



Survey Says...

The response rate from our survey has been fairly good, with 36% of the members responding so far.

The **highest** scoring question on the survey was "This is a good club to belong to" and the **lowest** scoring was "The most important aspect is raising funds for scholarships." On a scale of 1 to 5, these questions scored 4.4 and 1.4, respectively. There is a chart of the results on page 3.

Overall, club members are very pleased to be members of the WNGC, they like learning about gardening, and they like seeing their friends every month. (For myself, I think the home-made delectables help, too, but this is just a personal weakness on my part.)

Friends

And speaking of friendship, most people felt welcomed when they first joined the club, but few of us feel we know the people in the club as well as we would like.

Most of us seem to know a number of members very well, and the majority fairly well, but do you sometimes find yourself whispering, "Now, who is that again?" What might we do to get to know one another better?

Meetings

People said that they like the monthly meetings and have fun at them, and particularly enjoy the speakers who teach us about gardening. The most

December 1 "Boxwood Tree & Kissing Ball"

Extreme Trainer Nancy Perkins, accompanied by the ever un-flagging Priscilla Styer, will lead a workshop on creating either a boxwood Table-top Tree or a boxwood Kissing Ball to spark your holiday home. As always this is a great time to sit down with your buddies and dish, uh, rejoice in the holiday warmth. Like every program of Nancy's, it will be very worthwhile, as we learn skills to use year after year. **There will be a \$20 charge for materials, and please bring a pair of clippers.**

As always, the meeting will be held at 6:45 in the 1910 Building Annex.

Hospitality will be provided by Anne Jarzobski, Sandi Preble, Ginger Selman, Joan Parker, led by Rosemarie McCobb and Diane Dobson

See you there, and don't forget your clippers!



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A garden isn't meant to be useful; it's for joy.

— Rumer Godden

Survey Says... continued

(Continued from page 1)

popular monthly programs are those featuring the How-To's of gardening, followed by the workshops where we make things. Flower arranging demonstrations with raffles were a close third, with slide-show speakers coming in a distant fourth.

As we get ready to plan for next year's programs, are there any particular topics or formats you would like to see? Who do you know that we could book for next year?

Club Business

When it comes to the business of running the club, members like knowing about the club's finances but are uncomfortable asking to be reimbursed for expenses. Many felt that we spend our money on the right things, but of the 27 people who returned the survey, only 3 felt that raising money for scholarships was really important.

Perhaps we have enough money in the bank and are too focused on always raising more? Last year, with an excess of funds from our Plant Sale profits, the scholarship amount was raised to \$3000, intended as an "if we have the money" year-to-year decision. Have we fallen into a mindset that says "raise money and do not spend" in order to support this increased scholarship amount? If so, what should we be doing differently?

The Federation

Slightly less than half of the responders value our Federation affiliations, and Federation awards are not especially important to anyone, it seems.

Is this because most of us are not very familiar with the

Federation's programs, or because the programs seem irrelevant? Too hard to get to? Too expensive?

The Comments

There were quite a few comments in response to the questions "what would you most / least like to change about the club." There were several interesting and creative suggestions, but no clear patterns emerged.

What Next?

So where do we go from here?

Two things come to mind:

First, we should make sure the survey results really give a true picture of the members' opinions, and that everyone has a chance to say what they think, and be heard.

At the next meeting, we will post all the comments that came in, as well as a copy of the chart at the right.

As we make our table-top trees and kissing balls, perhaps we can talk about these results: Are they a true reflection of your feelings about the club? Does this ring a bell or do you feel differently?

And second, what should we do about it?

Do we need some major re-direction? Or are we really doing just fine, and only need some minor shifts in focus and some slightly different habits?

Do you want more insight into what decisions are made by the Executive Board and how they are made? Should the Board have more input from the members? Should the meetings be open?

Let's talk.

