



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
Club News

December 2004

Dear Members of the Millis Garden Club,

Throughout this holiday season, here's wishing that your days be filled with love and good cheer, and that you experience peace and joy each and every day.
Nancy Wong, Kathleen Hennessy, and Nancy Sitta

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Through successful networking and publicity efforts, we've increased our membership to 29, reports Nancy Wong, Membership Chair. *Let's welcome Kathleen (Kathy) Devine, Lynn Morse, Joanne Gannon and Nancy Fournier to our organization.* An updated Membership List will be emailed shortly.

And an easy way to further network, offer non-members the opportunity to receive our MGC Monthly Email Updates which offer information about our educational program and events. To add a person to our email blast, please send info to nmwong@gtcinternet.com.

If you have any membership questions, or wish to have MGC Membership brochures or other materials to pass along, please contact Nancy Wong at (508) 376-5805, or Membership Committee member Barbara LeBlanc at (508) 376-9022.

PROGRAMMING INFORMATION AND UPDATES

Upcoming

January 19th, 2005, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Snow Date: January 23, 2005, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Hospitality begins at 6:30pm
Event Location: Veteran's Memorial Hall, Room 18, Ground Floor

Water Gardens

To refresh our minds and spirits in the midst of winter, our presenter will offer a slide presentation and lecture on how to build a water garden; the positive effects of living with a water garden within your landscape; and various examples of completed designs. This educational opportunity is open to the public. Please encourage those interested in the subject to attend. Non-member donation fee \$5.00. Members Free. Our MGC business meeting will directly follow the presentation. An email reminder will be sent out prior to the meeting. Kathy Devine and Kathy Smith will organize the hospitality for this meeting so please contact them if you would like to contribute to the event.

The Fall Meetings In Review

December's Holiday Centerpiece Demonstration and Raffle.

On Wednesday, December 1, 2004, Doug and Julie McPhee created four holiday centerpieces for our audience, which was comprised of MGC members and guests, as well as members of the Medway Garden Club and the Millis Potpourri Club. Of the 47 attendees, 26 were guests. Members, keep up your successful networking efforts!

At the close of the demonstration, the attendees eagerly awaited the start of our raffle, which included the four centerpieces from the McPhee's and a very nice collection of gift baskets. We wish to express our warmest appreciation to those members who donated items to the raffle. The baskets were very creative and the table was full and very inviting. The raffle alone raised \$200, which will be earmarked for 2005 civic projects.

We also extend our appreciation to Heidi Dostoomian and Kathy Smith who organized a very festive hospitality table, and a hearty *thank you* to the members who brought the delicious goodies to the event. GREAT JOB BY ALL!

Workshop Presenter
Doug McPhee puts the
finishing touches on the
largest centerpiece.



Guest Mary Payson,
American Legion Past
Commander, admires all
the raffle items, while
member Kathy Dugan
eagerly awaits her next
sale of raffle tickets.

November's Holiday Wreath Workshop

The workshop was held on that snowy Saturday, November 13 at 3:00pm at St. Paul's Rectory. 19 Members and 9 guests attended. Anita Cross, our workshop leader bubbled over with creativity and enthusiasm and demonstrated 1) pot greening 2) swag making 3) bow making 4) wreath making, and offered suggestions for embellishing wreaths with red sumac, rose hips, rhododendron leaves, white pine, dried branches, the dried flowers and leaves of the mountain laurel, etc. etc etc. We all ran home jazzed for holiday decorating, and we've been admiring everyone's wreaths as we drive by. They are all uniquely beautiful. Great job!

We are already talking to Anita about coming back in November 2005 for a Boxwood tree workshop, to include our future Jr. Garden Club members as well. If we learn the most efficient and proper way from an expert, we could easily make Boxwood trees in quantity to sell at the "*Holiday Greens Sale*", a potential fundraiser for December 2005.

Thank you to Heidi Dostoomian for organizing a lovely hospitality table for our members and guests.

