



Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

November 2015

Vol. 23, No. 10

November's Club meeting

Make your own wreath, kissing ball

Thursday, November 19, from 6 to 8 p.m., we will gather in the greenhouse at Chapley Gardens to make one-of-a-kind wreaths with which to deck our halls – or doors, in this case! Come and immerse yourself in the aroma of freshly cut greens and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in this easy project. Experienced Club members will be on hand to help.

You may want to bring some unusual greens and decorations of your own: holly, Winterberry, cedar, grasses, dried seed heads, shiny bells, glass balls, tiny birds – anything you have on hand and want to incorporate into your creation. Stacey will also have similar items as well as ribbons for sale. She makes a killer bow for just a few dollars!

Want to create something different this year? Stacey will help those interested in making kissing balls. If you choose this option, you'll want to arrive promptly as this is more time-consuming than a wreath.

Cost: \$10 per wreath or \$20 per kissing ball. Bring snippers, light work gloves (think sap), a spool of florist wire (ring base supplied), a folding chair, and a food item to share. The Club will supply the hot mulled cider. Last year we had a great mix of food – sweet treats, crackers and cheese, veggies and dip, fresh fruit, wine. No wonder we had such a great time!



Directions: 397 Greenfield Road, Deerfield, MA. Take Route 5 south. Just past the Bridal Barn you'll see the sign for Chapley Gardens on the right. If you get as far as Magic Wings, you've gone too far.

RSVP: Since we need at least 10 warm bodies in order to turn on the heat in the greenhouse and keep our fingers relatively warm, please reserve your place soon so we can gauge interest. You can call Laura Schlaikjer at 413-774-4594 and leave a message, or email the Club: greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, November 19, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Annual wreath-making at Chapley Gardens, Deerfield.

Friday, November 20, 6:00 p.m. Steering Committee meeting and potluck at Jean Wall's home (40 High St., Greenfield). Members welcome.

Greenfield Winter Farmers Markets, Saturday, November 7, November 21, and December 5, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Greenfield Middle School.

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

► **THINK 2016!** We're filling out the schedule for next year's monthly programs. What are your ideas for gardens to visit, topics for education programs, and craft projects? Send your suggestions to greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

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

Recording Secretary:
Jeanne Canteen
774-6605 ▪ jeanne6040@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary:
Elise Schlaikjer
773-1683 ▪ roselise@verizon.net

President's Letter Garden challenges move indoors

By Laura Schlaikjer

November has settled in as I write on All Saints' Day – cool, wet, still some color left in the landscape. The robins and bluebirds have not yet arrived to inhale the bright red Winterberry (*Ilex decidua*) berries from the bush outside my kitchen window. The male plants seem fine to let the females have all the glory! Most of the harvest is in, and soups and cornbread are on the menu with increasing frequency.

I brought in the big pots from the back deck to try to extend the season a bit, but I know from experience that pests like aphids and white flies will magically appear and eventually do them in. The woodstove does too good a job at keeping the place toasty, and there is not enough moisture in the air to prevent the bug infestation. Plants are stressed from being brought inside a little too late, and that makes them more vulnerable. Mealy bugs are a problem too. Where do these little obnoxious critters come from? I keep Q-tips, rubbing alcohol and insecticidal soap on hand for this very reason.

I hope that your houseplants got a good inspection before you brought them in! If you have any tried-and-true tricks for eliminating hitchhiking pests, please feel free to share them with the membership. May your home be a haven for healthy houseplants this winter!

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of Oct. 31, 2015\$5,897.80

Income (Oct.)\$.14
Interest

Expenses (Oct.)\$ 15.09
Newsletter

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

Members share inspiration, success from past garden year



Different use for a birdbath

from Jeanne Canteen

The nicest new item in our garden this summer was a succulent-filled birdbath. I made it at a workshop during the Master Gardener Seminar last spring. It was easy to do and added an unusual touch to the rock garden. You take a bird bath and fill it with some soil, small rocks and moss. Then add succulents and any other decorations you want. I took it apart for the winter so I can have it for many years to come. Lots of fun!

Note: An internet search for "birdbath succulents" will bring you additional inspiring photos. Most directions suggest drilling drainage holes or using an already-cracked, leaking birdbath.

New plant, old plant

from Linda Tyler

Growing up on a farm surrounded on three sides by wetlands brought an array of flowers and colors into my young life. In the spring we were surrounded by the bright blooms of the marsh marigolds. There were walks back to the vernal pool in the woods where we would often discover the trailing arbutus's delicate blooms. My all-time favorite though was the brilliant violet-blue of the bottle gentian. Gentian blooms in the late summer to the early fall. This past year when I won a gift certificate from the Master Gardeners at the Franklin County Fair, I knew exactly what I was going in search of... Gentian! I was able to find a gentian at Bay State Perennial, and it was a welcome addition to my garden. Not only do I love the color and the unusual shape of its flower, it brings with it memories of my youth.



