

MIDDLEBURY GARDEN CLUB
NEWSLETTER

garden thymes

NEW EDITOR, NEW LOOK

In the last edition of The Garden Thymes Andrea put out a request for somebody to take over this newsletter. My wife, Mary, and I are new to the club but I jumped at the chance to work on it as I've been a designer for more years than I care to admit. Thanks to Andrea for allowing me to work on this. I'm happy to volunteer my time but keeping my thyme for cooking at home.

I've been slow to get the first quarter of 2024 edition put together and appreciate your patience as I learn the specifics of this newsletter and club.

Craig, GT Editor (Newbie, Yellow Belt)

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at Ilseley

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New Members



Heidi Franz ~ I recently moved to Vermont from Oregon where I was born and raised. My husband grew up in New Hampshire and three years ago we embarked on a great adventure, and returned to his neck of the woods. Since moving here I have enjoyed learning about how to create diversity and interest in my flower beds. I love weeding and raking leaves and the satisfaction you get when you take a blank space and make it beautiful. I'm excited to be part of the Garden Club.



Rick Tremblay ~

I enjoy the physical tasks of creating new garden beds. I grew up in New Hampshire leaving when I was 20 years old. My wife (Heidi) and I moved to Middlebury in May 2021 from Oregon. We had extensive Northwestern gardening experience prior to moving to Middlebury. I look forward to being an active member in the Middlebury Garden Club.



Marek & Juli Lorenc ~

Marek is a retired dermatologist and Juli a retired lavender farmer. They have many years of experience gardening vegetables, flowers and other plants in California. They are new to the New England Climate and are learning with enthusiasm. Happy to share what they know and excited to learn more.



Meg Ritter ~

I just joined in the fall and am looking forward to this year's activities! I've been an organic gardener for about 50 years, gardening in Ohio, Vermont, Missouri, South Dakota, and Massachusetts. I'm retired (for the second time) from teaching elementary through high school special education. I live in a tiny home on my daughter and son-in-law's property – they have amazing gardens!



Terri Nebraska ~

I've been a lifelong lover of digging in the dirt. I grew up helping my parents tend our family vegetable garden and have continued to dabble in vegetable gardening and landscaping as an adult. The yard of every home I've had, whether barren or well loved, inspires me to garden.



Craig & Mary Duddles ~

Mary is a retired High School teacher and now enjoys a second career as a bread baker at Otter Creek Bakery. Craig is a graphic designer and videographer/editor. We built a house in Bridport starting in 2019 and are learning to grow in the heavy clay. We have made a lot of mistakes in our planting and growing and are eager to learn from the expertise in our club. We are permaculture gardeners and want to have a lot of perennial fruit, nuts and berries with a vegetable garden and greenhouse. We have some old pear and apple trees in a windrow and are learning to care for them.



January arrangement by Sandy Bemis.



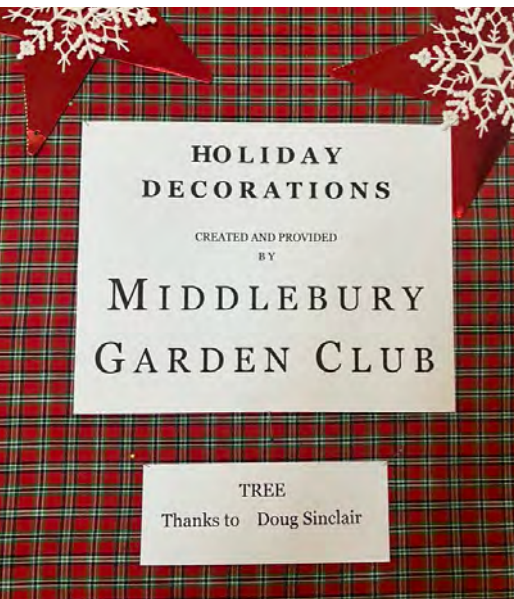
February arrangement by Lynne Boie.



Reminders

If you planted bulbs in a pot last November, check on them and bring them in to the warm house so they will open.







ilsleypubliclibrary.org

Ilsley Public Library

Main Street, Middlebury VT | 802-388-4095

Sarah Partridge Community Library

East Main Street, East Middlebury VT | 802-388-7588

November 20, 2023

Middlebury Garden Club
Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont
Middlebury, VT 05753

Dear Marilyn and Barbara,

Thank you for another year of beautiful decorations and merriment. The tree looks fantastic—festive, bright, and elegant! As always, the tree and the garland over the circulation desk evoke a spirit of warmth in the cold Vermont winter.

I realize that planning, organizing, and putting up all of these decorations represents an enormous amount of effort and time from the Garden Club. I am very grateful for your continued generosity. I know that this year's tree delivery didn't go as smoothly as planned, and I appreciate your willingness to be flexible.

