Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

December 2024 Vol. 32, No. 11

Swaps, Swags, and Merriment Maketh our December

Holiday Party with Yankee Swap*

Friday, December 13, 5-8 PM

41 Meadow Lane, Greenfield

Bring a dessert to share – savories and beverages suppied by the club.

RSVP by 12/3

413-773-0201 or
mds41@comcast.net

Let the fun begin!

**optional*

Annual Wreath or Swag Making

Saturday, December 7th

Wilder Hill Gardens

351 South Shirkshire Rd, Conway

$20 per wreath / $15per swag

Dress for the weather as we may be in an area open to the outdoors. All supplies will be provided, but it's helpful if you can bring your own pruning shears to cut the greens. Also helpful will be a spool of florist's wire and gloves. Hot mulled cider will warm us up.

RSVP to the club by 12/5.

December President's Musings ~ *Laura Schlaikjer*

Welcome Yule! We may not have a white Christmas, but in the higher elevations we did have a white Thanksgiving! We are also headed into the freezer for a while, after an extended warm and drought-y Fall. I am so very grateful for the rain we have received thus far. Many December events listed here are coming up fast, so do take advantage of all that interest you. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our festive Holiday Party and Yankee Swap – always sure to be delicious and fun. RSVP as soon as you finish reading this. We've had a great year together, and I look forward to all the events that 2025 will bring. We welcome all your ideas for trips, visits, lectures and films. What would you like to see and do next year? We will recap 2024 for you at the Annual Meeting in February. Happy Holidays!

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 7, 10 am – 1 pm – Winter Farmer's Market at GPL
December 7, 10 am – Make a wreath or swag at Wilder Hill Gardens
December 7, 1 pm – 3 pm – Pruning Workshop in Greenfield ($25)
December 11, 5:15 pm – Steering Committee Meeting
December 13, 5 pm – 8 pm – Holiday party with Yankee Swap
December 21 – Happy Winter Solstice!

Remember this December, that love weighs more than gold
~ Josephine Dodge Baskam Bacon

SAVE THE DATE!
Sunday, February 23rd, 12 – 3 PM
GGC Annual Meeting

We are n the final stages of planning the Annual Meeting, and we believe we have found a new site – the Farm Table's event barn. We are looking forward to having a meal together in an accessible building with plenty of space and perhaps some live music too! Our speaker will be Wisty Rorabacher, who will be speaking about the various projects she has spear-headed in Greenfield, and how she would like to encourage the next generation to shadow her as she prepares to hand them off. We would also like to form a **nominating committee**, who will be in charge of making sure we have a slate of officers to present to you for 2025. This committee will see which current officers would like to continue and where we need to find replacements. (All positions are open annually, so please step forward if you are interested!) There will be at least 1 vacancy as a Member-at-Large. Please consider joining this committee! Email the club with your interest.

Don't forget to check out Margaret Roach's excellent ***Monthly Garden Chores*** *on her website:* https://awaytogarden.com/category/chores-by-month/

Officers 2024:

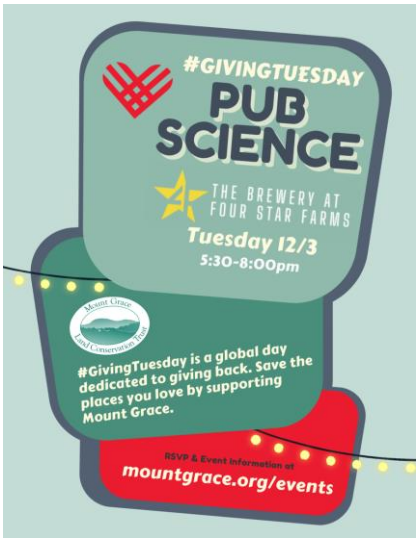
President/Newsletter/FB/Website: Laura Schlaikjer
Vice President: Marsha Stone
Treasurer: Becky George
Recording Secretary: Pamela McBride
Corresponding Secretary: Nicki Shipman
At Large Member/s: Eva Carrier; Michelle Tirrell; Celt Grant

