



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

This summer I visited the Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich multiple times — every time with a different friend or family member. Since I visit often and know the garden well, I let whoever is accompanying me lead the way and to take me to whatever part of the gardens they are interested in. What surprised me, after four visits, is that every visit was a unique experience. One friend wanted to see it all — to such an extent that when we tired of walking, we took the garden tour bus round to the remotest spots that we may have missed by walking. Another friend wanted to take it easy, visit only a few spots and enjoy the moments sitting on a bench in the shade. When my grandkids visited, they wanted to play in the garden — they turned the tree house into a restaurant and sold me imaginary hamburgers and hot dogs — that is after walking through the maze and the labyrinth. When I visited with my husband, he just wanted to go home and read his book!

It struck me that, although we were visiting the same garden, every experience was different and evoked different reactions in me and in others. And I thought — Isn't it the same with this pandemic? The environment is such that there is a threat of serious viral infection — yet people react differently to that threat. Some are very happy to stay at home and read their books — see what they're reading in the newsletter — while others cannot wait to don their masks and be out and about at the town center or whatever establishment takes their fancy. Some party recklessly and others still refuse to wear a mask believing all this to be a hoax.

We are all missing our vibrant monthly club meetings at the Depot. We miss our friends and seeing familiar faces. We miss the routine that every second Wednesday of every month we know we are occupied. Inasmuch as we would like to resume life as we have known it, we know that we cannot do so at this time. The risk is too high — and let us be honest, most of us club members are the 'at-risk' population! Even if one life is lost, it will be one life too many. For that reason, we have decided to keep meeting virtually through Zoom at least until the end of the year. We are setting up a Zoom account and will be sending information in the near future. It will be a different experience for everyone, but I assure you, it will be good. Join us!

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Bridget Galdes

Co-President



Important Notice about Our Meetings

Hello everyone! As we mentioned in this and recent newsletters, our “Big Club” meetings will be held, via Zoom, on the regularly scheduled dates, for the time being. Our first presentation, September 9th, will be “Historic Landscapes: Creating a Sense of Time and Place” by John Forti. An email will be sent to everyone as the date draws near, containing all the information necessary to join the meeting. We will also put a message on the website (www.LexGardenClub.org). We are always seeking new members, so perhaps you’d like to invite a friend to join you in a safe and socially distanced way – coffee in the garden? – to watch the presentation, and that friend will be inspired to join the LFGC and help support our missions! Be on the lookout for that email!

Have you seen...

...our new Yearbook! Endless thanks to **Donna Dennison** who patiently worked on each corrected copy and expertly put it all together. Copies were mailed out in August. If you did not receive your copy, please contact **Susan Cass** or **Marlene Stone**.



Meet our new Treasurer

Miranda Cohen

Raised by a green thumb, off-the-grid, homesteading mother, Miranda grew up in a Michigan home that had chickens, goats, a menagerie of pets, and a huge vegetable garden and flower beds nearly as big. She has lived in a number of interesting cities — Otsu (Japan), Chicago, Santa Fe, Las Vegas — before life brought her to Lexington in 2016. She holds an MBA in Finance and a Masters in Accounting from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She currently works in commercial real estate management and investment. Miranda has a lovely husband, Jonah, and two sweet daughters, Esme, 11, and Naomi, 5. When they first moved to Massachusetts, they rented a home in Belmont, but quickly fell in love with the history and beauty of Lexington. Miranda loves peonies, sedum, tulips and tomatoes. Since she started gardening three years ago, she no longer finds rabbits cute at all. She joined the LFGC at the plant sale in 2019, fell completely in love during the garden tour, and was happy to hear of a need for someone to fill the treasurer role.



Fun things to do.....

The Provincetown Art Association and Museum is bringing their annual “Secret Garden Tour” to online viewers. This tour will take you on a virtual visit of amazing gardens on Outer Cape Cod. Check out www.paam.org/garden and enjoy!



A member reported having a lovely picnic lunch with friends at the Acton Arboretum. Check out their website for more information! www.actonarboratum.org



A Note from Christel McCarthy, Gardener Extraordinaire....

