



MAYFLOWER

WINTER 2020

Winter Greetings to all our gardening friends-

This year has been different because of Covid19. But plants keep growing and many gardens have flourished in spite of the pandemic. Remember that the GCFM Native Plant Challenge <https://www.gcfm.org/president-s-project> will continue until June, 2021 and beyond. In our garden planning over the winter, we can keep in mind the spirit of the NPC effort to create more diverse habitat for native wildlife. Survey your garden; check resources for plant choices to add in the spring <https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/>; learn about the benefits of pollinators and wildlife in your garden from <https://www.ecolandscaping.org/11/designing-ecological-landscapes/native-plants/more-than-pollinator-friendly/> or study more deeply with articles posted on our website or via <https://www.ecolandscaping.org/event/ela-ecological-plant-conference-2020/>. Or simply enjoy the beautiful photographs posted on these sites. Welcome winter as a time to be inspired by the balance and beauty of nature.

Check the [GCFM Website](#)



FEATURED NATIVE PLANT

Comptonia peregrina

Sweet-fern (*Comptonia peregrina*) is a multi-stemmed deciduous native shrub which is low, spreading and with foliage strongly resembling that of a fern. It is ideal for naturalizing or for use in poor sandy soils. It flourishes in marginal places, such as rocky barren habitats with acidic soil; power line rights-of-way, and rocky outcrops. This is because it has teamed up with bacteria that turn atmospheric nitrogen into a form that the plant can use.

Sweetfern has dark green foliage throughout the season that turns brown in fall. Its leaves, which are fragrant, have a slightly citrusy, and pungently herbal aroma. The male and female flowers are usually on separate plants and inconspicuous. Just before the leaves open in April, pollen is released from the male plant and carried on the wind to the female plant. Small edible nutlets ripen inside burr-like scales by September. The seeds will germinate only after being exposed to strong temperature fluctuations, but seeds can remain viable up to 70 years.

Sweetfern grows in Zones 3–6. Its height can vary from a foot to three feet and spread two to five feet wide. It grows at a slow rate and can expect to live for up to 20 years. It forms a dense thicket and tends to stay within size limits, so little pruning is needed, but if you must prune it is best done in late winter once threat of extreme cold has passed.

It prefers sun to part shade, and dry to average soil and will die in too wet soils. It grows in acidic soils and will have yellowing leaves (chlorosis) if soil gets alkaline. It doesn't seem to mind environmental salts or pollution and is drought tolerant and suitable for xeriscaping. It lends a fine and delicate texture to the landscape.

It gets blister rust, the same as some pines, which doesn't seem to be harmful to sweetfern, but can kill the pines. It can get weedy, but is an excellent choice for areas where nothing else seems to grow, making it an effective groundcover for erosion control on steep, sandy banks and for species diversity in sterile, sandy soils. You should be aware that there can be an issue with suckering and be on the look out for them.

It is not known for its value to wildlife, but there are still some birds that feed on its buds, catkins and fruit and white-tailed deer may browse the foliage. It is a host plant for the grey-streaked butterfly.

When Covid-19 struck, garden clubs found that their meetings and projects changed. Many clubs cancelled meetings, but many went to a virtual platform. Clubs such as the **Lexington Field & GC** that has over 300 members and **GC of Hyannis** and **Acton GC** both with over 90 members had little choice, but to adapt to a different format such as Zoom for their meetings. Other clubs like the **Wellesley GC** came up with a hybrid model with some in person meetings which included masks and social distancing and other programs on Zoom. Some clubs decided to meet outside during the summer months at members' homes and would bring a chair and a lunch. These clubs will not meet during the winter, but might go to the virtual platform. Clubs depend on Fundraisers to continue their programs, and with Covid-19 this became an issue. The **Sharon GC** held an annual "Walkabout Tour." In order to have people walk through gardens this year, the club set new rules. Masks were mandatory; reservations needed; social distancing required, and gardens were set up with indicators for one way traffic. **Natick GC** decided to do their plant sale online. Information on the available plants went out and people preordered the plants. A time and place for picking up the plants was given. Social distancing and masks were required to pick up plants. The **Open Gate GC of Chelmsford** limited its plant sale to members only and plants could be picked up at a member's driveway. Both **Bridgewater GC** and **Danvers GC** will have greens sales in December, but each is taking a different approach to the sale. Bridgewater GC will do their sale outside under the Senior Center front awning and sell only bags of greens and simple wreaths. Danvers GC, however, is planning to have their greens sale done completely through pre-orders of wreaths, kissing balls, and hand-made bows. Since people were at home more, **Wareham GC** put together a cookbook, which went on sale in September.



