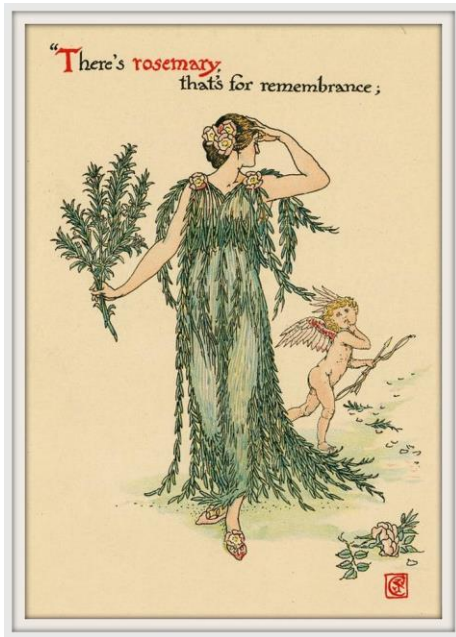


Academy Garden Club Thymes

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY GARDEN CLUB OF LENOX

MARCH 2019



*For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savour all winter long;
Grace and remembrance be to you both.*

The Winter's Tale,
Shakespeare's Flowers
by Jessica Kerr

* * * *

Dear Ladies,

Our glazing workshop was a fun adventure. Deb Carter found some exciting new glazes for us to use. All who attended are waiting to see how the flower pots turned out. Deb has completed the firing and they are ready for pick-up. All the flower pots are at the Lenox Community Center in the sewing room in the basement. There are bags and newspaper for transporting them. Please try to claim yours as soon as possible. Thank you.

We have a Nominating Committee. Thank you, Theresa Michney, Anne Gannon, and Colette Lemanski, for saying yes to finding our next Vice President and Secretary.

The Lenox Community Garden (LGC) has one 4 x 8-foot raised bed left. The LGC thought the AGC would like to purchase the plot for \$10 to grow herbs. Would the members like to divide some of their own herbs and contribute them to the community garden? We can discuss this at our March meeting.

The outside of the Academy building could use some sprucing up. As a Civic Project the AGC could set some plant containers by the steps and the Hosta beds could be cleaned up. The Trustees of the Academy Building thought it was a great idea. We can discuss this at the March meeting.

Thank you to Mary Ann Coakley, Joan Hajduk, Lois Hill, and Sandy Merlino for the cozy display in the Post Office window for the months of December, January, and February. What will the next window team's theme be? We will find out soon. The next window team will be Jen Picard, Liz Celli, and Jan Chague for the months of March, April, and May.

The Lenox Historical Society and the Academy Garden Club of Lenox are planning to have a Flower Show in August again this year. If anyone is interested in helping with this fun project, please let me know.

Thank you, Mary Ann Coakley and Sandy Merlino, for the coffee and tea and condiments at our meetings. They both are on the Hospitality Committee.

The Refreshment Hostesses are Colette Lemanski and Nancy Cowhig for March.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at the Academy Building at 7 PM. Our guest speaker will be Iris Bass, Herb Associate and cookbook editor. She will show us "How to Mix Your Own Herbal Teas".

Looking forward to seeing everyone on March 12th at 7 PM!

Sincerely,
Jan Chague
AGC President

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HORTICULTURAL COLUMN

By Harriet Wetstone



I have just returned from Morocco, and my head is reeling. From jet lag, yes, but really from the intensity of the experience - the fabulous light, the exotic scents, the incredible craftsmanship, the wild market places, the couscous and the tagine, the wonderful, always different, flat breads, and the endless grey green of the ubiquitous olive trees against the terra cotta earth.

The olive, *Olea europaea*, is a species of small tree in the family Oleaceae found in the Mediterranean Basin from Portugal to the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and southern Asia as far east as China. The *Olea* plant family also includes lilacs, jasmine, forsythia, and true ash trees (*Fraxinus*). Olives and olive oil are major dietary staples and were major sources of wealth in ancient times. Olives have been important to human civilization for at least five or six thousand years going all the way back to the early Bronze Age.

Olives have always been a great favorite for me, and in Morocco, whether you are in Casablanca or Fez or Marrakesh or the desert, or where ever, olives are the great staple. They appear at breakfast with the flat breads and yoghurt and eggs. (Chickens are everywhere and the rooster-crows begin just before dawn as does the call to pray, whether from loudspeakers in the cities or mournful chanting from the prayer towers in the village).

At breakfast the olives are the salty, shiny black kalamaras, and at lunch and dinner they are green and red and yellow, and are tossed with hot chilies and rosemary and thyme and oregano. The colors come not from the variety, but from different stages of ripeness. The colors are then accentuated by their curing process.

Morocco is the second largest producer of table olives and the sixth of olive oil. Marrakesh specializes in table olives. Meknes and Fez produce olive oil. Traveling through Morocco you see many huge stands of cultivated olive trees, but you also see lone wild olive trees almost everywhere. One of the wonders of the world is how people figured out how to use olives. If you try eating one fresh picked in all its purple glory, you are in for a surprise. They are incredibly bitter and acid.



Olives are harvested in mid-November. In Morocco they are usually cut with a razor blade, using a long diagonal slash. During the hand cutting they are sorted by color, each color going into different vats of water. The water is changed daily until most of the bitterness of the olives is soaked out. It takes two to three weeks! The olives are then cured in heavily salted water and vinegar. Family recipes are handed down through the generations. Those wonderfully black, salty, wrinkled-as-raisons olives are done differently. They are not soaked but are packed in salt right from the tree and left for about three months.

Many thanks to moroccotravelblog.com; www.plan-it-fez.com; Wikipedia; and www.thought.com.