



# 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

Hello Garden Club Friends,

September was a busy and productive month for all things Garden Club. It was lovely to participate in the Herb Fest and to work like many of you on some of the 23 traffic islands and historic/civic sites we care for. This newsletter contains a map of all those sites (thank you, **Sara Moorman**, for the map). I encourage you to visit them and see what is happening to beautify Lexington. Civic gardeners **Meg Himmel** and **Elaine Doran** are helping the DPW maintain and design a new shrub border for the Minuteman Statue, adding another vibrant garden to the civic garden roster. At the lovely garden of **Christina Gamota**, we thanked the more than 24 stewards for their wonderful contributions to these traffic islands and civic sites – particularly during a challenging summer of drought. If you are interested in getting more involved with civic gardening, please contact **Judy Minardi**. She will find a site where you can meet new friends and learn more about gardening.

In early September, we had a welcoming celebration for new members hosted by **Jackie Potdevin** and **Marilyn Ryniewicz** and sponsored by the membership committee. We also had a stimulating presentation and discussion of climate change at our monthly meeting with Quentin Prideaux of Sustainable Wellesley. On October 12 we will have an in-person meeting with Demetra Tseckares on 'Garden Designs to Attract Birds and Pollinators.' It will be our first in-person meeting in a long time. Hope to see you at the newly constructed building at Follen Church!

I was fortunate to have had a few networking opportunities with gardeners from other clubs. In early September, I attended the *Master Gardener's Symposium* at *Bentley University* and heard excellent speakers. I strongly recommend that people attend the symposium next year. In late September, I spent three days with Jana Milbocker (who wrote "*The Garden Tourist*") and 25 other gardeners visiting beautiful gardens in Connecticut. We visited *Elizabeth Park*, *Roseland Cottage*, two private gardens – *Hollister House* and *Brush Hill* – and bought plants at *White Flower Farm* and *O'Brien Nursery* (known for excellent conifers). All of these locations are day trips that club members could organize next year.

We are excited to announce a newly formed communications and marketing group, who will work on increasing awareness and recognition of the Lexington Field & Garden Club. And lastly, LFGC is participating in **Discovery Day** on **Saturday, October 8th**. Please sign up for an hour to help at **Sign Up Genius**.

Special thanks to **Vicki Blake** and **Georgia Harris** for putting this newsletter together!

Looking forward to a beautiful fall,

**Marlene Stone**, Co-President



## Dates to Remember

- October 6th** Executive Board Meeting, 9:00 AM Social/9:30 AM Meeting @ Marilyn Ryngiewicz' house
- October 8th** Discovery Day Lexington Center, 10 AM -3 PM
- October 12th** In-Person Meeting: Garden Designs to Attract Birds, Pollinators and Native Plants Speaker: Demetra Tseckares  
Location: Follen Church 9:30 AM Social/10:00 AM talk.



## Discovery Day

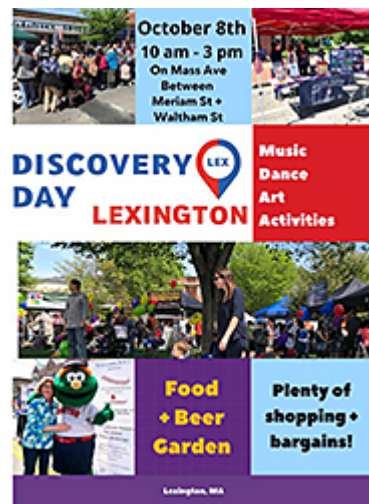
We are excited to be hosting a booth at Discovery Day on Saturday, October 8th. It's a fun family day to learn about vendors and happenings in Lexington.

We need volunteers to help at the booth. The slots are in one-hour increments, but feel free to sign up for more than one if you can.

Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com>

Bring your kiddos; I'm sure they will enjoy Discovery Day and the LFGC booth. We are still in the planning stage but will have fun stuff for kids while you help out at the booth.

**REQUEST:** do you have plants you are dividing this weekend? We are looking for small pots (4" or less) of plants and herbs as giveaways. Contact **Vicki Blake**. She will pick them up or you can drop them off at her house preferably by Monday, October 3rd.