Bats, Bats, Bats at the Brewery at Four Star Farms

508 Pine Meadow Rd, Northfield, MA

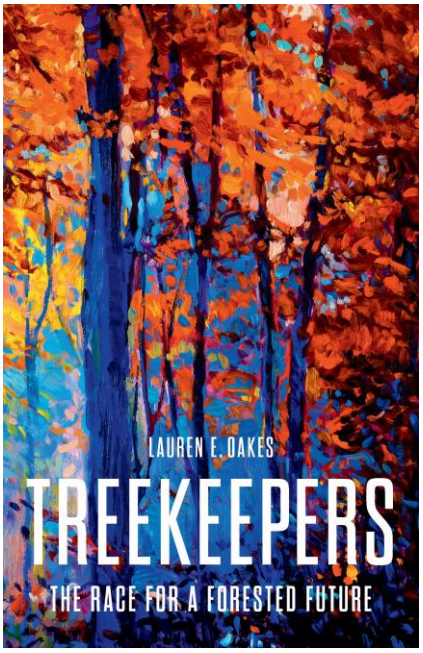
Tuesday, December 3rd, 5:30 - 8 pm

Enjoy local beer, cider, and good company as you support Mount Grace's conservation work AND learn about bats with Halie Larkin! Halie has been a Wildlife Biologist with Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for almost two years. Her primary focus is rare, threatened, and endangered species conservation. This includes various species of birds, mammals, turtles, and snakes. Many of the species she monitors are state listed on the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and/or federally listed under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act (ESA). One of the most imperiled wildlife groups is bats, whereby 8 out of the 9 species that occur in the state are listed under MESA. Halie has been involved with bat conservation since 2021 when she reviewed various projects for potential impacts to bats in Pennsylvania. In her current role she oversees the DCR State Forest and State Park bat program, which includes monitoring maternity colonies, surveying hibernacula, deploying acoustic detectors, and mist-netting bats. She's looking forward to sharing her experience and knowledge about bats in Massachusetts, as well as discussing her ongoing bat projects from around the state.



Halie Larkin - Wildlife Biologist

As insectivores, bats in Massachusetts provide a vital role in ecosystem health and function, contributing to pest management in forested and open habitat. The unique adaptations we see in bats today, including selection of roosting and foraging habitat, wing morphology, and echo-location characteristics specific to individual species, speak to the ingenuity of the taxa and fierce competition in a dynamic landscape.

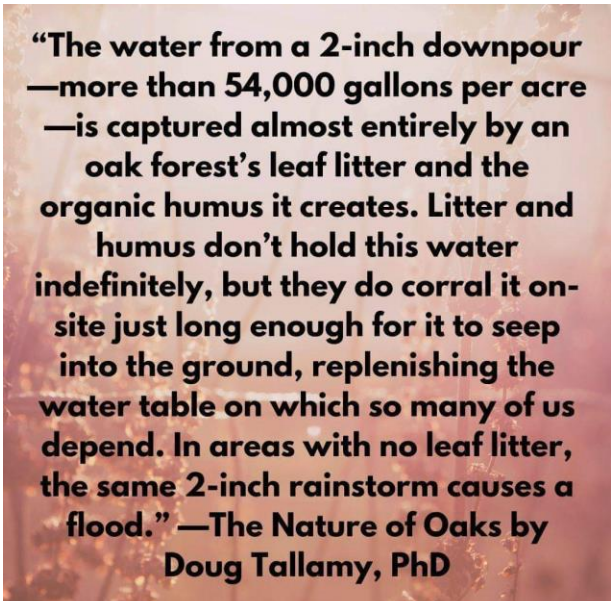


“A frank, probing, but ultimately hopeful book” (Elizabeth Kolbert) that shows how the path from climate change to a habitable future winds through the world’s forests.”

In recent years, planting a tree has become a catchall to represent “doing something good for the planet.” Many companies commit to planting a tree with every purchase. But who plants those trees and where? Will they flourish and offer the benefits that people expect? Can all the individual efforts around the world help remedy the ever-looming climate crisis?

In *Treekeepers*, Lauren E. Oakes takes us on a poetic and practical journey from the Scottish Highlands to the Panamanian jungle to meet the scientists, innovators, and local citizens who each offer part of the answer. Their work isn’t just about planting lots of trees, but also about understanding what it takes to grow or regrow a forest and to protect what remains. Throughout, Oakes shows the complex roles of forests in the fight against climate change, and of the people who are giving trees a chance with hope for our mutual survival.

