



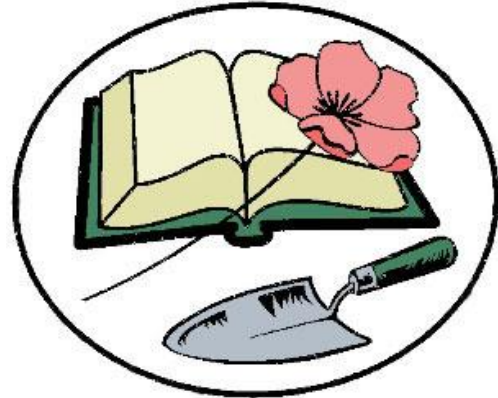
Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

March 2017

Vol. 25, No. 1

“M” is for March, and Master Gardener Symposium

In lieu of a March Meeting, we encourage all members to take advantage of the wonderful Western Mass Master Gardener Spring Symposium that is featuring Margaret Roach, of www.awaytogarden.com fame. (If you have not visited her website, you need to make haste and check it out!) Margaret’s talk is entitled: “Unlocking Seed Secrets, From Politics to the Practical.” “Want to grow your best vegetable garden ever in 2017? It all starts with a seed – and choosing the right varieties, from sources that match your garden’s conditions, which is much harder than you might think. Margaret will demystify the politics and the practical “aha’s” – many of which will be quite surprising – to get you growing with confidence. Topics include: Does buying organic seed matter? Is it worth the extra money? Are hybrids OK? Are heirlooms better? How do I avoid GMOs? How come my harvest didn’t look like the catalogue photo? And more! In addition to the main lecture, there are morning and afternoon workshops, as well as a vendor marketplace, books for sale from Storey Publishing and Timber Press, refreshments and optional purchased lunch (or bring your own!). Parking is tight and carpooling highly recommended. Visit www.wmmga.org to register – workshops fill quickly. Bad weather? Call 413-665-2181 the night before. Frontier High School, 8:00 AM – 2:15 PM \$35 pp.



Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association Logo

The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the educational mission of promoting good and sustainable gardening practices. We are volunteers who have graduated from an academic training class and have completed service hours working with the public to advance our mission. Individuals who complete this training and service are then certified as Master Gardeners. Although members participate in activities throughout Western Massachusetts, the organization is divided into three sub-regions: Berkshire County, Upper Valley, and Lower Valley which organize activities and volunteer efforts in their respective regions. Our program originated at the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of Massachusetts. In 1989 due to funding limitations, the program was discontinued at UMass. We have been operating independently since then thanks to a very dedicated group of program graduates. Our ranks continue to grow.

President’s Report for March

As I write, March is due to arrive in 45 minutes either as a lamb or as a lion! If the wind keeps blowing, it will be a lion for sure! The warmer temps of late also have me worried about the peach crop again this year. The weather can be so fickle, and it’s not getting any easier to predict! So, welcome officially to 2017! We had a nice annual meeting at the Wagon Wheel with good food and good company. It was fun to watch an episode of The Valley Gardener featuring its host, Steve Malsch as well as a much younger Jan Adam. Steve and Kathy Malsch were in attendance and we enjoyed hearing his reminiscences of the 2 years that this GCTV program was produced. It was a lot of work, and a lot of fun. If you would like to borrow a copy, we have 12 episodes to choose from. As many of you know, we are going to try

an every-other-year approach to the Garden Tour. I was hoping to alternate with the Franklin County Land Trust, but it seems they are not having a tour this year either! We are throwing our energy on our single fundraiser, the Extravaganza. We are going to have a pollinator theme, and will be ordering plugs from Prairie Moon to sell as well as donate to the Energy Park Butterfly Garden. Our April meeting will have a speaker on pollinators to get us in the spirit. If you know of a group that is interested in being a vendor/crafter on May 27th, spaces are \$10, and free if you are an informational group, like the Master Gardeners’ booth. We plan to have a pick-up service for garden-related tag sale items, so start boxing them up! More info to come – Happy Spring in the meantime!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Garden Club programs are generally the third Thursday of each month.

Sunday, March 5: 12 Midnight – Grant Submission deadline.

Sunday, March 12: look for the Springfield Garden Club's 100th Anniversary Section in the Springfield Sunday Republican Home & Garden insert.

Wednesday, March 8: 6 PM, Grant Committee meets; Taylors Tavern.

Saturday, March 18: 8:00 AM – 2:15 PM Western MA Master Gardener's Symposium, S. Deerfield. We encourage members to attend this event in lieu of a monthly meeting.

Monday, March 20: 6:00 PM Steering Committee; 40 High St. Greenfield.

Saturday, March 25: 1PM – Jan Johnsen speaker: "Serenity by Design" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield. Tix \$5 in advance/\$10 at door. Contact: Joann at 413-525-5694 or joannidirico@aol.com

Springfield Garden Club's 100th Anniversary

We congratulate them on their big milestone! There are many events this year to which we have been invited. Besides the article in the March 12 Sunday Republican, there is the March 25th event noted above. The full title of Jan's talk is "Serenity by Design – Simplicity, Sanctuary & Delight." Jan is a nationally recognized landscape designer and author. She is an instructor at the NY Botanical Garden and a contributing editor for Garden Design magazine. You can read more about her at www.janjohnsen.com. Tickets are only \$5 in advance and \$10 at the door. Seating is limited, so reserve yours today. This is a terrific price for such a well-known speaker, so put it on your calendars! We will announce future events of the Springfield Garden Club as they come up. If you are not able to make the GGC Bus Trip to NY Botanical on June 24th, there is always the Springfield Garden Club's Garden Tour, 10-4; "Hidden Gardens of Forest Park," More info to come.

