

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

OCTOBER 2021

A Message from the President

Thank you, members and friends, for all your kind words, messages, cards and support during this very sad time in my life. My son lived his life with kindness, honesty, and duty to his family, friends and community. He will be missed.

Please take a moment to check out the Lenox Post Office window. You will enjoy a display of Preserving the Bounty. Dianne and Janice did a beautiful job of showing means of preserving some of your gardens' vegetables, fruits and herbs through canning or drying. You will see canning jars of pickled items and bottled dried herbs and beans. You might even be inspired to do a little preserving for yourself. Thank you, Dianne and Janice.

As of this writing, we will go forward with our October 12th meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the Academy building. Remember to wear a **mask**. It will be a business meeting that will be brief, but still provide you with a chance to see each other. The purpose of the meeting will be to give members the opportunity to sign up for various committees and to vote on the officers.

To prepare you for that vote, let me introduce you to Kathleen Lynch who is willing, able and interested in taking the Vice President position. Kathleen was brought into the membership by Anne Gannon where she is a neighbor of Anne's in Blandford. I met Kathleen when she volunteered in the kitchen with the Herb Associates at the BBG, and I was immediately impressed.

Kathleen comes with degrees and work experience in education, psychology, leadership, and museum studies. She also volunteers at the Shaker Village.

Most importantly, she is an avid gardener. She has a flower farm and sells bouquets and lavender

products that is managed by her son who has autism. Even though she is a busy, devoted lady, she is excited to take on the role of Vice President.

Just a reminder if you have not done so already, please mail your dues of \$30 to Ginny Akabane at 100 Hubbard or bring it to the October 12th meeting.

Please be thinking about where or how you would like to celebrate the December 14th holiday celebratory meeting. We have held it at Ventfort Hall, the Academy, and members' homes. I believe we can explore those options again or attempt something new such as a walk about town to look at the decorations and a stop for a beverage at one of the inns. Bring your suggestions for members to consider.

We also thought it would be a good idea for members to bring in some questions, perhaps about problems they may have with plants, when to cut back; and/or bring in photos of plants they want to identify and know more about.



Photo by Bobbianne Salinetti

October Agenda

- Introduce new members
- Vote on officers
- Present programs

Theresa Terry Michney
President

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Horticultural Column By Harriet Wetstone

Loving the Native Trees

Theresa has asked me to resume my horticultural blurbs, and, as always, I am open to suggestions as to topics. I thought I would start with trees, focusing on small decorative native trees.

Helia Native Nursery has a wonderful master plant list of native wild flowers, shrubs and trees with photos and descriptions, Latin and common names. It makes for fascinating reading! Of the trees, there are several of my favorites.



The Pagoda Dogwood (*Cornus Alternifolia*) is a beautiful smaller shade tolerant shrub or small tree which grows 15 to 25 feet tall and 6 to 15 feet wide. It can be used as a shrub, branches down to the ground, or limbed up to be a tree. The Pagoda Dogwood form is interesting in that its tiered branches grow nearly horizontal which gives it a distinct architectural texture particularly attractive when covered in snow. It has extremely fragrant clusters of small flat topped creamy flowers in the spring which are loved by the bees and other pollinators. The bluish black fruit which is born on bright red stalks that follows is a nutrient rich, easy food for birds. The richly textured leaves turn an attractive burgundy in the fall. The Pagoda is hardy in Zones 3 to 7. It wants moist but well drained slightly acidic soil.

American Hornbeam (*Carpinus Caroliniana*) is another smaller hardwood tree, which is also referred to as blue-beech, ironwood, musclewood and muscle beech. The hornbeam has a beautiful upright oval habit and blue-grey striated bark. Its shape and growth habit make it a good candidate for hedging. Its foliage turns yellow in fall, and in winter, the bark creates a beautiful contrast to snow.



It is termed a floodplain tree as it is tolerant of flooding. The term muscle tree refers to its characteristic fluted trunk and branches that look like muscle tissue. The wood is very strong and is used to make tools. Its hops like fruit are hanging catkins, fluttery for the male flower and spikey for the female fruit. This tree is a host plant for butterflies and provides food and shelter for birds and mammals.



Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis Virginiana*) is yet another smaller tree with spectacular yellow fall foliage and fragrant yellow fall flowers. Interestingly, its crinkly fruits release their small black seeds explosively sometimes hurling them up to 30 feet away from the tree. That is if they have the chance. I have had a squirrel busy eating these fruit, working my witch hazel for weeks now! There are lots of interesting things about the witch hazel. Extracts from the leaves, bark and twigs provide an aromatic salve called witch hazel which is used to sooth cuts and burns, and bug bites. Branches of witch hazel have also been used as dowsing sticks for detecting underground water sources. Supposedly this use is how the common name witch hazel was devised - 'wicke' is the Middle English for 'lively', and 'wych' is from the Anglo-Saxon word for 'bend'. Early settlers saw American Indians using witch hazel branches to search for underground water and so did the same; dowsing became an established feature of well digging into the 20th century.

Thanks to: explorewnv.org; gobotany.nativeplanttust.org; edis.ifas.ufl.edu; mortonarb.org; helianativenursery.com