



The Magnolia

March Newsletter 2017

GARDENERS' GUILD OF BRAINTREE

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Gardeners' Guild of Braintree

<http://www.gardenersguildofbraintree.com/>

Contact:

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Corresponding Secretary
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If you have events, news, stories or photos to share, please send them to rmzahran@yahoo.com.

Deadline for the next e-newsletter is April 16, 2017.

Program: *"Botany For Gardeners"*

Judith Sumners

Join us to learn some closely-held botanical secrets, from seed germination and companion plants to reutilization, watering and mulching. Judith Sumners will share many of the subtle aspects of plant growth that affect plant survival in your garden. This mini-class in botany will demystify several perplexing topics in plant growth, with the goal of improving garden success!

Judith Sumners is a botanist who specializes in flowering plants, plant adaptations, garden history and ethnobotany. She has taught extensively both at the college level at the college level and at Arnold Arboretum and Garden in the Woods. She has been a guest on Martha Stewart Living Television show, the PBS program "Cultivating Life" with Sean Conway and various other PBS and educational programs. This presentation is open to the public with a suggested donation to the Guild of \$1.00.

Date: March 6, 2017

Time: 7:00 pm Gardener's Guild Business
7:30 pm Program

Place: Masonic Temple
403 Washington Street
Braintree, MA 02184

Membership and Remembrance Hostesses:
Virginia Quinn and Carmela Varraso

Hospitality Hostesses: Ann Moore and Erin Wilson

Bakers: Claire Mulligan, Louise Quigley, Virginia Quinn, Barbara Sullivan, Annette McLaughlin Hedlund

Invocation: Phyllis Field

Hospitality Chair: Sarah Sciascia and Patty Jenkins

GGB MEETING DATES

Meetings are held the first Monday of the month ~ October through May

2016

October 3 *Just Cook (Cooking from the Garden)*

November 7 *Herb Gardening through a Sustainable Lens*

November 28 *Christmas Greens Workshop*

December 4 *Boutique and Holiday House Tour*

1 Marinelli Court



2017

January 9 *Potluck and Brown Bag Grab Auction at the Bean Museum*

February 6 *Workshop: Sustainable Gardening and Growing your own Micro-garden*

March 6 *Botany for Gardeners*

April 3 *Getting Started - Getting your Garden Ready for Spring*

May 1 *Annual Spring Banquet*

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hi Everyone:

I want to thank everyone for your cards, caring expressions of sympathy, support and the Jasmine plant. I truly appreciate your kindness. It means a great deal to be surrounded by people who truly care. I will always be grateful for your thoughtfulness. I also want to thank Rochelle Moore for covering for me during my absence.

Best,

Joan



COMMITTEE UPDATES

Publicity

Press releases were sent to the regular media outlets regarding the February meeting: Braintree Forum, Patriot Ledger, Braintree Advertiser, Braintree Patch.

Publicity Co-Chairs: Steph McLaughlin and Tina O'Brien

BIRTHDAY WISHES

A very "Happy Birthday" to our members who have special days in **March**:



Steve Maccini

Ann Moore

Gail Rotondi

QUOTE

My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece.

— Claude Monet

PLANT THERAPY

News from Plant Therapy

Carolyn Mahoney, Plant Therapy Chairperson, will feature interesting horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture articles in our monthly member newsletters. If you are interested in joining the Plant Therapy Committee, please contact Carolyn at carolynmahoney@beld.net.

FEATURED TOPIC: ART IN BLOOM

Celebrate the return of spring with Art in Bloom, the Museum's annual festival of fine art and flowers.

Enjoy exquisite art from across the MFA's collection paired with magnificent floral interpretations created by New England-area garden clubs. Professional designers delight with creative designs in Museum entrances and walkways. This is truly a wonderful event!

Guided Group Tours

The date for our adventure -- **Saturday, April 29**

Bring your group of ten or more for a guided tour of the floral arrangements or opt to tour the galleries on your own. Reservations open February 23. Please **email me** at carolynmahoney@beld.net by **February 23rd** so I can reserve space for us. The cost is \$25.00, \$23.00 (seniors) or free if you are a member of the MFA. I am assuming we could car pool. The number of drivers needed would be dependent on the number of folks going. Once I get the count I will let you know at our next GG meeting and via email.



TIPS FOR MARCH: ZONE 6

Gardening To Do List - March in the Garden

Zone 6

- If you've had a mild winter, look for hosta shoots poking up through the soil. Dig up clumps that need to be divided, split them apart, and replant them. Water generously.
- Free the foliage from spring-blooming bulbs that are tangled in mulch.
- If the weather's mild, plant roses, trees, and shrubs.
- Move cool-loving broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower outdoors to a cold frame or protected spot.
- Start seeds of tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, perennials, and annual flowers indoors under lights.
- As soon the garden soil is workable, [plant peas](#), potatoes, sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*), poppies (*Papaver spp.*), rocket larkspur (*Consolida ajacis*), and mignonette (*Reseda odorata*).
- If there's no snow, top-dress the lawn with compost. Fill in low spots and reseed.