Timely, meticulously reported, and ultimately optimistic, *Treekeepers* teaches us how to live with a sense of urgency in our warming world, to find beauty in the present for ourselves and our children, and to take action big or small.



The Serge Hill Project
Thursday, December 12th, 2 pm
Live on Zoom

REGISTRATION
$5 for members of the Garden Conservancy
$15 for General Admission

A recording of this webinar will be sent to all registrants a few days after the event. We encourage you to register, even if you cannot attend the live webinar.

The Serge Hill Project for Gardening, Creativity, and Health was set up in 2021 by the wife-and-husband team of Sue and Tom Stuart-Smith. Based in an old orchard in Hertfordshire, England, the project draws on Sue's work as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, and Tom's horticultural expertise as an internationally renowned landscape architect.

This program will explore how the idea for Serge Hill developed from an old orchard near their home into a not-for-profit initiative based on the understanding that working with nature can radically transform people's health and well-being. They will explain how the programs and educational resources at Serge Hill are engaging those in the community who have the least opportunity to access the natural world.

About the Speakers:

Sue Stuart-Smith (right) is a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and author of *The Well Gardened Mind*, which analyses the relationship between gardening and mental health. She was the Garden Conservancy's National Speaker in Spring 2023. Sue studied English Literature at the University of Cambridge before qualifying as a doctor and working in the National Health Service for many years, becoming the lead clinician for psychotherapy in Hertfordshire.

Tom Stuart-Smith (left) is a landscape architect who works on a wide range of projects, from small private gardens to large parks. In 2024, he designed a garden for the National Garden Scheme at the Chelsea Flower Show and won his ninth gold medal. He runs a design studio with a team of twenty from next to his home in Hertfordshire. He is a trustee of the Garden Museum and was awarded an OBE in 2023. He is a Vice President of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Did you leave the leaves?

from GGC member Susan Farber

Congratulations to all of us who did not rake our yards to death this fall. Maybe you gently raked leaves onto garden beds, or built a leaf pile, or created soft landings around your trees. Maybe you left them wherever they fell.

And if you did, I'll bet that was a bit hard for you. *What will the neighbors think? It looks so messy!* We've been trained to think that a raked-up, mowed-up, bagged-up, blown-out, leaf-free yard is beautiful. But we now know, from the Xerces Society and others, how the best practice is to "leave the leaves."

Fallen leaves create a protected habitat for many insects over the winter. In that leaf layer are eggs, cocoons and sleeping critters: butterflies, moths, beetles, beneficial wasps and more.

We used to count on deep snow to insulate our perennial plants. With climate change, we are now without reliable snow, so leaves piled on our gardens can help protect our perennials from winter's harsh cold. And those leaves protect and enrich the soil, too.

A new study by Dr. Max Ferlauto, Maryland's state entomologist, brings weighty evidence of the insect destruction caused by removing leaves. Even more concerning to me were the study's additional findings of long-lasting destruction of soil health.

As gardeners we already know that soil is not inert dirt: it's an abundant ecosystem of billions of tiny creatures and millions of miles of mycelium (8 miles in a cubic inch!), all making possible the growth of healthy plants – trees and shrubs, the lawn, our treasured perennials and annual flowers, and all the vegetables we grow.

Dr. Ferlauto "found that when leaves had been consistently removed for many years, yards suffered twin losses in their soil carbon and decomposition rates that could not be reversed by letting leaves rest two years in a row." The study ended after two years, and those ill effects likely continue: "key ecosystem processes cannot quickly rebound."

We can help the soil and insect populations and the whole ecosystem in our yards rebound. This winter you can look out at your yard and think happily of the abundant life snuggled in the leaves because you practiced "leaving the leaves." And if you didn't, consider becoming a wise, lazy gardener like the rest of us.

Resources:

Rake Less, See Butterflies More from the University of Maryland Dept. of Entomology

Leave the Leaves! from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Note: Please know that when I say "insects" in this article, I also intend to include the many other kinds of valuable invertebrates such as millipedes, sowbugs, spiders and daddy-long-legs. - SF

JOIN US FOR OUR

Annual

Holiday Party

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13
FROM 5:00 - 8:00 PM

AT THE HOME OF
MARSHA STONE & NORM HIRSCHFELD
41 MEADOW LANE, GREENFIELD

BRING A DESSERT TO SHARE -
SAVORY FOOD AND DRINKS
SUPPLIED BY THE CLUB!
. BRING AN OPTIONAL YANKEE SWAP
WRAPPED GIFT
IN THE $15-$20 RANGE,
AND ENJOY THE ENSUING SURPRISES
AND FUN.

