

Aptucket Garden Club of Bourne

Stewards of the Earth

Monthly Newsletter

February 2021



Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside a fire: it is time for home."

- Edith Sitwell

Garden Therapy News

As hard as C-19 has been on all of us, it has been harder still for those in nursing homes. Their world of contacts got ever smaller when their facilities were closed to visitors. It will come as no surprise that members of the club set out to bring them some holiday cheer.

Just prior to Christmas, the Garden Therapy, Nursing Homes Committee put together arrangements for Bourne Manor and the Cape Cod Nursing Home. They made five arrangements for each facility. They wanted the staff and the residents to know that they were not forgotten.



Bourne Manor



Cape Cod Nursing Home

The holiday green baskets surprised the staff and delighted the residents. AGC brought a touch of love and a little beauty to each facility. **Many Thanks** to Paula O'Neill, Chair of this committee, and all the club members who made this happen.

Thank You!

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation Ideas to Make a Difference



Xerces urges us to get involved with protecting the natural world. Step one is to make a commitment. Go to the Xerces website <https://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-protection-pledge> and sign the Pollinator Protection Pledge.

To bring back the pollinators, I will:

- ✚ Grow a variety of bee-friendly flowers that bloom from spring through fall;
- ✚ Protect and provide bee nests and caterpillar host plants;
- ✚ Avoid using pesticides, especially insecticides; and
- ✚ Talk to my neighbors about the importance of pollinators and their habitat.

Xerces is a wonderful source for information. Their Pollinator Conservation Resource Center lets you search for information specific to our region. There are webinars that you can sign up for or watch on YouTube. One of the ones on YouTube that you will enjoy is ***Gardening with Native Plants, Learn from Our Mistakes and Successes.***



Eastern Bluebird



Eastern Bluebirds are found east of the Rockies and usually in the southeast. Although sightings are rare in New England, the bird has been seen here by both Sally Baer and Pat Nemeth. So be on the lookout. With luck you may see an Eastern Bluebird this year.

The Eastern Bluebird is part of the thrush family. The species is a “partial migrant”, with some birds migrating south and others (depending on the weather) remaining near their nests.

Females are paler versions of the male and are mostly grey. Females will typically raise two broods each season. Nests are often in abandoned woodpecker holes. Both parents cooperate in feeding the young.



Enjoying a drink in Sally Baer's backyard!

The vibrant colors and soft, musical warbles of the Eastern Bluebird are a welcome sight on a cold, snowy day. Bluebirds have long been considered harbingers of spring. Bluebirds are featured in many popular songs, including "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from the "Wizard of Oz".

What makes a beautiful floral design?

We all know about the Design Principles in our Yearbook. Words like *balance, contrast and rhythm* give guidance. But a beautiful floral design makes you *pause and think*. It takes you into the design, and makes you *wonder* at the beauty of the composition. Here are a few examples.

Horizontal Design by Sally Baer



All of the plants used in this arrangement are from Sally's garden. She used an oasis in her low rectangular container. Gerard's Rainbow leucothoe and fernspray cypress, frame skimmia blossoms, along with heather, skip laurel, dusty miller and Pinus parviflora. This piece reminds us that there is beauty in our gardens even in the dead of winter.

Winter by Laura Bergeron



Small stones from the beach help hold Laura's plants upright. There are flowering crabapple branches, tulips, eucalyptus, and narcissus bulbs just starting to green. A cardinal is used in memory of her loved ones.

Pot-et-Fleur by Alda Barron



Alda's orchid, fern and sansevieria plants are complimented with cut carnations, cotoneaster, and leucothoe. She placed the pots in a basket along with an oasis for the carnations. Here several parts have the appearance of one cohesive design.

Spring Memory by Judy Sheehy



Instead of an oasis, Judy used crisscrossed clear tape to support her arrangement. A loose roll of chicken wire could also be used. Judy used grocery store bunches of alstroemeria, carnation and chrysanthemum. The golden cypress is from her yard.

You are invited to submit additional floral designs for next month's Newsletter. Send a picture with a short text, by February 24, to pat.nemeth@hotmail.com Anyone needing an oasis can contact Sally Baer for a complementary one for this design challenge.

Celebrating Our Indoor Plants

Many members shared photos of their beloved indoor plants. Some of our happy winter friends are here. Some will be shared in next month's Newsletter.



