



www.actongardenclub.org

The Monthly AGC 'Dirt'

February 2023

February 7th Meeting will be zoomed

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81378724275?pwd=bWpUMXRqQmZuSEIUREdzS3FOUjUrZz09>

Meeting ID: 813 7872 4275 Passcode: 739789

Outside guests can join by contacting the AGC webmaster and requesting the zoom link

Sign in with your favorite breakfast beverage and snack. You can wear your pearls with your favorite jammy bottom.

9:15 AM business meeting

10 AM break

10:15 AM Program: *Hydrangea Happiness, Hydrangea Hysteria*, presented by C.I. Fornari.



Learn which varieties will live and flower well in your garden and how to care for them. From blue mopheads and lacecaps to white peegees, there are hydrangeas for every garden. Learn which varieties will live and flower well in your gardens and how to care for them.

C.L. Fornari is an artist and plant geek who got pulled into garden communications in 1995. She is the author of eight books including *Coffee for Roses*, *The Cocktail Hour Garden* and *Sand and Soil: Creating Beautiful Gardens on Cape Cod and the Islands*. These books are all fully illustrated with C.L.'s photographs.

C.L. is a regular columnist for *Garden Center Magazine*. She's also written for *Angie's List Magazine*, *Prime Time Magazine*, *Fine Gardening*, *Coastal Home*, *Country Gardens*, and *American Nurseryman*.

GardenLine, C.L.'s 2-hour live radio program has been heard on Saturday mornings on WXTK since 2021. For two years she was also the host of *The Garden Lady* on WRKO, and was a regular contributor to *The Cultivated Gardener*, heard on NPR stations nationwide. Along with Ellen Zachos, C.L. is the co-host of *Plantrama*, a podcast about plants, launched in 2017.

In addition to working at Hyannis Country Garden, a family owned IGC on Cape Cod, C.L. Fornari speaks to businesses, trade shows and garden groups nationwide, both virtually and in person.

C.L. was awarded the Garden Communicator award from the Perennial Plant Association, several awards from GardenComm and her book, *The Cocktail Hour Garden* was given a Silver award in the "How To-Self Help" category by ASJA. In 2019 the Plantrama podcast was given the highest award from GardenComm International, a Gold medal.

In 2015 C.L. launched the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival, a ten-day regional celebration of gardens that typically raises over \$50,000.00 for local non-profits every year and draws public attention to Hydrangeas and gardening.

Her not-so-secret mission is to keep horticulture in popular culture...in the meantime she is writing a novel and growing all manner of plants at Poison Ivy Acres on Cape Cod. Connect with her at www.GardenLady.com

February 14th Horticulture Study Group will meet at the Public Safety Building, 171 Main Street.

9 AM program: Jessie Panek: Why Native?

February 28th 9 AM Board Meeting via zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6884517160?pwd=ckszU0E5NXZobFRqM3NwOEtPMEpMUT09>

Meeting ID: 688 451 7160 Password: 739789

February 28th Annual Report due

Please complete the attached 3-part form and mail it along with your check for your 23-24 dues to Ruth Schemel, 9 Hillcrest Drive, Acton.

All members are to serve on one of the Community Service Committees.

Dues must be paid before you can choose a committee. Some of these committees fill up fast. So, hurry and become a member in good standing.

Membership

If your **address, email address or phone number** have changed, please let Melissa Couche, Membership Chairman know by contacting her at **650-454-5635** or mjcoucke@gmail.com

Garden Study School, April 13, 14, & 15

Judy Dembsey, Master Gardener, suggests in order to get Garden Club members interested in improving their knowledge of gardening, that Members register for **Garden Study School, April 13, 14, & 15**. The first session of this series has some basic gardening topics with good lecturers. The Garden Club provides \$50 for completed sessions with a passing grade. ***An educated membership makes for a Strong Garden Club.***

Gardening School Course 1 will be held on April 12, 14 & 15 via Zoom from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Students needing to take a test will do so at the end of each day using a Goggle form. Refreshers do not need to test.

