



# Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

Volume 11 Issue 9 • May 2021

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## Co-President's Letter

I read somewhere — or someone once told me — that we need three things to be happy:

1. Someone/something to love.
2. Something to do.
3. Something to look forward to.

As gardeners, we are lucky because our hobby provides us with all three things.

We love our gardens. We creatively plant things we love in our favorite colors and they reward us with their beauty. There is always something to do in the garden. Maybe there is a plant that needs relocating, or an overgrown bush that must be pruned, or flowers to be deadheaded, or new plants to install. Naturally, we constantly look forward to what will bloom next while carefully monitoring progress. An avid gardener in our club told me that she makes coffee in the morning and then is out in her garden all day. The passion for her gardening is enviable! That is happiness.

Today it is the “something to look forward to” that is occupying my thoughts. All winter long, in these newsletters, I talked about how we cannot wait for the snow to melt and for the warm weather to arrive and for the earth to wake up. That time has come. That time is now. The pansies are decking the tables at farm stands and embellishing our gardens; tulips and daffodils line our roads and soften the hardscape; and the various trees are in bloom. What a spectacle it is! This is the season we all look forward to: the warm season, the planting season, and now we can dig in – literally. We are happy at last.

This year feels especially joyful. A good number of us are now fully vaccinated and the days of isolation are nearing the end. We can venture out a little more and meet our friends more freely. Traveling is on the horizon. Life is returning to its normal state. We have looked forward to this day and now it is here. Thank goodness!

On a personal note, I am looking forward to the ‘third stage’ in life: a time of less work and more relaxation, and who better to do it with other than my family — children and grandchildren — in a warmer region of this beautiful country?



“Bloom where you are planted” is a mantra I have lived by, similar to what we hope for when we plant in our gardens. I have made some big moves in my life, leaving my country of birth in search of higher education and meaningful employment. I have been blessed with plenty along the way. I count as one blessing belonging to this wonderful garden club. I have loved it wholeheartedly, I have always had something to do for it, and I have looked forward to every meeting and event; I was happy. Thank you for allowing me to be of service and thus allowing me to bloom where planted.

Look forward to the Plant Sale!

**Bridget**

Co-President



## May Calendar

### LFGC Meeting

**Wednesday, May 12 • 10:00 AM • via Zoom**

Ikebana — The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging with Joanne Caccavale

### Sub Groups

**Monday Evening Group • May 24 • Die a Silk Scarf with Lichen Die with Leslie Masson**

**Morning Study Group • May 11 • Garden in the Woods**

**Garden Party • On hiatus**

**Wednesday Workshop • May 19 • The Charles River: An Urban and Suburban Treasure**

**Thursday Evening Group • May 13 • Tour of Historic Buttrick Garden at Minuteman Park**



## Lexington Field and Garden Club Meeting

April 14, 2021 • Via Zoom

Co-President, **Ruthanne Igoe**, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Announcements

- **Bridget Galdes**, Co-President, reported that 60 people attended the March meeting.
- The Plant Sale brochure will be available in early May. Purchase dates are May 18 and 19 and pick up is May 21 and 22.
- The LFGC main club meetings in September, October, January, February, March, and May 2021-2022 will be held at Follen Church. The November and April meetings and the Greens Party will be held at St. Briget's Church.
- By unanimous vote, the LFGC Board of Directors Officers are the following:

Co-Presidents — **Ruthanne Igoe** and **Marlene Stone**

Vice President — **Marilyn Ryngiewicz**

Recording Secretary — **Jane Halverson**

Corresponding Secretary — **Georgia Glick**

Membership — **Jackie Potdevin**

**Miranda Cohen** will continue as Treasurer and **Susan Cass** will continue as Membership Co-Chair.

**Marilyn Ryngiewicz** introduced the speaker, Suzanne Mahler. Her educational talk and beautiful photos covered irises, hostas, and daylilies.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, **Jane Halverson**, Recording Secretary

## A Special Thank you

Thank you to so many of you who helped me celebrate my birthday in such a lovely way. Garden club members know how to bring joy into this world.

