



Lexington Field & Garden Club

144 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

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Co-Presidents' Letter

Hello Fellow Gardeners:

Slowly, but hopefully surely, things will start to open up a bit in Massachusetts, and we can happily look forward to getting together and celebrating everything to do with horticulture! As your new Co-Presidents, we are very excited to work with a great team of Committee Chairs, volunteers, and fellow gardening enthusiasts. This has been a difficult time, but we've heard from many of you that working in your gardens has brought comfort and calm amid the worries of Covid-19. The weather is getting nicer and warmer each day, and it's been great to have more time to work outside.

We decided to take a positive approach and keep on planning activities and events for the Garden Club. Of course, all is dependent on state and local guidelines, as well as how safe we all feel as individuals and as groups. There are wonderful programs planned for our monthly meetings. The sub-groups have speakers and activities lined up. Various club members are working on sharing their knowledge and experiences with us all. There's a Holiday House Tour in the future as well as the always well-attended and festive Holiday Greens Party. Work resumes with the Civic Gardening Committee as members continue to maintain and beautify the many traffic islands and public areas for which they are responsible. And much more is in the planning stages!

We will miss our Summer Garden Picnics this year, but keep on reading for a way to still enjoy the beauty of our flowers, vegetables, and gardens with one another! We also have Cary Library webinars with our gardening club members on Wednesdays at 1 PM. You sign up through the library. If circumstances allow, maybe we can have a few Fall Garden Picnics come September!

In the meantime, thank you everyone for all you do. Remember, gardeners are a hearty bunch and we'll get through this pandemic with grace, grit and gloriously gorgeous gardens!

Take care and stay well,

Bridget Galdes and Ruthanne Igoe

Co-Presidents



Introducing Bridget Galdes

Thank you for your show of confidence in me by electing me your new co-president.

I have been a member of this garden club since 2016. I have always loved gardening, but I had been working solidly in the healthcare industry for twenty-one years — ever since my husband and I and our kids — moved to Lexington. Raising two kids, working full time and maintaining a home, left me no time to join the club. So, when I retired, I started attending meetings, and thanks to **Barbara Schafer** who coaxed, cajoled and enticed me in her gentle way, I joined the club. **Ashley Rooney** was quick to assign me some tasks, and by September she appointed me Publicity co-chair and member of the Executive board. Two years later I became the Membership co-chair, and now, thanks to **Jan Avallone's** excellent recruiting, I am co-president. Those of you who know me would recognize me from my heavy Maltese accent. Believe it or not, I've been in this country since '79 and I still haven't managed to drop the accent! Ah well! My plants understand me when I talk to them. This year, I gave up on one of my peonies and every time I walk by it I've been telling her that it is her last chance to shine and if she doesn't display some nice blooms soon, I'm going to have to replace her. And she delivered! She has three beautiful blooms in the making!

... but I digress.... What do I hope to do while I am the club's co-president? Together with Ruthanne, I would like to keep it thriving in all the ways it is currently thriving — maintain the beautification of Lexington in whichever way possible, keep supporting the education effort and foster more interest in horticulture and gardening, keep it financially healthy, as **Ashley** and **Leslie Sargis** left it, and keep the garden club members kind and welcoming to each other and any other new member that would like to join. Then I would like to step it up a notch. I do not exactly know how yet, but I am working on it, and I can promise you that I will do so in a transparent manner.

I cannot do this alone. The club belongs to all of us. We can only do this collectively. Which means — do come up with ideas to improve our club, transform criticism into fruitful suggestions, help each other with projects, and respond to the call for volunteers. It is the only way to truly experience the Lexington Field and Garden Club!.

And if you need help achieving this....Call me.

Respectfully yours

Bridget



Showcasing your Garden

We all work hard in our gardens and have so much to be proud of. Do you like showing it off?

Well, let us make that possible. Start this summer by taking as many pictures as you can of anything you want to showcase. We will then either post them on our website, or when we meet physically, perhaps have a small presentation, or show off the pictures in some other way. We will figure it out together depending on what we can do come September. I wish I had thought this earlier because I would have taken pictures of my flowering trees.... But currently the azaleas and lilacs are coming in bloom and soon the peonies, and roses.... The list is endless. We want to see the special specimen — and know how you handle them and what special care you give them. Wouldn't it be great if everyone displayed something about their garden — be it a pot, a patio, a balcony, or a raised bed or a whole property!! We want to know what you like about your garden. Join the fun!



A Reminder from Civic Gardening

Hello Everyone! Please remember to fill out and return the Civic Gardening Survey that was emailed to you on May 20th. We're looking forward to everyone's response!