Dear Garden Friends,

I was asked to write a few words about civic gardening to you all. The Garden Club's mission is all about improving the looks of the Town. When I first joined the Club in 1986 there was not that much emphasis on that aspect, there were plenty of other causes that kept us busy. I think in 2000 the idea was acted on to pay special attention to our many traffic islands and public spaces that were cared for largely by the Town's Public Works Department.

I am not sure who in the Club rallied a group of eager beavers that felt the Town's public spaces like Depot Square, the Library Entrance and all the many traffic islands should look less hum drum and show more flowers and small bushes to look good during the growing season. There were about 20 of us that signed up and most of us adopted a space near our homes. Groups of anywhere from 2 to 5 or more people took turns to do the work. I was living on Mass. Ave. at the time and adopted the Island on Worthen Road next to the Inn at Hastings Park. A neighbor, Anne Ugolini, offered to help and the two of us took care of the existing wilderness with lots of landscaping cloth underneath. You could not dig a hole, the dirt was so poor. It was a hopeless little piece of dirt. We ripped out most of the existing plantings over time and every year we improved the soil. As I had a fair-sized garden nearby, I would transfer perennials that I was hoping would do well and eventually we created a lovely little garden with something blooming all the time. People smiled driving by. Stuck at the traffic lights during rush hour, they had time to appreciate the Island and hopefully it gave them a good feeling.

While I was still living at 2006 Mass. Ave., the watering was not such a problem as the Island was nearby my house. Anne and I had devised a watering system. I put big plastic jugs into my son's Radio Flyer and we rolled the wagon over to water the garden. Anne was a good partner but after 8 years she needed a break. One day we were offered help from someone in a neighboring house, an offer to water in the midst of summer. The neighbor had a big garden herself and she would get up very early to water her own garden and she would drag her hose across Worthen Road to water our patch too.

Being so exposed in the middle of Worthen Road doing our work, people stopped with comments, mostly all very appreciative. One day a Boston Globe photographer happened to drive by, took a picture and interviewed me as I was working on the patch and sure enough it was in the Globe, in the Metro section. We got offers to work in private gardens and even a marriage offer, which made me think single ladies ought to be working on these projects!

Alas, my little traffic island is gone now, fallen victim to the very busy intersection of Mass. Ave. and Worthen Road. It gave Anne and me a lot of personal satisfaction. It felt good to do something to make the town lovely. I urge you to think about that kind of volunteer work and maybe you want to sign up for a spot when it next presents itself. It will make you feel good.

Best to all,

Christel

And a follow-up from Karen and Meg, Civic Gardening Chairs



For nearly 20 years now, **Christel McCarthy** has been lovingly tending a small stretch of ground, a traffic island along Worthen Road near Mass. Ave. In full sun and without irrigation, often with plants from her own garden, she kept the area blooming throughout the year. Like a number of our long-time members, she exemplifies the best among us, making the club's primary mission, beautification of public places around Lexington, a personal mission. We all thank you, **Christel**, for maintaining that lovely little oasis along Worthen Road, Christel's Island, for your dedication and commitment, for all these years. We thank you for sharing your knowledge, your friendship, your devotion and enthusiasm to Lexington Field & Garden Club. You have made Lexington a better place.



Lexington Field & Garden Fall/Winter Gardening Series

Sign Up for any of these virtual programs at Cary Library.

<https://www.caryllibrary.org/calendar/program-calendar>

Click on the title of program and you will be able to sign up. If you miss it, you can look under YouTube with **Ashley Rooney** on the Internet.

9/2 Wednesday at 1:00 PM: Welcoming Spring: Selecting and Planting Flower Bulbs

You don't need to be an expert gardener to grow bulbs. Many types of bulbs are easy to grow and provide years of pleasure with minimal upkeep. Join us for this special gardening session where Guy Doran and Ashley Rooney discuss how to select and plant flower bulbs.



