



Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

December 2015

Vol. 23, No. 11

Celebrate the year at Club's holiday party, look ahead to 25th anniversary in 2016

Holiday Party

The annual Holiday Party is ready for your presence to make it a fête! Make plans to join us on **Friday, December 11** at 6 p.m. for an evening filled with the warmth of friendship and the satisfaction of good food and drink. Please bring a dish to share – appetizer, main dish, or dessert. If you have a beverage to share, you might want to bring that along as well.

An added plus is the traditional Yankee Swap. Bring a wrapped gift in the \$15 range if you would like to participate – rules will be established before playing! Gifts with a garden connection are always welcome.

This year we have been invited to the home of Linda Smith, 788 Bernardston Road, Greenfield. She has a circular driveway – the first car in may be first to leave! Folks might want to carpool to lessen any congestion. Enjoy the holiday season with gardening friends – we hope you can join us!

RSVPs are not required, but feel free to email the Club if you know you can attend so we can be better prepared: greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com.

Annual Meeting

Save the date! **Monday, January 25** at 6:00 p.m. we will gather at the Wagon Wheel in Gill for another great meal and a visual

feast. Our presenter this year will be our good friend and talented photographer Jean-Claude Lejeune. His slide presentation will bring nature back into focus and banish winter doldrums.

Carolann at the Wagon Wheel is excited to have us back, and together we are planning another great meal to tickle your taste-buds!

More information and your reservation invitation will be coming in the mail in December.

Survey

Along with your annual meeting invitation, you will find a longer-than-usual survey. Please take time to study it and fill in your honest responses. We want to make the next 25 years as interesting and meaningful to club members as possible, and we need your input. Thank you in advance for returning it with your annual dues to Jean Wall, 40 High St, Greenfield, MA 01301.

Planning for 2016

Plans are afoot for the Club's 25th Anniversary year in 2016. The schedule for our monthly programs is almost complete, but there are still a few openings. We would love to hear your suggestions for a speaker, topic, craft or other hands-on project. email greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com or call Laura Schlaikjer at 413-774-4594.

Officers 2015

President: Laura Schlaikjer
774-4594 ■ depalma_3@yahoo.com

Vice President: Dolly Gagnon
774-4031 ■ dgagnon@recorder.com

Treasurer: Jean Wall
773-9069 ■ jeanwall1@verizon.net

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Jeanne Canteen
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Corresponding Secretary:
Elise Schlaikjer
773-1683 ■ roselise@verizon.net

Wreath party brings good cheer, creativity

Members and guests gathered Nov. 19 for our annual wreath-making event at Chapley Gardens. Many thanks to Stacey Chapley for hosting! Below, Stacy helps Carol Ball with finishing touches. Right, John Atkinson displays his wreath.



President's Letter

Grateful for the gift of community

By Laura Schlaikjer

Community. This month, I am thinking about all the friends I have, and those I have yet to make.

Many Sunday mornings at the Leyden Town Hall, the Leyden Café is running from 9 to 1:30. I have been making the time to drop in and get to know my neighbors over a cup of coffee (mocha!) and a freshly-baked scone or piece of apple strudel cake. I am even meeting folks from Colrain who wander in to socialize. Local residents have some of their handiwork tastefully displayed and there's an envelope for cash if you would like to purchase an item. There is talk of starting a walking group after café hours. It's a great feeling knowing that you are welcome at any time.

I think of the Garden Club this way as well. Always open, always welcoming, and social events with treats! This month, I am thinking about the annual holiday party, and the opportunity it gives to members and friends to unwind and enjoy a festive evening together. No stress, just a time to chat over food and spirits and to play a game of Yankee Swap.

Next Month, it will be the Annual Meeting - another chance to gather with friends over a fine meal and hear about what's in store for the 25th Anniversary Year.

There are at least 12 opportunities over the course of a year to gather this way. What a valuable commodity in this age of rushing around and the stress that comes with it. Please take advantage of your club's gift of Community.

Happy Holidays!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 11, 6:00 p.m. Holiday party with potluck and Yankee swap, Greenfield.