To handle programs for club members, **Andover GC** put postings on its website, "How to Make Your Own Face Covering," and composting. **Medfield GC** shared photos of members' gardens. **GC of Harvard** has posted on their Facebook page articles such as "Allelopathic Plants: What Are They, and How To (and Not To) Use Them." as well as information on the spotted lanternfly for members. **Belmont GC** took photos of their woodland garden at the library and created a program (see photo above right), and in September, the **Hamilton-Wenham GC** hosted a virtual garden tour with Jana Milbocker

and opened it up to the public, as well.

Despite the virus most clubs still continued with their civic projects. **Holliston GC** was still active in the community, maintaining various garden areas in town such as the Holliston Public Library garden (see photo above left). The **Ipswich GC** puts wreaths up around town for the holidays. Adjustments are being made to get the job done. Members are assigned a specific wreath and public building. To create the wreath members will be given a half hour time slot at a member's basement, where they will be able to get wreaths and supplies. Other members have made bows. **Haverhill GC** decided to brighten up the summer with a door tour. People decorated their doors and then there was a drive by to view the doors. The city's mayor picked the best door and a cash prize was given.

The **Community GC of Cohasset** also brightened up the town. Each week from July through October a bicycle appeared in a prominent spot in town. Members filled the bicycle basket with flowers or plants and decorated the bicycle coordinating it with its specific location (see photo on right).

Massachusetts garden clubs are still going strong. There may be a pandemic going on and life may have change, but garden club members are tenacious and will keep going with their projects and programs.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Massachusetts Horticultural Society's

Festival of Trees

Through December 20, 2020.

Find information at: [Festival of Trees](#)

Participating clubs:

Boston Junior League GC

Holliston GC

Natick GC

Noanett GC

Open Gate GC of Foxboro

Powisett GC

Tewksbury GC

Wellesley Gardeners' Guild

GCFM

(at right with the GCFM entry,
Suzanne McCance and Bonnie Rosenthal)



GARDEN CLUB FEDERATION OF MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

Zoom Virtual Offering Only April 8, 9, & 10, 2020

Gardening School Course 3, Series 11

Subjects covered:

April 8: · Factors That Influence Plant Growth – Dr. Judith Sumner

· New Plant Development and Evaluation – Dr. Judith Sumner

April 9: · Container Gardening – Betty Sanders, Master Gardener

· Houseplant Basics – Betty Sanders, Master Gardener

· Native Trees and Shrubs – Betty Sanders, Master Gardener

April 10: · Supporting the Wild: Plants for Birds and Pollinators – Joann Vieira, Horticulturalist

· Teaching Tour – Joann Vieira, Horticulturalist

Email test for those becoming consultants follows

Suggested Reading:

Botany for Gardeners by Brian Capon maybe purchased through [Amazon.com](#)

[Garden Study Course brochure and Registration Form](#)

Landscape Design Council



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a GCFM

Zoom Lecture

The New Heirloom Garden

by

Ellen Ecker Ogden

**10 a.m. Wednesday
January 27, 2021**

*Open to all Members of the
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts*

Ellen Ecker Ogden is an award winning kitchen garden designer and author of *The Complete Kitchen Garden* and *The New Heirloom Garden*. Her books feature European-style potager designs with recipes for cooks who love to garden. Using her six steps to successful garden design, she will guide you to creating a kitchen garden that will become a sanctuary for you and your family. Filled with flavorful vegetables, fragrant flowers and culinary herbs, your kitchen garden will become more than a place to grow food.



Her new book *New Heirloom Garden* features themed garden designs with recipes to introduce gardeners to the lost world of flavor, fragrance and old world charm that can be grown only in their own garden. You will be inspired to plant varieties that add forgotten charm to your own heirloom garden and serve up good food.

