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**Next Meeting – December 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:45pm Annex Building \*\*\*No Meeting in January**

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### ***Making the Holiday a Little Happier for Others***

Our December 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting will once again be dedicated to wreath decorating and providing table centerpieces for West Newbury residents. How great that we can meet again this year as a club and share in creating decorations for our community! The club will supply some decorative material however, members are asked to come with greens from your yard and decorations that you would like to use or offer to others. Please also bring cutters and wire to help fasten the embellishments. This is an all hands-on-activity, and we need you, your ideas, your nimble fingers, and your plant materials.

*Please bring non-perishable goods and/or gift cards for the Pettingill House which we will later deliver. This is an excellent way to start the season of giving.*

### **November Meeting Highlights**



#### ***Garden Beauty in Winter*** by Kathy Mandeville

With an obvious passion for horticulture, our November speaker, Warren Leach from [Tranquil Lake Nursery](http://Tranquil Lake Nursery) in Rehobeth, MA encouraged us to consider the additional delight of winter's effect on our gardens. His beautifully photographed examples included not only the beauty of shrubs and trees with colored bark like Red Twig Dogwood (*Cornus Sericea*), Yellow Twig Dogwood (*Cornus sericea 'Flamiramea'*), Paperback Maple and Birch, but also those with berries like Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), Red Chokeberry (*Aronia*) and Beautyberry Bush (*Callicarpa americana*). Ornamental grasses can be beautiful if left uncut, as can Evergreen trees, and shrubs like Leucothoe (*Leucothoe axillaris*) and groundcovers like Bearberry (*Cotoneaster dammeri*). Late Winter/early Spring blooming plants like Hellebores (*Helleborus*) can be striking, as can the many varieties of the small tree, Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis*). For more examples of Winter plants, you might check out: <https://www.gardenia.net/plants/seasons/winter>

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***Using an abundance of caution, the Board requests that you wear a mask and be fully vaccinated for our face-to-face meetings.***

***Annual Holiday Party Cancelled***



As much as we were looking forward to celebrating together, due to unforeseen circumstances at Cafe Sarina's, our club's December 12<sup>th</sup> Holiday Party has been cancelled. Once again, we turn hopeful for next year's holiday season when we can gather with confidence and ease. In the meantime, let's look forward to sharing some time together during our wreath and table-top decorating meeting!

\*\*\*Reimbursement for the party will take place on Thursday, December 2nd or, if you are unable to attend, a check will be mailed to you.

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### ***A Great Way to Kick Off the Christmas Season!***



Margo Pullman is heading the holiday decorating committee for the Museum of Old Newbury (Cushing House). The annual Holiday Open House sponsored by the Newburyport Historical Society, will be held on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Times are from 10 am to 4 pm. There is NO admission charge so be sure to stop by and take in the beautiful holiday décor planned by our club, and other area clubs. The house glows each year with festive lighting and features original ideas that you may be able to use when you decorate your own home this holiday season.

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### ***Let's Talk Gardening*** by Kathy Mandeville



Are you a WNGC member who would enjoy an additional opportunity to chat about gardening and plants? Perhaps with a smaller group, less structure, more casual, other than just during our monthly meeting? This was an idea recently initiated based on a conversation with new member, Kath Mason. "I know there are others like me sitting at meetings who are relatively new gardeners and, would love to learn more about gardening, and get to know other members better".

Winter is upon us, and what a better time to give this idea a chance? If you're interested in getting together with some other WNGC members to "talk plants, pose gardening challenges. and share ideas", let me know the best day(s) of the week that will work for you during the month of January. BYO tea or coffee and I'll provide the coffeecake. Contact Kathy Mandeville. Let's keep growing our garden club!



"The Mad Gardener"  
Illustration by Harry Furniss

## **Notes From a Novice Gardener** by Andrea Caswell

Long before we plant our own gardens, they are planted in our imaginations. They may be sacred and specific, such as the Garden of Eden, or secular literary gardens made famous by their authors. *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett conjures its own sort of paradise, as does Milton's complex epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667). What all these gardens have in common is the possibility of transformation.

For many children, Mr. McGregor's Garden may be the first one they "enter" when they follow Peter through the green gate. After the success of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1893) and subsequent books, Beatrix Potter purchased 34 acres of buildings and land known as Hill Top Farm in England's Lake District. Though Hill Top was only a part-time residence, away from the hustle-and-bustle of London, Potter used it as a sort of canvas

to experiment with the aesthetics of houses and gardens that figured prominently in her fiction. From her letters, we know she was influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, extensive travels, and well-known gardeners of the time such as Gertrude Jekyll. In 1906, Potter wrote to a friend of "...a quarryman who lives on the road to the ferry who has got some most splendid phloxes, they will look nice between the laurels...I shall plant the lilies between the azaleas."

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1866) by Lewis Carroll (pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), Alice is on a quest to follow the White Rabbit to "the loveliest garden you ever saw." In addition to the metamorphoses, she undergoes after consuming magical potions and currant cakes, a dream-world of fanciful characters to reach the enchanted garden. She converses with the Caterpillar, asks directions of the Cheshire-Cat, and attends the infamous party in front of the March Hare's house. To escape "the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life," she passes through a tiny door in a tree. Then "she found herself at last in the beautiful garden, among the bright flower-beds and the cool fountains."

The peace of the garden is an illusion too; she's stumbled into the croquet grounds of the Queen of Hearts. The Queen's gardeners are frantically trying to correct an error—they'd planted white roses instead of red—before the Queen can order their execution. High-stakes gardening, Mr. Carroll! But even that act, of trying to change the roses from white to red, is rooted in transformation, in the magical currency of the child's world. The Mad Hatter is one of the most famous characters in children's literature. But in a later novel, *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889), Carroll introduced an equally absurd character called, The Mad Gardener. This character, too, spouts all kinds of nonsense in rhymed verse. He's described as follows: "A gardener he seemed to be—yet surely a mad one, by the way he brandished his rake—madder, by the way he broke, ever and anon, into a frantic jig..." Yet can we fault him for his unbridled joy? Here's to brandishing rakes, to singing and dancing, through the gardens of our imaginations.

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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.

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**Stay Connected to WNGC**

Please remember to notify Linda Schaeffer, Membership Chair, when you change your mailing address, email address, and/or phone number. [linda-schaeffer@verizon.net](mailto:linda-schaeffer@verizon.net)

Note: WNGC Board meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at Board members' homes.  
Please contact Lori Boudrow if you wish to attend.