



The MULCH PILE

MGC CLUB NEWS

JANUARY 2006

OUR MISSION

Founded In 2004, The Millis Garden Club strives to enhance the natural beauty of our own surroundings and that of our community through the horticultural education of members – while cultivating new friendships in the process.

Upcoming Events

Desert Plants in the North East Garden with Mike Ambrose, Ambrose Plants and Design
Wednesday, January 18, 2006
7:00-8:00 PM VMB Room 18

Perennials in the Autumn Garden with Tess McDonough Ward, Sequinta Design
Please note date change:
Wednesday February 15, 2006
7:00-8:00PM VMB Room 18

The Woodland Gardens with Thomas Ward, Manager of the Dana Greenhouse at Arnold Arboretum
Wednesday March 15, 2006
7:00-8:00 PM VMB Room 18

Millis Beautification Day
Saturday April 15, 2006
8:00AM to 12 noon
A Member and Community Civic Project to benefit our town. Co-sponsored with the Millis Lions Club.

Container Gardening Workshop with Alison Campbell, Alison Campbell Designs
Saturday May 6, 2006
10:00 am to 12 noon
Pre-registration and payment begin Feb 1st. Location TBA. Open to Guests.

New Year's Message from the President

With each New Year brings changes. Some changes remain constant for all of us. Take for example; we are another year older and another year wiser (we hope). Some changes are more variable, like our responsibilities to our family, to our work, and to our home. Joining an organization, for an example, may bring on changes which may affect the member, their families, their homes and even possibly their work. How does joining a club change you, our member? Well, there are meetings you are encouraged to attend, and committees, projects and fundraisers to support. This all may change your schedule a bit, but because you, the member, believe in the mission of the organization – to make a difference in our Town (heck, that was the reason you joined the club in the first place), you try to work the changes into your life. And let's not forget about all the new community members you have met, and all the opportunities that have resulted from that, and all that you have learned and experienced since you joined. Those are the miscellaneous benefits from becoming a member of an organizing – but sometimes we remember them first.

Organizations change too. The Millis Garden Club is not the same club as on September 15, 2004, when it first opened its doors to the public. Today, it is a viable non-profit organization with 48 enthusiastic members; with successful fundraising and civic projects under its belt and more scheduled ahead; and most importantly, it has a vision for the future. We've got plans to ✨Bring back horticulture beauty by replanting the Children's Garden at Oak Grove Farm House. ✨Revitalize the Business district with a Window Box / Container Gardening Program. ✨Increase Community Spirit by sponsoring projects, such as Festival of Trees 2007. ✨Increase civic pride by sponsoring Millis Beautification Day, co-sponsored with the Millis Lions Club, a true community leader in our town. ✨Increase our horticulture knowledge with diverse and motivating educational programs throughout the year. This capsulated version of who we are today sounds and looks pretty good on paper, **but we can only grow and maintain our clubs' mission through the support of its membership.**

As a Member, I hope that you wish the organization to be diverse, show a steady growth, and experience contributions from each of its members. Make a positive contribution in your year ahead by taking on more of a commitment with the Millis Garden Club. Consider a leadership role in the organization. And if you are not able to hold an Executive Board's position this year, then we ask you to offer your expertise to a committee. However we look at it, your involvement is needed at this time, to take us into our third year. You, the club and your community will benefit greatly from what you can offer.

And I wish for you all, the happiest of days ahead, filled with peace, joy, good health and good spirit.

Nancy Sitta
President 2005-2006

**Festival of Trees, December 2-4, 2005
Oak Grove Farm House, Millis MA
Co-Sponsored by Millis Garden Club &
Millis Historic Commission.**

In Review

With thoughtful planning and a detailed implementation strategy, the public overwhelmingly gave us "two thumbs up" for our first attempt at the community holiday event called *Festival of Trees*. Many of you experienced the event first hand by either attending the private Holiday Gathering that Friday night, or maybe you visited with friends and family during the weekend. Either way, you saw smiling faces full of holiday spirit and good cheer.

