



Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

Volume 12 Issue 5 • January 2022

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Co-President's Letter



Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and is looking forward to a new year. I never thought that as we begin 2022, COVID would still be an issue, but here we are. We will continue to have our big club meetings on Zoom until further notice. Stay safe and well, everyone.

We had a wonderful Christmas, despite COVID. My youngest son, who has been stationed in Germany, is now back on US soil and will be in Colorado for the foreseeable future. I don't have to rely on planes, ships or restrictions to get to him. This makes me very happy! Once he finds a place to live, he's looking forward to starting a vegetable garden and we've been poring over some books and websites to begin to formulate a plan. The family has enjoyed lots of fun, good food, and even a Patriots game together (although

they lost, so that's not great)! I never look forward to taking down Christmas decorations (we had 42 decorated trees this year) but I have to admit, as I pack up the boxes, my mind starts churning out thoughts about something new and different to add next year.

I'm imagining many of you looking through flower and seed catalogs, planning your masterpieces for the spring. What a pleasant activity to while away the chilly days and early nights. I'm trying to temper my ever-growing orders with the reality of how exhausting this work can be once the ground warms up!

Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream. — Josephine Nuese



I'm always quite optimistic about "starting fresh" in January of a new year. New calendars, new journals, new goals, and new ideas about all the things I want to do. I'm happy to report that I've seen that optimism come alive in the LFGC as I've attended committee meetings and listened to the enthusiasm and excitement as members share plans about ways to bring us all closer together during these trying times as well as to get more involved and informed in the gardening world. The LFGC continues to amaze me with its dedicated core of members who put so much effort into the mission of education, service, and friendship. We have new people joining each month and I look forward to their involvement as we move forward. In the meantime, enjoy these more relaxed and cozy days, snuggled up with a good book or catalog. Join us for our Zoom meeting on Wednesday, January 12 as Trevor Smith talks about reducing invasive plants. And, as always, I hope to see you — in person ±— soon!

Fondly,

Ruthanne Igoe

Co-President



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Our next meeting, on Wednesday, January 12, will be held on Zoom!
Reducing Invasive Plants and Recovering a Healthy Plant Community

with Trevor Smith

Social time at 9:30 AM

Meeting and program begin at 10:00 AM

A Zoom invite email will be sent to members that week.











A Virtual Greens Party

Ann Webster

On Wednesday, December 8, LFGC had a virtual Greens Party to substitute for our annual tradition. Although we had to forego gathering over greens, decorations, and food, nearly 50 of us continued to share knowledge, laughter and holiday cheer by Zoom.

While **Marlene Stone** controlled the Zoom, **Maureen Bovet**, **Linda Walsh**, **Jane Halverson** and **Ann Webster** demonstrated some of their favorite tips and techniques for making holiday decorations with fresh greens. Their focus was on using greens from your backyard or that are otherwise easy to obtain. Several members welcomed people to come to their yards and take some cuttings.

Some of the tips covered were:

-  Put a brick inside an outdoor bucket full of greens in water to keep it from blowing over.
-  Connect boughs and bundles of greens to wreath forms or premade wreaths using wire and wire cutters. Hide cut ends under overlapping layers.
-  Simply decorate a bowl or other container using small poinsettias, succulents, or evergreens nestled in cones, greens, or moss.
-  Brighten cones with spray paint or with glitter glue applied with a small brush.
-  Turn cones, ornaments, loops or bows of ribbon, and other sparkly things you may have in the house, into picks for your arrangements with just a little wire and bamboo skewers from the grocery store.
-  Keep the dimensions of your arrangements in check. Set the desired height and width with the first several stems you place and keep adding within those boundaries. For centerpieces, make sure seated diners can see over the top.
-  Only use stem tips as much as possible. Hide cut ends under overlapping foliage or use a brown or green marker pen to camouflage them.
-  For arrangements to be viewed from all sides, turn your arrangement frequently as you assemble it. A Lazy Susan or small towel under your container will make the turning easier.