**Ashley**



## Help Wanted!

### Searching for Just the Right Person!

By **Donna Moultrup**

I have been working with **Ashley Rooney** over the last two years, since she wrote the successful grant to create the John and Dolores Furnstahl Sensory Garden at the Lexington Community Center. I have loved every minute of the time spent on that project, but it is with great sadness that I let all of you know that my husband and I will be relocating to Dexter, Michigan, very close to my oldest daughter, sometime this summer. I am in hot pursuit of someone who will love this garden and will oversee its operation. There are many wonderful individuals and groups at the LCC who are very interested in assisting as soon as COVID allows the Center to reopen. It just needs someone to oversee the operation and make sure that the garden gets the TLC that it requires. I have drawings, lists of plants, and a yearly workflow and I will be happy to work with someone over the next three months to make it a smooth transition. If interested, please contact **Donna Moultrup**. THANKS SO MUCH!

## Changing Venues!

The Executive Board has voted to change our meeting place to the Follen Church, 755 Massachusetts Ave. When we are back meeting in person, our monthly Wednesday morning meetings for September, October, January, February, March, and May will be held at this location. Our evening meetings in November and April, as well as the Holiday Greens Party, will continue to be held at St. Brigid's Church. Follen Church has undergone an extensive renovation and the space we will be renting has lots of room, the most recent and top of the line acoustic and video/projection capabilities, bathrooms in discreet locations, a kitchen, coat closet, room to mingle and so much more! It is entirely handicapped accessible. We think you will all be delighted with the space! There is parking on the property as well as street parking along Mass. Ave. We will be encouraging carpooling whenever possible and plan to provide information for people to get in touch with neighbors to share rides. More details on the parking and carpooling will be provided in the near future. If you have any questions, please email me at [igoefamily@aol.com](mailto:igoefamily@aol.com).

Thank you,

**Ruthanne Igoe**

## Lexington Field & Garden Club's Spring Plant Sale



**Lexington Field & Garden Club members are preparing for its 88th Plant Sale, rain or shine, the weekend of May 21-22.** We'll have locally grown, proven Lexington perennials for sun and shade dug and potted by some of our best local gardeners. Our dahlias and cannas have already leafed out; our native plants will attract pollinators and birdlife to your property; and our house plants will help you decorate your home.

We invite you to browse our brochure (published online the weekend before and sent to all garden club members) and do some shopping for your garden! All items are available to purchase on a "First Come, First Serve" basis.

Emails for your orders will be provided in the brochure. **Ordering begins on Monday, May 17 starting at 8 AM until Tuesday, May 18, at 8 PM.** Payment only by check made payable to Lexington Field & Garden Club when you pick up your order. Pick up days are May 21 (1 PM to 5 PM) or May 22 (9 AM to 4 PM). You will be assigned a time to pick up your plants.

**Note:** If you have plants that you wish to donate, please contact **Georgia Glick**.



## GCFM's Native Plant Challenge Continues

Many of you know **Bonnie Rosenthal**. Bonnie lived in Lexington for many years and was a very active member of the Lexington Field and Garden Club. She was a strong proponent of native plants and when she was elected president of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (GCFM) in 2019, she issued a Native Plant Challenge to all garden clubs in Massachusetts. Numerous native plants have been added to civic and private gardens all across Massachusetts over the past eighteen months as a result of this initiative. Due to its success, the Native Plant Challenge was recently extended by another two years.

More information about the Native Plant Challenge can be found here:

<https://www.gcfm.org/president-s-project>.

If you click the link <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/> and insert your zip code, you will find lists of native plants that do well in our area. To learn about the benefits of pollinators and wildlife in your garden see:

<https://www.ecolandscaping.org/11/designing-ecological-landscapes/native-plants/morethan-pollinator-friendly/>.

Some useful articles are also available here:

<https://www.ecolandscaping.org/event/ela-ecological-plant-conference-2020/>.

And please continue to read Doug Tallamy's books (*Bringing Nature Home*, *The Living Landscape* with Rick Darke, and *Nature's Best Hope*) that provide clear and convincing arguments for adding native plants to your gardens.

