



A POSY PICKER'S PAPER

New Meadows Garden Club
Topsfield, Massachusetts

January 19th through February 16 , 2021



Winter is definitely upon us now, bringing along with it cold and dreary days. But outside, nature carries on. Check out the Green Thumb Corner for a peek at what the birds and bees are up to.

The objectives of the New Meadows Garden Club shall be to foster knowledge of home gardening, decorative arrangements and an interest in civic projects.

Keeping in touch during the Pandemic and at a time of social distancing.

There's no question that the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to create extreme uncertainty in our lives. This uncertainty continues to extend to our club and how it is able to function at this time. In an effort to keep our members safe, our regular monthly meetings continue to be suspended until further notice. But, rest assured, our board is working on our members' behalf to carry on club business and will schedule events when it will be possible to hold them safely. You are being kept up to date electronically, so keep an eye out for messages you will receive about club happenings as time goes on. We all look forward to a time when we can safely be together again. In the meantime, please continue to keep yourselves and those special to you safe and healthy.

February 2



As with many other events this past year, this year's Groundhog Day celebration will be very different due to precautions that must be taken for safety during the pandemic. Punxsutawney Phil will be making his live annual prognostication from Gobbler's Knob, but there will not be any in-person attendance or guests on the grounds to bear witness. Instead, Phil's followers will be able to be there virtually. If you would like to join in, go to www.groundhog.org. Let's hope for a prediction of an early spring!

In honor of Groundhog Day, check out this short video to see what happens when Punxsutawney Phil's relatives visit your backyard:

<https://twitter.com/dodo/status/1223093546887958528>

February 16



Our next board meeting will be a Zoom meeting at 10 am. Stay tuned board members, and be prepared to fire up your electronics for this meeting. A Zoom invitation will be sent prior to the meeting.

Just heard...COVID 19 has forced Topsfield's 2021 Strawberry Festival to be cancelled.

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

NOTES



Our club's board discussed a very interesting and exciting fundraising suggestion made by our member, Mary Connor! Since we all have accumulated favorite recipes down through the years, why not put them into book form for the public to enjoy? Give some thought as to whether you would like to participate in an adventure such as this and which of your prized recipes you would be willing to share. Please let Mary know your thoughts.



Calling all members! Our club is looking for members to volunteer to bring a plant or floral design of some kind to the Topsfield Town Library for its circulation desk each week during the months of January, February and March. Please contact Sandy Whelan or Jane Cullinan to take a week!

Soon it will be Valentine's Day, a day to express your feelings for someone special to you. The gift of flowers, and especially roses, has become the most popular gift for that special someone on this holiday. Matter-of-fact, according to the Society of American Florists, 250 million roses were produced for Valentine's Day in 2019. Some say this tradition probably had its beginning in the late 1600's, when King Charles of Sweden learned about communicating artfully with flowers on a trip to Persia. The trend of sending



messages by means of flowers including the message "I love you," spread throughout Europe and rapidly became an integral part of the Valentine's Day traditions of today. Since the rose is thought to be the favorite flower of Venus, the Goddess of Love, and represents love in all its forms, it seemed perfect that lovers would begin giving them to those they cared about to show their deep feelings for each other.

And, what of Cupid? It seems that this "business of love" is a family affair! He just so happens to have been the son of Venus and was known for mischievously shooting arrows at both humans and gods, causing them to fall instantly in love with one another. So, it is appropriate that we associate him with this holiday of love as well!

♥♥ I have been purchasing precious little items on line from Victorian Trading Co. for many years. It is a very special website. For some Valentine fun, I invite you to visit their Blog with the following link: <https://blog.victoriantradingco.com/?s=Valentine%27s+Day>

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



...Bits and pieces...

*Decorating the Topsfield Library for
the Holiday Season*



Wreaths ready to hang.



*Many thanks to the Topsfield
Fire Department for hanging
the wreaths!*



The artistic volunteers.



The beautiful finished product.



*Linda Flynn's holiday urns at
the Steward School*



...Green Thumb Corner follows...

Green Thumb Corner

There's just something special about Bluebirds, don't you think? Up until this year, we haven't seen very many at our house, but this winter we have been blessed with a few flocks that visit the holly bushes outside our kitchen window for a snack. Since COVID-19 has rendered us housebound these several months, we've had lots of time to gaze out the window in hopes



of catching a glimpse of these colorful, sweet little birds. Our Eastern Bluebirds have not always remained this far north year-round. In the past, they have wintered in the Southeast United States and in Mexico...like the "snow birds" of the human kind! However, lately, there has been a northerly shift in their range. Bluebirds are now thought of as "partial migrants," with some migrating while others stay behind all winter. There is an advantage to be had for those who do not migrate in that they have first dibs on the best breeding places in spring! It is not known whether this is a permanent change in the Bluebirds' range, so perhaps it might be a good idea if we humans help our Bluebirds as they live through all that Mother Nature throws our way in winter. There are a few things that we can do:

- *Since Bluebirds need shelter from wind and cold during the winter, roosting boxes or birdhouses are a great addition to your winter landscape. Since the birds huddle together to keep warm inside, be sure to close off any cracks, leaving the entrance hole open, and face the house away from prevailing winter winds.*
- *Bluebirds mainly eat berries and fruit in winter, so think about planting fruit and berry-producing trees and shrubs like crabapples, hollies, winterberries and viburnums. If you already grow them in your yard, take good care of them so that they produce lots of food for your birds! You can try putting out food such as hulled sunflower or special mixes for Bluebirds and suet. Generally, most bluebirds do not feed this way, but it's worth a try. A week or so ago, I stung some Craisins on thin fish line and draped this over our holly, which is now running low on berries. I don't know as yet whether this will be successful but I'm keeping my fingers crossed!*
- *Bluebirds like water with their berries, so a heated birdbath nearby is perfect. As an alternate, many birds will eat snow to get water in winter.*

I hope these tips help and that you will enjoy many Bluebird sightings! ♦



Have you ever wondered where bees go in winter? Every animal has a winter routine, and this is true of bees as well. Some do migrate to warmer climates, but for those who remain, their time is spent working together to keep safe and warm. In the case of honey bees, during summer, they start their preparations for the harsh weather of the winter to come by primarily making honey, which will provide energy and nourishment. Without honey during winter they, including the queen, would die. That said, the

male bees and drones do die anyway or are driven out of the colony, which really doesn't seem very fair! .During just one winter, bees in a single hive can consume up to 30 pounds of the honey that they have hopefully stored! When the temperatures start to drop in fall, honey bees head for their hives and find a comfortable corner in which to huddle. This is known as a "winter cluster". Their one job in the hive is to keep the queen warm with their body heat and by moving their wings rapidly when they come in contact with the huddle, which generates even more heat. Since beehives are usually high off the ground, as long as the hive doesn't get damaged in some way, bees remain safe during bad weather. And, as far as housekeeping is concerned, the bees clean themselves and the hives on the few unusually warm days we sometimes get during winter. As winter wanes, the hive gradually degenerates. Come summer, the swarm then rebuilds the hive, and another cycle begins.

An amazing process, indeed. ♦