## Share in the Civic Gardening Joy

Help make Lexington's traffic islands, gardens, historic gardens, and civic sites beautiful! The gardens are maintained by a group of gardeners who nurture the gardens throughout the year. In the Fall, they need your help in putting the gardens to bed. Join us to share the joy of gardening. Remember, a beautiful garden gives pleasure to all. This is our joy!

Workdays are an excellent way to participate in LFGC activities, especially for those who are

short on time--each workday shift is only 2 hours. Workdays are also a nice way to meet a small group of members on an informal basis and to learn more about gardening or share your gardening knowledge with others. Fun and joy for all!

Fall civic gardening work days are scheduled for November 4 through November 19. Look at the [LFGC Civic Gardening Sites](#) to determine the garden location that works best for you.

To sign up for a workday shift, [click here](#). Select the "Sign Up" box for





the slot you want. Then Click **“Submit and Sign Up”** at the bottom of the page. Contact **Judy Minardi**.

It was a joyful afternoon on September 24 when the civic gardening stewards enjoyed a late afternoon get-together in Christina Gamota’s lovely garden. See the picture of the stewards with **Tori**, the youngest of the group.



### 2nd Annual Herb Fest a Success!

September 10 was a lovely, sunny day – perfect for bringing dozens of people to Lexington to sample, purchase, and learn about the many aspects of herbs. Co-sponsored by the Lexington Field & Garden Club and Lexington Historical Society, Herb Fest showcased the Society’s two beautiful herb gardens. At Hancock-Clarke House, visitors of all ages learned about the uses of herbs in food preservation, preparation, medicine, and dyeing; tried their hand at stitching and painting; and created bookmarks from gathered plants. **Christina Gamota** and her team created beautiful displays to share the history of 18th-century herbs and show their multiple uses; meanwhile, **Leslie Masson** intrigued children with the myriad colors created by herbs. At



Buckman Tavern, members of CAAL (Chinese American Association of Lexington) – some of whom are also Garden Club members – discussed the history of tea cultivation and ceremonies. Carla Fortmann and her team of helpers from both organizations created beautiful herb wreaths, aprons, Three Sisters Stew packets and bouquet garni to sell – and sell they did! It was a busy and successful ‘friendraiser.’

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for their energy, creativity, and hard work. These days we need connection and positivity more than ever, and the atmosphere we all created was one of wholesome community spirit



## Flowers That Bloom in the Fall

### E. Ashley Rooney

Many gardens fade long before the first leaves fall. There are many new plant 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 to 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 (*Anemone hupehensis*) and Japanese (*Anemone × 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 at the summer's end. Prized in Victorian gardens, this African plant is generally 3-4 feet tall and has brilliantly colored red, gold and green leaves. 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 (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) and Michaelmas daisies (*Symphotrichum 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. It has a shower of daisy-like flowers in white, lilac or purple and is hardy in Zones 4-6. This North American native thrives in a sunny pollinator garden or a wet meadow. The five-foot Snowbank and Pink Beauty are two of the more popular varieties: white and pink, respectively, with sparse grayish foliage. The plant requires stout staking, but it is quite lovely reclining over a fence.

**Reblooming Irises** are fantastic. Just as I think it is all over, I see them blooming here and there in my garden. They come in a variety of colors.

**Flowering kale** is excellent for containers, beds, and mass planting with its range of colors from crisp white to rose-red. The center rosette always contrasts the ruffled green or greenish-purple outer leaves. They begin to color as the days become shorter and the nights cooler. 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 the full sun and various habitats, from open meadows to wet bogs. Goldenrod spreads but does not cause hay fever, as many of us were taught.

**Helenium** or **sneezeweed**, another native, provides rich coloring to the fall garden. These 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. You will like this plant if you like bright golden yellow flowers, deep green foliage, and zero care. 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. Suitable 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 purple-brown leaves and white flowers.

The broad, woody-stemmed, fall flowering **Nippon Daisy** (*Nipponanthemum nipponicum*) is hardy at -10F, 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 outside enjoying your garden in October, plant a Nippon daisy to view from your windows.