Space is limited. Go to GCFM.org to Register.

Find the flyer here [Landscape Design Council Program/Seminar](#)

ALERT:



GCFM recently learned of presence of the Spotted Lanternfly in Massachusetts. Since 2014, infestations of the sap-sucking insects, native to Asia, have broken out in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, and West Virginia and Connecticut. Agriculture officials are asking anyone who has purchased- plants, landscaping materials, or outdoor furniture — from a state with a known spotted lanternfly infestation to carefully check the materials, including any packaging, for signs of the insects. See the FAQ sheet below for more

information and details on reporting.

<https://massnrc.org/pests/pestFAQsheets/spottedlanternfly.html>

<https://www.masslive.com/news/2020/10/massachusetts-residents-urged-to-be-on-lookout-for-invasive>

Attending Landscape Design School via ZOOM –

a student's experience – by Claire DeCusati, Landscape Design Consultant

The Landscape Design Schools have a long history in Massachusetts. During the 1959-60 GCFMA presidency of Isadore Smith, Landscape Design Study Courses were introduced as a forerunner of the accredited Landscape Design Study Course of 1961. With Harriet Field and Mildred S. Parker, Evelyn Cole worked to establish the Landscape Design Study Courses in Massachusetts. She conducted the first series of courses in Massachusetts beginning May 7, 1961. On October 14, 1963 at the Midtown Motor Inn, Boston, she presided at the organizational meeting of the Landscape Design Critics Council and presented "National Council Landscape Design Critics Certificates" to the forty-five students who had successfully completed the four-course program. [\[1\]](#)

With the current pandemic, Garden Clubs across the nation are turning to ZOOM to host virtual classes the National Garden Club curriculum. On October 23 – 24, 2020, the Ft. Meyers-Lee County Garden Council presented Landscape Design School Course 4 via ZOOM. The purpose of this article is to give a brief overview of the course from a student's perspective.

Read complete article here [Review of LDS ZOOM experience](#)

2020 "Green" Holiday Ideas (mindful of COVID-19)

In the past, Americans generated 25% more trash during the holidays than during the rest of the year! This year is likely to be different...less shopping, fewer and smaller gatherings, often a sad time remembering a loved one no longer with us. But, by being eco-friendly, we can add a needed encouraging care-for-the-future spirit to the season.

Consider the following ideas:

1. This is the year to shop online and have gifts shipped. Find organic and/or free trade items. For example, check out Taza Chocolate locally produced in Somerville, MA.
2. If you shop at Amazon, go through Amazon Smile. A % of your purchase is donated at no extra cost to you to any nonprofit organization you choose. Choose GCFM!
3. Consider giving the gift of indoor plants which can be ordered online and delivered to the doorstep. Something nice to add cheer to all our indoor at-home time this winter!
4. Buying water in plastic bottles may be convenient but it is wasteful and harmful to the environment. Give a gift of a stainless-steel water bottle that can be filled with tap water. If you have taste/safety concerns about tap water, give the gift of a water filtration system or Brita pitcher along with the stainless-steel water bottle. Add a set of stainless-steel straws!
5. Give a programmable thermostat so the heat can be turned down in the winter when you are asleep or away. They also work in the summer to turn up the temperature to save on A/C electricity.
6. A tire pressure gauge makes a great gift for less than \$10. Correctly inflated tires can save 20% at the pump and all that fossil fuel! Add a gift certificate for wheel alignment...that saves MPG, too.

For more fantastic gift ideas, continue reading here: [2020 Holiday Gift Ideas](#)

The Reach of Virtual Learning – An Event, An Invitation, An Opportunity!

By Maureen Christmas

Flower shows, garden club meetings, symposiums, the educational schools – all cancelled or moved to a virtual platform due to the pandemic. Also put on hold has been all the scheduled educational events for the business side of flowers. The annual symposium, district events, workshops - all shut down. Like the relationships formed among garden clubbers, the professionals were missing the contact with their fellow creatives. Many designers started doing live and recorded videos sharing a technique or design concept but the human interaction was missing.

