



Greenfield Garden Club

Newsletter

Vol. 22 No. 4

April 2014

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April Meeting

Saturday, April 26 from 9am - 3pm Garden Expo. The club has received a personal invitation to come and visit Five Acre Farm on Saturday, April 26th anytime between 9am and 3pm. There will be greenhouse tours, lots of garden-friendly vendors, and as always you get the club discount when you show your member card. It will be hard to resist buying pansies and other plant material after such a cold winter, but I am sure we are up to the challenge! We hope to have a club booth to give out information on the club between 11 and 1, so make sure you look for us.

Directions: 110 Hinsdale Rd is the address, which is really Route 63.

From Greenfield, take I91 to the Northfield exit, go east on Route 10 to the "T" with Route 63. Turn left, and go all the way through Northfield, passing the old Northfield School campus on your right. Continue to follow Route 63 when it takes a left and route 10 stays straight. Five Acre is just up the road on your left. If you pass the Northfield Drive In and the state line, you've gone too far. 413-498-2208 for more information.

President's Report

I have yet to see signs of spring bulbs in my gardens here in Leyden, (it's March 22 as I write, and it was snowing earlier today...) but I can tell it's time to be out and about with the pruners. My trees, especially the fruit trees, have suffered serious deer damage in the past few weeks. I will have to plan my winter cover-up/ protection more carefully next fall. In the 16 years we've lived here, we've never had them strip the bark like this. I think a little venison in the freezer may not be such a bad thing after all! I hope you've been able to attend some of the events we've sponsored or listed on our website this new year. The March fountain-making workshop was very illuminating, and a little wet! We hope we can convince Stacey to do a repeat workshop for outdoor fountains. Those large bubbling pots sitting on a bed of rocks already have me drooling! Be on the lookout for spring sales on extra-large pots for this purpose. We can purchase other supplies and plants directly from Stacey. Enjoy the respite month of April, because we have 3 events in quick succession in May. On the 3rd, we head up to Pickity Place (circa 1786) in Mason NH for gardens, lunch and shopping. Our Extravaganza, augmented with Mother's Day hanging baskets from Five Acre Farm and herbs and annuals from Spatcher Farm in Leyden is Saturday, May 10th. (Please start saving items for the garden-related tag sale and keep an eye on perennials that need dividing. Also, donations of raffle item will also be gratefully accepted.) Our monthly meeting is Thursday, May 15th, and we are heading out to Seeds of Solidarity in Orange, MA. I hope to see you at many of these terrific activities!!!

Laura Schlaikjer

UPCOMING EVENTS

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend any and all meetings!

Saturday, April 26 9 a.m to 3 p.m.
Garden Expo
Five Acre Farm

Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 17 6pm
Home of Jean Wall, 40 High St

Saturday, May 3rd.
Pickity Place, Mason, NH
Carpool from Cherry Rum Plaza at a time to be determined.
Tour gardens and shop the store.
Herbal lunch: 12:45pm seating.
Reservations are required.
Adults are \$21.95 plus tax.
www.pickityplace.com

*Everyone is encouraged to submit articles for the newsletters. For the **May Newsletter**, please send to Linda Tyler by Saturday, April 26 at 1:00pm. Thank you!*

Treasurer's Report

Jean Wall

Balance as of March 26, 2014: \$7,672.74

Income: \$274.18

Expenses: \$297.38

Income: Interest, Dues, Program

Expenses: Newsletter printing, Program food, Program speaker, Program

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to Jean Wall at 773-9069

or write to 40 High Street, Greenfield MA 01301.

Tips for April with help from Home Depot- Dolly Gagnon

Zone 5's average last frost date is April 15, but don't count on it. A little caution is called for since the weather can be unpredictable and a late freeze/snowstorm can undo a lot of hard work.

Perennials: Clean your perennial beds by hand to avoid damaging emerging roots. Apply a balanced, organic fertilizer over the old mulch and top dress with fresh mulch.

Perennials: Apply a trowel-full of wood ashes and one of manure or compost to your peonies. If your peony never blooms, it is either planted too deep or in a too-shady location.

Lift and divide chrysanthemums; re-plant rooted divisions 18 inches apart.

If the ground has thawed, divide/replant perennials such as asters, bee balm, and hostas.

Fertilize spring blooming bulbs in early April.

Plant summer/fall flowering bulbs as soon as the soil has warmed.

