



Next Meeting – February 1st - 6:30 pm - Annex Building

Native Plants for Every Yard and Why it is Vital to Plant Them - By Alison Reyes



Our first meeting of the new year will feature WNGC member Carol Decker, naturalist, and native plant aficionado. Members will learn more about native plants and how to incorporate them into every landscape. Carol's presentation will cover cultivars vs. natives, planting native seeds, no dig gardening, and why it is important to leave the leaves. Carol will explain how planting natives will support our birds and pollinators which are in serious decline. Hope you can join us!

December meeting - By Lori Boudrow



Our December meeting was once again bustling with fragrant greens, berries branches, and holiday baubles. Over thirty members came together to decorate twelve wreaths during the Dec meeting and were hung at 1919 town offices, Public Safety complex, Training Field, Hills House, GAR Library, Town Hall, Training Field. Additionally, fifteen tabletop arrangements were made for residents of WN Community Housing. New this year at the GAR Library door wreaths were switched out for decorated roping at the library entrance eliminating the messy trail of needles into the building. Tags were added to our creations helping to share the club's involvement in our community. A special "Thank You" to Gail Dinaro for sprucing up or creating new bows used on the wreaths!

Pettengill Donations - Many thanks to our members for their generosity as approximately \$900 of nonperishable food, paper & personal care products and gift cards filled a SUV. "Thank you" to Peg Duchemin for dropping our donations to Pettengill, Salisbury.

Museum of Old Newbury Cushing House - By Lori Boudrow



The WNGC was well represented by members, Margo Pullman, Hannah Page Koch, and Claudia Woods Estin in decorating Margaret's Parlor at the Newburyport Cushing House. A deep red color was used throughout the room with themes of music and pineapples, the symbol of hospitality. Windows were treated with either a potted amaryllis and beautiful roses at its base or a hanging boxwood wreath. Table arrangements used anemones, ranunculus, roses, and calla lilies. Fresh greens, amaryllis, roses, and pomegranates filled the fireplace mantle with pineapples flanking each end. A tabletop tree decorated a quiet corner using red berry garland and gold pineapples while the presents under were wrapped in either sheet music or red paper with pineapples pulling the entire theme together!

December Holiday Gathering – By Alison Reyes

Over forty members gathered at Café Sarina to celebrate the holiday season. Members enjoyed a beautifully decorated room, delicious food, and great company. Members also participated in a scavenger hunt created by Chris Gerzon which was fun, interactive, and provided a great opportunity to learn more about new and longtime members. A big thank you to Maureen Harris for her impeccable planning and execution!



Garden Committee Spotlight 1910 Garden - By Alexis Katkevich

The 1910 Building Garden Committee lovingly tends to every detail of the garden spaces at the West Newbury town office building and the Annex. As a member of the WNGC for the past ten years, it was an easy transition for Barbara Butler to become committee chair five years ago—especially since she lives within walking distance of the town office building. She maintains the gardens and designs holiday decorations with Heather Conner, Kathy DiStefano, Patty Sadler, Diane Teed, and the newest committee member, Susan Leverone.

Barbara and the committee expanded the garden space around the U-shaped bush at the front of the building four years ago, and now peonies, sedum, shasta daisies, and daffodils are beginning to fill the space with the help of soil amendment and plants acquired at the WNGC annual sale. A short swoop down the hill towards the road, holly bushes on either side of the wooden town hall sign add year-round greenery. In the winter, committee members spruce up the landscape with wreaths they create to adorn building entrances.

The committee worked hard to create a garden space at the right of the Annex entrance, planting perennials such as iris and daylilies. The recent garden renovation at the Old Town Hall building led to the donation of daffodils and a hydrangea bush expected to do well this coming season. While the DPW could not remove a large stump in the garden, it now holds a seasonal planter. Each garden cared for by the WNGC faces unique challenges. According to Barbara, the primary challenges here are poor soil quality due to abundant shale fragments and generally shallow soil. These issues are ones many West Newbury gardeners can attest to. There is little to no soil along the stone wall that follows the banking, so they use planters to showcase red and white geraniums paired with blue lobelia in warmer months, followed by mums and pumpkins in Autumn.

Watering the gardens across the property had been a challenge for years due to the lack of a hose, which required trips back and forth with watering cans. However, a hose was finally installed—just in time for the extremely rainy 2023 growing season! Barbara has a sunny outlook and says the committee does "the best we can in tough locations with tough soil!" West Newbury residents appreciate the effort put forth by the garden committee to beautify this frequented property and have much to look forward to in the spring.

Plants of the Month - By Chris Gerzon

Native perennials are vital for the health of our gardens and to support the little creatures who depend on them for food. Listed below are just a few native perennials that will be for sale at our annual plant sale in May.



Bluestem Goldenrod - Plant height 8-39 inches, spreads 1-2 feet, requires full sun.

A small species of goldenrod, this versatile plant adds interest and ornamentation to your garden. It blooms in late summer through the fall and attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Its tendency to clump means it works well as a border plant or a decoration for wildflower beds. It is easy to grow and deer resistant.



