



WINCHESTER HOME & GARDEN CLUB

Meetings 2020-2021

Mark your calendars and please join us on Zoom. You will not directly get an INVITE to the Zoom meeting but you will receive a LINK in an email.

- November 18**
- December "Secret Santa" TBA**
- January 20**
- February 24**
- March 17**
- April 28**
- May 19**

Books & Dues

A friendly reminder, books are delivered upon receipt of dues which are \$50 and can be mailed directly to our Treasurer, Courtney Peschel, 16 Lorena Road or you can pay online via Paypal at whgclub.org.



MEMBER FORAGING

Drive-By Chili Lunch & More

Tuesday lunchtime afforded Members the opportunity to come by and do a "Drive-By Chili Lunch". In our efforts of keeping our membership engaged, the invite went out to all Members. We were so pleased to meet and greet over 35 Members (and some husbands too)!

The menu consisted of a bowl of chili (Kelly's Roast Beef) which everyone truly enjoyed and was accompanied by cornbread and cookies. People chatted for a few minutes until they had to move along and let the next car pull up—but so many wonderful pleasantries were exchanged.



Our feelings are that there is something for everyone in our Garden Club and we want to continue to reach out and keep Members engaged. Whether it is a Zoom meeting, a drive-by treat or just a friendly note—we want all of you to know we are thinking of you and can't wait until we can meet again in Manion Hall for our monthly meetings.

Just to keep you up to date, we will have a Bingo Night in November and a presentation by Dawna of the Wild Bird in Woburn. Also, we will be hosting virtually the "Festival of Wreaths" with posting of wreaths during the week of 11/23. More information and an invite to follow.

Also, we will be sending along a questionnaire soon to see if you would like to participate in December's "Secret Santa Event".
All in good fun!



My Mother's Christmas Cactus

By Jessica Pineo Lohnes – October 20, 2020

It is that time of year again when I start preparing my Christmas Cactus for its blooming season. It is the same time that the potted plants that take advantage of the summer outdoors must come in for those of us that live in these northern climates. For me, it has always been a time of reflection as the last buds on the exterior blooms fade and wither and my mother wanders into my consciousness more often than normal. This annual process involves a plant that my mother bought around the time when she got married to my father in Pensacola, Florida, 73 years ago.

My childhood memory at this season fills with images of lush green outdoor garden rooms that give way to rustling brown leaves. Unlike the bustle and fury that my plants experience as I haul them in from our patio, my mother's plants seemed to transport themselves inside as if carried on a light breeze to find themselves in the soft sunny spot in the room with our cat curled in a ball on an upholstered footstool under the foliage. It was all part of the day and cycle of her life and to our benefit. The Christmas Cactus was always there.



My mother was a natural gardener, one for which blooms seemed to follow her slow and purposeful path. She had a way with plants and animals that was uncanny, and try as I might, I will always be a novice to her mastery. Since I have come into possession of "The Christmas Cactus" I have struggled to ever get it to bloom the same way my mother managed to do.

To give some factual information, the Christmas Cactus heritage springs from the genus of cacti called Schlumbergera and is one of the six to nine species found in the coastal mountains of south-eastern Brazil. It is more specifically part of the Buckleyi Group that came from Schlumbergera Russelliana. It has stem segments with rounded and symmetrical teeth, more or less symmetrical flowers which hang down below the horizontal and has pink pollen.

Unlike other cacti, the Christmas Cactus natural climate is shady and humid with seasons that are drier with long days and wet with short days. During the dry season the cactus remains in a slow and steady green growth mode with no flowering. In order for the cactus to bloom as an indoor plant, one needs to simulate the "rainy season" along with at least twelve hours of continuous darkness. As the days start to officially get longer around the end of September, I start to lightly fertilize the cactus with Miracle Grow and crushed eggshells scattered over the top of the soil. My mother always would say that her mother would go to the market to get oysters and bury them in the soil, and this was a sure-fire way of getting it to bloom. I confess I haven't tried this method yet worried about the potential smell? I once tried Neptune's Harvest as an alternative. I don't recommend it for indoor use. It caused me to have to repot the cactus; a traumatic process that took years of my life for fear of killing it. It would just be my luck to kill the cactus after it had survived so many years. *(continued on the following page)*

My Mother's Christmas Cactus *(continued from previous page)*

This Christmas Cactus, not to be confused with a Thanksgiving Cactus which has larger flat and spiky leaves than the former, has traveled all over the country as part of a military family. It even made two trips over the Atlantic Ocean to London and back on a military transport ship, severely trimmed back and kept in their berth. It is quite large now and every once and awhile I trim it back and hand off saplings to family members or anyone interested in starting their own journey with a cactus.

So, it is that time of year again, the 18th year in my care, that I start to go through the process of preparing my cactus for its celebration of bloom. I truly hope that this year will be a banner year of blooms. I think I might even make the sacrifice and go get some oysters and bury them (deep) into the soil. I think my mother would say it's about time.