Novel idea: Straw-Bale Gardening

Want to try something new this year? Straw bale gardening is a raised bed and container planter all in one. You start them about 2-3 weeks before planting and condition them (over 7 days, applying nitrogen and watering well), apply a balanced fertilizer – and soon the bale heats up dramatically inside (120-130 degrees). When it backs off to 75 – 80 degrees, you can plant. Put 2 plants in per bale – 2 tomatoes, 2 eggplants, squash, potatoes, peas, beans, cukes, and more. There is a lot of information on the web, so go take a look. You can also check out Craig LeHoullier's book called *Growing Vegetables in Straw Bales*. There are plenty of other books on the subject available too. It's a nice sterile medium (look for organic to avoid possible herbicides), but you want to make sure you are available to keep it well-watered. Try a couple bales!

Bee Fest and BeeSpaces Award

In looking for information on bees, I explored the **Langstroth Bee Festival** which takes place at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield. This June 3rd will be their 7th annual fest. Last year it was 9 to noon, during the Farmers Market, so I expect it will 'bee' the same this year. [Lorenzo Langstroth](#) was a former pastor of their church (1843-1848), and developed the moveable frame beehive, and authored (in 1853) *The Hive and the Honey Bee*, an important overview of beekeeping, which is still in print today. He is known as the Father of American Bee-keeping. **BeeSpaces Award** is a garden award for pollinator-friendly landscaping given to Franklin County, MA homes, farms, civic groups and businesses. BeeSpaces gardens need to be planted with pesticide free material, and can be difficult to site. Look them up on Face Book. I have requested more information and will share with the club at a later date.

Officers 2017:

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Spring! Ahead! Yes, in More Ways than One.

On Sunday, March 12th, we will awaken to find that we have sprung ahead by 1 hour. This is not my favorite part of Daylight Saving's Time, but we have no choice in the matter. Fruit trees and other plants are even more hard-pressed to figure out what time it is. Do I let my buds swell? Is it really spring? Or will I let them swell only to have them freeze hard and lose any chance of fruiting this year. Again. I still have peaches in the freezer, but I would hate to lose another crop this year.

Not many chores this month, as it's one day at a time. You do not want to walk on or disturb areas that are still semi-frozen or soggy. Wait until things really start to warm up and dry out. Protect your soil! When this point has been reached, you can go in and trim back plants like sedums before the new growth emerges. Carefully take debris off beds where bulbs are trying to push through. Packed, mushy dead leaves can stifle new plant growth. Hellebores, European Ginger and Epimedium will all benefit from the removal of old and tired leaves – and look significantly better! Cut ornamental grasses right at the base. Clean your birdhouses – no one wants to build a nest in a dirty box. Water feature? Gently rake out old soggy leaves from the depths, being careful to leave dragonfly larvae, wood frog eggs, tadpoles and any other happy inhabitants.

Time to prune – fruit trees (do some [research](#) on each type), dead or damaged branches of trees and shrubs, blueberries (cut out a couple of the oldest stems, or at least back to lower, vigorous branches, and thin any crowded younger branches, and any remaining straggly or gawky branches), thin your raspberries (snip out those that bore fruit last year, any canes smaller in diameter than a pencil, and cut back remaining canes by a foot), and prune your grapes (no more than 4 fruiting canes with 7 to 10 buds each). Remember not to prune early bloomers – like lilacs until after they have bloomed – if you want blooms!



ORANGE CORNMEAL CAKE *By special request!*

2 C all-purpose flour
1/2 C cornmeal
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
3/4 C unsalted butter, softened
1 1/4 C sugar
4 eggs
1 C whole milk
4 tsp orange zest.
2 tsp.vanilla

1/2 C unsalted butter
1/3 C packed brown sugar
1 1/2 tsp vanilla
1TB fresh thyme leaves
1 large orange or 2 small oranges, red, sliced 1/8 inch thick

Preheat oven to 350. Create the batter by mixing in a bowl the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and 1 tsp salt. In a large bowl beat the 3/4 c butter on high for 30 seconds. Add sugar. Beat 1 minute or until fluffy, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each until combined. Alternately add the flour mixture and the milk, beating on low between each addition until just combined. Stir in the orange zest and the 2 tsp vanilla, set aside.

2. Heat a 12 inch cast iron skillet over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the 1/2 cup butter. Stir the butter around until melted and the bottom of skillet is coated. Whisk in the brown sugar, 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla, and 1/8 tsp salt. Bring to boiling, boil 1 to 2 minutes or until thickened and caramelized. Stir in the thyme leaves. Remove from heat. Lay the orange slices in one even layer in the bottom of the skillet. Spoon batter over oranges; spread evenly.

3. Bake 45 to 50 minutes or until top is golden and knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool in skillet for 5 minutes. Invert onto a serving plate, transfer any fruit stuck to skillet back to the cake. Cool 20 minutes. Garnish with thyme sprigs. Makes 8 servings.

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of February 28, 2017\$7,449.11

Income\$1,972.36
Bus Tour, Dues, Annual Mtg, Interest

Expenses \$1,088.32
Annual Meeting

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to the club Treasurer:

Jean Wall

413-773-9069

40 High Street

Greenfield MA 01301



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 prices 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

Wilder Hill Gardens
351 South Shirkshire Road, Conway
10% off plants and consultations

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