**Karen Cronburg
Hyacinth Bulbs**



**Cheryl Keown
Greenhouse**



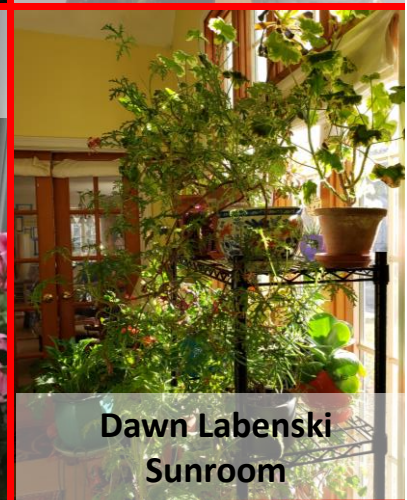
**Pam Matheson
Amaryllis**



**Laura Bergeron
Tropical Plants**



**Patti Dibella
Geranium**



**Dawn Labenski
Sunroom**



**Pat Nemeth
Geranium**



**Marcia Wilmot
Succulents & Ceramics**



**Sally Baer
Blooming Banana Plant**



Book Review Corner

Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife, by David Mizejewski
National Wildlife Federation



We need to reconnect our cities, towns, and neighborhoods back into the ecosystem they were once a part of.

- D. Mizejewski



To learn more, go to
www.nwf.org

By now we all know about native plants and invasive non-native species. We know about butterfly attractors and the wildflowers of the Cape. We know not to use pesticides; and we even know it is good leave our yards a little messy when the leaves fall. But if you want to be a *Steward of the Earth* and have a wildlife friendly yard, then this book is for you.

This is a “how to” book. The book begins by helping you assess your yard and evaluate what native plants you want to use. It discusses how to plant a mix of native plants that bloom in different seasons, some in spring, some in summer and some in fall. The goal is to have a beautiful yard, that supports wildlife, and is a delight for you and your loved ones.

There are chapters devoted to the four basic requirements for wildlife: food, water, cover and places to raise their young. Each chapter has lists of native plants and fun projects you can do as a family. I loved the project of using a cookie cutter, with day old bread and chunky peanut butter to make outdoor treats.

The book is illustrated with beautiful photos of plants to use and those to avoid, along with what plants attract what type of wildlife. There is a lovely project on how to plant a butterfly garden with a dozen practical tips. There are projects on building: nesting boxes, brush pile shelters, rain gardens and water features.

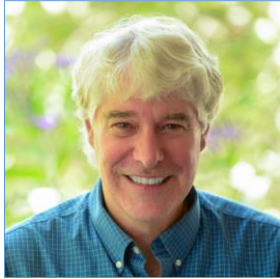
The book closes by discussing how to sustain your native plant wildlife garden. Organic gardening practices are reviewed, such as composting and conserving water. And when you are all done, you can have your garden certified by the National Wildlife Federation. Posting the Certified Wildlife Habitat sign celebrates your work and helps spread the message.

This is a book to read again and again. I give this book 5 Stars and highly recommend it to you.

- Pat Nemeth

Interesting Webinar

Webinar from April 2020



Dr. Chris Neill, Senior Scientist, Woodwell Climate Research Center

Here we are in winter, beginning to long for time in the garden again. Last April, the Woodwell Climate Research Center hosted an interesting webinar titled, ***Mild to Wild: How Our Backyard Choices Impact Our Environment.*** Here is a brief preview.

Dr. Christ Neill, Senior Scientist at the Woodwell Research Center presents the results of a decade long study of suburban back yards, titled *The Ecological Homogenization of Urban America*. Scientists in six cities joined together to study the impact of the gardening decisions we make in our yards. The six cities studied were: Boston, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, and Phoenix. The methodology consisted of a phone survey of 1,500 people, and a study of 30 backyards in each of the six cities. The study evaluated carbon and nitrogen levels in the soil, plant diversity and wildlife diversity.

Some of the interesting results were that regardless of the location most participants loved their yards. When asked what they wanted the most, the three items with the highest score were: “beauty, personal space and easy maintenance.” The two items with the lowest score for interest were: “reduce pollution” and “mitigate climate change”.

Chris urged the creation of Wildlife Friendly yards. “Try to create grassy scrubby habitat to improve bio-diversity.” If you are not ready to get rid of the whole lawn, “think about making changes around the edges.”

When asked if changing your small backyard really helps, Chris answered, “Every little change you make helps.” The old adage applies, “Think globally, act locally.”

The webinar also included comments from David Mizejewski, with the National Wildlife Federation. He is the author of *Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife*. David called his book a “toolbox” and it is. (See Book Review for more information.)

David said people often ask him, “How do I begin?” His answer is simple. “Wildlife needs four things: food, water, shelter, and a place to raise their young.” Look at your yard and ask what you can do to help provide these things. And remember, “Not all plants are created equal. Native plants help support native wildlife.”

