

# Academy Garden Club Thymes

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

DECEMBER 2022

## A Message from the President

*"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."*  
- Barbara Winkler

## Hello Members,

The boxwood workshop was a rousing success! The festive creations included candle holders, topiaries, and wreathes. It was a full house, and thanks go out to Dianne and Liz for putting this workshop together. Thanks also to Anne and Kathleen for the scrumptious refreshments. As always, thanks to everyone who helped set up the room and then put everything away and swept up at the end of the evening.

A new file cabinet was donated by the president and will help keep everything in one place. A raffle was held with a donated book from the book selection of November's newsletter. The recipes from the recipe swap were taken home by members, and for anyone who wants to share a recipe, the basket will be at the December meeting. Please read the minutes provided by the secretary, and a vote will be held to approve them at the December meeting.

The holiday party will be held at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in the Center House on December 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 p.m. For the December holiday party, members whose last names start with A-L will provide the appetizers, and those whose last names begin with M-Z will provide the desserts. Of course, you are welcome to bring both or switch up with someone else. Wine and other beverages will be included. Plates and utensils will be provided by BBG.

Raffle items are needed, so please bring anything you can contribute to make it a fun event and raise money for the organization. And do not forget to bring your dollars so you can participate in the raffle!

## December's book selection is:



### *The Last Garden in England*

by Julia Kelly

*One garden connects five women across three different times in The Last Garden in England. From 1907, when the beautiful garden was designed at the estate, to the dark days of 1944, when it was devastated by war, to present day, when this garden gets a second chance, author Julia Kelly weaves a tale in which the garden is not only a lush backdrop but also a character in its own right.*

## Agenda for December Meeting:

- Opening remarks and any announcements by members
- Questions or concerns
- Vote to accept the November minutes
- Purchase of raffle tickets
- The raffle will be held at the end of the meal

**See you then!**

**Kathleen Lynch**

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## Meeting Minutes

### November 8, 2022

Meeting was opened at 6:12 pm

Minutes: The minutes of the 10/11/2022 meeting were approved as printed in the "Thymes."

Treasurers Report: The opening balance was \$4,283.72 with expenditures for Massachusetts Annual Report filing fee for \$15.00 and Supplies for meetings \$213.78. Income was \$180.00 leaving a net of \$4,234.94.

The president announced there were several recipes in the share box and she brought a sweet book titled "Trellis and Seed" for the winner of a raffle. The raffle was won by Karen Falco.

A locked box for files has been secured for keeping important files.

The president also shared that she has two passes for Saturday at the Berkshire Botanical Garden from 3-4 p.m. if anyone wishes to attend. She also mentioned that the Methodist Church in Lenox is holding a crafts fair on Nov 19 from 9-3 p.m. Sarah Hatch invited all to the Lenox Land Trust annual meeting at the Lenox Library on Nov 10 at 6 p.m. There will be a talk by Amy Lafave on Stoneover Farm Park.

Susan Wolfe has become webmaster. She is adding a welcome page, notices of next meetings, a horticulture column with index to detail information about a specific plant, volunteer projects, and new activities.

The meeting was closed at 6:27 p.m. Dianne Romeo passed out boxwood floral foam for making table decorations for the holidays.

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Sarah Hatch, Secretary**

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## Horticultural Column – American Elderberry

### Harriet Wetstone

Thanksgiving! Only Monday, but already two of my grandchildren are here for the week, ear-phoned and huddled over their laptops, hard at work, but happy to be in the Berkshires instead of the city. And one with a cold. ("I've tested, Grammy, it's only a cold"). And I am still coughing, myself. So which native plant will I talk about? Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), of course! [healthline.com](https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/elderberry) tells us that elderberry is one of the most commonly used medicinal plants in the world. According to <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/elderberry>, Elderberry is a dark purple berry which grows in Europe, North America, Asia, and Northern Africa. It has long been used in folk medicine to treat colds and flu, and some preliminary research suggests that elderberry may indeed relieve symptoms of flu or other upper respiratory infections. No scientific data, yet, re Covid. NIH also warns that raw, unripe berries as well as leaves and stems contain toxic substances (e.g., sambunigrin, glycoside) which can cause nasty illnesses.

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Hmmm, not so romantic as my visions of Elderberry wine, or elderberry syrup! And not nearly so positive as WebMD, which says that the elderberry is one of nature's most versatile solutions for what ails you, and its use in folk medicine dates back as far as 400 BC. Hippocrates called the elder tree his "medicine chest." The Botanical Institute reports clinical trials in which elderberry extract to help reduce cold duration and severity and recommends elderberry for its antioxidant effects as does many other sources of herbal information.

*Sambucus canadensis*, or the American Elderberry, is native to eastern North America. It is a deciduous, somewhat sprawling, suckering shrub that typically grows to 5-12 feet tall and is fast growing. It grows in sun and part shade, and typically appears along stream beds and moist woodlands.



Large, flat, clusters of tiny lemon-scented white flowers appear in the Spring, and the very dark purple berries, in the Fall. Autumn foliage is a deep burgundy. Aside from its herbal/medicinal value, elderberries are bee friendly and attract butterflies and birds. Because of its suckering habit, Elderberry shrub is probably not a candidate for a formal garden, but it is wonderful in a wild jungley garden like mine, and it is said to be a good hedge choice. In Europe, elderberries are often planted as hedgerows and so were readily available. There are, however, much tamer and beautiful cultivars such as Black Lace Sambuca.

It is interesting that the North American elderberry shrub (*Sambucus canadensis*) is very closely related to the European Elder Tree (*Sambucus nigra*). However, the Missouri Botanical Garden cautions against *Sambucus nigra*, which can grow as much as 20 ft tall and wide, as being weedy and potentially invasive.

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I was surprised to read that Elderberry Wine, which conjures up Victorian Romance for me, is only one of the Elder wines, there is also Elderflower wine. The Elderflower wine is made from the flowers, not the berries. It is made by fermenting the fragrant flowers along with yeast and sugar, which results in a white wine. The Elderberry wine is a medium-bodied, acidic, tannic, dry, hearty red wine with flavors of elderberry, blackcurrant, blueberry, and cherry, as well as earthy notes - this from <https://www.thespruceeats.com/what-is-elderberry-wine-5199231>. Elderberry wine is known as a fruit wine, as opposed to a grape wine, but is said to be the closest of the fruit wines to a grape wine. This wine has been made for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, in the cooler regions of Europe where grapes would not grow.

Elderberry syrup can be made from fresh or dried elderberries and is pretty simple to make. One recipe (<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/228528/elderberry-syrup/>) calls for a cup of elderberries, 3 cups of water, a cup of honey, and cinnamon, cloves, and fresh ginger. If you are using dried berries, just double the water. Boil it up for 45 minutes, strain, and you are done! Pour on pancakes, take a tablespoon as a daily tonic, feast on the rich purple color!

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## November 2022 Boxwood Photos from Tjasa – thank you!

