



Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

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Co-President's Letter

Dear Friends,

As I write this, a soft snow is falling and everything is so quiet outside. I just came in from a lovely walk in the woods, but it was FREEZING! Days like today make me wonder how it is possible that spring arrives next month! I can't wait to see the early blooming flowers soon appear!

I've been reading Doug Tallamy's "Nature's Best Hope" (Morning Study Group will be discussing it at their next meeting!) and I am coming up with all sorts of ideas to promote the conservation of wildlife habitats in my own yard. Tallamy's "grassroots" approach encourages individuals... not government, agencies or policy makers... to turn their properties into "conservation corridors" that will greatly help the survival and eventually the flourishing of our wildlife populations. He gives easy and specific suggestions with lots of details in the explanation of why this endeavor is so important. I encourage you to read this book and think about ways to provide havens in your own yard for species in trouble.



The Garden Club is gearing up for our annual membership renewal. I truly hope you will all renew. Your membership is vital to the survival of the Club, especially when we've had to cancel or curtail our fund-raising efforts due to the pandemic. We've worked hard to bring you opportunities to stay connected through our Zoom programs and meetings. In fact, the Membership Committee is launching a new program to promote community and learning! Read about it on page 3 and know that there will be even more information in the March newsletter. This will be a fun activity that will provide learning, conversation and the chance to meet new people!

The Membership Committee is also starting a new Facebook group only for LFGC members. This will be a place to post or ask anything about gardening or the Club. Specific information and directions for signing up are on page 4.

Plans are in the making for the Plant Sale in May. Again, it will be a pared down version of our usual extravaganza, but we must make accommodations for the current situation. More details to come!

Can you imagine how exciting it will be when we can finally meet in person and continue our efforts as before? I cannot wait. However, in the meantime, if you have any ideas or suggestions for ways the Garden Club can improve, reach out better, or provide additional information, please let **Bridget Galdes** or me know. We are committed to meeting your needs as LFGC members!

Stay well,

Ruthanne Igoe

Co-President

February Calendar

LFGC Meeting

Wednesday, February 10, 2021 ♥ Lexington Watershed and Storm Runoff with Michael Sprague and John Livsey, LDPW

Sub Groups

Monday Evening Group ♥ **February 22** ♥ Gardening with Shrubs

Morning Study Group ♥ **February 9** ♥ Book Discussion: "Nature'S Best Hope"

Garden Party ♥ **On hiatus** until meeting outside can commence

Wednesday Workshop ♥ **February 17** ♥ Monet's Garden at Giverny

Thursday Evening Group ♥ **February 11** ♥ Garden Plants at Mt. Auburn Cemetery



Virtual Garden Happenings



This hydrangea is looking good!

Lexington's Cary Library and LFGC are pleased to present year-round talks on a variety of topics. A reservation is required so you receive the program link. You can register for individual programs by clicking on the Cary Library calendar, <https://www.carylibrary.org/calendar/program-calendar>.

Thurs, Feb 11, 7 PM When you prune correctly, you encourage healthy growth and flowering (in the case of flowering plants). Learn how to prune and when you need a professional Massachusetts Certified Arborist with Jim Harshbarger and **Ashley Rooney**. Jim's experience covers all aspects of trees and plants, plant health care, fertilization, irrigation, soil, safety and sustainability of landscapes.



New Opportunities for LFGC Members!

Garden Advice Group

Starting in late March the Membership Committee will be hosting garden advice meet-ups on Zoom. These events are a response to members asking for informal discussions to answer general questions about gardening. We will have both evening and day sessions and each will have two experienced gardeners in attendance. Stay tuned for more details in next month's newsletter!



New Garden Club Facebook Group

Are you on Facebook? If so, we have a new resource only for members of the Lexington Field and Garden Club - a Facebook Group. If you choose to join this group, you'll find a place for informal sharing between members. You can post anything related to gardening or the Club. Members can then comment on your post - answering your question, giving you information, adding a photo, or adding to your post. Only members can see who's in the group and what they post.

