



**MILLIS GARDEN CLUB**  
M I L L I S , M A 0 2 0 5 4

*The Millis Garden Club strives to enhance the natural beauty of our own surroundings and that of our community through the horticultural education of members - while cultivating new friendships in the process.*

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**The Mulch Pile ... .. MGC Newsletter** **November 2004**  
**C l u b N e w s**

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Dear Members of the Millis Garden Club,

What a lovely fall we are experiencing. The foliage around our surrounding communities has been just breathtaking. And if you have a Oak leaf Hydrangea in your yard, it must be turning flaming red now. Our members selected this specimen for our club flower because of its four season interest. MGC Member and graphic designer Candi Orsi is about to begin the initial design concepts for our "club identity". How exciting! Thank you, Candi for your generous support.

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

Nancy Wong, Membership Chair reports we have grown to 26 members. Let's welcome Kathy Doyle and Donna Cabibbo to our organization. We look forward to growing the club further with their support. An updated Member's Contact list will be emailed to you this week, which will include new member information as well as some corrections we caught after printing. Please email additional corrections to nsittamgc@comcast.net at your earliest. Thanks.

**Membership Interest Form.** We wish to collect all forms by the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Please complete and write your name on the form, and either drop it off at Nancy Wong's home at 1 Walnut Hill Road, or bring it with you to the November meeting. With your information, we can start planning the 2005-2006 year!

As we all know, **postage** is pretty costly and we'd prefer our dues not go to the USPS. We've been out there hand-delivering our information. In the future, all materials will be sent via email to those who have the service. We ask that you check your email frequently for any updates and meeting information.

If you have any membership questions, or wish to have MGC Membership brochures to pass along, please contact Nancy Wong, Membership Chair at (508) 376-5805, or committee member Barbara LeBlanc at (508) 376-9022.

**PROGRAMMING INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

**RSVP ASAP (by Nov 9) to the Saturday, November 13, 3 - 4:30p.m. Holiday Wreath and Bow Making**

**Demonstration and Workshop.** We need a count of how many members and non-members wish to attend this fun, fundraising event, as supplies must be ordered in advance. The class size is limited to only 40. Pass those green flyers around! Fee: Members \$15. Non-Members \$25. All proceeds after costs will be held for civic projects in the community.

A few additional wreaths will be ordered for community donations, so if you know of a family or organization in need of festive cheer, please let us know. Volunteers are still needed to help setup at 2pm and clean up at 4:45pm. Main contact for this project: Nancy Sitta. Hospitality: Heidi Dostoomian.

**Pre-registration is also necessary for the Wednesday, December 1, 7 - 8:30 p.m, Holiday Centerpiece Arranging Demonstration.** We've planned a very entertaining program for members and non-members. Our designers will create four unique centerpieces using a wide assortment of greens, fresh flowers and decorative objects. *Can we save you a seat?* Let us know if you'll be there, and if you are bringing a guest(s) as our program size is limited to 40. Cost for Non-Members is \$5.

This is another fundraising event for our club. In addition to the four centerpieces, we are asking our members to create/purchase/donate fun and festive (garden related or not) items to the raffle table.

The following items (incomplete list) are being donated by our members:

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|---|--|
| A hand-crafted decorative bird house  | a basket of locally grown organic honey and related products |
| a lush eucalyptus holiday wreath  | a fresh floral holiday centerpiece                           |
| a hand picked bottle of wine from Bob Harkey to pair with a specific holiday dinner |  |

*The more raffle items the more raffle tickets we sell the more "seeds" we are able to plant in our community.*

Let us know in advance what you would like to offer. Door proceeds (after costs) and raffle proceeds will be held for civic projects in the community. Contact person for this event: Nancy Sitta.

#### **PROGRAMMING INFORMATION AND UPDATES, CONTINUED....**

Please change your calendars for the February 2005 meeting. *Lawn Care 101* with Ted Wales, Hartney Greymont will be held on Wednesday, February 2, from 7-8:30 pm at VMH.

The April meeting is still in the works. TBA: date, topic, and location.

#### **CIVIC PROJECTS**

The results of the Millis Public Library "Spruce Up" day will go down in history books. To quote the photographer from the local paper, "I've covered many spruce-up's in my time— **this** was a full landscaping job." Many heads turned as they drove by on October 23 when MGC members and members of the community showed they cared and put forth tremendous energy and spirit to the project. We raked, weeded, limed, fertilized, seeded, mulched, pruned, composted, chipped, planted and watered. Whew! From what we "hear", the town is tickled green with our massive accomplishment. With the support of member Scott McPhee and two additional Hartney Greymont staff members, we were able to exceed all projected tasks for Phases 1-2-3. We thank the Girl Scouts for planting our Spanish Bluebells (we can't wait for spring!). A heartfelt thanks to all that supported this civic project, our first major accomplishment.

#### **The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts**

Although membership to this non-profit educational association is one year away for us, (membership requirements to apply: one year of existence and consist of 10 members), I had the opportunity to attend several Federated events held at the Espousal Center, Waltham in the past month, which I would like to share with you.

##### *Designing Principles by Principal Designers; 2 hour Interactive Demonstration*

Two floral designers are given specific tasks in the form of design challenges, which would meet the rules and regulations for competitive arranging as set forth in the "Handbook of Flower Shows". The first challenge was to create a "Duo Design", a freestanding creative design, where two separate designs are created in one pot, as if the container was split in half. First introduced in 1997, the finished sides are judged separately in different classes.