Thank you,

Karen Boudreau and Meg Himmel



Garden Club & Munroe Gardens



Since 1984 Lexington Field & Garden Club (LFGC) members have been working on gardens at Munroe Tavern, located at 1332 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington. They have created an oasis of natural beauty with plantings of historic interest, adding immeasurably to the story being told by the Lexington Historical Society in the Tavern.

To make these gardens safer to visit, the Garden Club has worked with Jeff Limerick of Natural Solutions to redo the lawn, fill the pot holes, and clean up the bricks around the rose garden.

The three gardens are:

- **The Garden of Colonial Flowers** contains simple, unimproved, open-pollinated species, the flowers Boston gardeners grew in the mid-to-late 1700s, which differ greatly from the plants in our twenty-first century gardens (search for “**Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Gardening**” at <https://www.antiquehomesmagazine.com>). **Kris Burton** is the lead steward.
- **The Rose Garden** has recently been rediscovered and renewed. Members of the New England Rose Society have helped us to identify them. Some of the species in the garden were brought from Spain or the Mideast generations ago. **Nancy Trautman** is the lead steward. She will tell the story of this garden in a webinar for Cary Library on June 3, at 1 PM.
- **The Wildflower or Native Plant Garden** has a large trillium collection, as well as many different plants, ferns, and shrubs that bloom during the spring. Jo Fray is the lead steward of this garden, which is in full spring array at this time.

Eighteen club members are involved in caring for these gardens. Some of them have been working on site since the 1980s.

Situated on this historic property, these three unique gardens with their sheer exuberance of plants will inspire both new gardeners designing their first garden as well as accomplished landscapers with acres of “garden rooms.” Now, thanks to Jeff's work, they have been made more accessible. Please check the Historical Society's website, www.lexingtonhistory.org, for reopening plans.



Member Gives Hartwell Facility a Green Space



Two years ago, Hartwell Composting Facility Foreman Kerry Weaver wanted to make a green space in Lexington's large composting facility. He approached the Lexington Field & Garden Club, whose mission, among other things, is to beautify the town. Member **Betsey Weiss** designed the space and drew up a plan, which was implemented on May 8.



Virtual Garden Talks

Cary Library is working with LFGC to present Garden Talks on Wednesdays in May and June at 1 PM. A reservation is required so they can send you the program link.

Click on the links to view the videos on the library's YouTube Channel for past programs or register for upcoming ones. Visit <https://www.carylibrary.org/calendar/program-calendar> for further information.

Thus far, we have talked on Vegetable Gardens for Beginners, Container Vegetable Gardening with Guy Doran, Sun and Shade Gardening with Elaine Doran.

May 27. Pollinator Gardens with Native Plants with Georgia Harris

June 3. Roses from the Past in Gardens today with Nancy Trautman

Who doesn't love beautiful, perfumed roses? Roses are notoriously tricky to grow but we will all have gorgeous rose gardens with the help of **Nancy Trautman** and **Ashley Rooney**! They will walk us through the best time to plant, use of seeds or seedlings, where to plant, how to get those wonderful colors, and so many other rose secrets. We'll also be chatting about the restoration of the Munroe Rose Garden: Don't know what that is? Join us!

June 10. Designing Your Water Garden With Linda Walsh

What is a water garden and why would you want one, you ask? Join us for this special gardening session where **Linda Walsh** and **Ashley Rooney** discuss the importance of water gardens in our community, how to design and plant your own, as well as the larger environmental issues related to having them. This is a discussion that folks with environmental and sustainability concerns should not miss (and, of course, our gardeners!).

June 17. A Victory Garden in the Middle of a Pandemic with Carla Fortmann

We've been through this before where gardens were a sign of hope during times of despair. Join **Carla Fortmann** and **Ashley Rooney** as they discuss the modern Victory Garden and its implications for the Lexington Community. How can you start or join a Victory Garden? What's the purpose? Carla and Ashley will be pleased to answer all of your questions!

Help Wanted!

We are looking for a person to volunteer to be a liaison between the LFGC and the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (GCFM). This would entail regularly checking the GCFM website and keeping track of events and lectures the GCFM is hosting that might be of interest to LFGC members so that the information could go in our monthly newsletter. Also, it would be great to submit articles, photos, etc. of things going on at our club to the GCFM so that the state knows what we're up to! If interested, please contact **Ruthanne Igoe** or **Bridget Galdes**.

Thank you!

Prolonging Peonies!

A friend told me that if you cut peony stems just before they open, wrap them in Saran wrap and put them in the refrigerator, they can keep for up to a month! When you take them out, unwrap and give them a fresh cut and enjoy!

Around Lexington

Hartwell is still open M-F from 7:30AM to 3PM for residents to drop-off yard waste, brush, and cardboard and pick up screened compost.