9/9 Wednesday at 1:00 PM: Creating a Pollinator Meadow

A meadow of mixed flowers and native grasses can replace your lawn, cover a slope, or enhance a roadside. Most meadows require much less water and fertilizer than lawns do, and they rarely need mowing. Join **Holly Samuels** and **Ashley Rooney** as they discuss creating a stylized, sustainable pollinator meadow that you can size to your yard.



9/16 Wednesday at 1:00 PM: Make a Plan Before You Plant



So often we plant before we plan our garden. **Linda Walsh** and **Ashley Rooney** will discuss the benefits of paper, pencil, and some reference materials in establishing a low maintenance garden.

9/23 Wednesday at 1:00 PM: From Suburban Chickens to the Farmers Market

Chickens in your lawn? **Ashley Rooney** will first meet with Tommy Reilly, who will describe the benefits and concerns of having chickens. Then Leslie Willcox Henrie of the Lexington Farmers Market will discuss their local fresh produce and local farming.



9/30 Wednesday at 1:00 PM: The Garden Goes to Bed: Dividing Plants to Preserving the Harvest



By the end of September, most of us are ready to put the garden to bed. Peter Lund and **Ashley Rooney** will describe some of the many tasks that face us — from dividing plants to preserving the harvest.

Evening Programs

10/22 Thursday at 7:00 PM: See, Feel, Smell the Sensory Garden at LCC

Lexington Community Center has a great sensory garden, thanks to a grant from the Friends of Council on Aging to the Lexington Field & Garden Club. **Donna Moultrup** and **Ashley Rooney** will describe how this came about and its future.



11/19 Thursday at 7:00 PM: Enjoy our Feathered Friends: Making Your Yard Bird Friendly

Watching birds at your feeder during the winter months is a great way to stay connected with nature. **Guy Doran** and **Ashley Rooney** will discuss how to care for the birds during winter months.



12/2 Thursday at 7:00 PM: Decorating for the Winter Using Your Garden Materials.



Fresh evergreen holiday decorations can turn just about any nook or cranny into an inviting retreat. **Elaine Doran** and **Ashley Rooney** will demonstrate how to use materials from your garden in your holiday centerpieces.



Sorry to Say....

The Covid-19 virus has caused numerous cancellations locally. After much thought and discussion, **Ashley Rooney** and **Regina Sutton** have decided to cancel the **Home for the Holidays** tour, which was planned for December 13, 2020. We are sad about this decision, but it seems sensible. We will consider the possibility of a tour for December 2021.



Too Many Plants

Sometimes our gardens become overcrowded or a builder is going to destroy the neighbor's gardens. Several Garden Club members are beginning to think ahead, digging up plants for next year's 88th Plant Sale. We have two-to-three vegetable gardens that we can store plants in over the winter. We even have the pots! Contact **Georgia Glick** or LFGC024@gmail.com.

The Greenhorn Green Thumb

Humorous Musings of a Novice Gardener

By Jim Poage

I have been seriously building and maintaining a decorative garden for three or four years. I want to share some results that have amazed or puzzled me as my young garden matures.

Runt of the six pack?

How can plants with the same name, purchased at the same time, from the same six-pack, planted at the same time, and planted next to each other grow so differently?



On the left is a photo of a Portulaca border. Most are growing like the ones on the outside, but what's with the two in the middle?

Remember, these four are from the same six-pack. Are these the runts of the litter (or "runts of the six-pack")? They're not dead, they're just not growing.



In the right photo are two Dahlias planted at the same time last spring. They've merged together, but you can see the bigger plant with bigger leaves on the right three-quarters and the smaller plant with smaller leaves on the left one-quarter. Both are green and blooming. But the one on the right is humongous compared to the half-pint next door. They're from different pots but purchased at the same time from the same nursery. Maybe they're different varieties and I didn't know it.

What a difference a year makes!

On the left are three Shasta Daisies (Becky) planted and pictured in 2019. You can make out one separate plant on the bottom. Not so visible is that there are two separate plants above it. The bigger one in the middle was a new plant from a nursery. The top and bottom ones were planted from dividing another daisy. Small and scraggly in August 2019.



