



THE GREENHOUSE BEET

GARDEN CLUB OF TEANECK NEWSLETTER, MARCH

Welcome to the March edition of our Garden Club Newsletter! As the saying goes, "In like a lion, out like a lamb", March is a month of transformation, bringing with it the promise of spring's gentle warmth after the fierce winter chill. This month, we are excited to explore the vibrant changes happening in our gardens and offer tips on preparing your plants for the upcoming season. From early blooms to soil preparation techniques, our newsletter is packed with insights to help you make the most of this transitional time. Join us as we embrace the roar of March and eagerly anticipate the serenity it promises to deliver.

Happy gardening!

GARDEN PLOT POINTS



Do you have any large Chinese soup containers? They would be perfect for more fig plants! Let's collect them and bring them along for the Sunday group!



- Thank you to the Wednesday team for installing the lock!
- A huge thanks to the person maintaining the greenhouse kitchen and bathrooms! let's keep it up everyone! See a mess, clean it up!
- Mouse, are you still here? Haven't seen them but keep eyes open for signs.
- Gnats have returned! The greenhouse temperature is at 94F, so be ready to spray if you see signs.
- The ventilation group needs to act! Let's enhance airflow—please see Anne for details.
- No parking is allowed on the curb in front of the greenhouse; signs are posted. Let's prioritize safety. We've seen accidents, so stay vigilant!
- Robyn's 101 talk in February was a success, attracting 34 participants despite the weather. Several new members signed up! Congrats, Robyn, and great job, Sara, on promoting the event!
- March has arrived! Christina has planted 140 nonstop begonias, 2 flats of dragon wings, 6 flats of vincas, and 2 flats of coleus. She needs help with transplanting or unloading—please contact her.
- ****Suggestion:**** Fran Levine suggests a lecture series; interested members should reach out to her.
- Hawthorne activities start on March 24th. Volunteers are needed—please contact Marilyn.

Reminders:

- Active participation is crucial to maintain your plot
- A mandatory meeting for plot holders is on April 5th/8th.
- Please stack boxes to keep tables clear.
- Attendance is required for the spring clean-up on April 26th & 27th.
- For the plant sale, plot holders must work three shifts
- Training for plant sale will be provided.

Reminder





To trim Alocasia effectively, do not cut down the stems. To encourage new growth, cut off yellowing or decaying leaves at the petiole without disturbing the stem. The stems provide nutrition for new growth. Remember to use clean, sharp scissors to minimize damage and prevent disease. Remove yellowing leaves promptly to promote new growth. Happy gardening!

Work Group Reports



Monday: Planted a whopping 712 hypoestes and got some figs sprouting; tomato seeds are on the launch pad!

Tuesday: Transplanted a garden party of plants with a smaller crew; new plant sale shenanigans are brewing!

Wednesday: A shiny new lock and shelf made their grand entrance; a whiteboard will join the fun soon!

Thursday: Coleuses are strutting their stuff like garden superstars!

Friday: Socializing? What's that? Too busy for that! We've got 126 canna bulbs and a firehouse canna waiting for their big debut!

Saturday: The whole crew is back this month to propagate herbs (Hey there, recaol), pamper the gorgeous lavender, aloes, and others for the kiddos, plus sketch out dreams for the fabulous 2025 Outdoor gardens!

Hawthorne Group: Time to rally the kids and boost those sales! Our plants are bursting with joy, but we're on the lookout for more helping hands!

Sunday: Perennials are getting the VIP treatment and gearing up for dahlia planting. Hypoestes are popping up everywhere—hundreds of them! And the figs? Looking magnificent!

Herb Group: Herb garden plans are sprouting!

Junior Garden Club: All spots filled and the group is ready to start soon!



Eastern monarch butterfly population doubles for 2025

The eastern monarch butterfly population— which migrate from Canada and the US to Mexico during winter – has nearly doubled this winter, covering 4.2 acres, though it remains below long-term averages. This increase, linked to conservation efforts, contrasts with a 22% decline in the US population over 20 years. The US Fish and Wildlife Service proposed classifying monarchs as threatened, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts. A report indicates butterflies occupied 4.42 acres this winter, up from 2.22 acres last year, with improved weather conditions in 2024 possibly aiding their migration from Canada and the US.

