



Needham Garden Club Newsletter

January/February 2022

Letter from the Tri-Presidents

We hope you all enjoyed the holidays with your families. Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah! And Happy 2022! We made it through another tough year dealing with COVID and all the restrictions that came along with it. Despite these challenges, we persevered. Thank you to all of you for your continued support and commitment to our club.

Our November program was a presentation by Karen Gorton. She shared various festive flower arrangements that we hope helped sparked some new creations from all of us.

Our Wreath and Arrangement Sale was back in all its glory this year. Our members gathered to decorate wreaths, make swags and create arrangements. Not only did we raise money for our programs and activities throughout the year, but we had an opportunity for plenty of fellowship -- especially needed after the past year of COVID isolation. Thank you to all that contributed their talents, energy and friendship. A big "Thanks!" to Diana, Fabienne and Nancy and the Ways and Means Committee for all their planning and hard work.

We would be very remiss if we weren't to give a big shout-out to the Festival of Trees Committee, who conceptualized a Scandinavian-themed tree. Isabell Wells' son-in-law designed and constructed a wooden tree, and Isabell, Caryl Johnson, Diana Conroy, Monica Foley, Nancy Yablonski and Jane Brand created hand-crafted ornaments and a tree skirt, and

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Upcoming Calendar

Tuesday, January 4 at 9:30 a.m. ~
Board Meeting, over Zoom

Tuesday, January 18 at 9:30 a.m. ~
"A Begonia for Any Season" with Betsy Szymczak at Needham Public Library Community Room (program starts at 10:00)

Thursday, February 10 ~
Deadline for submissions for March/April newsletter

Tuesday, February 15 at 9:30 a.m. ~
"Native Plants in New England" with Dan Jaffe Wilder at Needham Public Library Community Room (program starts at 10:00)



Festival
Of
Trees



Letter from Tri-Presidents, continued ...

prepared a variety of “Hygge” gifts for under the tree. Their work is much appreciated.

In 2022 we will look forward to our January meeting, “A Begonia for any Season,” with Susan Szymczak. Begonias can beautify our homes and gardens. We are anxious to learn more.

Native Plants have a special place in our garden planning. At our February meeting, Dan Jaffe Wilder will tell us which plants we should incorporate into our landscape. He will also share tips on how to foster rich and beautiful ecosystems.

As you can see, 2022 will be an exciting year. Keep up to date on all the latest news and information on our many activities by checking our website and our Facebook page – and don’t forget to “like” our posts! Your Tri-Presidents wish you a happy and healthy 2022 as we launch into the festivities of this next year.

Jane Lischewski, Martha Schleck & Debbie Wentworth

Program Committee

‘A Begonia for Any Season’ will be presented by Betsy Szymczak on January 18th at the Needham Library Community Room. We will learn how to grow begonias both inside and out. In winter, they are wonderful houseplants and make a wonderful addition to a terrarium. In the spring and summer, begonias are great bedding and container garden plants. Betsy will bring some begonias for an opportunity drawing.

On February 15th, Dan Jaffe will present ‘Native Plants in New England,’ where we will learn what plants are native, what we should be planting, and what techniques we can incorporate to build rich ecosystems.

Both the January and February meetings will begin after the conclusion of our business meetings, which start at 9:30 a.m.

Pat Hession & Bonnie Waters, Co-Chairs

Membership Committee

We are pleased to welcome five new members:

Rebecca (Becky) Levanduski;
Nancy Winbury;
Karen Johnson;
Joyce LaFaver;
and former member
Karen Shapiro, who has rejoined the club.

Please offer a warm welcome to Becky, Nancy, Karen, Joyce, and Karen when you see them!

Fawn Hurwitz & Eileen Mecagni, Co-Chairs



Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has begun to plan for the 2022-2023 year. As a committee we will be meeting soon to plan for the next year of leadership. Without your help and your willingness to step up and serve where needed, this club cannot survive.

We are an all-volunteer club and all need to do their part.

To do your part we need all members to look at the email that was sent to you with the preference sheet attached. Please make a real effort to serve where you can.

Your quick response will be very much appreciated so our committee can begin the work of making our next year a fantastic one.

We assign all members a spot that they have shown interest in. We do our best to place each member on the committees of their liking. But ... we can only do this if you respond.

You all should have received the preference sheets by now. If you have not, then please contact: Nancy at niagler@aol.com or Anne at Awcarlson@aol.com

Thank you.

Nancy Agler & Anne Carlson, Co-Chairs

Newsletter Committee

Please send your announcements, photos and ideas for the newsletter to Carol Alper (carol.alper25@gmail.com) or Amy Cicala (amycicala293@gmail.com).

The deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is ***February 10, 2022.***

Carol Alper & Amy Cicala, Co-Editors

Fabienne Madsen's Recipe for English Toffee Bars

Fabienne's English Toffee Bars were a big hit at the Wreath and Arrangement Sale Workshop. Fabienne has graciously agreed to share her recipe, below.

English Toffee Bars

Bake in 350 degree oven for 20-25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of butter
- 1 cup of packed brown sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups of flour
- 6 oz of chocolate bits
- 1 cup of walnuts - optional
- Dust with powdered sugar



Mix all ingredients except for chocolate and nuts. Form a dough. Spread in a 13 x 9 inch pan. Bake. Sprinkle chocolate. Wait until melted and spread all over the top of the bars. Cut while warm.

Enjoy!