One year later, the photo on the right. Last year's three pipsqueaks have merged into one, megamonstrous daisy extravaganza. How did all this happen in one year? This is one of the enchanting, euphoric experiences of gardening.

Too Close for Comfort!

I'm sure many beginning gardeners have planted plants too close. Here's an example today in my front yard from plantings done this past spring. I just didn't expect them all to get so large (or maybe I did not read or believe the plant tags).

On the left is a Russian Sage that I transplanted last spring from my partial shade back yard where it did poorly. So I must have based its expected size on its puny backyard performance and not on its new home in full sun. At least for now it's growing over the other plants and not into them (do you suppose it's just being polite for now and thinking, "Okay, I'll give you a chance to move and if you don't, next summer I'm taking over.>"). In the middle is a one-year old Wee White Hydrangea



that, while it will stay on the small side, you'd think, this being the end of its second year in my garden, it would not be so submissive to the other plants encroaching on it. Then there are the two Dahlias in front — so far just barely maintaining their separateness. And to the right, a Lantana! A pot I'd bought last spring had lost its tag, and I did not know what it was. It was so dinky and debilitated (maybe 2 to 3 inches across), I thought it would not survive and just plopped it in the ground to see what would happen. It survived! And it grew to 2 feet across, pushing into its neighbors as you see here. I will, of course, be doing some corrective transplanting. Lesson learned: look into plant sizes and believe them, even if a plant looks sickly.



Flowers That Bloom in the Fall

By E. Ashley Rooney

So many gardens fade long before the first leaves fall. And they don't need to. There are many new offerings that can be planted now for fall color next year. Early September is a good time to evaluate new plants, add perennials (not just chrysanthemums) to the garden, and plant for next year. It is also a time when you might find them on sale.

Here are some perennials to consider so you can have color in the fall:

Many of us know spring and summer **anemones**, but how many of us know the lovely autumn bloomers: Chinese (*A. hupehensis*) and Japanese (*A. hybrida*) anemones? Generally hardy in Zones 4–8, they have divided leaves and flowers reminiscent of apple blossoms or small dahlias in white and shades of pink on graceful, branching stems. These lovely plants are two to four feet tall and superior for cutting. They dislike wind, drought and soggy soil, but they flower for weeks in partial to full sun in moist but well-drained soil. They may be slow to establish, but the results are well worth your patience.

Have you noticed this flagrantly red plant in flower borders? Joseph's Coat or **Amaranthus tricolor** puts on a colorful show in sunny areas during the end of the summer. Prized in Victorian gardens, this African plant is generally 3-4 feet tall and has brilliantly colored leaves of red, gold and green. One or two go a long way during the heat of the summer.

Asters are one of the standard, autumn blooming perennials that can revitalize your fall gardens. Most of us know the hardy native New England (*A. novae-angliae*) and Michaelmas daisies (*A. novi-belgii*) species. They come in pinks, blues and violets, can reach five feet, and make a distinctive display in the fall garden. Dwarf asters are also attractive possibilities. Plant asters early in the fall in full sun and with good airflow to avoid mildew problems. If you pinch them back, you will get compact asters full of flowers. And bees love them!

Boltonia (*B. asteroides*) looks like a Michaelmas daisy or aster. Hardy in Zones 4–6, it has a shower of daisy-like flowers in white, lilac or purple. Another North American native, it thrives in a sunny, pollinator garden or a wet meadow. Two of the more popular varieties are the five-foot Snowbank and Pink Beauty, white and pink respectively, with sparse grayish foliage. The plant requires stout staking, but it is quite lovely reclining over a fence.

Garden Mums produce a showy floral display in autumn. They bear many flowers that are excellent for cut flowers. They require a rich soil that is well drained and benefit from some winter protection. Apply a winter mulch of wood chips or evergreen boughs after the ground has frozen and remove the mulch in spring to prevent rotting. If you pinch your mums back periodically until mid July, they will develop a fat, bushy growth.