A sample of posts for this Group could be: "I saved my dahlia tubers. When should I put them in the ground? Should I start them indoors?" or "I have cachepots I no longer need (you can post a photo). If you'd like them, message me and I can leave on the side of my driveway."

The Group is visible, but only LFGC members will be accepted as members. If you join and decide you would rather not be a part of the Group, it is easy to leave.

To join, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LexingtonFieldAndGardenClub> and click "Join Group". There are two questions for you to answer and your membership will be approved. Then you can begin posting. As this is a new endeavor, if you have suggestions for this Group (rules, etc.) please email **Susan Cass** or another member of the Membership Committee.



Plants for Giving

E. Ashley Rooney

We all have people in our lives who could use something to brighten up a dreary winter. One year my daughter won an enormous, pink poinsettia. It was bigger than the breadbox for sure. It was bigger than my dining room chairs. We promptly gave it to my mother. She was thrilled.

In December, we think of poinsettias. In February, we often think of roses for Valentine's Day, but plants live much longer.

Amaryllis

A favorite present for many is an amaryllis bulb, which produces large, eye-catching lily-like flowers that light up the room. They challenge the despondent, the despairing, and the apathetic into believing in the future once again. They sprout so quickly that you really think you can see them growing.

A tropical bulb, native to South and Central America, they are absolutely reliable and largely carefree, which makes them a great gift for anyone on your list. The dramatic flowers, which come in many colors, mini to doubles, stripes to ruffles, can be as much as 9 inches in diameter and stand up to 3 feet high (I find that these need staking). Larger bulb sizes (10 or more inches in circumference) will result in at least four flower buds, providing a longer bloom period. They come as bulbs, in pots, or even boxed for easy shipping.

Cyclamens

Others like the cyclamen. Some have ruffled flowers, and some varieties are miniature, but all maintain a large bright flower, usually in red, pinks, maroons and white, and green or variegated heart shaped leaves.

Cyclamens like filtered light and cool nights. Temperatures that are too high will cause the plant to begin to yellow, and the flowers will fade rapidly. That's why you don't give a cyclamen to someone who keeps their heat high because cyclamens enjoy a cool house.

Cyclamens are grown from corms: a short, thickened vertical stem. Their native habitat is the Mediterranean and Southern Europe. In your home, water your cyclamen plant only when the soil is dry to the touch, but do not leave the plant in this dry state so long that it shows visible signs of not being watered, such as droopy leaves and flowers. When you water the plant, water from below the leaves so that the water doesn't touch the stems or leaves.

When your cyclamen has finished blooming, it can be discarded or the corm can be saved. After the foliage dies back, the plant should be left to dry. The corm should then be dug and repotted in midsummer and placed in a warm place so it can establish roots before returning it to a cool 55-60° F. to encourage flowering

Jasmine



This handsome subtropical vine will give you a mid-winter display of elegant and exquisitely fragrant white flowers. Cool temperatures and the right location in a well-lit room or sunny window are important. Good air circulation helps promote jasmine's showy white, winter blooms when grown indoors. The plant can tolerate as much as four hours per day of direct sunlight, from late spring through fall. Decrease direct sunlight in winter.

Succulents

Aside from being outrageously popular, succulents are pretty easy to care for. Outdoors they generally need about 6 hours of bright, indirect sunlight each day. Indoors, you'll want to place your succulents near a window that gets light all day. If this isn't an option, place your succulents near the brightest window or brightest area of your home or office.

Succulents need good airflow to maintain healthy roots and therefore healthy stem and leaves. Provide a very well-draining potting medium. When repotting, use a container that has a drainage hole and is at least 1 to 2 inches larger than the nursery container. Avoid glass containers (such as mason jars or terrariums) as they don't allow roots to breathe and can cause root rot over time. Fill the bottom one-third of the container with pre-moistened potting mix, then position your plant inside, and backfill with more pre-moistened potting mix



As long as your loved one can keep a succulent near the sun and doesn't drastically over-water, the plant will thrive. There's a huge variety of succulents to choose from, and it is great fun to build little succulent gardens as gifts!

