



Fall 2016 Newsletter

Norwood Evening Garden Club Celebrates 20-year Anniversary

By Donna Lane

A lot has changed since we started meeting at the Norwood Library in September of 1996, both as a club and in society, but one thing has not – our commitment to beautifying the Norwood community.

The 1996 Polaroid photo below shows some of the members who worked on our first community project – cleanup at the Norwood Historical Society’s Fred Holland Day House. We have continued our relationship with the Norwood Historical Society over the years, designing the dining room side garden and re-designing, refurbishing and maintaining several gardens on the property.



Field Trip! Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum

By Tracy Firth

On a beautiful day in June, nine of us had the pleasure of visiting Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum in Bristol, RI. Located mid-way between Newport and Providence, Blithewold is considered one of the finest garden estates in New England. The estate – 33 acres on Narragansett Bay – was purchased in 1896 by coal baron Augustus Van Wickle and his wife, Bessie, as a summer retreat. The property’s dirt roads, stone walls, gentle pastures and waterfront views made it a perfect place for Bessie to pursue her passion for horticulture.

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Photo from 1996 (left to right): unknown member, Lynne Riley, club founder, with daughter Siobhan, Shirley Booth, Claire Birch, and Donna Lane.

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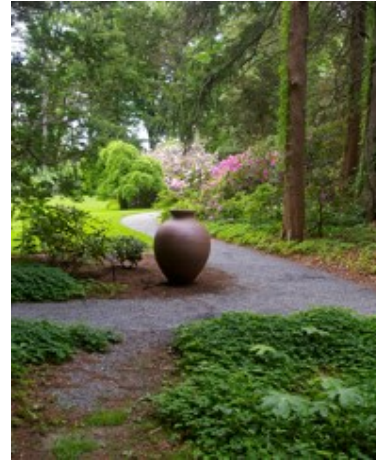
With an eye for design and plant knowledge, she oversaw the placement of almost every tree, garden and structure on the grounds. Her elder daughter, Marjorie, inherited her mother's love of gardening and grew thousands of plants for the gardens including seedlings from Blithewold's Giant Sequoia. Upon her death in 1976, Marjorie bequeathed Blithewold to the public so now, thousands of visitors are able to enjoy and find inspiration there each year.

Our visit began in the Rose Garden, planted circa 1900, where several volunteers were busily weeding and deadheading a variety of showy climbing and shrub roses. They graciously answered our many questions about the unusual varieties of perennials in the garden while we looked and lingered. We were off to a great start!



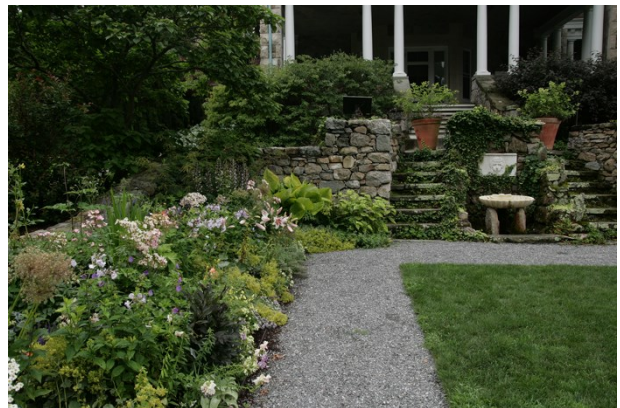
The Rose Garden with Asian-inspired Moongate

From there we walked down Lovers' Lane, a tree lined private road pre-dating the 18th century. It brought us to a pier on the bay where we could look back at the beautiful view of the house, the 10-acre Great Lawn and the Arboretum. As we headed up the lawn on our way to the mansion, we had our first encounter with one of several grand scale ceramic pieces on exhibit around the property.



Modern work by Vermont artist Stephen Procter looking fabulous in the century old landscape.

We explored the mansion and then ventured back outside to enjoy the formal North Garden. This garden was viewed by the family as an extension of the mansion and features a variety of perennials, annuals and flowering shrubs as well as ornamental stonework, a fountain and garden pool.



The formal North Garden was considered an extension of the mansion.

We traveled from there through the Bosquet (French for "woodland") enjoying its tall canopy of trees, evergreen ground covers and open views within. Passing by a memorial to the family's dogs served as a reminder that real people had actually lived there in the past.

