

# NEEDHAM GARDEN CLUB

*Annual Report of  
Officers and Standing Committees*



*2021-2022*

## OFFICERS

### ***Tri-Presidents Debbie Wentworth, Jane Lischewski and Martha Schleck:***

The Club Presidents conducted seven Board meetings via Zoom. In addition, we led our general meetings in September, October, November, January, February and April. Some of these meetings were held in the library's Community Room as in the past, but surges in the COVID-19 pandemic required that some be held over Zoom due to restrictions at the library. The efforts of the Program Committee as we adjusted to the varying degrees of COVID during the year were much appreciated.

The Club was represented by its Presidents at the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts [GCFM] events, including the Fall Coffee held at Elm Bank in September and a Board meeting held in March via ZOOM. The Presidents will also attend the GCFM's Annual Meeting in June. These meetings are opportunities for our clubs to share ideas, ask questions and "meet & greet" other clubs' representatives.

In addition to the above, the Presidents selected a local high school student to receive our club scholarship for 2022. Thirteen students with an interest in horticulture, environmental science and conservation submitted applications for consideration. The NGC scholarship will be presented to a student with plans to pursue a career in horticulture.

This year was successful due to the efforts of the committee chairs, committee members and all members of the club. The Annual Meeting and Luncheon, held at the Needham Golf Club, provided an opportunity to celebrate our successes, vote on the slate of Board members for the coming term and look forward to next year with our new Co-President, Gail Davis.

### ***Treasurer Nancy Agler:***

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, another year has passed with very few in-person events so there has been very little accounting activity this fiscal year. Each month the treasurer report was sent to every board member for the monthly meeting. The 2022-2023 budget meeting has not occurred yet but the next budget most likely will remain close to the previous year's budget except for an addition to the Donations line. The yearbook showed the club donating to the Charles River Watershed Association, yet the club had not donated to the organization in many years. After a vote, the Board agreed to begin that practice once again.

### ***Corresponding Secretary Bonnie Waters:***

The Corresponding Secretary sent a total of 14 cards this year as follows: 8 Get Well, 2 Thinking of you, 3 Sympathy and 1 Thank You. In memory of former NGC president Fran Phillips, the book *The Northeast Native Plant Primer: 235 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden* by Uli Lorimer, Director of Horticulture at Native Plant Trust, was donated to the Needham Public Library. A book plate was designed in Fran's memory.

Because all Board of Directors' meetings were held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers to host and co-host each meeting were not solicited.

### ***Recording Secretary Jane Brand:***

The Recording Secretary prepared minutes for nine Board Meetings held during the course of the program year. The Recording Secretary also prepared minutes for the business portion of those

general club meetings at which business was conducted. Due to changes in programming necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, not all general meeting minutes included a business component, as would normally be the case. The Board Meeting minutes were emailed to the Board members following the meetings, and both Board and General Meeting minutes were made available to members on the club's website. Reports were collected from all officers and committee chairs/co-chairs concerning activities during the program year. These reports were compiled into the Annual Report, which is posted to the club's website in May.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### ***Communications - Publicity:***

#### ***Chair Gail Davis***

The Needham Times, Wicked Local, and the Hometown Weekly consistently published press releases promoting Garden Club community activities and those programs and/or events which were open to the public. Posts about Club activities appeared on the Facebook pages of The Needham Garden Club, Town of Needham, Needham Perennial Share, and Town of Wellesley. Email flyers were created to share with friends, and the Needham Electronic Sign was used, to promote the Plant Sale and the Wreath and Arrangement Sale.

### ***Communications - Social Media:***

#### ***Chair Lyn Jekowsky***

The club's Facebook page continues to serve as a way of sharing information, including photos, of meetings, events and other functions with club members and the community at large. Despite restrictions on in-person meetings due to the coronavirus pandemic, we were able to share news of some of our virtual programming this year. The page is continually updated, and members are encouraged to share the page with friends.