Flowering Kale is excellent for containers, beds and mass planting with its range of colors from crisp white to rose-red. The center rosette is always in contrast to the ruffled green or greenish-purple outer leaves. As the days become shorter and the night's cooler, they begin to color. Flowering kale is often still effective up until December.

Goldenrod (*Solidago* spp), another North American native, bears masses of eye-catching golden-hued flowers and can grow up to five feet. Some experts say it is our single most valuable perennial plant for **pollinators**. It loves full sun and various habitats, from open meadows to wet bogs. It does spread, but it does not cause hay fever as most of us were taught.

Helenium or sneezeweed, another native, provides rich coloring to the fall garden. Its daisy-like flowers can be found throughout much of the US. Hardy in Zones 4–8, Helenium is fond of heat and sun, impervious to pests, and will bloom its head off in moist, even soggy, soil. It comes in yellow, red and mahogany.

Heliopsis has big double daisies the color of sunshine. Some cultivars begin blooming in June and produce armloads of semi-double flowers until early September. This native can grow to four feet in good conditions in Zones 4–9. Its nectar attracts butterflies and other pollinators. If you like bright golden yellow flowers, deep green foliage, and zero care, you will like this plant. It thrives in full sun and well-drained, even dry, soil and is excellent as a cut flower.

Butterflies and bees find the dusky rose flowers of the Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) irresistible. Good for borders, meadow gardens and dried arrangements, Joe Pye Weed likes a moist, sunny site in Zones 3–9. It can grow up to five feet tall. A 'Chocolate' cultivar has purplebrown leaves and white flowers.

The broad, woody-stemmed, fall-flowering **Nippon Daisy** (*C. nipponicum*) is hardy at -10 degrees F, but it may not have time to flower before the first frost. Some, like myself, will plant it anyway because of its attractive foliage. Those glossy, spear-shaped leaves look great in any arrangement. The Shasta-type daisy bloom that continues for several weeks is an added bonus. Since you may not be enjoying your garden in October, plant this one so it is visible from your windows.

Ornamental Grasses can give year-round interest, accent and texture. Robust performers, they add distinction to your border or gardens from early spring through the fall. When the plumes are left on the plant (and not dried, which is a natural end), they provide graceful

beauty throughout the winter. They grow in good, well-drained soil in sun or very light shade and are highly resistant to drought. Talk to your local supplier to find what works in your area but definitely consider Miscanthus, Pennisetum (or fountain grass) and Carex.

The '**Autumn Joy**' **Sedum** is considered by many to be one of the best perennials grown in the US today, probably because it is attractive throughout the year. An erect, sage-green clump, it happily marches down any border. Its flowers turn pale pink, attracting butterflies and bees, and slowly darkening to a coppery rose. The deadheads remain attractive even in deep snow. The plant requires well-drained soil, is hardy in Zones 4–9, does well in light shade and full sun and does not require staking. What else can you ask for?

Toad Lilies (*Tricyrtis* spp.) will like the shady, moist areas of your garden. Their small, white, pink, and even purple flowers resemble small orchids. They are small enough that they are not visible from a distance. Locate the plant near a path and watch passers-by stop and stare. They grow to about three feet in Zones 4–9.



What are you reading? Members share some of the books they're enjoying this summer...

Martha Crosier Wood

My usual go-to reading is either mysteries or non-fiction — especially history or current affairs, but the stand-out for me this summer was a novel, *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead, winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Underground Railroad*. Obviously an outstanding author, his writing pulls you along and won't let you put the book down. It's certainly NOT light beach reading but a story of the truly horrifying abuse and prejudices — complete inhumanity — meted out at a fictional Florida reformatory called Nickel but based on Florida's very real Dozier Reform School. I won't say more about the plot because I don't want to give anything away.

