

A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club

Topsfield, Massachusetts

April 16th through May 21, 2019



This year's Cherry Blossom Festival is ongoing in our Nation's Capital. I have never personally seen it, but perhaps some of you have. While looking at photos of the exquisite display, I started wondering about the story of these trees. I share a bit of what I learned with you in this month's Green Thumb Corner.

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

April 16



At our next regular membership meeting, we will be treated to a very special design workshop presented by Tina Lefebvre of the Platinum Posies Florist in Middleton.

The meeting will be held at the Topsfield Town Hall at 6:00 pm. ► Please note that this is a change in both location and time from that printed in our program books. The meeting will be held in the Public Hall on the second floor of the town hall, and parking is in the rear of the building. An elevator is available.

Tina will provide the flowers and containers, and of course, the guidance, as we create our masterpieces! The cost to members is \$15.00, and \$25.00 for your guests, who are welcome to join us! So that Tina can provide enough flowers and containers, if you haven't already, it is very important to RSVP to Janet Hanson with your check made out to New Meadows Garden as soon as possible.

Hostesses are Linda Mann and Marsha Stevens

April 17



The Village Gardeners of Topsfield have invited us to join them at their meeting at the Topsfield Town Library at 6:30 pm. The program will be "Welcoming Native Plants & Insects to our Garden." Learn all about it and enjoy delightful refreshments and conversation as well!

April 24

The Northern District Annual Meeting will be held at the Tewksbury Country Club, 1880 Main Street, Tewksbury. Registration is now closed. Wishing those who will attend from our club a nice day!

April 25



Arbor Day will be held at the Steward School, 261 Perkins Row, Topsfield at 9:15 am. It's best to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the ceremony so that you have time to check in at the office. As our club does each year, a tree will be donated and planted on the school grounds. You are invited to join in the celebration of this rite of spring with the children in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

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

April 27—29



We're very excited that Claudette Poor will be our club's designer this year at **Art In Bloom at the MFA Boston**. Co-President, Jane Cullinan will assist. Claudette has received her assigned object pictured at left. This ancient sandstone sculpture is 2000 years old and is one of the great treasures at the museum. **The Torso of a Fertility Goddess (Yakshi)** stood at the Great Stupa (Buddhist shrine) at Sanchi near Bhopal in India in its day, and formed part of the decorative scheme on one of four gateways. She is associated with good luck, fertility and wealth, and placed near a temple signified protection and welcome. You can view her and Claudette's design in the **South and Southeast Asia Gallery (Gallery 176)**.

April 30



Please mark your calendar for our annual spring cleanup of the two traffic islands our club maintains in Topsfield and the garden at the Pine Grove Cemetery. We will meet at the **Prospect Street** island at 12 pm. When our work is complete there, we will move to the **Linebrook Road** island, and then the cemetery garden. With a good group of volunteers, the job goes quickly! Please bring your gardening gloves, a rake, a broom, a plastic trash bag or two and perhaps some clippers. There are jobs for all abilities, so please lend a hand. Every little bit helps!

May 1



Our regular membership meeting will be held at the **Peabody Essex Museum at 11 am** featuring 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. Guests are welcome. Here's a link for more details about the exhibit: www.pem.org/exhibitions/natures-nation-american-art-and-environment.

► Please make your reservation and send your check for \$20.00 made out to **New Meadows Garden Club** to Penny Rogers as soon as possible.

► The tour will begin at 11 am sharp, so please plan to have your car parked and meet our group inside the museum at 10:45 am!!

May 16



The Hidden Gardens of Beacon Hill Annual Tour will be held from 9 am to 5 pm, rain or shine. Attendees will be invited to visit at their own pace behind the gates of ten spectacular private gardens of club members. Advance tickets are \$50.00, and \$60.00 after May 9th.

For tickets and more information, please visit BeaconHillGardenClub.org

May 20



***Attention all Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs! All annual Committee Reports must be submitted to Secretary Joline Yeaton by May 20th for inclusion in her Annual Report to be distributed electronically in June.

May 21

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

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

NOTES



♥ Our Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held on June 4, 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!*

► A reminder from Treasurer, Marsha Stevens! The club's fiscal year will close on June 30th and she is now looking for any receipts members may have, which are eligible for reimbursement by the club. She needs these very soon, so she can close her books at the end of our garden club year! So please get them to her as soon as possible.



Help Wanted! We are looking for volunteers to help coordinate our fundraising table at Topsfield's Strawberry Festival, June 8, 2019. There are jobs for everyone...this is a club effort! Our treasury, which provides programs for our members and also supports our community projects, depends on your help at this event. Be on the look-out for your opportunity to sign up soon!



Membership Chair, Janet Hanson, will mail membership renewals to all members at the beginning of May. Please renew your membership with your dues payment as soon as possible. Dues payments are due by the club's Annual Meeting and Banquet on June 4th.

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...Bits and pieces...

Topsfield Garden Club's Grow Spring! Expo 2019



Pat Durgin's creative silent auction item for our table!



Marsha Stevens, Sandy Whelan and Pat Durgin tend our pollinator information table at the Expo.



Creating our spring door decorations and showing off the finished product at our March 2019 meeting!