Annuals: Plant cool season annuals like pansies as soon as the ground has thawed and dried.

Usually, by the beginning of April, you can plant hardy annuals such as geraniums and even petunias. A light frost does no harm, but a hard freeze will.

Vegetables: To enjoy abundant harvests before hot weather arrives, plant peas, lettuce and spinach early this month.

Use row covers to protect seedbeds from birds and late frosts. Once the seedlings are a couple of inches tall, it is usually safe to remove the covers. Don't leave the covers on too long since pollinators need to have access to the flowers.

Trees/Shrubs: Apply dormant oil to shrubs and fruit trees early in the month to kill most insect eggs. Do this while plants are dormant and air temperatures are above freezing for at least 24 hours.

Plant bare root trees when the soil is thawed and dried, usually in early April.

Before growth begins, prune dead, broken and wayward branches from hybrid tea, grandiflora and floibunda roses. You know it is time to prune roses

when the forsythia blooms. Treat blue hydrangeas with aluminum sulphate to keep them blue. Put down lime to turn them pink.

Lawn/Turf: To kill annoying weeds that sprout in gravel, brick and stone paths, spray them with plain white vinegar.

After your first mowing, apply fertilizer. Add pre-emergent weed killer for crabgrass if necessary. When you see the first dandelion bloom, it is time to apply crabgrass control.

Heavenly Hellebores

Have you been enchanted by a Hellebore lately? They are easy maintenance, shade tolerant, early bloomers, and available in many ethereal colors and petal formations. Unlike many perennials, the clumps do not die off in the center. Hellebores like evenly moist yet well-drained soil, with lots of organic matter. Water during extended dry periods. They are drought-tolerant once established. They prefer a neutral bordering on alkaline soil: apply lime if your soil is acidic. Apply a light application of granular, balanced fertilizer in early spring. Prune off dead and disfigured foliage before new growth appears. Helleborus niger does not like all of its leaves removed, but the Lenten Rose, Helleborus hybridus (orientalis) – the most common types sold at garden centers – can tolerate complete pruning of old leaves. Springhill Nurseries has a video on YouTube if you'd like to see how it's done.

Hellebores will bloom before the snow has completely faded. Consider adding plants with a similar bloom-time: Epimedium, Trillium, Hepatica, miniature Narcissus, and Galanthus (Snow Drops) would all be fine complements to your Hellebores. Other companion ideas from the woodland garden: Ferns, Tiarella, Campanula, Alchemilla, Hosta and Pulmonaria. In late spring, remove old flower stems as they decline, especially if you do not want seedlings. Hybrid seedlings will likely not resemble the parent. Move desired seedlings to a preferred location, or pot and give to your club plant sale! Remove dead or yellow leaves as you find them. Lenten Rose tends to form a large root ball, so make sure you plant them where you want them, as they may resent being moved. Fall is the ideal time for any divisions. Also in the fall, a light mulch of salt marsh hay or straw will be beneficial. Looking for tempting varieties not available in the average garden center? Try Pine Knot Farms:

<http://www.pineknotfarms.com/new%20list.htm>.

Pickity Place

Linda Tyler

Our Road Trip to Pickity Place at 248 Nutting Hill Rd in Mason, NH has been moved to Saturday, May 3rd. This will come up quickly, so make sure you put it on

your calendar now. We will meet at 9am at Cherry Rum Plaza to carpool since this about an hour and a half drive east and north. We would like to tour the gardens (butterfly, silver, oregano, bird, healing, and moonlight) before our 5 course gourmet herbal luncheon at 12:45pm. They also sell herbal seasonings and mixes in their little country store. Here is the May Menu:

New England Vegetable Dip
Creamy Broccoli with Smoked Gouda Soup
Spring Chopped Salad with Black Salt and White Pepper
Garlic Bread with Sun Dried Tomato Dipping Oil
Abruzzo Stuffed Pepper

— or —

Four Cheese Ratatouille Quiche
Sautéed Asparagus with Citrus Shallot Butter
Dutch Chocolate Mousse in Sweet Pastry

The luncheon is \$21.95 plus tax/tip, and we will need to make reservations in advance. You may email the club any time now to indicate your firm commitment to attend. Remember to make a donation to your driver for gas. Please keep your eye on our website for any last-minute updates on this trip.