As the days shorten and the temperature drops, we all need a little holiday cheer. Thank you on behalf of the library staff, patrons, and the entire community for lighting up the library when we need it most!

Thank you again for your generous support.

With warm wishes,

Dana Hart

Dana Hart
Director

Holiday Party



More Holiday Party





Upcoming Events



**Middlebury
Garden Club**



Plant. Learn. Grow. Share.

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Gardening with Ornamental Grasses, 1 pm

Sylvia Jope, a landscape designer from Chittenden County, will be speaking about how she incorporates ornamental grasses into her landscape designs. Sylvia describes herself as a problem solver, with “each project [being] like a puzzle “challenging her “to create a customized plan that offers both functional and beautiful garden solutions.” (Open to the public.)

MARCH 12, 2024

Introduction to Bonsai, 1 pm

Carl Phelps and Nan Jenks-Jay of Miller Hill Farm in Sudbury will discuss the creation and maintenance of bonsai. Some of their interesting bonsai will be on display. (Open to the public.)

APRIL (DATE TBA)

Spring Clean-Up of Sheldon Museum Garden

APRIL 16, 2024

Container Gardening, 1 pm

Charlie Nardozi will speak to us about container gardening and his favorite annuals. This should help us get ready for planting season. (Open to the public.)

MAY (DATE TBA)

Planting of Annuals at the Sheldon Museum Garden

MAY 7, 2024

Flower Arranging Demonstration, 1 pm

Jaga Smiechowski is the floral designer for “My Flowers for All Events” in Rutland. Jaga will demonstrate how to

create several unique arrangements including one using only grasses, leaves, and branches. After the demonstration the arrangements created will be auctioned among attendees. <https://www.facebook.com/myflowersforalleventsbyjaga/>

MAY 14, 2024

Bird Walk at Dead Creek Wildlife Area, 9 am

Wally Elton will talk about the wildlife area and what birds we may see. He will cover the use of bird identification books, Merlin ID on your smart phone, as well as eBird for use in reporting the birds you have seen.

JUNE 1, 2024

Annual Plant Sale 7 am-noon (sale 9 am - noon)

This is the fundraiser that provides money for our activities, grants and scholarships. We hope each member will donate a minimum of eight plants in containers of at least four inches in diameter. Please label your plants with light requirements, bloom color (and other information you wish to include) and deliver them to the Town Green between 7:00am and 8:30am the morning of the sale.

JUNE 11

Annual Meeting and Luncheon, 11 am Waybury Inn

Please make your required reservation in advance and join us for the final celebration of the club year. We will have lunch, hold our business meeting and watch a “Year in Review” slideshow.



Parting Thoughts

WISDOM FROM FAILURE

We had such ambitions when we closed on our property five years ago. Big items on the to do list were/are: establish: orchard, vineyard and garden, tap the maples... oh and build a house from scratch after putting in all the utilities and adjusting to a new state, new job, new weather and most everything except a new spouse. And do it without debt or mortgage. Plus 756 unknowns. Plus 1,084 little complications. And one big pandemic.

After two years the house was mostly built. Mostly. The money from our Florida property was long spent.

After three years we had killed a lot of berry starts, fruit trees and nut trees because we failed to understand the airless pudding/concrete we call soil. Some days I wanted to take a flame thrower to the mosquitos and quit. And I think most of you would agree mud should be a four letter word.

Our vegetable garden got off to a slow start. We tilled and amended. Cardboard and wood chips on the foot paths, old hay on the rows. Every year the garden has improved as the soil food web gets more organics and air. Every year we have fretted over the unplanted areas and despaired at the distance between the dream (glossy botanical abundance) and the reality (soggy grass and weeds that need to be mowed. Again.).

Every year we clear more of our 800 foot windrow using a tractor backhoe and mower. Goodbye poison ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, buckthorn and prickly ash. Hello long-neglected pear and apple trees. We prune and prune. Every year the harvest improves as the branches get more air and sun.

Every year we have more love for the plants that grow easily. Like the abundant staghorn sumac. They plant themselves. Or, cut a stick, put it in the ground and voila, tree. They have unusual and tasty blossoms (I can bore you with uses for this spice and flavor). They grow fast. Fall foliage is spectacular.

With all the pruning and clearing has come large piles of branches. It can be chipped for mulch. It can be pyrolyzed for biochar which makes a durable compost. I've filled two 55 gallon drums with charcoal. Branches can also be put in raised beds to wick moisture and cheaply fill the bottom half of the bed. Also firewood.

Did we know any of this five years ago? We did not. Failing has better equipped us to do all the things we hope to do next. Five years of hard-won wisdom (or at least experience).

We are happy to have found this community and want to learn from those who've gardened here for decades. Thanks in advance.

Craig, GT Editor



Recent drone picture I took to try to plan plantings. I hope in ten years it looks very different.