



# MAYFLOWER

Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts Newsletter



*The Mayflower is an online newsletter, full of clickable internet links that can take you to GCFM resources*

## The President's Message



**Summer is finally here!** After so many Spring weekends of rain, we now have time to enjoy our beautiful Public Gardens along with various Garden Tours in

our communities, and sit back and enjoy our own backyards.

My theme "It Takes a Village" means the *village* is our Garden Club members, the Garden Club **you** belong to, the District your Garden Club is part of, the Garden Club Federation of MA (GCFM) and the National Garden Club (NGC).

**Each of us** belongs to a very large extended family of Garden Clubs Members!

**Exactly how big is your extended family?**  
168 Garden Clubs and over 10,891 members and we are still growing!

**GCFM is preparing** new programs for the 2025-2026 year with Contests, more Awards, exciting Webinars, Schools and Workshops. Plus we are bringing back the GCFM Life Member Program with more benefits!

**There are changes in the Mayflower**, with newly organized sections devoted to EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, HORTICULTURE and FLORAL NEWS. Education is a priority to GCFM, and bringing you opportunities in every form are vital to this administration. New programs, workshops and webinars are coming your way!

### AMERICA



*As we enter America's semi-quincentennial year, GCFM will feature your patriotic-themed gardening efforts*

**It's a good time to follow GCFM's Facebook Page** to read what's going on.



**CLICK HERE!**

**Did you know?** The Garden Club Plant Sale Calendar last year listed 50 Plant Sale events but this year we had over 90 Plant Sale listings which included beautiful

flyers that we were proud to publish on the GCFM website.

**Free publicity!** If your Club isn't submitting events open to the public to be posted on the GCFM website, you are missing out on free advertising. We post your Club events in both the Garden Club Event Google Calendar and – if you've created a flyer – they get uploaded to <https://www.gcfm.org/clubevents> for all website traffic to see.

**Submit your Club events for publishing!**  
Send your flyers and/or information to [GCFMwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:GCFMwebmaster@gmail.com).

If you have any questions, GCFM and our Committees are here to assist your Garden Club. Just email or leave us a voicemail.

Email: [gardenclubfedma@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubfedma@gmail.com)  
Voice mail: 781-237-0336  
Enjoy your Summer.

*Kim Edwards  
GCFM President  
"It Takes a Village"*



## Table of Contents

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### CLUB NEWS A-Z 3-12

### FEDERATED NEWS

- GCFM Annual Meeting 13
- NGC Convention 14
- GCFM Centennial Fundraiser 15
- NEGC Upcoming Annual Meeting 15

### EDUCATION - Upcoming Classes 16

### ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- Honey Bees / Native Bees 17
- What is a Pollinator Pathway? 18

### HORTICULTURE

- The Sweet Science of Brix 19-20

### FLORAL NEWS

- Art In Bloom 21-22
- Upcoming Flower Shows 22
- Newport Flower Show 23

### FEATURES

- Her Shirley Farm 24-25
- Tab-ulation 26
- Garden To Table 27
- Book Review 28



Sarah Ribeiro  
Worcester Garden Club  
SECOND PLACE  
Class 10, "Princess and the Pea" Category  
NEWPORT FLOWER SHOW, PAGE 23



## GARDEN CLUBS AT WORK



### BOXFORD

Boxford had great town participation at Earth Day this year. Over 2 tons of textiles were collected through Helpsy. Citizens of Boxford gathered litter from their streets and enjoyed a sundae through local ice cream vendor Benson's. Face painting and a goat petting area were on hand to entertain the families. We had a great turnout and a thoroughly enjoyable day.



*BVGC Members at Earth Day*

The Boxford Village Garden Club had an overflow attendance at our General Meeting as we welcomed Marjorie Dienhart, president of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts on Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Due to the special occasion, many of our past presidents attended the meeting. Pictured is Marjorie Dienhart who posed with past presidents of the BVGC and the current president.



*Seated in front: Elaine Tarbox and Marjorie Dienhart. Standing: Kathy Kinney, Judi Eisenberg, Suzy Arsenault, Diane Gori, Marge Hildebrand and current president, Melanie Cullinane.*

### BURLINGTON

Spring is a busy time for our club. In March we had Pizza and Program night – everyone enjoyed pizza, homemade salads and desserts while being entertained by author Neal Sanders. Lots of laughs and questions asked. The club announced two new members and a record eleven pounds of tabs for the Shriners pull-tab program.



*Eleven Pounds of Pull-Tabs*

Our April Hydrangea P & Q program, held at the library, attracted 75 enthusiastic attendees, and the club gained a new member that night! Five members put together an artistic, colorful display highlighting our garden club programs and activities in the Public Library's 18 glass display cases. Patrons walking in and out of the library enjoyed the presentation for all of April.



*Library Display*

### BOXBOROUGH

On Sunday March 16, members of The Boxborough Garden Club attended a Bonsai class at Bonsai West in Littleton, MA. Members toured the gardens afterward for additional inspiration.



*Boxborough Garden Club Members at Bonsai West*

On Saturday May 10 members of the Boxborough Garden Club held their annual plant sale at the Boxborough UCC church. Despite the downpours, hardy customers and community members supported the club for a very successful sale.



*Boxborough Garden Club Plant Sale*

## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



The Bedford garden club and Massachusetts Master Gardeners Association were revitalizing memorial gardens at the Bedford VA Hospital. Eight members of our club honored their veterans by donating 10 perennial plants. The Bedford club and MMGA did a fantastic job reviving the gardens and we were glad to help in a small way.

### FALMOUTH

Falmouth Garden Club is in full swing with summer activities. Heidi DiGiovani is the 2025 recipient of the Florabunda Award



*FGC Floribunda winner Heidi DiGiovani with (L-R), Co-president, Sonia Smith, former Co-president, Rosanne Mili, and 2024 recipient, Judy Pooley.*

due to her unwavering dedication as Recording Secretary and Chairing two committees. FGC participation in the Cape Cod

Hydrangea Festival will showcase the gardens at the Museums on the Green in Falmouth that are maintained by our members. Garden tours and hydrangea themed workshops will be available on July 16 & 17. Hope to see you there.

### FRAMINGHAM

The Framingham Garden Club (FGC) ushered in new leadership at its annual meeting on May 14, 2025. Each newly appointed officer received a yellow rose and was formally entrusted with her responsibilities by a past club president. The newly installed officers include **Shannon Fitzpatrick** (president), **Lianne Manzella**



*Immediate past president Marie Giorgetti passes the gavel to incoming president Shannon Fitzpatrick*

(1st vice president), and **Pam Keeney** (recording secretary for the board). Continuing in their roles are **Kathy Hoogboom** (2nd vice president), **Cathy DeNorscia** (treasurer), **Eileen Fialkow** (recording secretary for member meetings), and **Maria Chaput** (communications secretary). To celebrate the contributions of outgoing president **Marie Giorgetti**, member **Pat Towle** crafted a lively Q&A game that tested members' knowledge of her tenure. In collaboration with City public works employees, FGC members tackled a thorough cleanup of the Memorial Building's



*FGC designer Minal Akkad demonstrates how to determine dimensions of design*

raised perennial garden beds—beds originally designed by the club. Additionally, members developed a comprehensive garden bed maintenance plan to help the City preserve these centerpiece gardens for the long term.

Design workshops led by **Ruth Evans**, Chair of the Design Committee, continued to gain popularity throughout May and June, necessitating multiple sessions to accommodate growing interest. The latest workshop, held on June 4, focused on an all-foliage design. All workshops teach design principles to both novice and seasoned floral designers.



*Game Judges*

FGC's annual plant sale delighted visitors with a whimsical fairy garden tour, captivating both young and old alike. Buyers also found an impressive selection of native perennials and grasses, a result of



## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



dedicated members cultivating more native plants for the sale.

### GROTON

The GGC storylab project was held on April 25th at the Library from 4-5 pm. Nine students participated. We were blessed with a lovely afternoon and the project took place outside in the courtyard. Lisa Murray read the book "Plant Secrets" by Emily Goodman. The book describes the stages of oak, peas, tomatoes, and roses. as each goes from seed, plant, flower, fruit. After the story, the children went to four different stations to learn about seeds.