Swoop into Spring! Celebrate, learn about and help Bats!

Saturday April 26, 2014 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in downtown Turners Falls.

A family-friendly event, but open to everyone!

Free admission (Donations will be accepted and all money will be given to help bats!!)

Come at the start to make a bat mask, then hear songs and skits about bats! Look at displays to learn about bats. An all-ages film will be shown during the last hour regarding the natural history of bats and conservation efforts.

Raffle to raise money to directly help bats, who are in peril as a result of a disease called White Nose Syndrome.

This event is created by students at Deer Paths Nature Education Center in Wendell, MA as a culmination of their bat studies. Bat house donated by Bat Bungalows in Chicopee, MA.

Any questions, email deerpaths@gmail.com or call 978-544-1990 (contact us if you want to donate money for bats or have an item for the raffle!)

Greenfield Garden Club

The club celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2016.

Anyone interested in helping to plan out the events for our anniversary year should contact Laura Schlaikjer at greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com, or by calling 774-4594.

Controlling the Rodent Population ***Linda Tyler***
With help from A Way to Garden.com

<http://awaytogarden.com/>

As winter fades into spring the rodent population blossoms! How do you control those varmints safely and effectively? Please do not resort to toxic solutions which harm not only the intended species but others as well!

A Way to Garden.com suggests you take organic farmer Eliot Coleman's advice. He says the key to success is vigilant year-round trapping on your property. That is right. The good old fashioned snap traps baited with peanut butter! Setting the traps inside boxes with small opening not only is an effective way to trap the rodents but also protects other larger animals, like say the pet dog who decides the peanut better bait was meant for them. Now you may not be able to create a rodent free zone, but keeping the population under control will certainly help lower the incidence of damage to your plants. Besides garden damage, ridding your property of rodents helps with the deterrent of ticks that can carry Lyme disease. Now a more natural control of mice is to have a large population of snakes on your property. How do you get more snakes to move in? That "Snake Welcome" sign is not going to work so set up a habitat that is inviting to the snakes. Snakes are looking for an area that has lots of hidey holes to slither into. Tall grasses also offer the snake cover and a place to hunt. A pile of rocks not only offers protection for snakes but a great place to bask in the sun. A water source is also important to all wild life, so work that into your garden design as well. A healthy snake population also will help control other garden pests such as slugs.

March Event

Jeanne Canteen

We had a delightful and productive evening this month making fountain gardens. Stacy Chapley led the discussion and demonstration and many of us left with lovely indoor fountains.

There were 13 attendees - the most for a monthly meeting in some time - and we had two new members join us.

We also voted on the budget for 2014. Linda Tyler made the motion to approve the budget and Jeanne Canteen seconded it. All present approved the budget as proposed.

The Club has up to \$3,000 to give in grants this year. If you want additional details on the budget, please contact any of the officers of the Club.

Please plan on attending an event soon. There are lots of exciting ones coming up; they are posted on the website.



Greenfield Garden Club
P. O. Box 309
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01302-0309

The following vendors have agreed to provide the listed discounts for members who show their membership card when making a purchase. We really appreciate their support.

Please respect their offers by remembering these generous discounts are for our club members only, and when your card is presented.

Backyard Birds Strong Ave. Northampton 10% off regularly priced items except thistle birdseed
Baystate Perennial Route 5/10 Whately 10% off regular priced plants
Chapley Gardens 397 Greenfield Road – RT 5/10 Deerfield 10% off regular priced plants and pond supplies
Fairview Gardens 8 Main St. Northfield 10% off everything except cut flowers
Five Acre Farms 110 Hinsdale Rd., Northfield 10% off regular priced plants
Glenbrook Gardens 54 Glenbrook Drive Greenfield 10% off regular priced plants and products
Greenfield Farmers Cooperative (Agway) High Street Greenfield 10% anything garden related
LaSalle Florists Rte. 5/10 Whately 10% off regular priced plants
O'Brien Nurserymen, 40 Wells Road, Granby, CT 10% off plants
Silver Gardens 23 Picket Lane, Greenfield – 10% off daylilies
Sugarloaf Nursery 25 Amherst Rd, Sunderland- 10% off regular priced plants
Warm Colors Apiary 2 South Mill River Road South Deerfield – 10% off
Wilder Hill Gardens 351 So. Shirkshire Rd., Conway, 10% off plants and consultations

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