March, 2025, The Guardian

Interested in fostering Monarch butterflies? Plant Milkweed, their essential host plant!!





The Joy of Luffa, an experiment by Debbie Hoffman



Last summer, my friend Laura surprised me with a package of loofah seeds. My friend and artisan soap maker, Marilyn, said, "If you grow them, I can use the loofahs in my soaps." The challenge was on! Loofah sponges, which come from the fibrous interior of loofah gourds, can be grown in gardens. They require a long, sunny growing season and plenty of love to climb, reaching high into trees!

Though I didn't have a garden plot at the Teaneck Garden Club, I was given a 2'x3' sunny spot. After the frost danger passed, I planted 10-12 seeds, resulting in 4-6 plants that produced about 20-25 loofahs. I watered regularly, keeping the soil moist but not drenched. The loofahs easily latched onto the fence.

You know a loofah is ready to harvest when it feels firm. If you can let them turn brown on the vine, it's easier to prepare them. If harvested green, they need to dry out in the sun or can be baked in the oven. Once dry, you'll hear the seeds rattle inside, signaling they're ready for preparation.

I encourage parents and teachers to try this gardening project with kids. They can plant the seeds, water, measure growth, and eventually use the loofahs for bathing and dishes. It's a fun way to inspire early holiday gifts when paired with special soaps. Hopefully, I've inspired you to enjoy growing loofahs!

Check out this [Video](#) for more information

Gardeners AT THE MUSEUM



On Saturday, March 8th, members of the GCT enjoyed a private tour of the Montclair Museum of Art, led by fellow GCT member and museum docent, Pat Pacheco. Renowned for its diverse collection and engaging exhibits, the Montclair Museum of Art offered a vibrant array of art and culture that captivated the attendees. Pat, with her deep knowledge and enthusiasm for the arts, guided the group through an intriguing exploration of both classical and contemporary works. The tour showcased notable pieces from the museum's permanent collection, as well as special exhibits that highlighted the creativity of local artists. Members were especially fascinated by the interactive installations, which encouraged them to connect with art in innovative and surprising ways. The visit wrapped up with a spirited discussion over an Ethiopian lunch, where members exchanged their thoughts and insights, further enhancing their appreciation of the museum's offerings.

Foccacia Garden Art



As our outdoor gardens enjoyed their beauty rest, the Saturday group opted to unleash their creativity through focaccia dough and a variety of vegetables. With laughter and friendly chatter filling the air, everyone immersed themselves in bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, red onions, and fragrant herbs, crafting their own edible masterpieces. The result? A stunning visual feast that delighted both the eyes and the palate!

Focaccia art is a delightful way to paint with nature's vibrant colors on a doughy canvas. Each design flourishes with colorful veggies and herbs, transforming your plate into a delightful garden of culinary wonders.

To make your own focaccia art, start with this simple recipe:

Ingredients:

- 2 cups warm water
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 packet (2 1/4 teaspoons) active dry yeast
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 2 teaspoons salt
- An assortment of colorful vegetables (like bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, red onions)
- Fresh herbs (such as rosemary, thyme, or basil)

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, dissolve the sugar in warm water, then sprinkle the yeast over the top. Let it sit until frothy, about 5-10 minutes.
2. Add flour, olive oil, and salt to the yeast mixture. Mix until a dough forms then knead for about 10 minutes until smooth and elastic. (as an option, see No-Knead option above)
3. Place the dough in an oiled bowl, cover, and let it rise in a warm area until doubled in size, about 1-2 hours.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Punch down the dough and spread it onto a greased baking sheet.
5. Drizzle with olive oil, then arrange your vegetables and herbs to create your art. Gently press them into the dough.
6. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden brown. Let cool slightly before slicing and serving your beautiful, edible creation.

Forget the Kneading!
After mixing in step 2,
place the dough in the
fridge overnight to allow
the gluten to form without
kneading. Bring to room
temp, then move to step 3



GARDEN GIGGLES

Welcome to our "Garden Giggles" page,
your go-to source for gardening humor!

