



Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

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Dear Friends,

What a time this is....we're all sheltering in our homes, perhaps catching up on our reading, household projects or television series binging. I know we're all thinking ahead to warmer days when we can get out in our yards, balconies or windowsills and feel the warmth of the earth and smell the scents of newly emerging flowers and shrubs!

Looking forward, the LFGC Co-Presidents are seriously considering all ramifications of what is on our upcoming calendar. As sorry as we are to do so, we are cancelling and/or postponing all April and May meetings and events. Everyone's health, well-being and peace of mind are our priority. We are figuring out ways to reschedule some of these events for the fall. For example, the Monet-inspired Annual Lunch is too wonderful an idea to give up! Our Annual Meeting can wait a few months.

The Plant Sale volunteers have been trying to figure out ways to make the potting sessions viable, but, again, the virus situation has made this too uncertain and risky. We are a smart and intrepid bunch of plant lovers, and we'll get through this difficult time, supporting each other and the LFGC as always.

Stay well,

Ruthanne and Ashley



Programs

All programs for April and May are cancelled. We could have some interesting educational picnics this year!



Civic Gardening

Just when we thought we were going to get an early start to our spring cleaning, life threw us a serious curve! You may see some of the dedicated stewards out cleaning up public spaces. We thank them. We will be out in very small groups, staying at least 6 feet from each other, as long as it is safe to do so. We will not be scheduling any large group workdays until further notice. Our social gathering has been postponed and will be rescheduled. Hopefully, the sun will shine upon us all soon. Please keep yourself safe and enjoy working in your own garden.

Meg Himmel and Karen Boudreau

Co-Chairs Civic Gardening



Write Your Check

Now is the time to check off one item on your TO DO list while you have a lighter schedule.

Renew your membership today! Bridget is waiting to process your check or your PayPal payment. She too has more time on her hands, and is checking the PO Box frequently — because it gives her an excuse to leave the house — and sending acknowledgements.

Let's all work together to get this done while we have this lull and get our next year's yearbook completed!!

Thank you

Bridget

Membership Cochair

A. In your email for renewal, you will find a [blue link](#). Click on it and it will take you directly to your individual page. Review the information we have on file for you and make any corrections. Be sure to click on submit when you are done, even if you did not make any changes, so that we know the record has been processed.

AND

B. Make Payment

Either electronically: Go to the LexGardenClub.org website and click on the Renewing Members page. Click the Paypal button to make you payment. (This is the preferred option since it simplifies administration work.)

Or by check: Make check payable to LFGC, and drop in Membership box on the membership mail to LFGC Membership, PO Box 133, Lexington, MA 02420.

Membership in LFGC is a prerequisite for membership in the sub groups.



Arbor Day

All states have an official Arbor Day, usually at a time of year that has the best weather conditions for planting trees. Here in Lexington, the Garden Club and DPW holds an annual tree-planting ceremony to create community awareness and to honor the memory of those club members who passed way during the year. This year, we had only one member: **Mary Gillespie**. Mary was well known for her acceptance towards and generosity to a wide diversity of people. We need more like her. We will celebrate her next year.



Join Us for Art A-Blooming! 2020

This artful mix of talents of LexArt (LACS) and LFGC has existed for 22 years. Enjoy the freedom of creative floral expression with no judging.

We already have 18 arrangers and only have room for 8 more arrangers. Please contact **Kathy Leva**.

Event dates:

Select your artwork Monday June 1 from 2-5 — *note change*

LFGC members choose a piece of artwork created by LACS members to interpret with flowers.

Thursday, September 24, 11-1, set-up for the show.

Thursday September 24, 7-9 PM, arranger, artists, friends, and family reception.

September 25, September 26, September 27, 11-4 PM each day, open to the public.

September 27 after 4 PM, pickup and take down.



Thinking Ahead

All Yearbook materials due by May 13.

Cary Memorial Library has requested that we join them in Books A Blooming in June 2021. The floral designer can pick her favorite book.

The 2021 summer reading theme is Reading Colors Your World, which lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and vibrant graphic presentation.



Horticulture

When my first husband was dying, I dug gardens. I found the exercise and the results very soothing. When the days are nice, take yourself outside and clean up your gardens or a civic island, pull some garlic mustard, or dream of a new garden.