Members in the News **WNGC to be in Accent**

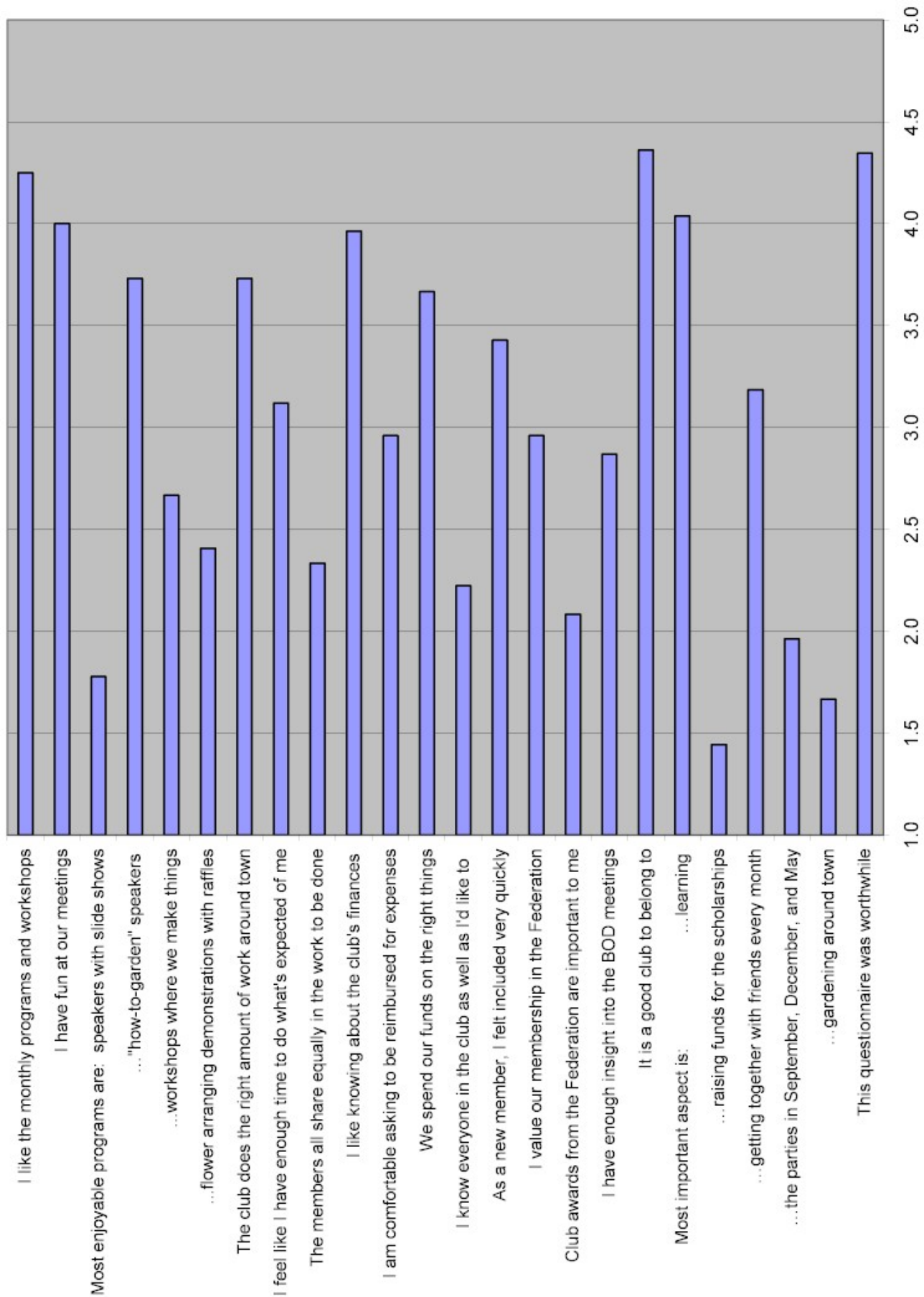
In the March 2006 issue of Accent Magazine the West Newbury Garden Club will be included in an article about noteworthy area garden clubs. They found us by means of our fabulous website, and liked the site so much they called!

Robin Sweetser, feature writer for the glossy Portsmouth, New Hampshire home and garden bi-monthly, is authoring the article which will highlight a number of garden clubs in the northern New England region, the area covered by Accent. According to Robin, they will be focusing on the club's camaraderie, mix of gardeners of all ages and expertise levels, our gardens around town, and our annual plant sale.

In another issue, they will be featuring an article on peonies, and Robin will be calling back to get more information on our Thurlow peonies and the display garden maintained at Ferry Lane Park.

We're going to be down-right famous!

If you are interested in more information and are a web-surfer, go to www.accentmagazine.com for a look around. They also have an "Ask the Experts" link for gardening and old house questions which looks very useful.





WNGC

WEST NEWBURY GARDEN CLUB

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Gardens for beauty, learning, and sharing

The West Newbury Garden Club was founded in 1936 to encourage and cultivate an interest in gardening, to aid in protecting and conserving our natural resources, to further the study of horticulture and flower arranging, and to promote civic beauty. For more information, please contact Marsha Cope at 978 388 2076, at bpgroup@verizon.net, or at 30 Merrimac St, Amesbury MA, 01913.

Next Board Meeting
January 12, 2006

In the Garden this Month **December**

Garden Highlights this Month

Lingering berries, buds, and pods on dogwood, ornamental grasses, Echinacea, sedum, hollies. Plant silhouettes, birch, elm, willow, oak, poplar.

Planting—Indoors

Continue planting narcissus at two-week intervals for continuous bloom. Check house plants frequently, groom well, wash off or spray insect problems. Turn plants regularly in the window for even development.

Pruning

Gather greens from the garden for holiday decorations in the house. Mix broadleaf and needle evergreens, berries, climbers, and ground covers. Add berries, pine cones, interesting seed pods.

Cut winter- and early spring-blooming shrubs such as forsythia and pussy willow, to force into bloom in the house.

Fertilizing

Fertilize houseplants lightly if at all, as this is a dormant season. Orchids may be an exception.

Garden Maintenance

Finish fall cleanup and winter plant protection. After ground freezes mulch bulb beds, roses, perennials, and other small plants. Set tree guards to protect tender ornamentals, apples, cherries from rodent damage. Ventilate cold frames until ground freezes, then cover lightly.

Feed resident birds, taking care with feeder placement to discourage voles and other pests.