Mosquitos training for Summer



May your coffee be stronger
than the urge to plant your
seedlings a month too early



Eucalyptus are the only plants named
after what they would say if pruned



Tell that little voice in your head to
be quiet. You should definitely sow
the extra 246 tomato seedlings
you won't have room for.

Avellinofarms



[Got more garden jokes for us? Lettuce know!](#)

Celebrating March with Plants & Flowers!

Ramadan is a sacred month in the Islamic calendar, observed by millions for fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. It emphasizes spiritual growth, self-discipline, and compassion. In 2025, Ramadan will be from February 28 to March 29.

Iftar, the meal to break the fast at sunset, often includes dates, symbolizing sustenance and spiritual richness. Dates are nutritious and grown on long-living date palms in arid climates.

Flowers like roses, lilacs, and jasmine also enhance the beauty of Ramadan, representing love, purity, and peace. Olive branches symbolize unity, fostering a sense of community and encouraging the sharing of blessings among families and friends.



During Purim, March 13th, 2025, through Friday, March 14th, flowers add a vibrant touch to the festive atmosphere, symbolizing joy and renewal. As families gather to celebrate the triumph of Esther and the Jewish people, colorful bouquets adorn tables and homes, reflecting the spirit of the holiday. Traditional decorations may include bright arrangements of tulips, daisies, and other spring blooms, which not only enhance the visual appeal but also evoke the themes of hope and rebirth that are central to Purim's story. The presence of flowers, such as hyacinths and daffodils, serves as a reminder of the beauty found in community, celebration, and the resilience of the human spirit.



St. Patrick's Day, celebrated on March 17th, is marked by vibrant green displays symbolizing Ireland's lush landscapes. The shamrock, linked to good luck and used by St. Patrick to explain the Holy Trinity, is a key emblem of the holiday. Other green plants like clovers and mosses also enhance decorations. Additionally, flowers such as green hydrangeas, daisies, white lilies, and yellow daffodils contribute to the festive aesthetic, celebrating nature's beauty in early spring.