Barbara Seeber-Wagner, Lisa Murray and Penny Hommeyer

1. Marigolds that had been planted a week apart by Claire Wilson showed the plant development from seedling to flower
2. A selection of seeds and seed pods including coneflower, acorn, maple, rudbeckia, rhododendron, pine cone, hosta, and more was presented by Penny Hommeyer for the children to

look at through magnifying glasses brought by Ann White and Charla Boles

3. Barbara Seeber - Wagner ( in a chef's outfit) talked about all phases of the following fruits and vegetables: dragon-fruit, papaya, mango, sumo orange, okra coconut and more. The children, and their parents, enjoyed tasting all the different fruits and vegetables (including pickled okra.)
4. Nancy Muller and Penny Hommeyer demonstrated how to plant peas and beans in pots and the students each took home a pot with soil and seeds to plant

Publicity chair, Harris McWade, was on hand with her husband Paul to photograph the event.

Thank you to Lisa Murray, Nancy Muller, Ann White, Charla Boles, Barbara Seeber-Wagner, Claire Wilson, and Harris McWade and Penny Hommeyer for making this project a success.

### NAUSET



Cindy Doherty, Les Lutz and Tina Williamson

Les Lutz, the Director of Horticulture and Facilities Manager at the Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich, was the guest speaker at the February Nauset Garden Club meeting. Mr. Lutz gave a history of "Heritage" with a specific focus on the breeding and propagation of different varie-

### JEANNE BERDIK WINS AWARD



Jeanne Berdik, a dedicated member of the Junior League of Pittsburgh and current resident of Orleans, MA, has been recognized as one of the distinguished recipients of [The Association of Junior Leagues International's \(AJLI\) inaugural 40 Over 40 Award](http://www.jlfi.org/).

This prestigious award celebrates outstanding Junior League Members who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, impact, and service in their careers and communities. Mrs. Berdik is being honored for her significant contributions to both Pittsburgh and Orleans, MA, including her pivotal role in establishing the Pittsburgh Children's Museum and founding the Pittsburgh Chapter of ARCS Foundation, as well as her current work with Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod and the Orleans Conservation Trust.

ties of rhododendrons.

Donna Garrabrant, Master Gardener, was the guest speaker at the Nauset Garden Club April meeting. Donna is the District Director of the Southeastern District of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts and the leader of the Master Gardener Scholarship Program. Her presentation on the historical beginnings, propagation, and care of roses was very informative and well received.



## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



*Donna Garrabrant*

May 2025 GARDEN FEST, a Nauset Garden Club / Latham Centers combined fundraiser. \$3000 was raised to help support both non-profits. Learn more about NGC's relationship with Latham Centers at [nausetgardenclub.com/learn](http://nausetgardenclub.com/learn)

### NORFOLK



*Martine Amundsen (NGC member), Jackie O'Connor (Director of Advancement, Latham Schools), Carol Zenke (NGC member), Ashley Bolger (Marketing and Social Media Specialist, Latham Schools)*

The Garden Club of Norfolk (GCN) received one of New England's top honors in wildlife gardening for its innovative and educational butterfly gardens. Vana Nespor, Director Western and Central South District, attended our March meeting and presented the Virginia Grandpre Wildlife Gardening Award. We

are honored to be recognized as the top project in Massachusetts and across New England for excellence in native plant education and public benefit.

This prestigious award, established in 2009, recognizes outstanding programs that promote the use of native plants and contribute to ecological education. GCN's three butterfly and pollinator gardens—located at H. Olive Day Elementary School, Stony Brook Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Norfolk Federated Church—were praised



*Norfolk Garden Club Members with award*

for their beauty, educational value, and ecological impact.

All three gardens are Monarch Waystations, and one also holds certification as a Butterfly Garden. Each provides a vital habitat for butterflies, including host and nectar plants essential to their life cycle.

### NORTHBOROUGH

Learning how to take better photographs of our gardens was the theme of the Northborough Garden Club's March meeting. Club member and professional photographer, Michael Roman, taught us the art and science of flower photography. To commemorate our centennial, a flower and photography show "Decades in Bloom" was held at the Northborough Free Library in April. Members created stunning floral arrangements reflecting the styles of each decade from the 1920s through the 2000s. Flowering arranging styles have certainly changed in 100 years and each one was a loving tribute to times past. A gallery of pictures taken by members was displayed along with a revolving

slideshow of people and past events. Our club received a citation from the Governor's Office, the House of Representatives, and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. We were very proud of that day, and proud of what we continue to do for the community.



*Arrangement by Parisa Freshman*

### NORWELL

The Norwell Garden Club distributed red bud saplings to Norwell third-grade students in celebration of Arbor Day. The club bulk ordered extra red bud saplings, which were sold as part of a new fundraising effort. A total of 100 saplings, offered as either bare-root or potted, sold raising \$800.

The Norwell Garden Club volunteers created floral arrangements for Norwell Council on Aging annual Mother's Day Tea. These



*Maryann Cohan, Gigi Verenis, Donna Cunio and Laurie Mott*

arrangements featured teacups and saucers placed atop inverted sherbet glasses created by member Donna Cunio. A lucky attendee from each table was able to take



## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



*Christine Josti, Laurie Mott and Lynn Hirt*

home an arrangement. The club also participated in the Norwell Grange Open day where members showed children how to sow zinnia seeds in a peat pot they could take home.

Club member Barbara Cain received the Floribunda Award in recognition of her extensive contributions to the club. A



*Barbara Cain and Susan Schulze*

long-time member, Barbara is the club's go-to expert for plant-related inquiries. She has graciously opened her garden for club tours on numerous occasions, generously shares plants her garden and

has served on various committees. This award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of her efforts.

### PLYMOUTH

Several members from America's Hometown Garden Club in Plymouth attended the wonderful Floral Design presentation by Michael Derouin on April 30, 2025. "A Prelude to GCFM's 100 Anniversary" was held at the Double Tree by Hilton in Milford and was well attended. All were captivated by Michael's design tips n expertise in floral design. It was a successful event where members



*Karen Crimmins, Margaret Brickley, Jean Nalen Dobachesky, and Melanie Galie.*

bonded over good conversation and excitement especially during the raffle of Michael's beautiful floral designs. Items from Stonewall Kitchen were also included in the raffle. Thank you GCFM for a lovely and truly enjoyable event!

### READING

On Saturday, May 17, 2025 the Reading Garden Club held its annual plant sale on the Reading Town Common. We sold annuals purchased from Mahoney's Garden Center. Members baked and we had a very profitable and delicious bake sale. The biggest attraction was the huge display of member's plants dug up and potted from our member's own gardens. All proceeds from the sale are used for our civic beautification projects in many areas of the town.



*Shown in the photo working as cashiers are past president Sue Shealy and Denise McCarthy.*

### STONEHAM

In March, the Stoneham Garden Club had another successful collection for the local food bank. The Club has a long-standing tradition of collecting donations for the local food bank twice a year.

Preparation of the Raised Bed Vegetable Gardens at the Senior Center began in April, including checking out the beds, putting in a few early seeds, and planning the regular maintenance and



*Rosalie Dougherty, SGC 2nd Vice President with Ms. Demetra Tseckare*

watering. Starting in May Club members meet weekly to maintain the Gardens. Food from the garden is donated to a local food bank.

Trisha Jenkyns PT, DPT, member of the Stoneham Garden Club, presented "Garden Body Mechanics with Learn How to Hip Hinge and More!" by at the Stoneham Annual Wellness Fair. Many people stopped by and learned how to



## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



*Ellie Denault, Pam Meroski, Trisha Keddie, Cheryl Petrola, Karen Favreau, Christine Demers, Susan Young and Laetita Won at the Tewksbury Community Pantry*



*SGC President Debbie Taylor-Smith with Incoming GCFM President Kim Edwards*

program run on State Hospital grounds was unexpectedly cut and the person who ran that program was no longer able to work there. The vegetables and plants needed for our Plant Sale and ACE committee work were starting inside. A dedicated group of club members began working the greenhouses for 7 weeks on a daily basis to successfully care for more than 1500 plants from seed through full grown beauties.



*Jayne Marquis, Debbie Michaud, Joan Hoeckele, and Ellie Denault, part of the greenhouse crew, tending ACE and Plant Sale plants*

The Club Plant Sale held on May 17<sup>th</sup> was an enormous success. The next week saw the ACE committee planting the War Memorial for Veteran's Day and creating summer containers around town.