I'd like to share with you a few significant details about the event. The public came out in droves because this was their chance to see the inside of the historic property owned by the Town of Millis. Upon entering the driveway from Route 115, they could immediately see that the outside of the farm house was completely transformed into a magical Victorian wonderland with yards of garland, wreaths, bows, and swags, with tiny white lights strung along the porch. We give just credit to five very imaginative, talented and resourceful people, who are lovingly addressed as the FOT Decorations Committee. With a clear vision from the start as to what the house should convey to the public during the event, Jean Maier, Patty Breen, Jen McPhee, Joyce Boiardi and Janet Parnes effortlessly decorated each individual room to tell a story. And a magical story was indeed told with the use of hand made decorations, Christmas cactuses, antique toys, gorgeous fabrics and greens, and more. This dynamic and creative team deserves a rousing standing ovation for making Oak Grove Farmhouse into a magical winter wonderland. Thank you, ladies!

On Friday, the first day the event was open to the Public, we warmly welcomed members of the Norfolk and Walpole Council on Aging. The minute the vans pulled up to the steps of the farmer's porch, the groups were 100% enchanted with the entire event. Kathy Doyle was instrumental in outreaching to these groups and inviting them to the event, along with area garden clubs and schools, including Strawberry Fields of Millis. Thank you, Kathy! All your efforts paid off. We brought joy to many children, young and old.

Members had fun with The First Annual MGC Greens Sale which was held concurrently with Festival of Trees. Wreaths were decorated, and centerpieces, boxwood trees, and burning bundles were made over three days and sold throughout the weekend. We have Debbie Lane Lesbirel to thank for heading the Greens Sale - and it was a success. The buyers loved what we made - and we loved making what they bought, thanks to the help of Joyce Boiardi, Anita Cross, Sandy Tannozzini and Sheryl Mourea.

Continued page 3 column 1

**Millis Garden Club's Educational Programming
Winter 2006**

Wednesday, January 18, 2006 from 7-8 pm
Desert Planting in the Northeast with Mike Ambrose,
Ambrose Plants and Design, Millis, MA

Program Details:

Desert Plants in the Northeast Garden will cover plants native to the western United States that will survive in New England. The focus will be on perennials, cactus and yucca. The talk will cover plants that the speaker grows in his own desert garden as well as others that are adaptable to our local climate. Information on building a raised bed, plant sources and informational resources will be provided. If time permits, selected shrubs and trees will be discussed, as well as more commonly available local plants that can be used to create an arid plant themed garden.

Wednesday, February 15, 2006, from 7-8pm
Perennials for the Fall Garden with Tess McDonough
Ward, Sequintia Designs, Millis, MA.

Program Details:

Autumn is a long and glorious season in New England. Our gardens deserve more than short mums and fading summer perennials. Come for a glimpse of the wide array of plant choices we have to make Autumn the highlight season in your perennial garden!

(Editor's Note: Last March, Tess' program "Tough, Reliable and Steady Perennials" was overwhelmingly attended. Her slides were outstanding - content superb, and her hand out - invaluable. Make sure you invite friends and neighbors to this program.)

Wednesday, March 15, 2006, from 7-8pm
Small Trees and Shrubs for the Woodland Garden
with Tom Ward, Manager of the Green Houses at
Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University

Program Details: Our presenter will offer a slide lecture which focuses on a number of different forms of woodland gardens. He will give us the essentials of their creation and maintenance while showing us a number of small trees and shrubs that can add beauty and interest to these gardens year round.

(Editors Notes: Tom Ward and Tess McDonough Ward are two well respected members in the industry. Together they have over 40 years experience in the Hort world. They are residents of Millis.

Festival of Trees...continued....