Go native, everyone!





## Pollinator Plant Kits for Sale!!!

Our club is part of Lexington Living Landscapes, which is collaborating with Lexington Conservation on a sale of plant kits to benefit our pollinators. The kits include four native plant species selected based on bloom time and their attractiveness to pollinators. They are: **Zizia aurea** (golden Alexanders), **Monarda fistulosa** (wild bergamot), **Pycnanthemum tenuifolium** (narrow-leaved mountain-mint), and **Solidago caesia** (blue-stemmed goldenrod). The plants are grown at a certified organic native perennial farm in New Hampshire and come in quart size biodegradable pots. You can purchase a kit of 12 plants (three plants of each species) for \$60, or a set of 4 individual plants (one plant per species) for \$22. The sale is conducted online and the kits will be available for pick-up at DPW located at 201 Bedford Street in Lexington on Saturday May 15, 9 AM to 12 noon.

Anyone wishing to buy a kit should set up a MyRec account first. [https://lexrecma.myrec.com/info/household/add\\_step\\_01.aspx](https://lexrecma.myrec.com/info/household/add_step_01.aspx)

To make the purchase, scroll down to Conservation at the bottom of:

<https://lexrecma.myrec.com/info/activities/default.aspx>.

For any questions, please email us at

[lexlivingland@gmail.com](mailto:lexlivingland@gmail.com) or [acarr@lexingtonma.gov](mailto:acarr@lexingtonma.gov).



## Attention All Readers!

Summertime is reading time, so if you have any great books to recommend to the membership, please send your suggestions with a brief review to **Ruthanne Igoe** by May 20. Thank you!



## Virtual Garden Happenings

Lexington's Cary Library and LFGC are pleased to present year-round talks on a variety of topics. A reservation is required at least 24 hours beforehand so you receive the program link. You can register for individual programs by clicking on the Cary Library calendar, <https://www.caryllibrary.org/calendar/program-calendar>.

### Tuesday, May 11, 7 PM — On the Road Gardening

**Guy** and **Elaine Doran**, well known for their gardening expertise, will share some of their favorite nurseries and plants with us as they take us to nurseries in NH, ME, and CT. Follow in their footsteps, pack a picnic, get out of town, and bring home new plants and many memories.

## Civic Gardening

By **Chris Kochanski**

Spring is here!

I can't wait to go to my yard and start again with pruning, weeding, and all those maintenance chores that make a garden space look good. I love to see plants looking their best. A beautiful garden gives pleasure to all who view it. As garden club members, we have an opportunity to contribute to the beauty of the town in which we live.

You can learn a lot by gardening in places other than your own; you can see plants you haven't considered for your own garden, and see how they behave. I have worked on numerous islands and green spaces in Lexington; each has different plant material due to its setting. If you ever volunteer at the Community Center, you will see how tough **peonies** are. Surviving in full sun with little water, they still come back every year — a proven winner! At the Maple Street/Mass Ave island, there is a **blue salvia** (probably May Night), that survived (and bloomed) with no water last summer. The **Peroviskia** (Russian Sage) bloomed despite the lack of rain — two more winners! Unfortunately, the **yellow dogwood bushes** don't look good because it's too dry for them. However, I liked the effect of the open yellow stems behind the bench so much that I used it in another garden design.

Some plants can be too successful, such as the "**Grow-Lo Sumac**" in Emory Park that requires continuous pruning to keep it under control. This is something to consider if you purchase this plant. One year, the Mass Ave/Woburn St. island had **chartreuse sweet potato vines** that cascaded down to the street. I love this plant, but I can only use it in pots due to bunnies — they love it even more than me! The Summer St. island has **hardy pink mums** that come back every year. It's a tough plant that looks good in late summer/fall and a good choice for full sun. Any island with **Siberian Iris** demonstrates how tough these are. They just need dividing every few years which means more plants!

