

ARLINGTON GARDEN CLUB

The Perennial

February 2026

Issue 6

ArlingtonGarden.org

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President's Message

Greetings My Fellow Gardeners,

It's time for new governance. Remember the Club's Yearbook? While you may check on monthly program speakers or look up a member's contact information, pp. 21-25 contain the Club's By-Laws, the rules by which our Club is officially governed. Article VI addresses the topic of Election of Officers and Committee Chairs, a process started by a Nominating Committee. Former Club President Lolly Bennett will chair this year's Nominating Committee. Marilyn Sullivan and Marie Doughty will assist her. Their task is to present a slate of nominees at the April meeting.

The following Board positions will be open to nominees for 2026-27: Treasurer, Membership Chair, Hospitality Chair, Environment Chair.

The Treasurer manages the Club's funds, and while some knowledge of spreadsheets is helpful, it's not required. Treasurer Nancie Richardson will carefully guide the new Treasurer through the processes.

The Membership Chair is responsible for keeping membership records up-to-date, and, like Nancie, Membership Chair Emily Forshay-Crowley will mentor the new Chair in this role. (Read Emily's words found later in *The Perennial*.)

The Club's Hospitality Co-Chairs ensure coffee, tea and lunch happen every month. No, they don't prepare all the yummy food we enjoy; rather they coordinate sign-ups for members to contribute salads, sandwiches and desserts to create a tasty meal for socializing time. Happily, members regularly come through with food, and help with setup and breakdown. Hospitality Chair Julie McDaniel will explain the behind-the-scenes coordination to make this happen.

The Club's Environment Chair's role is more open, such as encouraging innovative ideas to educate members about environmental issues and coordinating with the Club's outreach to school gardens.

How can you step up and assume one of these positions? The Board will welcome you. The Club will welcome you. And you will really enjoy your new role!

Emily, your President

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Looking Ahead to Spring Cleanup for Healthy Soil and Tips for Happy Hydrangeas

Jessica Zander

Jessica is a gardener, coach and consultant based in the Boston area. In 2022 she launched her business “**You Can Do It Gardening**” which helps people feel more confident tackling their own gardens. Jessica is known for her no-nonsense encouraging style. She has over 900,000 followers on Tik Tok, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.



The meeting begins at 10:30 am at St. John’s Church, corner of Pleasant St. and Lombard Rd., Arlington

Reminder: This month is a “brown bag” lunch meeting. Bring your own. Coffee, teas and desserts will be provided.

Upcoming Program for March

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

Spring Ephemerals: Our Native Woodland Wildflowers

Joan Butler



Joan is an avid gardener, plant collector, and backyard birder. She is past President of the Holliston Garden Club and an Accredited Flower Show Judge. She is a Master Gardener, holds degrees in Geology and Landscape Management from UMass Amherst and their Green School. We have invited Joan back to present to us another of her delightful programs.