And we would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of several MGC Members: Barbara LeBlanc, who scheduled and trained the volunteers throughout the weekend and to Sharon Bennette, who oversaw Raffle sales, and her dynamite sales team (you know when it is a successful raffle when you run out of raffle tickets at the very end and you have to use post it notes instead!). And did you see those beautiful holiday cookies? Maybe you didn't and that's because they sold out! We so appreciate the fabulous work of Heidi Dostoomian who oversaw our Hospitality Table, and to all the cookie bakers, Tress Downs, Chris Gavin, Diane Hubbard and Jen McPhee.... All we heard was, "These are delicious!"

To all the dedicated MGC Members and Community Members from Millis and beyond who gave of their time and volunteered for shifts throughout the weekend event. To Norm LeBlanc, CPA, who counted, counted, counted!

Thank you, Thank you Thank you to all of you! Your generous contribution of time and energy and enthusiasm was so appreciated.

Now, ask yourself how you can be involved in this fun event. Festival of Trees, scheduled for December 2007 is already germinating. If each member took on one small task.....wow, the event could be even greater - imagine that! Hmmm, we can!

We thank the Millis Historical Commission, overseers of the Oak Grove Farmhouse for their support in co-sponsoring a very successful community event.

Monies raised from Festival of Trees will support the planting and maintaining of the newly designed Children's Garden at Oak Grove Farm, slated for planting Fall 2006.

We'd like to share additional comments heard throughout the weekend event:

It is really nice that the house is open to the public. We've never been inside before and we've lived in Millis for a long time.

The decorations are just beautiful in each and every room. Even the bathroom is gorgeously decorated!

This kind of event happens in other Towns. We never thought we'd see this in Millis. Thank you so much for organizing this event.

We loved all the decorated trees and wreaths. It was difficult to choose which ones to take the Raffle on. We wanted them all!

Festival of Trees created a huge amount of holiday spirit for us all. What a way to start off the season! Please do this again - we loved it.

What a weekend! We all had a blast, and we can't wait until the next one.

Gardening Magazines available at The Millis Public Library

Linda Stetson, Director of The Millis Public Library, would like members of the Millis Garden Club to be aware of the gardening magazines available at the Library.

The titles available are:

Better Homes & Gardens

Fine Gardening

Garden Design

Horticulture

Martha Stewart Living

Winter months are the time to look through magazines and periodicals to get some great ideas for the spring! Check out our local Library!

Events Around Millis and Beyond: The Camellias are Blooming! The Camellias are Blooming!

Camellia Blooming Season begins at the Lyman Estate Greenhouses on January 30 and runs Monday through Saturday through February 25, and Sundays February 5 and 12. This is a real treat with camellias up to 100 years old in full bloom and other greenhouse rooms filled with blooming orchids, citrus and sweet olive. There is no charge but a small donation is requested from nonmembers.

The greenhouses at the Lyman Estate located at 185 Lyman St., Waltham, Massachusetts, are open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 am to 4 pm, year round. For additional information, please call (781) 891-4882, ext. 244.

There is no more beautiful sight around Boston than that of The Vale camellias in the splendor of their greenhouse on a snowy day in early February. The large specimens of Camellia japonica, some over a hundred years old and as tall as fifteen feet, are descendants of plants propagated and grown in pots in the nursery gardens of the seaport towns of China and Japan. European traders introduced these exotic plants to Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, and England. In the eighteenth century, a lively competition in growing camellias developed among the aristocracy.

Camellias were introduced to America in the late eighteenth century by André Michaux, a French explorer and botanist, who brought four shrubs of Camellia japonica to the South Carolina plantation Middleton Place. The first record of camellias in Boston dates from 1806, when Joseph Barrell, owner of an estate in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was given a Camellia alba plena. About the same time, Boston merchant Theodore Lyman added the camellia house to his complex of greenhouses at The Vale in Waltham, Massachusetts. Lyman participated fully in the excitement surrounding camellia culture in Boston and was a member of the group of Boston gentlemen who formed the Camellia Society under the auspices of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. Boston seedsman and nurseryman C.M. Hovey did much to advance camellias through his Magazine of Horticulture, which he published from 1834 to 1868.