MARCH GARDEN CHECKLIST

General Garden Care



On dry days remove winter debris from lawn and garden beds. Check for broken branches (prune immediately) or plants damaged by snow loads or rodents. Remove burlap screens erected to protect plants from wind or road salt spray.

Consider a soil test of your entire yard or specific garden areas if you have not had one before. Consult the results of the test before adding amendments to your soil. Soil temperature must be 50 degrees for a proper reading. Tests can also be performed in the fall.

To avoid compacting garden soil, wait until it has dried out before tilling, planting, or even walking in the garden beds. Mix in 6 inches or more of compost or leaf mold to lighten heavy soil.

Tree and shrub care

Watch weather conditions for an appropriate window of time to spray fruit trees or large deciduous trees with dormant oil. Spray if aphids, scale, or mites were a problem in the past. Temperatures must be at least 40 degrees Fahrenheit with no chance of freezing or rain within the following 24 hours. Avoid spraying on a windy day. Certain trees have a photo toxicity to dormant oil and should not be sprayed. A few common ones are arborvitae, beech, red maple, Japanese maple, sugar maple, smoke bush, blue spruce, blue cultivars of juniper, and yew. Call Plant Information if in doubt.

To reduce the spread of oak wilt, all oak pruning should be completed in March, or before the oaks begin active growth. Pruning should not resume until after the first frost, or around November 1.

Prune fruit trees in early March on a dry day before buds swell. As with all pruning chores, sterilize pruning tools with a 10 percent solution of bleach before each cut. Prune out sucker growth, water sprouts, and any diseased or dead branches. Remove crossing branches, rubbing branches, or those that grow toward the center or the plant rather than outward, away from the interior. Fruit trees benefit from having their canopies opened up to permit more sunlight and air into their centers.

Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs immediately after they flower to preserve this season's flower display.

Prune roses when the forsythia begins to bloom. When pruning roses, make a 45-degree cut above a healthy bud, angled away from the center of the plant. If not done last fall, prune hybrid tea roses and grandiflora roses back to 12 inches to reinvigorate growth. Prune out dried, darkened, and broken canes and any dead tips. Prune shrub roses to remove dead wood and very lightly to shape to size.

Fertilize woody plants four to six weeks before they begin new growth only if they have shown signs that they could use it. These would include poor leaf color, failure to completely fruit or flower, or stunted growth. Use a slow-release granular fertilizer or an organic product and water in well. Do not fertilize newly planted trees or shrubs. Wait one year before making this application.

Plant trees and shrubs before they break bud and when soil conditions permit. If spring weather is unusually wet, consider planting in the fall when the plants begin their dormancy. With all woody plants, avoid planting too deep. Research indicates that more trees suffer from being planted too deep in the hole than any other problem. Plant with one-third of the root ball above ground. Taper soil away from the trunk back to ground level. Mulch the entire root zone with several inches of shredded or chipped bark.

Annual and Perennial Care

Look for early spring-blooming bulbs (sometimes beneath the snow or ground cover). If necessary, divide clumps of old,





non-blooming bulbs or fertilize with a 5-10-5 granular fertilizer now and again in fall. Mark the spots with small stakes for locating next fall.

Gently press back any perennials that heaved out of the ground over the winter. Mulch those plants with several inches of shredded material.

As days warm up, gradually pull back mulch from around perennial crowns.

Remove dead leaves from perennial clumps taking care not to injure emerging new leaves.

Cut back to the ground all perennials and ornamental grasses that were left standing for winter interest.

Prune back to 12 inches stems of autumn-flowering clematis vines.

Fruit, Vegetable, and Herb Care

Prune grapevines according to selected method. For detailed information on pruning grapevines, contact plant information at (847) 835-0972 to order Plant Information Fact Sheet #36, Pruning Grapevines.

Prune raspberry bushes and reattach canes to support system, if necessary. Some gardeners mow their raspberry patches to the ground this month to encourage one big crop during summer. Ever-bearing bushes should not be mowed down.

When soil temperatures are consistently in the 50s, sow seeds of cool-season vegetables directly into the garden. If seeds were started indoors, small transplants can be moved outside after a period of adjustment. Cool-season vegetables that can be direct-seeded include the root crops of beets, carrots, radishes, parsnips and turnips; the leaf crops of chard, loose-leaf lettuces, spinach, mesclun mix, mustard and collard greens, and kale. The crops that should be started indoors and moved outside as transplants are broccoli, the cabbages, and cauliflowers.

