



Brockton Garden Club
P.O. Box 154
Brockton, MA 02303

Gardener's News

Think Spring!

February 2016

President's Message: I was sooooo looking forward to the springing up of all our bulbs and actually thought it would be early this year until we were stomped with a couple of feet of snow! Hopefully, the past snow storms and cold wave are the last of the season. I have heard the birds getting more vocal in the yard and the days are getting longer so signs point toward getting closer to Spring!! Please be right Mr. Ground Hog. I am so looking forward to gardening.
Peg Parenteau

UPCOMING:

- Carol Banks will collect donations for Health Imperatives Connections at our general meeting, Monday, Feb. 22 at the Arnone School. The Garden Club also donates \$300 toward the charity, which among other services offers safety, security, and comfort to survivors of domestic violence and their children.
- The Nomination Committee is now seeking officers to help fill the following Garden Club board positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording secretary, Corresponding secretary, Auditor, Director 2 years, Director 4 years. The committee is chaired by Bobbi Lemasa. The other members are confidential which is essential for the club to achieve a balance of new people with seasoned people. The new president elect will then start looking for committee chairs. This is sometimes done prior to actually being elected. An explanation is expected at the Feb. 22 meeting.

Committee Reports

Civic: Civic will schedule a committee meeting in March to discuss planning for the Annual Plant Sale. Details to come. **Co-Chairs Birute Silvia and Tim Steadman**

Programs: It may not seem like it but spring is just around the corner. Well, alright maybe two corners. As gardeners we know one of the most important things we need to prepare is our soil. We are very pleased to have Master Gardener Gretel Anspoch speaking about how to get our soil prepared so our flowers, vegetables and herbs receive the nutrients and moisture needed to be healthy for the upcoming growing season. Hope to see you at Monday's meeting. **Co-chairs Judy Burnett, Carol Beffert-Banks & Susan Spaulding.**

Toolin' Around



By John Duggan

Hello Brockton Garden Club Members: I hope everyone has been surviving the past few snowstorms we've had and I hope everyone's snow blowers started on the first pull! With any luck we are at the tail end of winter and hopefully spring will arrive early so we can get back to work in our gardens!

When Judy Burnett first approached me about writing this column, she suggested I write about various Club Members and their favorite tools. I thought this was a great idea and this month I would like to profile my good friend, Setta Arevian, and two favorite garden tools that she can't live without: her CobraHead Weeder and Cultivator and her Perennial Spade by Sneeboer. Setta let me borrow these tools for photographing and told me that if I didn't return them, she would track me down and do some bodily harm. And for those who know Setta, she means it! For those of you who do not know Setta, she has been a member of the Brockton Garden

Club for almost

twenty years and is quite an accomplished gardener.

Her gardens are extraordinary; full of beautiful colors and a variety of plants and shrubs that any gardener envies. Setta is especially well known for her beautiful peonies.

The CobraHead Weeder Cultivator is pictured below. It cost \$24.95 and is made in the USA! It is an ideal tool for weeding and de-thatching your flower beds. Setta said it is awesome for breaking up soil that is dry and hard-packed. Here is the website



in case you would like to purchase one: <http://www.cobrahead.com/cobrahead-weeder-and-cultivator>. And yes, I will be

buying one of these. As well as Diane Sterling!

The second tool Setta can't live without is the Perennial Spade by Sneeboer. Setta purchased it at the Boston Garden Show several years ago. This is a beautifully made tool! It measures only 21 ½ inches, sells for about \$65 and is an ideal tool for dividing perennials.

It was easy to clean and sharpen and the steel blade was hand forged.

Unfortunately, the closest garden center that sells the Sneeboer line of tools is located in Mystic, Conn. Is anyone interested in a field trip? Maybe Foxwoods afterwards? Check out the Sneeboer website – very interesting video:

<http://www.sneeboer.com>

That's it for this month. See you at the February monthly meeting!



See you Monday, Feb. 22 at the Arnone, 7 p.m. Bring a coffee or tea mug. Recycle, reduce and reuse!

AROUND THE STATE:

- Rhode Island Spring and Flower Show, Feb. 18-21. Visit www.flowershow.com for more details.
- Mass. Horticultural Society Flower Show, March 16-20. Floral designers still being sought. Visit www.masshort.org for more info and upcoming workshops.
- Garden Club Federation of Mass. 14th Annual Civic Development Workshop, March 24, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Click here for more info and registration form. gcfm.org/Education/Workshops/CivicDevelopment.aspx



On the next page is info about Garden Club Federation of Mass. contests, including planting a pollinator garden competition.

Garden Federation of Mass: "Plant a Pollinator Friendly Garden" Contest

You have already heard about the **heirloom plant contest** where you are encouraged to bring wonderful heirloom plants back into your gardens. To refresh your club on the details, go to GCFM.org, click on Awards and Contest tab and go to the line for Historic Heirloom plant contest.

Our **second contest** is the **native pollinator garden competition** that asks you to take steps to add pollinator-friendly plants into both your home and civic gardens. In this contest, any pollinator friendly garden

you create, or that you are property or as a part of your work gets you that much

You add to or create a pollinator plants

the several websites listed

The number of native

decreasing drastically as more of the plants we grow are not food sources for them and as too many pesticides and herbicides have been employed.

Many non-native plants do not provide the pollen or nectar needed by native bees, butterflies, moths and others. Without food for their adult and, in the case of butterflies and moths larval stages, they die out.

Without the pollinators, many of our plants cannot produce the seeds or fruit that we depend on to feed ourselves.

Without pollinators we get no apples or eggplants or peas.

If there is no milkweed, Monarch butterflies have nothing that provides the nutrition they need to go from the larval stage to the butterfly stage.

In other words, no milkweed, no Monarch butterflies.



employing native plants already growing, on your club's civic beautification

closer to the prize. garden using the native recommended on

below. pollinators have been



Repeat that with many other species and our gardens lose the life and magic provided by these hard working and often beautiful visitors to our gardens.

We want to inspire you to change all that.

A generous sponsor has offered a \$100 prize to each small, medium and large garden club that grows the largest number of gardens with predominately pollinator friendly plants as a percentage of the membership.

For example: If your garden club has 50 members and 15 of them have pollinator friendly gardens plus the club maintains 3 civic sites with pollinator friendly gardens, it has 18 gardens or 36% based on the number of members.

But what is a pollinator garden and how do I know if my plants, already in the ground, are pollinator friendly. First check a couple of websites.

You will quickly find that most native plants, those that evolved with the bees and butterflies, are pollinator friendly. Beyond that, look at websites that are helping gardeners find pollinator friendly plants. Avoid commercial sites selling plants, they have 'split' agendas.

Go the New England Wildflower Society (NewEnglandWild.org/grow/), the Xerces Society (xerces.org) or, GCFM's absolute favorite, the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service online publication called Pollinator Friendly Plants for the NorthEastern U.S. and type into your browser

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_027028.pdf.



This site has a photo of the plant and alongside it, a listing of pollinator value, it's preferred growing site, amount of sun, when it blooms and so much more.

The government made it hard to get to but a wonderful resource once you do.

The first thing you can do is share this email to your club's members.

Some may already have pollinator friendly gardens at home. Others may be willing to add pollinator plants to make them the majority of plants in existing gardens.

Everyone can help design or redesign civic gardens for your area. All of the details of the contest are posted on the GCFM website under the awards tab and listed as Pollinator Gardens Contest.

And maybe in June of 2017 the GCFM could be handing your club a check for doing good for the environment while you beautify your property, and your neighborhood.