**Ornamental Grasses and Sedges** can give year-round interest, accent and texture. Robust performers 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. If native grasses are left to overwinter, they provide food and shelter for native birds. They grow best in 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 consider *Miscanthus*, *Pennisetum* (or fountain grass), and *Carex*.

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

**Toad lilies** (*Tricyrtis spp.*) should be planted in 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 passerby stop and stare. They grow to about three feet in Zones 4-9.



# Leave the Leaves and the Stalks

Georgia Harris

Fall in New England, there's nothing like it on earth. We thrill for those beautiful reds, golds, and oranges. Sometimes it feels like a technicolor dream. How does something that inspires so much awe on the branch become something we need to completely eliminate when it falls to the ground?



If you want butterflies, you must have caterpillars. If you want birds, you must have caterpillars. If you want caterpillars and bees, you need places for them to overwinter and hibernate. **YOU NEED LEAVES.** I have some Good News!!

You can do some really simple steps to help create small habitats in your yard. It will help generate eco habitats in your yard and give you an action to make positive changes in the world.



More GOOD NEWS: You get to be really lazy. Does it get any better than that? I am proposing and permitting you to be lazy in your garden this fall. Instead of spending hours blowing your leaves. Which damages ecosystems by being extremely loud and pumping vast amounts of pollutants into the air. Interesting FACT: The California Air Resources Board estimates that one hour of gas leaf blower operation emits smog-forming pollution comparable to driving a 2017 Toyota Camry about eleven hundred miles.

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF THE AMERICAN GARDEN?

LOSS OF LAND & HABITAT  
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION  
LACK OF POLLINATORS & BIRDS  
DISRUPTION OF THE FOOD WEB  
SOUL-LESS CONFORMITY

This is not permission to be extremely lazy but somewhat lazy. Our lawns are not carpets that need to be vacuumed of every leaf and particle with every blade just so. We must let go of that uber tidiness in our gardens and lawns.

When you are out in a park, wetlands, or conversation area, do you ever think I wish someone would blow every leaf and stick away? No, you look at every leaf, and you notice the colors of the leaves on the trees and on the ground. You see patterns in leaves. You notice beauty.

There is no reason you can't treat your yard and garden similarly. Nature does not rake or blow leaves; remarkably, plants come back year after year, and equally essential insects come back year after year.

Let's look at what falling leaves do for the environment.

- They hold in moisture.
- They build up soil structures.
- They provide winter cover to keep perennials protected from frost heaves
- They furnish an over-winter home for many insects, pollinators, and caterpillars.
- They are FREE !!!
- What's not to love?



I have released you from having to rake your entire yard. I leave the leaves in my garden bed where they fall. If I have early bulbs, I might rake leaves away just before the bulbs begin to bloom, but otherwise, I just let them lie where they fall.

### **An Exception: The Lawn**

I do not leave the leaves on my turf grass (lawn). Here you have two options. If you have just a few leaves on the lawn, you can use a mulching mower and simply run over them like a vacuum cleaner leaving the chopped leaves on the lawn to add much-needed nutrients to the yard. Remember you don't want to chop all your leaves as many contain eggs and chrysalis of next year's moths and butterflies.

Or, if you have a thick layer of leaves, I rake them onto my perennial beds and cover beds with about 2 inches of leaves. This is especially helpful if you have a garden bed that needs more moisture and has poor soil. Leaves are fantastic soil builders. If you still have too many leaves, I rake them onto a tarp and bring them to my backyard compost or an area at the back of my property.

Of all garden chores, I hate using leaf bags. I feel it's such a challenging process to get leaves into those lawn bags, and it takes too much valuable time. Raking leaves onto a tarp is SOOO much more straightforward.

### **Exceptions to the new leaf protocols/deal/contract:**

Oak leaves take a long time to decompose. I do not use oak leaves in my perennial beds but let them lay in my shrub/shade beds. Diseased plant material I do not leave in place. For example, peonies are lovely in the spring, but they should be cut back in the fall when they look ragged and mildewy.

We need to be more dynamic in our clean-up. Again, we need to take cues from the reproductive and migration habits of key bird and insect species – rather than focus on rote tasks performed in the same order every year. To be in sync with nature I strongly recommend more laziness. This includes limited tidying of the garden.



