Greenfield Garden Club Newsletter

April 2021 Vol. 29, No. 4

Bonsai Basics with John Rough

Thursday, April 22nd at 7PM

Via Zoom

RSVP to receive the zoom link:

greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

John Rough has been a bonsai practitioner for over 30 years. He is a student of Nick Lenz of Leverett, MA, and has been mentored by several other international Masters. He is a member of the American Bonsai Society, and is a partner in BDB Bonsai, a local nursery.

Please plan to join us for a discussion with slides about bonsai basics. This will include what makes a plant a bonsai? What makes a good bonsai environment – we'll look at the pots and soil. We will look at different bonsai styles, accents, and incorporating them into your garden as a focal point. John will discuss local species and readily available garden plants you can use. He will lead us in how to get started and be successful. All ages and experience levels are welcome! Q & A to follow.

April President's Report ~ *Laura Schlaikjer*

April is here with all its cold and blustery days. I have just finished pruning the blueberry bushes in my small blueberry patch, which I let get too overgrown. I hope to be able to keep up annually now. I have heard several people ask about when they can start to remove leaf litter in their garden beds. Doug Tallamy suggests not only leaving the leaves in place in the fall, but not being too quick to tidy up in the Spring. Overwintering insects, notably bee, certain butterflies and moths all need a stretch of 50-ish-degree days to get moving. Otherwise, removing the litter too quickly might kill them or take them too far away from their host plants. (See A Way to Garden April Chores.) One thing I am doing as I walk around is look to see what I might be able to divide and pot up for the Plant Sale in May. Also, if you can sow an extra 6-pack or 2 of veggies or annuals, people were asking about those at last year's sale. Houseplants are also welcome. Save the date: Saturday, May 29, 2021. Cheers!

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 8: 12:15-1:00PM Gardens of the Arts & Crafts Movement (Free/zoom)
April 8-11: Festival of Flowers, Springfield Museums
April 20-22: Earth Day Live 2021: Restore Our Earth
April 22: 7pm **– GGC April monthly meeting –** Bonsai via zoom with club member John Rough. Slides and commentary. See description on page 1.

When the April wind wakes the call for the soil, I hold the plough as my only hold upon the earth, and as I follow through the fresh and fragrant furrow, I am planted with every foot-step, growing, budding, blooming into a spirit of spring.
- Dallas Lore Sharp, 1870-1929

Happy Hellebores

Hellebores are easy and carefree once they are established in your garden. They prefer partial shade and rich, moist, but well-draining soil. They are deer-resistant, which is a bonus. Plant them with the crown just slightly buried beneath the soil. Too deep and this can hinder flower production. The leathery foliage of the previous year's growth will look best when sheared in late winter just before the new growth emerges. Thin out any new seedlings that are too close to mature plants. Put these in a new location, or pot them up for a local plant sale (hint, hint). Hellebores benefit from an annual application of manure or compost. Provide plenty of water during spring and fall when they are actively growing. Hellebore flowers are hard to see since they are downward-facing, so some gardeners like to plant them on a steep slope or hillside, or in raised flower beds. Remember that the plants are toxic, so keep them out of the reach of pets and children. The first open garden weekend at O'Brien Hosta (see page 3) is all about Hellebores. Who could resist the hybrid Dark and Handsome, or Rio Carnival?!

GGC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021 Please keep your club membership current by sending in your dues. $20 per person, or $25 per household. Please make checks payable to: Greenfield Garden Club; and send them to the club treasurer, Joanne Burns, at 14 Freeman St, Greenfield, MA 01301. Thank you!

Stevens-Coolidge House (*their photo*)

In case you are hankering to see a dazzling bulb display, and feel the need to travel, visit the website for the Spring BloomFest in North Andover at the Stevens Coolidge House and reserve your tickets soon. Only a few dates remain and they expect to sell out.

The house and gardens at this Trustees of Reservations property reopen this April with new and improved gardens, indoor classroom, retail, event lawn, and reimagined interior spaces. The Spring BulbFest features more than 165,000 tulips and other bulbs, filling 9 display gardens with the exuberant colors of spring.

