



MIDDLETOWN
GARDEN CLUB
**CORNUS
CHRONICLE**

February 2025

REMINDER:

The February meeting will take place at 1 pm on Thursday, the 20th, at CFPA headquarters.

CALENDAR:

Wednesday, February 12th: “The Magical Witches of Winter” – talk by Adam Wheeler of Broken Arrow Nursery at Haddam G.C.; RSVP required.

Thursday, February 20th: MGC business meeting and presentation on mycorrhizal fungi by Susanna Kerio of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station. **THE PUBLIC IS INVITED.**

February 20 – 23: The CT Flower and Garden Show, Hartford. Click on the link to order tickets online, or via the Federated Garden Clubs website, either of which will save you \$1.66 per ticket! For \$14 discounted tickets, see the mail-in form on page 7 below.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:

Hi there...

While January may seem like a time to relax, bundle up, hunker down, make hearty soups and sip hot chocolate,

come February you slowly realize that the snow, ice and frigid cold won’t last forever. You may start thinking about venturing outside to take a walk, refill the bird feeders or go to a movie, lecture or even a flower show.

Whatever you decide, have a happy February and don’t forget your sweetheart!

XO -- Kim



PROGRAM:

The February program will once again precede our business meeting. The topic is "Mycorrhizal Inoculation of Landscape Trees in Connecticut."

Dr. Susanna Kerio is an Assistant Scientist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), with a Ph.D. in forest ecology and forest pathology. Her research in Connecticut focuses on

tree stress responses, and the applications of these stress signals in tree health management. Susanna's current research focuses on how site factors and mycorrhizal inoculation affect tree health, and if carbohydrate levels and foliar pigments can be used to evaluate tree condition. She also conducts research on chestnuts and is a board member of the Connecticut Tree Protection Examining Board and the Connecticut Urban Forest Council.

~ Lynne and Judy



MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16TH MEETING:

As the meeting was open to the public, our program began at 1 pm with a presentation by member Rhea Higgins, introducing us to the landscape at Stourhead, a 2,650-acre estate in Wiltshire, England. Following this fascinating program, President Wuestefeld called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

She thanked hostesses Kathie Green and Ona McLaughlin for providing refreshments for the club and numerous community guests. The meeting was generously hosted and promoted by the Durham Library.

Approval of the Treasurer's report was moved by Kate and seconded by Kathie, with a unanimous vote in favor.

There was further discussion on funding a bench for the garden at the Mansion. It was moved by Ona to NOT fund a bench, seconded by Rob. The vote was by show of hands in favor of not providing the funding.

Lynn reminded us of the line item for the St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen in memory of Ted Xenelis in the amount of \$100.00. Lynn moved that \$100.00 be given to the garden at the Mansion in Maria's honor. There is a bereavement fund. Ed seconded this motion. The motion was passed.

Committee Reports:

Membership: Kathy Meyering spoke about different days and meeting times to attract new members. March and April meetings will be at 5 p.m.

Holiday Bazaar: Ona said the sale of wreaths at the Bazaar did well but the table arrangements did not. People asked for kissing balls. We will have to rethink what else to do.

Treasurer: Lynn said the club needs a new Square, the portable credit card reader. It was difficult at the Bazaar.

Miscellaneous: Patsy told us that named gardens (Wasch, Maria) aren't being maintained. Knowledgeable people are preferable for this. The City will provide bags for clean-up. She recommended that we adopt a garden as some clubs do. The public would see our work and ask about the work. We should keep to Maria's plan as much as possible.

Ona stated there is a move on to restore Pameacha pond.

Kathie moved to adjourn, seconded by Kate.

Submitted by Kathie Green, Secretary pro tem

ATTENDANCE:

L. Bank, J. Bell, K. Coley, S. Cornish, E. Dzialo, T. Ferguson, L. Garner, K. Green, R. Higgins, L. Johnson, O. McLaughlin, K. Meyering, S. Mylchreest, E.

Ranganathan, R. Rickenback, R.
Schoonmaker, C. Wasch, K. Wuestefeld

Excused: S. Allison, E. Carella, N.
D'Oench, M. Giamei, J. Harris, M.
Kalayjian, R. Kelley, M. Roberts, D.
Shapiro, M. Xenelis



CONSERVATION NEWS:

Update on Neonicotinoids:
As advocates for environmental health we can do our part by supporting pollinators and the web of life in our gardens. One of the threats to pollinators is the widespread use of neonicotinoid pesticides, which have been banned in many states. As noted before, we can try to avoid using seeds and plants containing this toxin, but it is not always easy to do, without accurate labelling.

