

One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides. ~W.E. Johns, *The Passing Show*



### Inside this issue:

Get Ready to "Celebrate the Earth!"	2
A Gardening Moment With Mary Jo	2
Blizzard of 2013!	3
Newsletter Mailing Preparations	4
Houseplant Tips	4
Pollination Project	4
Need a Tropical Vacation?	4
Pre-Blizzard Visitors	4

### Upcoming Events:

- First meeting of 2013, March 13th
- Boston Flower Show, March 13-17th
- Celebrate the Earth, April 13th, 10am-12
- Art in Bloom, Museum of Fine Arts, April 27-29



# Sunflower Times

## Welcome Back!

### First Official Meeting of 2013 Scheduled

Our first meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.** Please note that we will meet at the Library as usual, however, for this meeting **we'll be meeting in the front part of the Library (old section where they have the large print books).** Our "welcome back" meeting will concentrate on getting re-acquainted as we socialize, play a game created by Kristin & Meredith McCauley and create a fresh flower craft led by Jill Dunn. **This is a great opportunity for you to bring a friend and introduce them to Garden Club.** See you there!

## February Fun Flares at Feng Shui

To fight the winter doldrums, several garden club members ventured out on a cold February 13th to enjoy dinner at Feng Shui in Chelmsford. After ordering drinks, we received our soup, then salad, then were treated to a show by our waiter as he cooked our food right at our own private hibachi grill. Spreading the grill with oil, he lit it and flames exploded in front of us. As he cooked our veggies, steak and seafood, he built a mini mountain out of onion rings, then filled that with oil and lit it, creating a volcano erupting in flames. Not only was the evening amusing as we enjoyed the "cooking show," but we also shared lots of laughs, stories, and delicious food. We gardeners know how to harvest a good time!

—Kathy Gauthier

*Top Photo:* Laurel and Donna B. watch the volcano explode.

*Bottom Photo L to R:* Mary Jo, Jeannette, Pat, Donna V., Laurel, Donna B.



*In attendance but not pictured:* Kathy G. (acting photographer!). Donna V.'s mom also joined us for the evening.



# Get Ready to "Celebrate the Earth"!

## Celebrate the Earth Schedule of Events

- Tree dedication ceremony
- Activities for children centered around nature and the importance of "the three R's"
- Educational exhibits and demonstrations, such as Composting 101 and Waste-free Lunches
- Free tree saplings and raffle prizes
- Electronic waste collection
- Kick-off to our Community Clean-up Week

Springtime will be here before we know it and with that, our annual **Celebrate the Earth\*** event. This will be our 12th year celebrating Earth Day and Arbor Day along with our community.

This year's theme will be "the impact of climate change and making better choices for our future." While listening to President Obama's State of the Union address, I was thrilled to hear him say once again that we must do more to combat climate change. As the President said, we need to take action now to "reduce pollution, prepare our communities for the consequences of climate change, and speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy." With **Celebrate the Earth**, we hope to convey the message that making better choices, even if it's one small step at a time, will help make a difference in our world.

**Celebrate the Earth** will be held on Saturday, April 13th, 2013, from 10 AM to 12 PM at Veterans' Memorial Park. In the event of rain, the celebration will be held in Har-

ny Hall at the Dracut Historical Society.

We are in the midst of planning the event right now and will need all hands on deck that day and for certain activities beforehand. Sign-up sheets will be available at the March meeting. One thing we'd like each member to start doing is collecting 3, 6, and 8 oz. yogurt cups, and pint & quart size paper milk cartons or similar size containers from home and work. We'd like to use these as seed-starting containers for one of the children's crafts. Please clean the containers thoroughly, and it would be most helpful if you could cut the large containers down to the appropriate size (about 3-6" deep) and add a dime-size drainage hole. Just be careful and Google ways to do this if necessary! This will save us money and demonstrate reduce-reuse-recycle at the same time. This year we'll also be collecting certain types of small electronic waste for recycling; cell phones in-

cluding smartphones, digital cameras, keyboard and mouse components, web cams, laptops, and MP3 players. Our club will continue to collect these and other items on an on-going basis as well. More details will be coming on this initiative. In the meantime, if you could start digging out any of these unused electronics from the corners of your home that would be appreciated. It would be great to see at least 1 or 2 of each item in the collection boxes at the start of the event.

Thank you in advance for your support of CTE. It makes me happy and proud that our garden club and town encourage environmental awareness through this program.

—Leigh Cameron

\*The **Celebrate the Earth** program is supported in part by the Town of Dracut, the Dracut DPW, and a grant from the Dracut Cultural Council, a local agency funded by the MA Cultural Council, a state agency.

## A Gardening Moment with Mary Jo: Spring-cleaning Your Houseplants and Starting Seeds

Here are a few ideas for gardening now. It's a good time to clean the dust off your houseplants. The coating can inhibit the exchange of air and moisture for the plants. With smooth leaved plants, you can just wipe them with a damp sponge or moist paper towel. For plants that have textured or fuzzy leaves, take a clean paint brush

or even a make-up brush and whisk away the dust.

If you are starting seeds indoors, try to water them from the bottom. Watering from above can dislodge the seeds or even knock down a tender seedling. Set the flat or pot into a larger container and pour

the water into that and let the seeds absorb what they need from that. Just don't leave them in standing water for more than a few minutes. Happy spring, and keep a look-out for those first crocus, or flowers on a hellebore, the plant also known as a Lenten rose because it can blossom as early as Lent.