Air Plants

Like succulents, air plants are quite popular these days. These epiphytes can survive without soil, making them perfect for hanging in little glass orbs along windows. They do require some careful soaking or misting and occasional fertilizer, but otherwise they're pretty hardy little plants.

If your air plant has fuzzy leaves, you can water it once or twice a week. If it has smooth or glossy leaves, which means the plant is from a rain forest or cloud forest, you need to water it more frequently.

As a general rule, keep your air plants out of direct sunlight. Remember, in the wild, many air plant species like to grow up in the sheltered, shady canopy of trees. So keep your plants in a brightly lit spot away from direct sunlight.



Lexington Nature Speaker Series Launched

In November 2020, the Lexington Conservation Department welcomed Amber Carr, formerly of Mass Audubon, to its staff. Since then, Amber and her colleagues have been busy putting together a series of nature talks that will be offered free of charge to all members of our community this spring. The dates and titles of the talks are listed below. Further details along with Zoom links are available at <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/pages/lexington-nature-speaker-series>.

This month's talk (**2/25**) by Professor Robert Gegear of UMass Dartmouth is of special interest to gardeners since it suggests ways that we can help to alleviate the problem of pollinator decline by adding pollen and nectar-rich native plants to our gardens. Please do not miss his talk! And please remember to mark your calendars for all the other talks in this series as well!

2/4/2021 – Winter Tracks and Signs (Shirley Sutton)

Novice or expert, zoom-in for an overview of interpreting what local wildlife left behind. Learn how to identify Massachusetts' many wildlife species by the tracks they leave in the mud and snow.

2/25/2021 – What's the Buzz? The people, plant, pollinator connection (Robert Gegear)

Ever wonder which bees benefit from your yard or how you can help rare species? Come learn about eastern North American plant-pollinator systems with Dr. Gegear. He will also highlight his Beecology Project, a citizen science project that uses eco-technology in order to collect data on 'at risk' plant-pollinator systems native to New England.

3/18/2021 – Wicked Neat: Natural History of Vernal Pools (Matt Burne)

Join BSC Group's Senior Ecologist, Matt Burne, for an in-depth exploration of one of New England's neatest natural history stories - vernal pools. Discover some of the fascinating creatures that rely entirely on these small, temporary ponds and learn about the ecological interactions that make them so important to wildlife in the New England landscape.

4/8/2021 – Bee City (Hannah Mullally)

Come celebrate Lexington becoming the first Bee City in Massachusetts! Ever wonder how to create habitat for pollinators in your backyard? Learn from Xerces Society's, Hannah Mullally, as she describes how to plan, design, install, and manage habitat for pollinators in urban settings.

4/29/2021- Nibbling on Natives in Your Back Yard and Beyond (Russ Cohen)

Join Russ Cohen, expert forager and author of *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*, for a 60-minute slide show featuring at least two dozen species of native edible wild plants suitable for adding to your own landscape, or nibbling on as you encounter them in other locales. Keys to the identification of each species will be provided, along with edible portions, seasons of availability and preparation methods, along with guidelines for safe and environmentally responsible foraging.

5/20/2021- All About Backyard Birds (Michele Grzenda)

Are you fascinated by all the visitors coming to your family's bird feeder? Join Michele Grzenda to learn skills to identify all those colorful feathered friends you admire. She will teach you common songs and calls of our backyard birds as well as some helpful mnemonic memorization.

Civic Gardening The Mary Garden

Barbara Mahoney

The Mary Garden behind St. Brigid's Church is maintained by the Lexington Field & Garden Club Wednesday Workshop volunteers. This is in appreciation for use of church space. It is kept manicured from May to October. The teardrop shape garden was designed by a LFGC member in the 1980's and funded by church members. It continues to flourish. An entrance leads to the courtyard where stone benches and a statue of Mary grace the interior. This serene garden consists of trees, shrubs and perennials. You will see dogwood and Japanese Stewartia trees. Shrubs include Azalea, Redvein Enkianthus, Hydrangea, Rhododendron, and American Cranberry bush. Perennials are Asters, Astilbe, Daylilly, Peony and more. As the pandemic kept people in isolation, Wednesday Workshop did solo gardening this past season with only 10 members. The garden is a hidden gem best accessed from Worthen Road.