**The Central Mass Flower Show
Worcester's DCU Center
February 23-26, 2006**

Can't wait for the New England Flower Show? The Central Mass Flower Show is sponsoring "Glorious Garden Escapes" and it happens February 23-26, 2006. The four day event offers ideas and ways to beautify your Home & Garden this spring. Creating an escape in your own backyard is made easy when you visit the CMFS. Come meet the landscapers who created the gardens lined with fresh flowers, inviting patio settings, and welcoming stone walkways.

Show Hours

Thursday, February 23: 4pm-9pm

Friday, February 24: 9am-8pm

Saturday, February 25: 9am-8pm

Sunday, February 26: 10am-5pm

Ticket Info

Thursday & Friday: \$12

Saturday & Sunday: \$14

Senior Discount: all four days: \$11

Group Rate (10 or more): \$10

The event takes place at the Worcester's DCU Center - formally Worcester Centrum. For more information about directions, advance tickets, parking, call 800-533-0229 or visit www.centralmaflowershow.com for more information.

**Discount Ticket Offer to New England Flower Show,
March 11 - 19, 2006, Bayside Expo Center Boston**

Act Now!

Deadline for Purchase is Friday, January 27, 2006.

Because we are a Member of the Garden Club Federation of MA, our Club is able to purchase tickets to the New England Flower show at \$15.00 per ticket. And, you can go anytime, with or without the club. Deadline to purchase is Friday, January 27. If you wish to purchase any amount of tickets at this discounted price, please contact Nancy Sitta ASAP to make arrangements (508) 376-2676. (Parking fee still applicable).

Show Dates and Hours:

Saturdays: March 11 & March 18, 9:00AM to 9:00PM

Sundays: March 12 & March 19, 9:00AM to 6:00PM

Monday Fri: March 13 - March 17, 10:00AM to 9:00PM

**Horticulturist and MGC Member Tess McDonough
Ward Speaks to Needham Garden Club
Tuesday, February 21, 2006, 9:30 am**

Tess will be presenting "Low Maintenance Perennials" to the Needham Garden Club Members. The meeting will be held at the Congregational Church of Needham. This event is open to the public. \$3.00 fee at the door. For more information please contact club member Joan Oakes at (781) 444-8645 directly. If interested in attending, please call Nancy Sitta to arrange transportation.

**Mark Your Calenders now for a Little Road Trip to the
Shores of Rhode Island!**

**Spring Fair at BLITHEWOLD Mansion, Gardens &
Arboretum, Saturday May 20, 2006, 10 am - 4 pm.
Rain or Shine.**

The 2nd Annual Spring Fair is a unique exhibition and sale which will feature 50 outstanding East-coast garden antiques dealers and specialty nurseries under three large, elegant, white tents on Blithewold's sweeping 10-acre Great Lawn overlooking Narragansett Bay in Bristol, RI. Spring Fair exhibitors will offer a wide selection of fine garden statuary, affordable country garden antiques, and a superior selection of interesting and unusual plants. Admission: \$15. Sounds like a great way to spend the day!

Blithewold Mansion is located 101 Ferry Road Bristol, RI 02809 For more information contact them at 401-253-2707 or visit www.blithewold.org/

NOTE TO OUR MEMBERS:

This year as we grow into our 3rd year, it is important that each one of you become more dedicated Members. As an easy way to start, please consider forwarding this newsletter on to anyone in your address book who is interested in gardening; and to your friends, family and neighbors who live in Millis and beyond. We can make more of an impact in our community if more community members are involved in our educational programming, civic projects and fundraising events. Our club's mission is educational outreach and civic projects in our town. We welcome the community to become involved, because all we do is for the community.