The Garden Club was the recipient of 2 important grants – one was from the

Ames Tool Grant through the NGC and the other from the Tewksbury Congregational Church Tariela Grant fund. The tools received from the Ames Tool Grant were used to plant native plants in an area being converted to a pollinator garden.



*Ellie Denault, Bonnie Joefer and Denise Cunniff transitioning Master Park garden to a Pollinator Garden*

prevent injuries while gardening.

The Stoneham Garden Club continues to have a series of wonderful guest speakers. In March, Demetra Tseckare gave an absolutely wonderful presentation: How to Transform your Garden into a Living Landscape. In April, Christine Paxhia presented: Stop and Smell the Lilacs. In addition, we were honored to have incoming President of the GCFM, Kim Edwards and Sue Shealey, Middlesex District Director join us.

### TEWKSBURY

The Tewksbury Garden Club was busy this Spring. In addition to our usual educational and fun-filled meetings and Garden Therapy programs, the club conducted a Food Drive for the Community Food Pantry on March 28<sup>th</sup> and collected a large amount of needed food products for the clients. In April we were faced with a unique problem. Funding for a greenhouse

### WALTHAM

#### Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival

The Waltham Garden Club was delighted to again take part in this year's Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival, hosting our **Gardening for Fun** tent. Despite the heavy rain, plenty of enthusiastic children and adults stopped by to enjoy our all-free hands-on activities. Visitors planted sunflower seeds to take home, colored garden-themed art pages, chose from **hundreds of free seed packets**, and even dug up potatoes in our now nearly famous **Potato Patch activity**. It was a muddy, memorable day—proof that a little rain can't wash away the joy of gardening!

#### Waltham Garde Club's 18th Annual Plant Sale

Rain didn't stop the Waltham Garden Club from hosting their 18th Annual Plant Sale! Our dedicated members braved the weather, contributing a wide variety of plants from their own



## Clubs at Work, Cont'd



gardens to help support next year's programs and events.

Even those who couldn't donate plants found creative ways to contribute—



*Children in the Potato Patch*



*Waltham's Plant Sale*

like crafting and donating beautiful handmade tote bags that were offered for sale. Petite Mother's Day flower arrangements were scooped up and added a special touch to the sale. Visitors were delighted to discover our tent stocked with free seed packets to take home and try in their own gardens.

The day was a wonderful reminder of how vibrant our community is—united by generosity, creativity, and a shared love of gardening.

### Planting on the Common

In a spirited show of teamwork, members of the Waltham Garden Club partnered with Waltham's Consolidated

Public Works Division to plant the two large planters along Main Street beside City Hall—and did so in record time! Thanks to the many hands of our enthusiastic volunteers, the planters are now filled with a lush, vibrant display to welcome walkers, cyclists, and visitors as they approach City Hall.

A wonderful civic tradition, this project reflects our continued commitment to beautifying public spaces and nurturing community pride.



*Planting on the Common*

## Want to make a submission to the Mayflower? Here's how!

**TEXT:** Please try to keep your stories 75 words or less.

**PICTURES:** Attach image files (usually JPG's) to your email, do not embed them in your document.

**CAPTIONS:** Please provide captions for each photo you submit (describe what is going on in the photograph).

**EMAIL:** Send your story to [GCFMmayflower@gmail.com](mailto:GCFMmayflower@gmail.com)





## Laurelwood Garden Club Sponsors Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker in Leominster



Laurelwood Garden Club members  
Tisha Schiavitti and Julie Palioca



The Armed Forces, local and state officials, GCFM representatives, and Blue Star Mother-Chapter One, at the Dedication ceremony

The Laurelwood Garden Club was the sponsor for the Blue Star Mothers - Massachusetts Chapter 1 in its request to have a Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker. On May 4, 2025, a formal ceremony with all the National Garden Clubs and the GCFM requirements was held to unveil and place the Blue Star Memorial Marker on Rte. 12 near the intersection of Hamilton St., in Leominster MA.

Members from the Laurelwood Garden Club, the Blue Star Mothers Mass Chapter 1, local and state Officials and over 75 guests were in attendance including Lynn Noland, Co-Chair of the Blue Star Memorial Projects thru the Federation and Nancy Riggs, Central North District Director. This was an emotional and proud historic event for the Laurelwood Garden Club and it will be remembered for years as a tribute to the men and women in the Armed Forces who have defended the United States of America.

## Blue Star & Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program

Looking for a great 250th celebration gift to your town and club?

Why not a Blue Star memorial plaque or highway marker? These plaques and highway signs are a good way to honor all who have served in the armed forces.

For help and more information contact:

Joy DiMaggio at [GCFMbluestar@gmail.com](mailto:GCFMbluestar@gmail.com)



Blue Star Memorial Marker in Sudbury



## Lexington Field & Garden Club - SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

### Arbor Day, April 25, 2025

Every year on Arbor Day, the Lexington Field & Garden Club (LFGC) honors and remembers those who have passed away in the last year. On April 25, this year, we planted a tree in honor of five members who passed in the last year: *Kristine Burton, Pat Costello, Pauline Gardner, Greta Ljung, and Molly Nye*. This year was special with This Old House joining us for the tree planting in memory of two of their group who passed away this year. It was a sad yet joyous event with over 100 people in attendance.



*Kathy Leva, President LFGC*

### Plant Sale, May 17, 2025

Once again, the garden club put on its annual plant sale. It was held in late May and sold lots of plants – native and non-native, dug up and donated by the intrepid gardeners of the club.



*Plant Sale Work Crew*

### It Happens Here, April 25, 2025

On May 20, 2025, a TV segment about Lexington's Emery Park was produced by Breana Pitts of WBZ-TV Boston. The Lexington Field & Garden Club members included Kathy Leva, Chris Kochanski, Christina Gamota, Regina Sutton, and Gail Harris. Breana was interested in learning more about the garden club and its civic gardening efforts. Chris related her experiences as the current steward and Christina provided historical background of Emery Park. Breana helped plant new flowers with us. And we also managed to do some pruning as well. It was a wonderful and exciting experience! And it certainly promoted our garden club, its civic gardening program, and the fact that we are the oldest garden club in Massachusetts.



### LFGC Members Marched in Lexington's Semiquincentennial Parade

From its inception, one important mission of the LFGC has focused on the care and beautification of public spaces, from the Minuteman statue in the center of Lexington to traffic islands throughout the town. This work continues today.

The intrepid civic gardeners work tirelessly and joyfully to provide a valuable service to the community by supplying plant material and maintaining the landscaping for public spaces at over twenty locations.



Sporting costumes and decorations that showed bystanders their "monarch butterfly" theme, members of the Lexington Field and Garden Club proudly marched in the Patriots' Day parade to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the battle of Lexington on Saturday, April 19th.



Volunteer Frank Olson built the impressive 8 x 8 wooden butterfly float.





## Sudbury Wins Grant - Constructs Native Plant “American Revolutionary Garden” in Historic Center of Town - by Juju Lem-Pang

The Sudbury Garden Club is the proud 2025 recipient of \$2,000 from the National Garden Clubs, Plant America Community Project Grant. Their project is to design and install a native plant garden for the Sudbury community to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.

In Sudbury's historic town center, a new 1,268 square foot garden will be planted for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. It will be located in the middle of the oldest part of the town, surrounded by buildings from the 1700's.



*Cardboard layering*



*Compost and leaf mulch are added*

Progress to prepare this special garden is on schedule. Installation began on March 20th, which coincidentally was the first day of Spring. Work began at our own Heritage Park with step one and two completed. SGC club member, Heather Halsey laid out the new garden shape using rope and spray paint. Two club members Mike H, Juju L.P. and her husband Ark edged the bed preparing it for



*Ark W. Pang and Heather Halsey position an Eastern Redbud tree for planting*

the next step. Now that steps one and two are complete, the next step is a no-dig sheet mulching garden technique that involves layering organic materials, first with cardboard followed by 9 yards of compost and then with 9 yards of leaf mulch over the compost to smother weeds and build soil.

On May 7, 2025, Sudbury Garden Club Civic Beautification members, Massachusetts Master Gardeners, and volunteers started the installation of tree and shrubs in the garden. One “Forest Pansy” Eastern Redbud tree, three Oakleaf hydrangea Ruby slippers, and three Fothergilla Gardenia were planted. The next installation will be the various shade loving perennials. This



*Members of the Sudbury Garden Club and volunteers*

will take place in the beginning of June.



