

Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

NOVEMBER 2022

A Message from the President

Happy November! I hope everyone is well and enjoying the last vestige of our autumn colors. Many of us have been spending time putting our gardens to bed for the winter, digging up the dahlia tubers, and planting bulbs for spring beauty. Robert Frost describes November so eloquently in his poem,

My November Guest

*My sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.*

*Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.*

*The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.*

*Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow,
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.*

Robert Frost

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For the November meeting, I will be bringing a small file cabinet per our discussion in October, which will fit in the Academy shelf upstairs. Also, if anyone wants to bring one or more recipes, I will have a container for an ongoing recipe swap.

Don't forget to bring ten dollars for the boxwoods, shears, containers, a glue gun if you have it, and your creative spirit! I sent out an email to rsvp the event.

Thank-you so much to Bobbi Ann Salinetti for her wonderful presentation of growing amaryllis bulbs, to Jan Chague for ordering them for us, and to Lynn Schmitter and Carol Way for the delicious refreshments at the October meeting. A wonderful time was had by all!

I will be adding book recommendations each month pertaining to gardening (big surprise!). The first lovely little book is *The Trellis and the Seed* by Jan Karon.

The little seed spent the winter in a jelly glass on the top shelf of a china cupboard. It was only a seed and very, very small. How could it ever be a vine with blossoms? In this gentle tale, Karon offers her readers a parable about the rewards that come from being a little bit different from everyone else. Rich, vibrant illustrations by noted artist Robert Gantt Steele make the perfect complement to this simple story of the beauty that can be found in everyday miracles.

Agenda for November Meeting:

- Opening remarks
- Minutes from last meeting
- Treasurer Report
- Boxwood Creations
- Refreshments

See you then!

Kathleen Lynch

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Meeting Minutes October 11, 2022

Attendees: 30 including one new member

The meeting began promptly at 6pm. The president, Kathleen Lynch, opened by reading a nice “thank you” note received from this year’s scholarship recipient, Mia Giardina.

The minutes of the September 13th meeting were accepted as published in the Thymes.

In the absence of the treasurer, the secretary gave the treasurer’s report. She first mentioned that the September report was corrected to align with the fiscal year and showed a balance of \$3,826.63. The October report shows income from dues \$350, a donation of \$30 and the apple squeeze proceeds of \$273. Expenses showed supplies \$3, printing of new Handbook \$80.20 and 50% of Flower Show costs of \$112.71 - leaving a balance of \$4,283.72.

There was a proposal made to provide a locking file cabinet for the club. It was pointed out that we need permission from the VA. Diane Romeo mentioned she recently talked to the VA, and they have allotted additional space to the club by the upstairs emergency exit. It was noted that a small file cabinet might fit within the space, so no permission is needed. It was voted for the president to look for and price out something to fit the space.

Today’s workshop is on Amaryllises. Bulbs have been purchased but not enough for all to participate. Given that the number of attendees to the meetings varies, the president announced that

for future workshop meetings RSVPs will be needed to assure that the correct number of supplies are available.

The president also noted that a container for recipes will be placed out each meeting and asked that people bring recipes to share on a “take one or leave one” basis.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Sarah Hatch, Secretary

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Horticultural Column – New England’s Oaks

Harriet Wetstone



I am looking out over vivid orange yellow and red foliage, a little sparser than a week ago but still so beautiful. Another week, and I am afraid it will be gone. I am always struck by how the predominant yellows and oranges play up the precious deep reds provided by Oaks and Japanese maples. Happily, oaks are among New England’s most prolific tree species.

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Oaks are everywhere, and they are a fascinating species. In New England, we have so many species of Oak! To simplify, there are the White Oaks (*Quercus alba*) and the Red Oaks (*Quercus rubra*). The Red Oaks include the Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*), the Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), and the Bear Oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*). The White Oaks include the Swamp Oak (*Quercus bicolor*), the Burr Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), and the Chestnut Oak (*Quercus Montana*).

It is the White Oaks that are the “mighty” oaks. They can grow into massive specimens if left on their own - 80 feet tall and almost as wide - and can survive for centuries. The wood is lighter in color, and the bark tends to be ashen in color with very deep ridges. The leaves are deeply lobed with rounded points. They are slow growers; they produce masses of acorns but not until they are past twenty years old, at least. White oaks are resistant to drought and are also disease resistant. They are multicolored and gorgeous in the fall.

The red oaks are not so massive. They tend to grow about sixty feet tall, with a leaner, more pyramidal shape. They are much faster growers and can grow multiple feet in a year. Their wood is darker in color, their bark also darker and hardly ridged at all. Red oak leaves are also deeply lobed but with sharp points. They are not so drought resistant. Red oaks are also about twenty years old when they begin to produce acorns. It is interesting that red oaks mature their acorns over two growing seasons, white oaks, over one. Red Oak tree acorns are bitter, but White Oak tree acorns are sweet.

In order to germinate, acorns need a ground disturbance that will create an ideal seedbed with plenty of sunlight. This is why forest fires are an important means of regenerating oak trees. Fire suppression, which began in the early 1900s, has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of oak trees, with eastern forests populated more by maple, birch, and hemlock trees. MassWildlife and its partners have been conducting prescribed fires at strategic locations to stimulate the growth of new oak trees.



Oaks provide crucial nourishment for a host of wildlife. Acorns are packed with vitamins and healthy fats and proteins and are eaten by deer and bears and smaller creatures, as well as grouse and turkeys and blue jays. But the leaves! Over five hundred species of moth and butterfly caterpillars depend on oak leaves - and the caterpillars in turn feed the birds, who keep the caterpillars from denuding the trees. What a system! Oaks are vital to a vigorous forest food web.

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Long ago, acorns were an important food supply for people, as well as wildlife, but not so much anymore. The bitterness of the Red Oak acorns is caused by tannins, which can be leached out by soaking them. Tannins are an antinutrient, which means they reduce your body's ability to absorb essential nutrients. I don't know how that works for squirrels and chipmunks! It used to be that acorns were ground into flour for a number of uses. Today, the Honest Food website will show you how to make acorn flour and acorn grits. It is not a quick and easy process, but they claim that the flavor is worth it: sweet, nutty, and interesting!

Happy experimenting!

Thanks to:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/guides/736?taxon=861033>;

<https://www.plantmegreen.com/blogs/news/white-oak-vs-red-oak-trees-what-are-the-differences>;

<https://www.mass.gov/news/the-mighty-oak>;

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/>;

<https://honest-food.net/acorn-flour>

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Some Fun Photos from our Potluck Dinner September 13, 2022 Thank you Tjjasa