- All Consultants or Masters must refresh at least every 5 years, but can refresh before the 5-year period is up. If you do not refresh your accreditation lapses. Judy has sent an email with brochures to those that have to refresh in 2023.
- If you have become a Consultant, you must refresh 4 times in order to become a Master. Those refreshers can be done one every 5 years taking 15 years to get your masters or each year taking on 4 years to get your masters. If you are a Consultant, you might want to consider refreshing this year towards your Masters.
- Students have 7 years from their starting date to complete the 4 courses to become a Consultant or credit for the course/s taken lapses. Judy has sent an email with a brochure to those needing Course 1.

Taking the course with Zoom may be easier for some of you rather than traveling to a site.

January 19th Gardening With Young People (GWYP)



GWYP met with AB Buddies at ABRHS for the first time in 3 years!

Cathy Fochtman demonstrated with nineteen students participating how to make terrariums with moss, plant material and plastic toads.

Thanks go to club members Tanaz Hashemi, Linda O'Neil, Ann Marie Testarmata and Ruth Schemel for assisting. **A fun time was had by all.**

Save the Date! Tuesday, March 21, 9:00 AM

Exhibition Table Arrangement

Display your selected table items on a raised structure with a coordinating arrangement in your own vase.

We will try a variety of floral design techniques. Flowers and oasis provided. Bring several coordinating table items and cloth, a small vase, empty shoe boxes, your floral shears, wire cutters and your tool box.

Cost \$25, check to “Acton Garden Club”, memo “Floral Design”.

DEADLINE: Wednesday, March 15

Sign up at the February General Meeting or contact Cathy Fochtman, lcfochtman@gmail.com
Cathy Fochtman & Thelma Shoneman Floral Design Study Group



Noreen Rowe's arrangement at the Acton Library has morphed in personality from the New Year's motif. Can you tell Noreen is a retired elementary school teacher?



Lora Malony's colorful arrangement greets patrons at the circulation desk of the Acton Memorial Library. Let the employees know you appreciate the arrangements.

NY Times, 1/9/23

Stop killing houseplants. Try [Lego flowers](#)

Penn State Extension

Winter Sowing. Have you tried it? If no, you should!

Many annual and perennial seeds require a cold period to germinate. You can provide a controlled cold environment for seedlings with these instructions.

What Is Winter Sowing?

When you consider how seeds germinate in nature, it makes sense to sow seeds the same way. In late summer, left to their own devices, seeds fall to the ground. They slowly get covered with leaves and other natural materials to begin their long winter in the soil. Exposure to cold

temperatures and moist conditions breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate when temperatures increase in the spring.

Winter sowing is the process of planting seeds outdoors in a container during the winter months. The container remains outdoors until the seedlings emerge in the spring. The container protects the seeds from animals and harsh weather, but the exposure to colder temperatures breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate. The container also provides an ideal environment for germination in the spring.

What to Winter Sow?

Winter sowing is ideal for some annuals, perennials, and wildflowers. Check out a seed catalogue: most will have some sort of notation about a seed's germination requirements. Look for seeds that are described with the following terms: reseeds; colonizes; self-sows; hardy seeds; seedlings can withstand frost; sow outdoors in late autumn or early winter; sow outdoors in early spring while frosts may still occur; needs pre-chilling; requires stratification.

When to Winter Sow?

The best time to winter sow perennials and hardy annuals is generally December to March depending on the weather conditions in your area. These seeds require a consistent period of moist, cold temperatures before germination occurs in spring. Tender plants including annuals and vegetables can be sown later in spring (March or April) as they do not require a cold period in order to germinate.

What Are the Benefits of Winter Sowing?

When you direct sow in the ground, the seeds are at the mercy of Mother Nature. They can be washed out in downpours; eaten by critters, bugs, and birds; desiccate in the wind; or rot in the soil.

Containerized seedlings stay more compact and do not need to be hardened off before planting in the garden.

