



NEWSLETTER



Winter Sunrise by Holly McDonough



Braving the weather at 2016 Backyard Botany



GCBB members at 2016 Plant Sale

President's Message

Are you cloaked in a dreary winter? If so, this edition of our GCBB newsletter will provide you with some escape. So settle in with your mug of tea or cocoa and enjoy the issue which will take you through the “ABC’s” of a garden, boxwoods on steroids and along to meet our newest provisionals plus more. What better way to be distracted from the winter blahs. Guess it’s good that February is the shortest month.

Just a heads up for your calendars, our February meeting will be an Ikebana presentation at the Southworth Library while further out in the year there will definitely be a summer outing in July. Stay tuned for that information in our WHAT’S AHEAD editions. Life is short, be inspired.



— Ruth Furman

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***Editors' Note:** Thanks to everyone who submitted photos for the Newsletter cover. We got winter landscapes, botanicals from January blooming hellebores to succulents and amaryllis. As of this issue the Newsletter will be an annual publication with features and photos, as the GCBB website, www.gardenclubbuzzardsbay.org is being used more and more and a feature or photo may appear in the bimonthly What's Ahead. As always, we welcome photos, features ideas and writers.*

-- Ruth Jolliffe and Carolyn Willard, Communications Committee

New Provisional GCBB Members

Ann Sheehan

Before moving to Dartmouth, my husband and I lived in various places throughout the U.S. — Hanover New Hampshire, Boston, Denver, Santa Barbara CA, and Rochester MN – all because of my husband's medical training and career. My own career was dappled by different locations and circumstances, always in sync with my husband's.



Living with my Maine Coon cat in Dartmouth since 1976, I'm now in a house I designed and contracted in 2003-4. My yard consists of over an acre, most of which is preserved as controlled woodland, my preference, and I have enjoyed water gardening and goldfish raising in my 3 created ponds. I'm a widow with three daughters and seven grandchildren, most of whom live in MA, and I've just finished a manuscript for an historical fiction novel which I hope you all can read in the not-too-distant future.

Cheryl Gamsby

I am originally from Milford, Ct and graduated from the University of Connecticut. I moved to Massachusetts after my husband started work at which was then New England Telephone. We settled in Framingham where we lived for 30 years. When I retired from teaching pre-school and Henry retired from Verizon in 2009, we decided it was time to move closer to the water and our sailboat that we keep at the Fairhaven Shipyard. We built a new home in Dartmouth. We are members of the New Bedford Yacht Club and enjoy summer cruising with other members of the club.

We have one son, Michael, who lives in Braintree.

I enjoy yoga, the gym and traveling. I especially enjoy my time outside in my garden. I'm a relatively new gardener, but have already learned much by going to the greenhouse on Tuesdays. I hope with help by all the experienced gardeners I have met, my gardens will be much improved with many new additions.



Suzie Prescott

I was born in Boston but grew up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan., attended Connecticut's Westover School and Bennett College in Millbrook, New York.

In 1972 I married Bill Prescott, inheriting a five year-old son in the process and we had two daughters of our own. Bill served as headmaster of Kingswood School Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and later as head of The Wheeler School in Providence. In Michigan I was a member of the Junior League and Tau Beta, a women's charitable organization devoted to charitable activities.

I substituted in Wheeler's pre-school and twice chaired the School's annual Clothing Sale, enjoying her children's sporting events. I was on the Board of Trustees at St. Elizabeth's Nursing Home and joined the College Hill Garden Club. In 1985 I began a 31 year career in real estate, working for Coleman Realtors, retiring in 2016.

We bought a small house in South Dartmouth, MA in 1989, where for many years we enjoyed weekends and summer vacations with their children. Bill's retirement in 2003 necessitated a tear-down and rebuild of this house, where we have dedicated ourselves to its upkeep and to tending its gardens. Now that I am retired, I have time to play golf (in nearby Nonquitt) and to take yoga classes, not to mention more time in the garden. I relish learning about new plants, garden design, and starting flowers from seeds and cuttings.



