

The Perennial



2016-2017

Issue 6: February

Website:

ArlingtonGarden.org

I'm sure we're all enjoying this spring-like weather but it may not be the best for our plants. Last year, peach trees and hydrangeas pushed out their buds only to have them frozen when temperatures plummeted. Our spring bulbs generally require up to 15 weeks of temperatures between 35 and 45 degrees before they can sprout successfully. They will only bloom if they have had the proper chilling. These unusual temperatures may become the new norm as we experience climate change. If you haven't had a chance to read Mary Stack's article from last month on climate change, check it out.

March Program: March 8 at 10:30

St. John's Episcopal Church, 74 Pleasant St., Arlington, MA



Welcome Spring Flowers! Mary Huntoon, an accredited National Garden Club Master Judge Flower Show School Instructor in Design. She will create several designs for our homes. At the end of her presentation, we will hold a raffle for the arrangements.

Hospitality – Nancy Pike and Carol Nahigian

Our two "bag-lunch" meetings were held in January and February, with desserts and drinks provided by board members. March will see the return of another wonderful home-made luncheon.

Books in Bloom – Sally Naish and Patsy Kraemer

Be sure to mark the date, **Friday, March 10**. Tickets are available from Patsy, Emily Snyder, the Book Rack, the Robbins Library and the Fox Library, and online at [Eventbrite](#).

We've had a great response from Club members and friends as we prepare for this event; we expect about 20 floral arrangements, and all slots for help on the night have been filled. Many thanks to all those who have volunteered.

Now we need help from everyone in promoting the event: buy tickets, tell all your friends and family, spread the word far and wide. All our efforts will be for naught, if we don't sell tickets! If you see somewhere that lacks a flyer, please print one from the attachment at the end of the newsletter and post it or contact Patsy or Sally for a copy. Let's make this a sell-out event again.

Nominating Committee – Janet Pagliuca, chair

Joining Janet on the committee are Kathy Morello and Irene MacKinnon. Should you be asked, please consider serving in one of the open positions. Thanks to Dorothy Mallam who has agreed to serve as Hospitality co-chair next year.

Garden Therapy Group – Barbara Neenan and Robin Watson

A Valentine Garden Therapy program was held at the Park Avenue Health Center on February 6, 2017. A record 31 residents participated. Charleen Donahue created the craft - a votive candle holder painted pink or red with a flickering candle inside and Valentine stickers for residents to attach around the outside. Donna McGowan made pretty Valentine cupcakes with pink sprinkles. Kathy Reeder played the piano and enthusiastic residents sang Valentine songs and "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" as the Red Sox equipment headed for Florida and the TV celebrated the Patriot's Super Bowl win.



Tours – Emily Forshay-Crowley

Plans are moving forward for a tour of favorite trees in Arlington with the Tree Warden or with members of the Arlington Tree Committee for late spring. More information to follow.

Environmental Corner – Mary Stack

GMO (genetically modified organisms) are plants, animals or microorganisms that have been genetically altered in laboratories by the insertion of genes from the DNA of an unrelated organism. They are used in medical research, drug production and agriculture. Of concern to most people is their use in agriculture.

Most GMO crops are modified to increase their tolerance of herbicides and their ability to produce natural pesticides. GMO crops are widely used in the US and Canada. They are banned in Europe. Close to 90% of US crops of corn, soy and sugar beets are genetically modified. Since most processed foods contain one or more of these ingredients, they are prevalent in the American diet.

There is a lot of controversy about GMO foods. How do they affect our health? Do they promote the overuse of harmful herbicide? Can their use cause the development of super weeds or bugs? Will they permanently alter the genetics of our basic food crops?

The majority of scientists believe GMOs are safe. They believe them necessary to produce more food for the increasing world population. Researchers hope that genetically modifying crops will help us deal with climate change. Opponents counter that much of the research being done is sponsored by companies that produce genetically modified seeds.

Opponents think they encourage overuse of herbicides. They fear that since GMOs are patented, companies can monopolize seed production. Pollen from them can contaminate non-GMO crops. Some point to increases in food allergies as evidence of health problems. Many opponents of GMOs want clear labeling of ingredients, so consumers can make informed choices

Congress recently passed legislation requiring labeling of foods containing GMOs. The bill directs USDA to determine what constitutes a GMO and to decide what types of labels will be required. There are some loopholes in the bill and many opponents of GMOs don't think it is comprehensive enough.

Many of the questions and worries about GMO will only be answered by the passage of time and additional research and evaluation.

In the meantime, home gardeners have little to worry about as far as their own vegetable crops are concerned. GMO seeds are expensive to produce and only available to commercial growers.

Plant Sale – Emily Snyder and Jessica Lane, co-chairs

Many thanks to Emily and Jessica for stepping up as co-chairs. All of last year's sub-committee chairs have agreed to serve again. An initial meeting will be held following Books in Bloom. The Historical Society has waived the fee for the use of the Jason Russell House grounds since the Club did so much work on the herb garden.

Donations for the tag sale will be accepted after April 1st and may be brought clean to Nancy Pike's basement. Check your yearbook for the address. In early May a committee will start working on pricing and labeling the merchandise. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy at nancypike44@verizon.net

Senior Center Project – Sally Naish

At our last meeting several designs were presented to the group who then critiqued them based on design concepts previously presented by Sally. Following the discussion, Sally sent out all the designs and each member of the group voted for their top three. It is now up to those three designers to flesh out their plans with specific plantings. At our next meeting on March 2nd, after viewing the final designs and discussing the design elements, the group will vote once again for their top choice.

Many thanks to Sally for all her work to educate the group about landscape design and to organize all the information to present at each meeting. It's been a wonderful opportunity for all the members.

Members' Corner – Jackie Keshian

We welcome new member Janet O'Riordan.

Programs of Interest:

-The New Hampshire Master Gardeners Association will be offering "A Garden Symposium: Fresh Ideas...Gardening for 2017" open to both Master Gardeners and the public and offering topics for beginners and advanced gardeners on Saturday, March 18th. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

-On March 30, the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts will be presenting a civic development program "Tough Roadside Gardens." Kerry Ann Mendez will share plants that are able to survive the worst conditions to

provide beautiful spaces. For more information and to register you can go to the [GCFM website](#).

-Grow Native Massachusetts next Evenings with Experts will be on March 1 7:00 to 8:30 at the Cambridge Public Library. Randi Eckel, founder of Toadshade Wildflower Farm is presenting “The Art and Science of Growing Native Plants from Seed: Why, When and How.”



First Snowdrops of the Season

Books in Bloom flyer attached



Books in Bloom

Stunning Floral Displays

Hors d'Oeuvres and Beverages

in the elegant Robbins Library Reading Room & Rotunda

Music by the Morningside Music Studio Jazz Combo



FRIDAY, MARCH 10th, 2017 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Tickets \$30.00 in advance (or \$35.00 at the door) available from:

- ♦ Circulation Desk of the Robbins and Fox Libraries
 - ♦ The Book Rack (781-646-2665)
- ♦ Patsy Kraemer (Patsy@patsykraemer.com 781-858-8629)

Checks to be made payable to Arlington Garden Club