The second designer was given the task of designing a table-top arrangement with flowers and accessories. Focusing on the rules and regulations for competitive arranging, it was interesting to see what options worked and what options took away from the overall design of the table. For example, setting a table with clear glass (candlesticks, butter dish, water glasses) adds very little to the design element, where as incorporating a color, or another medium such as clay or metal, adds depth, color and richness.

##### *Design Workshop; 1.5 hour Demonstration and Workshop*

A Guest floral designer offers the class complete instructions and tips on how to complete a floral display using a variety of fresh flowers and greenery. Although each arranger is using the same materials, each arrangement is unique. Attendees then take the completed arrangement and container home with them to enjoy.

*The Garden Club Federation of MA's Annual Fall Meeting* was held on Wednesday, October 27 at the Westford Regency Inn, Westford, MA. The focus of this year's meeting was "Big Dig Little Dig". Three MA garden clubs offered slide presentations of their civic projects, their "Little Dig". The Sharon Garden Club impressed me greatly with their re-landscaping project of a public park area which surrounds their local lake. Under "Big Dig", Rebecca Barnes, Boston Redevelopment Authority, took us through the extensive design and construction of Boston's billion dollar project with a focus on the Rose Kennedy Beltway.

Overall, not only did I increase my knowledge and expand my ideas, but I networked, networked and networked! Happy to report that the President of the Federation and the District Leader for South Central MA knows that we exist. Each received a packet full of material, outlining our accomplishments to date. The District Leader even saw the Library write up in the Milford paper! We are now recognized for our civic work —How great is this!

#### **Reminder of Upcoming Community Events of Interest**

Medfield Garden Club's "The Frugal Arranger" with Marisa McCoy, held on Wednesday, November 10, 2004, 10 am-12noon, United Church of Christ, Route 109, Medfield. No registration necessary. Pay at the door. Cost: \$5.00

Marisa owns *Marisa Designs*, a wedding floral design business in Wellesley. I've had several occasions to meet her and she's definitely one of the best around.

Medfield Garden Club's Annual Green Sale, Saturday, December 4, 10am – noon. Wouldn't you just love a living boxwood tree for your mantle or credenza? These members spend days before making luscious centerpieces and arrangements for the holidays, which can last for months if watered. This is their biggest fundraiser – let's support them!

Buy a 2005 calendar now and pen this date in! Medfield Garden Club's *Beautiful Things* with Bill Graham, a floral arranging demo, held on Wednesday, February 9, 2005, 10 am –12 noon, United Church of Christ, Route 109, Medfield. Pre-register by January 20th with Nancy Sitta. Cost: \$5.00 He is worth missing a day of work for. I promise you won't be disappointed!

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***From the Garden of Tess McDonough Ward, Member and Horticulturist.***

*Water, Water, Water! She says...*

One of the most important steps to keeping your garden healthy over the winter is consistent watering before the plantings go dormant. This is particularly important for broadleaved evergreen and needled evergreen plants (conifers), because their leaves still transpire in the winter. Sunny, open, or windy winters cause a lot of transpiration ((water loss) from leaves, and with the ground frozen, they are unable to replace the lost water, leading to desiccation and browning of leaves, known as winter burn. This is permanently disfiguring and debilitating as long as those leaves are counted on for photosynthesis and food making. So, before the water is shut off and the ground freezes, water plants deeply.

***Mower Maintenance From Rebecca's Garden. For more gardening tips, visit [www.rebeccasgarden.com](http://www.rebeccasgarden.com)***

Many people don't winterize or tune their mowers as often as they probably should. Not to worry, Phil Shores from Home Depot reveals the simple maintenance steps that will keep your investment running for years to come!

... You'll need:

- WD-40
- Wrench
- Screwdriver
- Putty knife
- Hose
- Rust inhibitor (if necessary)
- Blade sharpener

... First, empty the fuel. Run the mower until it is out of gas.

... Next, check the spark plug on your mower. First, remove spark plug and clean with WD-40 or carburetor cleaner. If you find that the center of the spark plug is worn down, it's time to buy a new one. Before replacing the spark plug, spray a lubricant like WD-40 into the spark plug chamber. Pull the engine cord several times and then replace the spark plug.

... Check the air filter. After removing the air filter, hold it up to the light. If you can see through it, then it's still good, otherwise you'll want to replace it.

... You'll also need to clean the blades. First, remove the blades carefully. Use a butty knife to scrape grass clumps from the underside of the mower. If the paint is peeling and rusting like mine, paint with a rust inhibitor to stop the corrosion. When you finish scraping the initial layer, hose off the remaining debris.

... Next, sharpen the blade. For a dull blade, a mill-cut hand file will do the job as long as you sharpen your blade on a regular basis. For an abused blade, use a power file or take it to a professional to have it sharpened.

Following these simple steps will give your lawn mower many years of life!

***From Loretta Carrigan, Floral Department Manager, Roche Bro's, Millis***

When you have to wire, why wire just ordinary flowers when you can send tropical flowers from Hawaii, all year round. Here are just 3 web sites to drool over, and starting making your list now!

<http://www.maui.net/~florist/index.htm>

<http://www.mauifloral.com>

<http://www.sendtropicalflowers.com>

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*The Mulch Pile* Newsletter is produced and published monthly by the Millis Garden Club, Millis, MA. 02054. Frequent contributors to our "Tips From Our Members and Beyond" column include our members, and horticultural and landscaping professionals. The Editors welcome tips, suggestions, reports from field trips, etc, from all of our members. Submissions for *The Mulch Pile* are due by the 20th of every month and should be 'season appropriate.' Please send submissions to [nsittamgc@comcast.net](mailto:nsittamgc@comcast.net). Thank you, *The Editors*.