



The Community Garden Club of Cohasset, Massachusetts

March 2008

Sally Avery, Corresponding Secretary
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Message from the President

As I look out the window, I see ice covering the rocks and dried sprays of salt happily eating my car. The driveways around me are sporting reflector lollipops in case of snowplows, and the wind has blown brown leaves into every bush. But the yew bush and the rhododendrons are impervious to the weather, a reproof to my fault-finding.

March really has to be the bleakest of months, yet it's redeemed by having the New England Spring Flower Show right in the middle of it. The contrast between the gray skies and the spring interior of the show provides something like a mini-vacation to a different world. This year, like last year, offers a chance to see the show and to attend the South Shore District Meeting on the same day. It's not only an easy way to attend the meeting, but also an opportunity to look up from exhibits and find familiar faces. It's lovely to be able to share a day filled with flowers, friends, and a change of season.

It's appropriate that Sally Avery will be talking to us about the birds at the general meeting in March, a time for looking about anxiously for signs of the coming good weather. When I see birds flying by, I always think they have some secret knowledge about just when spring will arrive, perhaps because they seem to be so purposeful and know just what they're about. So much for groundhogs...

- Mary Eisenhaure

Club Calendar

www.communitygardenclubofcohasset.org

- Mar. 4:** **Executive Board** 9:30 A.M.
Lightkeepers Cottage
Hostesses: Pat Cammett, Liz Richardson
- Mar. 10:** **Junior Gardeners** 2:45 - 3:45 P.M.
Deer Hill School Cafeteria
- Mar. 11:** **Horticulture**
Tour of Tower Hill, Boylston, MA
- Mar. 12:** **S. Shore District Meeting at NESFS**
- Mar 12:** **Garden Therapy** 2:00 - 3:00 P.M.
Golden Living Center, Cohasset
Lucky Shamrock
- Mar. 18:** **Design Workshop** 9:30 - 11:30 A.M.
Lightkeepers Cottage
Principles of Design
Annette Sechen and Mary Hickey
- Mar. 25:** **General Meeting** 9:00 A.M. coffee
Second Congregational Church
Beyond Silent Spring

Past President and avid birdwatcher Sally Avery will discuss the variety of natural communities in Massachusetts today, their resident birds, and the conservation status of these habitats.

Federation Calendar

www.gcfm.org

- Mar. 1-2:** **Worcester Flower Show**
DCU Center, Friday (Feb. 29) - Sunday
"Welcome to Spring"
- Mar. 7:** New England Spring Flower Show
Preview Party
- Mar. 8-16:** New England Spring Flower Show
- Mar. 25:** Speakers Program Workshop
Elm Bank, Wellesley, 9:00 A.M.
- Mar. 26:** Civic Development Workshop
Espousal Center, Waltham, 10:00 A.M.
- Mar. 27:** Speakers Program Workshop
Elm Bank, Wellesley, 9:00 A.M.

New Member Applications

New member applications can be printed from our website or obtained at the General Meeting and must be in Mary Eisenhaure's hands prior to the March 4th board meeting. All new members will be invited to a New Members luncheon following the April 1st board meeting.

Hospitality:The following people are responsible for refreshments for the March 25th General Meeting by **9 A.M.:**

M.B. Curry, S. Daly, M. Daniels, A. DeVries, A. DiPasquale, B. Faulkner, K. Fay, A. Fenn, S. Filbey, L. Galler, S. Grant, C. Fogarty

Horticulture Workshop

March 11, 2008

Tour of Tower Hill, Boylston, MA

We are saddened by the unexpected death of Mary Rose Mitterando who so cheerfully chaired our Horticulture Committee in the last year and a half. Claire Tinory has graciously stepped up to make arrangements for this field trip to Tower Hill. Details will be announced at the February General Meeting or call Claire at home or on her cell .

Design Workshop

March 18, 2008

9:30-11:30 AM

Lightkeepers Cottage

“Our Questions Answered and Review of Principles of Design” will be the subject of the morning enthusiastically presented by Master Judge Mary Hickey and Life Judge Annette Sechen. No materials are necessary for this workshop; however, be prepared to take copious notes to which you can refer when creating your “Books in Bloom” design in May! Contacts: Nancy Wholley, Lee Drew

Junior Gardeners

March 10, 2008

2:30 - 3:45 at Deer Hill School Cafeteria

The committee is looking for volunteers to help in March and April to teach our Junior Gardeners some design principles that they can use in entering arrangements for our May 7th - 9th “Books in Bloom” exhibit at the Paul Pratt Library.

