



Sunflower Times

DGC Members Celebrate the Holidays

Inside this issue:

Three Tips for Gardeners 2

Bloomin' Bulbs are Back 2

The Art of Wine Tasting 3

A Gardening Moment with Mary Jo: Dreaming of Spring 3

New Officers and Committee Chairs 3

New from Garden Club Federation of MA 4

Photo Scrapbook 4

Dracut Garden Club members celebrated the holiday season in December with a festive gathering at the Sweetheart Inn in Methuen. The room was decorated for the holiday season and thanks to the creative efforts of Jeannette, Mary Anne, and Jill there were beautiful centerpieces on



each table (which were later raffled off and sent home with the lucky winners). After taking care of club business with a general meeting, we held our election of officers (see the results inside this issue!). Then the party really began! While enjoying each other's company, some wine, appetizers, a buffet dinner and dessert, we had fun selecting and opening raffle gifts. We all got chuckles when Chris Maxim, left, opened her fancy net gloves and modeled them for us—Ooh, la, la! In addition to the raffles, a gift was presented to Donna by Jerelyn on behalf of the club, and Donna presented the executive board members and committee chairs with gifts of recognition for the efforts



Juanita, Donna, and Jerelyn get into the holiday spirit

they've put into our club over the past two years. We rounded out the evening with a Christmas carol sing along and Christmas Bingo. Thanks to everyone who helped organize this event and to those who donated raffle gifts and centerpieces.

More photos on page 4...

Upcoming Events:

- Executive Board Meeting for both current and new officers, January 23, at Donna Vallois's house.
- February Fun...Hibachi at Feng Shui Restaurant in Chelmsford on February 13th—Watch for more details via email.

Spreading Holiday Spirit

Santa's elves, in the form of volunteers from the Dracut Garden Club, visited the Town Hall and Library in late November, to spread the holiday spirit. Two cast iron urns now flank the entrance to the library thanks to Jill Dunn who got them for a great deal. These were filled with greenery and holiday decorations. Wreaths and

garland were hung to adorn the library and Town Hall entrances. Thanks to Isabel Flynn for chairing this event while Pat Beebe was recuperating from knee surgery. And thanks to all the elves: Eileen Kane, Georgia Cirillo, Laurel Chisholm, Leigh Cameron, Mary Anne Johnston, Gail Morrisette, Donna Vallois, and Diane Hogue.



More photos on page 4...

Tips for Busy Gardeners

By Donna Vallois

1. Keep it small and simple.

Grow fewer kinds of plants but more of them to simplify maintenance.

2. Choose plants to fit the conditions of your garden.

Grow full-sun plants in sun and give moisture-lovers a spot near the downspout. Plants will look good without lots of fussing on your part.

3. Keep the garden near the house.

That way it's easier to pop out and get chores done quickly.

Gardeners need something to dream about during the dreary winter months. Upon receiving and diving into my newest edition of Garden Gate Magazine, I wanted to share a few of my favorite "top new sun and shade perennials."

Goldfinch Shasta Daisy

If you thought white was your only color choice in Shasta daisies, think again! The cheerful yellow flowers of "Goldfinch" creates a bright spot of color in any sunny boarder. Long-lasting semi-double blooms start out lemon yellow and fade to ivory. You'll really enjoy watching the butterflies dance around them, adding even more color. You

can deadhead spent flowers to tidy up plants, but whatever you do or not "Goldfinch" will keep blooming all summer. Full sun, 8-12" tall, 10-14" wide.

Southern Belle Coneflower

There are lots of coneflowers at the garden shops, but not all of them live up to the hype as the "Southern Belle." Its deep magenta double cones have a light pink skirt of petals. But what's different is that the flowers start in early summer and keep going for 12 to 14 weeks. There will be plenty of gorgeous flowers to enjoy. It's sturdy stems are strong so they stay upright, instead of flopping. "Southern Belle" doesn't produce much seed. But if you notice small plants coming up, pull them. They won't look like the parents. Full sun; 30-36 in. tall and wide.

Paprika Coral Bells

Spice up your garden with this new coral bells -- it has the orangest foliage you'll find. Extra-big leaves open rosy orange in spring and change to deeper orange by summer. "Paprika" tolerates heat and humidity well. White flowers arrive in spring in time to give hummingbirds a snack. Part to full shade; 8-12 in. tall; 12-16 in wide.

Sea Heart Brunnera

While the silvery variation of this new brunnera may remind you of "Jack Frost," "Sea Heart" is different in some important ways. First, it blooms a couple of weeks earlier, and when the flowers open, they start out the traditional blue and fade to pink. That gives you a bouquet of two-tone flowers. It has thicker leaves, so it holds up to heat and humidity. The big sturdy leaves will brighten up your shade garden all summer and well into fall. Full to part shade; 6-12 in. tall; 12-24 in wide.

