

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

OCTOBER 2023

AGENDA

October 10, 2023, Meeting

1. Program and cooking demonstration
2. Approve minutes
3. Accept financial report
4. Approve revised Bylaws
5. Old and New Business
 - a. Discuss potential winter dinner

President's Letter

I am looking forward to seeing you at the **October 10 meeting at the Lenox Community Center** where we will enjoy a cooking demonstration and discussion of cooking with tomatoes with cookbook author Miriam Rubin. She will bring cookbooks that we can buy for \$22, so remember to bring money if you think you might want a cookbook. For those of us with robust tomato crops the timing of this program is perfect.

Congratulations to our Finance & Fundraising Committee for a very successful fundraiser at the Apple Squeeze on September 23! Thanks to the Committee and its co-Chairs, Jill Dore and Theresa Terry Michney, as well as the many members who helped by contributing vases, baskets, flowers and plants; harvesting hydrangea; constructing terrariums and bouquets; manning our booth; and setting up/closing.



The proposed revised Bylaws are attached to this newsletter again, with no changes from the copy included last month. If you didn't have a chance to read it yet, please do that before the October meeting and be ready to discuss if you have questions or comments. We will vote on approving the revised Bylaws at the October meeting.

Dianne Romeo will be traveling so will miss the October meeting, but she is planning the boxwood workshop for our November meeting. She needs a headcount to order the correct amount of boxwood. So **please let us know no later than the October meeting if you will want boxwood for the November workshop.** Note that the cost of the boxwood will be passed along to those participating by a fee to be paid in November and based upon the cost of the boxwood.

Anne Gannon initiated a great conversation about whether members may prefer adding more summer events, holding a winter dinner, and/or (in years after the 2023-2024 Club year) eliminating some winter activities. Anne has graciously agreed to meet with our Program and Summer Garden Tour Committees where we will develop a questionnaire for members to aid our planning future events and provide the basis for a proposal that might be considered by members at a future meeting.

Look forward to seeing you at the October 10 meeting.

Best,

Susan

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Horticultural Column

The Wonderful Colors of Autumn

Harriet Wetstone



I looked out my window early this morning and realized that the lush green of my very overgrown woodland garden has begun to give way to the yellows that define fall color at my house. Sigh. No summer is every too long, although with all the rain this year, I can't say it has been my favorite summer. This touch of yellow sent me straight away to see what the forecast is for this year's foliage.

Looking at several forecasts, all of which acknowledge the incredibly wet summer we have had, it looks like leaves will be midway in color at the beginning of October and will peak around October 9th. This year's fall color will be somewhat muted.

There are several factors which affect how vibrant the fall color will be. One factor is that wet weather means more pathogens and fungi are active on the leaves and impacts how long the leaves stay on the trees.

But there is so much more. During the summer, leaves use sunlight to turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and glucose, or sugar. Photosynthesis is facilitated by chlorophyll, which of course is why summer leaves are green.

As the days get cooler and shorter, the tiny tubes holding water and sugar in the leaves shut down, and the chlorophyll fades away, making visible the xanthophyll, which is responsible for yellow, and the carotene which is responsible for orange, and the tannins, which are responsible for brown. Xanthophyll and carotene fade as temperatures get much colder, but the tannins are unaffected by cold.

But what about the crimsons and purples? They come from the anthocyanins which get manufactured in the fall from the sugars that get trapped when those tiny tubes holding water and sugar get shut down. And in really wet weather, when the sugars are more diluted, there is less of the anthocyanins and the fall colors are more muted. It is true that a run of bright warm days followed by cool crisp nights will make the most of whatever little anthocyanin can get manufactured and that will help boost foliage performance.



While I love the foliage show, of course, I also love the sunshiny yellow of the golden rod, and even more, those wonderful purples of the fall asters and the colchicum or fall blooming crocus!

The New England aster (*symphyotrichum novae-angliae*) has just started blooming in my garden, although it showed up several weeks ago and it was a while before I remembered what it was. It is a cold hardy pollinator and a great treat for butterflies.

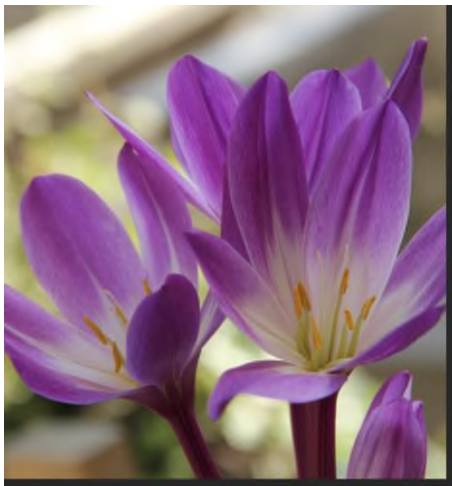
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Native to North America, they have a range of flower colors from magenta to deep purple. Asters are fast growers with erect stems that can grow several feet tall and can branch profusely. If you cut it when the flowers are still closed it should last up to ten days in a vase.



Colchicum, known as the fall blooming crocus, or meadow saffron, is not a crocus, it is a lily. And it is, in fact, poisonous. Colchicum are also known as Naked Ladies because they bloom as leafless flower stalks. The leaves appear in the early spring and then disappear, the flowers then come in mid-September. Once you plant these bulbs, you can forget them, they need no care. After a few years, however, you can divide them and get a bigger and bigger display. There are a variety of cultivars. The giant colchicum can produce as many as ten flowers each, all violet with white throats. The violet queen also has violet flowers with white lines in the throat and distinctive orange anthers. A waterlily is a sterile hybrid with lilac pink flowers with multiple petals, but no anthers. Here's to a run of bright sunny fall days and delightfully cool crisp nights. And no more rain!

Thanks to: <https://patch.com/massachusetts/across-ma/fall-foliage-peak-ma-2023-best-time-leaf-peeping>;
<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/autumn-crocus-colchicum-spp/>;
<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-grow-new-england-asters-4109086>;
<https://www.almanac.com/plant/asters>;
<https://www.thespruce.com/perennial-aster-flower-plan>

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September 2023 Lenox Apple Squeeze



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