### ***Communications – Website:***

#### ***Chair Nancy Agler***

The NGC website has stayed up to date with any and all club information. Essentially, the Yearbook is online and updated in the password protected Members Only section. In addition, any meetings and events held are documented along with photos. This year, due to COVID-19, the meetings have been mainly through Zoom so there hasn't been as much new information this year as in the past. Nevertheless, members are encouraged to visit all of the pages, especially the Horticultural Hints.

### ***Communications - Yearbook:***

#### ***Chair Trish Cruickshank***

The 2021-2022 Needham Garden Club Yearbook was compiled during the summer of 2021. Due to the continuing restrictions and uncertainties posed by the coronavirus pandemic, decisions concerning virtual vs. in-person meetings and scheduling of speakers presented challenges to presenting the calendar of upcoming events in the yearbook. To the extent possible and as known at the time of publication, the yearbook included information regarding education, events, and

meetings organized by the club, as well as any sponsored by the organizations with which the club is affiliated, such as the Metro District and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. It also included contact information for the District, Regional and National Garden Club leaders, and updated information for all Needham Garden Club members for the 2021-2022 year. Information concerning the leadership and committee assignments also was updated.

***Community Outreach:***

***Co-Chairs Cathie Cummings and Lynne Jones***

At the end of May we planted our newly purchased urns with a variety of summer annuals & greens. In the Fall, Winter & Spring, the plants were changed to reflect the season. Club volunteers kept them watered and fresh from May through November.

A Spring clean-up and fertilization of the garden at Noyes Park took place, and three native columbine plants were added. Members helped to keep the garden vibrant by watering, weeding and deadheading over the Summer and Fall. This Spring we continue with efforts to introduce more native plants. To that end, a redesign of the garden is in progress.

This past year we were unable to resume our Garden Therapy program due to COVID-19 concerns. We plan to work with the area nursing homes to start this program again in the Fall of 2022.

In August we were able to revive our long tradition of placing flowers or a plant in the reception area of the library. Each week a club member generously contributed a plant or flower arrangement that was placed on the coffee table located there. The committee coordinates the schedule of volunteers for this program.

***Flower Arranging:***

***Co-Chairs Carole Grosberg and Lyn Jekowsky***

In September, Co-Chairs Carole Grosberg and Lyn Jekowsky provided a large floral arrangement for the retirement reception for the Needham Public Library's director.

In October, the committee organized a virtual club mixer, "A Halloween Table-Scape Extravaganza." Members signed up to participate and were assigned teams via email, and met to plan their creations in member's homes. The presentation was well attended via Zoom and there were many laughs as we shared our spooky creations. COVID-19 protocols were maintained.

***Horticulture:***

***Co-Chairs Trish Cruickshank and Terry Luskin***

The Horticulture Committee spent most of this year yet again on COVID-19 hiatus. In-person workshops and day trips could not be planned because of MA coronavirus limits on gatherings. Hopes remain that the level of virus in 2022-2023 will allow us to plan some outdoor horticultural adventures together.

In September, the Horticulture Committee offered members a choice of three amaryllis cultivars from Van Engelen Nursery. Members ordered 57 bulbs at wholesale pricing plus modest shipping charges, and the bulbs arrived in November.

Last's year's Spring Plant Sale generated a profit of \$2,557 toward the club's high school scholarship, with members contributing much time, plant material, and gardening enthusiasm in support of the Sale. In April 2022, the Container Workshop was again held at Lyn Jekowsky's back garden, with many hands lightening the work. Plans are in motion for the 2022 Spring Plant Sale on

May 21, 2022.

***Hospitality:***

***Co-Chairs Cathy Flaherty and Anne Brain***

In a typical year, the Hospitality Committee recruits/coordinates members to provide baked goods and/or fruit snacks and beverages for the monthly club meetings, and also makes food and drink arrangements for certain members-only events during the course of the year. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, no food or beverages were provided at in-person monthly meetings. The committee was able to coordinate food and beverages for the Wreath and Arrangement Sale workshop, taking extra precautions to have food portions individually wrapped. In addition, the Committee made arrangements for the Annual Meeting luncheon at the Needham Golf Club, an event which had had to be canceled the past two years due to the pandemic. Its duties also include cataloguing and ordering hospitality supplies, but there has been little need for this in the past year given the limited use of such materials during the pandemic.