### **DO NOT REMOVE the stalks of your perennials. Do not cut them back.**



Birds need the perennial seed heads to fuel their migration or sustain them through the winter. Many of our native bees and pollinators do not migrate but spend the winter in the stalks of spent perennials. If you want moths and butterflies in the spring, they need stalks in which to hibernate. Many moths lay their eggs on leaves that overwinter and hatch in the spring. Why do we care about insects? As E.O. Wilson says, *"Insects are the little things that run the world."*

Here's your quick and easy solution. **Leave the Leaves.** We need them for our survival. Now is not the time to sit on the sidelines. We need to create dynamic gardens and habitats that serve all the world's inhabitants, not simply ourselves.

*"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."*

Viktor Frankl



## LFGC ARCHIVES in Need of Yearbooks

The following yearbook years are missing:

- 2017-2019
- 1960 yearbooks
- 1950 yearbooks
- 1940 yearbooks
- Any yearbook earlier than 1940

**Regina Sutton** would like a complete yearbook set for the LFGC Archives. Would you be interested in donating your copy? Contact Regina



## Interesting Articles, Podcasts, and Websites

### What Planting a Garden Taught me About Self-Care

For Nkoula Badila, cultivating and caring for plants is a way to connect with nature, herself, those she loves, and her history. She reminds us that sometimes, what we need most is to give ourselves the right conditions to thrive. Read the article [Mindful.Org](#)

### Arnold Arboretum's 150th Anniversary

There's a world of fall hues on our doorstep. Now marking its 150th anniversary, the Arboretum preserves one of the planet's most comprehensive collections of trees and woody plants from temperate zones. It's no stretch to say that autumn brings a world of color. Read the article [The Boston Globe](#).

### The Quotable Garden: Writings That Will Grab Your Heart

Follow along with reflections on garden writings by Benjamin Vogt. Maybe you'll see yourself in these reflections. Or perhaps you'll find a whole new way of looking at gardening. Read the article [Houzz](#).

### Harmful Pesticides Found in Milkweeds From Retail Nurseries

A new study released in Biological Conservation found harmful levels of pesticides in milkweed plants purchased from retail nurseries across the United States. Pesticides were found in all plants tested, raising alarms for monarch conservation efforts that rely on planting milkweed sourced from commercial nurseries. Read the article [Xerces Society](#).

### Best Native Grasses for New England Gardens

Ornamental grasses can make a great addition to the landscape. They are easy to care for and add interesting colors, textures, and movement to perennial borders, rain gardens and naturalized areas. Read the article [University of New Hampshire Extension](#).





## Gardens & Classes Around New England

**The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts** hosts an NGC Standard Flower Show  
**Topsfield Fair Flower Show** September 30 - October 10

**Maine Botanical Garden Cider Saturdays – Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens** October  
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

**DeCordova Art & Ales Tour – The Trustees of Reservations** Sunday,  
October 2, 2 - 3:30 PM

**Stevens Coolidge House & Gardens Autumn in the Gardens – The Trustees of Reservations** Tuesday, October 4, 10 AM - 6 PM

**The Garden Conservancy – Virtual Talk 10-6-22: The Seasonal Gardener: Events**  
October 6, 2 - 3 PM

**Falmouth Garden Club** Harvest House Tour – **EVENTS & WORKSHOPS | Falmouth Garden Club** October 8, 10 AM - 3 PM

**Lexington Historical Society** Cronin Lecture: Past the Cemetery Gate with the Gravestone Girls – Thursday, October 13, 7:00 - 8:30 PM (refreshments at 6:30 PM), at the Depot, Depot Square **Free Event Past the Cemetery Gate**

**Arnold Arboretum Crabapple and Maple Festival** – Saturday, October 15, 12 - 3 PM

**The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts – GCM | Landscape Design School**  
Deadline for sign-up October 10 , Class Begins October 26-28

**Cary Library** Events **VIRTUAL – A History of Wampanoag Food Systems**  
October 27, 7 - 8 PM



## A Few Flowers Blooming in the Native Garden Today



*Ageratina altissima*



*Solidago caesia*



*Actea racemosa*

***That's all for this month, hope to see you soon!***