

# Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

JUNE 2022

## A Message from the President

Hooray, we can finish planting our gardens! I think we don't have to worry about frost killing our tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, basil, and all the other tender plants and flowers. Now, the heat may be another challenge! Stay hydrated along with your plants.

We had a wonderful luncheon at the BBG. The food from Market Place was delicious and the slide lecture presented by Bridgette was interesting and encouraging. Thank you, Susan, for your generosity and for making the arrangements. It was a treat for all who attended.



Bridgette's slide presentation prepared us for the May 27<sup>th</sup> lecture on Native Plants. The presenter and author, Uli Lorimer was very knowledgeable and supportive of northeast native plants. We learned the qualifications of a native plant, the reasons for creating and maintaining native plants, and the plants to select for given areas. His lecture and slides inspired us to do better in our plantings and to consider introducing them in our monument plantings. Perspectives change when we become knowledgeable and considerate of our natural environment. As a garden club, we can make things better for all creatures.



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PAGE TWO

Our final meeting before summer is on **June 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 at the Berkshire Botanical Garden.** This meeting will be a festive one with food, drink, and raffles. So please bring your dollars if you would like to participate. If you have items you would like to put in the raffle, please bring them also. Since we all enjoy eating and sharing our favorite dishes, please bring an appetizer or a dessert. Once again, we will divide the tasks and this time let's try the following:

**A-L - please provide desserts**

**M-Z - please provide appetizers**

Please feel free to bring both or switch with a friend. Wine and beverages will be provided as well as plates and utensils.

Before the festivities begin, I will ask you to sign up for activities, a civic project, and fundraising. As a member you are expected to participate in one fundraising activity or one civic project. The club will not survive without your participation. Please review your handbook for descriptions of each committee and decide on which ones you choose.

To be ahead of September and to enable Pat to prepare the 2022-23 yearbook, please bring your membership dues of \$30 to our June meeting. This will ensure that your name and information will be included in the booklet.

The nominating committee will present the new slate of officers for 2022-23 year. Thank you to those who stepped up to take the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. We are all here to support you.

The program committee has an exciting list of workshops and lectures. They include new lectures and some traditional favorites.

Elaine and Bill of Mill Brook Sugarhouse were thrilled to see the Post Office windows devoted to maple sugaring. Thank you, ladies. Maple sugaring must give way to summer and a change of the windows for June, July, and August. We look forward to Kathleen's, Anne's, and Caroline's display.

I enjoyed being your president for the 2021-22 year. Your support of me and enthusiasm for the club have been wonderful. I appreciated your flexibility when we had to change programs and places and deal with the COVID restrictions. It is so good to know that there are people who are as generous and interested in all aspects of gardening as you, the members of the Academy Garden Club of Lenox. Thank you.

**Theresa Terry Michney**

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**Horticultural Column**

**Harriet Wetstone**

Here we are, our end of year June meeting coming up. I have enjoyed writing about trees and some 'not trees' this year! But for this last tree talk, I want to check in with all of you, and to ask if you have read about the community of trees, how trees form networks very much like families.

Over the last several years there has been some astonishing research into the ways in which trees communicate, respond to threats, nurture younger trees. Here is a quote from a fascinating article in the Smithsonian Magazine (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-whispering-trees-180968084/>) (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-whispering-trees-180968084/>). It is an article called "The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from A Secret World (The Mysteries of Nature, 1)," and



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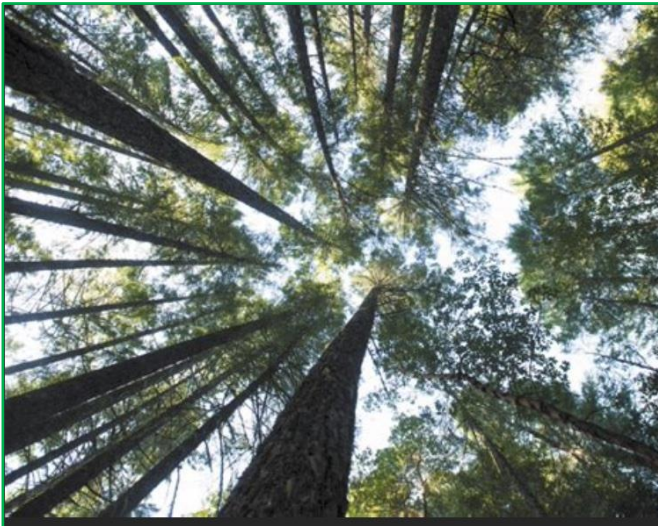
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PAGE THREE

is about an interview with the author Peter Wohlleben who wrote the book *The Hidden Life of Trees*.

“All the trees in every forest that is not too damaged are connected to each other through underground fungal networks. Trees share water and nutrients through the networks and use them to communicate. They send distress signals about drought and disease, for example, or insect attacks, and other trees alter their behavior when they receive these messages.” Scientists call these mycorrhizal networks.



The fine, hairlike root tips of trees join together with microscopic fungal filaments to form the basic links of the network, which appears to operate as a symbiotic relationship between trees and fungi, or perhaps an economic exchange. As a kind of fee for services, the fungi consume about 30 percent of the sugar that trees photosynthesize from sunlight. The sugar is what fuels the fungi, as they scavenge the soil for nitrogen, phosphorus, and other mineral nutrients, which are then absorbed and consumed by the trees.



Trees can detect scents through their leaves, which, for Wohlleben, qualifies as a sense of smell. They also have a sense of taste. When elms and pines come under attack by leaf-eating caterpillars, for example, they detect the caterpillar saliva, and release pheromones that attract parasitic wasps. The wasps lay their eggs inside the caterpillars, and the wasp larvae eat the caterpillars from the inside out. “Very unpleasant for the caterpillars,” says Wohlleben. “Very clever of the trees.”

A recent study from Leipzig University and the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research shows that trees know the taste of deer saliva. “When a deer is biting a branch, the tree brings defending chemicals to make the leaves taste bad,” he says. “When a human breaks the branch with his hands, the tree knows the difference, and brings in substances to heal the wound.”

I encourage you to read the entire article, if you haven’t already gotten into this literature, and there are other books as well. Forests everywhere are threatened, and the more we know as gardeners the better. Celebrate summer! Plant trees! Read about trees! The website [onetreepanted.org](http://onetreepanted.org) has a wonderful list of books.

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