



Greenfield Garden Club

Newsletter

Vol. 22

May 2013

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May Program Meeting

Got calendars? This month is a craft night, and we are going to make a placemat using a paper weaving technique. There is a photo of one on the website. Bring 1 or 2 calendars plus a pair of scissors, a pencil, a ruler, and a piece of color-coordinated poster board. If you want, you could bring a wood cutting board and a razor blade or Exacto knife. Calendar pictures with contrasting colors work best. Two 12 month calendars will produce 6 placemats. I cut them into strips and weave them, and then I mount them on poster board and laminate them. I will have lamination sheets and laminator on hand. This event takes place at Pearl Rhodes School in Leyden, a mere 8.6 miles from Main St in Greenfield (15 minutes). The address for you GPS users is 7 Brattleboro Road, Leyden, MA. Come and be crafty together!

Laura Schlaikjer

President's Report

We have many exciting events to tell you about starting in May. As you may have noticed, the June craft night is now in May, and we have a field trip to a Cactus and Succulent expert's gardens in June. Our Extravaganza is May 11th, and I do hope many of you will bring plant divisions for the sale. We will be offering a nice selection of annuals and herbs; plus hanging baskets for Mother's Day - as well as soil testing by Master Gardeners. I can't stress enough the importance of checking our website to stay current with our changing schedule! We will also be offering several field trips: May 2 is a woodland walk at 6pm at 23 Pickett Ln in Greenfield; and June 29 a trip to the Boylston, MA home of John Trexler, past Executive Director of the Worcester County Horticultural Society (think Tower Hill). There will be another hyper tufa event soon - this time we'll try balls and hand shapes. Details will be posted on Facebook and our website. I have added a page on the website for the Fair, where you can read about the work bee/potluck scheduled for July 27th at 3pm. Please don't wait for us to contact you for any volunteer project - contact any steering committee member or email us to offer your support. Happy gardening!

Laura Schlaikjer

Trap Plain Clean Up

There will be a work bee at Trap Plain on Monday, June 10 at 5:30 with a rain date of Tuesday, June 11 at 5:30. Please bring rakes, trowels, a weed bucket, and clippers.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

May Meeting 6:00 pm

May 16- Craft Night
Pearl Rhodes School
7 Brattleboro Road, Leyden, MA

Extravaganza Plant and Tag Sale Drop Off

May 10 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Extravaganza May 11

Set up 7:00 a.m.

Sale 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Steering Committee 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 23
Home of Jean Wall

All members are welcome to attend all Steering Committee meetings

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

Treasurer's Report

Jean Wall

Balance as of April 30, 2013: \$5,496.57

Income: \$56.00

Expenses: \$1,775.79

Income: Dues, interest

Expenses: Newsletter, programs, grants, postage

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

or write to 40 High Street, Greenfield MA 01301.

Dandelions!

Who among us has not popped the head off of a dandelion, made a dandelion chain necklace, or blown the downy fluff across the field. To many the dandelion appears as a pesky weed in the lawn whose tap root goes deep making it more difficult to dig. But the dandelion is really a very useful herb that can be used as food, medicine and even wine! It is rich in vitamins A, B complex, C and D. For minerals it totes iron, potassium and zinc. It can be added to salads, used as the greens in sandwiches and brewed into tea and the flowers can be made into wine. Native Americans used it to treat kidney disease, swelling, skin issues, heartburn and stomach upset. The Chinese used it for stomach distress, appendicitis, and nursing issues. In Europe it was used to treat fevers, boils, diabetes and diarrhea. In today's world the dandelion is used as an appetite stimulator, for gall bladder and liver problems and as a diuretic. So take a close look at the dandelion. Perhaps it is not such a pest after all.

The First Dandelion

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,

As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,

Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd grass--innocent, golden, calm as the dawn,

The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

Source: "Leaves of Grass," by Walt Whitman

Extravaganza

I hope you have potted up some beautiful plants for the Extravaganza! This is one of our 2 fundraisers! We would love if each member donated 5 or 6 nice plants to help make this event a success. The better the plants the more profitable the sale!

If you have items for the tag sale you can drop them off at the home of Judy Gagnon, 42 Briar Way, Greenfield or bring them on Friday night when you drop off plants.

The Extravaganza will take place on Saturday, May 11 from 8 to 1! Please drop your plants off on Friday, May 10 between 5:00 and 6:30 so they can be priced and arranged prior to the sale. We would love

volunteers the day of the sale to help customers while making purchases and getting their plants to their vehicles. We also need people around for clean up as well! Please arrive at Trap Plain at 7:00 to help with the morning set up.

From White Flower Farm site Pre- and Post-Bloom Care for Amaryllis:

Place the pot where the temperature remains above 60°F. The warmer the temperature (70-80°F night and day is ideal), the faster the bulb will sprout and grow. Providing bottom heat (by setting the pot on a propagation mat or on the top of a refrigerator) may help stimulate growth. Water only when the top inch of the potting mix is dry to the touch. Watering more frequently, particularly just after potting, can cause the bulb to rot. (If the pot is covered with Spanish Moss, lift the moss and pour water directly on the potting mix.)

Growth generally begins in 2-8 weeks. Certain varieties of Amaryllis may take more time to sprout. As long as your bulb remains firm, be patient and take care not to overwater. Provide ample sunshine (a south-facing window or a sunroom) as soon as the bulb sprouts. Rotate the pot frequently to prevent the flower stalks from leaning toward the light. The flower stalks may require support to keep from toppling; our **Amaryllis stakes** are ideally suited to this purpose. Please call or check our Web site for details.