Kathe Parker



I was born in Colorado, lived in Seattle, and spent my “formative” years lolling on the beaches of Florida. After graduating from the University of Florida, I moved to Boston and met my husband, Jim. We were married in 1973 and raised our family in Dedham. Our boys went to The Fessenden School and when our youngest reached middle school, I started working in the school library. I was there until 2012 when I retired, and we moved to Mattapoisett as year-round residents. I love to garden, play bridge, read, paint, and sort of like to play golf!

I am so happy to have been accepted to this wonderful club and have met such friendly, talented women. I love the greenhouse and look forward to working on the plant sale!

Features

Ruth Jolliffe Creates an AlphaBed Garden

By Laura McLean

Reprinted from the Standard-Times

Everything starts with your ABCs, so why not a garden? Ruth Jolliffe's delightful border overlooking Mattapoisett Harbor is visual proof that the alphabet can be an enticing way to select and grow flowers.

She and husband Michael have created a storybook landscape here where fruit trees, vegetable plots, a Japanese garden and rectangular water gardens that mirror the sky



extend and accentuate their architecturally distinctive home, named "Bluefish" and designed by Michael, a civil engineer with global experience. Walking the grounds is an adventure as the eyes are led on through a series of borders that attest to the owners' artistic vision and love of plants. It's a very freeing kind of environment with interactive spaces - there's a checkerboard garden, a playhouse for grandchildren, a raised swimming pool and even a place for pilates.

An idea for a border dedicated to perennial flowers was something Ruth wanted to do, but wasn't sure how to proceed. Whereas most gardens are designed by color or shape or a seasonal theme, this one follows an altogether different logic. She explains: "The gardeners I know have lovely perennial gardens, well planned to bloom throughout the season with something different coming all through the summer.

Not having as much experience, but with a new found space and a desire for flowers – the rest of our gardens are mainly food – but knowing I couldn't compete with my gardening friends, I came upon the idea of perennials in alpha order by botanical name. Common

names are fine, but many plants have multiple names. So began the premise of the AlphaBed.”

Now three years old, the “AlphaBed,” a 60-foot long and 4-foot wide border situated in the middle of the property, is lovely in the height of summer as I snap photos. The expected companions of roses, lilies, daisies and clematis make a big impression with less common but equally impressive flora like *kniphofia uvaria* (hot poker lily), plumbago and oxalis springing up beside them.



Rather than a rectangular shape, this garden curves in the mid-section (taking in the letters J through P) in a quarter-round shape to mirror the geometry of a two-story quarter-round window section of their house. From those windows, the Jolliffe’s have yet another angle to view their handiwork. They haven’t been the only ones paying attention, says Ruth. “The rabbits liked the plants so much the first year that we designed a decorative protective fence, the sections of which can be lifted out for ease of weeding.”

This original idea hatched by Ruth would follow one rule: use plants that began with the letters of the alphabet. The very idea of an A to Z garden has a nostalgic ring to anyone who learned their ABCs channelling the nonsensical language of Dr. Seuss (my personal favorite being zizzer-zazz-zuzz) or watched Lena Horne leading the Muppetthrough the ABCs on Sesame Street, or some other phonetics lesson that awakened the impressionable mind. That same concept is at work here, although it focuses on plant nomenclature, which is Latin-based. You won’t find four fluffy feathers on a fiffer-feffer-feff, but prepare to meet fritillaria and fragaria.



It sounds instructional and it is. Ruth, who is a fastidious researcher, admits she got some help. “I found a huge tome: A to Z that I thought would answer all my needs, but I soon found out that a number of letters have many multiple entries, while others are very slim, made even trickier by the zone requirements.”

“The first year was a pretty much complete alphabet, albeit a strange mix. The beds are laid out in groups ABC, DEF, GHI, JKLMNOP, RST, UVW and XYZ. The early groups are full, but the choices for J, Q, UVS and XYX are limited. The first year’s Quinoa hasn’t worked again, but I do have a small sculpture of a Quail. The Juncus was moved to the frog ponds, and now Jasmine Nudiflora has taken its place. I got rid of Urtica (Stinging Nettle), though it keeps coming back, and I’ve added various things, including a struggling variegated wigelea. There are still blank spaces in the DEF, and Q areas. The UVW is somewhat boring, and the XYZ is weak, though my favorite there is a charming little Zenobia with bell-shaped flowers dangling amidst the grey green leaves.”