Friends of Robbins Town Gardens & AGC Gardeners Meet

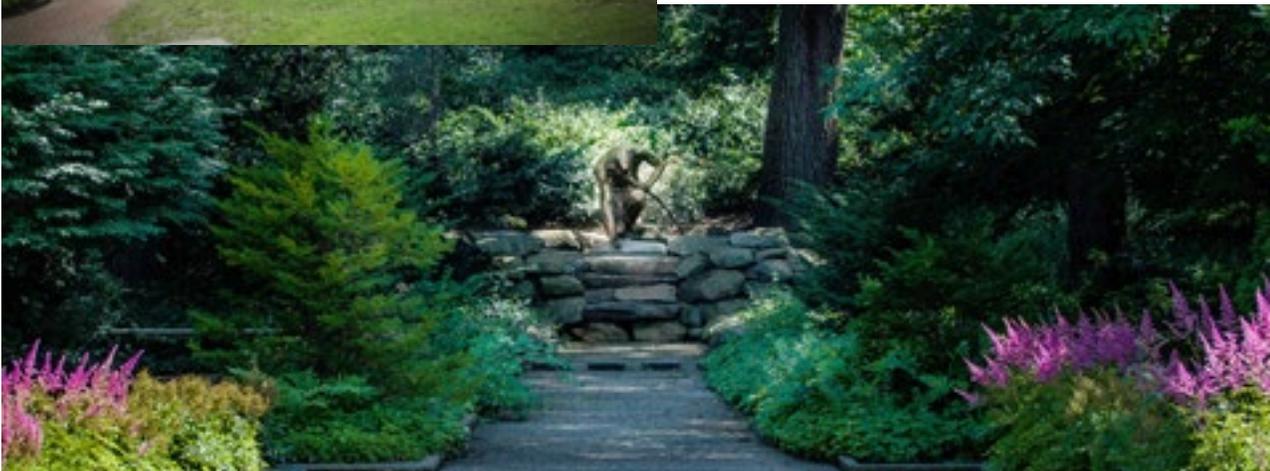
Recently AGC gardeners, who for many years have gardened from spring through fall in the Whittemore Robbins House & Town Hall Gardens, met with members of the Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens. <https://www.friendsoftherobbinstowngardens.org/> Also in attendance was Christine Bongiorno, Deputy Town Manager. The Friends group was founded in 2014 by a group of concerned citizens, including several AGC members, to advocate for the Gardens to be restored to their former glory. The Friends also focus on fundraising and have been successful in being awarded Community Preservation Act (CPA) grants for plantings behind the Indian statue at the head of the iconic Reflecting Pool, the site of many weddings ceremonies. In April 2017 The Friends and the Town's Historic Commission received a CPA Grant to renew the Reflecting Pool's archaic mechanism.

The AGC/Friends meeting highlighted the need to bring wider attention to the Gardens and their maintenance. All attendees acknowledge that the two groups' efforts alone are not sufficient to keep up with the garden's maintenance, weeding, clearing invasive plants and restoring plantings.

AGC members asked to be notified for the Friends' spring and fall clean-up days, so that the Club can inform and, hopefully, enlist additional AGC members to participate. Stay tuned!



Whittemore Robbins House & Town Hall Gardens, Spring and Summer.
Spring Photo courtesy of Jonathan Spiller



REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES

Plant Sale

Karen MacKinnon and Jan Ford, Co-chairs



It's only February, BUT Plant Sale Co-chairs Karen MacKinnon and I (Jan Ford) have started thinking about this spring's Plant Sale, which will be held on Saturday, May 16th, on the grounds of the Jason Russell house.

We hope you will come join with us to plan and bring some creative ideas as we will no longer be having a yard sale and would like to introduce a new experience to the sale. Our first committee planning meeting will be on Thursday, February 19 at 1:30 at Karen MacKinnon's home (138 Wachusett Ave). We'd love to see you!

Membership

Emily Forshay-Crowley, Chair

Membership chair is an easy job; it is also a very necessary job to keep the wheels turning of our Garden Club.

Many of my duties you are already familiar with such as being here each month to greet the members, record attendance and make sure you have a name badge. The Membership Chair receives all renewal and new applications and forwards the dues payments to the Treasurer.

Behind the scenes I maintain a spreadsheet with all the names of members, their contact information and their activity interests. I provide this spreadsheet to all the Board members and keep them updated on any changes.

In the spring there is the mailing of the renewal applications and in fall the mailing of yearbooks to members who have not attended the first two meetings. It is fine to have a committee to help; these past few years Barbara Neenan has been my mainstay helper with greeting members. She has also covered meetings I could not attend as have Kathy Creedon and Karen Doyle. Whenever help was needed, there was always someone to pitch-in.

Last but not least, meeting with the Board members each month is another interesting and fun part of my duties. Personally, I have very much enjoyed being part of this important role. When I took over the duties of the former Membership Chair, Ginger Tower, Ginger taught me the ropes and I will be here for the next person to help them get started.

