



ARLINGTON GARDEN CLUB

The Perennial

April 2026

Issue 8

ArlingtonGarden.org

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President's Message

On March 21st I volunteered to staff the GrowNative Massachusetts table at the Gardeners' Gathering held in Northeastern's Curry Student Center. I had never heard of this event, but when I turned up, I learned, much to my surprise, that this was the 50th year for the event organized by The Trustees. In a large space packed with tables from a wide variety of garden/green groups, many with an urban garden focus, attendees were all ages, veteran and newbie gardeners as well as non-gardeners wanting to learn more. The three of us at the GrowNative/Pollinator Pathway table enjoyed a constant stream of questions and questioners.

To learn more

On another note, the Club's website receives a variety of queries. Most recently a Robbins librarian wrote asking for seed suggestions which can be given as prizes in the library's 2026 summer reading challenge "Unearthing a Story." I was pleased to see that she requested "types of seeds that are both affordable and native to the area — so we don't have to worry about invasive species, are easy to take care of and can get people interested in gardening/growing plants/food."

I sent her a list of seeds for common, easy-to-grow native plants. Maybe some AGC members will be reading challenge winners!

Emily Snyder, President



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026

Spring Container Gardening for Stunning Results

Susan Nock

Join us as Susan designs three container displays using her favorite plants. She will be choosing spring-specific planters and will create show-stopping arrangements while giving tips we can use to attain the same results. We will auction off all the finished designs.

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

Reminder: Lunch along with coffee, tea and desserts will be provided by the Hospitality Committee.



Upcoming Program for May

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

Commercial Composting A-Z

Andrew Brousseau



Did you ever wonder what happens to your scraps when the truck comes to your house, picks up the green bucket, and empties it into their stinky truck? Andrew will share with us anything and everything you want to know about commercial composting the Black Earth way. Andrew is a partner and compost manager at Black Earth Compost.

Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens and the Arlington Garden Club to Collaborate on Spring Clean-Up



On Saturday, April 25th, Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens invites everyone to their annual Spring Clean-Up of this iconic garden that's between Town Hall and the Robbins Library. People of all ages who enjoy gardening are welcome to attend. Hours are 10 AM - 2 PM. Meet at the Whittemore Robbins House parking lot. Rain date is Saturday, May 2nd.

Snacks and drinks will be on hand. The event always fosters a spirit of fun and camaraderie as many hands come together to spruce up these beloved Town Gardens.

Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens have some tools, but it's always helpful if people can bring gardening gloves, and tools such as a rake and trowel. Just be sure your tools are marked with your name or other identifying markers. Some experienced gardeners can work with guides to do pruning.

This year the Friends plan to continue planting groundcover along the water rill and the forest area on the hill. Of course, a major focus will be to clean out dead branches and other debris that have accumulated over the winter.

If you can help out with their Spring Clean-Up, please email FRTG2018@gmail.com to let us know your name, skill level, email address and any questions. We look forward to seeing you in the Town Gardens on April 25!

Urban Wilds Initiative

Arlington's Environmental Planner, David Morgan, invites everyone to attend the launch of the Urban Wilds Initiative. This Initiative, funded by a Community Preservation Act grant, will bring new life to 14 Arlington Conservation Commission properties. The first meeting will be held on Saturday, April 11th at 11 AM - 1 PM in the main room of the Community Center at 27 Maple Street. At this meeting, the focus will be on what community members value about open spaces in Arlington. Bring your friends.

The goals of this Urban Wilds Initiative are to map each property, document how each property connects to other nearby green spaces, determine what plants and pollinators inhabit each property, and map what lies around each property, such as roads or homes. Using the results, the plan is to shape each property with native and climate-resilient plants and features that welcome a variety of wildlife, while also creating simple, low-impact ways for people to enjoy the spaces —like walking paths or quiet spots for birdwatching.

[More information](#)

REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES

Annual Plant Sale

Jan Ford and Karen MacKinnon, co-chairs



Our big day will soon be here. Did everyone receive the email from Stephan Miller about the plant sale? He included a document for creating labels. This same document is on the Club's website under Member Resources.

Peggy Bliss is hoping to collect more scarves at the April 15th meeting. A box will be available.

Patsy Kraemer is collecting garden tools. Or, you can deliver your cleaned tools the morning of the sale.

Janet Pagliuca writes that there will be a table of unsold jewelry for FREE. What is leftover will be given to charities for resale. The Club will no longer accept jewelry to be sold at future plant sales.

Garden Outreach

Jackie Keshian and Carol Nahigian, co-chairs

On Thursday, March 19th, Mary Hatvany, Jackie Keshian and Janet Pagliuca went to BrightView Senior Assisted Living in Arlington for flower arranging with the residents. Our time there was fun and full of the lovely spring flowers that Jackie brought. There was much appreciation from the residents who participated as well as those who walked by and saw the flowers.

Our next visit there is on Thursday, April 23rd, when we will plant seedlings with residents.



Photos by Mary Hatvany



Civic Development

Patsy Kraemer, Chair

Spring garden work is underway! Steph Miller is leading the way with this schedule for gardening work at one of our Civic Development sites. All are welcome to join and keep this showpiece of gardening in terrific shape!

