



Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

October 2015

Vol. 23, No. 9

October's Club meeting

Create a unique, colorful plate

It's time for another fall craft project! Thursday, October 15, starting at 6:00 p.m., it's decoupage using your favorite fall or holiday fabric and a clear glass plate. We will meet in the kitchen at 114 Main Street in Greenfield.

We have 12 round, clear glass plates for Club members to use, or you may choose to bring your own clear glass plate. Square plates are also attractive.

We will be cutting out a circle of fabric and applying it with Mod Podge to the back of the plate, so make sure your choice of fabric is colorfast, or pre-wash it. The fabric piece you bring must be

larger than the plate you wish to decoupage.

If you have these on hand, please bring a pair of sharp scissors, a sponge brush and a jar of Mod Podge, as we will probably not have enough to go around for everyone in attendance.

Need a preliminary tutorial? See a demonstration here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehJhHl2v6Ow>.

Feel free to bring a bag supper or snacks as there is time to eat and chat while the plates dry.



We need to limit the size of this class, so be sure to reserve your space as early as possible. Send your RSVP to: greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com, or leave a message for Laura Schlaikjer at 413-774-4594.

Officers 2015

President:

Laura Schlaikjer 774-4594
depalma_3@yahoo.com

Vice President:

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Treasurer:

Jean Wall 773-9069
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Recording Secretary:

Jeanne Canteen 774-6605
jeanne6040@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary:

Elise Schlaikjer 773-1683
roselise@verizon.net

Our Club thrives because of the dedicated service of our officers! We will elect next year's officers at our annual meeting in December. Would you be willing to serve on the nominating committee? Are you interested in serving as an officer next year? Let our Steering Committee know: greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

Club's 'Monet's Garden' wins at Franklin County Fair

Monet was very much in evidence at our booth at the Franklin County Fair this year, and our Club scored again by winning first place as well as the Cushman Award in our category. (There are three Cushman awards: crafts, fruits/veggies, and flowers.)



This year's team – Laura Schlaikjer, Linda Tyler, Debran Brocklesby and Jean Wall – created Monet's Garden in the days leading up to the Fair. The heat and an unusual influx of biting bugs made the process a little more unpleasant this year, but we persevered in good humor and teamwork.

We installed the water feature first, and then proceeded to surround it with flowers.

Knowing that our plants had to be pristine, Jean was relegated to the bench with a pair of scissors and very carefully pruned out any bug-eaten leaves or forlorn-looking blossoms.

Laura had the dubious pleasure of being inside the booth, while Linda and Debran

President's Letter

Busy, busy, busy with harvest

By Laura Schlaikjer

I have to fess up – it's my fault that the newsletter is delayed this month! I missed the deadline for my report because I have been working hard to use the fruits and vegetables I picked from my gardens this fall – Cornelian cherries and beach plums, apples, peaches and pears, peppers and cabbage.

I have found an excellent recipe for Peach Salsa that I have parlayed into 32 golden pints for storage. I will share the recipe with you in a newsletter before peach season next year as fresh, local peaches are now gone from the market.

I wanted to freeze some local corn, but because my freezers are already full, I decided to make corn relish.

Needless to say, the small berries are being made into jam. This year I'm experimenting with using Merlot in the beach plum jam versus plain old water.

Apples and pears are being made into sauce. It appears to have been quite the bumper year for apples.

Making cabbage into kimchi is on the horizon in the kitchen, and saving the Chinese chestnuts from the squirrels, who always manage to steal my crop, is on the docket for outdoor tasks.

I hope that your gardens are still producing, and that you've been able to preserve your harvest in a myriad of ways as well.

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of Sept. 30, 2015....\$5,897.80

Income (Sept.).....\$228.15

Dues, Interest, Programs, Fair

Expenses (Sept.)\$ 65.09

Newsletter, Programs

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to Jean Wall:

413-773-9069

40 High Street, Greenfield MA 01301



Above: Laura arranges brickwork. Below: Our miniature version of Monet's lily pond, surrounded by flowers.



The lion's share of plant material was either donated or loaned by our good friend Stacey Chapley of Chapley Gardens in Deerfield chapleygardens.com/ – for which we are truly grateful.

Next year? We haven't even thought about it yet. Perhaps you will be inspired by a garden you've visited or a design you've seen and will suggest it as an idea for next year's County Fair booth. We're all ears!

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Monet's Garden

pointed to certain spots and handed her plants.

Looking for more height, Debraan picked some tall grasses which we tucked into a vase hidden behind the other plants.