Rainbow's End Hosta

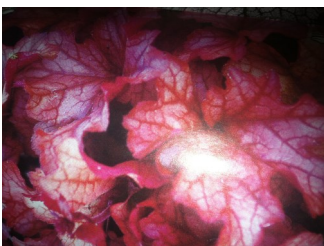
Whether you've got dozens of hostas in your collection or just starting out, you'll want to add "Rainbow's End" into the mix. Its glossy leaves catch the light and add some shimmer to your shade garden all season. It starts out with yellow-green accenting the dark variable strips, but by summer the yellow fades to creamy white. Purple late-summer flowers show up on red stems and have a nectar the hummingbirds can't resist. Full to part shade; 11 in tall, 21 in wide.



Goldfinch Shasta Daisy



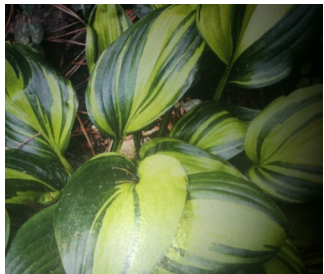
Southern Belle Coneflower



Paprika Coral Bells



Sea Heart Brunnera



Rainbow's End Hosta

Support Dracut Garden Club

Brent and Becky's Bulbs: Bloomin' Bucks is back!!

Order Spring/Summer Bloomers NOW and help support our club!

*Select *Dracut Garden Club* as the organization you wish to support when placing your order.

<http://www.bloominbucks.com>



The Art of Wine Tasting?

By Kathy Gauthier

What can one do to chase away the winter blahs? Why drink wine and paint flowers, of course! And that's exactly what several DGC members did one evening in January at Tutto Bene Wine and Cheese Shop in Lowell. While an artist led us in the steps to creating our individual masterpieces, we sipped on three different wines and nibbled on cheeses, fruit, pretzels and chocolate. What a fun evening for everyone!



A Gardening Moment with Mary Jo: Dreaming of Spring

What does a New England gardener do in winter? Dream of spring, of course! Besides taking care of houseplants, you could peruse seed catalogs, review any notes you made during the growing season about what to do differently, and perhaps create a plan for your spring garden. Pictures and diagrams in books and catalogs could help with that. And don't forget the Internet. Google any garden topic and

get loads of information. Another thing to do is check your seed stash. Some leftovers from last season may still be good if you have stored them in a cool, dry place. Larger seeds, such as beans, squash, morning glories and nasturtium, are more apt to be viable than small seeds such as lettuce, carrots, columbines, and poppies. Tiny seeds are less able to retain moisture. Try keeping them in a

crisper drawer in your fridge stored in a sealed plastic bag. Then take a break from gardening 'til those first crocus pop up.

Mary Jo



DGC Members Elect New Officers

At our recent December meeting/Holiday Gathering, members elected the following new Executive Board Members for 2013-2015:

President: Donna Vallois

1st VP: Juanita Pare

2nd VP: Kristen McCauley

Treasurer: Georgia Cirillo

Secretary: Kathy Gauthier

The following members have agreed to chair our committees:

Horticulture: Gail Morrisette

Ways & Means: Laurel Chisholm

Hospitality: Diane Hogue

Sunshine: Jerelyn Serra

Civic Development: Mary Jo Baur

Earth Day: Leigh Cameron

Jr. Garden Club: Mary Ellen McCarthy

Historian: Leigh Cameron

Yearbook: Donna Vallois

Congratulations to our new officers and committee chairs. As always, thanks for your hard work and creativity!

From the President's Desk...

Executive Board Meeting, January 23, Donna's house...Bring your ideas for the year ahead...

Our "informal gathering" for February will be Hibachi at Feng Shui restaurant in Chelmsford. Watch for details in upcoming email.

The Museum of Fine Arts annual presentation of Art in Bloom is scheduled for April 27-29. Mary Jo and Laurel will attend a March orientation at which time they'll be given a picture of their object to be interpreted and will share with us at our March Meeting. As always, there will be a free night to view this exhibit and Mary Jo will share this information as soon as it becomes available.

DRACUT GARDEN CLUB

News from the

Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

GCFM is offering **Gardening Study School** in April. It's a wonderful opportunity for you to expand your knowledge of gardening. For more information, contact Donna Vallois.

GCFM offers **scholarships** for undergraduate students (including high school seniors who will be freshmen in the fall) and graduate students who will be attending accredited colleges and universities. Applications are due March 1st. Scholarships are available for students majoring in horticulture, floriculture, landscape design or architecture, conservation, forestry agronomy, city planning, environmental studies, land management, botany, biology, and allied subjects. For more information, contact Donna Vallois for guidelines and application.



DGC Supports

Girls, Inc.

In November, Girls, Inc., a local charity held a fundraiser event and auction. Our own Krista McCauley is on Girls, Inc.'s board of directors and was pleased to include the above wreath made by Gail Morrisette as our donation to their raffle. Beautiful job, Gail!

Dracut Garden Club Email:
dracutgardenclub@gmail.com

Photo Scrapbook of Recent Events



"Singing" in the season.



Our decorating volunteers show off their hard work!



Checking those raffle tickets!



Wine, conversation and friendship.



Lots of Laughs!



A good time was had by everyone!



2011-2012 Executive Board Members



And the holiday pin winner is...

Jeannette



A moment between friends.