To enjoy the Webinar, go to:

<https://www.woodwellclimate.org/?event=mild-to-wild-how-our-backyard-choices-impact-our-environment>



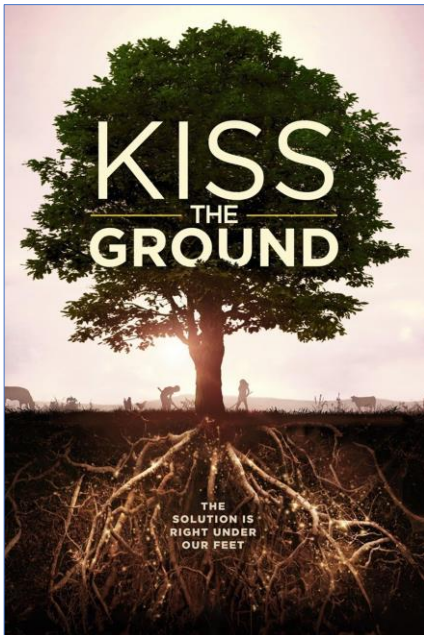
By David Mizejewski, Naturalist, National Wildlife Federation

Looking Ahead

February Calendar

Due to Covid 19 and our winter weather, our in person meetings have been put on hold. Other opportunities to connect through Zoom and YouTube program videos will be announced by email. Look for updates from Kathy Sargent-O'Neill. Stay warm, safe and well.

Great Documentary Movie



Kiss the Ground

Narrated by Woody Harrelson

Scientists and farmers discuss the ways in which farming practices can improve the soil's ability to store carbon. Increased carbon storage improves a farm's yield, reduces topsoil erosion, and helps mitigate global warming. This movie is great. You can enjoy it on Netflix.

The movie was inspired by the book [Kiss the Ground: How the food you eat can reverse climate change, heal your body & ultimately save our world](#), by Josh Tickell. The book is available at the Jonathan Bourne Public Library.



Happy Valentine's Day!

**News From Kew Gardens, London
December 2020**

We hear so often about the extinction of plants and wildlife, that it is fun to know that scientists are continuing to discover new species. Recently, Kew Gardens announced that scientists worldwide had identified 156 new plant and fungal species. Here are few of the new discoveries.

	<p><i>Hibiscus hareyae</i>, found in the coastal scrub area of southern Tanzania</p>
<p>Bromeliad, from the forest shaded limestone cliffs in central Brazil</p>	
	<p>2 new species of Aloe, found in a forest in Madagascar</p>
<p><i>Dendrobium ianthinum</i>, one of 19 new orchids from New Guinea</p>	
	<p><i>Marsdenia chirindensis</i>, new medicinal herb found in the Chirinda forest of Zimbabwe</p>

For more information, go to www.kew.org

Botanical Illustrations

By Jane Urso, Horticulture Chair

I grew up surrounded by woods. I always played in the dirt and looked under rocks to see what mysteries I could find. On one of my adventures, I discovered a gorgeous Pink Lady's Slipper. That day my drawing of botanicals began.



The aesthetic beauty of botanical illustration has fascinated and inspired people for centuries. Botanical drawings help identify and understand plants in a timeless manner. The original purpose was to aid in plant identification for medicinal and culinary uses.

All over the world, botanical drawings are recognized and collected as an art form. You have one foot in art and one foot in science. You pass on botanical information about plants in an artistic way, so that the person who looks at the drawing will see the plant's details for the first time.

*I encourage you to study your favorite plants and draw them. An informative YouTube video is **How to Draw Leaves and Botanicals, Relaxing, Journaling, Beginner**, by Shayda Campbell.*



Poppy, by Rory McEwen

Interesting Plant Facts: Longleaf Pines



Once, longleaf pine forests stretched from Virginia to Texas. Early settlers cleared the forests and used the wood for construction and heating. Today only a few small patches of pines remain.

Longleaf pine trees develop male and female cones. The male cones fertilize the female cones in the spring with bursts of pollen. The tree has an interesting life cycle. Rather than spending its first few years growing in height, the longleaf pine goes through a grass stage.



From the surface, the plant appears to be a large clump of needles. During the grass stage, which can last 5 to 12 years, the longleaf pine develops a tap root. After going through the grass stage, the tree will begin to grow in height. By maturity they will have a spreading lateral root system and will be over 100 feet tall. The tree has a very thick bark and is fire-resistant.

These slow-growing trees live for over 300 years. To learn more, go to <http://www.americaslongleaf.org/>



Message from the President

Hi All,

As I sit here watching the brief snow shower descend on Sagamore Beach, I think of the new start of our government, and how well we have all done at getting through this pandemic. Hang in there, shots are on the way.

Congrats to those Garden Therapy Ladies on their innovative arrangements for the Nursing Homes. Thank you for your efforts. And to those that accepted the walking challenge, keep it up. I have enjoyed walking at the beach near my house and on the delightful trails in Shawme Forest in Sandwich. I also want to thank those of you who submitted floral designs this month. I hope more will be submitted next month.

We continue to plan for a Zoom meeting in February. So, stay tuned, stay warm, and stay healthy. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, call friends, clean closets, binge on the Queen's Gambit, and other shows on your list. And above all dream of the gardens, browse the seed catalogs and all the perennials magazines for inspiration.

*Take care and hang in there,
- Sally Baer*

Aptucxet Garden Club of Bourne is a member of the Southeastern District of Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, New England Region Garden and National Garden Clubs, Inc.

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Visit the Aptucxet Garden Club Website www.aprucxetgardenclub.com