February Funnies



Zoom disrupters

What did one watermelon say to the other on Valentine's Day?

You're one in a melon!

What did George Washington say to his men before crossing the Delaware?

Get in the boat.

What did one volcano say to its Valentine?

I lava you!

Who was the funniest person in George Washington's army?

Laughayette.



What We're Reading...

Georgia Glick

The Vanishing Half, by Brit Bennett

Identical twins Desiree and Stella who grow up in the small town of Mallard, Louisiana, were blacks are so light-skinned, they can pass as white. At 16 the twins run away, and soon become separated. One marries the blackest man she can find; the other marries a white man. The story follows the lives and consequences of their actions: their lies, and deceptions, from the 1950s to the 90s, including the effects on their daughters who meet. This is a riveting multi-generational family saga.

Bridget Galdes

Kindred, by Octavia Butler

I ordered this book at the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement, as I thought it would help me learn about and be more empathetic to people who are different from me. This is an excellent book, albeit a story about slavery. A black woman marries an older white male, and she gets repeatedly pulled back — one time with her husband — into the past of her family ancestors where she/they experience the horrors of slavery, racism, sexism and white supremacy in the past.

And What We're Watching...

Bridget Galdes

We watch many PBS shows. They are always entertaining, well made and high quality.

Over the Christmas holidays we decided to binge watch 'Downton Abbey'. By now probably everyone has seen it but if you have not already, it is a must see. This historical drama follows the lives of the Crawley family and their servants in the family's Edwardian country house and starts at the time of the sinking of the Titanic and goes beyond. It can be watched on Amazon Prime. Binge watching is a different experience from watching something once a week. You see things you missed in the original run and in some ways, test your memory!!

Lately we have watched 'All Creatures Large and Small', also on PBS. It is a Masterpiece Theatre production and is a remake of the television series from back in the seventies. It is about the trials and misadventures of the staff at a country veterinary office in Yorkshire. James Herriot is a young animal surgeon, who moves to a small Yorkshire town to begin his first job. Do not think that this is simply about animals. It is about relationships, hopes, achievements, empathy, life in small country villages — and, as always, about love. Another bonus to watching these two shows is seeing the beautiful English countryside and gardens. We enjoyed it so much that we are now watching the original TV series. Fun!

'Borgen' on Netflix is another entertaining series we have watched. Borgen is a Danish political drama. Birgitte Nyborg gets elected to be the first Danish female prime minister. What follows gives the viewer an insight into the political scene and how Birgitte maneuvers her way around corrupt colleagues, the press, sexism, and global issues while balancing her private life with her public one. This is well worth watching and although in Danish, it is dubbed in English. Here is a link to follow.

<https://www.bustle.com/articles/108818-6-reasons-borgen-is-the-best-show-youve-never-seen>.

We love to end our evening TV viewing with something lighthearted so that we go to bed feeling happy. To that end we have watched another PBS series, 'The Trouble with Maggie Cole'. Set in a picturesque fishing village — similar to 'Doc Marten' — Maggie engages in idle gossip which has extensive ramifications into the village people's lives. No spoiler alert but 'People who live in glass houses should not throw stones' applies here....

Another comedy series is 'Still Game' on Netflix. This is about two old widower friends and their mishaps. What more can I say? Suffice it to say that my husband and I would wake up chuckling about the previous day's episode.