Katherine Leva

Looking for a tender and memorable, satisfying read, something realistic, compassionate, with a dose of humor? Then check out *Elizabeth Is Missing*, by Emma Healy, from your local library. Maud, a grandmother in her 80s living with Dementia relies on sticky notes to get through the day as her memory slowly deteriorates. One day her best friend, another elderly woman named Elizabeth, fails to meet her as promised. Maud begins to believe something sinister has happened to Elizabeth, but her attempts to raise the alarm are dismissed by those around her. She is forced to investigate on her own as her memory flashes back to the mystery of another disappearance. The clues Maud uncovers lead her deeper into her past, to an unsolved disappearance of her older sister Sukey, who vanished shortly after World War II.

Bonus Information:

PBS Masterpiece will air *Elizabeth Is Missing on Sunday*, January 3, 2021, at 9:00 PM!

Claire Bertucci

Last month I read *Saving Jemima* by Julie Zickefoose, nature book author and artist. It is a chronicle of the ups and downs of raising an orphaned jay. This was my book club's selection which I felt compelled to read even though I have always thought of blue jays as nasty birds and robbers. After enjoying the book with its beautiful illustrations and learning that jays are quite intelligent (related to crows and magpies), I have had a change of heart! The illustrations and photos are gorgeous, so bird lovers might want to read or own this one. I'm currently reading *The Splendid and the Vile* about Winston Churchill; excellent, but a much slower read!

Meade Fasciano

Lost Rose, by Martha Hall Kelly (a prequel of sorts to *Lilac Girls*, a *New York Times* bestseller) is a historical novel based on a true story of three women, one from Russian royalty, one from Russia's lower class and one from New York high society. The story begins in 1914 with the world on the brink of war and the beginning of the Russian revolution. The women's lives are intertwined in profound ways and we get a glimpse of the experiences of the upper class, as well as the revolutionists. From the turbulent streets of St. Petersburg and aristocratic countryside to the avenues of Paris where a society of fallen Russian émigrés live, to the mansions of Long Island, the lives of these three women intersect. It becomes a page-turner wondering what will become of these women, two of whom are best friends from different countries.

Mary Bicknell

When asked what I have been reading this summer I am tempted to say "lots of mysteries." That is only partially true. I have read many books, but will only mention a couple. *Code Girls* by Liza Mundy is the story of the young women (mostly from women's colleges of the north-east) recruited by the government during World War II to decipher codes. Their work was absolutely "hush, hush." As I understand it, the group evolved into the National Security Agency, which I remember seeking candidates in 1966 when I was a senior in college. I took the qualifying test and traveled to Boston to go through the initial interview (my first and only lie detector test!). After much pondering, the job seemed too isolated for me. However, I thoroughly enjoyed the book about these dedicated women in WWII.

I also read or actually reread Anna Quindlen's *Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake*. I loved it when I first read it last fall. It is a memoir made up of numerous essays that weigh in on the ups and downs of life. I'm not sure how old Quindlen is, but she really spoke to me. I thought my older daughter who had just turned fifty would enjoy it so I gave her a copy for Christmas. She called about a month ago and said she thought it was wonderful. In fact, she allowed herself only a chapter a night to make it last longer. This summer, I reread it and loved it again.

There are of course still many mysteries and English country life books that I have plowed through while I could have been doing something else, but reading is my refuge.

In closing, I would suggest any of the *Bruno Chief of Police* mystery series by Martin Walker.



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



Regina Sutton shares this fun Word Find Gardening Puzzle for us to enjoy!

105 **A FINE BOUQUET** **105**

Baby's-breath is a garden plant of the pink family, grown for its tiny white flowers. It is a favorite of florists who arrange its sprigs among larger flowers in bouquets and corsages to create a delicate, misty effect. It's also included in this list of bouquet flowers!

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Loosely-Literary Laughs

What would you find in Charles Dickens' pantry?

The best of thyme, the worst of thyme. What kind of dinosaur writes romance novels?

Why did Shakespeare write only in pen? A Brontesaurus.

He couldn't decide which type of pencil to use — a 2B or not 2B.

What's in a wardrobe?

I wanted to name my son Lance, but my friend said it was too uncommon. Narnia business!

But I told her that in medieval days, people were named Lance a lot.