As with all gardens you win some plants and you lose some and these are duly noted with a line through the names of those no longer present. Ruth also wisely made a list with photos of flowers and their spring foliage so that she has an idea of what’s coming up in the spring.

Be a Garden Detective

By Nan Sinton

Take one part detective, one part researcher, one part journalist -- mix with skills in photography and season with an obsession for all things garden and you may be the right person to be a member of the GCBB Garden History and Design committee. Our mission is to search out and document significant private gardens as we work to preserve records of this heritage for future gardeners.



And how does it work? Let’s suppose it’s the year 2067 and you have moved to Dartmouth. You’re curious about the history of gardening in this place – where do you turn? To the Smithsonian Archives of American Gardening –looking on line

at the plans, studying lists of plants, features and ornaments you are transported to a garden almost lost in time. This is virtual reality in garden terms – you see the garden in its seasons, the way the design works with the landscape and the architecture, the changing design and plant choices, a time capsule of the slowest of performing arts.

In 1992 the Garden Club of American donated its collection of images of notable American Parks and Gardens to the Smithsonian Institute to form the nucleus of the Archives of American Gardening .The GCA went on to invite clubs to submit portfolios of gardens for the Smithsonian to consider accepting as additions to this searchable database. Since then the GCBB has had 10 gardens accepted into the archives, including Jim Perry’s *Jardim Escondido* (MA 338-2004) pictured above; Al Walker’s *Sea Thrift* (MA 323 2002) and most recently the *Underwood Garden* (MA 321 2016). Presently the committee is updating the Levin Property (MA 154), which has doubled in size since first submitted in 1999.



Suzanne Underwood’s Nonquitt garden in 1985 in this Corliss Engel photo.

The Fantastic Boxwood of Marqueyssac

By Susan McLaren

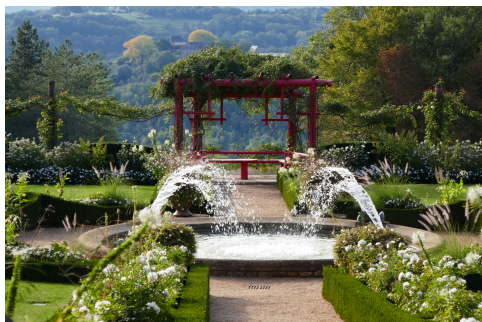
Fall in the Dordogne region of France is almost as beautiful as fall in New England but in a different way. This is the land of chateaus, medieval hilltop villages, walnuts, foie gras, truffles and chestnuts. There are also many beautiful gardens where boxwoods clipped into topiary seem to be a key feature.

While visiting the area in October, I discovered the wonderful Hanging Gardens of Marqueyssac, that started as a private estate dating from the 17th century.

After major expansion and later renovations, Marqueyssac is now open to the public and the most visited garden in Aquitaine

(southwest France). Website is www.marqueyssac.com.

The gardens are perched high on a limestone cliff with panoramic views overlooking the Dordogne River valley and cover 54 acres with 4 miles of walking paths. There are boxwoods everywhere in the park....about 150,000 of them. They make up the main theme of the garden and line its sinuous paths. Many of the boxwoods are clipped into round and rolling shapes that unite them with the rest of the landscape.



These are common boxwoods, *Buxus sempervirens*, that have adapted to their harsh environment of chalky soil and drought. To maintain the topiary forms, 5 gardeners trim the boxwoods with hand shears (not electric) twice a year. The Marqueyssac boxwoods are definitely a work of art and an inspiration! I could use a little of that magic for the overgrown hedge in front of my house. Five gardeners might help....

**PHOTO SHOW AT THE HOLIDAY PARTY
Blue Ribbon Winners**



Ruth Jolliffe's Best in Show, above. Upper right is Chris Dole's winning entry in Free Flight. Lower right is Leslie Bernert's Reflections entry.



More blue ribbon winners: Brian Rothschild, above, won the family class, Laura McLean, right, in the manipulated class and Carolyn Willard, bottom, in the monochrome class.

