

# *The Perennial*



2015-2016  
Issue 4: December

Website:  
[ArlingtonGarden.org](http://ArlingtonGarden.org)

The weather continued to be unusually warm although predications are for a wintry mix this week and dropping temperatures to begin the new year. Cherry blossoms, primroses, and hellebores have all been seen flowering. This created stress for our plants as they are confused by the spring-like temperatures. Check our "Gardening Tips" for more information.

## *Upcoming Programs:*

Daytime Meeting – January 13 – 10:30  
St. John's Episcopal Church

**The Ins and Outs of Recycling** –Charlotte Milan,  
Recycling Coordinator, Department of Public  
Works, Town of Arlington  
Get the latest information on recycling  
guidelines and future trends for Arlington.



## **Evening Meetings**

The evening meetings will be on hiatus until March 31 when the Day and Evening Groups will have a joint evening program with nationally known garden designer, Kerry Ann Mendez. More information will follow in future issues.

### *December Holiday Meeting:*

What a thoroughly enjoyable event! The food was delicious, the auction enthusiastic, and the arrangements spectacular. Many thanks to Nancy Pike, Carol Nahigian, Nancie Richardson, Patsy Kraemer, Fritz Galley, and Katherine Krister along with all the members who donated items for the auction, bid on those items (sight unseen), and helped with set-up and clean-up. A total of \$552.00 was raised to support the club and its community projects.



The Garden Therapy team leads  
a holiday sing along



Members have a chance to chat  
following lunch

### *Garden Therapy:*

From Ginger Tower and Donna McGowan

The residents decorated Christmas greens in red containers that were arranged by Beverly Miller. They added in pinecones and berries to personalize their arrangements. Each was beautiful and unique. A snack of holiday cupcakes, provided by Diane Bedo, and a resounding song fest capped off the day's activities.

### *Garden Tips:*

From Juliette Avots comes this suggestion for a homemade and less toxic insecticide for your houseplants:

Mix 1 tablespoon of mild detergent into 1 quart of water, pour it into a spray bottle and voila: You have insecticidal soap that reportedly works as well as commercial varieties. Spraying the mixture on a houseplant, with special attention to the undersides of the leaves, where some pest species tend to hide, smothers and kills most insects. Insects with waxy coverings may be a little more difficult to exterminate. Adding 1 tablespoon of canola oil to the soap-and-water mixture turns it into what is called horticultural oil. The oil helps the pesticide cling to the plant and to the insects longer for maximum effect. <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/home-remedies-controlling-indoor-plant-pests-71835.html>

Additional ideas at <http://www.todayshomeowner.com/how-to-make-homemade-insecticidal-soap-for-plants/>

From Weston Nurseries:

“So how will this bizarre weather impact your trees and plants come spring? And is there anything we need to do to protect our gardens once the inevitable cold snap comes again?

Typically trees & shrubs tend to put on buds late in the season, when they have the energy reserves to put into prepping for next year's growth. Once that's done, they slip into the slow dormancy of autumn. Over winter a tough outer cap protects the delicate green leaves and budding blooms beneath and protects them from ice and snow. As long as those buds don't open and unfurl (known as “breaking bud” in nursery lingo), those little sprouts will stay safe, and the gradual increase in soil and air temps near the equinox will prompt them to blossom at the correct time. When it comes to trees and shrubs budding out too soon there is not a lot we can do. If they break open and are literally “nipped in the bud” by snow or cold, the young leaves will be damaged. Most likely it won't kill the tree, but the spring foliage and blooms will be somewhat lackluster. It's also a waste of the precious energy they put into creating buds last year, which will have to be made up for in Spring. For smaller specimens you can apply Wilt-Pruf to prevent dessication by cold winter winds, and wrap them in burlap to create a wind barrier and provide a little insulation. Next year give the affected plants extra care and attention and help them to recover by watering them well and applying fertilizer. For perennials, it's best to let things run their course and let them have their faux-Spring celebration. They'll quiet down again once it gets properly cold, and in the meantime a light application of leaf mulch and compost will keep their roots insulated from the approaching cold. You might lose some specimens, but things will eventually balance out. Our best advice, come springtime take extra care and be sure to water and fertilize. ”

### *Elm Bank Trip:*

Thanks to Emily Forshay-Crowley for organizing a delightful trip to the Mass Horticultural Society's Festival of trees.



## Invasives Corner:

From Mary Stack

Because they are able to withstand harsh urban conditions, Norway maple trees (*Acer platanoides*) were once planted abundantly as street trees. They are now classified as invasive in Massachusetts. The trees have moved into urban, forested areas and forest edges where they crowd out other trees, especially Sugar maples. They have dense canopies which block sunlight, preventing understory growth. Their thick, shallow root system takes up water and releases allelopathic chemicals which inhibit the growth of other plants. Because they produce leaves and seeds earlier than most other trees, they get a jump start in reproducing.

Norway maples make up about forty percent of the street trees in Arlington. The town is now replacing lost trees with other species; but because of budget cuts, more trees are lost than can be replaced. Residents can request and pay for replacement trees which the DPW will plant for free. Among the suggested replacement trees are : October Glory Red Maple, Thornless Honey Locust, American Linden. For more info and advise about town trees go to :<http://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/public-works/trees/recommended-trees>

Marjorie Cavin forwarded an article from the Advocate (December 17, 2015) on this topic where it was noted that trees reduce noise, heating and cooling costs, and increase property values. If your request for a tree is granted, your assistance in watering the new tree will be necessary.



Norway Maple, leaves and keys



American linden  
(*Tilia Americana*)



Red Maple  
(*Acer rubrum*)





### *Web-site Changes Coming:*

Sally Naish and Juliette Avots are exploring changing our website support from Google to WordPress. It is hoped that this would become the major source of information to our members. For example, members might receive an email letting them know that the newsletter is available but rather than using an attachment, they would go to the website to view or download the Perennial. Some other proposed changes include the possibility of a drop-down menu, a more attractive first page with information about the club and how to join, a membership application and a “clickable” calendar. A “Members Only” area might also be included. It is also important that the website be engaging for people who are considering joining or are seeking information about the club and its activities.

### *Thank You!*

Many thanks to everyone who sent in articles to be included in the newsletter and to Fritz Galley and Flo Dunlop for their photos of club events. Please continue to send along your suggestions, gardening information and photos.

### *Using Old Christmas Trees:*

These suggestions come from WGBH's [This Old House](#).

\*Keep the tree upright in its stand or leaning against a tree trunk and it becomes a shelter for birds.

\*Trim off the boughs and use them to mulch your perennials.



*Best wishes for a happy 2016 and all the joy that gardening brings!*