On June 4, 2025, the Sudbury Garden Club's Civic Beautification members and Massachusetts Master Gardeners planted the final installation of shade loving perennials to this garden. A total of 45 plants were installed.

Remaining items on the wish list are to plant signs that identify each of the plants and a sign to commemorate this garden as the Sudbury Garden Club 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. When this is achieved, the garden will be complete. This garden would not be achieved without the guidance of Heather Halsey's garden design.



*The project finished*

We are appreciative for the following organizations to make this garden possible:

- National Garden Clubs Inc.
- Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts
- Massachusetts Master Gardeners
- Black Earth Compost
- Town of Sudbury DPW
- Town of Sudbury Park & Recreation
- Heather Halsey, Heather Garden Design
- Sustainable Sudbury
- Sudbury Historical Commission
- Sudbury Garden Club (Civic Beautification Committee)





## *Celebrating Tradition & New Beginnings—Highlights From the 98th Annual GCFM Meeting*

### *by Christina Nikitas*

The 98th Annual Meeting of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (GCFM) took place on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at the picturesque Danversport venue in Danvers Massachusetts. With over 200 attendees gathered seaside, the event was a vibrant celebration of tradition, commitment and prominent forward momentum.



*51st GCFM President Marjorie Dienhart makes opening remarks*

Among the distinguished guests was Polly Brooks, the newly appointed Director of the New England Garden Clubs. Adding to the day's significance, five former GCFM Presidents, Diane Bullock, Leslie Frost, Suzanne McCance and Jill Malcolm, were also in attendance honoring the legacy of the GCFM leadership.



*Audience members in the Danversport ballroom*

This year's meeting also marked the biennial installation of officers. The newly elected Executive Board will serve through 2027 guiding the Federation toward its centennial celebration. The afternoon included the ceremonial pass-

ing of the traditional gemstone encrusted gold pin from outgoing President Marjorie Dienhart to incoming President Kim Edwards, who delivered an inspiring inaugural speech.

#### **2025–2027 GCFM Executive Officers:**

- President: Kim Edwards
- First Vice President: Susan MacPherson
- Second Vice President: Linda Thomson-Clem
- Recording Secretary: Juju Lem-Pang
- Treasurer: Maryalice Kenney



*Proven Winners' Natalie Carmolli was the featured speaker*

#### **2025–2027 GCFM District Directors:**

- Central North: Lorraine Lee, Lancaster Garden Club
- Cranberry: Joan Marie Driscoll, Canton Garden Club
- Northern: Jane Jeffers, West Newbury Garden Club
- Southeastern: Judy Morgan, Wareham Garden Club
- South Shore: Terry Harrison, Weymouth Garden Club
- Western & Central South: Jill Dore, Academy Garden Club of Lenox

*Note: The Metro, Middlesex, and North-eastern District Director positions are currently open.*

Outgoing President Marjorie Dienhart delivered heartfelt Presidential Citations to a few exceptional members in recognition of their talent, dedication and service:



*Cindora Goldberg Award Winner LuBeth Kuemmerle's Floral Design*

- Betsy Howard – for her behind-the-scenes excellence as GCFM Technology Webmaster
- Karen Brockelbank – for her creative leadership across multiple publications and design roles
- Ann Webster – for her years of valued Board service, including as Treasurer and Budget/Finance Chair
- Beate Bolen – for her exceptional stewardship as Treasurer and financial operations leader



*New GCFM President Kim Edwards, NEGC Director Polly Brooks, and former GCFM President Marjorie Dienhart*



**GCFM Annual Meeting, Cont'd***Kim Edwards gives inaugural speech*

The keynote speaker Natalie Carmolli, public relations specialist at Spring Meadow Nursery, Inc./Proven Winners, Grand Haven, Michigan, captivated the audience with intriguing information and insights on the world of hydrangeas. During lunch attendees also enjoyed browsing a vibrant selection of items showcased by gardening related vendors, enjoying shopping and socializing.

The afternoon featured the presentation of numerous awards by Awards Committee Chairperson Lisa Murray with support of committee member Donna Garbrant. Gail Hubacker announced the Flower Show Awards, and the most prestigious Cindora Goldberg Award for excellence in floral design was presented by Minal Akkad to LuBeth Kuemmerle.



### PARLIAMENTARIAN WANTED

If interested, please contact  
[gardenclubfedma@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubfedma@gmail.com)

781-237-0336

**NGC Annual Convention, Charleston, South Carolina, May 19-23, 2025, by Marjorie Dienhart**

At the 94th National Garden Clubs Convention this year, Brenda Moore gave a heartfelt and warm farewell speech recalling her experiences over the past 2 years. We were fortunate to have Brenda visit both New England Regional Conferences twice: first in October 2023 in Plymouth, MA and again in October 2024 in Warwick, Rhode Island.

As is tradition and protocol, Donna Donnelly was installed as the new NGC President in Charleston, SC. Donna is continuing Brenda's theme of Plant America. Her vision is to eventually extend the Plant America Grant program to all gardeners nationwide, supporting gardening efforts in every community. In addition to this, every state will have the wonderful opportunity to join the celebration of America's 250th birthday! The project will invite all to plant red, white and blue across the nation to showcase our dedication to Plant America.



*New NGC President Donna Donnelly, GCFM 1st Vice President Kim Edwards, outgoing NGC President Brenda Moore, and GCFM*

Representing Massachusetts at the convention were: Marjorie Dienhart, GCFM President, Kim Edwards, GCFM 1st VP, Suzanne McCance, former GCFM President, and Bonnie Dinneen, President of the Curbs & Cobblestones Garden Club in Lowell.



*Floral arrangement by  
Donna Donnelly*



*Floral arrangement by  
Brenda Moore*

## GCFM Fundraiser, April 30



The GCFM Centennial Fundraiser was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Milton on Wednesday April 30.

The guest speaker, Michael Derouin, amazed audiences with his stunning floral creations.

Micheal demonstrated his creative DIY design skills from the vessel to floral arrangement using the same flora and color with five arrangements that varied in size and shape.

Audience members were inspired to use the knowledge they had acquired in creating arrangements of their own.



## NEGC Annual Meeting October 14-15, 2025



The New England Garden Clubs Annual Meeting will be held at The Sheraton Hartford South Hotel, 100 Capitol Boulevard Rocky Hill, CT on October 14-15, 2025.

NEGC is currently running a **PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST**, "We Grow Gardens and Gardeners". The deadline for submissions is August 31. There are six categories in this competition—full details can be found in their newsletter, [here](#).

Finalists images will be displayed during this meeting at The Sheraton Hartford South Hotel.

NEGC is also hosting a **PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS** over ZOOM with the renowned Lisa Cuchera on August 14. All skills levels welcome, all camera models welcome, including cell phones. Sign up before August 12 by clicking [here](#), cost is non refundable \$5.00.



## GCFM HELP WANTED

### Get to Know the People in Your Village

All garden club members are invited to learn more about the GCFM Village. We have committees, schools, flower shows, FUN, and lots more to share.

There are many ways you can participate —

- be part of a committee (Awards, Scholarships, Youth activities, Yearbook, or others)
- attend a Fall Coffee Meeting and meet the Officers
- coordinate a district event for nearby clubs
- participate in a GCFM School or learn more about the Councils

Our mission is dedicated to assisting you with education and appreciation of Horticulture, Landscape and Floral Design, Gardening and Environmental Concerns.

To find out more -

- check out [www.gcfm.org](http://www.gcfm.org)
- email [gardenclubfedma@gmail.com](mailto:gardenclubfedma@gmail.com)
- call us at 781-237-0336



Be a part of an organization that loves gardening and wants you to be part of our village and grow with us.



# EDUCATION



## NEGC PHOTOGRAPHY ZOOM WORKSHOP AUGUST 14

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER - AUGUST 12**

Mastering Composition, Exposure and Depth with your Camera and Smart phone with Lisa Cuchara




## NEGC PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST "We Grow Gardens & Gardeners"

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER AUGUST 31**

Finalists' images will be displayed at the Annual Meeting of The New England Garden Clubs, Inc. October 14-15, 2025




## GCFM FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL COURSE III - October 15-18, 2025

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER - SEPTEMBER 23**

Education Division and Youth/Sponsored Group Divisions; Judging etiquette/ethics; Combination plantings; Creative designs.






# ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

with Maria Bartlett

## How Do Honey Bees Impact Native Bee Populations?

Many people have heard about the decline of honey bees and wondered what could be done to help. Many suburban residents, and even some living in urban areas, have taken up bee keeping as a way to help. But is that the best thing to do... are honey bees hurting our native bee populations?

producing honey! And, they are fascinating creatures and serve as an engaging hobby for many.

There was a time in the early 2000s when Colony Collapse Disease threatened many honey bee hives and jeopardized the \$18B contribution they made to US agriculture. However,

**populations have rebounded** and at this time, honey bee populations are at adequate levels for the role they play in pollinating crops.

What about our native bees? Of the 20,000 species of native bees worldwide, there are 3600 in North America. **Many of these are endangered or in decline** due to loss of habitat, widespread pesticide use (primarily neonicotinoids), and climate change challenges. Unlike honey bees, native bees are solitary or live in small colonies,

fly no more than 300 yards for food, and live in the ground or tree cavities. Unlike honey bees that forage on many different plants, many native bees are specialists that are supported by only a particular species of native plant.

So, what do these differences mean for our bees and can they coexist and where do they each belong? Honey bees are huge feeders: 1 honey bee hive can extract the same amount of pollen as 100,000 native bees! This is why honey bees are so useful as pollinators in agricultural settings. However, in natural settings and suburban gardens, honey bees can easily out-compete native bees leading to native bee decline **unless there is an overwhelming abundance of flowering**



*Carpenter bee*

**plants** so there is enough for all. Realistically, this means **honey bees are best in agricultural settings**. If managed for honey and/or as a hobby outside of an agricultural setting, the hive density in any one area should be very low so as not to challenge/outcompete the native bee populations. What is an ideal density? Buglife UK suggests 1 honey bee hive needs 5 acres of flowering habitat. Xerces suggests that a honey bee hive in natural areas should be more than 2 miles from at risk-native bees. Low density hive placement ideally could be a community discussion in order to not outcompete native bees.

In addition to providing ample flowering resources, it is also important to note the **critical importance of reducing the use of pesticides in settings foraged by honey and native bees!** Neonicotinoids are especially harmful to all bees and contribute to much bee decline.

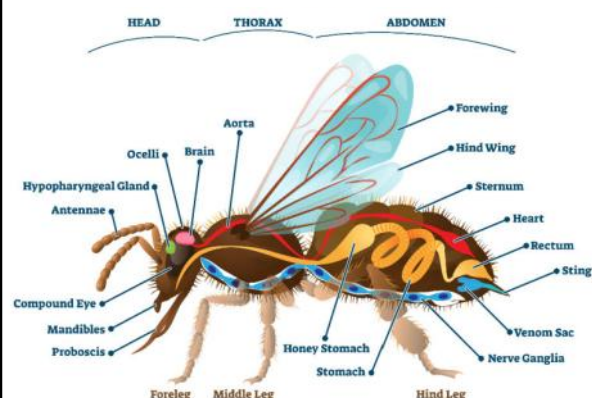
Resources:

<https://xerces.org/bug-banter/saving-bees-why-honey-bees-are-not-answer>

<https://xerces.org/blog/want-to-save-bees-focus-on-habitat-not-honey-bees>

Video presentation by Xerces staff:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XMgphEP1M>

### ANATOMY OF A HONEY BEE



To answer that question it is important to understand that both honey bees and native bees play critical environmental roles but roles that are very different: **honey bees serve primarily an agricultural purpose while native bees enhance biodiversity and conserve healthy ecosystems.**

As many of us know, honey bees are not native to North America but were brought over from Europe with the colonists in the 1620s. They live socially in large hives, can fly long distances, and need a lot of flowering plants to secure pollen and nectar. Today, their large hive colonies are used primarily for, and are essential to, US agriculture, especially for the large mono crops like almonds in California and corn/soybeans across the Midwest. They are also important for

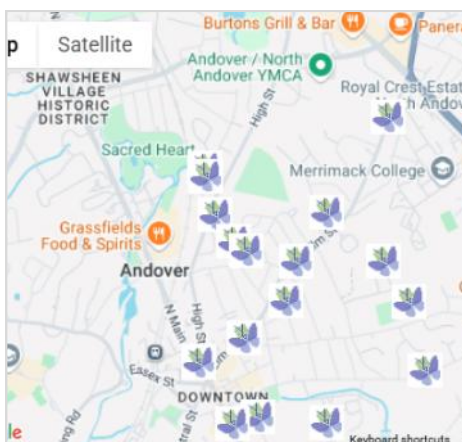


## What is a Pollinator Pathway? By Karen Brockelbank

You may have heard the term “Pollinator Pathway” over the past few years. But what is it?

The [Pollinator Pathway Organization](#) is a 501(c)(3) run by volunteers. Their main goal is to encourage groups across North America to “create continuous corridors of habitat that support pollinator populations by providing food, shelter, and nesting sites. This is achieved by encouraging the planting of native, pollinator-friendly plants and avoiding pesticides and herbicides.”

Currently, there are registered Pollinator Pathways in 20 American states plus the Canadian province of Ontario. Within Massachusetts, there are 19 cities and towns with a web page displaying their Pollinator Pathways, plus an entire community of Cape Cod as the 20<sup>th</sup> registered location listing 15 gardens on the peninsula.



Andover's Pollinator Pathway Google Map

Creating a Pollinator Pathway is accomplished by individual garden clubs, or groups of volunteers within a town. In the Town of Andover, for example, there are no less than three garden clubs: The Andover Garden Club, The Spade and Trowel Garden Club of Andover and the Village Garden Club of Andover, but the Andover Pollinator Pathway was started by an small group that had nothing to do with any of these garden clubs!

In the summer of 2022, several friends in Andover who were interested in ecological gardening practices joined forces and connected with garden clubs, conserva-



Andover's Playstead Intergenerational Garden

tion groups, the senior center, and youth groups, etc. about environmental topics. Eventually they decided that they wanted to exist as an official “group”, and after evaluating existing groups they chose Pollinator Pathways because they were willing to host a web page for free, had an interactive Google map for registered properties, a national map, and also sold lawn medallions.

Once they were organized as Andover's Pollinator Pathway, they reached out within their community groups in town for partnerships and endorsements, connecting with Weston Nurseries in nearby Hopkinton to supply native plants for a plant kit sale. They arranged with the nursery to drop off the plants at the Andover DPW site for pick-up. This, explained one of the group's leaders, Suzanne Korschun, was a great way to support their local nursery while bringing 600 native plants into Andover homeowners' yards.

The newly formed group also connected with their town in the following ways:

- Applied for and received a grant from the Andover Garden Club
- Worked the Andover Day town fair with tables, distributed handouts
- Worked with the trustees of the Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS)
- Created new relationships by working with the Seed Library
- Worked with the Andover Public Library to get speakers

- Had tables at fairs and other local events
- Worked with a high school intern for a couple of years
- Made garden coaching visits to homes, distributed lists of plants from Xerxes
- Email a newsletter to their community that lists free webinars, events, hikes, volunteer maintenance, etc.

The [Andover Pollinator Pathway](#) lists five goals for their membership:

- Plant native plants, including trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers.
- Reduce the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides in favor of safer alternatives.
- Control invasive plants
- Reduce lawn size in favor of native plantings
- Leave leaves in the landscape in the fall

They currently have three public gardens, over 200 private citizens on their email list, and more than 50 homeowner gardens listed on the Pollinator Pathway map.

It took the Andover Pollinator Pathway crew about a year to get organized and registered. It was such a success that Suzanne even accepts speaking engagements on the subject (email her [here](#) for more info).

All it takes is time and effort, there is no actual cost (unless you want to buy little medallions for your lawn, and they are pretty affordable.) Sounds like everybody benefits – especially the pollinators.



### Pollinator Pathway

#### SOME QUICK FACTS:

- **Getting involved in the Pollinator Pathway program is FREE**
- **Getting your native plant garden certified is self-reported and FREE**
- **Getting your garden posted on the Pollinator Pathway map is FREE**



## Brix, Bugs, & Beneficial Bacteria: A Sweet Science for Healthier Plants

The sun is shining, the flowers are blooming...ahhh, life is sweet!

It turns out that sweetness has a real impact on gardening.

More and more gardeners are adding molasses to their watering and fertilizing routines—and not just because it smells like cookies. It's all about **sugar** and how it helps plants grow stronger and more pest-resistant.