Rebuilding Bulb: After flowering, your bulb is exhausted. If you want flowers next year (many people prefer simply to purchase new bulbs every fall), you must allow it to rebuild itself. After the last bloom fades, cut off the flower stalk 3-5 inches above the bulb, **BUT DO NOT CUT THE LEAVES OFF. THEY PRODUCE FOOD THAT WILL BE STORED IN THE BULB.** Put your plant in a sunny window (a south-facing one is best), water when the top inch of the potting mix is dry to the touch, and begin fertilizing with a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer once a month. When the danger of frost has passed in spring, set the pot outdoors in full sun or knock the bulb out of its pot and plant it in the ground in a sunny location. In fall -- we often wait until frost blackens the leaves -- bring the bulb indoors, cut the foliage off just above the bulb, and store it dry in a cool (55°F), dark place such as a basement for 8-10 weeks. Then pot (or repot) the bulb and water it. Thereafter, keep the potting mix almost dry until new growth emerges, and follow the instructions under "**Pre-bloom Care.**"

Felder's Tips for Slowing Down, Even in This Busy Season- Do the squirrels enjoy your garden furniture more than you do? Do you sometimes get so busy weeding, staking, and pruning that you forget to stop and smell the tuberose? If so, you might want to try a

little slow gardening. In his 2011 book *Slow Gardening: A No Stress Philosophy for All Senses and All Seasons*, Felder Rushing takes the principles of the Slow Food movement -- which celebrates everything fast food is not -- and applies them to gardening. It's a quirky book from a quirky, iconoclastic guy, but I think Felder is on to something.

"Slow gardening isn't lazy or passive gardening," he writes. "It actually involves doing more stuff, but carefully selected to be productive without senseless, repetitive chores. By focusing on seasonal rhythms and local conditions, it helps the gardener get more from the garden. . . . Think 'long haul' and take your time. Life has lots of pressures -- why include them in the garden?"

Felder offers a long list of suggestions for slowing down. None are earth-shaking, but that's kind of the point. Here are a few to get you started:

- *Spread out your chores; do a little as you go, instead of loading up the weekend.
- *Right plant, right place -- choose pest-resistant plants well-adapted to your local climate and soils, plant them well, and let them grow without being pushed. . .
- *When practical, use quiet hand tools over noisy power equipment. . . .
- *Get personal with your weather -- use a rain gauge and outdoor thermometer.
- *Take it easy on vacation -- visit public botanic gardens, and walk around older neighborhoods to savor what is grown locally by hands-on gardeners.
- *Shop at a farmer's market for in-season, locally-grown produce.
- *Grow your own -- propagate enough plants for you and for friends or neighbors.
- *Ponder the mysteries of the universe, in the microcosm of your own back yard.
- *Share relaxing garden techniques and easy, rewarding plants with children."

Walker Farm

A reminder that Walker farm- 1190 U.S. 5 Dummerston, VT is offering a 10% discount on plant materials until the end of June. ☺

Aubuchon Booklet Dolly Gagnon

If members haven't picked up a free spring booklet from Aubuchon, they might be interested in a few gardening tips from their Spring Garden Guide. One I was especially glad to see is listed first.

- If you don't use all the seeds you purchase this spring, you can store most varieties in your freezer for planting next spring.
- Cut back ornamental grasses to about 4 inches tall before or just as they put out new growth. This is also

the time to divide ornamental grasses, if you wish to do so.

- In mid- or late spring: Once your forsythia, camellias and lilacs finish flowering for the season, they may need a haircut. They start making next year's floral display just a few weeks after they finish blooming, so cut them back as flowers fade so you won't be disappointed next year.

There are many more tips listed; this is just a few -- worth picking up a free copy.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center Jeanne Canteen

I had the good fortune to be able to visit the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX recently and wanted to share my experience with all of you.

The Center was founded by the former first lady, Lady Bird Johnson, and the actress Helen Hayes to preserve North America's native plants and natural landscapes. There are 279 acres with 650 species of Texas native plants. The prize is the Texas Bluebonnets which bloom in mid-April and are found all over the countryside as well as in the Center.

This time of year there are many other beautiful flowers blooming; these include black-eyed Susans, false foxgloves, wild columbine and Indian blankets. There is a special butterfly section with plants designed to attract the butterflies.

A recent addition is the Arboretum; it is a 16-acre woody plant museum that showcases magnificent and diverse Texas trees. A well groomed 1.1 mile trail wanders through the Arboretum and is a delightful way to view the trees.

Another very special feature of the Center is the focus on water conservation. As you may know, Central Texas is very dry and water conservation is critically important. A central irrigation system collects rainwater from the 17,000 square feet of roof and stores it in a cistern for use at the Center.

If you have the chance to visit Austin, be sure to include a visit to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. We had a wonderful time

Annie's Garden Store

Mother's Day Breast Cancer Benefit

Make your Mother's Day gift count - 10% of sales are donated to Rays of Hope Breast Cancer Center.

Open Garden Days at O'Brien Nurserymen Granby, CT www.obrienhosta.com

May 3, 4, 5- Spring Ephemerals, Native & Asian Wildflowers

May 17, 18, 19- Exotic, Elegant and Amazing Arisaemas

May 24, 25, 26, 27- Enticing Epimedium

May 31, June 1, 2- Diverse, Dynamic and Deliciously Fragrant Daphne



Greenfield Garden Club
23 Hastings Street
Greenfield, MA 01301

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 when your card is presented.

Annie's Garden Store 515 Sunderland Road, Amherst. 10% off regular priced plants.
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
Stewarts Nursery 135 Millers Falls Rd., Montague – 10% off regularly priced plants
Walker Farm 1190 U.S. 5 Dummerston, VT- 10% off plant material until the end of June
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 .