

# A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club  
Topsfield, Massachusetts  
November—December 2022



*A few November gardening tips and a Gardener's Christmas poem waiting in this month's Green Thumb!*

*"A falling leaf is nothing more than a summer's wave goodbye."*

*Unknown*

## Thanksgiving week



*Our club will decorate the outside of the Topsfield Town Library for the holidays. At present, we are looking at the week of November 21st on Monday, Tuesday Wednesday or Saturday, weather permitting. Please stay close to your inbox for the exact date and time. Cut greens from your gardens are needed to dress up the urns and extra hands would be great for decorating the urns and the outside railings of the building.*

*P.S. We also would appreciate greens from your gardens to dress the Pine Grove Cemetery urns, since Wreaths across America will be laying wreaths at the cemetery in December.*

## December 2



*Our annual **Holiday Luncheon and Yankee Swap** will be held once again at Toscana's Restaurant, 3 Bourbon Street, Peabody at 12:00 noon. From Route 1 South, take the Lowell Street exit, bear right at the stop sign for Lowell Street and then proceed in the left lane and take the second left. Dunkin' Donuts is on the corner. Toscana's will be on your right past Karl's Sausage Kitchen. Please respond to Jane or Sandy ASAP!*

*This year's social will feature a new variation on our traditional Yankee Swap! Of course, as usual, participation is optional!*



*Your Yankee Swap gift should be a Christmas stocking filled with wrapped gifts value \$12 to \$15!*



## December 8



*Our Garden Therapy Committee will hold a Boxwood Tree Workshop for members of the Topsfield Council On Aging at the Trinity Church Meeting Hall, Topsfield at 9:30 am. Participation is limited to 20 people and the cost will be \$12 per person. We need all the help we can get to prepare for the workshop and helpers are requested to arrive at 8:00 am for set-up prior to the workshop. Please bring newspapers to cover tables, and clippers! Please let Mary Connor know as soon as possible whether you will be able to lend a hand at the workshop!*

*...more news on the following page...*



*...Bits and pieces...*



*Sandy and Jane busy at work at the Linebrook Island*

*Great news that, with the help from some hearty and devoted souls, our community gardens around town and at the Pine Grove Cemetery have been put to bed for the winter. Many thanks to Jane Cullinan and her husband, Chris, Sandy Whelan and her husband, Steve, and Jane's kind landscaper, Scott Hayes, for cutting down and raking the gardens, and carting away all the cut plant material. Quite honestly, what would we do without them?*

### *Topsfield Fair 2022*



*Congratulations to our club's favorite chef, Donna Ryan, who won an award in the King Arthur Challenge for her Pumpkin Cake, described by Donna as follows: "12 cup pumpkin cake filled with apples, pecans & raisins, topped with pecans and pumpkin seeds. Sounds delightful!"*



### *A Haunted Garden*



*Congratulations to the Topsfield Garden Club for a first place award for their feature garden in the Fair's Flower Barn.*



*Nancy Emmons and Linda Mann with Linda's creative bows!*

### *November 2022 Tri-Town Joint Meeting*



*The gang at our fundraising table!*

*...The Green Thumb Corner follows...*



## Green Thumb Corner

Ah, it's November and time for a long winter's nap for the gardener, right? Not so fast! Richard Biers had it right when he said "A garden is a thing of beauty and a job forever." I have personally found this to be the case, as I continue to share my time between my outdoor gardens and houseplants that have adopted me as their "Mom." So just when you thought you were off the hook, here are some gardening tips for November.



First but not least, there are the leaves that seem to be everywhere this year and the size of dinner plates! Here's a final reminder to clear those leaves off your grassy areas. Not removing them can cause grass to die, or at least result in a patchy lawn in need of reseeding in the spring. In addition, excessive leaf matter on your lawn over winter can promote snow mold diseases. Leaves also create a nice cover for critters like voles and mice to do turf damage in secret. As for flowerbeds, those with small plants and evergreens should probably be cleared of leaves to avoid smothering. Flowerbeds with large plants or bulbs probably don't need to be cleared, since the leaves may protect the plants and suppress weeds. Complicated, but you're in the driver's seat. Do what you feel is best.



Next tip: Soon the cold, howling winds will be here. Don't let the recent balmy weather fool you! Be warned that cold winter winds can cause injury to evergreens. Wind blowing over leaf surfaces can result in winter burn, and can draw water out of the plant. To protect your plants, be sure that the soil is evenly moist up until the ground freezes. You may also want to consider wrapping your plants in burlap or setting up some kind of barrier to break the wind. Another option is to spray with an anti-desiccant spray such as Wilt Pruf. These sprays work by creating an invisible film on the surface of the leaves, which will reduce the amount of water lost to the sun and wind.

Tip number three: Did you know that giving your houseplants cold water to drink can destroy the ability of their root cells to take up nutrients and water? Water below 50 degrees may reduce leaf size, cause leaves to drop and may eventually cause the untimely death of your poor plant. So the next time it becomes necessary to water, do it with water that feels comfortable to you...about 90 degrees...which has been found to actually stimulate growth.



Here's number four: Your houseplants just hate that dry feeling in your heated home all winter! Plants prefer relative humidity of about 40 to 50 percent, and suffer at levels which are common in our homes during winter...10 to 20 percent. What to do? Humidifiers help, as does grouping plants together. Another method, which I use, is to place houseplants on trays or saucers filled with pebbles. Add water to the trays, making sure that you keep the bottoms of your pots above the water line. Unfortunately, it turns out that misting is not an effective way to raise humidity. The plant's foliage dries much too quickly, and in order to be effective, you would have to mist several times a day. That's not going to happen!



And, the final tip for today: When buying your poinsettias, be sure to buy those which have bright bracts and healthy foliage that does not look wilted. Try your best to protect your plant from the cold on its journey home. Once your plant is home, place it in a brightly lit location away from cold drafts or hot air registers.

And, remember, don't kill your dear little plant with kindness! Water only when the surface of the soil is dry to the touch. And, if the pot is covered with foil, be sure there is a drainage hole in the foil. Dispose of any water that might collect either in the foil, or in the saucer below your plant.

*Even though the following passage seems meant for our Thanksgiving holiday celebrations, I feel that the entirety of the holiday season should be a time of thanksgiving for all that we have, and perhaps take for granted. In this spirit, I pass these thoughts onto you...*



*~ A Gardener's Thanksgiving ~*

*Let us give thanks for a bounty of people:*

*For children who are our second planting, and though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are;*

*For generous friends with hearts and smiles as bright as their blossoms;*

*For feisty friends as tart as apples;*

*For continuous friends, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us that we've had them;*

*For crotchety friends, as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;*

*For handsome friends, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn, and the other, plain as potatoes and as good for you;*

*For funny friends, who are as silly as Brussels Sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem Artichokes, and serious friends, as complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions;*

*For friends as unpretentious as cabbages, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and who, like parsnips, can be counted on to see you through the winter;*

*For old friends, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;*

*For loving friends, who wind around us like tendrils and hold us, despite our blights, wilts and witherings;*

*And finally, for those friends now gone, like gardens past that have been harvested, and who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter;*

*For all these we give thanks.*

*~ Reverend Max Coots  
1928-2009*

*Best wishes to you and those special to you for a beautiful season of holidays. May you be safe, healthy and happy!*