Let's dig in (garden pun fully intended).

### What's Brix Got to Do With It?

Back in the 1800s, a German mathematician named Adolf Ferdinand Wenceslaus Brix came up with a way to measure and record sugar concentration in liquids. In

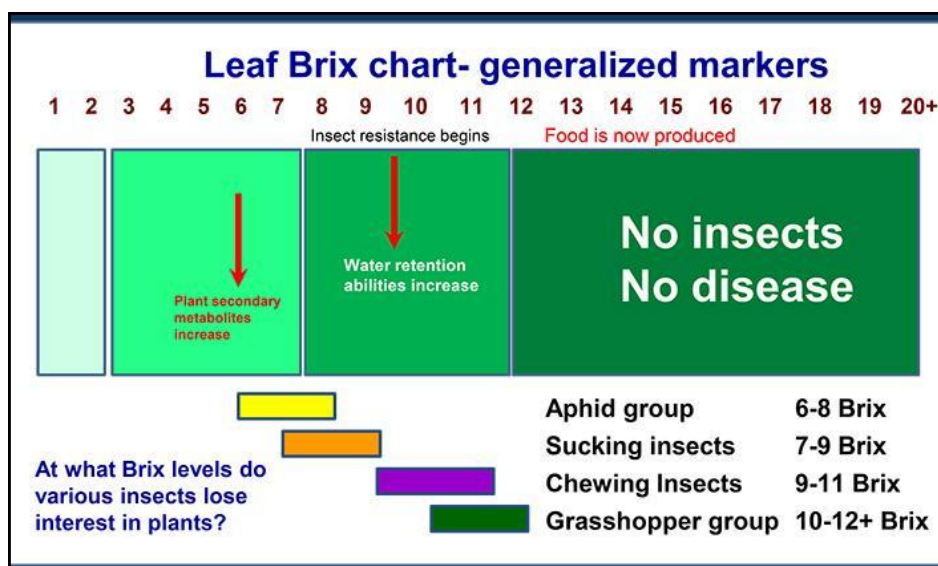
**Adolf Brix**



**Born** Adolf Ferdinand Wenceslaus Brix  
20 February 1798  
Wesel, Kingdom of Prussia

**Died** 14 February 1870 (aged 71)  
German

**Occupation(s)** Mathematician, engineer



agriculture, farmers refer to degrees Brix ( $^{\circ}\text{Bx}$ ) when measuring sugar levels in plants and soil. Farmers who want sweeter fruits and vegetables, aim for higher Brix levels. Recently, flower farmers and home gardeners have hopped on the bandwagon – *err, wheelbarrow*. It seems that higher Brix levels are also beneficial when growing flowers. Why? Because higher sugar levels in plants and soil can mean fewer pests and healthier soil.

### Bugs Don't Like Dessert?

Strangely enough, the sweeter the plant, the less bugs seem to want it. Maybe it's the taste, maybe it's the denser, tougher plant tissue that comes with high sugar content—but leaf-chewing insects such as aphids, mites, and spiders avoid high-Brix plants.

### Sweet Soil = Happy Microbes = Thriving Plants

Higher Brix levels are also linked to better nutrient absorption in plants. And the key players behind that? Beneficial microbes like bacteria and fungi.

These underground allies are finally getting the credit they deserve. That's why more gardeners are switching to no-till methods and gentler practices that protect this hidden ecosystem.

Microbes in your soil feed off sugar. Think about baking bread. Bakers add sugar to the yeast to help it multiply so their bread will rise. Gardeners can add sugar to their soil to help the microbes multiply so their plants will thrive.

### Symbiosis is so sweet!

Plants make sugar during photosynthesis. Excess sugar moves down into their roots and is released into the soil as root exudates. These sugary snacks feed the microbes, which in turn break down nutrients and make them easier for the plant to absorb.

### Enter: Molasses

Molasses is packed with sugar. It also offers a few trace minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium, but in horticultural use it primarily is considered a soil amendment or indirect fertilizer. Direct fertilizers feed plants. Molasses is used to enrich the soil by feeding the microbes in the soil and helping them multiply.

It is a beautiful trade: plants give sugar to microbes via root exudates and microbes give nutrients to plants. Feed the microbes, and they'll feed your plants. Healthier soil, happier plants. Everyone wins.



## Horticulture Cont'd

### I'm Giving It a Try

This season, I'm adding molasses to my regular watering and fertilizing routine. I may not be able to eat as many doughnuts as I used to, but I'm happy to indulge my *soil's* sweet tooth.

Here's to a sweet, strong, beautiful summer garden!

### How to Use Molasses in the Garden

#### Measurements

Depends on your plant and its stage of growth, but a good general rule:  
**2 tablespoons of molasses per gallon of water**, applied every two weeks.

#### How to Use It

- **Soil Drench:** Dissolve molasses in water and pour at the base of the plant.
- **Foliar Spray:** Same mixture, sprayed directly on leaves.
- **Compost Tea:** Add molasses to your compost brew for a microbial boost.
- **Compost Pile:** Molasses can help speed up decomposition.
- **Dry Application:** Dried molasses can be mixed directly into soil ([here's a 4-lb bag on Amazon](#)).



#### Pro Tip: Dissolving Molasses

- Warm a bit of water and stir in the molasses until dissolved, then add it to a watering can filled with cool water.
- Or skip the heat—just shake molasses and water in a jar until well mixed.

#### Important

Use **unsulphured** molasses. Sulphur (a preservative) can disrupt soil pH and harm microbes. Organic molasses is your best bet if you're gardening organically.

### Before You Pour...

-  Water first – Dry soil can become hydrophobic and won't absorb the mixture properly.
-  Pollinator-safe – Molasses won't



## Brix


### What is Brix?

The degree Brix ("Bx) is the most common scale for measuring dissolved or soluble solids. It is used to express the concentration (% weight) or density of sugar in aqueous solutions in a wide variety of quality control operations including food and other industries.

Each degree brix (°1) is equivalent to 1% sugar concentration when measured at 20°C. The Brix value of a given product can be directly obtained by using a device called refractometer or hydrometer. For example, when using a refractometer, 10°Bx are equal to 10g of sugar in 100g of solution/sample. In most industries, the sugar content is usually expressed as sucrose.



hurt bees, butterflies, or even the "bad" bugs. It just makes your plants less tasty to them.

-  Want to geek out? Grab a refractometer (they're inexpensive online) to measure your plants' Brix level. Just mash a leaf and test the juice. Aim for 12° Brix or higher.

### How Long Until You See Results?

Give it time! Most gardeners notice improvements within 4–6 weeks of consistent use.

### Check out these links!



**MICRO  
FLOWER FARM**

[Micro Flower Farm BRIX Instagram](#)

[Micro Flower Farm BRIX Facebook](#)



**MI GARDENER**

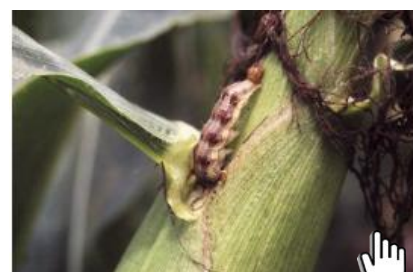
[How to Fertilize Your Garden With Molasses](#)



**MR. GROW IT**

[Molasses For Plants! How To Feed & When](#)

## Understanding Brix and How it Affects Plants and Pests - Joe Gardener



### Digital Brix Refractometer

#### How to use?



01 Turn on the device, drip pure water into the prism dish.



02 Short press and then hold the button until "Zeroing" display. Then data show 0.00 display means calibration finish.



03 Drip sample liquid into the prism dish, and place enough liquid to cover the prism dish.



04 Short press to measure, result will display.

# Floral News

## Art in Bloom, May 2-4, 2025

### By Shannon Fitzpatrick

More than 40 members of GCFM, along with their assistants, showcased their floral artistry at the Museum of Fine Arts' 49th annual *Art in Bloom* celebration, titled *Petals and Masterpieces*. Each designer was randomly paired with an artwork from the museum's diverse collection and tasked with creating an interpretive floral arrangement inspired by their assigned piece. The MFA reported that over 20,000 visitors attended the three-day event, held from May 2 to May 4, 2025.



