

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

February 25th through March 17, 2020



Check out this month's Green Thumb corner for tips to make your garden bird-friendly during the winter months!

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

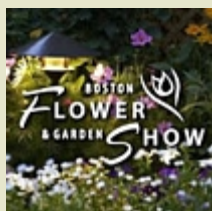
February 25



Our February regular membership meeting will a Mid-Winter Social, to be held beginning at 1:30 pm at the home of Horticulture Co-Chair, Donna Ryan. Donna and her Co-Chair, Cheryl Connors, are planning a nice get-together, including delicious treats and a chance for members to visit with one another and preview special garden club events that will soon be coming up! ► If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Donna as soon as possible! Parking is limited, so please carpool, if you can!

Hostesses: Mary Connor and Joline Yeaton.

March 11—15



The Boston Flower and Garden Show will be held at the Seaport World Trade Center. This year's show theme is "Garden Party: Celebrating Friends & Family". Outdoor living and interior plantscapes that will inspire us to spend time with those special to us will be highlighted. As always, the show will feature floral design, horticulture and photography competitions and exhibits, lectures, demonstrations, workshops and a Garden Marketplace.

March 12



Our membership meeting in March is not to be missed! Please note that the date for this meeting has been changed from that listed in our program books. Our club will be collaborating with the Town and Country Garden Club of Ipswich to bring you a very special program, "Stories and Gardens from Ireland" presented by Irish artist, sculptor and garden designer, Karin Stanley. A guest from the Irish Consulate will also be in attendance. The meeting will be held at EBSCO, 5 Peatfield Street, Ipswich at 7 pm. EBSCO is located at the former Kosciusko Club site.

There is an elevator available to get to the meeting place on the second floor. Do carpool to this one! Parking is available at Ipswich's train station.

Since our club will be co-sponsoring this meeting, we are requesting that members bring some Irish themed finger desserts...cookies, Irish Soda Bread, whatever you think would be yummy. Please let Co-Presidents Jane and Sandy know what you are thinking about bringing.

P.S. Since St. Patrick's Day will be just around the corner, we are encouraged to wear something green in celebration!

Hostesses are Jane Cullinan and Claudette Poor

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

March 12



Horticulture Morning will be held at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society The Gardens At Elm Bank, 900 Washington Street, Wellesley at 10 am. The meeting will feature Dan Jaffee, who will present his program Design-Less Gardening: A Natural Approach. There is a suggested donation of \$5.00 at the door.

March 17

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

March 21



Rooms in Bloom Open House will be held at the Stevens-Coolidge Place, 137 Andover Street, North Andover from 10 am to 3 pm. Enjoy a tour through the elegant historical summer home of John and Helen Coolidge, surrounded by fresh florals provided by local floral designers and garden clubs. The cost is \$9.00 for Trustee of Reservation members and \$15.00 for nonmembers. Pre-registration is encouraged at:

[https://events.thetrustees.org/tickets/ItemShow.aspx?](https://events.thetrustees.org/tickets/ItemShow.aspx?Dep=dw9UV13o7qVuMrWSWIKqaw==&Cat=dCgYwxlo417SlQMiwAB9iA==&It=9cFx5vzNSNA=&d=03-21-2020)

[Dep=dw9UV13o7qVuMrWSWIKqaw==&Cat=dCgYwxlo417SlQMiwAB9iA==&It=9cFx5vzNSNA=&d=03-21-2020](https://events.thetrustees.org/tickets/ItemShow.aspx?Dep=dw9UV13o7qVuMrWSWIKqaw==&Cat=dCgYwxlo417SlQMiwAB9iA==&It=9cFx5vzNSNA=&d=03-21-2020)

NOTES



Coming soon!

► **Saturday, April 4, 2020** — The Topsfield Garden Club will sponsor its Grow Spring EXPO at the Proctor School, Topsfield. This event gets bigger every year, and this year will be no exception. Save the date.

► **Friday, April 24, 2020** — Arbor Day at the Steward School. Save the date.

► **Thursday, April 30, 2020** — Membership meeting at the Topsfield Library at 5:30 pm featuring Betsy Williams, who will guide us in creating our own Tussie Mussie. Please note that this is a change in date and program from that printed in our program book. More details will follow. Save the date.

► **Saturday, May 9, 2020, 9 am to 12 pm** — Mother's Day Tea Cup sale. More details to follow. Save the date.

► **Tuesday, May 26, 2020, 11 am** — Membership meeting at the Valley View Farm in Topsfield. Learn all about the resident goats and the cheese making process. More details will follow. Save the date.

► **Tuesday, June 9, 2020, 12 pm** — Our Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held at the Ipswich Country Club. Save the date.