Rain barrel distribution event.

The May 2 event has been rescheduled to Sat. August 8 from 9AM to Noon at Hartwell. Residents pre-order by visiting www.tgarb.com.

Tower Hill Starting to Re-Open

Tower Hill Botanic Garden is inviting its members to visit on a limited basis, starting June 1st.

Pre-registration is necessary for timed entry tickets (at no charge), available at towerhillbg.org.

Check out their website for further information and guidelines. LFGC has passes.

Contact **Mary Nokes**.



Take a Road Trip

Regina Sutton came up with a great idea: take a road trip and see some gardens! Of course, check to be sure they are open.

Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Boston

Boston Public Garden, Boston

Brewster Gardens, Plymouth

Charles River Esplanade, Boston

Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate, Canton

Garden In The Woods, Framingham

Gardens at Elm Bank, Wellesley

Long Hill, Beverly

Lyman Estate and Greenhouses, Waltham

Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston

Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum, New Bedford

Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston

Wellesley College Botanic Garden, Wellesley

Horticultural Happenings

Thriller, a Filler, and a Spiller



As the start of the growing season fast approaches, I begin thinking about creating some hanging baskets, which add beauty, color, and texture to my landscape design. Hanging baskets can turn just about any nook or cranny into an inviting retreat. When suspended from a ceiling, fence, or even a tree, planters can bring additional color to your landscape.

To make your own, there is an old adage, which goes well here: “a thriller, a filler, and a spiller.” That’s the basic formula for making planters. One plant that grabs the eye, one plant that fills in the holes, and one plant that spills over the edges.

To determine your plants, you need to decide whether your basket will be in the sun for 6 hours a day or in the shade or somewhere between. Geraniums, zinnias, fuchsia, or coleus are good choices for main-theme upright flowers. Fill in with

things like petunias, nasturtiums, or begonias. As for your spillers, look to combine them with colorful foliage plants such as licorice plant, purple shield, or sweet potato vine. These foliage plants are quick to become established and remain in top form well into autumn.

The baskets look best if they’re crowded with plants.

Planting hanging baskets

The best hanging baskets are between 14 to 16 inches in diameter, as this gives you ample room for a variety of plants. Plastic or wire baskets are the best candidates. Plastic is inexpensive, easy to plant and is slower to dry out. Planting a wire basket isn’t as easy, and you need a liner. However, plastic-coated galvanized wire baskets allow more choices in size and planting arrangements. Many people find them more attractive because they become a flower-covered ball visible from all angles. The Internet has good instructions for how to plant them.



Whichever type of basket you are planting, begin by selecting a high-quality potting soil to fill it with. Garden soil is too heavy and may carry pathogens that can infect your flowers. Choose a lightweight bagged soil mix created especially for hanging baskets. It should contain a mix of organic ingredients that will feed your plants, such as compost, leaf mold, and inorganic ingredients that lighten the soil, like perlite or vermiculite. Moisten the soil and add more as settling occurs before you start planting.

One source says to use one plant per inch of basket diameter — so 12 small plants per 12-inch basket. You’ll only need 5 plants per 12 inch hanging basket for bigger plants like geraniums (Pelargoniums), petunias, culinary herbs, and fuchsias.

Trailing plants should be planted at the edges and bushy or upright plants at the center or back. Be sure that the taller plants do not interfere with hanging the basket. Test the hook you plan to use to be sure that it is strong enough to support the full weight of the basket when the planting has been watered, as well as when it’s dry. Water your creation well.

Hang it in a cool, shaded place to recover for several days before subjecting it to full sun.

Hanging Candidates



A wide range of plants and colors are available to select from these days. Some good possibilities are: scaveola, which will form vines and cascade down the sides of a hanging basket; lantana, which has colorful and fragrant blossoms and grows upright; and gazania, which has daisy-like yellow, orange, pink, or red flowers and tolerates heat. Bacopa, a sun-lover, has cascading white flowers, and sweet potato vine comes in deep maroon or chartreuse. If you are looking for a shade plant, tuberous begonias offer colorful flowers and are the perfect choice if you are looking for something showy in your hanging

baskets. Baskets and containers with contrasting foliage always steal the show. So mix it up. Of course, choose plants that enjoy the same conditions. For example, combine bright gold pansies with purple shamrocks for a basket for part shade. For sun, try coral and white petunias with gray green licorice plants.

As long as you're choosing hardy species that survive well in your climate and grow well in containers, just follow your preference in terms of foliage, style of growth, and colors.

Caring for your Pot

Water every day when heat becomes intense, and remove initial flowers to promote bushiness. For extra bushiness, pinch back foliage plants occasionally.



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