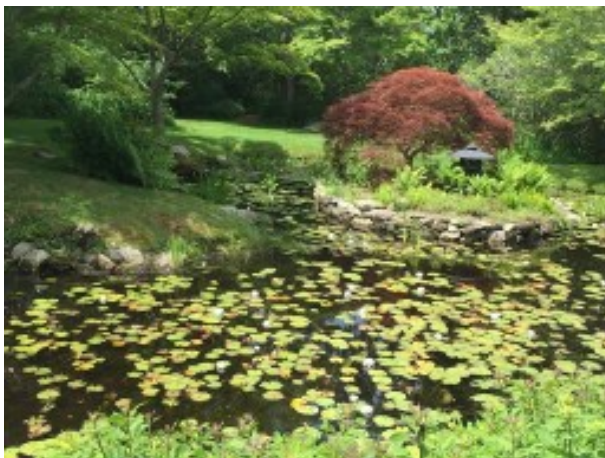
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Entrance to the Bosquet

We passed a stand of bamboo on our way to the working greenhouses and vegetable gardens, and a short walk brought us to the Asian-inspired Water Garden complete with water lilies, Japanese maples and an iron lantern.



The Water Garden

The nearby Rock Garden, Bessie's favorite, features a raised area of rocks, small-scale plantings and evergreen trees and shrubs to provide shelter from the wind.



Bessie nicknamed the Rock Garden "Little Mt. Hope".

Finally, the Shrub Walk, a border of evergreen trees featuring Giant Sequoia, White Pine, White Spruce, Arborvitae, False Cypress and Silver Fir, brought us back up to the North Garden and one last look at the mansion before returning to life in 2016.

A true gem, Blithewold is open and beautiful throughout the year but is best enjoyed with friends! (www.blithewold.org)



From left: Shirley Booth, Tracy Firth, Susan Master-son, Nancy Costa, Susan Cosman, Janet Taylor, Lor-raine Devine, Sheela Venkatesh (not in photo: Donna Lane)

Meet Nancy Costa - NEGC President 2016-2018



President Nancy Costa joined our club in 2008 and quickly discovered her passion for floral arranging and civic beautification. She took on the lead role at The Round, followed by co-chair of Art in Bloom. Nancy also served as Vice President and Program Chair from 2014 – 2016 and has been a member of the Board of Directors since that time.

Nancy is Staging and Volunteers Chair for Design Division II at the Boston Flower Show. She studies at the National Garden Club's Flower Show School, and her goal is to become an accredited Flower Show Judge. She also studies Ikebana, Japanese floral arranging, and is an active member of the Sogetsu Massachusetts Branch. As a designer, Nancy has won top ribbons at the Boston Flower Show and Marshfield Fair.

Nancy's goals for NEGC are to increase awareness of educational opportunities and to encourage the sharing of knowledge among members. In 2015, she established the NEGC Horticulture Challenge, a display of members' horticulture at monthly club meetings. Nancy also enjoys organizing group trips to gardens, nurseries and arboreta.

Nancy is retired from Brockton Public Schools where she worked as the Coordinator of Library and Media, K-12, supervising 23 school libraries. She is a founding member of a local book club, subscribes to Providence Performing Arts Center, and enjoys golf and travel. Nancy maintains home gardens in Sandwich and Norwood, where she has lived for 25 years with her husband, Joe, and sons Darren and Matt.

Things to be doing in the garden -- Late Fall

Winterize your roses before the ground freezes but after several days of below-freezing temperatures. *Lightly* prune and secure long canes so they don't whip about during winter storms. Clean up fallen foliage which may be diseased and do not compost it. Apply lime, if necessary, to maintain proper pH (roses thrive between 6.0 – 6.8). Finally, hill up the base of each rose to a height of 12" using soil, mulch, manure, compost or seaweed. This mound protects the bud union, not by keeping it warm, but by keeping the plant dormant during mid-winter freeze/thaw cycles. It's a fast, simple and effective way to prevent winterkill during even the coldest months.



Lois Walsh was thrilled to encounter this barred owl during a November walk at Adams Farm.

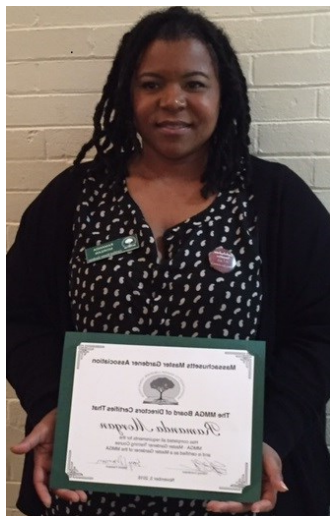
What is a Master Gardener?