A few of us were still jazzed up the next day, so we decorated four wreaths and donated them to the Millis Public Library and the Millis Food Pantry.

CIVIC PROJECTS

In January, MGC will meet with the **Oak Grove Playground Committee** to discuss the time line for our garden project, space allocation, educational goals, preliminary design, etc. If interested in being involved in this project, contact Nancy Sitta.

During the **Millis Library Spruce-up Project** in October, a few of our members noticed that, due to overgrown yew trees, the Korean Monument was obstructed from any view. Donna Cabibbo mentioned this to Mary Payson, **American Legion Past Commander** and the Legion fully agreed that it was time for the yews to be replaced with lower plantings. Once we apply to the Veteran's Association for funding, the bed design can be initiated and we'll proceed with planting for Spring 2005.

MGC requested support from the **Millis Lion's Club** for the **Millis Public Library 2004 Spruce-up Project**. We received a check for \$150 this week, which will be earmarked for the design and plantings of the two beds flanking the sideway at Route 109, where two Lion's markers now rest. The design work has already been completed by member Tess McDonough Ward and will be executed in Spring 2005.

In a written letter with their donation, the Lion's Club has asked that *their gratitude be conveyed, for allowing them to support our efforts on behalf of the Town of Millis*. They invited Nancy Sitta to speak at their next meeting, to find out more about our organization and projects. This event took place on Tuesday, December 7th at Glen Ellen and MGC was very well received by the 50 attendees of the holiday dinner. And, it was a great outreach opportunity, as spouses attended the meeting. Mike Flaherty, King Lion, suggested that we join forces and sponsor a **Millis Clean-Up Day** to be scheduled in April 2005. This would become an annual community event and would include other civic groups as well. Let's discuss this great civic opportunity at our January meeting.

FUNDRAISING PROJECTS

As discussed in the October 20, 2004 meeting, there are two community events which would allow MGC an excellent venue for membership outreach and fundraising. The Spring holds the **Clyde Brown Fair**, and Fall holds the **Fireman's Muster**. Anyone interested in being involved with either one of these events, please see Kathleen Hennessy.

MGC has been approached by **The Millis Historical Commission** to consider co-sponsoring an annual community event called **Festival of Trees**, which would take place for one week in December, starting in 2005. Possible locations for the event are Niagara Hall and Oak Grove Farm. *Festival of Trees* is a display of fully decorated artificial trees that have been donated by local businesses and community members (the sponsor purchases the artificial tree, decorates it, then donates it to the event). Attendees pay a small entrance fee to view the trees and may purchase raffle tickets throughout the festival, placing their raffle ticket in the container specific to the tree they desire. The trees are then raffled off at the end of the festival. The winner may chose to take their tree home or, donate it to a non-profit organization or a family in need.

Other family activities can be planned throughout the week, such as visits with Santa, wagon / sleigh rides at Oak Grove Farm, musical performances, etc. In addition, this event would offer us a prime location for a "*Holiday Green Sale*" (the sale of holiday wreaths, centerpieces, swags, boxwood trees that are made by MGC members), which is generally the biggest fundraising event for many garden clubs.

Similar *Festival of Tress* events are planned in many communities and it has proven to be a successful fundraiser for many civic organizations and garden clubs, and most importantly, a highly spirited community event. With the two groups combining efforts, the tasks and the proceeds would be shared. A January meeting with MHC is planned to discuss feasibility, which will then be reviewed and voted on at the January 19th meeting. If interested in learning more about the potential of this project, or if you wish to be involved in the first meeting, contact Nancy Sitta.

