



Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

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email: LFGC024@gmail.com

Co-President's Letter

Well, we made it. The activities are slowing down and summer is fast approaching. I can't wait to lie on the beach, read my book and listen to the waves. My daffodils and tulips have withered, the lilac scent is fading, but the peonies and iris are coming on strong! And soon, the roses! I can't wait to get my recently acquired gems from the LFGC Plant Sale in the ground. Birds are making nests in every nook and cranny and we can hear little peeps emerging from bushes, trees and bird houses! This is such a lovely time of the year.



My dogs also love this time of year. I could sit all day (and often do) and watch them play together outside. Rosie and Sadie love to roll in the grass and especially love to roll in the mud! Once the temperatures warm up, they seem to gather even more energy as they fly out the door each morning and run in big circles all over the yard. They chase the bees (we've had our share of swollen faces) and every bunny, chipmunk and other furry animal they come across. Sadie tries desperately to climb a big tree in the back to get to a very annoying squirrel that daily sits a few branches above the ground and, I swear, taunts her mercilessly. They have never passed up a stick to play with and I can't even get annoyed when they frolic through the newly planted gardens. They're just too darn cute.

Thanks to everyone for supporting the LFGC as we weathered the pandemic and all the changes and adaptations we had to employ to keep our programs going. We had a great turnout from the Plant Sale and sold out of most items! We have the most dedicated and wonderful volunteers who make a lot of things happen in this Club, pandemic or no pandemic!

This will be the last "formal" newsletter until September, but be sure to read about the exciting new "Grants for Gardeners" initiative in this issue. An email will follow in the summer with even more information. We can't wait to see what creative and exciting ideas our membership will propose!



The Yearbook preparation is underway and you will receive your copy during the summer. You'll be able to peruse the programs offered for next year, read about the study groups, learn about the history of the club, and check out all the members!

I wish you all a very happy and healthy summer. And I can't wait to see you in September.

Fondly,

Ruthanne Igoe

Co-President

LFGC Plant Sale a Success!



Thanks to our membership and the local community for supporting the Annual Plant Sale! The Club earned about \$3000.00 and, more importantly, new friendships were made, lots of learning occurred and new people showed interest in joining the LFGC. Special thanks to the Plant Sale Committee: **Georgia Glick, Donna Moultrup, Ashley Rooney, Bridget Galdes and John and Ruthanne Igoe.**



Lexington Field and Garden Club Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2021 • Via Zoom

Co-President **Ruthanne Igoe** called the meeting to order at 10:00.

Announcements

- The Plant Sale Brochure will be available online on May 14th. Purchase dates are May 17th and 18th and pick-up dates are May 21st and 22nd.
- The FAC announced that funds are available for projects that will enhance the town. More information regarding the process and grant applications will be sent to all LFGC members and will be available on the LFGC website.
- Goodbye and a HUGE THANK YOU to LFGC Board members **Meg Himmel, Karen Boudreau, Bridget Galdes, and Jan Avallone.**

Marilyn Ryniewicz introduced the speaker, Joanne Caccavale. Joanne has been teaching Ikebana, the art of Japanese flower arranging, for many years. She put together several arrangements using a variety of materials and containers and emphasized the importance of color and line. Questions were answered following the demonstration.

Bridget Galdes, Co-President, counted 40 people present.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Halverson

Recording Secretary



Dear Lexington Field and Garden Club members,

The Lexington Field and Garden Club is proud to announce an exciting, new initiative called “Grants for Gardeners” that will support club members who have exciting new ideas that benefit our club or the town of Lexington!

This new Board initiative was announced by **Ruthanne Igoe** at the May Annual Meeting to generate and support new projects or ideas within our Club.

Over the past few years and thanks to the generous contributions of many, the LFGC is in strong financial health. At the November 4, 2020 Meeting, the Board voted to create the Financial Advisory Working Group (FAWG), tasked to develop and implement a new Financial Strategy and transparent process to generate, evaluate and fund new initiatives by active Club members to support education, beautification and friendship to the benefit of all members of the oldest Field and Garden Club of America.