All club members are invited to drop in to help at any of our meetings held the 2nd Monday of the month 2:30 - 3:45 at the Deer Hill cafeteria unless there is a snow day. Hope to see you there.

The weather caused us to postpone our January meeting, necessitating double duty in February. In addition to the orange pomander project, horticulture projects using soil and seeds donated by Paul Split and baby orchid plants donated by Ann Pompeo were completed.

We have an enthusiastic group of children this year at the Deer Hill School. The programs we have been offering include many aspects of gardening, flower arranging, and conservation. In order to continue this program next year we will be needing someone to step up to the plate to organize the committee. As the organizer, it is not necessary to plan each meeting, but merely to line up members on a monthly basis to work with the children. Please let us know of your interest in continuing this worthwhile endeavor. -Lee Jenkins

Spring Plant Sale

The spring plant sale will be held Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Cohasset Historical Society. We’re developing quite a clientele who look forward to purchasing plants from the gardens of our members, so mark your calendars and start to think about what plants you will contribute.

Can you start a few seeds of a special perennial or annual? Perhaps you have a sunny window (or windows) where you could grow one or more plants for the sale.

Think about sharing a seed packet with other members. It’s more fun to make it a group effort!

Can you join a Plant Sale committee and help plan the event? Ideas and helping hands are very welcome. Contact Dolores Roy.

South Shore District Meeting

March 12, 2008

New England Spring Flower Show

Once again plans are being made by our District Director, Louise Hannington, to hold the South Shore District meeting at the New England Spring Flower Show. Last year our club had two full tables of attendees and the consensus was that it was a great way to see the Flower Show as well as to meet members of other South Shore Clubs. Details to be announced.

In Memoriam

The following books have been purchased and donated to the Paul Pratt Library in memory of members of our club who passed away recently:

American Horticultural Society’s Northeast - Smart Gardening Regional Guide in memory of Rita Morton.

Tasha Tudor’s Garden in memory of Mary Rose Mitterando.

Art in Bloom

Saturday April 26th - Tuesday April 29th
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Tentative plans have been made for club members to attend “Art in Bloom” at the Museum of Fine Arts on Monday, April 28th. The plan would involve taking the train and transferring to the subway as a group. For lunch, you could choose to eat at one of the museum’s restaurants, order a box lunch in advance, or bring your own. Please let a member of the board know if you would be interested in going with the group. Arrangements will be discussed at the March General Meeting.

Hawthorn

Crataegus laevigata



Hawthorn was used as a heart tonic long before it came to the attention of the medical establishment in the 1890's, due to an article in a medical journal. Ancient Greeks and Romans used it as a ceremonial herb to symbolize hope and to ward off evil. High in bioflavonoids and antioxidants, Hawthorn had been shown to increase circulation to the heart and brain as well as regulate and strengthen contractions and mildly lower blood pressure. In the early twentieth century, Hawthorn was the treatment of choice for heart related ailments. With all the modern advances in heart related research, today it is more widely used in Europe and Asia than here in America. It has been shown that extracts from the leaf and flowers improve peripheral circulation while fruit preparations may lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Hawthorn has also been used as a diuretic, especially in weight loss programs and as a treatment for insomnia, digestive problems and, in conjunction with ginkgo bilboa, a memory enhancer via improved cranial circulation. Although there is little evidence that indicates that Hawthorn, taken over time in small doses, is toxic, it is best to consult a physician prior to self medicating.

Hawthorn is a small tree or shrub with nasty thorns that can survive in a wide range of growing conditions from urban areas to open, exposed, windy seascapes. It is hardy to zone 3 and prefers a rich, loamy, alkaline soil in full sun to part shade. If you have an appropriate spot in the garden for a thorny shrub that may grow to five feet, it will flower in the spring giving a beautiful display of white rose-like flowers followed by clusters of red berries. It has been called one of the most beautiful spring flowering shrubs. As an interesting aside, Hawthorn is also know as Mayblossom and lent its name to the ship Mayflower.

- Judy Dickstein

Tree Committee Action

National Grid held a tree hearing recently to discuss the proposed removal of 14 trees mainly in the Pond Street/ Woodland Drive area which they deemed too fragile to withstand winter storm action. Ginny Norman sprang into action by examining each of these trees to determine first hand whether their removal was merited and what the impact on the area might be. Her recommendation was that two trees were not damaged enough to necessitate removal and Andy Swanson, our tree warden, concurred. Unable to attend the hearing itself, she appointed Barbara Dillon to take her place. Barbara ably presented the committee's case, but the final decision allowed for saving only one of the trees. Fortunately, there are grants available for replacing trees and it is believed that Andy Swanson will be applying for such grant money. Kudos to our tree committee for their continued involvement in protecting the nature of Cohasset.