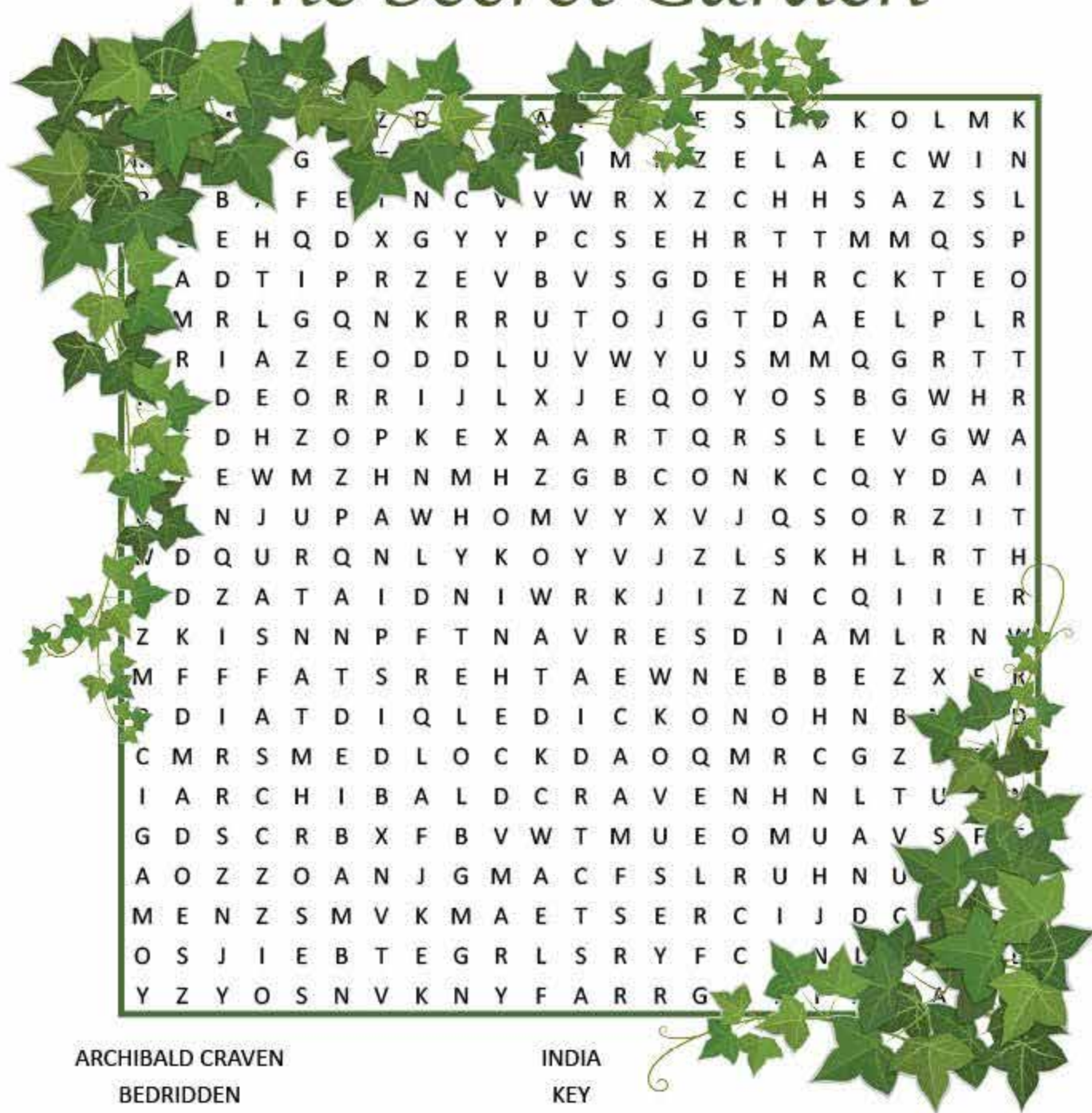
When we just have a short time left before bedtime, we watch You Tube Carpool Karaoke with James Corden. Watch 'Adele' or Barak or Michelle Obama or Lady Gaga, Pink, Barbara Streisand, Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber and so many more...Enjoy!



If you've read a book or watched a show you'd like to share with the membership, please email your description to **Ruthanne Igoe** by February 15th.



The Secret Garden



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ARCHIBALD CRAVEN
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 BEN WEATHERSTAFF
 CHOLERA
 COLIN
 DICKON
 DR. CRAVEN
 ENGLAND
 HEALTH
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INDIA
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 MARTHA
 MARY
 MISSELTHWAITE
 MOOR
 MRS. MEDLOCK
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ORPHAN
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 ROBIN
 ROSES
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