Ways and Means Committee

The Tri-Chairs of the Ways and Means Committee would like to thank the membership for its robust help with putting on our first Wreath and Arrangement Sale in two years. We had a lovely turn-out of both members and the public, and a great deal of our inventory sold. The minister of the Congregational Church very graciously allowed us to sell the remainder in the church library the following day and was kind enough to send out a note about it to the congregation on a Saturday evening. We sold all but three items on that day, leaving very few items needing a home.

In a first for the garden club, thanks to a rascally glue gun, the fire alarm went off during the sale, resulting in the Tri-Chairs evacuating the building until the fire department arrived. Thankfully all was well, no one was hurt, and all the customers returned to the sale and went home with both a wreath, swag or arrangement -- and a good story to tell! The firefighters were good natured enough to allow two of their brethren to pose with us. Not your average Wreath and Arrangement Group Photo!

On a more serious note, a couple came by and bought a wreath, and told me their daughter was the grateful recipient of the club's High School scholarship in 1995. She majored in geology and is now employed as a mapper of environmental clean-up sites using her geology and environmental science background. Her parents try faithfully to come every year to support our sale as a way of saying thank you. It was a good reminder of how important the Wreath and Arrangement Sale is, and how our little club has an impact on our community in many, many ways.

Thank you again for all your support surrounding the Wreath Sale.

***Diana Conroy, Fabienne Madsen &
Nancy Yablonski,
Ways and Means Committee Tri-Chairs***



Community Outreach

Our committee coordinates various community activities with participation from the general membership.

Each week a club member generously contributes a plant or arrangement for the reception area of the library. The plants & flowers are a welcoming sight and are appreciated by both the library patrons and the staff. Many thanks to all who have helped in this activity. We will be sending an email in January with a request for future volunteer opportunities.

The flowers and greens that we planted in the urns outside of the library in May had an amazingly long life. We did some minor trimming in October and added some Fall touches. In December, we removed the remaining plants and replaced them with winter greens, decorative branches, and faux berries. The urns and the arrangements seem to be secure, but if anyone notices anything amiss, please contact Lynne or Cathie.

We are planning on starting a review of the garden in Noyes Park in March. We especially want to replace the Spirea with native plants. If you are interested in being part of this project, please contact Cathie or Lynne.

We are sorry to say that our Garden Therapy program is still on hold due to COVID concerns. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Again, thank you to all who have helped over the past year with the various community programs sponsored by our club.

Lynne Jones & Cathie Cummings, Co-Chairs

From the Corresponding Secretary



We encourage all Needham Garden Club members to let Bonnie Waters know of any news that would warrant a card from the Club. Whether illness, death, house move or a celebratory event, please send an email to Bonnie at bonniewaters@comcast.net, or call her at 617-512-1404. These cards are greatly appreciated.

Communications Committee

Have you checked out the club's social media lately? The website and the club's Facebook page are continually updated. If you have gardening tips or photos to share, please send them to Nancy Agler at niagler@aol.com. And keep sending photos of club events to Lyn Jekowsky at lynjekowsky@comcast.net. Lyn will post them on the club's Facebook page.

Horticulture news.

January and February might be the most important months for your garden. Take inventory of your gardens/yard. With many of the leaves gone, you can literally “see” the elements in each section of the garden. Taking a “walk about” allows you to identify plants and evaluate size, structure, balance, changes in form, sun/shade transitions, etc. Once you have this picture in your head (or on paper) you can develop a plan to implement any changes.

A few winter tips and reminders:

If you want to try winter gardening with milk bottle mini green houses, here’s a site from the San Francisco Gate magazine.

<https://www.gardengatemagazine.com/articles/how-to/start-seeds/sow-seeds-outdoors-in-winter/>

A word about pruning Hydrangeas:

Hydrangeas that produce blooms on **old wood**, generally begin blooming in early summer and cease blooming by midsummer. Shrubs that produce blooms on **new wood** generally start blooming later than old-growth bloomers because they must set their buds the same year they bloom. New-wood bloomers will begin to flower in midsummer and continue until frost.

Hydrangeas that bloom on new wood takes all the guess-work out of pruning. These shrubs are cut all the way back to the soil level in late winter or early spring. This is called ‘hard pruning’ and enables the shrub to remain healthy, producing more and larger blooms each year.

If your new-wood shrub is old and large, it may be subject to ‘flopping’ each year if given a hard pruning. Flopping occurs when the new, tender branches become wet from rain or watering and are unable to remain upright under the weight of the water and blooms. To prevent flopping, space your plants properly and prune new-wood hydrangeas to 18 inches high in late winter or early spring. This will form a network of old, woody branches that will support the new growth, preventing flopping.

Bananas

Bananas are a super food, and the peels are loaded with nutrients that your vegetation craves. First and foremost of these is, of course, potassium. **Potassium** greatly helps your plant’s overall strength. It makes the cell walls more robust on the fruit. It also helps generate stronger plant stems and promotes healthy root development. **Phosphorus** has the next highest mineral concentration in banana peels. That’s great, because your garden loves phosphorus! Phosphorus is vital for vigorous plants. It aids germination, healthy roots, and strengthening production of blooms, pollen, and fruits. Not to be forgotten, peels also contain calcium and magnesium. These are important in your garden’s healthy development. Banana peels do NOT contain nitrogen. But the calcium helps make nutrients in the soil, such as nitrogen, more available to plants. Throwing a few banana peels around your spring flowering perennials will give them a great natural boost.

Wreath & Arrangement Workshop and Sale



***November's Program
Karen Gorton presents "Season's Greening with a Floral Twist"***