Spring BulbFest is open April 22 – May 16. Weekday Adult fee is $9/member and $15/non-member. As of this writing, only 4 dates have availability with timed entries. (Weekend rates are $12/member and $20 non-member.) Event entry is rain or shine. See more photos/story on the Enchanted Gardens blog here.

Officers 2021:

President/Newsletter/Website:
Laura Schlaikjer
Vice President:
Marsha Stone
Treasurer:
Joanne Burns
Recording Secretary:
Annette Kilminster
Corresponding Secretary:
Eva Carrier
At Large Members:
Nicki Shipman (welcome Nicki!)
(Looking for 2 volunteers)

Gardening Hacks with Pat Leuchtman

A little garden book was sent to me recently, and I'd like to share a few of its projects with you. **Gardening Hacks: 300+ Time and Money Saving Hacks** by Jon VanZile, has many amazing and fun ideas. This little book ($15.99) has five sections, from seeds and cuttings to tools, pests and harvesting. In between there is information about indoor, outdoor, and container gardening. You would be amazed by the supplies you can find right in your home or shed! Two-liter bottles, (I use wine bottles to keep hoses out of the garden) old newspapers, cardboard, old tires, cinder blocks and bricks, and even chimney flue liners can be used for a variety of tasks in the garden. Of course, other inexpensive supplies like PVC, fertilizer and garden tools might be necessary for a given project.

This has been a hard year and it isn't over yet. More people than ever have taken up gardening which we all know is totally understandable. Children like getting into the garden too, and Gardening Hacks has lots of ideas that would suit children as well as parents. I was amazed at the kinds of projects that families could do together. There are instructions for planting unroasted coffee beans that will make a nice houseplant (#61), or layering a branch of a shrub to make a new shrub (#63). Try tomato slice propagation (#66), and set up a worm farm so you can collect the castings for rich compost (#92.)

There are lots more ideas like creating a hanging tomato garden (#160). I have a friend who grew all her tomatoes in upside down buckets one summer. You can quickly make a DYI raised bed with cinderblocks (#165), or make a 'puddling' station for butterflies (#176). Butterflies aren't really 'thirsty,' they drink nectar, but they get nutrition from the mud, or rotting organic matter in your 'puddle.'

There are indoor projects, too. Grow tropical plants in the bathroom (#219). Think of all that warm steam. Sprout avocado pits (#221), plant pineapple tops (# 228), and turn your old aquarium into a water garden (#235)! Grow microgreens (#263) and start a sprout jar (#264). Make a Kokedama, a hanging ball of soil for a plant (#268).

Everyone in the family can have a good time with these various projects, indoors and out. Maybe the children will have some of their own ideas. There's a lot of fun to be had in the garden!

Pat's "Planting in the Green"

"Planting in the green" is the simple technique of taking your spade and digging deeply under the clump of snowdrop shoots and depositing that clump in a prepared hole where the shoots will grow and bloom. "In the green" means when the flowers are past and the shoots are simply green. This is the best time to transplant.

I have used this technique several times on two different snowdrops, Galanthus nivalis the familiar small snowdrops, and G. elwesii, which is also known as the foot tall Giant Snowdrop. Sometimes I move the snowdrop shoots because I want them to be more admired. Sometimes plants are just getting too crowded.

Late this March I dug up a large group of giant snowdrops hiding almost under a yellow twig dogwood. I split the clump and set the sections along my garden walk where I can enjoy them. They look fine and I think they will be lovely later in April.

OPEN GARDEN DAYS 2021 AT O'BRIEN HOSTA (10-5 each day)

Warning: Do not leave home without a checkbook or cash as they do not accept credit cards! Remember to show your membership card to receive 10% off plants.

April 9, 10 & 11 – Can't wait for Spring; Hellebore Selections in Bloom!

April 16, 17 & 18 – Spring Ephemerals – Bloodroot, Trillium, Jeffersonia etc.

April 23, 24 & 25 – Yellow Magnolias, Kinda New, Kinda Different, Really Special!