Medfield.. Saturday, December 4, 2004, 9:30am... The winds were wiping and the temps were in the low 20's during the Annual Medfield Garden Club's Holiday Green Sale, their biggest fundraiser of the year. We were luckily fifth in line, and at 10:00 am when the doors opened, we saw over 60 people waiting around the corner. It was frenzy inside! We're talking Filene's Basement during the Wedding Gown Sale. People were quickly selecting beautiful decorated boxwood trees, swags, wreaths, center-pieces, bags of boxwood, holly, winter berries, and rose hips. The sales were brisk and right before our very eyes, the tables were becoming emptier by the minute (they sell out within an hour of opening the doors). We could easily experience the same rewards with a Holiday Green Sale for December 2005....Let's talk!

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Submitted by Chris Gavin

Gardens In Winter

On November 19th Nancy Sitta and I were able to tag along with Geri Sprague's Winter Garden class, which is taught by Gary Koller, Landscape Institute of Harvard University. I took this class a few years ago and still think about the private residences we viewed at that time. This year the plan was to view a private residence in Shrewsbury and then tour Tower Hill Botanical Gardens in Boylston.



View of Several Rooms in Shrewsbury

First stop: Shrewsbury. The house sits on a half-acre corner lot. Along the front is a 3' stone wall rising at one point over a circular opening which allows a tiny glimpse to the interior. We began our tour at the front entry - a cobbled floor (no grass), a wrought iron gate to the drive, another to the street, details (wonderful bird houses, huge pots containing small trees and decorated with greens), and plantings to soften the edges and to screen the house from the street and drive. A blue stone walk leads around the side with evergreens planted to obscure the street below. Turning a corner we find a blue stone terrace tucked into an ell of the house. Huge granite steps lead to the sun room. Look down a few steps to the lawn with a pond and fountain (the photo shows this view in reverse, looking back to the house). The path continues around the greenhouse to a garden area of geometric beds with tall grasses. This space, in turn, leads to three other garden rooms, each planted uniquely, separated by hedges, walls or weeping firs trained over tall wrought iron arches. The owner explained that his gardens had evolved over twelve years. In the beginning the property was a steeply sloped site with a stream flowing across it. He first dealt with drainage and grading, then installed hard-scape and planted the various "rooms." These outdoor areas are completely screened from the street, noise is softened by the bubbling fountain, details and materials are repeated and views into the next garden space give the impression of a much larger area. Evergreens, walls, grasses and ornamental details all provide a visual panorama for the winter season. Our garden club is invited to see the gardens in late spring.

On to Tower Hill. Geri's instructor lead us around, stopping frequently to point out interesting bark, seed pods, branch formation, buds, berries and contrasting color combinations. He talked about using paths, walls, trellises, ponds, arbors and ornamental details to offer structure, especially in the winter. The curved line of a path creates mystery and interest - what is around the corner? Views can be directed through the opening in a hedge, between an allee of trees or framed by an arbor or pergola. We saw red, black, white, orange and purple berries; cinnamon bark, peeling bark, mottled bark, lichen bark, white bark, even pink stems on one variety of dogwood; evergreens in shades of burgundy, green, chartreuse, gold, and some that change from green in warm weather to purplish or bronze in winter; hard, soft, fuzzy, lacy, feathery, or prickly textures; ground covers ranging from myrtle to ivy to low-growing junipers and cryptomeria; and finally some leaves, still hanging on deciduous shrubs, in shades of purple, yellow and red. A very inspirational feast for the eyes. (For information about Tower Hill: www.towerhillbg.org). Currently at Tower Hill, *Holly Days*.



Winter Berry at Tower Hill

From Martha Stewart's Temporary Desk

Martha must have been right there with us while Anita Cross was trying to teach us bow making....(We're still finding it challenging to make a multi-looped ribbon), as she is featuring bow making in her December 2004 issue, starting on page95. *Thank you Martha. Bow making is a good thing.*

Martha also a great article on pruning evergreens in the winter, (Martha Stewart, December 2004, page 84) which was Tess McDonough Ward's focus of the month, before our "in-box" was erased. Sorry Tess!

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The Mulch Pile Newsletter is produced and published monthly by the Millis Garden Club, Millis, MA. 02054. 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*.