Indoor Plant Care

Continue to care for indoor flowering gift plants.

Azaleas require even moisture and bright light. Deadhead to keep plants blooming for four to six weeks. Azaleas can go outside to a partly shaded location after May 15, but must come back in before fall frost.

Primrose plants can be discarded after flowering or planted directly in shaded, well-drained garden area. They will go dormant during summer months and require heavy mulch to protect from summer heat and winter cold. Indoor-blooming tulip, daffodil, hyacinth, or crocus plants can be planted outside and treated like outdoor bulbs after they have flowered but there is no guarantee they will flower the following year.

Get a head start on summer-blooming bulbs and tubers by starting them indoors in moist, soilless mix. Plant *Caladium* (caladium), *Colocassia* (elephant ears), *Begonia x tuberhybrida* (tuberous begonia), *Crocasmia* (montbretia), *Agapanthus* (Lily of the Nile), *Canna x generalis* (garden canna), *Polianthes* (tuberose), *Acidanthera* (peacock orchid). Keep warm until new growth appears. Move pots into a sunny window or under grow lights if necessary. Move these pots outside when all danger of frost has passed, after gradually introducing plants to warm weather conditions.

Repot houseplants, including orchids, after they have flowered and if they have become root bound. Increase pot size by one inch. Change the potting soil/fir bark but do not change the level at which the plant was situated in the pot.

Fertilize houseplants as they begin new growth. Try low dosages of organic fertilizers or a very dilute, balanced granular fertilizer rather than stronger formulas. Telltale white salt markings on terra cotta pots indicate overuse of fertilizer. Flush out soil of over fertilized plants with plain water.



Propagate houseplants. Softwood cuttings, leaf cuttings, air-layering, cane cuttings, or division may all be done this spring.

Start seeds of warm-season annuals and vegetables in a moist, soilless seed mix. These seeds are started six to eight weeks before the spring frost date of May 15. Transplant tiny seedlings into a "growing on" mix in slightly larger containers when they have two sets of true leaves. Gradually introduce small plants to outdoor conditions. They can be planted in containers or garden beds after May 15.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST BEYOND GGB

Annual Backyard Farm and Garden lecture event coming up

MARSHFIELD – The Marshfield Agricultural Commission will hold the seventh annual Backyard Farm and Garden lecture event from 9 am to 12:30 pm , Saturday, March 4, at the Marshfield Senior Center, 230 Webster St.

The event is free. Participants may choose two of six lectures geared to the backyard enthusiast.

Paul F. Split, a horticulturist with more than 45 years of experience with organic gardening, will be returning. He will demonstrate techniques for successful organic seed starting, and he will give a presentation on xeriscaping (low-water gardening).

Suzanne Mahler is a horticulturist known for writing a coluher local column, Green Thumbs Up. She will present “Design Basics for Home Gardens” and then Sun Gardens for All Seasons.”

Cheryl and Bronie Rozenas of Sippican River Farm have been raising alpacas on their Rochester property since 2008 in the hopes of developing a retirement business. They maintain 18 alpacas, harvest the wool and sell a variety of products at local markets. They will share their stories in a talk titled “Keeping Alpacas and Using the Fiber.”

Karen Kaczorowski is a veterinarian known for her work with goats. Her mobile practice extends throughout southeastern Massachusetts. This lecture will cover basic goat husbandry, behavior, diet, medications, parasites and diseases.

For more information or to pre-register, go to www.townofmarshfield.org/lecture2017.htm or call 781-837-1433.



Visit a flower show. Nothing beats the winter blues like going to a flower show. This month there are many all over New England, starting with the [Flower and Patio Show](#) in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the [Vermont Flower Show](#) (both March 1 to 3). The [Boston Flower & Garden Show](#) follows (March 13 to 17), along with the [Original Western Massachusetts Home & Garden Show](#) (March 21 to 24) and the [Seacoast Home & Garden Show](#) in Durham, New Hampshire (March 23 to 24).

SPRING IN THE PERENNIAL GARDEN

Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, and
Andrea Luchini, Graduate Assistant
University of Vermont

In order for perennial gardens to look their best in summer, they require some care in spring before most plants begin to flower.

In the very early spring, if you ordered bare-root plants (just the plant and its roots) through the mail or internet, they may arrive. It's best to pot them into a container and let them get established in an outdoor, but sheltered, area before planting into the ground later. If they are from a warmer location, with lush growth, you'll want to protect them from spring frosts. Also, now is a good time to get your tools ready by cleaning, oiling, and sharpening. Sharpening devices can be found at many complete garden stores, hardware stores, or online.