You should try out civic gardening. When you see an email asking for a one-day commitment, sign-up! It's fun and you will make new friends. Ask if any islands need another volunteer - don't be shy! Choose a space near you, so that you can admire it when you drive by. You will be surprised how often people passing-by say, "Thank you! It looks great!"



*Community Center crew*

## Pollinator News

### Kitty Galaitsis

Ecological news from Britain is that major changes in human-dominated environments have impacted the floral landscapes for insect pollinators. Studies compared the distribution of floral resources in nature reserves, farmland and urban areas in Great Britain. By combining data on floral abundance and nectar sugar production the nectar supply in the three habitats could be estimated. The per unit area in all three habitats of nectar sugar production was similar but data showed that the diversity of nectar sources was significantly higher in cities than in nature reserves or farm land. The key reason for the greater diversity and for a wide variety of plant species for pollinating insects was residential gardens in the cities. Yea gardeners!

— From *Science Magazine* March 2021



## Splendid Shade Gardens

### E. Ashley Rooney

A shade garden need not be dull. Many brightly colored foliage plants (think of those **char-treuse coleus** or **bright coral impatiens**) can turn a shaded area into something quite splendid. To lighten up a dark corner, you can use plants with white-colored blossoms and foliage such as **hosta** or **goat's beard**. Or you can add water-filled stone troughs to reflect light. Or perhaps you can amuse the viewer with a sensational garden ornament. There are ways to make those shade gardens very interesting.

### Shade Gardening Basics

Determine the depth of your shade and the amount of moisture in your area before going crazy for shade plants. The more moisture that's provided and the lighter your shade, the more choices you have.

"Light shade" describes the dappled light under canopy plants or trees or three or four hours of direct sunlight. Very few plants survive dense, dry shade.

Gardening becomes more difficult under mature trees or on the north side of a building. If the canopy is deciduous, however, the garden underneath often gets a full day of sunlight in April and May, allowing early spring flowers to bloom.

Most shade plants require rich, well-drained soil and regular watering. Before you plant, layer about 3 inches of compost, seaweed or peat moss on the soil so the soil retains moisture. Do not pile up soil or mulch directly against tree trunks or the tree could die.

Of course, if your trees are not evergreen, your "shade" garden often gets a full day of sunlight in April and May, allowing early spring wildflowers such as **dutchman's breeches**, **Virginia bluebells**, or **shooting stars** to live out their year's life cycle of blooming and seeding before the leaves appear. These highly prized plants are called "spring ephemerals" because they go dormant and totally vanish after the shade fills in, only to reappear in the light of the following spring.

## Spring Shade Blooms

**Hellebores** or **Lenten roses** bloom from February to the beginning of spring, so make them obvious. The foliage remains shiny green throughout the winter, but the flowers that range in color from purple, red, white to pink are the real show. The colors begin to fade by May, but the flowers can hang on for months.

**Arisaema** or the **jack-in-the-pulpit** stands elegantly in the moist, shady garden, especially among ferns and astilbes. Plant them so you can see their unusual hooded flowers in the spring and bright, orange-berried spikes in the fall.

The dainty, heart-shaped, pink or white flowers and, ferny foliage of the **Dicentras** or **bleeding hearts** add beautiful color and texture to shade regulars such as ferns and hostas. The taller, spring-blooming bleeding hearts flower in May and June. They have larger leaves and more colorful flowers, but they are sad by early June. Other forms (e.g., *D. eximia*) have lacy foliage and small flowers bloom until autumn.

**Epimedium**, a slow, creeping groundcover, has starry flowers that appear in early spring. They are followed by almost lime-green leaves, which often have distinct red highlights. In summer, their unusual form and density attract our eye. They have good fall color, and the leaves last through winter.

**Pulmonaria** (**lungwort**, **trout plant**) produces arching clusters of tubular flowers that are usually pink in bud and open to blue or purple. Their handsome leaves emerge and expand as the flowers fade.

The various species of **Hepatica/ Anemone** are considered to be great native perennials for a shade garden. The plant stays in bloom longer than most native shade plants, and it is not overly demanding. These early bloomers flower in March and April.

