



# Rough Year for Gardens

The spring and summer weather this year has been wild! The floods and cool temperatures made for a very difficult spring in the garden, with a lot of plants getting off to a slow start, and many of our fruit trees and early vegetables suffering because the bees and other pollinators couldn't fly. The national weather service has declared that the summer has been one of the hottest on record since the 1930's. I don't know about your garden, but we've been pulling weeds like the dickens, and they are still outnumbering the perennials.

The extreme conditions have been especially hard on our gardens around

town in the public spaces, and the Board of Directors has been calling out the troops to try and get some very welcome fall color into our Garden Club spots. The fall looks like it may be a lovely, mild one, perhaps to make up for the tough summer, so the effort really seems worth it this year.

It is also the "official" start of our West Newbury Garden Club 70th Anniversary, and what a great time to go all out to spruce up the whole town! **Many, many thanks to all of you** who find the time to not only keep your own gardens healthy and beautiful, but then turn around and work so hard for the enjoyment of everyone else!

## October 5 The Art of Bonsai

"The exact origins of bonsai are difficult to determine, but it is generally believed that the art form began in China, and from there spread to Japan." This is the beginning of Michael Levin's explanation of bonsai on his Bonsai West shop's website. Michael will give us a complete introduction to this ancient art of growing trees. He will show us an assortment of his prize plants, discuss the many varieties of plants used to create a Bonsai, and show us the basics of how to design, pot, wire, prune and landscape a Bonsai.

This will be a fascinating and informative evening.

Hospitality will be provided by chairs **Virginia Hallman** and **Gloria Kuran**, with Susan Dougherty, Dianne Faulkner, Tracy Peter, and Heidi Tucker.



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### Cool websites:

What is that bug? A picture gallery:  
<http://www.pbase.com/crocodile/root>

**Michael Levin's Bonsai West**  
[www.bonsaiwest.com](http://www.bonsaiwest.com)



## Ask Peony **Trouble Free Tillandsia**

Dear Readers,

Oh my, the cards and letters I receive complaining of not having the time or desire to take care of houseplants, even though you like them. You travel, you are busy in outdoor gardens. And, you are lazy. Cheer up, pals, let me share one of my favorite no-nonsense plants with you: the TILLANDSIA, ta da!

A Tillandsia is a Bromeliad, but not all Bromeliads are Tillandsias. Bromeliad is the Family name. Tillandsia is the genus. And you are the genius who will have no trouble keeping it alive. This is the perfect way to garden in winter; just read this:

- ✿ Air plants are known as epiphytes...plants that absorb what they need from the air through their leaves, not through their roots.
- ✿ They are unusually hardy, surviving temperatures from 35 to 120 degrees.
- ✿ They are able to tolerate long periods without water, but it is also difficult to over-water them. Just put the whole arrangement in a container of water- a bucket- two or so times a week when you are home.
- ✿ They do not need direct sun. They rarely need food (an occasional drop in water).
- ✿ Their flowering process is very colorful...Some air plants turn pink, red or orange prior to blooming.
- ✿ After blooming the plants reproduce 1-8 offspring from the side of the mother, which can later be separated.



What materials will you need?

A lovely piece of bark or driftwood might be the mount (You can put them in anything...seashells, teacups, empty vases, driftwood...many people like to hang them on fishing line. Your imagination is your only limitation....).

Non-water soluble adhesive.

Sand, moss or sawdust to hide the glue.

Oh yes, a plant would help... Check your favorite plant place and do look up: [www.airplant.com](http://www.airplant.com) or [www.airplants.com](http://www.airplants.com) (no kidding).

Directions:

- ✿ Set air plant(s) on the prospective [mount](#).
- ✿ Apply [adhesive](#) to selected areas.
- ✿ Place air plants onto [adhesive](#) ( larger plants may be supported with fishing line until [adhesive](#) dries).
- ✿ Cover wet [adhesive](#) with stuff to camouflage, and allow to dry.

I do hope this answers the multitude of questions on this subject with which I have been deluged. Good luck and fresh air (plants) to all. And keep those letters coming!

As always,

Peony

## Members in the News **Topsfield Fair**

Our club members are storming the Topsfield Fair again this year in the wake of last year's successes. Gloria Kuran is again planning to enter the Horticulture competition and Priscilla Styer is helping out with the judging as well as entering an arrangement in the judged competition, "Are You Goin' to the Arboretum." This is "a design staged on a 31" h x 16" sq. pedestal. All plant material must be in values of green."

Several members, Kathy Krajewski, Priscilla (again), and the indefatigable Maguy Thomson are acting as hostesses in the show area of the Flower Barn, thus earning themselves the undying gratitude of the organizers and muddled patrons, as well as a free ticket to the show. Rumor has it that if anyone else is interested, there are still slots available for hostesses. Each pair of hostesses gets one free parking pass, too. Contact LuBeth Kuemmerle at 978 468-7085 for more information.

