

MGC CLUB FLOWER
Oak Leaf Hydrangea



Hydrangea Quercifolia

MILLIS GARDEN CLUB

M I L L I S , M A 0 2 0 5 4

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.

The Mulch Pile ❁❁❁

MGC Newsletter

January 2005

CLUB NEWS

Dear Members of the Millis Garden Club,

May the hearts and spirits of our members and their families be filled with peace and joy in the New Year.

Nancy Wong, Kathleen Hennessy, and Nancy Sitta

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Nancy Wong reports that we have a total of 31 members at this time. We encourage each Member to personally invite those interested in horticulture to our three upcoming educational programs, all of which are detailed below under Programming. We will have flyers available for you to hand out, listing the details of each event. If you know of someone who is interested in joining, Nancy Wong will happily hand deliver the membership brochure to them.

Our next business meeting is Wednesday, January 19th following our educational program. We encourage Members to contribute agenda items for discussion that night, to include any old/new business you would like to bring before the Membership. Submit in advance via email to nmwong@gtcinternet.com. We appreciate any and all contributions from our Members.

Past and current MGC Mulch Pile Newsletters can be viewed by visiting www.millisgardenclub.org. Since this is a public site (open to non-members), feel free to share the site info with those who wish to learn more about horticulture and our organization. And we will happily accommodate those Members who prefer to receive our newsletters in printed form. Just let us know!

Sharing Holiday Decorating Inspirations

A few Members wanted to share how the November Wreath and Greening Workshop and the December Centerpiece Demonstration influenced and inspired their holiday decorating. Thank you to those who contributed!

Member, Carol Olsen tells us that she attended the wreath workshop and loved learning about the use of greens. It has inspired her to take a closer look at decorations this season. On New Year's Day she went to Boston and was walking from Charles Street to Quincy Market via Beacon Hill. Carol said "I walked by some beautifully decorated front doors, window boxes and topiaries. I particularly liked a door that had a double wreath that was shaped in a figure eight. The wreath was decorated with greens and feathers (not sure from which bird, although they were brown, about 10 - 12" long)." Wow, what a nice way to spend New Year's Day!!

Member, Barbara LeBlanc says that she was so inspired by Doug McPhee's Centerpiece Workshop and by the arrangement Nancy Sitta made for a raffle item that she decided to put her creative hat on and make something of her own. Barbara designed a floral arrangement that included pine branches, lemon leaves and bright red Gerber Daisies. She grouped the daisies together in the center. It was placed on the sofa table in her family room when she hosted the LeBlanc family Christmas party. Barbara, sounds delightful. Next year we will ask Barbara to take a picture for us. And from her husband for the holiday, Barbara received a nice new pair of leather garden gloves that she's eager to get dirty!

Member, Nancy Wong has advised that she was greatly inspired by our workshops as well. For the first time she greened four large outdoor pots. Each contains white pine, holly and euonymus branches - all found in her yard. Fellow garden club member, and neighbor, Nancy Sitta, added pine cone clusters, which gave these pots the perfect final touch. Two pots were placed on either side of her mailbox and the other two on her front walkway. Nancy claims that she received a great sense of accomplishment and that the pots were quite simple to make.

CLUB NEWS

WINTER 2005 PROGRAMMING

Upcoming Educational Programs and Meetings

We have three very diverse and interesting educational programs scheduled for January, February and March, which will appeal to a broad range of people. We encourage our Members to personally invite guests to attend any of these programs. The cost for Non-Members to attend is a \$5.00 donation fee. Flyers are available to assist you with networking. And if you know of a guest speaker or potential field trip for our April meeting.... please share with us!

Members are asked to contribute to our Hospitality Table. Please see Kathy Smith for January's program.

<p>Wednesday, January 19, 2005 <i>Veteran's Memorial Building, Room 18</i> 6:30- 7:00 Hospitality, 7:00 – 8:00 Educational Program, 8:00 – 8:45 MGC Business Meeting.</p>	<p>Topic: Water Gardens Join the Millis Garden Club and the owner of Ripple Effects, as we take you on a journey of discovery through the popular world of water gardens. Explore the variety in water garden design as you glean ideas for creating your own tranquil oasis. Witnessing the process professionals use, through a step-by-step slide presentation, you will learn to maximize the potential of any existing landscape with water and transform your landscape vision from beautiful to spectacular. <i>Members Free. Guests are welcome with a \$5.00 Donation Fee.</i></p>
<p>Wednesday, February 2, 2005 <i>Veteran's Memorial Building, Room 18</i> 6:30- 7:00 Hospitality 7:00 – 8:00 Educational Program 8:00 – 8:45 MGC Business Meeting</p>	<p>Topic: Lawn Care 101 Join the Millis Garden Club and Ted Wales, Lawn Care Expert with Hartney Greymont, a full service landscaping service based in Neeham, MA. Ted is prepared to give us the full scoop on how to nurture and maintain a healthy lawn all year round. <i>Members Free. Guests are welcome with a \$5.00 Donation Fee.</i></p>
<p>Wednesday, March 16, 2005 <i>Veteran's Memorial Building, Room 18</i> 6:30- 7:00 Hospitality 7:00 – 8:00 Educational Program 8:00 – 8:45 MGC Business Meeting</p>	<p>Topic: Cast Iron Plantings Join the Millis Garden Club for a dazzling slide presentation by Tess McDonough Ward, horticulturist and member of MGC. We asked her to speak on annuals and perennials that are hardy, draught resilient/resistant, showy and worthy of our garden scapes in the North East. Bring your notepad and plenty of questions. (Snow Date March 23). <i>Members Free. Guests are welcome with a \$5.00 Donation Fee.</i></p>