By Lorraine Devine, Principal Master Gardener

The Norwood Evening Garden Club has 12 Master Gardeners in its ranks – more than any other garden club in Massachusetts. We are often asked by other NEGC members: “What is a Master Gardener?” “Does that mean you’re a gardening expert?” and similar questions.

A Master Gardener (MG) is a trained volunteer who provides gardening advice to the public. Every MG has taken and passed the Master Gardener Training program, which includes more than 100 hours of introductory horticulture training and 30 hours of volunteer work annually to maintain active status.

Ramanda Morgan, new NEGC member and newly minted Master Gardener



The Master Gardener Training (MGT) program dates back to 1972 in the Seattle area to fill the demand for urban horticulture and gardening advice. The concept spread, and today, Master Gardeners are active in all 50 states, nine Canadian provinces, and South Korea. According to the latest Extension Master Gardener Survey, there were nearly 95,000 active Master Gardeners who provide approximately 5,000,000 volunteer hours of service *per year* to their communities.

The nearest MGT program is run by the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association at Elm Bank in Wellesley. Students attend two 7-week programs of classroom education, one in the spring and one in the fall. They receive extensive training from academic and industry specialists in soil, trees and shrubs, landscape design, botany, pruning, composting, houseplants, plant pathology, perennials, turf, insects, weeds, small fruits, vegetables, propagation, and sustainable gardening concepts and practices. Since knowing where to find

the answer is more important than knowing all the answers, students are also taught how to research questions. During the summer months, students gain valuable knowledge and experience by participating in volunteer activities while under the supervision of Certified MGs. After attending all the classes, completing the apprenticeship, and passing the final exam, students graduate and receive their official Certified Master Gardener pins, their most valued piece of jewelry!

MGs answer home owner questions remotely or in person at events such as our Spring Plant Sale. MGs speak at public events and participate in community gardening programs.

Of course, membership has privileges, most of which are available to MGs at no extra cost. A few of our recent tours include Mt. Auburn Cemetery and the Arnold Arboretum greenhouses. We can visit several gardens of fellow MGs each summer, and we enjoy lectures and presentations throughout the year.

And that's what being an MG is all about. You're a dedicated gardener and a steward of the land, spreading gardening information and teaching others about sustainable gardening methods, all while having fun with like-minded gardeners and constantly, constantly learning.

Complete information and the application for the upcoming 2017 MGT may be downloaded at massmastergardeners.org. The classroom sessions run on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. from April 6 – May 18 and then from September 14 – October 26. The volunteering apprenticeship may begin when classes start and must be completed one week before graduation. For questions or further information, email one of the Training Course Coordinators: Steve Shaw at sgshaw@aol.com.

As part of NEGC's ongoing commitment to education, conservation and sound horticultural practices, the Board is pleased to announce that a scholarship for 50% of tuition and books for the 2017 MG class is available to club members with at least 3 years of service! See Donna Lane for details.

NEGC Doings



Two views of the lovely two-sided arrangement created by club members Barbara Hopcroft, Janice Mullen, Debbie Wells, and Nancy Costa for the Golden Living Center in Norwood. The group plans to make four arrangements in all this year as a community outreach. For more information, contact Barbara, who is the project lead.



Our October speaker, **Nancy Vargas**, presented a floral design program which incorporated eco-friendly design techniques, recycled pots and biodegradable materials. Her first design was a large pumpkin topped with Spanish moss, mums and succulents.

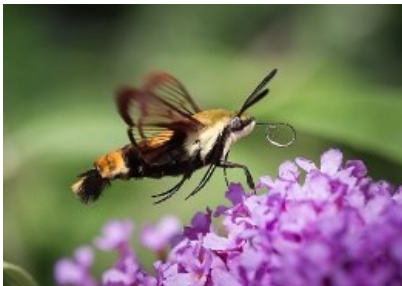
As she began her second design, she told us she does not use Oasis because it is not biodegradable. Instead, she showed us how to mold reusable chicken wire to the shape of the recycled container to support the flowers. This wire grid ensured the water could be emptied out and refilled as needed, making the arrangement last longer. Just when we thought the design was complete, she inserted 2' long curly willow branches in a north, south, east, west pattern, gathered the ends together and pulled them above the flowers, thereby “capturing the negative space”. After she secured them with a raffia bow, we were awed by the ‘basket of flowers’.

Nancy’s third arrangement was an amazing hand-tied bouquet made from floral material she picked in her yard and some leftover flowers. She twirled the bouquet in one hand and added more material with the other, all the while chatting to us about her schooling and travels. When completed, the bouquet was exquisite. She was a truly inspiring floral designer.