A Shade Garden That Goes Beyond Hosta

Several people had asked about gardens for those dark garden spots. As our speaker showed two weeks ago, you can brighten your shady areas with colorful perennials in complementary colors.

Of course, when people ask about shade gardens, the first plant that is mentioned is Hosta, which comes in a multitude of shapes, textures and colors, ranging from cool blue-green to lemon yellow. Some varieties are huge and will grow to be a couple of feet in diameter. But there are many more shade perennials than Hosta. I describe a few below.



- 🌀 **Astilbe** has plumes of flowers in pink, lavender, red, white and salmon rising above fern-like foliage. If you choose varieties with different foliage colors, bloom times and heights, they can add lots of interesting color and texture throughout the season. Astilbes and Hostas go well together. Rabbit and deer resistant.
- 🌀 **Coral Bells** (Heucheras) are great plants for shade. They do flower, but it is their leaves that are so colorful: silvery, burgundy, and purple-black, chartreuse, salmon and rusty orange. Rabbits like their flowers.
- 🌀 **Creeping Jenny** is a perennial that will return year after year. Round, chartreuse leaves on trailing stems creep along the ground, lighting up shady beds and providing contrast to your other shade perennials. It roots as it grows and spreads quickly. When planted in containers, it cascades beautifully. Deer and rabbit resistant,
- 🌀 **Bleeding Heart** (*Dicentra spectabilis* and *D.exima*). *Dicentra spectabilis* is valued for its heart-shaped pink and white flowers. It has graceful, soft green foliage and 1-inch-long, rose pink, nodding, heart-shaped flowers with protruding white inner petals hanging from long, arching stems in early to mid-spring. This variety typically grows 2-3 feet tall. *D. exima*, eastern or fringed bleeding heart, is native to eastern North America, and grows only about a foot tall, with more finely divided leaves and smaller flowers. It has a longer blooming season and retains its leaves through the growing season. Deer-resistant.
- 🌀 **Chinese Wild Ginger** (*Asarum splendens*). There are many species and varieties of wild ginger, but this vigorous species with its heart-shaped, dark green leaves is recommended in Fine Gardening. The foliage shimmers when hit by a beam of light. Plants spread quickly by underground rhizomes, forming a thick mat of foliage that crowds out weeds

- 🌿 **Dead Nettle** (*Lamium maculatum*). A low, spreading plant with silvery foliage, it has purple, pink, red or white blooms in early summer. In shady locations, dead nettles are valued as perennial ground covers for areas that might otherwise remain bare (except for weeds). Rabbits do eat them, but they are deer resistant.
- 🌿 **Epimediums** (*Berberidaceae*) combine well with ferns, hostas, lungwort, and other shade garden plants. Depending on the species, the number of delicate orchid-like flowers produced per plant can vary from just a few to literally hundreds covering a single stem. Flower color runs the gamut from white, pink, rose, and purple to yellow, orange, and red. Epimediums will grow in dry shade, but they fare much better in part sun to light shade with a rich, organic, moisture-retentive soil.
- 🌿 **Foxglove** (*Digitalis*). Stately foxgloves have clusters of tubular shaped blooms in white, lavender, yellow, pink, red, and purple. Most foxgloves are biennials, spending their first year growing foliage, their second year flowering, and then they die. If flower heads are not removed, the plants reseed themselves abundantly – so much so that I even take a flower stalk and let it dry where I want them to grow. If you have children or pets, make sure to plant foxglove in an inaccessible location because it is poisonous if ingested.
- 🌿 **Foam Flower** (*Tiarella cordifolia*). Similar to *Heuchera* in leaf and form, *Tiarella* has white or pale pink flowers. With evergreen foliage and long-blooming, late-spring flowers, this low-maintenance groundcover is ideal for a spot in part to deep shade where there's room to expand. Depending on the variety, its leaves may have red, maroon or dark centers. Note: the rabbits loved these.
- 🌿 **Japanese forest grass** (*Hakonechloa*). Unlike most grasses, this chartreuse pom pom with its cascading golden and green leaves grows best in partial shade. It's short (12-15"), clump-forming, and slow growing. Depending on the variety, its foliage is golden green, lime green or variegated. Some turn red, orange or purple in the fall.
- 🌿 **Japanese painted fern**. (*Athyrium niponicum*) are colorful plants that brighten the part shade to shady areas of the garden. This deciduous fern has glowing pewter-and-green fronds and red or purple stems. Give this plant moist, well-drained soil. It can handle some sun during the day if the soil stays consistently moist. Several cultivars of this plant are available to the gardener, with varying shades of color. Rabbits have eaten them but they are said to be deer resistant.
- 🌿 **Lungwort** (*Pulmonaria*). This plant also has beautiful silvery foliage on long narrow leaves. Lungwort flowers in spring, and its blossoms are quite showy, ranging in color from white through pink and blue. It is deer and rabbit resistant.
- 🌿 **Siberian bugloss** (*Brunnera*). Known for its often colorful, heart-shaped leaves, *Brunnera* is a carefree plant that thrives in partial shade. It has sprays of blue flowers in spring. Rabbits usually don't eat it.

