

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

APRIL 2023

Dear Members,

What a lovely early taste of spring the weather is giving us! Hope to see you at our May 9 meeting.

Some changes from the yearbook for that May 9 meeting – we will be at the Lenox Community Center, and we will hear from Chris Ferraro on Pollinator Paradise (postponed from March due to the snowstorm).

This year, thanks to a great suggestion from Lynn Schmitter and Carol Way, we will offer the sign-up sheets for civic projects at both our May and June programs. If you don't already have a favorite project you plan to sign up for, check out the descriptions in the yearbook for maintaining flowers at the Paterson-Egleston Monument, planters at the Academy Building, plants in front of the monument honoring firefighters at the New Lenox Fire Station and creating exhibits for the Lenox Post Office Windows. It is more fun when lots of our members participate so we encourage everyone to choose a project. See Agenda below.

All the best,

Susan Wolf

Agenda

- Program: Pollinator's Paradise
- Approve Minutes
- Accept Treasurer's Report
- Any new or old business

***Please renew your membership (2023-2024) early this year. It will help us update the Program Book and deliver it to you on time in September.
Thank you.***

Horticultural Column

Harriet Wetstone

One of my very favorite things to nibble are sugar snap peas! They are of the Fabaceae plant family as are all the legume, peas, and beans.

The Faceae family includes all sorts of flowering plants: trees, shrubs, and vines as well as perennial or annual herbaceous plants, all of which are recognized by their fruit and by their compound stipulate leaves.



The Perennial Sweet Pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*) is a vigorous climbing perennial that flowers in vibrant rose to white and will continue to flower all summer long in both sun and light shade as long as it is not allowed to go to seed. It is vigorous to the point of being considered evasive in some areas, so they need to be watched. Unlike the annual sweet pea, (*Lathyrus oderatus*) the perennial is not fragrant. It is tolerant of dryness, attractive to pollinators but ignored by deer!

The annual sweet pea is a favorite for both its colorful everblooming and its wonderful fragrance. It is a wonderful trellis vine, but also will do well in pots. This sweet pea comes from the Mediterranean and has been used in gardens since the 17th century. Both the annual and perennial sweet peas are toxic.

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

APRIL 2023

Page Two

The Fabaceae is the third largest plant family in the world, behind only the Orchid and the Sunflower family. The fruit is typically a legume or pod and as such fits the definition as a fruit being a container for seeds. The leaves are compound in that they have three or more leaflets, and some, such as the pea and the passionflower, have tendrils. Tendrils are plant organs, leaves, with a thread like shape, and specialized to anchor and support vining stems vis a vis their tendency to twine.

When it comes to peas, their shoots - the young stem and their tendrils - are as much of a delicacy as the peas and pea pods. But another important aspect of the usefulness of the Fabaceae family is that these plants are nitrogen fixing, converting the nitrogen in the soil into compounds that are accessible to other plants.

Trees in the Fabaceae family include the Honey Locust and the Black Locust trees, and the Pagoda tree. The Pagoda tree, *Styphnolobium japonicum*, is highly valued for its profuse blooms in late summer.



Its leaves look exactly like the compound leaves of the pea, simply larger, thicker, and shinier. The white flowers come in panicles almost a foot long, and the resulting legumes or pods hold up to six seeds. Be careful though, these sour tasting seeds are poisonous! The Mimosa tree with its sweet flower puffs is also Fabaceae, as is the little sensitive plant whose leaves curl when you touch them.



Lupines are in the Fabaceae family! There is nothing more beautiful than a field of lupines stretching out as far as you can see! Lupines grow one to four feet tall, with grey green leaves with silvery hairs, and form hairy pods with up to twelve seeds. There are hundreds of species of Lupines, many native to North America. Lupines have a long tap root and need moist loose soil and cooler temperatures. They have been hybridized into an endless number of glorious colors.

Thanks to: <https://www.thespruce.com/sweet-peas-the-queen-of-the-annuals-1402917>;
<https://www.almanac.com/plant/sweet-peas>;
<https://www.allaboutgardening.com/lupine/>;
<https://www.allaboutgardening.com/lupine/>;
<https://worldoffloweringplants.com/families/fabaceae/>

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

APRIL 2023

Page Three

Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023

The evening began at 6PM sharp with a presentation by Bridgette Stone of the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Bridgette gave a power point presentation on "Planning your Spring Garden" with many practical tips on how to approach gardening each year. First you visualize your garden to think about why you like having a garden—fruit, flowers, vegetables, and or pollinators etc. Next, she suggested taking stock of your resources and abilities and start to prioritize.

Bridgette's approach helped to break down a major planning task into smaller jobs. She suggested you think of your yard in terms of zones i.e., where do you spend your time looking out and what is important as you and visitors approach your home. She suggested considering zones of shade or sun, seasonal growing, vegetables versus blossoms.

She talked about taking smaller steps in the coming months — clean up, sharpening and cleaning tools (suggested a bucket of sand for this), edges defined, taking soil samples, moving and dividing plants, adding compost and soil additives, starting seeds versus buying plugs. Most importantly she suggested keeping some sort of daily record each year to help not only see where you were last year but also to see where you are this year and what is ahead to do. She provided a check-list handout for tasks during April and May.

The Business Meeting began at 6:40 PM

Treasurer's Report. Jill Dore shared the report for February and March. February started with \$4,421.94 and there were expenses of \$251.35 leaving a balance for March of \$4170.59. March expenses were \$250.00 leaving a starting April balance of \$3,920.59. There was no income for either month. The report was accepted and approved.

Secretary's Report. Sarah Hatch shared that the minutes for both December and March were published in the newsletter. The minutes were accepted as published and approved.

There was a second discussion regarding a memorial for Jen Picard. Jen was very involved with the youth at the community center. A variety of ideas were suggested which would involve the youth at the Lenox Community Center—a grow and eat herb project, a salsa garden, planting of daffodil garden. Susan Wolf asked that anyone interested in helping to choose and plan a memorial activity for 2024 to please let her know.

Janice Brindisi said there was only one Lenox applicant for the 2 scholarships available. She noted that Lee high school has been unresponsive to all requests for applicants. Several suggestions were made to try other schools or other groups like GreenAgers as a possible source of applicants for next year.

Diane Romeo updated members on our spring trips to North Hampton and Albany. She expressed disappointment in the attendance, but the trips were both delightful. She asked people to share any ideas for a summer destination.

Peggy Ammendola shared the history of the bird houses now in the window of the Post Office. There is the clock tower of Highlawn Farms and one of the farm houses, as well as IS 183 building in Interlaken. Her husband made 5 of the 9 bird houses exhibited and she painted them all. Everyone is urged to stop and look.

Before closing the meeting Susan Wolf said that the officers were going to review and discuss the by-laws to see if there were changes that are needed. It seems that during this last year and, of course, over COVID some things were not handled according to the current by-laws, our affiliation with Massachusetts Federation of Garden Clubs and with the state. She noted that Jill Dore has done a masterful job in getting us into compliance. She asked that anyone interested may participate in the review, and if there are proposed changes, the full membership will have a chance to understand the reasons and vote on any proposed changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38PM

Respectfully submitted by

Sarah Hatch
Secretary