► **Saturday, June 13, 2020** — Our club's fundraiser at Topsfield's Strawberry Festival. Save the date.

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

► *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: Pat Durgin, Feb 24th, Linda Flynn, March 2nd, Linde Martin, March 9th, Donna Ryan, March 16th, Cheryl Connors, March 23rd and Mary Connor, March 30th.*



...Bits and pieces...

If you're spending some of these cold winter days planning your spring garden, why not include a Flower Pot Bed for man's best friend?



...more on the following page...

Green Thumb Corner

As I gaze out of my kitchen window, it is quite evident that these are the sleepy days of winter for the local wildlife we are so used to seeing during other seasons of the year. Occasionally, we see our resident deer, but not often. That is truly unusual, except in winter. The fox, that has made his home beneath our deck for the last few years, does venture out from time to time, reassuring us that our



Hopper feeder

rodent population is more under control than it would otherwise be. So, with nature as quiet as it is right now, how thrilled we are that the birds who brave our New England winters are here, feasting at our bird feeders from dawn to dusk each day. It is truly a challenge to keep seed in the feeders for the nice variety of birds that stop by. About a week ago, the first pair of bluebirds I have ever seen were perched on the Holly just outside the window! What an amazing treat that was. Unfortunately, my hubby was napping and missed it all.

Feeding birds in winter is an enjoyable way to provide color and interest to your garden at the most dreary time of the year. In addition, the birds benefit since their normal source of food, which is small insects and seeds, is dramatically diminished during winter. The most common birds in winter locally are titmice, jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, cardinals, finches and mourning doves. We have seen them all and others as well. If you'd like to get into feeding birds and would like to attract a lot of different species, you will need to put out a few different types of bird feeders. Here are a few that you can chose from and the birds they will attract:

- ♦ *Thistle feeders attract finches. Fill these with niger (thistle) seed. I like these feeders because squirrels have no interest in them and it takes longer for the birds to empty them!*
- ♦ *Tube feeders attract birds that perch such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and finches. In winter, fill with black oil sunflower seeds.*
- ♦ *Platform feeders attract groundfeeding birds such as cardinals, jays, doves, and some finches. Any kind of seed may be used, but should be emptied and refilled daily to prevent mildew and spoilage.*
- ♦ *Suet feeders attract birds that perch such as finches chickadees and titmice.*
- ♦ *Peanut feeders attract nuthatches, woodpeckers, chickadees and titmice. Fill with raw peanuts.*
- ♦ *Hopper feeders attract most birds, and are much tidier than platform feeders because of their enclosed container or hopper for seed. Fill with black oil sunflower seed.*

Keep in mind that a seed favorite among our winter birds is black oil sunflower seed and this will attract a greatest variety of birds. Most birds will sift through mixed bird seed, picking out what they like best while tossing the rest aside. This happens all the time with our bird feeders, but we find that our ground feeding birds take care of the seeds tossed aside by our perching birds...a perfect symbiotic relationship!

In winter, your feeders should be placed in sheltered locations where they will be spared the severe winds we sometimes get during this season. Providing a wide cover over perches and dispensing trays will keep seed from being buried during snowfalls. If your feeders do not come with a built-in cover, wide baffles can be added to keep snow and ice away. Seed should be protected as much as possible from moisture, otherwise mold might grow before it is consumed. Be sure to tamp down snow that falls underneath your feeders to make it easier for ground-feeding birds to find fallen seeds. Be sure to place your feeders close enough to the house so that you can do some bird watching while your birds are feeding. But, to avoid collisions with windows or walls, place your feeders at least five feet away. Also, make sure you can get to your feeders easily for refilling! And, your birds will be delighted if there is a hedge or shrub nearby, which will provide some cover from predators.