Linda Flynn's cheery springtime urn at the Steward School, Topsfield

Museum of Fine Arts press release for Art In Bloom!



Members of New Meadows Garden Club of Topsfield will participate in Art in Bloom at the Museum of Fine Arts. Head arranger, Claudette Poor, left, stands with assistant arranger, Jane Cullinan..

...Green Thumb Corner follows...

Green Thumb Corner

As I sit here in New England, surrounded by a landscape still in its long winter's sleep, the cherry trees planted in our Nation's Capital are at the peak of their blooming season. What a spectacular sight it must be. Visitors rise at dawn to catch a glimpse of the flowering trees in their full glory at




first light, the magnificent display lasting until darkness sets in each day for a about a two week period at this time each year. Of course, the best time to be there is when the blossoms are at their peak. The peak bloom date is defined as the day when 70 percent of the trees have opened their buds. On average, that occurs on April 4th, but, as you can imagine the date does change depending on whether the winter preceding has been cold or warm. This year it was April 1st!

So it is an exciting time to be in Washington DC. The Cherry Blossom Festival, which began as a small celebration in 1927, now boasts more than 1.5 million attendees each year. Following a lavish Opening Ceremony, there is a Blossom Kite Festival, the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade, more than 150 daily performances by local, national and international entertainers that honor both American and Japanese cultures, a 10 mile run and 5 K walk, spectacular fireworks and much more, all presided over by the Cherry Blossom Queen!

Being curious about many things, all of this excitement made me ponder how all of this came about. I just don't know what I ever did without all the resources available on the internet these days! What follows is a bit of what I learned about Washington DC's cherry trees and the reason behind these yearly celebrations.

Although the cherry trees arrived many years later, the story really begins in 1885 when Mrs. Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore returned to Washington from her first visit to Japan. Struck by the beauty of the cherry trees there, she approached the US Army Superintendent of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds with the idea to plant cherry trees along the Potomac waterfront. She met with no success, and kept approaching each new superintendent for the next 24 years! It wasn't until Eliza, along with Agriculture Department official, David Fairchild, another cherry tree fan, contacted First Lady, Helen Taft, in 1909 with their proposal to raise funds to purchase cherry trees and donate them to the city. Mrs. Taft had lived in Japan and was well aware of the beauty of the flowering cherry trees there. She was "all in" on the plan! Co-incidentally, two Japanese dignitaries happened to be in Washington at the time and when told about the plan, offered a donation of 2000 cherry trees from Japan in the name of the City of Tokyo. To Yukio Ozaki, then mayor of Tokyo, it was a fitting thank you gift for the help the United States had given to end Russo-Japanese War in 1905. And so, on December 10, 1909, 2000 cherry trees arrived in Seattle, Washington from Japan, and a month later they arrived in Washington, DC after traveling in temperature-controlled railcars.

...more on the following page...



Everything seemed to be moving along quite nicely until The Department of Agriculture discovered a week later that the trees were heavily infested with the San Jose and the West Indian peach scale, earwigs, thrips and Oriental moths. Much to everyone's dismay, the trees would have to be destroyed to protect American growers from these diseases. But at what cost? Would this deeply offend the Mayor of Tokyo and the Japanese? It was decided that a US diplomat would deliver the bad news. Tokyo Mayor Ozaki broke the tension by making a joke: "it has been an American tradition to destroy cherry trees since your first president, George Washington!" Needless to say, the US diplomat was very relieved.

Mayor Ozaki promised a second shipment of trees to replace the ill-fated first shipment, but, to his dismay, he learned that there was not a single field in Japan that was clear of these pests. To solve this problem, the mayor asked his Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce to grow cherry trees from seeds that would be planted in sterilized beds. In 1912, once these trees were finally grown, 3000 were shipped to our nation's capital. The trees consisted of a dozen assorted varieties. On March 27, 1912, Mrs. Taft and Japanese ambassador Sutemi Chinda and his wife planted the first cherry trees along the basin. Ultimately, the trees were planted around the Tidal Basin and in East Potomac Park. Seventeen years later, after a very wet summer, Japan's Cherry Blossom Society donated 500 additional trees to replace some that had been destroyed by root rot.

Then, in 1938, preparations were being made for construction of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, which would require cutting down some of these precious Cherry Trees. A group of women chained themselves together near the trees making a political statement against the plan and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was called the Cherry Tree Rebellion. A compromise was made that called for more trees to be planted along the south side of the Tidal Basin to provide a frame for the memorial.

The next "bump in the road" was the Second World War, during which the United States and Japan found themselves adversaries. In 1941, newspapers in Japan reported that the cherry trees had all been cut down, but, Yukio Ozaki, now the former Mayor of Tokyo, didn't believe that the Americans would be so insensitive. In fact, four cherry trees had been mysteriously cut down in suspected retaliation for the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, but this was never proven.

Throughout his long life, Mayor Yukio Ozaki always regarded the gift of the cherry trees to the United States as a high point in his career. Just four months before his death in 1950, he was photographed inspecting the blossoms during his visit to Washington. On his deathbed, he composed the following poem:

*"As I gaze at cherry blossoms in my garden
From my sickbed, I recall
The Potomac in spring." ♦*