At the May 5 Annual Board Meeting, the following FAWG proposals were approved:

First, the current budgeting process will be reinforced by an annual review by the Financial Advisory Council, reinstating the tradition of former Presidents and Treasurers providing counsel and reflection on next year’s initiatives and budget.

Second, to secure the financial future of our beloved Club, the Treasurer will keep in Reserves 3 year’s equivalent of our Operating Budget at all times.

Third, the Board will fund an annual Grant Program, based on funds available, after the Reserves and the Operating Budget are set aside.

For 2021, a pilot year for this new process, the total Grant budget has been set at \$3,000. Once the new Grant process and Request Form is published on the LFGC website, any active member of the LFGC can submit a new project, initiative, or idea which they believe benefits the members of the LFGC in accordance to our bylaws, and the Lexington public spaces. The project lead will submit an application, including detailed rationale on what and how the project entails and how it will benefit the Club. The FAWG team will evaluate the projects anonymously and provide feedback within 30 days. The deadline for the 2021 Grant Requests submissions is September 15. All this and more detailed information will be provided to all members in mid-June. We can’t wait to hear your ideas!

Any questions can be sent to LFGC024@gmail.com. We’re very excited to support your new projects!

Thank you,

The Financial Advisory Working Group

Kris Alaerts (Chair), Marilyn Rudick, Betsy Pollack, Ann Webster, Bridget Galdes, Ruthanne Igoe

Growing Gorgeous Flowers for the New Gardener

E. Ashley Rooney

Memorial Day is the traditional day in New England for planting, although many of us take our chances and put some (e.g., pansies, calendula) out earlier. Annuals offer that instant gratification and inexpensive variety. They provide an easy-to-grow abundance of brightly colored flowers from now until frost.

Your Flower Bed



Shallow-rooted annuals don't require a lot of deep soil preparation. Generally, they prefer at least six hours of sun per day and well-drained soil with moderate humus content. If your soil is clay, add compost or well-rotted manure; after the first year, you should need only a light reapplication in spring.

Check the soil acidity; most annuals will do well with a pH between 5.5 and 7.0. Your flowerbed should have good organic matter and about two inches of compost. If it is a new bed, turn it with a shovel or rototill.

Your Stock

If you plan to buy stock from a nursery, choose your plants carefully. Look for deep green, sturdy plants with few flowers. Turn the plant over and look for good small roots just peeking through the holes. Of course, we would urge that you buy native plants. To make a positive impact on pollinators while beautifying your property, plant some of these native pollinators:

Anemone	Goldenrod (<i>Solidago</i>)
Anise Hyssop (<i>Agastache foeniculum</i>)	Great Blue Lobelia (<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>)
Asters	Holly
Bearberry	Joe Pye Weed
Bee Balm <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>)	Lavender
Blazing Star sp. (<i>Liatris</i>)	Lowbush blueberry
Bluets (<i>Houstonia caerulea</i>)	Obedient Plant
Butterfly Weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	Salvias
Cardinal Flower	Sedums
Catmint	Swamp Milkweed (<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>)
Coneflower	Tall Coneflower (<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>)
Coral Bells	Turtlehead sp. (<i>Chelone</i>)
Coreopsis sp. (especially Lance-leaved)	Virginia Bluebells
Foxglove beardtongue (<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>)	Winterberry
Goat's Beard (<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>)	

If it is not possible for you to plant right away, place your plants in a lightly shaded area, watering as needed.

Before you plant greenhouse-grown annuals in full sun, they need to be "hardened off," which means getting them accustomed to the outside. Every day or so for a week, move them to a more exposed location; obviously, keep shade-loving plants in the shade. Water them as needed and cover if frost is predicted. Just prior to planting, soak your plants from the bottom up. The garden bed should also be slightly moist prior to planting.



Planting Day

Ideally, you should plant on an overcast day or in the late afternoon. Gently slip the plants from their cell packs or pots by squeezing or pushing on the bottom of the container. If the roots are matted, loosen them by either breaking the soil ball apart slightly or cutting the sides of the root ball with a knife. This step helps to encourage better rooting in the garden bed. Some believe that you should pinch off any flowers so your plants will set better roots.