Figure 2: Photographs © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Figure 1: FGC designers Nancy Martin and Shannon Fitzpatrick with their Pollock-inspired design. Photo by unknown on Shannon's phone

Framingham Garden Club designers Nancy Martin and Shannon Fitzpatrick faced an



Figure 3 Photo by Shannon Fitzpatrick

exciting challenge when paired with Jackson Pollock's abstract piece, *The Troubled Queen*. After much experimentation, their final arrangement featured peacock-blue dried bird of

paradise leaves, abstracted red Gerbera daisies, manipulated palm fronds and flax leaves, pincushion protea, chartreuse brain celosia, and other floral elements inspired by Pollock's color palette.

Also representing the Framingham Garden Club—but on behalf of the Judges Council—Ruth Evans and Betsy Szymczak interpreted a 9th Century A.D. *Chinese Arched Lintel with Buddhist Triad, Disciples, and Guardian*



Figure 4 Ruth and Betsy's design, photo by Shannon Fitzpatrick

*Deities with Engraved Decoration.* Their arrangement featured allium, pincushion protea, calla lily, poppy seed heads, and manipulated steel grass to reflect the spherical head and halo motifs of the ancient sculpture. The team cited their greatest challenge as adhering to a 14-inch height limit.

All of the designs by all of the clubs were stunning. Seen here are just a few.



## Art in Bloom, Cont'd



Figure 5: Provisional Garden Club of Weston – “Passage of the Delaware,” photo by Shannon Fitzpatrick



Figure 6: Hills Garden Club of Wellesley – “Guanyin Bodhisattva of Compassion,” featuring amaranth, Bells of Ireland, spray roses, scabiosa, and more. Figures 3-7 Photos by Shannon Fitzpatrick



Figure 7: Garden Club of Back Bay “Voices of the Past”



Figure 8: Acton Garden Club's "Christ in Majesty"

## MFA Boston Art in Bloom

### DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING FLOWER SHOWS!

#### Southeast District Flower Show, JULY 23-25, 2025

Heritage Museums & Gardens, Sandwich, MA

[WEBSITE](#)

[SCHEDULE](#)



#### South Shore District Flower Show, AUGUST 15-19, 2025

Marshfield Fairgrounds, Marshfield, MA

[WEBSITE](#)

[SCHEDULE](#)



#### New England Fall Flower Show, SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2025

The Garden at Elm Bank, Wellesley, MA

[WEBSITE](#)

[SCHEDULE](#)





## Newport Flower Show June 20-22, 2025

The Newport Flower Show, "A Floral Fair", was held at the Rosecliff Mansion over the weekend of June 20-22.

Inside the elegant rooms of Rosecliff, guests were transported back to the Gilded Age, honoring the legacy of Theresa Fair Oelrichs, the mansion's original owner. Exhibitors in Floral Design and Botanical Arts drew inspiration from her 1913 fairy tale-themed dinner, creating captivating displays of imagination and elegance.

While efforts were made by arrangers from all over the mid-Atlantic, the following creations by Massachusetts floral arrangers caught the eye.



*Pat Fleming, Hamilton-Wenham Garden Club  
Tinkerbell Class, Honorable Mention*



*Thu-Hang Tran, Milton Garden Club  
The Pied Piper of Hamelin, 1st Place*



*Vana Nespor, Springfield Garden Club  
The Pied Piper of Hamelin, 2nd Place*

**Congratulations to all the Massachusetts winners (this is an incomplete list - we could not fit all the winners on this page).**

We all look forward to next year's show in Newport!



*Andrea Little, Westborough Garden Club  
Red Riding Hood Class, 3rd Place*



*Sally Jablonski, Worcester Garden Club  
Red Riding Hood Class, Honble. Mention*



*Heidi Coffin, Stoneham Garden Club  
Thumbelina Class, Third Place*



## Her Shirley Farm Landscape Project, Part Thirteen - Juliet Silveri

*The Porcupine is Defeated, Wildlife Hedgery, the Japanese Holly Hedges, and Peonies*

Spring 2025 has brought success to my allée with a replacement 2-2.5 caliper Green Mountain Sugar Maple. A porcupine had chewed the bark all the way around the trunk on the previous maple, almost two years ago. Last spring I realized the tree was dead, and that the porcupine was the culprit. My new tree fortunately matches the height of the trees in the allée that had been planted in May of 2022. I did not expect this. I had assumed it would be shorter and look silly, so this is happy news.



***The Green Mountain sugar maple replacement fits perfectly in the allée.***

In March and April, after the harsh cold and winds of winter, my Japanese hollies (Ilex crenata 'green lustre') looked dreadfully dead with many brown leaves due to winter burn, although I had sprayed them with Wilt-Pruf in December. I expected to have to replace many, but they have since dropped all their leaves and regrown new ones, which proves I had built them a strong healthy root system that carried them through the drought of fall 2024. Out of 64 I have only had to replace 3 thus far. I am not sure how to protect them going forward, other than doing the Wilt-Pruf dance with the weather gods every year. One can wrap them in burlap, but since I garden for beauty all year round and winter-burlap-wrapped plants are hideous, that is out of the question.

In my wildlife hedge, or bio-hedge news: As shown in the photo, the trees and shrubs are all doing well—and the 'winter king' green



***Ilex crenata 'green lustre' regrowing after winter burn damage***

hawthorn (Crataegus viridis) trees were covered with white flowers, which are turning into red berries for the birds. I expect quite a red berry show this winter. The birds like to let the berries go through a freezing and thawing period before devouring all of them in January. The 'raspberry lemonade' ninebarks have developed many raspberry-colored flowers for the pollinators. The Lindera benzoin, northern spicebushes, had an early display of bright yellow flowers. I don't see any signs of berries, though, and don't know whether my four dioecious plants were all male, all female, or a mix of both. I understand it is difficult for the growers to know this as well.



***This young wildlife hedge behind the allée of maples supports wildlife and pleases the eye.***



***In the wildlife hedge is 'Raspberry lemonade' ninebark with blooms and bright green foliage***



***In the wildlife hedge is Northern Spicebush blooming in May***

A couple of notable June bloomers:



***Carolina Sweetshrub in its fourth growing season***

In my side lawn not far from my bedroom window Carolina sweetshrub or allspice (Calycanthus 'venus'), flaunts blooms that

## Her Shirley Farm, Cont'd

smell like honeydew melon or kiwi fruit. This sprawling old-fashioned charmer doesn't flop, and doesn't exceed around 6 feet. It blooms later than most shrubs, sometime in June in Zone 6. Unfortunately, I don't see many of these around these parts. I have grown it in various locations for years, and it is an easy-going shrub.

The peonies in the photo give me a sentimental feeling, since they came from my sister's house many years ago. I had given up on them blooming again and had almost forgotten about them, since they were then transplanted into pots, then into my Shirley gardens four years ago. Then this year--the outstanding hot pink in the peonies against their green foliage is a color combination to be sought after.

An update on my back woods area's new plantings:

- Although the area is covered with poi-



***My peonies' stunning hot-pink-against-green display***

son ivy, I have managed to grow two compact winterberry hollies (ilex verticillata) 'Mr. Poppins' and 'Berry Poppins', and a serviceberry shrub (Amelanchier canadensis) in that area. They made it through the drought in the fall of their first year, and alt-

hough not showy at this time, are doing well. I am slowly removing poison ivy and bittersweet in this area and replacing those with tough native shrubs and perennials.

- The swamp azalea 'lemon drop' (azalea viscosum) has all but perished due to root competition from trees, although I watered it a lot last year. I will have to replace that with something more drought tolerant, and perhaps with shallower roots, like a heuchera.

In the next installation I hope to have plans for the winding paths I have written of in previous installments, so please accompany me to view their shape and the enticing planned assortment of trees and shrubs.

Now it's time for summer.



## Is Your Club Into Conservation? Get Noticed!

There is a new feature on the Environmental Awareness page for clubs who do conservation work - like Harwich. Just send in a picture of your club at work with a paragraph or two, and your hard work will be posted on the GCFM website in our new ***"Spotlight on Garden Club Conservation Efforts"***.

Join clubs like Harwich and send in your stories and photographs of environmental projects such as efforts to eliminate invasive plants and preserve native species. Does your club have programs to educate members and/or the public about pollinators, and organic ways to treat pests? Do you bare-root your plants before potting them up for your yearly Plant Sale? Do you work with a seed library? Are you planting trees on Arbor Day? We want to hear about it! Send in your information to [gcfmwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:gcfmwebmaster@gmail.com).