**Bloodroot** will easily spread with very little attention in your woodland garden or in rock gardens. It is white, sometimes tinged with pink, and likes dry soil. **Virginia bluebells** (**Mertensia virginica**) is another native New England wildflower that grows 12 to 24 inches tall with oval, bluish-green leaves. It produces blossoms from March through April.

**Solomon Seal**, a partial shade lover, produces small, lengthy, tube shaped flowers which hang from the stems. The blooms appear in late spring and last throughout the summer months. Solomon's seal blooms on upright stems and does well in partial shade. The blooms turn to bluish colored berries when summer leaves and fall begins.

## Summer Shade Blooms

One of my favorite summer bloomers is the giant white **goat's beard** or **Aruncus**. The magnificent feathery plumes of creamy white flowers float like clouds above the foliage in early to mid summer. A boon to flower arrangements, this plant adds vertical color and soft texture to the shade garden and is ideal for the rear of the garden.

One of the most popular shade perennials is the **Astilbe**. Its feathery spikes in many shades of pink, white, red and purple are one of the primary ingredients of easy midsummer color in the shade garden. Its deeply cut, medium to dark green, fernlike foliage remains attractive all summer.

**Meadow rue** (**Thalictrum spp.**) include several species that are narrow clumping plants with delicate foliage and flowers that are sometimes mistaken for those of columbine. **Thalictrum polygamum** (**tall meadow rue**) is a white-flowering species that blooms from July to September. It can grow very tall—up to 8 feet—and may need staking, especially when growing in shady garden conditions.



If you want a geranium that thrives in the shade and flowers for months, try the **Cranesbill**. With saucer-shaped flowers, they make excellent border plants. Purple, blue, and pink varieties mean you can add lots of color to your shade garden.

The deep coppery leaves of the **Actaea racemosa** are dramatic on their own. In the late summer/early fall, the plant is topped by stout, 6 ft. stems bearing foot-long, creamy white bottlebrushes known as fairy candles.

Ferns are a carefree addition to the moist, dappled shade garden. The **Japanese Painted Fern** (*A. nipponicum* 'Pictum') is the most popular, probably because of its elegant silver/maroon/blue-lavender foliage. To get the best color, grow this fern in morning sun or in a dappled exposure. For deep shade, try the **Variiegated Holly Fern**. Each long, leathery, pointed frond has a central yellow zigzag that really gives it a sharp, formal look. The **Hart's Tongue**, with its neatly puckered leaves, has lovely colors.

The erect **Foxglove** or **Digitalis** combines elegant colors with a cottage-garden appeal. It has tall spikes of tubular flowers in pinks, roses, whites, and yellows. Short-lived, it is easy to grow if you lift the clumps after flowering and replant the new rosettes or allow it to self seed. It will bloom all summer.

**Coral bells** or **Heuchera** offer handsome foliage clumps and graceful spikes of small bell-like flowers in late spring to late summer. The taller varieties have a misty, ethereal quality when clumped together. The smaller types have a subtle, refined beauty. Some coral bells have red to purple foliage, which may be marked with silver.

Generally, when we consider shade plants, we think of **Hostas**, which are grown primarily for their green, blue-green or yellow-green foliage. Incidentally, the yellows become more vivid with more sun; the blues become bluer with more shade. Hostas, however, have white or blue flowers, which can be quite showy in the dark border. They are virtually maintenance free, except that deer and slugs LOVE them! Unfortunately, rabbits do too.

The spectacular **Rodgersias** have tall, branched spikes of fuzzy flowers and huge, beautifully textured leaves that become red and bronze in fall. Related to the **Astilbe**, it produces fluffy plumes held well above the foliage. It adapts well to a wide range of light levels, preferring cooler growing conditions. It is at its best when planted along the edges of a water or bog garden.



## May Merriment

What do you get when you plant kisses?

Tu-lips

What kind of socks  
does a gardener wear?

Garden hose

What do you get when you cross a  
bike with a flower?

Bicycle petals

God made rainy days so gardeners could  
get their housework done...