Shawn Michael Foley, AIFD, PFCI, a designer



and set it upon three stacked pots to hold my

and life coach based in Dallas, Texas saw a need to create a 'space' for creatives to "gather, grow and thrive". Foley and Gina Thresher, AIFD, EMC, owner of From the Ground Up Floral in Seattle, combined forces to create and co-host the Fleurvana Virtual Summit. Belonging to both worlds as a professional and as an Acton Garden Club member, I accepted the invitation to be a presenter at the Holiday edition which aired the end of October. What is the Fleurvana Virtual Summit you ask? – A free ticket gave you access to four consecutive days of education covering topics such as floral design and business but also delves into creative writing, technology, aromatherapy, knowing your worth, personal coaching and social media.

I'm thrilled and honored to have had the opportunity to participate in this novel approach to education and connecting with fellow creatives from around the world. A VIP upgrade to the free ticket allowed access to a live round table discussion at 5:30 each day. As one who usually stands in the back row, getting in front of a camera was a bit intimidating!!! The first step was coming up with a topic and then narrowing down the scope of it. I've always loved working with all types of wires so "Wired for the Holidays – Eco-friendly Designs Using Wire Mechanics" was born. Different design styles using reusable structures and mechanics were demonstrated along with pro tips to elevate the creations. It was quite a learning experience to transform my kitchen into a studio, set up the camera to show only what I wanted and then record myself while talking to metallic rectangle! I molded chicken wire

phone! Luckily, on the production end, Gina edited my raw footage and inserted photos to show close-ups of techniques. As I write this, I haven't seen the final product.

Doing this video has provided opportunities and opened a whole new world to explore. I encourage you to look into creating videos and getting used to being on camera. Walk around your yard and talk about your plantings. Pretend you're talking to a friend and not to the unknown. If I hadn't done this video, I probably would have declined an offer to create a virtual workshop for my town's community education curriculum. You never know what opportunities will come your way. I like to live by the motto, "If you're ready, you don't have to get ready!"

The Fleurvana Virtual Summit consisted of videos, 20-40 minutes in duration aired on the hour, giving viewers a chance to take a break from their screens and perhaps tackle a quick task. Up until the live airings, free tickets were available for viewers to watch in real time and they had up to midnight to catch any presentation they missed during the day. They could upgrade to VIP passes which gave unlimited access to view the presentations at any point in the future. I give you this information in the event there is another edition of Fleurvana produced, you'll understand how it works. Now that the summit has passed, there is still an opportunity to see the programs. Shawn Foley has kindly generated a coupon code which takes the price from \$197 to \$98.50 for unlimited viewing of the **27** videos! The link and coupon follow.

Coupon Code **SAVE50**.

<https://maureenchristmas.krtra.com/t/7ZnuB3JgE89>

Eleven Scholarships Available Through the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

Are you in college or headed for college in the fall? Are you majoring in one of the 'green' sciences such as horticulture, environmental studies, botany or biology? Are you looking for scholarship aid? If so, you should know that the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts (GCFM) offers eleven different scholarships each year to qualifying students.

The deadline for applying for these scholarships is March 1. The application forms are available at [GCFM Scholarships](#). The basic requirements are that you have been a legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year, have maintained a minimum 'B' average in school, have good character, and have a financial need. Each scholarship has a specific set of additional requirements, which are described in detail on the GCFM website.

For example, one scholarship requires that the student be a "graduate or undergraduate pursuing a degree in horticulture, landscape design, environmental science or related fields of interest." Another is open to "juniors, seniors or graduate students majoring in landscape architecture, city planning, or related fields of interest." Three are restricted to students enrolled at one of the University of Massachusetts campuses in areas such as floriculture, horticulture or landscape design.

These scholarships are designed to help defray tuition or living expenses. Our goal is to encourage Massachusetts students to pursue studies in horticulture or environmental sciences.

Two scholarships are also offered by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. to Massachusetts students. The deadline for these scholarships is February 1st. The website for forms for these scholarships is gardenclub.org

Eligibility for the scholarships is determined by the GCFM Scholarship Committee and is determined based on the completed application package. All necessary forms, including those to

determine financial need, are available at the GCFM website.

For additional information please contact: dtaverna@msn.com gcfmscholarship@aol.com
