

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

SEPTEMBER 2022

A Message from the President

Welcome everyone to a new year! A year when we will be able to meet regularly for the first time in, well, it feels like ages! The Program Committee has done an exemplary job in creating a varied, educational, and just plain fun array of activities, speakers, and parties. Equally as important are our contributions to the community through our civic projects.

If you did not sign up for committees or civic projects at the fabulous end-of-the-year party, do not fear, your opportunity awaits at our first meeting on September 13, 2022 at 6:00 pm at the Lenox Academy Building. If you are unable to attend, and would like to sign up for something, sent an email to Pat or myself and we will be thrilled to write you in. I will be using the email address of academygarden6@gmail.com if you need to send me a note.

The Civic Projects for 2022-2023 are:

-The Paterson - Egleston Monument- design, plant and maintain flowers around the town monument.

-The Academy Building – Maintain plants in two planters on either side of front door.

-The New Lenox Fire Station – Maintain plants in front of monument honoring firefighters; plants are on right side of building.

- Post Office Windows Plan and place attractive displays with outdoor and gardening themes in the windows of Lenox Post Office four times a year.

Our first meeting will be a Meet and Greet. It is a Potluck Dinner, so bring your favorite traveling dish! We will have a raffle, and the handbooks will be given out. We will celebrate the start of a wonderful year and celebrate all the participants

who entered the Academy Garden Show with the Lenox Historical Society, and the members who participated in the Berkshire Botanical Garden's Grow Show.

It is time for Paddington Bear and his tea party to leave the Post Office, and time to see the amazing window that Cindy Packard, Bobbie Ann Salinetti, and Jane Whalen have put together.

Also, if you have not already done so, bring your membership dues of \$30 in an envelope with your name, address, telephone number and email address on it. If you prefer, you can mail your membership dues and information to our Treasurer, Jill Dore, at 11 Dunmore Ct. Lenox, MA 01240. Make your check payable to Academy Garden Club of Lenox.

I want to thank all of you who have been so helpful in helping me find my footing, especially Terry Terry Michney, who keeps me steady.

Final notes for you to ponder: Extending terms of offices, and the possibility of using one email address for all Academy notifications...just food for thought.

Speaking of food, I am looking forward to serving our club, and looking forward to the food that will be dished up on September 13th! See you then!

Kathleen Lynch

"I like gardening - it's a place where I find myself when I need to lose myself. "

Alice Sebold

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Horticultural Column – Native Plants

Harriet Wetstone

Have we ever been glad to see the Summer dwindle away? I don't think so. I won't miss the Tanglewood traffic, and I have been known to complain about temperatures above 80, but I am always sad when it starts to get dark earlier and earlier. I treasure my time in the garden, especially in the early morning, pulling weeds, dead heading, cutting Hosta leaves for foliage bouquets, munching on cherry tomatoes, gathering parsley, thyme, basil and oregano for salads and omelets. Oh well, there is satisfaction in getting back to work. And so, I asked Theresa Terry, ever my creative inspiration, what I should focus on for this year's Hort Columns. And she had a ready answer: Native Plants!

So, I have begun to do some research. And I discovered right off the bat that the native plant movement, which is said to have been around for at least thirty years, generates a lot of controversy. It isn't just that some folks feel strongly about velvety lawns and exotic perennial plantings while others feel strongly about maintaining habitats and nurturing the native plants that have always grown here. There is also controversy as to what plants are native. The broadest definition is those plants which occur and reproduce in an area without cultivation by man. However, many of the plants we think of as native, such as Queen Anne's Lace, and ox-eye daisies, may have been here for two hundred years, but they were brought here by European settlers. It is said that over 20 percent of the wildflowers listed in the Guide to North American Wildflowers, are introductions from Europe. When it comes to determining which wildflowers are native to which States, there is even more trouble: plants follow rain fall and soil types and temperatures rather than State lines.

There are also two factions of native plant supporters, the ecologists which are concerned about maintaining habitat and only growing the plants within their native habitat. Others, the horticulturists, are concerned with preserving species of plants that are in danger of disappearing which entails propagating plants in nurseries far from natural habitats. Economics creep in as well - horticulturists propagate plants for sale to the public which effects seed selection and propagation of the fittest plants. For ecologists, these plants now differ from the original native plants.



Curly Chives

One of the strongest arguments for maintaining native plants in their habitat is for the wildlife populations that depend on those plants. - the bees, the moths, the butterflies, the bats, the birds, the small mammals, all of whom feed on the nectar, seeds, and fruits of these plants. unlike my hydrangea which is insect free.

It is said that native plants, because they are so well adapted to local environmental conditions, require far less water, thus saving time, money, and our most precious resource - water. It is also said that natives are easier to maintain, less vulnerable to pests and disease. This may be true only to a point.

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Many nonnative cultivated plants are as adapted to our native environment as many native plants. I always think about David Austin Roses as a case in point of nonnative plants which require far more time, attention, and resources than our natives.

I think it will be fun to take a close look at several families of native plants, to see exactly how native they are, how they have been managed, differences between natives and cultivars of natives, and more.

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Thanks to:

Cutting Through the Jungle: Native Plants Myths and Realities by Tony Avent

www.plantdelights.com

Why Native Plants Matter: www.audubon.org

Why Native Plants - Native Plant Trust:

www.nativeplanttrust.org

What are Native Plants and Where to Find Them by Melinda Myers

www.birdsandblooms.com

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