Monday, December 21—The Winter Solstice brings the shortest day, longest night of the year.

Monday, January 25, 6:00, Annual Dinner and Meeting, Wagon Wheel, Gill.

Call for committee volunteers

Our Garden Club is organizing for 2016, and needs members (you?) to step forward to help.

Would you be willing to serve on the nominating committee? Ideally, there are 3 people on this committee, and they serve overlapping 3-year terms. We need to present a slate of officers at the annual meeting, and it is better if the officers are not presenting themselves!

If you are interested in running for an elected position in the Club, you are more

than welcome to put your name forward. Positions available are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary.

Our community and fund-raising events – including the Extravaganza, Garden Tour, and Community Meal – need chairs, co-chairs, or leadership teams.

Please email the Club greenfield-gardenclub@yahoo.com or contact a member of the steering committee to volunteer or ask for more information.

Good news for pollinators

You've heard, undoubtedly, that bees do a waggle dance to tell hivemates where the best pollen and nectar are to be found. Which direction and how far to fly and what kind of plant to look for are all communicated through the waggle dance.

Bees may also be doing the happy dance in response to recent announcements by big retailers pledging to remove neonicotinoids from their plants.

Neonics, as they're commonly called, are a particularly toxic and long-lasting pesticide linked to bee colony collapse. For the past decade, beekeepers in the U.S. have lost a third of their hives each year to bee colony collapse.

You can find a more detailed explanation of neonics in our Club's April newsletter: www.thegreenfieldgardenclub.org

Last spring, Lowe's announced it will phase out neonic-tainted plants and products by 2019, and last week (Dec. 3), Home Depot pledged to stop selling neonic-plants by 2018.

Groups like Friends of the Earth continue to pressure other large chains, like True Value and Ace, to respond to consumer demand for bee-friendly plants.

A three- and four-year phase-out seems slow, given the swift and harrowing decline in bee populations. Come spring, bee advocates might prefer you buy plants from organic growers at a farmers market or local neonic-free nursery.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on Nov. 22 2015.... \$5,867.76

Income (Nov.) \$ —
Interest

Expenses (Nov.) \$ 15.09
Newsletter

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to Jean Wall:
413-773-9069
40 High St., Greenfield MA 01301

Children learn: Grants awarded in 2015

Through our grant program, our Garden Club supports garden-related educational programs for children. In 2015, we gave a total of \$2,151 to these 11 projects.

Erving Elementary School Rainbow Garden

\$150 to repair raised beds for preschool garden and to support seed-starting project with preschoolers, 5th graders, and senior citizens, to grow plants and flowers in all colors of the rainbow. From preschool teacher Mary Deneault Glabach: "Because we learn about the life cycle of a plant, weather, and insects in the spring, the garden ties in nicely with our academic requirements and it overlaps so many other areas of development and 'life' learning. Some of the families now also have start to garden because their children get so excited about planning seeds and watching the process."

Erving Elementary School Monarch Habitat Garden Project

\$200 for nectar plants and seeds, watering system, and compost for 800 square-foot monarch habitat. "Our school has been using the Monarch butterfly to teach the life cycle in both preschool and kindergarten for many years. This garden will serve as an educational project not only for the students, but for the community as well, for all to see how important a habitat is for the success and prosperity of its inhabitants."

Gill Elementary School Edible Gardening Program

\$161 for hoop house, compost, seeds, and child-sized garden tools. "Through the process of growing a garden, students will explore and learn about soil chemistry, soil invertebrates, the plant life cycle and the water cycle. Students will be able to observe plants growing and changing and also have expanded outdoor time by having learning experiences in their Edible Garden. Students will be taught responsibility and ownership by caring for their plants and garden. Students will experience the joy of eating food that they grew and nurtured over many months. Students will meet and garden with local farmers and learn more about farming as profession

and the importance of local agriculture in our community."

Great Falls Middle School Experience Nature

\$140 for raised beds, perennials and bird feeder, for the Life Skills students.

Greenfield Rec. Department Earth Day Project

\$150 for children's seed-planting activity and landscaping at the Rec. Dept. office.