April 30, May 1 & 2 – Our favorite Rhododendron 'April Mist', a Mehlquist Hybrid

May 7, 8 & 9 – Enticing Epimediums – Explore our Expanded Choices

May 14, 15 & 16 – Diverse, Dynamic and Deliciously Fragrant Daphnes

May 21, 22 & 23 – Intriguing Iris; Dwarf, German, Crested, and Species

May 28, 29, 30 & 31 – Dicentra 'White Gold', 1st offering of this cool Bleeding Heart!

June 4, 5 & 6 – Cypripediums! Yes, we offer Lady-Slippers

June 11, 12 & 13 – Even more Itoh Peonies to choose from

June 18, 19 & 20 – Mini Hostas all the Rage; Hostas at their best!

June 25, 26 & 27 – Elegant, Amazing, and Exotic Arisaemas

July 2, 3 & 4 – Japanese Maples, Spectacular from Spring till Fall

July 9, 10 & 11 – We offer Hardy Hydrangeas that will bloom in your Garden!

July 16, 17 & 18 – Discover our Dazzling Daylily Displays, for 2+ months

July 23, 24 & 25 – Polygonatums, Many Special Selections of Solomon Seal

July 30, 31 & August 1 – Heuchera, Foliage in many Color Variations.

August 13, 14 & 15 – Hosta Dividing Demo Each Day at Noon

August 27, 28 & 29 – Franklinia, Starts Blooming now for Two Months!

September 3, 4 & 5 – Dwarf & Compact Ginkgos for Golden Fall Color

September 17, 18 & 19 – Our Favorite Seedpod, on the Japanese Woodland Peony

September 24, 25 & 26 – Unique Conifers, for the Winter Garden.

October 8, 9 & 10 – End of the Hosta Season Sale

October 29, 30 & 31 – Amazing Fall Color of Japanese Maple, Ginkgo, Fothergilla, etc.

O'Brien Nurserymen
40 Wells Rd
Granby, CT 06035
860-653-0163 / sales@obrienhosta.com

Are you **sowing seeds indoors** this year? Take a look at Margaret Roach's very helpful How to Start Seeds: 18 Confidence Building Tips. Too little light is the most common reason for seed-sowing failure, making tips number 11 and 12 the most important of her 18 tips. See her Seed-starting Calculator to help decide when to start your babies.

In the news: Angela Roell one of Grist's Top 50

Ang Roell

Beekeeper & Founder

They Keep Bees

Great Falls, MA

This beekeeper is bringing hive mentality to climate activism

As an independent beekeeper, Ang Roell knows how important bees are to the food supply. They also know all about the threats to the busy little critters — and how consolidation in the commercial business contributes to those dangers. A city kid, Roell got interested in farming as a way to connect with people and with the natural world. Then one day, they saw beekeeping in action. "It's chaos, but such an organized kind of chaos," Roell says. "That was it for me — this is the piece that's been missing." To educate, raise awareness, and celebrate the diversity of indie honey farmers, Roell organized a Boston bike-based "Tour de Hives," hosted a 2019 Queer and Trans Bee Day, and wrote *Radicalize the Hive*, a free downloadable book of wisdom about community and the natural world. We have much to learn from these insects' consensus-driven social lives, says Roell.

Photo: Sandra Costello

Margaret Roach's excellent Monthly Garden Chores:

https://awaytogarden.com/category/chores-by-month/

What do **Concerto for Philodendron and Pothos**, **Symphony for a Spider Plant**, and **A Mellow Mood for Maidenhair** all have in common? They are tracks on Mort Garson's self-released 1976 album, Mother Earth's Plantasia. You can still purchase this on eBay, or it has been re-released on Sacred Bones Records where you can choose the format. It has also been uploaded to YouTube. I love some of the comments: "This album puts the synthesize in photosynthesize." "You just made my bonsai's day." "It's growing on me."

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of February 15, 2021 .....$7,673.70

Income $525.21

Dues: $380; Interest $0.21; Donations in memory of Agnes Zielinski $145

Expenses $0.00

None this month

Balance as of March 15, 2021 .....$8,228.91

All financial matters and membership dues should be directed to the club Treasurer:

Joanne Burns, 14 Freeman St

Greenfield MA 01301 **Questions?**

greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com

April NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

Wednesday, April 28th

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

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

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