When using floral foam (Oasis)

-  Soak the block with the perforated side down and be patient as it absorbs the water.

- ✂️ Press the top of your container against the block. The impression on the foam will help you cut it to the right size and shape.
- ✂️ Aim for a very snug fit. If necessary, add little wedges of wet foam or a strip of water-proof tape to keep the block secure.
- ✂️ Cut the block 1-2 inches taller than your container to allow greens to trail over the top edge and possibly all the way down to the table. Trim sharp edges and corners off the block.
- ✂️ For boxwood or holly trees, trim the top of the block only a little. Even at the top you need enough to hold branches from all sides. Create the conical shape with different lengths of stems.
- ✂️ Check your final work from multiple angles, including sitting and standing. You shouldn't be able to see any foam.

Our presenters really appreciated all the comments, questions and suggestions from the audience during and following the presentations, and we all hope to be able to reprise this party in person in 2022!



REMINDER!

Grants for Gardeners applications are due February 15. Check the LFGC website for all the information. (LexGardenClub.org)



Kudos to Morning Study Group and a Few Good Souls



MSG maintained its tradition of collecting white socks and calendars for the Veterans Hospital in Bedford. We collected 225 pairs. One 6-pack even came from the DC area! There were more than 100 calendars! Thank you very much!

Garden Party Visits Tower Hill!



On a chilly, clear night, seven hardy members of the Garden Party sub-group drove out to Boylston, MA, for a fun evening walking the brightly lit Tower Hill Botanic Garden Night Lights display. We followed paths festooned with colorful lights hanging from bushes, trees, and structures. We bent way over in order to pass through tunnels, stopping to take lots of photos along the way. And we shopped in the lovely garden boutique. A wonderful time was had by all and we're planning a return trip next year!



Membership Corner

John Igoe

In 2015, my wife **Ruthanne** told me about her interest in joining the Lexington Field and Garden Club. As a person with little interest in gardening, I was supportive but somewhat skeptical on the mission and role of a garden club in affluent Lexington where it appeared to me the majority of the gardening was done on a contract basis by outside firms. My thought was that the focus of the LFGC was for those totally engrossed in the art of gardening and that to join you had to already have a well-founded understanding and appreciation for plants, the seasons, and landscaping. Boy, was I mistaken!

As Ruthanne engaged more and more with the activities of the club, I realized my initial impression was clearly in error and I needed to engage to learn more. As I attended social gatherings and participated in various educational sessions on pruning, bee keeping, and plant maintenance, I realized the club was focused on a variety of areas for both emerging and advanced gardeners.



The more I engaged, the more I became aware of the other benefits of the club. Not only was the club focused on gardening and education at all levels but also on fostering a sense of community and friendship. Social engagements in the form of cocktail parties, workshops, and fundraisers expanded my interest in joining the club and at some point I enrolled as a member. Once enrolled, I became even more involved in terms of helping to maintain the LFGC civic islands and working at historical sites to improve the garden beds. I met incredibly committed individuals like **Meg Himmel, Karen Boudreau, Ashley Rooney,** and **Peter Lund** who let me help in the most basic ways on projects across town. The model I felt most comfortable with was to take direction and learn from those who have all the experience. This has resulted in a most rewarding experience for me and I continue to look forward to more engagements. I've even gotten excited about working in our gardens at home!



You TOO Can Make a Fairy House

E. Ashley Rooney

You may have heard talk about the Fairy Homes and Gardens event, which has just been enthusiastically endorsed by the Lexington Tourism Committee and the Chamber of Commerce. It is a free family-friendly cross-town celebration and an invitation to come enjoy Lexington the weekend of May 27-29 and admire magical fairy homes.