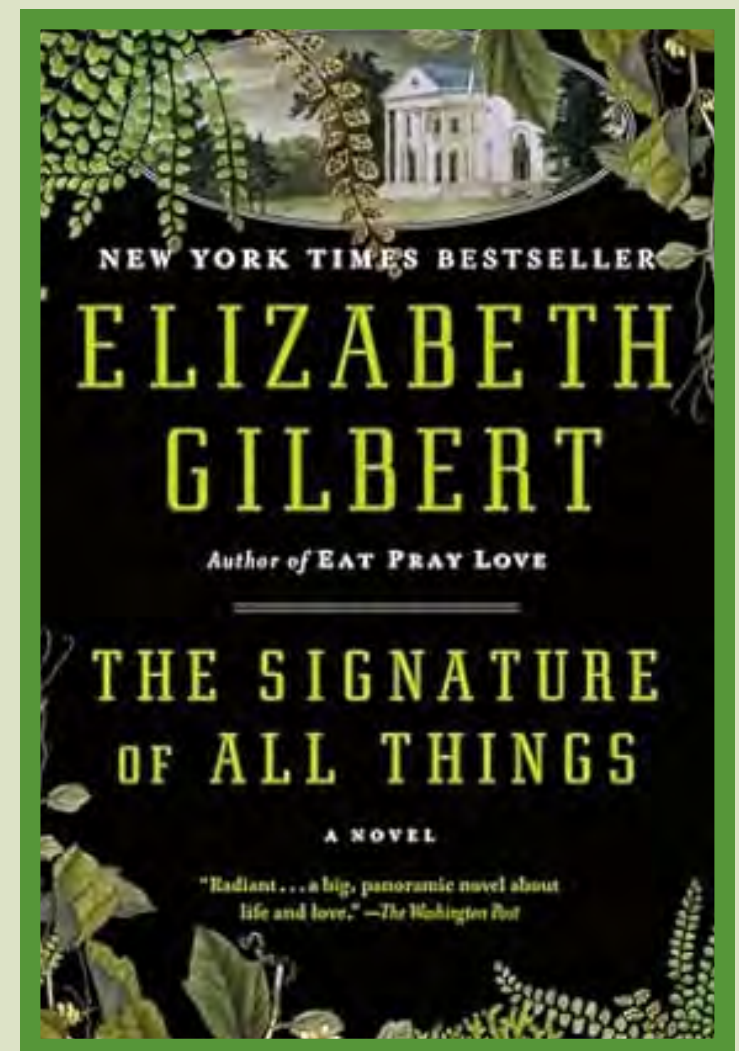


Garden Reads

The Signature of All Things

by Elizabeth Gilbert

"The Signature of All Things" by Elizabeth Gilbert is a captivating novel that combines history, science, and romance. Set in the 18th and 19th centuries, it follows Alma Whittaker, a botanist driven by curiosity to explore the natural world and her own desires. Gilbert's detailed research immerses readers in the era, while the story delves into the interconnectedness of life and the human quest for knowledge. This beautifully written tale offers a reflective journey that lingers long after reading.



"its about a female botanist who dedicated her life to studying moss. I have a weak spot for moss! I love its history, diversity, beauty, and survivability" – Dr. Marilyn Figueroa

Would you like to discuss this book further? [Contact Marilyn!](#)

Drats... GNATS!

An instructional tale by The Garden Beet

As spring burst onto the scene, Clara was all about her greenhouse bench plants, soaking in their beauty like a proud plant parent! The **warm, humid air** was a cozy blanket against March's chilly tantrums, but it also rolled out the red carpet for **pesky fungus gnats** who thought they'd found paradise in her soil.

Not one to back down, Clara got crafty! She decided to **water less frequently**, letting the soil dry out fully between sips, and voilà—healthier plants! She even brought in the secret squad: **beneficial nematodes**, to take out those gnat larvae, and set up **bright yellow sticky traps** to snag the flying nuisances.

Soon, her **daily inspections** became a fun little adventure, armed with **spray from her greenhouse maintenance team** for any fresh infestations. Week by week, her greenhouse transformed into a lush wonderland, and those gnats? Just a minor footnote in her gardening saga!

Clara proved that with a sprinkle of creativity and a dash of determination, even the tiniest pests can be conquered!

What's Growing on Around Us?

Friends of Frelinghuysen Arboretum:

Taking the Mystery Out of Organic Gardening

Thursday 04-03-25 07:00 pm Virtual via Zoom

Learn the basics about how to create and maintain an organic vegetable garden

Container Vegetable Gardening

Wednesday 04-16-25 07:00 pm Virtual Via Zoom

Learn how to plant and grow a variety of vegetables in containers on your porch

New Jersey Botanical Garden:

Spring Wreath Making

Saturday March 22 @ 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

A cheerful and crafty way to welcome the season!

FoHVOS NJ Invasive Species Strike Team

2025 New Jersey Invasive Species Conference

Wed, 04-16 9am- 4pm @Duke's Farm, Hillsborough, NJ

[View Agenda and Topics HERE](#)



Garden Club of Teaneck Upcoming Events

Hawthorne Kids Program

March 24, 25, 26, 27, 28

April 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7

Garden Club General Meeting

Sat, Apr 5 at 10 AM

MANDATORY Plot Holder Meeting

Sat, Apr 5 after GCT Meeting OR

Tues Apr 8 (5 and 7pm)

Spring Clean Up

Sat, April 26, 12pm

Sun, April 27 9am

ANNUAL Plant Sale -

Members Only Thu, May 1 at 4 PM

Gen Public Sale May 2,3,4 and May 9,10,11

Want more gardening articles?

Spring's official start is nearly here and there's work to do in the garden.

New plant species discovered in Big Bend National Park

Microplastics Are Messing with Photosynthesis in Plants

How to plant a garden with children

We hope you enjoyed this issue of our newsletter!

Every member, from green thumbs to new buds,
is a cherished part of our green family.

Website: the Garden Club of Teaneck

Facebook:

facebook.com/GardenClubofTeaneck

Email: gardenclubofteaneck@gmail.com

Location: [Directions and Map](#)

[Reach out](#) to sow your stories,
feature your favorite plant, or
sprinkle some wisdom and insight to
all members! [Let's grow together!](#)