

Bloomin' Times

February 2024



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Photograph by Maryfran Annese

CLUB NEWS

IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth “Betty” Gulino

(née Fantaccione)



Betty passed away on January 11, 2024 at the age of 80.

1966, she married her high school sweetheart, Martin Gulino, in Ridgewood, NJ.

Together there, they raised their three daughters Michelle, Kathleen, and Debra. Betty was a life-long learner who pursued her dreams of achieving a college education to become a teacher at Paramus Catholic High School.

Betty’s desire to give back to the community was reflected in the many organizations and charities that she supported. She joined the Rake & Hoe Garden Club in 2015 and became especially active in Community Projects. Her dedication to Mobile Meals, Veterans, the Nursing Homes, and Jardine Academy was legend. In 2022 she won the Agnes Eggimann Award for her work.

Her family was the center of her world, and she took great pride in making each occasion special. Her smile could brighten a room, and her laugh was infectious. She was the heart of the family.

Dear Heather and Sharon,

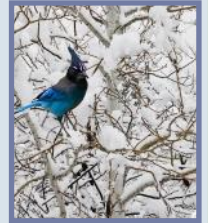
My mom asked me to write this note to you. Please pass it on. She was very grateful for all the flowers, gifts, and photo show that she had received. It was the nicest day that she had this year.

Love from Barbara (Mullin)... via Nancy.

February Highlights

(Consult your Yearbook for details.)

- 2-6 Mobile Meals Mini-Arrangements. Meet at Baptist Church.
- 2-13 Juniors: Valentines Arrangements for nursing home. Meet at home of Betty Clark. NOTE: This meeting is on a Tuesday.
- 2-13 Artistic Crafts. Frog Workshop. 1:00pm. Mountainside Library.
- 2-14 GENERAL MEETING—*Contact Margot for information.*
 - ◆ Program: “Table Artistry”, with Diana and friends.
 - ◆ Judy Kampe Competition: “Winter Trees Through The Lens”
- 2-26 Garden B’s “Movie Night” and Potluck Dinner. *Contact Beth Hanscom.*



Rake & Hoe members visit with Barbara Mullin, who was visiting Westfield in mid-December. Front Row: Clare Minnick; Middle Row: Alice Cowell, President Sharon Shiraga, Kris Luka, Barbara Mullin; Top Row: Margot Partridge, Nina Sylvester.

MORE CLUB NEWS

NEW MEMBER CONTACT

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JUDY KAMPE AWARD

The Judy Kampe Competition will be held at the February 14th general meeting. Entitled "*Winter Trees through the Lens*," it will be a photograph competition that focuses on the textures and outlines of winter.

R&H Members may enter one photo. So get out there to capture our trees in their Winter glory. There is still space - contact Margot. The size of the photograph must be 8"x10," matted in an 11"x14" white photo matte. Mattes are available from Margot.

FLOWER SHOW

In case you weren't at January's meeting, I passed out a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in being on the planning committee for the flower show. I will soon be announcing the date and location of our first meeting. Let me know if you would like to be on the committee.

Anyone who wishes to be involved will be included in the decisions. Sharon

TABLE ARTISTRY

Floral Arranger Diana Kazazis will be doing a presentation on Table Artistry at the February 14 general meeting. Arrive early to get a seat with good sightlines. Don't let your view be blocked by the lady with the feather hat.



On March, 19, from 1:30-3:00 at the Mountainside Library, there will be a workshop on Table Artistry. The assignment - Tray Table Design - will be demonstrated at the February 14 general meeting. Participants will be asked to complete the assignment before the workshop.

Let Regina Kelley know if you have any questions.

Member Birthdays in February

2 Jeanette Pelikan 11 Inge Bossert 14 Cathy Becker
16 Pam Kolb 20 Peggy Smith 26 Lee Perry
27 Tracy Criscitiello 28 Kay Cross

Contributors to This Issue

Maryfran Annese, Rich Pelikan, Diana Kazazis,
Mabel Woloj, Betty Clark, Sharon Shiraga
Nina Sylvesster, Barb Spellmeyer, Inge Bossert

AGNES EGGIMANN AWARD

2024 Winner

Nina Sylvester



This year's theme was *Citrus Delights*. Entries were invited in the categories of desserts, salads, beverages, etc. Nina's entry was *Italian Almond-Orange Cookies*. See recipe on page 4.

The competition for the Judy Kampe Award in February will be a photographic challenge on *Winter Trees Through the Lens*. See box at left.

