



Next Meeting – October 5th - 6:30 pm - Annex Building

Feeding Backyard Birds with Bille Gette



Our October meeting will feature a presentation by Bill Gette, former Director of Joppa Flats Education Center. Bill will describe why the hobby of birding is so popular, highlight local birds, and discuss the impact of climate change, land use, and development on local bird populations. Members will learn how to create a sanctuary for our local feathered friends. There is a \$5.00 guest fee.

September Potluck Dinner and Meeting

Our September meeting featured a potluck dinner, new connections, and slideshow prepared by Heather Conner and Dianna Fogel highlighting our accomplishments in 2022/23 year. Members also received their club 2023-24 yearbooks thanks to the hard work of yearbook Co-Editors Lynn Boyd and Sherry Loudon and help from committee members Wendy Gus, Linda Schaeffer, Maureen Harris, Anne Sanchez Felix, and Jane Jeffers.



Friendly reminder that our meeting start time is now 6:30 pm

The Many Beautiful Gardens Maintained by WNGC Members -

By Alexis Katkevich & Marley Switzer

The WNGC is fortunate to have eight committees whose members care for beautiful public spaces. This dedicated team of volunteers participates in projects throughout the year. Irene Harnett heads the group that tends to three outdoor spaces at the G.A.R. Library. Judy Bloomgarden, Gail Dinaro, Dianne Faulkner, Carrie Hometh, Rosemarie McCobb, and Irene are the self-proclaimed "Library Garden Girls." Not only do they focus on the very visible main entrance and a stone bench area at the front of the building, but they also provide

loving care for the new memorial to WNGC member and historian Mary Dorothy "Dot" Cavanaugh, who passed away in May.

The Library Entrance

The space has been converted primarily to perennials. Irene says many shade-loving summer blooms beautify the space, including Astilbe, hosta's, Columbine, and Jacob's Ladder. These are complemented by "long-lasting, colorful annuals to brighten spots here and there," she notes. Three Chrysanthemums along a sunnier border begin to bloom in September, when Fall brings children to spot the metal sculptures and pumpkins. And here is an historical note from Children's Librarian Kate Gove. The front garden long ago was a memorial to a West Newbury resident by the name of Blossom Pond.

The Bench Garden

Pollinator-loving Milkweed, Black-eyed Susan, Montauk Daisies, Catmint and Pulmonaria populate the bench space nestled between two Hydrangea trees often buzzing with bees on warm days. Irene says a small remodel is planned for next year, with an emphasis on natives and plants that attract butterflies and hummingbirds. This garden also has a birdhouse that is always occupied.



Dot's Memorial

The birdhouse is in keeping with a nearby bird bath that belonged to the late Dot Cavanaugh. The WNGC member was a historian and Library Trustee who loved watching birds visit her garden. A plaque in her loving memory has been installed here, in view of her historic home on the Training Field. Library Director Corinn Flaherty recalls that "Dot was like our family." That thought "makes us all smile while we weed and water," Irene says.

Garden Challenges and Joys

The odds are stacked against the library gardens. The soil is dry. In the Spring, the Hosta's need to be netted to deter the mystery animal that dines on the young leaves (perhaps the rabbit who dives in and out of the large Hosta by the Children's Room). And in three seasons of the year, curious children are tempted to explore the plants.

But the Library Garden Girls say their reward is making a beautiful space for library patrons to stop and appreciate its peace and tranquility. Irene says, "Whenever one of us is watering or working in the garden, we get a 'thank you' from library patrons."

The library staff also gives the WNGC high praise. "They do an awesome job," Corinn says. "Every morning when I walk in, when the light is shining, I say, 'Look how pretty it is!'"

Save Your Geraniums! By Kathy Mandeville



It isn't only that I hate to throw away living plants or spend a lot of money on new plants – well, maybe it's a bit of both – but also, it has been so EASY to save our geraniums from year to year. Before the first frost, I trim our geraniums to about one-half their size and store them in our cool basement (which has good-sized windows), and water them a few times during the winter. They get leggy by Spring, but then I bring them outside after danger of frost, do a little pruning, add water, and fertilize lightly. Alternately, you can shake the soil from the roots, hang them upside down (again, in a cool basement or garage), soak the stems a few times during the winter, then re-pot in the Spring. If you have a well-lit storage space that stays about 50-60 degrees in the winter and you can REMEMBER to water the plants a few times, you too can enjoy your lovely container beauties.

What to do with your Hydrangeas in the Fall - By Jane Jeffers



The many different species of Hydrangeas can make caring for them in the Fall both a puzzle and an art. Here are some practices that have been effective in preparing my Hydrangeas for Winter. As usual, I will start out by saying, what you do depends on the species of Hydrangea. (And, no, "lacecap" is not a species; it is a flower type.)

Hydrangea Macrophylla examples include Endless Summer, Cityline, and Nikko Blue. Hydrangea Macrophylla can either lacecap or mophead. New varieties now grow on

both old and new wood, but they are the most susceptible to non-blooming based on the severity of Winter weather. The deep freeze last February and the early May cold snap affected some but not all Macrophylla.

Now is the time to DEADHEAD your Macrophylla. Start at the faded bloom and move down the stem until you see buds. Cut off the dead bloom above the bud. Do this before it gets too cold. Although this is not recommended, I will be cutting back my Macrophylla quite a bit to winterize them. They grew so tall last Winter that I will not be able to wrap them as usual. For those interested in wrapping, I use TYVAK cages, fill them with leaves, and then cover the top. In some cases, I use many layers of burlap around the plants. If you want to wrap, focus on new plants.