***Membership:***

***Co-Chairs Fawn Hurwitz and Eileen Mecagni***

The Needham Garden Club welcomed seven new members during this crazy 2021-2022 year. All new members except one received an apron and yearbook; that new member will receive her apron and yearbook at the next in-person meeting.

Our membership consists of 17 associate members and 61 active members, for a total of 78 members. This figure is up from last year. Unfortunately, we lost long-time member Sally Burns. We look forward to increasing membership with in-person meetings next year.

***Newsletter:***

***Co-Editors Carol Alper and Amy Cicala***

The two co-chairs, Amy Cicala and Carol Alper, along with committee member, Jane Brand, have issued Needham Garden Club newsletters every other month. Jane Lischewski has graciously distributed it to the membership via email. The Club is finally beginning to emerge from the pandemic year, and thanks to the stories, photos, and news items for the newsletter submitted by the various board and club members, we have been able to produce a document to keep our members informed about the goings-on, both virtual and in person.

***Nominating:***

***Co-Chairs Nancy Agler and Anne Carlson***

Planning for the 2022-2023 year has been very successful for the Nominating Committee. Due to the COVID pandemic and all committee members and chairs agreeing to stay in their roles, it was hard to predict how this year of volunteering would play out. Much to our surprise and delight, the nominating slate filled out very nicely and our members were most generous with their willingness to be leaders and workers in this fun and rewarding club.

Some of the changes for the upcoming year include Gail Davis as Co-President, Mary Toran as Recording Secretary, Ellen Barnes joining Cathie Cummings as Community Outreach Co-Chair, Diana Conroy and Lynne Braley serving as Membership Co-Chairs, Martha Schleck and Nancy Gallerani heading up Programs, Nancy Agler and Jane Lischewski leading the Nominating

Committee, and Anne Carlson taking charge of Publicity. Some chairs and officers will remain in place.

***Programming:***

***Co-Chairs Pat Hession and Bonnie Waters***

The club began its season in September with an in-person floral design program presented by Kathryn Leva who taught us how to express ourselves through the art of flowers. The holiday program, 'Season's Greening with a Floral Twist' was presented by Karen Gorton. Her designs used various greens, ribbon, faux fruit, and natural materials. In January, due to another pandemic surge, the meeting was held via Zoom, but Betsy Szymczak delighted us all with a program on begonias. We learned about these versatile plants that can be both houseplants and bedding plants in the summer. Dan Jaffe Wilder also presented via Zoom in February with a program on 'Native Plants in New England.' He explained what is native to our region and how we can build a rich and beautiful ecosystem in our yards. The Tri-Club meeting was held at Temple Beth Shalom on March 8. New Leaf Flores demonstrated floral arrangements for personal and large-scale events. In April, for our final program of the season, Chuck Doughty, Program Director of Landscape, Grounds and Arboretum at Northeastern University and co-owner of Cochato Nursery in Holbrook, spoke on shade plant gardening.

***Ways and Means:***

***Tri-Chairs Diana Conroy, Fabienne Madsen and Nancy Yablonski***

The Ways and Means Committee held the club's annual Wreath Sale at the Congregational Church of Needham on Saturday, December 4, 2021. Being unsure of how robust the interest from the public would be to come indoors for the sale during the COVID-19 pandemic, we intentionally ordered fewer wreaths than in previous years. On Friday, December 3, members participated in making wreaths and arrangements for sale to the public, following which those members who chose to participate in the Make-Your-Own-Wreath workshop prepared their own creations. In compliance with COVID guidance, members were masked, and eating was confined to a separate room. The social and collegial aspect of this event was noted by many and was considered to have great value, irrespective of the final sale results. The activities during the sale caused the fire alarm to sound, so the sale was temporarily evacuated, and the fire department came to assure that all was well. The sale resumed with good cheer and no customers abandoned their pursuit of wreaths and arrangements.

The club's net profit was \$1,685.74 after expenses of \$2,766.26, which was under our budget. All factors considered, this was felt to be a favorable number.