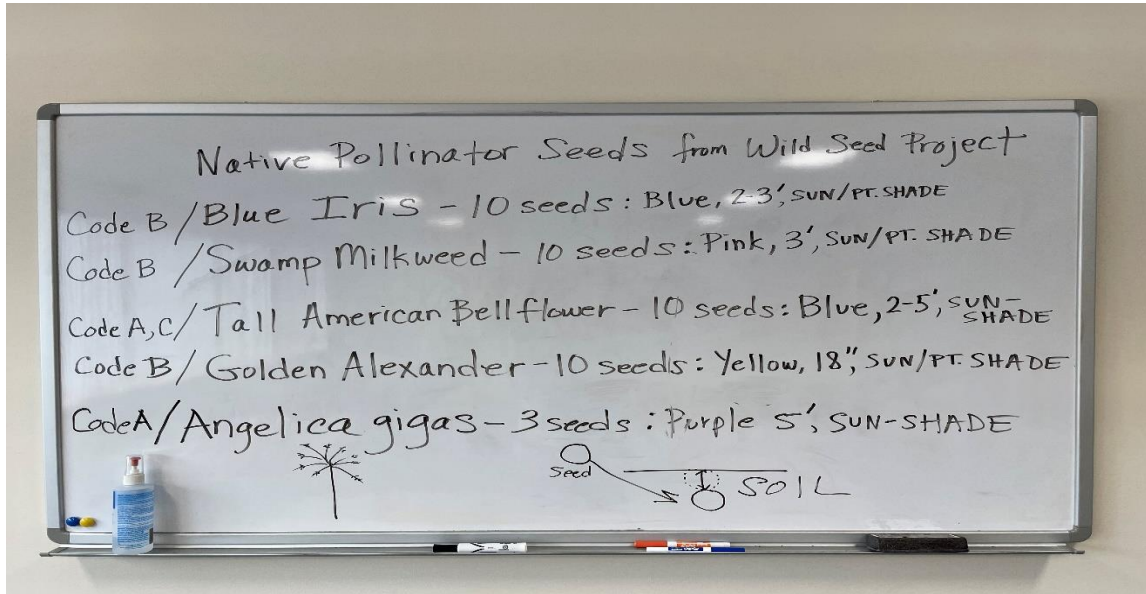
Winter sowing is ideal for those with limited indoor space for seed starting. No special lighting or equipment is required for germination

How To

1. Clean container — Wash a milk jug or suitable container in warm, soapy water and rinse. Discard the top. The opening allows rain and melting snow to keep the soil moist.
2. Cut container — If not using a container with a hinged lid, insert a serrated knife or box cutter into the side of the jug, lay it on its side and cut all the way round, leaving about 1.5 inches (under the handle, if using a jug with a handle) so that the top hinges open. Tip: use coffee mug with marker placed on top. Twirl jug around to mark a perfect cutting line.
3. Create air holes — Use a knife, screwdriver or nail to poke holes for drainage in the bottom of the container. This is important--if you don't make drainage holes, your seeds will drown! If using a container with a hinged lid, poke a few air holes in the top of the lid.
4. Add soil — Fill the container with 2 to 4" of a soilless seed starting medium. Avoid garden soil which may contain pathogens and weed seeds.
5. Water the soil — Lightly moisten growing medium and allow excess to drain.
6. Sow the seeds — Follow the directions on the seed package and sow seeds on the surface of the soil. Cover the seeds with a layer of soil and gently pat down.
7. Seal the container — Seal the cut edges of the container with light-colored duct tape. Leave the top open. Tip: rather than using tape, make holes for pipe cleaners or twist ties for easy opening and closing without the stickiness of the tape.

8. Label container – use a laundry marker (better than permanent marker) to label the type of seed and date of sowing. Place the label in the bottom of the container.

9. Set outdoors and leave! – Site the container in an area that receives winter sun. Do not place the container on a covered porch as the seeds require the moisture from the rain and snow. They should experience all the weather conditions they would in nature. Consider placing containers in a milk crate if conditions are windy. Forget about your containers until the spring when the seedlings germinate.



With all the garden catalogues filling your mailbox, now is the time to start thinking about flower seed.



While we are putting up with winter in New England our fearless leader, Maura Sharp, is admiring 6-foot-tall Allium in Hobart Tasmania.

The question is she using her plant identification app while she is in a different part of the world. Does it work there as well?

Boston Globe 1/18/23

In the depths of winter, Gardner Museum goes tropical



The museum's Midwinter Tropics display, running through February, features lush plant life that offers a vivid counterpoint to Boston's stark winter including delicate orchids, Norfolk Island pine, tree ferns, large fishtail palms, and smaller fan and Areca Palms.