Roasted Butternut Squash, Ginger, and Cashew Soup

from Norm Hirschfeld

If your garden's success story is a bumper crop of winter squash, Norm offers this delicious recipe for soup, well received at the steering committee's potluck meeting in October.

2 large butternut squash
1 cup unsalted cashews
(if salty, wash off the salt)
1" piece of ginger, peeled & chopped
2 ½ cups chicken broth or veg. stock
small onion
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
2 Tablespoons olive oil

In a pot, sauté onion in till it's translucent.

Halve the squash, clean out the seeds, coat the cut side with olive oil, and roast in the oven at 400-degrees for 1 hour with the cut side down on a baking pan. After the squash has cooled, scrape out the squash from the skin.

Whir the cashews in a blender till finely chopped.

Add all other ingredients to the pot and cook on medium-high heat for 20–25 minutes until the butternut is tender.

Check for seasoning and adjust to taste.

Puree in batches in the blender or use a stick blender.

Garnish and enjoy!

BIG FAT LIES about earthworms

By Susan Farber

► If you cut an earthworm in half, you'll get two earthworms.

Over the last few weeks, I've been learning about earthworms and telling Amazing Worm Facts to my oh-so-patient friends. Several friends in turn told me about cutting worms in half. They were shocked when I told them it's not so. At that moment of truth, each got very quiet, pondering, I suppose, the gullibility of childhood and all those poor chopped-up worms – innocent intentions, fatal results.

It is true that some earthworms can lose a portion of their lower half and regrow their "tail." You've probably heard of lizards who can similarly drop their tails and escape danger. I can see the evolutionary advantage for earthworms, too: imagine a hungry robin who's caught the tail-end of a night crawler.

It's also true that some primitive worms – notably, the water-dwelling planarian flatworm – can be cut in half and both halves will live. The head bit grows a tail, and the tail bit grows a head. Incredibly, you can chop a flatworm into a thousand bits and you'll end up with a thousand flatworms. Like Godzilla. But not like earthworms.

► When it rains, earthworms come to the surface to keep from drowning.

Earthworms breathe through their skin, and they can live underwater for days if there's enough dissolved oxygen in the water. It's drying out, not drowning, that is the earthworm's peril. Their skin must stay moist for the oxygen to pass through. An earthworm that dries out suffocates.

All those earthworms slithering in the rain? As much as we can tell what earthworms are thinking in their rainy-day behavior, it seems they are making a mad dash to new territory, to a new home. In the rain, they stay moist and can breathe, and they can travel a lot more quickly on top of the ground.

► The smooth band toward the front of an earthworm is its "heart ring."

Earthworms have five (!) hearts, but they're not inside that smooth band. Its hearts are above its stomach, which is located just above that band, called the clitellum. The clitellum is the sexy part of the earthworm.

Most earthworms are hermaphroditic, both male and female. The clitellum produces eggs and sperm. Earthworms mate by linking up their clitella and exchanging sperm. Then each earthworm secretes a thick coating of mucus around its clitellum and ejects the sperm and eggs into that goo. Much like you would pull off a turtleneck sweater, it pulls off that ring of goo, which closes itself like a bag. The sperm and eggs inside the bag, properly called a cocoon, do their magic and voila! In a few weeks, baby earthworms wriggle out.

Interestingly, if it's too wet or hot or cold, the cocoon can stay sealed up for years until the time is right for babies.

And now I know what those tiny lemon-colored blobs are that I've been finding in my garden soil: baby earthworms waiting to be born!

One earthworm fact that we wish were a big fat lie

New England's forests are being devoured by invasive foreign earthworms. So say researchers at the University of Vermont.

To fully understand the situation requires a time machine. Go back 2 million years ago to find what is now Canada and the northern U.S. smothered by mile-high glaciers. About 12,000 years ago, the last glaciers melted, leaving behind barren earth. All life, including earthworms, had been frozen into extinction.

Gradually, other life forms migrated northward on legs, wings, fins, and on the wind. Native species of earthworms still lived where the glaciers weren't – New Jersey and southward – but in their estimated wriggle-pace of five yards a year, they barely made it past Trenton. For thousands of years, our northern ecosystems thrived without earthworms.

Then the Europeans "discovered" the New World. They arrived on ships whose holds were full of dirt for ballast. They brought plants in pots. Earthworms and their egg cocoons hitched along.

Fast forward to now: trucked-in loam, widespread horticultural trade, leftover fishing bait dumped on stream banks, even abandoned vermiculture bins have spread foreign earthworms throughout our region. UVM soil scientists have found 14 European species and 2 Asian species in Vermont forests.

Ten or eleven of these exotic species – including the especially troublesome "crazy snake worm" – are so voracious that they are devouring the leaf litter and duff layer. Woodlands invaded by earthworms have trees and bare dirt. There's no duff layer to nourish understory plants, no place for seeds to sprout or small critters like salamanders to hide.

There seems to be no solution. The infestation is spotty: some woodlands are in full-wriggle, full-depletion mode, and across the ridge, not an earthworm to be found. We can be careful to limit further spread by not dumping mulch, compost, or anything else that might contain worms or cocoons near woodlands.



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.