## ***“Tab-ulation” 2025, By Margot Eckert, Springfield Garden Club***

The gardeners of Massachusetts continue to “pull through” with an astounding number of pull tabs donated in 2024 and so far in 2025.

While the Mayflower Newsletter usually features information about plants, soils, and all things natural, this article is decidedly metallic in nature – specifically aluminum. Let me explain. The Springfield Garden Club collects aluminum pull tabs from all the Garden Club Federation member organizations throughout the Commonwealth for donating to the Shriners Children’s Hospital in Springfield. The local chapter of The Ladies Oriental Shrine of Helma Court No. 64 oversees the recycling tabs project for the Hospital.

For those of you new to the Pull-Tab Project, here is some background. Shriners Hospitals for Children, located throughout North America, have been serving children with complex and specialized healthcare



*Pop off the tab before you toss the can in your recycle bin*

needs since 1922. These include orthopedic and neuromuscular conditions and burn injuries to name just a few. As part of that commitment, all care and services are provided regardless of a family's ability to pay or insurance status. The Shriners Hospital in Springfield specializes in pediatric orthopedic care. To accomplish its mis-

sion, the Shriners’ network has fundraisers and accepts donations. Aluminum pull-tabs are among the donations accepted.



The process is simple: tabs from all the donating organizations are collected in huge bins at the Hospital and periodically weighed and picked up by an aluminum recycling company. Based on the weight of the tabs times the prevailing value of the aluminum on that day, a check is sent to Shriners to fulfill one of its many needs. Over the past 30 years, the proceeds of the tabs have helped to purchase customized wheelchairs, balance pads, a computerized pressure mapping system, and supplies for the Child Life Department.



*Shriners Hospital for Children Springfield, MA*

How can a tiny, almost weightless, pull tab be worth the effort? First, it does not take much effort to save pull tabs, and they add up quickly. Just pull the tabs and collect them in whatever container you choose. Take them to a meeting, and the Federation oversees a periodic collection. Representatives from the Springfield Garden Club then willingly transport the boxes and bags back to Springfield which I collect in my basement until I have a “weigh day” on my bathroom scale, and load up the back of my car to transport the tabs to Shriners. Remember, you can still redeem the can for a nickel at your local recycler even after the tab is removed. I don’t collect the returnable cans and bottles themselves, because they take up too much space, attract bugs, and would require a storage facility. Tabs are light, clean, and easy to collect! Tabs also represent the complete re-use of a product. This speaks to gardeners who take to heart the “3R” message to reduce, re-use and recycle!

With my strong son, Nate, I have delivered **58.5 pounds of tabs in 2024** and **24 pounds so far in 2025**. This means about **104,500 tabs were donated by our gardeners**.

Thank you garden clubbers from all over Massachusetts! Think of each tab as a small act of kindness which helps to recycle a valuable metal and helps a child in need at Shriners Hospital. Big things can be accomplished with the tiny tabs when we all “pull” together.

For more information:  
[www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/locations/new-england](http://www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/locations/new-england)

# Garden to Table

*Recipes from our garden club members' back yards*

## Rhubarb & Apple Cobbler

*By Alice Yabe, Boxford Village Garden Club*

### Filling:

1 ½ lb. rhubarb, cut into ½" pieces  
(approx. 4-5 cups)  
2 apples, peeled and cut into ½" pieces  
1 cup sugar  
3 Tbsp. cornstarch  
½ tsp. grated fresh ginger  
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice  
½ tsp. salt

### Topping:

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
¼ cup almond flour  
¼ cup sugar  
1 ¾ tsp. baking powder  
¾ tsp. salt  
6 tbsp. unsalted chilled butter  
¾ cup heavy cream  
¼ tsp. almond extract  
Sliced almonds and raw or organic sugar for sprinkling

**Filling:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In large bowl, combine rhubarb, apples, sugar, cornstarch, ginger, lemon juice and salt. Transfer to a 9 x 13" baking dish.

**Topping:** Whisk together both flours, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add butter by cutting small pieces into bowl then incorporating it using your fingers until pea sized. Add cream and almond extract; stir with fork until mixture comes together. Scatter small clumps over fruit in baking dish. Brush with cream. Sprinkle almonds and raw sugar over top.

**Bake** until cobbler is bubbling in center and topping is golden brown, approx. 40 min. Let cool.

*Fresh rhubarb is in season right now*



A beautiful table setting by Alice Yabe



Rhubarb



Apple



Ginger



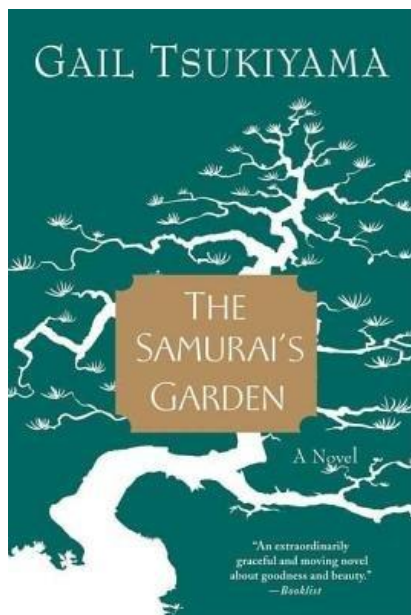
Lemon

Would you like to submit a recipe? Contact [GCFMmayflower@gmail.com](mailto:GCFMmayflower@gmail.com) to learn the guidelines.



## Book Review

**The Samurai's Garden, Gail Tsukiyama**  
**St. Martin's Griffin, 1994**



The Samurai's Garden written in 1994 by Gail Tsukiyama is a beautiful story about two wonderful people, their different but exquisite gardens, and a world torn apart in Japan and China in the latter part of the 1930s.

The author was born in San Francisco. Her mother was from Hong Kong, and her father came from Hawaii. She is the author of 7 novels, her newest *The Color of Air* was published in July of 2020.

The story unfolds as 20 year old Stephen, son of a Chinese businessman is sent by his Hong Kong family to seaside Tarumi, Japan to recuperate from tuberculosis. He is to stay at the summer home of his late grandfather under the

watchful eye of the caretaker, a Japanese gardener named Matsu. As Stephen slowly begins to understand Matsu's quiet ways, he observes the garden. Entering by the bamboo gate, he inhales the sweetness of the summer blossoms of the silk tree, sees an oval shaped pond with fish, a wooden bridge arched across its width. That is Matsu's garden and it is so lovely that Stephen paints it.

Matsu's friend Sachi lives in a village on the mountainside. Her garden is in stark contrast to Matsu's. It is a "hardscape" as we might describe it today. It consists of stones and gravel, and each day she rakes through the stones creating ripples. She can create many different patterns as she so chooses. It too is a beautiful and calming place.

The story of Matsu and Sachi is one of tremendous love and respect, and young Stephen becomes close to them both. The war between China and Japan, the Rape of Nanking is a sad part of the story, but cannot touch the beauty of the relationship between these individuals.

I highly recommend this story of a love and two gardens, available in CWMARS or from your favorite bookstore.

*Phyllis Foley*  
*Greenleaf Garden Club*

## A Note From The Editor

Friends,

Time has brought another administration to GCFM, and another fine leader has taken up the helm to guide us.

While you are waiting for the next exciting new programs to be unveiled, please take a look at some of GCFM's past presidents on our history page at [www.gcfm.org/history](http://www.gcfm.org/history). There you will learn all about the great leaders of our past, and get prepared to celebrate 100 years of GCFM's history in 2027 when we have our Centennial Celebration.

We're starting to plan the party now - see you there!



Karen Brockelbank

[gcfmmayflower@gmail.com](mailto:gcfmmayflower@gmail.com)



### A "HOW-TO" FOR SENDING IN YOUR SUBMISSIONS

**DEADLINE:** The next *Mayflower* Issue deadline for submissions is **September 10.**

**TEXT:** Please try to keep your stories 75 words or less.

**PICTURES:** Attach image files (usually JPG's) to your email, do not embed them in your document.

**CAPTIONS:** Please provide captions for each photo you submit.

SEND IN YOUR NEWSWORTHY ITEMS TO  
[gcfmmayflower@gmail.com](mailto:gcfmmayflower@gmail.com).

**All photographs in this newsletter have been supplied courtesy of each Garden Club submitting the information**