1. Hydrangea Serrata examples include Tuff Stuff, Tiny Tuff Stuff and Tuff Stuff Ah-ha. These are "Mountain Hydrangea" and are more tolerant of cold weather. Deadhead if you want, but I sometimes wait until Spring to do that.
2. Hydrangea Aborescens examples include Annebelle, Invincible Spirit and Incrediball. The Internet has many recommendations for what to do with this species. I cut mine down each October to about 8", and they come back big and beautiful every year.
3. Hydrangea Paniculata examples include Quick Fire, Pinky Winky, Limelight and Little Lime. Hydrangea Paniculata can be trimmed like trees. Cut any branches that intersect with other branches. I deadhead the spent blooms and trim in the Spring, although this year I will deadhead my Little Lime and Limelight next month. The stems of this variety are not strong, and they have been tortured by the rain this

Summer. Deadheading now could help prevent stems from breaking this Winter if we have heavy snow.

4. Oakleaf Hydrangea. Nothing needs to be done now. Trim as you would a tree.
5. Potted Hydrangea. If you have Hydrangea in pots that you overwinter in your garage or shed, bring them inside after all the leaves have fallen off, usually in November. They do not need to be watered until leaves start to bud in March or April. Then give them a drink but wait until the nights are going to be consistently in the high 30's before bringing them out.

Winterizing your Dahlias - By Barbara Merrill



Now that you have enjoyed your dahlias' 3 months of continuous blooms, it is time to put the tubers to bed for the winter. After the first frost, when the leaves start to shrivel, cut the foliage to six inches, and use a pitchfork or spade to dig the tubers. Wash tubers with a garden hose and leave for one day to dry protected from the elements. Tubers should be stored in a cardboard box or crate lined with about 10-12 layers of newspaper, although I have had success using garden pots. Add damp peat moss or wood shavings around the tubers and store in a cool, dry area ideally 40 - 50 degrees.

Notes from a Novice Gardener - by Andrea Caswell

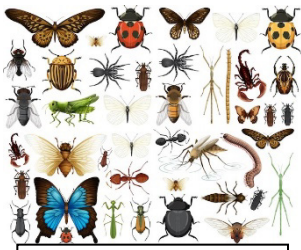


image by brgfx on Freepik

It is fun to focus on the pretty parts of gardening: watching bumblebees bump along the spotted bee balm, filling the bird feeder for song sparrows, cedar waxwings, and delicate indigo buntings. We especially enjoy seeing lemon-colored goldfinches, and the darling, white-breasted nuthatches. But there is a dark underside to gardening; more specifically, a creepy-crawly side. This summer, while weeding on a rare sunny day, I was bitten by a tick. Several days passed before I noticed it had happened. My doctor quickly prescribed antibiotics, and I learned that ticks have been very bad this year. Apparently, they didn't die off over the "mild" winter. Now they are just about everywhere, not only lurking in the woods.

Perhaps everyone but me already appreciated the scope of this problem. Yet accepting that "Yep, ticks are out there" can make it easy to let our guard down sometimes. After my experience this summer, I researched ways to prevent tick-borne illness, because clearly, I needed a refresher. Just as you would shield yourself from sun exposure with protective clothing and sunscreen, gardeners can take similar approaches to tick-bite prevention.

Here are a few of the tips I found. Wear light-colored clothing that offers coverage, such as long sleeves. Tuck your shirt into your waistband and your pants legs into your socks. If you have longer hair, pull it back securely. And no matter your hair length, always wear a hat. Since I am on high-alert mode now, I also use tick-repellent spray on my shoes and ankles before working in the garden. For more coverage, you can buy insect-repellent clothing, such as pre-treated socks and pants. Someday, I might go into full superhero-mode with The Tick Suit (www.theticksuit.com). All while having fun, of course. Stay safe out there, my friends!

Moving into the 21st Century - By Lori Boudrow & Barbara Merrill



The Board would like to acknowledge and thank club members who have devoted their time and talents to moving the club towards Digital Archiving. This topic has been long discussed by the board allowing our clubs' history to be preserved using current technology. Digital archiving began 2022/23 calendar year. The committee began research for this project in May 2022 and presented a proposed schedule to the board which was unanimously accepted in November 2022. Data entry began in 2023. Document archiving deals with long term storage of inactive documents and photos. These are not to be changed and

are not used regularly. Data is being stored on an external hard drive which is updated and backed up regularly. It is easily retrievable if needed for legal, auditing, or other purposes. Many thanks and much appreciation to the committee members:

Chair - Barbara Merrill

Joanne Gay - Data entry and keeper of electronic files

Kathy Mandeville - Instrumental in setting up the schedule worksheet.

Dot Cavanaugh - Contributed perspective of past record keeping.

Coming Soon!

*Payment due for Holiday Party November 2nd

*Plant Container drive November 11th & 12th

*Anna Jacques Hospital wreath decorating November 27th

*Cushing House Holiday Decorating - late November/December

*Pettingill House food drive - December 7th meeting

Thank You!



*Lynn Boyd & Sherry Loudon - Co-Editors of yearbook & our yearbook team

*Barbara Merrill - For our beautiful yearbook photo

*Heather Conner & Dianna Fogel - 2022/23 Slideshows

*Elisa Grammer & Jane Jeffers - Updated website

Contact us!

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WNGC is a member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. Read their quarterly newsletter *Mayflower* for articles, announcements, events and workshops.

Stay Connected to WNGC

Note: WNGC Board meetings are held the 1st Monday of the month at Board members' homes.
Please contact Lori Boudrow if you wish to attend.