Read: UConn Study released January 27, 2025
<https://www.ctaudubon.org/2025/01/ct-pesticide-reform-news-release-widely-used-insecticides-found-in-connecticut-waters-pose-a-deadly-threat-to-aquatic-ecosystems-and-a-risk-to-human-health/>

To support a ban, contact your legislators who are putting this bill forward:

CT SB00505 An Act Concerning The Regulation of Neonicotinoids
Introduced January 1, 2025, and referred to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

The sponsors are: Christine Cohen (D), Hector Arzeno (D), Pat Dillon(D), Joe Gresko (D)



PERENNIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR:

As the Conservation/NAL committees continue the effort for legislative recognition of the importance of native plants, rather than cultivars and non-natives, it is encouraging to note that the 2025 Perennial Plant Association's Plant of the Year is a native, Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*).

It is a hardy shrub-like plant, providing many garden benefits.

- Native range: Meadows and open woodlands in the eastern United States and west to Texas
- Growth: Branched stems grow 2–3 ft tall and form a dense clump
- Leaves: Silvery-green foliage with a minty smell
- Flowers: Small, white, nectar-rich flowers that bloom in button-like clusters
- Bracts: Silver bracts that give the plant a frosted appearance

- Soil: Adapts to a wide range of soils, wet or dry
- Deer and rabbit resistance: Aromatic foliage makes it unpalatable to deer and rabbits
- Disease resistance: Virtually disease-free

Benefits:

- Attracts pollinators like bees, butterflies, and wasps
- Enhances local ecosystems
- Easy-care garden addition
- Suppresses weeds



WINTER FORCING TIPS FROM THE FARMER'S ALMANAC

Best Trees and Shrubs for Forcing Branches

Below is a list of the best trees and shrubs that you would prune before bloom. The numbers in the chart below indicate the approximate number of weeks that the branches will take to flower indoors.

Note: Branches won't flower until they've had a proper cold period, usually about six weeks.

January to early February is a great time to force forsythias and witch hazels. By mid-February, try eastern redbud, cherry, and red maples. By mid-to-late February, consider lilacs, honeysuckle, willows, and magnolias.

If you have pussy willows, they are a great choice for forcing indoors. They don't require water, and they last for ages. (Wait until the downy catkins have broken out of their casings.)

Best Trees and Shrubs for Forcing Indoors

Tree or Shrub	Time to Bloom
Buckeye	5 weeks
Cherry	4 weeks
Cornelian dogwood	2 weeks
Crab apple	4 weeks
Deutzia	3 weeks
Flowering almond	3 weeks
Flowering dogwood	5 weeks
Flowering quince	4 weeks
Forsythia	1 week
Honeysuckle	3 weeks
Horse chestnut	5 weeks
Lilac	4 weeks
Magnolia	3 weeks
Pussy willow	2 weeks
Red maple	2 weeks
Redbud	2 weeks
Red-twig dogwood	5 weeks
Spicebush	2 weeks

Tree or Shrub	Time to Bloom
Spirea	4 weeks
Wisteria	3 weeks

*Note that the trees tend to be stubborn, and their blossoms may not be as rewarding as those of the shrubs.

How to Prune Branches

All you need is a pair of clean, sharp pruners (and a spring-flowering tree or shrub!)

1. Choose a day when the temperature is above freezing. The milder temperatures help ease the transition the plants must make from outdoors to indoors.
2. Select branches that are not essential to the form of your shrub or tree, in a crowded section, and towards the back of the plant.
3. Prune a 1 to 2 foot-long length of branch. Choose a branch with lots of buds, preferably with very small buds that are beginning to open. (The flower buds are generally fatter and more rounded than leaf buds.)

SIGNS OF SPRING PRESENTED BY THE FEDERATED GARDEN CLUB OF CT, INC.

CONNECTICUT Flower & Garden Show
CT CONVENTION CENTER
FEB 20-23, 2025

Thu 10a - 7p | Fri 10a - 8p
Sat 10a - 8p | Sun 10a - 5p

\$20 Admission at the Door
\$17 Advance Tickets Online
\$5 Children Ages 5-12
FREE Children Ages 0-4

Spectacularly Floral Artistic Gardens



Hundreds of flower & garden exhibitors! Including artists, crafters, tools, decor, outdoor living experts, indoor & outdoor plants, seeds, bulbs, water features & more!

Floral Design & Horticulture Competition
Federated Garden Clubs of CT

2025 Show Theme - Signs of Spring



CTFlowerShow.com



THE FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF CT MEMBERS PAY \$14.00* PER TICKET IN ADVANCE
TICKETS ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 7th, 2025
Please make check payable to North East Expos, Inc., 175 Case Street, Canton, CT 06019

Number of Tickets # _____ Enclosed is the amount of: \$ _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

CVV (3 Digit Security code on reverse of card): _____ Billing Zip Code: _____
4% Service fee on all credit cards

CLUB NAME: _____ CONTACT PERSON: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ Email: _____

Ticket Sales Policy

Tickets are **non-refundable** and **non-exchangeable**.
Any order received after February 7th will be charged full admission price of \$20.00
Visit ctflowershow.com for more details.
We will return the tickets via email upon receipt of the order.
Please fill in the information requested and return with payment. You may also purchase with a credit card by telephone **860-844-8461**.