How would you like to spend part of your summer on an exotic island? ... and it's totally free of charge (well, maybe a small amount of labor)! Just come and join the cordial group of volunteers that maintain the garden at Ridge Circle. We meet at 9 am on Tuesdays, every three weeks. It's not necessary to commit for the whole summer, just come when you can. Tentative schedule: 4/7, 4/28, 5/19, 6/9, 6/30, 7/21, 8/11, 9/1, 9/22



Nominations

Lolly Bennett, Chair



Who would like to be the Club's treasurer? It's an easy job, you just need to know how to balance a checkbook. Plus you will be on the Board and will have lots of opportunities to provide input on our Club. More Events of Interest

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 11 AM - 1 PM

Arlington's Urban Wilds Initiative

Town of Arlington, main room of the Community Center, 27 Maple Street

See article on page 3 for more details.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 10 AM - 12 NOON

ArMI Roving Weedout

Thursday weedouts meet at various locations. Focus on garlic mustard removal in April. ArMI (Arlington Mass. Invasives) is a group of Arlington residents and allies dedicated to removing invasive plants that choke out native plants. [Register here](#)



THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 7 - 8:30 PM, IN-PERSON OR ONLINE

How to Grow a Better Bird Feeder

Grow Native Massachusetts

First Parish Church, 7 Harrington Rd, Lexington

We all know that habitat loss, climate change, and pesticides are decimating bird populations, but simple actions will let us restore critical bird habitat in our yards and gardens. Conservation biologist Desirée Narango will share her research on native plants' importance to food webs, why insects matter for bird conservation, and practical steps we can take. Final talk this year in Grow Native's Evenings with Experts series. [Free, register here](#)



Town Gardens Fall Clean-up Along the Water Rill in November 2025

SATURDAY APRIL 25, 10:00 - 2:00 PM

Friends of the Robbins Town Gardens Spring Clean-Up

Whittemore Robbins House Parking Lot

See article on page 3 for more details.

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 5:30 - 6:30 PM ONLINE

Matrix planting

Native Plant Trust

This method combines structural plants, seasonal layers, and ground-covering species into a unified system. Marie Chieppo, ecological landscape designer, will cover plant selection, spacing, competition, succession, and management so your plantings thrive and evolve beautifully over time. \$25. [Register here](#)

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 7 - 8:15 PM ONLINE

Climate change and the future flora of New England

Grow Native Massachusetts

Jesse Bellemare, plant ecologist at Smith College, explores the ways that changing climate will likely affect plant diversity in New England and beyond, how species are adjusting (or failing to), and ways that biotic interactions might facilitate or hinder these changes. Free. Monthly offering from Mass Pollinator Network. Free, [register here](#)

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Plug in to Gardening to Support Native Bees, Butterflies and Birds

Robbins Library Community Room

Join us to learn why we are currently in a biodiversity crisis. Amy Meltzer, co-chair of the steering committee of the Mass Pollinator Network and an active member of Grow Native Massachusetts, will discuss the evolutionary history among native bees, butterflies, insects, birds, plants and fungi, and the interdependent relationships among these diverse species.



FRIDAY, MAY 1 - SUNDAY, MAY 3 AND SATURDAY

MAY 9, 9:30 AM - 4 PM

Annual Spring Herb Sale

Lyman Estate Greenhouses, 185 Lyman St, Waltham

Thousands of culinary, medicinal, and ornamental herbs, plus scented geraniums, tomato and vegetable seedlings, pottery, and garden gifts, and expert advice from greenhouse staff. [More information](#)

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2 - 3 PM IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

The American Chestnut: A Conversation with Donald Davis

Thoreau Farm, 341 Virginia Road, Concord

Before 1910, the American chestnut was one of the most common trees in the eastern United States. Then a blight fungus arrived. Donald Davis, author of *The American Chestnut: An Environmental History*, traces the chestnut's place in Native American life, early American industry, and everyday culture—and examines modern restoration efforts, from breeding programs to genetic research. Free. [Register here](#)



SUNDAY, MAY 10, 10 AM - 3 PM

Lilac Sunday

Arnold Arboretum

A collection of over 400 lilacs, tours with Arboretum experts, kids' programming, Picnicking (the only day it's allowed) and more. Parking is limited. [More information](#)

Photo courtesy of Arnold Arboretum

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 7 - 8:30 PM, IN-PERSON OR ONLINE

Choosing Native Plants For a Beautiful and Beneficial Garden

Learning Lab at the Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge

Balance ecological value with your preferences in your garden! Learn how to select native plants that will suit your conditions and support birds and beneficial insects. Amy Meltzer, co-chair of the Mass Pollinator Network steering committee and active member of Grow Native Massachusetts, will discuss assessing your site and planning your garden, matching your site conditions with plant characteristics, choices for starting a native plant garden, finding affordable native plants, caring for your new plants and adapting your garden to climate change. Free, Contact Amy or check the Cambridge Library listings for a registration link. More Information: ameltzerma@comcast.net

Events compiled and submitted by Helen Snively, Somerville Garden Club member, and Amy Meltzer, Co-Chair, Massachusetts Pollinator Network Steering Committee

April showers bring May flowers

AGC Member J. B. Maxwell sent the following note:

Dear all of Valerie's great friends and members

I wish to very sincerely thank you for the condolence note and memories on the life and untimely death of my very best friend and wife, Valerie Ronson Maxwell. Thank you for being there for me. It meant more than you know!

Valerie loved and always looked forward to the AGC meetings and Plant Sale. She loved y'all so much, as do I!



Photo by Agnes Parise