Our patio was brick this year, as we have used stone in our more recent booths. Thyme from Elise's garden pathways was tucked into the patio crevices. An easel and painting (definitely not Louvre quality) was installed with paints and brushes nearby.

For added interest, a miniature easel and painting was placed under the large one, with a stone mouse as the artist. We enjoy having children find things that adults may miss!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Garden Club programs are the third Thursday of each month.

Saturday, October 11, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. Just Roots Fall Festival at the community farm in Greenfield.

Thursday, October 15, 6:00 p.m. Club's craft night: Decoupage glass plates with fabric, Greenfield.

Thursday, October 29, at 6:00 p.m. Steering Committee meeting and potluck at Jean Wall's home (40 High St., Greenfield). Members welcome.

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

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

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

The best thing I grew in my garden this year



By Susan Farber

October brings to a close my second summer in this old but new-to-me house, which I bought primarily for the double-size lot it sits on. So much space to garden!

Many of my neighbors on this happy street in the middle of Greenfield are gardeners, too. They keep chickens and bees and grow daylilies and kale in the hell strip. So I'm in the right place for my dream to take root: transform this nothing-special yard into an urban farmette.

I dug up the front lawn and planted tomatoes and squash. Gone from the back yard is the enormous, mostly-rotted, I'm-going-to-crash-through-your-roof-in-the-next-big-storm silver maple, and in its place are four baby fruit trees, surrounded by vegetables and cover-crop clover.

I'm doing my best to follow the maxim on my car's bumpersticker: "Grow Food Everywhere" (which I picked up at last year's Garden Club tour of Seeds of Solidarity).

In my Grow Food Everywhere yard, what's the best thing I grew this year? It's true that I harvested plentiful greens and beans. The zinnias bloomed with abandon. Open my freezer and you'll see stacked containers of San Marzano tomatoes. In the basement are potatoes and onions to feed me into the New Year.

But the best thing I'm growing? Dirt. And let me tell you, growing dirt is a lot more complicated than growing plants and

takes a lot longer than growing trees.

Fortunately for me and my gardens, in August I attended a workshop on Soil Fertility taught by Emmet Van Driesche, property steward at the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield. Emmet is a clear, down-to-earth teacher, but at the end of the workshop I felt overwhelmed by all I needed to learn and do.

Two soil tests and six weeks of study later, I'm still overwhelmed, but I can share a bit of what I've learned from Emmet and his fellow soil gurus.

(1) **All problems can be solved by heaps of compost and mulch!** Um, not true. Organic matter is helpful but it's not the panacea I once believed it was. Far more important is adding missing minerals to the soil.

(2) Ah, but **what minerals are missing?** And how much to add? I followed Emmet's advice to get my soil tested by Logan Labs and with the results, filled out the detailed worksheets. From there it was a simple matter of four hours with the calculator: $45\text{ppm} - 19\text{ppm test result} = 26\text{ ppm deficit} / 0.17 \times 2.75\%$, which seemed to suggest I needed to buy 4 pounds of gypsum. Twenty-five more calculations like this to go!

Brain-wracking but important stuff. Emmet explained, "Soil fertility is limited by the least available component." Which means that if my garden soil has 100% of all necessary nutrients except, say, only 10% of the calcium my plants need, the

soil fertility is stuck at 10%.

Fortunately, the schedule is to add lime now in the fall and the rest (sulfur, potassium, trace minerals, etc.) in the spring, so I'll have time to double-check my calculations.

(3) And speaking of lime, I learned there are **two kinds of lime**. Most garden centers sell dolomitic lime, which throws our New England soil out of whack with an overabundance of magnesium. We need the other kind, agricultural "hi-cal" lime, which has no magnesium.

(4) Our Garden Club's recent tour of Laughing Dog Farm left me with this question: **Where are the bad bugs?** Dan's squash plants were exuberantly sprawling while mine had been devoured by squash bugs.

The Soil Fertility workshop reminded me that plants have immune systems against diseases and pests. Weak plants struggling to grow in poor soil, Emmet said, give off chemical cues that insects can sense, and they move in for an easy kill. Soil nutrients, especially sulfur, support plants' immune systems. Good soil and adequate water give plants a better chance of surviving assaults from destructive viruses, fungi, and insects.

(5) In a weird but true example of how everything is connected to everything else: **Most of us need to have our wisdom teeth pulled** because our soil is depleted. For the explanation, you'll have to wait until you meet Emmet.



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

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.