Heath Elementary School Revitalize & Protect Our School Garden

\$300 to upgrade the school's garden: build 4 raised beds, buy compost, seeds and seedlings, tomato cages, mulch.

Leverett Elementary School Compost and Soil Fertility

\$200 for two compost bins, a vermicompost bin (earthworms), compost activity book, thermometer, soil tests and amendments. From teacher Dawn Marvin Ward: "The LES greenhouse/garden program reaches out to all ages in the school community (Pre-K thru 6th grade). The educational component of science, nature, art and literacy all combine to be a valuable and well liked program to continue into the future. This past fall season I have started a Recess Garden Club for those who rather work on greenhouse projects during their recess time, in addition to their classroom time. This has been a great success as well. Approximately 134 students have lesson times each week during the growing seasons (Spring and Fall)."

Mohawk Trail Reg. High School Sustainable Agriculture

\$400 to help build a 14' x 36' hoop house. "Through the middle school Project Based Learning course and high school Biology, AP Biology, Environmental Science, AP Environmental Science, and especially the brand new course Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture, this investment

should be able to impact every member of the student body."

Rhodes Elementary School (Leyden) Growing a "New" Greenhouse

\$200: Teacher Judi Shilling writes: "Upon arriving back at school in August, we were very disappointed to discover that our old greenhouse had been demolished to make way for a new propane tank. The greenhouse was the center of our spring garden work and was a huge part of our science program." Judi received \$1,200 from "Donors Choose" to build a new greenhouse. The school used our Garden Club funding to outfit the greenhouse with storage bins, planting boxes and shelves, and also to create an herb garden for the school's lunch program.

Saint James' Church, Greenfield Children's Garden

\$50 for plants and seeds, soil amendments, and a bird bath for a children's garden, to be planted around the "legacy" tree, which honors parishioners who have given a gift to the church in their will.

Whately Elementary School Monarch Waystation

\$200 for compost and nectar perennials for the school's monarch garden. "Whately first graders study the life cycle of monarch butterflies. Each fall, teacher Ann Collette combs milkweed patches along the roadsides and fields of Whately, looking for monarch caterpillars for her classroom. Local farmers know her by sight and make sure to leave an extra strip of milkweed along their fields so the kids will have caterpillars to observe. The caterpillars are placed in the classroom in aquaria and become a central part of classroom learning as they move through their metamorphosis.

"This year the students learned that monarch butterflies are endangered due to increasing habitat loss and pesticide contamination. Concern over the fate of the monarchs led to discussions about what could be done to help them. The first graders decided to plant a Monarch Waystation."



Greenfield Garden Club

PO Box 309

Greenfield MA 01302-0309

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

These vendors have agreed to provide the listed discounts for members who show their membership card when making a purchase. We appreciate their support! Please respect their offers by remembering these generous discounts are for Club members only and only when your card is presented.

Backyard Birds – 15 Strong Ave., Northampton
10% off regularly priced items except thistle birdseed

Baystate Perennial Farm
36 State Road (Route 5/10), Whately
10% off regular priced plants

Chapley Gardens
397 Greenfield Road (Route 5/10), Deerfield
10% off regular priced plants and pond supplies

Five Acre Farm – 110 Hinsdale Rd., Northfield
10% off regular priced plants

Glenbrook Gardens
56 Glenbrook Drive, Greenfield
10% off regular priced plants and products

Greenfield Farmers' Cooperative (Agway)
269 High Street, Greenfield

10% anything garden related

LaSalle Florists
23 LaSalle Drive (Route 5/10), Whately
10% off regular priced plants

O'Brien Nurserymen – 40 Wells Road, Granby, CT
10% off plants

Silver Garden Daylilies – 23 Picket Lane, Greenfield
10% off daylilies

Sugarloaf Nursery – 25 Amherst Road, Sunderland
10% off regular priced plants

Warm Colors Apiary
2 South Mill River Road, South Deerfield
10% off

Any vendors interested in offering our gardeners a discount, please contact the Steering Committee.