

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

Academy Garden Club Thymes Summer 2019 Newsletter

Hello Academy Garden Club Members!!

This is my first chance to address all of you as this year's president. Please know that I welcome all suggestions for newsletter content and for Hort Column topics. I am in awe of how wonderfully so many of you are at the ready to facilitate our many projects and to do all you do to keep us humming along.

I hope you are all having a glorious summer with your gardens coming exactly as you would wish, and lots of time for delicious early morning dead heading and weeding and listening to the birds, as well as all other manner of good summertime fun.

We are grateful to our members who have kept the Monument garden neat and tidy and thriving.

The garden containers are in place on either side of the Academy Building's front steps, each planted with an *Ilyx glabra* (Inkberry). Inkberry shrubs have small dainty dark green leaves with attractive red tips during the spring flush and they are considered to be good alternatives to boxwood. We are grateful to Jan Chague and Vickie Salvatore who are keeping an eye on them, and to the Academy Trustees who shared expenses.

The Academy Garden Club Handbook is being prepared and will be available at our meeting on September tenth, which will be a covered dish supper at the Academy Building.

Remember the trip to the Vanderbilt Museum on September 12. Check in with Diane Romeo about going if you haven't already done so.

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Hort Column by Harriet Wetstone

Some of the lovely things about summer are the wild flowers in the meadows and on the roadsides. I particularly love the roadside combination of glorious blue chicory and creamy white Queen Anne's Lace.



Chicory and Queen Anne's Lace

Roadside chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) is a member of the Asteraceae family. It is native to Asia, North Africa and Europe, but has been naturalized in North America since the 1700s. Chicory has a deep tap root similar to dandelions to which it is closely related. The tap root, which when roasted has a coffee like scent, has long been used as a coffee additive or extender, and there is some evidence that it counteracts the stimulant effect of caffeine.

Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*), is also called "wild carrot". It is in the family Apiaceae and is native to temperate Europe and southwest Asia. It has naturalized in North America and, while really beautiful, self-sows to such an extent that it is considered noxious and invasive in many areas.

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Queen Anne's Lace and Butterfly

I love to gather bouquets of Queen Anne's Lace which always seems to arrange itself. An added bonus I have just discovered is that if you put color in the water the flowers will draw it up and become delicately colored. (Carnations will also draw up color, something florists make use of.) Queen Anne's Lace is said to be a good companion plant for tomatoes and lettuce, and is a good butterfly host. It is often confused with Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*, also in the Apinacaea family), which is sometimes called wild chervil; however, Cow Parsley blooms earlier and is more delicate in appearance.

They are both very similar to two very noxious plants in the Apinacaea family, one, Poison Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), the other, Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). Poison Hemlock is said to be the poison that killed Socrates - that's a scary plant! Hogweed has sap that is extremely irritating to skin causing serious blisters and burns.

(continued to the right)

While I could not find any specifics about Poison Hemlock in the Berkshires, Hogweed is said to have become established in Massachusetts. Both Poison Hemlock and Hogweed have hairy stems with purple blotches, while Queen Anne's Lace has smooth stems with no blotches. I must say, having done this research, I will be careful to not touch any plant unless I know for certain what it is!



Chicory and Wasp

Many thanks to Wikipedia, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, ag.umass.edu; www.gallowaywildfoods.com; oregonstate.edu; www.naturalalternativeremedy.com

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