Upcoming Horticultural Field Trips for Group or On Your Own

Flora Euphoria! This amazing, four-day, art and floral extravaganza is presented by the Worcester Art Museum and Tower Hill Botanic Garden. Around every corner of the Museum encounter stunning fresh, floral arrangements inspired by selected works from the Museum's renowned collection. At Tower Hill, Flora features "Poetic Expressions", the arrangements reflect a poem chosen by the arranger. For more information, please visit

<http://www.towerhillbg.org/thwebspecev.html>

(Although the floral arrangements are on view throughout the day, you gain more information if you are part of a tour.)

Worcester Art Museum Tour Dates/Times (Free for WAM Members or \$8.00 Museum Admission Fee)

Friday, February 4 - 12:30, 1, 1:30 and 2PM

Saturday, February 5, 11AM, 1, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30PM

Sunday, February 6, 12:30 and 1:30PM

Tower Hill Botanical Gardens Tour Dates/Times (Free for THBG Members or for Mass Hort Member)

Thursday, Friday, 1PM

Saturday, Sunday 1 and 3PM

Medfield Garden Club presents "**Beautiful Things**" with **Bill Graham**, floral designer extraordinaire. February 9, 10am-12 noon. United Church of Christ, Route 109/North Street. Advance registration required. Call Nancy Dearness at 508-359-2063 to reserve your seat.

CLUB NEWS

Upcoming Horticultural Field Trips for Group or On Your Own, continued...

The Rhode Island Spring Flower and Garden Show, February 17-20, RI Convention Center, Providence, RI. \$16 admission. For more information, please visit www.flowershow.com

New England Spring Flower Show, March 12-20, Bayside Expo Center, Boston. Weekday \$17. Weekend \$20. Mass Hort Members Free. For more information, please visit www.Masshort.org

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Submitted by Barbara LeBlanc

Holly Days at Tower Hill Botanical Garden



Beverly McCarter and Barbara LeBlanc enjoy viewing the hand-crafted ornaments on this beautifully decorated Victorian era Christmas tree.

Boylston, MA.....On a beautiful, clear, sunny, brisk day Nancy Sitta, Beverly McCarter and Barbara LeBlanc visited Tower Hill Botanical Garden to attend Holly Days. There we enjoyed viewing the many trees, wreaths and swags adorned with natural ornaments made with pinecones, nuts, and dried flowers and leaves. The decorating theme for this year was *A Journey in Time*.

Secondly, we visited the Orangerie. What a treat it was to see all the labeled plants that were either in bloom or bud or with fruit.

Lastly, we strolled some of the outdoor garden paths and enjoyed the garden in winter with its many colored berries, branches and barks.

The tranquil setting to the THBG provided us with a peaceful pause from the hectic Christmas time activities.

This trip gets an A+!

Visit THBG website to view February's *Flora in Winter* event concurrently at the Worcester Art Museum and THBG. Feels like another field trip to us!
<http://www.towerhillbg.org/thwebspecev.html>



Beverly and Barbara gaze at all the winter interest extending from THBG.

Tips from our members and beyond

Editor's Note: Due to an Editor melt-down, the following information was regrettably omitted from our December Newsletter. Knowing some of Geri's tips are more pertinent for the month of December, we are including them in this issue anyway. File and keep in mind for next year.

From Sprague Garden Designs (originally submitted for the December '04 issue of The Mulch Pile)

It's not too late to fertilize all bulbs. Just sprinkle Super phosphate (0-20-0) on the soil above the bulbs, even bulbs you've previously planted like last year's spring and summer bulbs. Don't use Bone Meal because it attracts dogs and squirrels, which will probably unearth your bulbs.

Add wood ashes from fireplace to your garden. It's potash.

LIME-LIME-LIME! 100 lbs. per 1000 square feet.

MULCH-MULCH-MULCH: The ground should be completely frozen after January 1, if it's not already with these cold temperatures. Mulching prevents heaving of plants when temps freeze and thaw.

Suggested mulches – salt marsh hay, not regular hay which has too many seeds.

Leaves- I know you're thinking that you just raked up all the leaves why put them back. The leaves that you put on the garden in January will be slightly frozen and won't mat down like freshly fallen leaves. Three inches of mulch is recommended.