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1-2:30 PM, ONLINE

Approaching Design from an Ecological Perspective

The Virtual Garden Club

You've likely heard of Rebecca McMackin, the "ecologically obsessed" horticulturist, garden designer, and writer. Her resume includes Harvard, the Brooklyn Bridge Park, PBS, etc., etc. She's a hoot—and wise. Before we pick out plants or draw up a plan, she wants us to first design an ecological landscape: think about the history of our land, the ecology of the region, and the existing wildlife communities, so we can incorporate them into a final design that has more integrity than any "store-bought butterfly garden." \$29, [register here](#).

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 6:30-8 PM, ONLINE

Healthy Soil through Maximum Biodiversity: Replicable Models for Resilient Design

Middlesex Conservation District

Can we improve soil health and sequester more soil carbon by supporting pollinator species at risk of extinction? The Landscape Interactions group is trying! Evan Abramson will share some of their data, explain how they created the target list of over 150 at-risk species, and showcase the scalable, replicable landscape designs they've developed to support these species. Very interesting. [Free, more info here](#)

THURSDAY MARCH 5, 7 PM, ONLINE

Vernal pools and their special ecology

Newton Conservators



Seasonal ponds, or vernal pools, are full of life. They can be found throughout our area, including several in Newton. Barbara Bates, teacher, naturalist, and board member of Newton Conservators, will tell us how these pools form, their unique ecology and the life stories of the invertebrates and amphibians who inhabit them, including fairy shrimp, salamanders, and wood frogs. Free. [Register here](#)

Photo courtesy of Newton Conservators

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7 (RAIN DATE MARCH 14),
9 AM-3.30 PM**

27th Annual Maple Sugar Boil Down

Somerville Community Growing Center, 22 Vinal Ave

Every winter, volunteers tap maple trees on the Tufts campus, collecting dozens of gallons of sap over several weeks. At the Boil Down, they boil it all down into real, true 100% hyper-local maple syrup. Watch the process first hand, and learn more about trees. Bring kids! It's always fun. [More info here](#)



THURSDAY, MARCH 12 1:30 - 3 PM

Senior Tea

Wright-Locke Farm, Winchester



Come enjoy a lovely afternoon at Wright-Locke Farm's All Season's Barn. Seniors are invited to relax and connect over a warm cup of tea, delicious homemade treats, and the serene beauty of the farm. This special gathering is a perfect opportunity to meet new friends, share stories, and unwind in a welcoming environment. [Free, register here](#)

Photo courtesy of Wright-Locke Farm

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11, 7-8.30 PM

Unlocking the Mysteries of Native Plant Selection

Grow Native Massachusetts and Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway

Kim Eierman, ecological landscape designer and more, explains the mysteries and complexities of choosing native plants: Is this a genetic clone, and does it matter? Are native cultivars ok? What about dwarf natives and double flowers? Better to plant native seeds or buy live plants? And lots more. The second Evening with Experts offered by Grow Native Massachusetts and the only one in person.

[Free, more info here](#)

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7 - SUNDAY, MARCH 22 | 10 AM - 4 PM, M-F
AND 10 AM - 8 PM, SAT AND SUN**

2026 Spring Bulb Show

The Botanic Garden at Smith College

The Botanic Garden's Spring Bulb Show is a Smith College tradition that began in the early 1900s. Ordinarily blooming at different times during the spring, over 8,000 bulbs are coaxed into flowering simultaneously, providing an explosion of color against the backdrop of the departing winter. An impressive display of crocuses, hyacinths, narcissi, irises, lilies, tulips and non-hardy South African bulbs offer an early glimpse of spring. [More info here](#)



Photo courtesy of the Botanic Garden at Smith College

Event listings courtesy of Helen Snively, member, Somerville Garden Club

New Member

*We welcome the following new member to the
Arlington Garden Club.*

Lisa Marson



Joy is seeing a delightful winter display brought to you, in part, by the Arlington Garden Club's civic development group. Thank you!