janet Hanson, March 25th.



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

*...Bits and pieces...*

*Getting to know Honorary Member, Anne Mahen*



*In the fall of 2013, our club planted a Memorial Garden for our past member, Anne Mahen, near the historical Parson Capen House in Topsfield. The garden is small, but features an Endless Summer Hydrangea, thought to be one of Anne's favorites. Since she left our club in 2007 to move closer to her daughter in Tucson, Arizona and ultimately passed away in 2010, many of today's members of our club unfortunately didn't have the opportunity to know the thoughtfulness and beauty that was*

*Anne. So, today, I thought I would introduce all who didn't know Anne to the special person she was and what her presence in our club really meant for its present and future. Anne was born in East Boston and, after graduating from Boston University, became a stewardess with American Airlines. While employed there, she met her husband, Jim, a pilot. They moved to Topsfield around 1960 and raised their family in their house on Woodside Road. After arriving in Topsfield, Anne didn't waste any time joining our club, becoming a member in 1961. She became fast friends with many of the Charter Members of our club, friendships that endured through all her garden club years. As time passed, she also became a very active member of the Topsfield Historical Society, serving as docent at Topsfield's Parson Capen House.*

*Although Anne never served as a club officer, her great support, talent and memorable contributions were felt throughout her many years of membership, and are still present in our club today. She spent her time in the club working on the Garden Therapy, Artistic, Conservation, and the Awards and Scholarship Committees, at times serving as the Committee Chair. Most notably toward the end of her membership, she served on the Nominating Committee. Anne and Charter Member, Deb Moulton, made quite a pair as they recruited officers for our club for many years. It was very difficult to say "no" to either of them once they had you in their sights for a position on the Administrative Board! Serving on the Nominating Committee isn't an easy task at times, but, for them, it was a labor of love for the club.*

*In order to tell you about Anne, and to confirm some of my personal recollections about her, I contacted Honorary Member, Linda Harvey, who had this to say about Anne: "...she was very active in the plantings of flowers around the commercial buildings in Topsfield...as well as the planning of many of the Flower Shows" (held by our club). Linda remembers Anne's favorite comment regarding club activities, referring to each of them as a "learning experience." She refers to Anne as the "quintessential garden club member. Loved the China dishes (the club owned) and hostessing. A talented designer, as well as a knowledgeable gardener." Very well said! Thanks so much, Linda, for your comments.*

*You will notice in the photo of Anne above that she is posing with Benji, the bronze statue our club contributed to the Topsfield Town Library in 1976 in memory of our Charter Member, Ruth Thompson. Both Linda Harvey and I are certain that Anne was the mastermind behind the entire project. It was Anne's husband, Jim, who made the stand for Benji, and also the small club sign used at the circulation desk at the Topsfield Library during the three months of the year we provide arrangements for the desk.*

*I could go on and on about Anne, and, in my research, came up with so many other ways she made a difference to our club. There is just not enough space here to numerate them all! Just know that she was always there to make our club better and enjoyable for her fellow members. I hope that through my efforts here, you know a little more about her and why are club chose to honor her with the little garden planted near the Parson Capen House. Sometime, when you are in Topsfield, why not visit the little garden our club has created and maintains in memory of a very special garden club member! ♥*



*...Green Thumb Corner follows...*



## Green Thumb Corner

I can't think of anyone I know who doesn't love the sweet scent of lavender, can you? This perennial flowering shrub has been a favorite for more than 2500 years and is native to northern Africa and the Mediterranean region. Because of its long



history, it's no surprise that many cultures throughout the world have used it in various ways to make life more enjoyable down through the years. Early on, lavender, especially the variety *Lavandula augustifolia*, was used for perfumes and mummification. Others used it in their bathwater to help purify their skin. These days, we create lovely gardens with it, we decorate our homes with it, we use it in the holistic healing treatment known as aromatherapy and we cook with it.