Butterfly Weed - Plant Height 1-3 feet, spreads 1-2 feet, requires full sun.

As its name implies, this plant attracts butterflies and hummingbirds because it produces large amounts of nectar. It blooms continually throughout the summer and is essential in sustaining Monarch butterflies, making it a must have for beds and borders.



Cardinal Flower Lobelia- Plant Height 2-5 feet, spread 1-2, requires full sun to part shade.

Named for its red flowers, this showy plant blooms Spring through fall. Its fruits are blue and the foliage changes color in the fall. This plant does well near water and makes a great companion to swamp rose.



Great Blue Lobelia - Plant Height 3-4 feet, spread 1- 1.5 feet, requires full sun.

This blue blossom plant is prized for its late blooms when most other flowers are long gone. Cascades of segmented tubular flowers sit atop tall stems and are very striking. It works well as a border plant or near streams and ponds. It makes a great companion to hollyhocks, impatiens, and begonias.

Notes from a Novice Gardener — By Andrea Caswell



My main methods for killing houseplants are tried-and-true: overwatering and underwatering. A plant that has resisted my bumbling is the poinsettia. I love everything about a poinsettia. First, I love that word, with its weird spelling and pronunciation. I love the colors—saturated unapologetic red, salmon pink, or ivory white, standing out against its dark green leaves. I love the size variations, affordability, and easy availability at this time of year. I love how a poinsettia “ups the festive factor” wherever it is placed. Whether on a countertop, as a holiday centerpiece, or ringing the base of a Christmas tree, I look forward to having them in the house every year.

Fun facts: The poinsettia is native to the Americas, primarily Mexico and Central America. In the wild it can grow up to fifteen feet tall. It has many names in Spanish, but perhaps the prettiest one is *la flor de nochebuena*, or the Christmas Eve flower (its botanical name is *Euphorbia pulcherrima*). Our English word for it comes from an American politician named Joel Roberts Poinsett, who went to Mexico as a sort of ambassador in the early 1800s. While there, he collected specimens of this beautiful plant to cultivate in the U.S. Commercial poinsettias are now produced in greenhouses and nurseries worldwide and have become a bright symbol of winter and Christmas.

Last year, I managed to keep a poinsettia alive well into February. This was a very good result for me, given my checkered history with houseplants. I was motivated to succeed because this was an absolutely gorgeous one: about two feet tall, bushy and deeply red, and terrifically low maintenance. A few care tips if you would like to keep the poinsettia spirit going all winter: only water the plant once a week or so and be sure it receives at least six hours of indirect sunlight a day. Don't place it too close to a heat source. If you want to treat it like a pet and really keep your plant alive, it prefers a regimented schedule of 12 hours in darkness and the other twelve in daylight. Speaking of pets: poinsettias are only mildly toxic to dogs and cats, not terribly poisonous as we sometimes fear (as far as botanical holiday offenders, mistletoe berries are much more dangerous for pets, and shouldn't be in the same household with small animals).

On December 10, I was fortunate to bring home a raffle prize from the holiday party. It's a beautiful centerpiece of greenery with a white pillar candle in the middle. I have paired it with a red poinsettia to make the kitchen feel festive and pretty. Tremendous thanks to our board, and to everyone who made the holiday party so fun and lovely. Happy New Year to all!

Annual Forum at Nunan's- Sponsored by the Haverhill & Groveland Garden Clubs

The Haverhill and Groveland Garden Clubs invite members to their annual Forum at Nunan's Greenhouses. The program begins at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 21. Guests are welcome to arrive early for refreshments, raffles, and discounted shopping with **guest fee of \$5**.

"Gardening with a New Landscape Ethic" is the topic landscape architect Ruth Loettlre will discuss. Ruth is a master's graduate of the University of Virginia, with more than 40 years of professional experience as a landscape architect in Cambridge, MA. She will give suggestions on integrating native plants into non-native pollinator gardens, emphasizing succession of bloom and design principles. Her goal is teaching gardeners to plant outdoor spaces that are not only pleasing to our eyes, but helpful to the other species with whom we share our corner of the world. Ms. Loettlre serves on the board of Grow Native Massachusetts, a small nonprofit that promotes recognizing the ecological potential of every garden.

Celebrating the Life of Lynn Boyd



A Celebration of Life was held on January 20th for long time member and friend Lynn Boyd. Lynn served on our Executive Board as Director and Correspondence Secretary for the past 8 years providing thoughtful perspectives, fairness, and her remarkable wit. For the past five years, Lynn has produced our club yearbook.

For many years, members got to know Lynn as our Plant Sale Sun Committee Chair bringing her energy, cheerfulness and dedication to our annual plant sale and she shared her beautiful gardens for our 2022 garden tour. Lynn welcomed all with enthusiasm and laughter and our club has been most fortunate to have been the recipient of her hard work, dedication and most importantly her friendship. Rest in Peace, Lynn, you will be missed.

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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 2nd Monday of the month at Board members 'homes. Please contact Lori Boudrow if you wish to attend.