The Fair runs this year from Saturday, September 30

through Monday, October 9, from 10 am to 10 pm. Don't miss the pig races, running daily at noontime and at 2, 4, 6, and 8 pm.

See the RCMP Musical Ride at 6 pm.  
Shown here performing "The Maze."



## Club & Federation News **Fall Conference**

GCFMA's "Magic of Flowers" Fall Conference will be held on Wednesday, October 25, from 8 am to 3pm at the Holiday Inn in Mansfield, Mass. The program includes talks on the Springfield Garden Club's Shriner's Hospital Project on garden therapy with children. Also on the agenda is a presentation on the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden in Harvard, Mass.

The featured designer is Andrew Anderson, co-owner of Ilex Designs, a boutique florist in the South End. Paul Lopes will talk on America In Bloom, dedicated to promot-

ing nationwide beautification programs. This is the sponsor of the competition in which the Newburyport window boxes on State Street are entered every year.

For more information, check out the website at <http://www.gcfm.org/fallconference1/> or send your choice of Chicken Marsala or Broccoli Quiche with fresh fruit along with a check to GCFMA for \$55 (or \$45 if post-marked on or **before Oct 14th**) to Christine Bjorkland, 1 Velvet Lane, Chelmsford, MA. 01824

## Flower Arranging **Lectures & Workshops**

### Design Workshop

For beginning and intermediate flower arrangers. Four Session on Fridays, 10 am to noon: Oct 6, Nov 17, April 13, May 4 at the Espousal Center in Waltham. \$120 for All 4 sessions includes materials. Contact Maureen Marshall 508 429-4936. First come, first served. Class size limit: 90

### Designing Principles

A series of lectures and demonstrations on Flower Arranging. Massachusetts designers will teach what they do and how they do it. Top secrets are often revealed... Three sessions, 10 am to noon, at the Espousal Center in Waltham. Oct 31, Jan 23, April 17. \$20 for all 3 sessions.

First come first served. Deadline Oct 8. Checks to Mary Huntoon, 206 Main Street, Wenham, MA 01984

### Flower Show at Tower Hill Botanic Garden

"Autumn Splendor" presented by the Central North and South Districts. 11 French Drive, Boylston MA. Nov 3-5, 10 am to 5 pm. Entrance Fee: \$8 Adults, \$5 Seniors. Special Garden Club Day Program on Friday, Nov 1 only: A Designer Show with Mary Huntoon, at noon with lunch following. \$15. Tickets: call Cessy Bombara email to [Fbombara@charter.net](mailto:Fbombara@charter.net) or phone her at 508 393-8464. Tower Hill entrance fee must be paid separately.



**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](mailto:bpgroup@verizon.net), or at 30 Merrimac St, Amesbury MA, 01913.*

**Next Board Meeting**  
**October 12, 2006 7:00pm**

## Conservation Building a Rain Garden

Do you have a wet area in your yard, where the ground is wet due to runoff from paving or roofs? You might consider a "rain garden" to control runoff into rivers or streams. Your rain garden can be constructed in your front or back yard. Front yard rain gardens can intercept runoff from paved surfaces or from a downspout. Back yard gardens can be situated in any wet area that collects drainage or where you can direct runoff from a downspout. Here are some pointers from the Massachusetts Riverways Programs. More info at <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/pdf/raingardenfactsheet.pdf>

Keep the rain garden away from foundations and let the downspout end about 4 feet from the outside edge of the garden. Your garden should be about 1/3 of the size of the surface area providing the runoff.

You should make a depression 6 to 18 inches deep throughout the area of the garden. The soil in your rain garden should be a mix that allows fast infiltration of water. This can be done using a mixture of about 50% sand or stone aggregate, 30% compost and 20% topsoil. This mixture will allow excellent root growth and recharge of water.

Hardy native species that thrive in our ecosystem are the best choice for a rain garden. Native plants are tolerant of wet conditions as well as periods of drought. Use shrubs as well as wild flowers and grasses. Choose plants that attract local birds and insects.

Large rain gardens generally contain at least 15 different species of plants at a density of 1 per square foot. For smaller gardens, a variety of perennials and shrubs makes a good mix. As the rain garden matures, you will need to thin the population of some plants as others grow. Some suggestions:

**Plants for Sun:** Marsh Milkweed, New England Aster, Tussock Sedge, Turtlehead, Joe Pye Weed, Boneset, Butterfly weed, Bee Balm

**Plants for Shade:** Cardinal Flower, Foam flower, Bleeding heart, Solomon's seal, Columbine, Maidenhair Fern, Ostrich Fern, and Sensitive Fern

**Shrubs:** Red Twig Dogwood, High Bush Blueberry, Inkberry, Winterberry, Pussy Willow, High Bush Cranberry, and Black Elderberry