Interesting annuals to add would include **Impatiens** and **Persian Shield**, which is a lovely purple that will add a splash of color,



Gardening Tasks this April

As awful as this situation is, spring is certainly coming and, we can get out in our gardens, on our traffic islands and into our parks

- **Clean up the garden.** Ideally, you'll have done this in March but, if not, rake out and collect all the dead leaves, stems, old mulch, dried flower heads – anything that won't be used to create an organic layer in the garden.
- **Cut back perennials.** Some of us leave stems standing throughout the winter to create interest in the garden. Cut them back now. Perennials with a woody structure, such as butterfly bush, caryopteris, lavender, Russian sage, and Montauk daisies, should be pruned back once new growth appears. Cut your ornamental grasses down to nearly ground level before they start to grow. Don't prune your roses until the forsythia blooms.
- **Weed, weed, weed.** Weeding is a definite must-do now.
- **Stake or support plants.** Putting in your stakes, hoops, etc. now is much easier than waiting until the plants leaf out.
- **Plant hardy annuals.** April is the perfect time to plant pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, dusty miller, herbs, and other cold weather annuals.
- **Grow a salad garden.** April is the ideal time to plant salad crops such as spinach, Swiss chard, beets, lettuce, arugula, carrots, radishes, and peas. To increase yields, scatter the seeds in 4- to 6-inch wide bands or rows. There's no need to thin the seedlings: Just let the plants grow, and harvest as you need them. If you are short on space, grow a salad garden in a pot or planter by your kitchen door. Then, just snip what you need as you prepare meals.
- **Turn and aerate compost piles.** Screen any compost you'll be applying in the next few weeks so that it will be ready when you need it.
- **Fix bare spots in your lawn.** Rake the area to remove dead grass or other debris. Look for mixes that contain less than 1 percent of "weed" or "crop" seeds. Also, never purchase grass seed that has less than a 70 percent germination rate listed on the label. To help germination, barely cover the seed with soil and tamp gently. Water daily until the seed germinates.
- **Finish tree and shrub pruning, but don't touch spring bloomers until flowers fade.** You can prune evergreens until late summer.

By the time you do all this, we will no longer be quarantined!



Making Wildflower Bombs

Without meetings or the library, gym, church, or the symphony, I read last week's entire Sunday Times and learned about making a wildflower bomb. You just need a mixing bowl and baking sheets. A couple of children would be helpful. If you start with 1 cup of seeds, you will end up with dozens of seed bombs to give as gifts or to create colorful plant explosions.

Use native wildflower mix. Mix 1 part of seed mix suitable to the area to four parts powdered clay and five parts fine-grained compost.

Mix the dry ingredients and stir in water slowly until you have a dough-like consistency. Take a pinch of your seed-infused mud and roll it into a nickel-size ball. Set the balls on a cookie sheet and let them dry in the sun. When dry, gently throw them into a sunny spot, preferably on bare soil, before a predicted rainfall.



Interesting Publications

The Federation Recommends awaytogarden@gmail.com. It is into organic gardening and an interesting newsletter at first read.

Regina recommends American Horticultural Society — they have a section on gardening for wellness for the homebound. <newsletter@ahsgardening.org>



MMGA

Like many organizations in Massachusetts, New England, and the nation, the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association (MMGA) has made the difficult decision to suspend all face-to-face activities through April 30. Registration remains open for the 2020 Massachusetts Gardening Symposium, Saturday, October 3, in Westford. This year's theme is "Inspiration for Next Year: Specialty Gardens."