In the early spring, after most of the snow melts and temperatures are mostly above freezing, remove winter protection such as evergreen boughs, or other types of coverings and winter mulches. Do so early in the spring because plants will begin growing under these. Perennials need the sun, and to be exposed to cooler temperatures, to be fully hardy. Uncover too late, and they may be easily burned by the sun or injured by dips in the temperature. The mulches can stay on open parts of the perennial beds.

When you want to get out early in the season and garden it is hard to resist, but you don't want to start working in your flower beds if the soils are wet (especially clay soils). This can cause compaction, which will make the ground harder for the plant roots to grow through, and it removes the necessary pore space for air and water. You also don't want to step on newly emerging plants.

That being said, you shouldn't wait too long! Any plants heaved up by frost action should be pressed back down into the ground. Before too many plants start their spring growth, start your spring clean-up by removing dead, decaying plant matter. While it does provide organic matter to your beds, it can also harbor pests and diseases. So it's best to remove this dead growth from last year, if you didn't last fall. Now, or later, you can add fresh compost or mulch for additional organic matter.

Some perennials such as tickseed, shasta daisy, garden phlox, asters, and coneflowers have green rosettes at ground level that overwinter and need to be exposed. Most perennials (such as perennial geranium, daylily, bee balm, and others) can be cut back almost to the ground, and they will regrow from there.

Once all the plants are cut back, you can start weeding! By now, weeds will already be growing strong. It's the best time, and easiest, to get at them before they get too big. Watch what you are doing as newly emerging plants (especially small ones you just planted last fall), and seedlings, can sometimes be confused with weeds. If you know it's a seedling of something you don't want, go ahead and remove it. If you want theseedling, but not in that spot, wait until it gets larger before trying to transplant it.

You can also start fertilizing and mulching your beds, again watching out for new plants. Inorganic fertilizer shouldn't be necessary every year in perennial beds, especially if you've been consistently adding compost, but older beds may need the added boost. Organic fertilizers, which have fewer nutrients and are more slow release than inorganic ones, can be added each year. Make sure to keep fertilizer off plant foliage to avoid burning it.

It's also better to apply too little rather than too much fertilizer. Too much fertilizer may result in perennials growing lush foliage, with few or no flowers. Too much fertilizer, and it may end up in surface or groundwater supplies.

When mulching your beds with fine pine bark or similar organic material, be careful not to over-mulch. Two to three inches thick should be enough for open areas, and don't put any mulch on the crowns (base) of your perennials. Some plants, such as peonies, won't flower at all if their crowns are covered. Other shallow-rooted perennials such as yarrow and many bellflowers may be smothered and killed by heavy mulching.

If you have plants that need dividing or moving, mid-to-late spring is usually the best time for this. Keep in mind that many perennials won't need dividing unless they had few blooms the past season, or have open centers with no stems emerging. It's best to divide most perennials when they are about two to four inches tall. If they are taller than that, you may want to cut them back to about this height. Try not to move or divide a plant when it is flowering. This includes spring-bloomers such as lungwort and primroses.

While most plants like to be divided in the spring, some are best divided after bloom. These include oriental poppies, Siberian iris, bearded iris, and true lilies (not daylilies). Peonies are best divided in the fall.

Weeding, fertilizing, mulching, and dividing can all continue into late spring. In general it's best to have the fertilizing, mulching, and dividing done before summer begins. Staking plants with cages around them, or hoops as for peonies, should begin now before plants get too large. You can cut flowers off of tulips, daffodils, and other larger bulbs when they are finished bloom. Leave the foliage though to die down naturally, adding nutrients back to the bulb for next year.

NEXT MEETING SNEAK PEEK: ON YOUR MARK, GET SET ... GROW!

April 3, 2017

Melissa Pace: “*On Your Mark, Get Set ... GROW!*”

Location:

Masonic Temple, 503 Washington Street, Braintree, MA

Starting a new garden, no matter if it is your first or not, can be overwhelming. Many of the ideas we discuss will be applicable to rehabbing established gardens as well – This talk will help you develop a step-by-step plan for your new endeavor. Learn about the incredible benefits of having your soil tested and how to do that, gain ideas on reducing common problems from ever appearing in your garden, and making a plan to reduce the future work your garden will need.

Each member will receive a personal worksheet full of prompts and design tools to assist them in developing the perfect garden plan. Melissa Pace is an award winning horticulturalist that competes in numerous garden and flower shows. She has been a URI Master Gardener since 2003. This presentation is open to the public with a suggested donation to the Gardeners Guild of Braintree of \$1.00.



GGB is on Facebook Are you on Facebook? If so, don't forget to "Like" Gardeners' Guild of Braintree to get updates, reminders and to see some great photos from past events. Contact Gail Ritz to add anything to the facebook page.