Many organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Munroe Center for the Arts, Cary Library, CAAL, Cotting School, local preschools, Girl Scouts, and our own Christine Kochanski, Kitty Galaitsis, and Leslie Masson have joined in and are making their fairy houses. You can too. And they are great fun to do with a friend or a grandchild.

The first step in building a fairy house is to collect natural materials from the outdoors. Take a walk in your neighborhood or around your yard. Soon you'll discover interesting twigs and rocks and acorn caps. Bring a bag and fill it up. All these interesting stones, pinecones, twisted twigs, lichen, and grasses offer fun opportunities. You may have a collection of shells gathering dust. Don't forget to check out your jewelry box or dresser drawers for other interesting bits such as that one earring, the broken bead necklace, or the European coins that are no longer any good. And of course, there are those holiday ornaments.

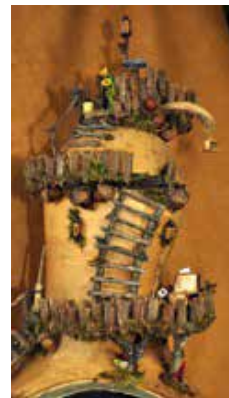


Now you need to build your structure using twine and a glue gun unless you are planning to use a conch shell or a dried out squash.

Once the overall structure is built and secure, it's time to decorate with all your findings. Fairies are attracted to shiny objects so decorate the inside with sparkly stickers or foil for a shimmering glow. Some extra birch bark can make a tiny chair, table, and steps for the entrance. Or you can use that collection of shells. What you can make from natural materials is almost as limitless as your imagination, especially if you make it in miniature.

To be sure it is rain-proof, you can weatherproof your creation by spraying it with a clear coat of polyurethane from a craft or hardware store. Wrap your fairy house with battery powered fairy lights for nighttime enchantment.

For more information, visit Cary Library's books on fairy houses.



Jessica Marro's fairy house in FAIRY HOMES & GARDENS 2



Lexington Living Landscapes in partnership with Cary Library and co-sponsored by the Lexington Conservation Division brings you.....

The Language of Flowers: An Introduction to Pollination Ecology

Speaker: Rebecca McMackin, Director of Horticulture at the Brooklyn Bridge Park

Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Online via Zoom

The vast majority of plants rely on pollinators to reproduce. From bees, to butterflies, to birds and bats, these pollinator partners shaped the evolution of flowers, giving us so much of the beauty we appreciate today. However, these exciting dynamics, in which a flower's pollen is carried to a stigma, are fraught with trickery, bribery, thievery, and of course, salacious plant sex.

This lecture will cover the basics of pollination ecology. Why do plants have flowers? How did they evolve? And specifically, what are flowers doing? Why are they so pretty and smell so good to us, non-pollinating primates? By the end of the presentation, you will be able to “read” flowers and come to know the true desires of the organisms you cultivate.

Rebecca McMackin is an ecologically obsessed horticulturist and garden designer. By day, she is the Director of Horticulture for Brooklyn Bridge Park, where she manages 85 acres of diverse parkland organically and with an eye towards habitat creation for birds, butterflies, and soil microorganisms. In her imaginary free time, Rebecca writes about landscape management and pollination ecology, as well as designs the occasional garden. Her writing has been published by the New York Times, the Ecological Landscape Alliance, and the Landscape Institute.

Advance registration required; register here. <https://www.lexingtonlivinglandscapes.org/events/upcoming-events>



A Hint for Your Holiday Wreaths...



John Forti, in *The Heirloom Gardener*, suggests moving your wreaths after the holidays to trees so that the cyclical process can continue as the fruits, seeds, and berries from the wreaths become neighborhood bird feeders and nests. The wildlife that replants them will create new generations of growth as they are sown into the landscape. “Another visible reminder of the circle of life.”



January Jollies

Who is Frosty the Snowman's favorite aunt?

Aunt Arctica

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?

A cookie sheet

What do you call an old snowman?

Water

My daughter wants to study burrowing rodents.

I told her to gopher it.