Of all of the various uses of lavender, use of its essential oil form is probably the most popular and most versatile. To produce the oil, lavender flowers are placed over a still and slowly steamed. The steam eventually releases the essential compounds of the flowers in the form of an oil. Lavender oil is valued for its anti-inflammatory, antifungal and therapeutic benefits. Many believe that it improves digestion, restores hair loss, treats skin disorders, relieves respiratory disorders, improves blood circulation and induces a feeling of calm. The list of believed benefits of lavender oil is endless. What more can we ask?? You may use a few drops of the oil in your bathwater, use it in a diffuser, dilute it with a carrier oil...coconut, olive or avocado oil for example...and massage it into your skin. ► One caution, though. Before using pure lavender essential oil, it is advisable to do a skin test first to check for any allergic reaction. Just apply one drop of oil to your arm. If any irritation arises, all of this may not be for you. If there is no evidence of irritation, you're good to go!

In addition to their divine scent, lavender flowers are very pleasing to the eye, making their use popular in home decorating. The options are endless...dried lavender bouquets hanging from a decorative hook, stems added to flower arrangements, and wreaths to adorn your walls, lavender flowers in your grandmother's favorite heirloom vase or just an ordinary canning jar, there is no end to the possibilities! If you are handy with a sewing machine, why not put together a few lavender sachets to place in a draw or closet. And how about making one for your car? That's way better than those auto pine tree air fresheners you see in the stores. You know the ones I mean! And don't forget to check online if you need even more inspiration. The internet will provide you will an infinite number of ideas for bringing the beauty of lavender into your home and your life.

As if all of this isn't enough to get you "hooked" on lavender, have you ever tasted lavender shortbread cookies or sipped a cup of lavender tea? Lavender is an incredibly versatile herb for cooking. While there is no definitive difference

...more on the following page...



between lavender used for ornamental purposes and that used for culinary purposes, there are some varieties that are better for cooking than others. Most widely used for cooking, *Lavandula angustifolia*, particularly "Munstead," has the sweetest fragrance of the lavenders. Lavender's stems and leaves can be used in recipes, but the use of its flowers will

lend a particularly sweet citrus flavor. These can be used either dried or fresh and are a wonderful addition to desserts and salads. Be careful to use lavender sparingly since it does have a strong flavor! A little goes a long way. ► Caution: do not cook with pre-packaged lavender from a craft store since this product may contain chemicals that are toxic when ingested. Only use unprocessed lavender.

If you have fresh lavender and would like to dry it to use later for cooking, here's what to do: hang a bunch upside-down in a dark place for 2 to 4 weeks. Once the lavender is dried, grind it in a coffee grinder or mash it with a mortar and pestle. Then place it in an airtight container or freeze it in a plastic freezer bag. Be sure to use your supply within a year.

► You can also use lavender essential oil in cooking, but if you decide to do this, be sure to buy a good therapeutic grade essential oil.

Here are a few fast and easy uses for lavender in the kitchen to try:

Lavender Butter—In a medium bowl, mash together 1/2 cup softened butter and 1 tablespoon fresh or dried lavender buds minced. Lather on warm scones or biscuits!

Lavender Tea—Fill a tea ball with 4 teaspoons of fresh or dried lavender flowers. Add to 8 ounces of boiling water and steep for 10 minutes. Watch the time since steeping longer may make your tea taste bitter! You may add a dollop of honey to make your cup of tea even more heavenly!!

Don't stop here...there are many good recipes at your fingertips online.

Want an endless supply of lavender of your own? Many varieties of Lavender are hardy in USDA zones 5 to 9, so varieties hardy in zones 5 or 6 would be perfect for us to grow here. A good choice would be the variety "Munstead," which is outstanding for both decorative and culinary uses. What a nice addition to any garden these purple blossoms would be, with the added benefit of being able to gather a bunch whenever the mood strikes! Would you like to try your hand at growing lavender? Here's what to do: first, find a nice sunny spot with well draining soil. Add a bit of compost to your hole, and then backfill. Water new plants well, but do not saturate the soil. Allow the soil to dry out between watering. Lavender is quite drought tolerant and doesn't like wet feet. An application of fertilizer in spring and a covering of mulch in winter is perfect. Other than this, lavender plants are care free, although they are short-lived and may last only about 10 years. Harvest lavender flowers and stems in the morning of a dry, not too hot day when the blooms have reached a vivid color.♦