Place each plant before actually planting them. Arrange them so to create a mass of color when in bloom. Don't plant in rows; they look like clothespins that way; instead stagger them or plant them in diamond designs.



Plants should be set at the same depth they were growing in the container.

If you are planting annuals that grow tall and may require staking later on, put the stakes in now. Carefully firm the soil around the plant and water well to wash soil around the root ball and eliminate air pockets. Water transplants generously with a water-soluble plant food.

Fertilize regularly with a liquid fertilizer according to package directions.

Mulch

Organic mulch such as pine needles, shredded leaves or peat moss helps to conserve soil moisture as well as reduce weeds. It also makes the bed more attractive. The following year the mulch can be incorporated into the soil and new mulch added on top.

Water

Annuals need about an inch of water a week. Your plants benefit more from deep watering than by frequent shallow watering, which encourages the roots to stay close to the surface instead of spreading more deeply. Aim to moisten the top six inches of soil when you water and allow the soil to dry a bit between watering.



Water early in the day to reduce evaporation losses and to give your plants time to dry out. Plant people strongly believe in using a soaker hose to wet the soil and not the foliage. If you must use an overhead sprinkler, use it early in the day so the foliage will be dry by nightfall, lessening the chance of disease.

If you are concerned about conserving water, choose drought-tolerant annuals such as cleome, dusty miller, globe amaranth, gaillardia, marigold, petunias, portulaca, salvia, sunflowers, and zinnia.

Gorgeous Blooms



After the first week of planting, apply a liquid 5-10-4 fertilizer. Apply this liquid food every two or three weeks as needed until plants are established.

Removing dead flowers (deadheading) and pinching the tips will encourage new flowers to bloom and keep the plant attractive. Many plants will become stronger when the top is pinched. Remove the plants in the fall when the foliage begins to fade.

Weeding not only keeps the bed more attractive, but also eliminates possible hosts for insects and disease and allows the flowers to receive the full benefit of the available moisture and nutrients.

Sources of Plants

Purchase plants from nurseries and chain stores in the spring. The quality of plants will vary from location to location.



Civic Gardening – Hancock and Adams Island

By Kris Alaerts

“So how are we going to do this?” Anne Lee asked as we were overlooking the Hancock-Adams island. Two hundred forty Dutch bulbs needed to be carefully placed in their winter beds. Trying to be gentlemanly about it I tried, “Well, shall I dig, and you throw them in?” Not that I was in a hurry, but I had 300 more bulbs waiting in my own yard and the first freezing temperatures had been announced. “Throw??” The look in her eyes was part concern, part bemusement and disbelief, as one can expect from a former President of the LFGC and long-time steward of the island that was going to suffer my abuse. I said, “Sure, I’ll dig, you dump. Dig and dump. Easy!”

Mind you, I generally like things neat, including in my garden, but when it comes to planting I’m a mass planting kind of guy. Less variety but strength in numbers. As to the bulbs, yes, they need to go twice as deep as they are big as a general rule of thumb. They don’t handle being planted upside down well either. Otherwise: dig a hole, throw them in, cover up — done. Gardening can be simple in a soothing kind of way. Critters are not a likely threat to traffic islands, bulbs rarely get dug up. Watering can be a challenge, but for those enthused to give nature a hand, Civic Gardening has a HUGE watering container!

Fast forward this spring: the result of me digging and Anne dumping (and neither of us watering, I confess) is a great pleasure to watch: a cornucopia of life and color unfolding, the power of spring in action, answering the calls of our great Club’s mission of beautification, education and friendship. The latter is what I’ll miss most from being a member of the LFGC and the Civic Gardening team, as I’m preparing our family’s move to Switzerland, and I, alas, need to say goodbye to “our” island. We’ll have bulbs in Switzerland too, plenty to “dig and dump”, but sadly, no Civic Gardening. Time to make lots of new beautiful memories.



June Jokes

Where did Noah put the bees?
In the Ark hives.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits
of eating dried grapes...
It's called raisin awareness.

If you can think of a better fish pun...
...let minnow.

What do you call a girl who stands in the middle of
a tennis court?
Annette

And in honor of Father's Day...

Why did the cookie cry?
Because his father was a wafer so long.

