

# Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

## MARCH 2021

***It's March!*** We're all getting restless with winter and have great plans for our gardens...if only the snow and wind would go away! Let's hope that the "March...in like a lion, out like a lamb" adage is true this year.

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*This is a picture of my geraniums in my kitchen.*

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### **Save the Date!!! May 11<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM**

Exciting news! Chris Ferraro is going to give a Zoom presentation to our club. The title of her talk is Gardening in Small Places. Realizing that not all of our members have computers and some others might not be able to "tune in" that evening, Chris is looking into taping her presentation and having it available at the Lenox Library. More details about the presentation will be coming soon.

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### **The Last Garden in England**

Need a good book to get you through to actual gardening season? The Last Garden in England by Julia Kelly is a story of five women who are connected across time by a garden. In 1907, Venetia, a famous landscape gardener whose character is loosely based on famous gardener Gertrude Jekyll, is hired to create a spectacular garden made up of many "rooms" for the owners of Highbury House.

Skipping ahead to 1944, with the war on, the now owners of Highbury House find that the house has been taken over as a hospital for injured soldiers. In 2021 a young gardener is hired to bring the overgrown gardens back to their original glory as true to the original design as possible.

In each time period, the garden is a focus for the events in each of the women's lives. As the garden was created and later recreated, the characters spoke of many flowers and the conditions that would be appropriate for them to thrive in. Roses were an important feature in several of the garden rooms.

The novel is an easy read, and it was fun to recognize the names of the flowers that they used and know that some of them I have in my garden now.

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## Northeast: March To-Do List

I found this article on-line. Kristen Green is the author of Plantiful: Start Small, Grow Big with 150 Plants that Spread, Self-sow and Overwinter. (I put in to get her book from CWMARS.) I am usually not a fan of self sowers, give me a plant that stays in a nice clump, but thought it would be interesting to see what she says, and who couldn't use a book with a lot of nice pictures in it at this time of year? Here's what she says about what we should be doing this month.

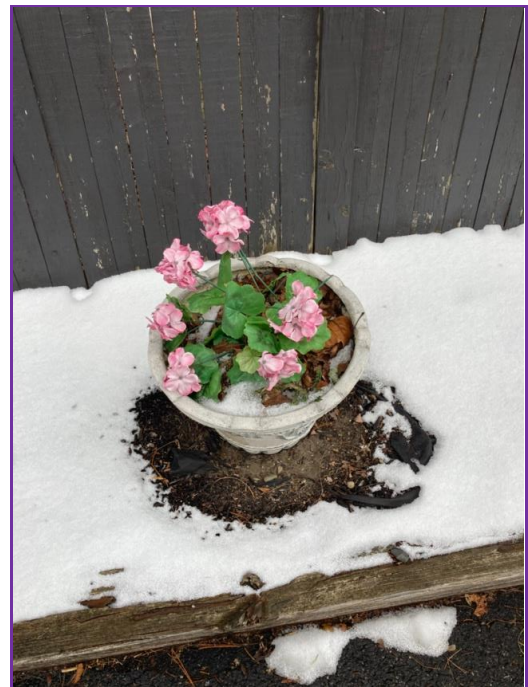
March has to be the most challenging month for Northeastern gardeners. The weather is aggressively indecisive-balmy one day, snowing the next -and we are ready to GO. But if we tidy up the garden's insulating mess too soon, we risk damaging spring's earliest and tenderest new growth. We also threaten the lives of our garden's best workforce: the native pollinators, beetles, butterflies, and spiders that are still sheltering in leaf litter and hollow stems. So, no matter how much the disorder torments you, leave that stuff alone. There are other things you can do to prepare for the season ahead.

**Clean out the shed**, Sharpen, polish, and organize your tools. Experts say the best time to prune is when your loppers are sharp, which brings me to...

**Complete your dormant pruning chores** while your plants are dormant. Remove water shoots and crossed branches from fruit trees, and prune for shape and airflow. Coppice shrubs that bloom on new wood to keep them from getting leggy and weird. Place some stems from spring blooming shrubs and trees in warm water to force them into early bloom indoors.

**Sow seeds** Place a seed order if you haven't already (it isn't too late), and pencil sowing dates into your calendar. Direct-sow seeds that need stratification as soon as possible.

**Fertilize your houseplants.** Even indoors, plants respond to the sun's higher, brighter angle. Start doling out a dilute solution of an all-purpose (or specific) fertilizer once a month.



*And this is a picture of a "blooming geranium" that I saw on my walk that same week! Surely there is a secret to getting geraniums to bloom in the snow. It gave me a much-needed chuckle!*

We hope that you all are staying safe and healthy. As the vaccine continues to be available to more and more people, we can begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime, look at those seed catalogs, join us for Chris's Zoom talk, and think thoughts of spring!!

**Carol and Lynn**