



West Newbury Garden Club Newsletter • December, 2015

CHRISTMAS TREES

The winter tradition of the "Christmas Tree", the practice of bringing live evergreen branches into the home, has ancient roots. Apparently the Vikings believed that evergreens were the special plant of the sun god, Balder. Pagans used branches of it to decorate their homes during the winter solstice, and Germans are credited with incorporating the practice into the Christian tradition in the 16th century.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, the majority of Christmas trees sold in New England are Spruce, Pine or Fir. Among Spruce Trees, Norway's color is fair to excellent, but needle retention is considered poor unless the trees are cut fresh and kept properly watered. White Spruce has excellent foliage color, short stiff needles and a good natural shape, and needle retention is better than the Norway. Among Pine Trees, White Pines' needle retention is good to excellent, but it has very little aroma. (This is reported to result in fewer allergic reactions than do some of the more aromatic species.) Scotch Pine is probably the most commonly used species in the United States because of its planting ease, growth survival, excellent harvesting and shipping qualities. The major Fir Trees sold are Balsam, Douglas, Fraser and Noble. Balsam Fir has several desirable properties including its dark-green appearance, long-lasting needles, attractive form and lasting fragrance. Douglas Firs are one of the top major U.S. Christmas tree species. They have soft dark green-blue green needles that radiate in all directions from the branch, and when crushed, these needles emit a sweet fragrance. Fraser Fir has a winning combination of form, needle retention, dark blue-green color and pleasant scent. Noble Fir, grown primarily in the Pacific Northwest, has long been considered an excellent Christmas tree because of its beauty, stiff branches and long "keep-ability".

NEXT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Dec. 3, 2015, 6:45 pm

Town Offices Annex
381 Main Street, W. N.

Hosting the meeting

Chair Linda Schaeffer
Lynn Boyd, Elizabeth Croft,
Karen Diombala, Peg
Duchemin, Ginger Selman
and Barbara Warne

Need a ride to the meeting?
Call Linda Schaeffer at
978-363-5251

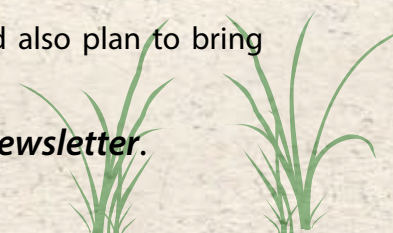
Holiday Wreath Workshop

Gather the greens! It's wreath building time again. We need all hands on deck for this fun annual project.

Club members are expected to come laden with quantities of a variety of evergreen boughs and branches. The bounty is distributed on a floor tarp, and after a brief review of the process, we will commence to building lovely wreaths and swags. The club provides the wire frames, bows and holiday music. The wreaths will then be hung at the West Newbury Town Hall, the 1910 Building, the Police Safety Complex, Hills House and the G.A.R. Library.

Besides branches and boughs, members should also plan to bring clippers, gloves, wires and newspapers.

Please take note, no January meeting or newsletter.



Now Appearing

WINTERBERRY (*Ilex Verticillata Aquifoliaceae*)



If you've walked in or driven by wooded areas this Fall, you have no doubt noticed the abundance of native Winterberry. Perhaps the display is due to last winter's snow cover and bitter cold, a mild summer, who knows...the red-orange berries are brilliant this year!

Winterberry is part of the Holly family, and grows throughout the eastern U.S.. It is an erect, moderate sized shrub, typically growing 5'-15' tall. Winterberry does best in moist, acid soil in full sun to partial shade. As with hollies, Winterberry have genders, therefore female plants need to be within 40' of male plants for pollination to occur, and bushes need to be at least 3 years of age before they can reproduce. Spring blossoms give way to summer berries that darken in color in the fall and last into the winter. The berries are a favorite late winter food of small mammals and several species of birds. We certainly enjoy their branches in holiday decorations.

Several varieties have been cultivated from this native holly, and are common in nursery stock. If you have a warm spot in your heart for birds, and a damp spot in your yard – think about adopting a few bushes of Winterberry.

More information can be found at: <https://www.arboday.org/Trees/treeguide/TreeDetail.cfm?ItemID=939>

LAST MEETING'S HIGHLIGHTS

Essex County Trails

Debbie Hamilton has been a resident of West Newbury for 40 years, committed to local conservation efforts and a long-time Board member of the Essex County Trail Association (ECTA). The mission of ECTA is to protect access to the trails and open lands throughout Hamilton, Wenham, Ipswich, Topsfield, Essex and West Newbury, all managed by volunteers. Debbie gave an energetic overview of the history and activities of ECTA, and the twelve trails/properties that are within West Newbury. Of particular interest is the Riverside Conservation Area along the Merrimack River. It hosts five trails and features uncommon flora including old growth forest, a large Tupelo Tree and rare wild rice patties. Explore more about the Tupelo and Wild Rice at <https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/species/nyssa/sylvatica/> and http://northernwoodlands.org/outside_story/article/new-englands-wild-rice.

For trail maps, membership information and events, visit the ECTA website at: www.ectaonline.org/

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Directors met Nov. 12th. Two members went to the GCFM Fall Conference and several resulting items were discussed, including the benefits of trying to use a Facebook Page for the Club. Of additional benefit at the conference were informal discussions of how other clubs manage celebrations and fund-raising events.

Also discussed were details of wreath making at the December meeting, the details for the Cushing House and the Holiday party.