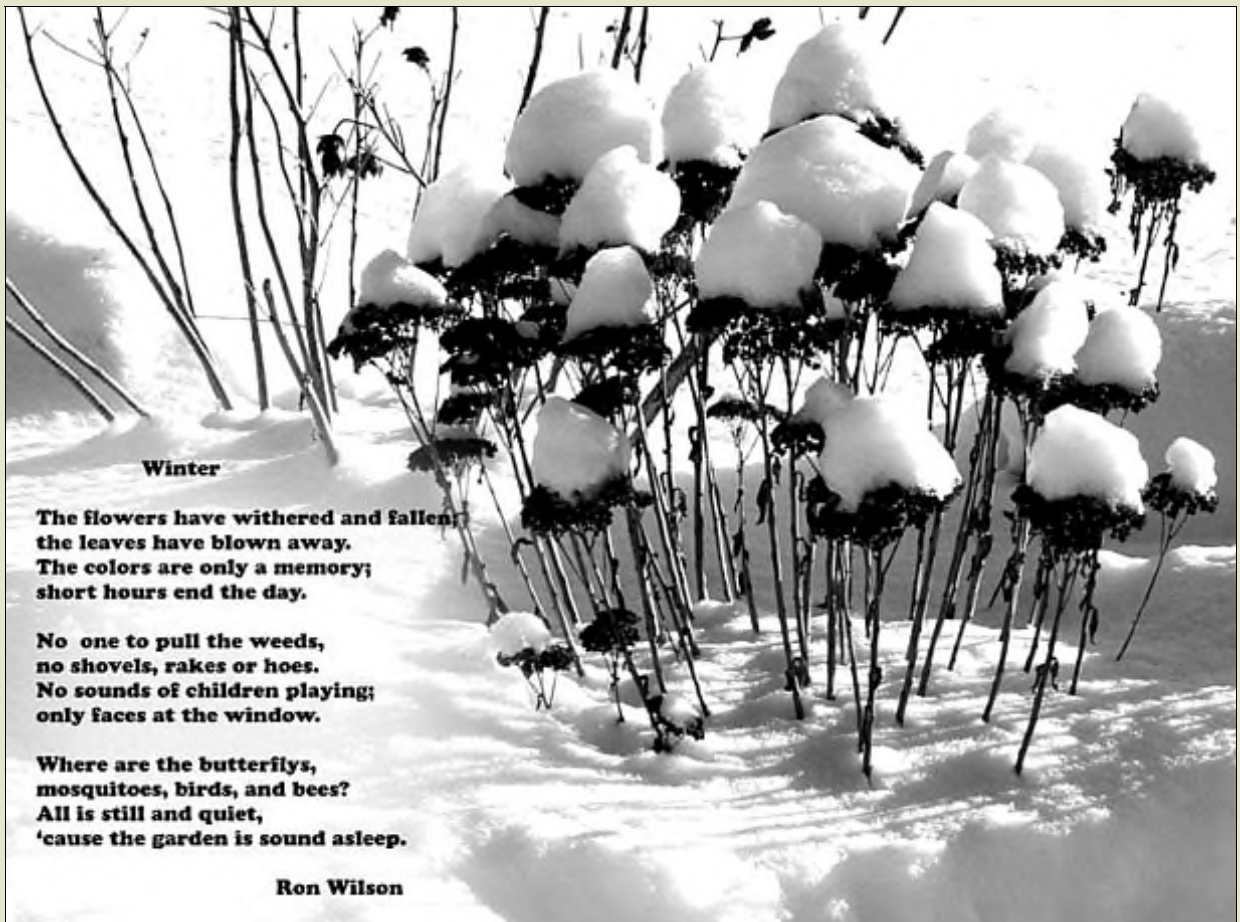
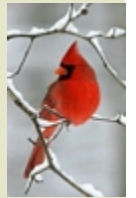
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Your feeders will need some housecleaning as well. They should be cleaned about once a month. This can be done by soaking them in a mild solution of bleach and water (1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon water.) Then rinse thoroughly and let them dry.

To stay warm and hydrated during winter, birds of winter need water. Even if there is snow and ice in your yard, it costs birds precious calories and body heat to melt frozen water for hydration. Since it can be difficult for them to find water if everything is in a deep freeze, you may want to winterize a birdbath with an electric temperature-sensitive water heater. These are available from Amazon and are not too pricey.

And a few last points...when choosing your feeders, the best are those made from thick plastic or metal with pest repellents such as caged perches or squirrel baffles. If you have a large population of squirrels, as we do at our house, it might be a good idea to offer other food for these pest animals, such as corn cobs, best placed in a different location. It's also a good idea to leave birdhouses up year round to provide winter roosting sites for your birds. And one last tip about seed selection. If you are having a problem with "bully" birds at your feeders, like grackles and blackbirds, or squirrels that insist on raiding the "cookie jar" you've set up for your birds, consider using safflower seeds, which have a bitter flavor that is not appealing to these guys. The birds that normally winter hereabouts that we welcome into our gardens seem to become used to the taste. Safflower seeds are available on line, of course, and locally at stores like Petco and Home Depot.

Backyard bird-watching can be a fun hobby throughout, what is for us here in the Northeast, a fairly boring season. See how many varieties you can attract and have fun watching their antics just outside your window! ♥



Winter

**The flowers have withered and fallen;
the leaves have blown away.
The colors are only a memory;
short hours end the day.**

**No one to pull the weeds,
no shovels, rakes or hoes.
No sounds of children playing;
only faces at the window.**

**Where are the butterflies,
mosquitoes, birds, and bees?
All is still and quiet,
'cause the garden is sound asleep.**

Ron Wilson