Our January 31, 2017, meeting will feature Kathi Gariepy, longtime Master Gardener and recipient of the MMGA’s Golden Trowel award. Kathi will speak on *Establishing a Home Herb Garden*.

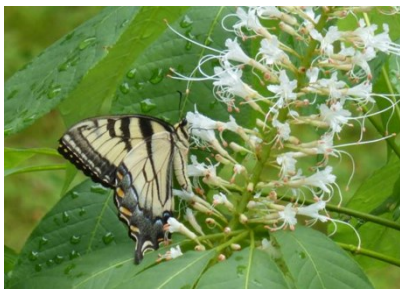
Surprises in the Garden 2016 Edition

Anne Heller - I thought I had a "weird" hummingbird. It was right in front of me getting nectar from a Monarda 'Raspberry Wine'. I mentioned it to a knowledgeable bug person, and she suggested it might be a hummingbird moth, *Hemaris diffinis*. I looked it up, and she was right! It mimics a hummingbird in movement and appearance, and its long proboscis (tongue) makes it a good pollinator for tubular shaped flowers like verbena, bee balm and petunias.



Snowberry Clearwing (Hemaris diffinis) is one of a number of moth species commonly called hummingbird, sphinx or hawk moths. Photo credit: Roads End Naturalist (roadsendnaturalist.com)

Martha Emerson - my surprises were insects...a hummingbird moth on my phlox and a beautiful eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly on my native bottlebrush buckeye!



Nancy Costa - This dry summer did *not* take a toll on my Curly Willow and Ninebark 'Diabolo'. Both deciduous shrubs weathered the drought! The Ninebark brings a beautiful deep burgundy color in the fall, perfect with green, pink or orange flowers. I have plenty of branch material to harvest for cut flower bouquets or designs!

Nell Rose Maresco - Two or three years ago I didn't get to dig up my Gladiolus. I thought I had lost them, but to my surprise they come up every year and multiply. This summer I had cut a bouquet of Glads, and as I was holding them a hummingbird came right up and started feeding on the flowers. I wish I had had my phone in my pocket and taken a real close-up of a hummingbird!

Donna Lane - I am used to describing my backyard as a "wild kingdom", but this summer a surprising number of hawks decided to make my yard their stomping grounds. They were often too close for comfort, and I was unnerved enough that I could not work in the garden since that seemed to be their hunting grounds. Some days they dive-bombed very close to the house for hours. Other days they hunted at the edge of my raised beds. Mother and the four young hawks stuck around for most of June before leaving me in peace. But they continued to make their presence known by screeching for hours at a time throughout the summer.



Vivien Bouffard - On a whim, I bought a 25%-off pot of okra at Russell's in the spring. There were two plants in the pot, so I separated and planted them at the Community Garden. This summer turned out to be perfect okra-growing weather, and the plants ended up being huge - over 5 feet tall! The flowers were gorgeous. We ate some okra, I gave some away, and I let other pods grow huge and have dried them for crafts.

Summer Job in Acadia

By Barbara Hopcroft

I had the privilege this past summer to volunteer with the Friends of Acadia as a gardener at Sieur de Monts at Acadia National Park in Bar Harbor, Maine. I usually worked two two-hour shifts per week with a botanist who serves as head gardener. The garden at Sieur de Monts consists of the plants growing in the seven microclimates of the Park, grouped by climate. The plants are all labeled, and there are always flowers in bloom. This native garden is subtly beautiful, with more attention on shades of green and shapes than on large, colorful flowers.

One of our jobs is to answer visitors' questions about the garden, and most people are amazed to see all the understated flowers such as the many varieties of asters that bloom throughout the season. People who visit Acadia are reverential about nature in general and the Park in particular and always stop to thank the volunteers for helping keep the garden and Park looking good. A nice job perk! One day a caterpillar wandered across the walkway to the Nature Center at the garden, and I watched for a while with some visitors, making some notes when I returned home:

The luna caterpillar shimmers across the walkway. It is bigger than expected, but then so is the moth it will become. The caterpillar is luminescent, electric, its color more natural in tropical environments. What's that? On its sides, close to the ground, black and yellow slashes of color, uniform and destined to complete the moth's beautiful uniform. The caterpillar moves toward the landscaping, toward a small pruned tree, seeming to sniff like a dog, and then moves on. Another offering emerging from the dry lawn, a leafy shrub, is approached by the caterpillar and rejected. Purposefully, the caterpillar moves on, searching intently for the vegetation that will fulfill its purpose. I'm envious; if only humans could emulate its elegant and efficient methodology.