Mary Jo Baur



Lenten Rose (hellebore), photo taken a few weeks ago by Michelle Gauthier, Pepperell, MA

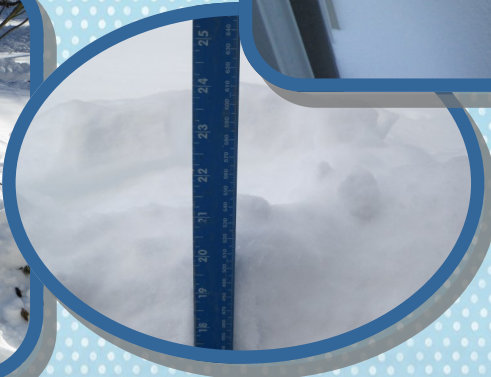




# Blizzard of 2013



When the Blizzard of 2013 (otherwise known as Nemo) buried us in two feet of snow, several of our members captured the historical weather event on camera. Thank you to Nichoal DeVito, Donna Vallois, and Kathy Gauthier for sharing their snow adventure shots with us! Take heart...



...Spring will soon be here!!



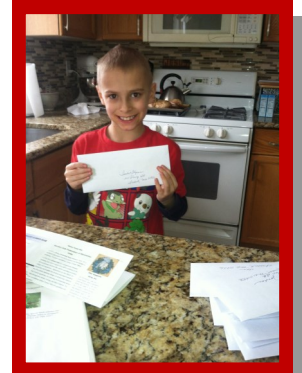
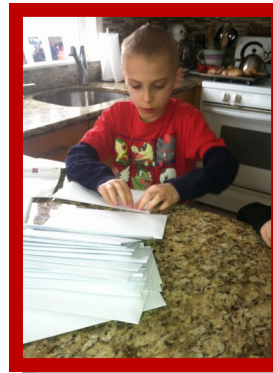
## DRACUT GARDEN CLUB



**Dracut Garden Club Email:**  
**[dracutgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:dracutgardenclub@gmail.com)**

**Here's how our newsletter gets prepared for mailing....**

Donna solicits all kinds of help! Ryan can't wait to do it again in March!



## Houseplant Tips

Did you know some house plants are poisonous and you should keep them out of reach of kids and pets? Azaleas, Crotons, Crown-of-thorns, Dieffenbachia, Eng-

lish Ivy, Golden pothos, Peace lily, and Flamingo flower to name a few...

Some good houseplants that grow extremely well in low light are: Arrowhead vine, Chinese evergreen, Corn plant, Variegated spider plant, snake plant, heartleaf philodendron, Grape ivy, Parlor palm, Son of India dracaena and Buddhist pine.

Do you find growing African violets a challenge, but love the flowers? If your violets' leaves are turning brown and mushy, it's likely that you're overwatering the plant. Typically, watering a violet once a week is plenty. It's important to water from the bottom to avoid splashing water on the leaves, which can leave brown spots on the foliage. Bright indirect light suits African violets best. A northern or eastern exposure brings the best results. Fertilize monthly with a liquid fertilizer at half strength. Use room temperature water when watering.

How do you get your amaryllis to rebloom? After the flowers fade, cut them off to prevent seeds from forming. Remove the stalk after it turns yellow. Keep the plant in a sunny location, and water as needed. After all danger of frost has passed, move the bulb outdoors for the summer. Keep it actively growing through summer by watering and fertilizing regularly. In fall, bring the plant back indoors. Stop watering the plant, and let the foliage die down naturally. Keep the bulb, pot and all, in a cool, dry, dark location for several months. After this resting period bring it back to a warm location and start watering to initiate new growth and another bloom cycle.

Do you have a Christmas cactus that doesn't bloom? They need cool temperatures. To induce bloom, give the plants a rest period in fall. Keep them on the dry side, but water enough to prevent the flat, leafy stems from shriveling. Maintain temperatures in the 50's to set the most flower buds. Place plant in bright, indirect light. After flower buds have formed increase watering to prevent buds from dropping. Flower buds also drop if the temperature is too warm, light levels are too low, or the plant is exposed to drafts.

—Donna Vallois

## The Pollination Project

Georgia Cirillo found this tidbit in a recent Parade Magazine supplement in the Sunday newspaper:

"Imagine you had \$1,000 to put toward doing something positive in your community. Throughout 2013, entrepreneur Ari Nessel will award \$365,000 in seed grants to 365 individuals who want to make a difference." Apply at [thepollinationproject.org](http://thepollinationproject.org).



## Need a Tropical Vacation?

Try a visit to **Tower Hill Botanic Gardens** in Boylston, MA! It's about an hour's drive from Dracut, and their Orangery and Limonaia offer lush tropical environments to enjoy. Once spring arrives, check out their outdoor gardens! For more information explore their website: [www.towerhillbg.org](http://www.towerhillbg.org).

## Pre-Blizzard Visitors



Photos by Kathy Gauthier

Just as I was about to leave for work the Thursday before the Blizzard of 2013, I glanced out my window and was thrilled to find these bluebirds visiting my feeders. Hang in there...Spring is coming! —Kathy Gauthier