Barbara, Carrie and Carrie enjoying the November meeting.

Member News

Club Member, Barbara Haack, is featuring her ceramics in the Barberry Hill Pottery Fall Studio Show and Sale. December 5th-6th and 12th-13th from noon until 4pm, 102 Main Street, West Newbury. Come by and see her beautiful work, and find some special holiday gifts. For more information, contact Barbara at 978-363-2245 or barhaack@verizon.net

We're always interested in keeping our members informed and included. If you know of any members who have special events going on in their lives, please tell one of the Board members.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

'Tis the Season

Cushing House Open House

December 5th, 6th and 7th
10am – 4pm
98 High Street, Newburyport
The Museum of Old Newbury
Free and Public Invited

For the last few years, The Newburyport Garden Club, the Newbury Garden Club, and our own Club have been invited to decorate downstairs rooms of the historic Cushing House with holiday cheer. Our club is proud to do so once again this year. Club members joining in the fun will be Lynn Boyd, Dot Cavanaugh, Linda DeCoste, Anne Jarzowski, Jane Jeffers, Kathy Krajeski, Barbara Merrill, Priscilla Styer, Joan Tranfaglia and Deb Whitaker.

The Cushing House was built in 1808. Margaret Cushing, last family member residing in the house, lived for 100 years, and upon her death in 1955, Cushing heirs then gave the building to the Historical Society of Old Newbury (now the Museum of Old Newbury). "The house boasts a mix of period rooms and gallery spaces that tell the stories of the past 300 years in the Newburys." The Museum preserves and interprets the history of "Old Newbury" which includes Newbury, Newburyport, and West Newbury from settlement to the present.

Annual Holiday Pot Luck Party

Thursday, Dec. 10th at 6:00 pm
1910 Building Annex

What will you bring to this year's pot luck holiday party? The variety of appetizers, entrees and desserts is always beautiful and bountiful!

The Annex will be transformed into a twinkling, holiday delight by the Hospitality Committee. Party Chair is Kathy Krajeski assisted by Committee members Jean Berkenbush, Cyndy Bourquard, Carrie Hometh, Mary Kemper, Kathy Mandeville and John Terry.

Please bring an appetizer, main dish or dessert to share. Please also remember to:

- bring canned goods for our annual donation to the Pettengill House Pantry. (Please assure that donated goods have not exceeded their expiration dates!) A listing of preferred foods and supplies can be found at: www.pettengillhouse.org/resources/pdf/mostNeededItems.pdf
- bring a \$15 or less garden related gift for the Yankee Swap, if you'd like to participate.

Now is the time

Here are a few helpful hints on selecting and caring for a tree, from the National Christmas Tree Assoc.

Do a freshness test. Grasp a branch between your thumb and forefinger and pull it toward you. Very few needles should come off in your hand if the tree is fresh. Shake or bounce the tree on its stump. You should not see an excessive amount of green needles fall to the ground.

Once you've chosen your tree, keep it in a sheltered, unheated area such as a porch or garage to protect it from the wind and sun until you are ready to decorate it.

Before you set up your tree, make a fresh, straight cut across the base of the trunk (about a quarter inch up from the original cut) and place the tree in a tree stand that holds a gallon of water or more.

Warning: Keep the tree stand filled with water. A seal of dried sap will form over the cut stump in four to six hours if the water drops below the base of the tree, preventing the tree from absorbing water later when the tree stand is refilled. If a seal does form, another fresh cut should be made.

A tree will absorb as much as a gallon of water or more in the first 24 hours and one or more quarts a day thereafter. Water prevents the needles from drying and dropping off and the boughs from drooping. Water also keeps the tree fragrant.

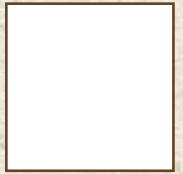
Keep your tree away from heat and draft sources like fireplaces, radiators and television sets. Test your light cords and connections before hanging them on the tree to make sure they're in good working order. Don't use cords with cracked insulation or broken or empty sockets. Also be sure to unplug the lights before you go to bed or leave the house. Never overload electrical circuits.



West Newbury Garden Club

P. O. Box 11

West Newbury, MA 01985



Visit our website TODAY!

www.wngc.org

You will find links to upcoming events and gardening resources as well as copies of newsletters, the club's history, and much more.

SHARING OUR INTERESTS

As a Garden Club we experience many projects, events, trips and speakers worth sharing with our friends and community. And, as individuals, we see many items of interest worth sharing with fellow Club members. As a result, there is interest in generating a Facebook Page for the WNGC.

Many organizations rely on a Facebook page to quickly generate interest for local events and expand local reach to the community. Our plant sale and scholarship fund are prime examples of club activity that should be shared locally. A Facebook page is also an internal opportunity to share our individual sightings and excursions. We may also want to feature items from local garden centers we all frequent.

We're not sure yet how this will be used, but for the remainder of the Club year we'll beta-test the use of a FB page. As the Internet and social media evolves it is important that organizations effectively use evolving communication tools. Think of the website as a static pool of information and our FB page as a brag book and megaphone.

In fact, our November meeting provided a wonderful example of why we may need a FB page. Deb Hamilton's presentation included a reference to two videos of ECTA trails in town housed on her own website. These are easily shared on our FB page and can be shared with others.

So, like us on Facebook and let's see if we like it!
www.facebook.com/westnewburygardenclub



Visit our FB page to see two wonderful videos of West Newbury done by Deb Hamilton