Wreath and Plant Sale

Our last month presenters Ferris Donham and Philippa Ferridge are hosting a wreath sale with homemade wreaths, wreath kits, chrysanthemums, perennials and many other things this coming weekend. Saturday 10/24 from 12-4 at Ferris' house at 63 Ronald Road, Arlington.

They will also be taking sign ups for their 2021 CSA beginning April-October. Spaces are limited. Their Flower CSA is unique because they curate the weekly share with flower arrangers in mind since our favorite thing to do is create beautiful seasonal floral pieces.



A few samples of their homemade wreaths



Liz Barbour of The Creative Feast

Wednesday Night we welcomed Liz Barbour of The Creative Feast to the WH&GC's October Zoom meeting. Liz, a passionate gardener and chef, presented a program from her kitchen studio that was informative and engaging.



Her 15 Minute Meals class included tips to save us time, healthy food information, what to keep in stock and a cooking demonstration. She prepared two recipes, Smoked Sausage and Kale with delicata squash and Kale-sauce Pasta.

She assured those of us who are not crazy about kale, that if we cook it, the kale (leaves only, no stems!) won't be bitter. With the added smoked sausage, olive oil, garlic and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, I'm sure Liz will convert us all. But just in case you are not so sure, she suggested substituting thick slices of green cabbage for kale in the smoked sausage recipe. She also suggested adding frozen spinach with the green cabbage. (Defrost the spinach and squeeze out excess water first.)

Liz whipped up the Kale Sauce Pasta in no time and added cheese and a few beautiful, home grown, edible flowers to the plate of pasta. It was beautiful. If only we could have had a taste!

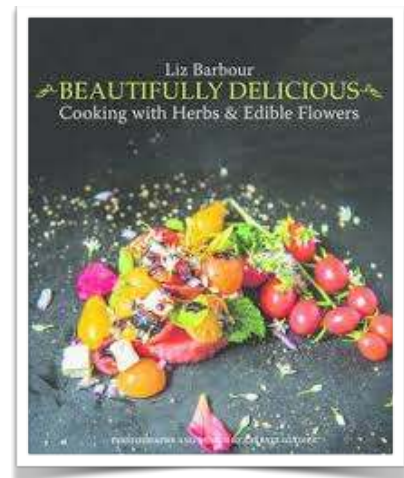
You can find these recipes and more on her website <https://www.thecreativefeast.com>. Click on FOOD STUFFS at the top of the page, then click on RECIPE BLOG. The search field is on the right side of the page. Type in 15 Minutes, Kale Sauce or Smoked Sausage and Kale, or look for something different!

Liz offers a wide variety of on-line classes, as well as programs through libraries. If a library is hosting a program that interests you, contact Liz to find out how/if you can join the class.

You can also find Liz on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/thecreativefeast/> Liz welcomes you into her kitchen studio for live cooking demonstrations, via Facebook on the first Friday of the month at 5pm.

Liz's cookbook, Beautifully Delicious: Cooking with Herbs and Edible Flowers, is also available on-line. Her book is full of gorgeous photographs and contains over 60 of Liz's favorite flavor-inspired recipes using herbs and edible flowers.

The the lucky raffle winner is Jen Warner and she will receive a copy of Liz's book.



Thanks to everyone for a great night of friendly faces and food talk! See you in November.

MISTY FLOREZ'S DAHLIA GARDEN



2020 Misty's Dahlia Garden

[34 new photos added to shared album](#)



2015-2019 Dahlia Pictures

[13 nouvelles photos ajoutées à l'album partagé](#)

Dahlias are octoploids, with eight sets of chromosomes a unique characteristic from most living organisms with 2 sets of chromosomes creating so many forms and varieties from tiny pompons, to open centered and very large “dinner plate” sizes.

I love flowers and gardening and about 5 years ago I was hit by the dahlia bug and started growing dahlias more seriously after joining a local chapter of the American Dahlia Society. Our backyard garden has 7 raised beds that are 3’ wide x 30’ long. I grow around 150 tubers each year, roughly 50 varieties. Planting them in the spring, enjoying the blooms in the late summer and fall and digging them up soon after first frost. Having a variety of blooms in different forms and colors to cut from the garden and share with others makes it worth the effort they take to plant, dig, divided and store each year. It’s fun to attend dahlia shows during the fall around New England and search out for specific varieties to grow and add to the garden.

Over the years I've attended several Dahlia shows around New England and in 2018 I attended my first national show at Longwood Gardens. In 2018 I started to participate at shows by clerking for senior judges as well as take the steps to getting my student judging certificate. I hope in 2021 and 2022 I'll be able to work towards being an accredited dahlia judge. Last year it was the first time I entered my dahlia blooms into a dahlia show at Tower Hill Botanic Garden. My blooms didn't make the head table, but the thrill of participating and receiving a few ribbons was exciting.