

Academy Garden Club Thymes

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

OCTOBER 2017

Tuesday, October 10, 2017
Lenox Academy Building – 7:00 pm

Program: *All about Garlic*

Speaker: Tom Romeo

Refreshment Hostesses:

Lynn Schmitter and Carol Way

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Hello,

Last month brought the yearly “Apple Squeeze” event! Thanks to everyone who helped with this year’s production!!

While I see that we had a very good turnout, some crafting and some helping with the booth (set up, clean up and selling), I would like to say that instead of half of us participating in our fundraising efforts, I would like to see ALL of us participating in our fundraising efforts!!

I cannot say it enough. The money WE raise goes toward great causes. One of these is funding our monthly speaker that we all enjoy, and another is the Scholarship money our Club donates to area students. So PLEASE try to find a way to help out next year with this yearly event!

For our next meeting, we are lucky to have Tom Romeo speak to us about growing and using garlic. This is a basic ingredient that is used countless times in our weekly, if not daily, cooking. It may be something you really don't think too much about other than to chop it up and use it!

After this talk we will all be experts in the field of garlic. I, for one, cannot wait to hear all about this rather notorious bulb coming at the perfect time . . . Halloween!! Those werewolves and vampires won't stand a chance with our group!

Warmly,

Anne

**Anne Gannon
President**

HORTICULTURAL COLUMN

By Harriet Wetstone

Is That Goldenrod or Ragweed?

As much as everyone loves fall color, and as much as the sunny to golden color of Goldenrod is enjoyed, the question always comes up, “Is that goldenrod or **ragweed?**”



Ragweed

What I have learned is that ragweed (*ambrosia artemisiifolia*) is a shallow rooted annual plant that grows up to four feet tall, and has hairy stems and deeply lobed leaves similar to the leaves of *Artemisia*. The very insignificant, almost colorless flowers grow like little beads along stalks or spikes.

Goldenrod, on the other hand, or *Solidago*, is in the aster family, *Asteraceae*. It is a perennial with bright yellow clusters of flowers, and has been used for centuries as an herb.

The misery caused by ragweed is that each plant alone produces up to one billion pollen grains, and these air born pollen grains, which are highly allergenically active, can travel as much as four hundred miles.

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On the other hand, studies of goldenrod pollen indicate that it is not a potent allergen for most people. In fact, goldenrod is also a very potent anti-allergic herb for sufferers of hay fever.

The purpose of any plant, no matter how delightful its looks or its fragrance, is to produce seeds to make more plants. There are three different seed producing systems: plants are either monoecious, dioecious or perfect.

Monoecious plants are ones that have both male and female flowers living on the same plant. The male flowers must release pollen in order to fertilize the female flowers. For some monoecious plants the male flowers send their pollen into the air, for others, insects spread the pollen. As it happens, both ragweed and goldenrod are monoecious, however ragweed is wind pollinated and goldenrod is insect pollinated.

Plants that are dioecious bear their flowers on different plants, plants that bear either female or male flowers, and so again, pollen must travel from plants with male flowers to plants with female flowers. Holly, asparagus, ginkgo, blueberries, and currant are all dioecious.

What allergy sufferers really want are plants that are insect-pollinated rather than wind pollinated. That brings us to 'perfect' plants, plants in which each flower is both male and female, equipped with stamens and pistil with no need to send its pollen out into the air.

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Roses are perfect flowers, as are hibiscus and lilies. They rely on pollinators, such as bees who industriously gather up pollen from the stamens and in doing so brush up against the pistil depositing pollen right where it needs to be.

So now we know the difference between goldenrod and ragweed! Billowing, brilliant goldenrod among purple asters is a gorgeous late summer, early fall, combination, and most goldenrod cultivars are hardy for zones 4-7.



Goldenrod

Many, however, are too big for most gardens and, more importantly, are mint like in their spreading habits. Showy Goldenrod (*S.speciosa*), especially the one called sweet goldenrod because of its scent, Golden Fleece (*S.sphacelata* "golden fleece") and Fireworks Goldenrod (*S.rugosa* "fireworks") are three that are recommended for garden use.

Thank you Healthline, EverydayHealth.org, garden.org, nature.org

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