News from Nagoya

Mr. Yoshifumi Kato, a high school teacher of Japanese Literature, spoke to us about "*The Tale of Genji* and Flowers" commemorating the millennium since it was written by Lady *Murasaki*. In the tale, the author uses numerous flowers and plants to describe not only the characters but also the brilliant picture-scrolls of gorgeous life in Imperial Court in Kyoto during the Heian Period (794-1185). More than one hundred flowers and trees appear in the tale, some of which are used for the titles of several chapters. Through *The Tale of Genji*, we learned how people admired floral plants in their everyday life a few centuries before the time of flower arranging.

In ancient times in Japan "*Murasaki* (=purple)" was the noblest color whose use was granted to only a few nobles. The color was made from "*Murasakigusa*" which is now protected as an endangered species by the Ministry of Environment. *Murasakigusa* is a perennial plant with a thick, purple root, growing to about 2 feet producing small white flowers in early summer. In addition to the purple pigment, the root is also an herbal medicine used as antipyretic and antidote. Another remarkable specimen with purple color in Japan at that time was wisteria (*Fuji* in Japanese).

Genji constructed four huge mansions on his fifteen acre estate in Kyoto for each of his four most important women. Using principles of *feng shui* and the seasonal preferences of each woman, the construction of *Genji's* estate involved removing or reconstructing hills and ponds or changing the flow of water and shapes of ponds. The hillsides of the "Spring Palace," were planted with many spring and autumn-blooming trees creating a beautiful balance of colors around the bank of the pond. Decorative shrubberies were arranged at the front garden. In the background, there were Japanese white pine, plum trees with deep-pink blossom, cherry, Japanese rose, azalea and, of course, wisteria which produces pretty purple flowers in May. At the "Autumn Palace," on a higher hill than Spring Town, the stream was reformed with rocks to create a roaring water fall. Various kinds of red maple trees mixed with floral grasses were planted to create a gorgeous autumnal red carpet. The "Summer Palace" rested in an area with a cool spring which, in summer, brought comfortable air. Many tall trees created the look of a forest. The fence planted with deutzia enclosed a garden with mandarin oranges, fringed pink, Japanese roses, tree peonies, sweet flags, etc. The "Winter Palace" was demarcated by a hedge of pine trees and bamboos which were picturesque when snowed-covered in winter. Chrysanthemums and Japanese oaks were planted within.

-excerpted from text by Takako Kohri

Know Your Garden Birds
Red-bellied Woodpecker



Most people are perplexed by the name “Red-bellied” attached to this handsome woodpecker because the red on the belly is far from a prominent feature. Some males show a slight reddish wash in that region, but many birds have no obvious color on the belly. The red nape and crown on the male bird might suggest the name “Red-headed,” but that name is reserved for another species, not commonly found in New England, whose entire hood is red. The 8 1/2- to 10-inch Red-belly sports a black-and-white barred back with whitish face and underparts and a white rump visible only in flight. The female has red on the nape, but not the crown. It has only been in the last 10 to 15 years that these woodpeckers have been spotted regularly in New England having resided in more southerly locations. Most birds do not migrate so we can hear their noisy *chup-chup* calls as they move from tree to tree seeking insects hidden under the bark or visit our suet feeders for some high-quality fat in the cold winter months. Toward spring, a gentle *churr, churr* song becomes part of their repertoire along with the loud drumming that communicates availability to potential mates. Open woodlands are their preferred habitat, and a cavity excavated in a dead trunk, limb, or utility pole 5-70 feet above the ground harbors 3-8 white eggs.

After a two week incubation period, the young stay in the nest just short of a month and then continue to remain with the parents after fledging. In addition to insects, the birds eat seeds and fruit to round out the diet. The Red-belly’s long cylindrical tongue can be extended an amazing distance to spear grasshoppers and beetles and its sticky saliva aids it in lapping up ants. Its head is built with a cushioning space between a heavy outer membrane and a thick skull supported by a strong neck to protect the bird from injury while drumming or chiseling wood from a tree. Additional protection is given by a covering of finely bristled feathers which protect the nostrils from wood dust. The Red-bellied Woodpecker presents a stunning addition to our gardens as it makes its daily rounds.

- Sally Avery