BIRDS: If you have a bird feeder keep it full and try to provide a water source for the birds. There are heated bird baths available. Check out the local bird store in Millis on Pleasant St. Birds offer backyard interest during the quiet winter period.

COMPOSTING: Use the left over fertilizer and lime in your compost pile before you put it to rest for the winter. I don't add kitchen waste to my compost during these cold months. I begin adding to it in April after I've sifted the old compost and added it to my garden beds. You can NEVER add too much organic matter to a New England garden or lawn.

PICTURES: Think about taking pictures of your winter garden from inside your house. You'll see things in the picture that you don't see standing in your yard. Study the pictures and decide what you'd like to keep or to change. What trees, bark, shapes remain after the freezing temperatures arrive? The change can include things other than plant materials, like sculpture or architecture (arbors, gates, pergolas, birdhouses).

Thank you Geri, for consistently inspiring us all year round-The Editors.

From the Garden of Tess McDonough Ward

January is the time to help broadleaved shrubs from winterkill, which includes windburn, draught and transplant shock. When moisture is not available, leaves and stems continue to transpire, taking moisture from living cells. What happens is desiccation or drying out, resulting in browning or actual killing of leaves and stems. By using the product Wilt-Pruf, an anti-transpirant product designed to protect plants from moisture loss through their foliage, proper applications prevent and alleviate moisture stress in plants..

Wilt-Pruf works by forming a clear, protective coating on foliage that helps plants to retain moisture. The coating is flexible and does not interfere with plant growth. Furthermore, Wilt-Pruf is organic, non-toxic and biodegradable, making it safe and favorable to use in many applications. When to apply and what to apply to:

Spray Rhododendrons and other broadleaf evergreens in the late fall.

Apply to foliage of roses for mildew control & prevention of other fungal diseases.

Spray your Christmas tree.

Use during periods of drought.

Apply Wilt-Pruf in the late fall to newly planted needled evergreens.

In windy areas, apply once per season.

Apply when 40 degrees or higher.

From the Garden of Tess McDonough Ward, continued...

For more information about Wilt-Pruf Plant Protector products, please visit <http://www.wiltpruf.com/>

Start planning your perennial beds now for spring by purchasing supplies and ordering seeds. Best to order plant material to be received in Spring when they can ship (Mid April is earliest I would ever receive plant material). And my best advice for January...REST UP FOR THE SPRING!!!

From the Water Garden View at Scott McPhee's Home

We've been alerting our customers for a year now about the Winter Moth. Originally from Europe and now a threat to the North East, the Winter Moth can devastate oak, maple, elm, linden, and flowering fruit trees including crabapple, apple and cherry.

During the fall season and into January last year, and during the past few months, you might have seen a small brown moth flying around during the milder days. These are adult stage specimens of the Winter Moth, which lays its eggs in the fall and winter months. These eggs later hatch in spring and begin feeding on the leaves and flower buds of its host. Severe populations of the Winter Moth can cause limbs to die and possibly tree mortality.

The Editors recommend visiting Hartney Greymont's web site for additional info on the Winter Moth: <http://www.hartney.com/Leaflets/LeafletSpring2004%2Epdf>. Search their website frequently and read their quarterly "Leaflet" Newsletter, a valuable source of horticultural tips, facts, suggestions and newsworthy data on local and regional news. <http://www.hartney.com/newsroom.asp>

Scott has recommended an equally invaluable site - the UMASS Amherst Extension Program for Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Diagnostic Services. Their main site is <http://www.umassgreeninfo.org>
Two interesting pages on the Winter Moth:
http://www.umassgreeninfo.org/fact_sheets/defoliators/winter_moth.pdf
http://www.umassgreeninfo.org/news_events.html#wm

Member Barbara LeBlanc suggested we take a look at her newest favorite website: www.bostongardens.com, and we did. For a long time. Very interesting articles by season, including what to do now in the garden. The site also lists horticultural educational programs, with many of the classes held at Mass Bay College in Wellesley. Barbara, thank you for sharing this gem of a site with us.

Here's a tip from the Editors: Do YOU have a fear of pronouncing botanical names? And don't tell us we are the only ones! We noticed on the [Fine Gardening](http://www.taunton.com/finegardening/pages/spg017.asp#A) website the option to "listen" to the botanical names of selected plants. How cool is that? Check it out! <http://www.taunton.com/finegardening/pages/spg017.asp#A>



The Mulch Pile Newsletter is produced and published monthly by the Millis Garden Club, P.O. Box 535, Millis, MA. 02054 and can be viewed by visiting www.millisgardenclub.org. Frequent contributors to our "Tips From Our Members and Beyond" column include our horticultural and landscaping professional members. The Editors welcome tips, suggestions, reports from field trips, etc, from all of our members. Submissions for *The Mulch Pile* are due by the 20th of every month and should be 'season appropriate.' Please send submissions to nsittamgc@comcast.net. Thank you, *The Editors*.