RSVP BY DECEMBER 3

413-773-0201
MDS41@COMCAST.NET

If you are looking for local gifts for your holiday gift-giving, be sure to check out some of these vendors, many of whom will be at the GPL Winter Farmers Market on December 7th.

Give the Garden Calendar as a gift and enjoy one yourself all year... Each month of UMass Extension's Garden Calendar features:

- One large, inspiring garden image plus information about the image
- Daily gardening tips for Northeast growing conditions
- Daily sunrise and sunset times*
- Phases of the moon
- Plenty of room for notes
- Low gloss paper for easy writing

The UMass Garden calendar is a wall calendar. The dimensions of the calendar when open are 12.5" wide x 19" long.

Huge congratulations to Homegrown National Park's co-founder, Douglas Tallamy, on receiving the prestigious Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award from the New York and Connecticut Audubon chapters.

Lee Potter, Amy Chase Gulden, Randy Ramusack, Doug Tallamy (HNP Co-Founder), Tim Snyder (HNP Executive Director), Michelle Alfandari (HNP Co-Founder), and Christian Cooper (Extraordinary Birder). Photo: Paola Chapdelaine/Audubon

The Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award recognizes those who demonstrate remarkable leadership and commitment to protecting birds and the places they depend on.

Rather than give a traditional acceptance speech, Doug shared photos of the native plants and trees he and his wife have added to their 10-acre property. Formerly a hayfield, it is now home to 1,335 species of moths and 62 bird species.

"Failure is not an option! Property owners are the hope and future of conservation. We have to practice conservation on our private properties and balconies, not just in parks and preserves. In the past, conservationists worked exclusively where there weren't a lot of people. Now, we need to find ways to thrive in human-dominated landscapes."

Join us on **December 3rd** for Giving Tuesday!

The fastest way to assemble a large assortment of holiday cookies is to sign up for a cookie swap. The Greenfield Public Library is once again holding its Holiday Cookie Recipe Exchange, where you not only get to swap your single batch of festive cookies with those of the other attendees, you also get all the recipes! Hurry – registration closes on December 4th. Scan the code to the left for more information.

How do you keep cut out sugar cookies **from spreading?** There are 4 important things to remember:

- **Use real butter.** No substitutes! For even better results, use a high fat European butter.
- **Don't add leavening**. Baking powder and baking soda both make the dough rise, causing the shapes to get out of proportion and not hold well. This sugar cookie dough is perfect without those ingredients.
- **Fully mix the ingredients.** If there are pockets of butter, they will melt during baking and cause the cookies to spread. Scrape the sides of the bowl often during mixing to ensure all ingredients get well incorporated.
- **Refrigerate the dough.** It's sometimes a pain to wait for dough to chill, but it greatly helps sugar cookies keep their shape.

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of Oct 15, 2024.....$8,053.91

Income $20.20
Interest $0.21; 1 new member: $20
Expenses $200.00
Oktoberfest supplies: $200
Balance as of Nov 15, 2024.....$7,874.11

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to Greenfield Garden Club:
c/o Becky George, 91 Smith St #111, Greenfield MA 01301 **Questions?**
greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
Friday, December 27th
greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

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.

Baystate Perennial Farm
36 State Road (Route 5/10), Whately
10% off regular priced plants with membership

Chapley Gardens
397 Greenfield Road (Route 5/10), Deerfield
10% off regular priced plants and pond supplies

Greenfield Farmers' Cooperative (Agway)
269 High Street, Greenfield
10% anything garden-related

Silver Garden Daylilies – 23 Picket Lane, Greenfield
10% off daylilies

Shelburne Farm and Garden
355 Mohawk Trail, Shelburne
10% off anything garden-related

Any vendors interested in offering our club member - gardeners a discount, please contact a member of the Steering Committee – thank you!!

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

Mill River Farm Market – Conway Road/corner 116 & Rtes 5/10. S. Deerfield
10% off plants in Spring and Fall

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