Rake & Hoe Garden Club

Sharon Shiraga, President

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Regina Kelley, "*Profiles*"

Richard Pelikan, "*Jersey Gems*"

Mabel Woloj, "*Native Plants*"

Joe Da Rold, Editor, "*Native Plants*," "*Garden Limericks*"

R&H BULLETIN BOARD



Ed. Note. You won't be able to see the messages on the other side of the postcards unless you stand in back of the screen.

2024 Agnes Eggimann Award

Italian Almond-Orange Cookies

1/3 cup egg whites (we separated two jumbo eggs and got exactly 1/3 cup of egg whites, but you may need more than two eggs to measure out exactly 1/3 cup)

1 1/4 cups granulated sugar

Zest of one orange

2 tablespoons honey

2 1/2 cups almond flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 cup powdered sugar

Recipe >>>>>

In a medium bowl, whisk egg whites, sugar, orange zest and honey with a whisk until smooth.

Add the almond flour and baking powder. Mix with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until moist.

Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour and as long as 24 hours. Preheat oven to 325 F with two racks in top two positions.

Cover cookie sheets with parchment. Place the powdered sugar in a small bowl.

Roll the dough on your counter with your hands into a fat log and cut it into two equal pieces.

Roll each piece out into logs and cut in half then each piece in half again. Then cut each piece into three. This will give you 24 pieces.

Roll each piece into a ball then roll in the powdered sugar. Place onto the cookie sheets, 12 per tray. Bake for 15-17 minutes. Rotate half-way through.

The cookies are done when they start to crackle and flatten out and are slightly browned on the bottom. The centers will be very soft. Do not lift the cookie off the sheet yet.

As they cool on the cookie sheet, they stiffen up and have a crisp outside and a chewy center.



JUNIORS Welcome You

Who are the Juniors?

The Junior members of the Rake & Hoe Garden Club of Westfield range from kindergarten through high school students. The Juniors Club has been in existence since 1956. They meet monthly after school during the school year to work on projects focused on flower design, gardening and community service. The Juniors have won many awards for their skills in flower design. They have achieved great success at the New Jersey Garden Club's annual Flower show, winning ribbons in various categories of flower design. At a single show, the Juniors were awarded 19 blue ribbons.

In the spring of 2013, the Juniors planted a Butterfly Garden in Shadowlawn Park, to attract Monarchs, Swallowtails, and other pollinators. Along with the Senior Garden Club members, they maintain the garden twice a year, adding annuals and herbs for variety. They have added special touches to the garden, such as handmade "kindness rocks", mosaic stepping stones created from broken tiles and china and also created insect habitat boxes. Senior members visit with the Juniors during the year to instruct them in plant care, tree identification and other horticultural topics.

The Juniors are also dedicated to community service. Each year they create holiday centerpieces for residents of senior living homes in the various communities of Union County. The Junior Club is always looking for new members who have an interest in learning about flower design, gardening and community service.

If you wish to get additional information please email Betty Clark at bestvezclark@gmail.com.



***The Junior Club
is always looking
for new
members.***



NATIVE PLANTS

A native plant is a species that occurs naturally in a given location, either because it evolved there or dispersed to that location without benefit of human activity.



Liatris ligulistylis

Most gardeners are aware of the importance of Milkweed to the Monarch Butterflies, but Milkweed is not necessarily everyone's favorite flower. Native to North America, the genus *Liatris* includes about 40 species all beloved by hummingbirds, bees, butterflies and gardeners.



Liatris ligulistylis (Meadow Blazing Star) is easy to find in seed packets. It can grow up to 5' tall when planted in rich soils. This *Liatris* is somewhat tolerant of dry soils, but is best planted in areas that have consistently "medium" soil moisture and fertility. It tolerates summer heat and humidity, but avoid planting it in soils that stay wet in the winter.

The species *Liatris ligulistylis* is the ultimate nectar plant for adult Monarchs. The plants provide fuel for the Monarchs to give them needed energy for their long migration. Numerous other butterflies and pollinators will visit as well, along with hummingbirds and goldfinches.

Q
&A

Monarch Family Migration

Q. When does it start?

A. The Monarchs overwinter in Mexico, then breed in the spring to start the next generation flying north. This flight north spans several generations of monarchs. A much-longer-lived "super generation" flies from the northern reaches of the butterfly's range all the way to Mexico.

Monarch Trivia

- ◆ Their 3,000-mile migration is done in flights of 100 miles per day.
- ◆ Monarchs eat poisonous milkweed during their larval stage. The poison causes predators to vomit, but it does not kill them.
- ◆ The larvae are voracious eaters and fast growers. In just two weeks, they will become up to 2,000 times heavier.
- ◆ The Monarch is only in its caterpillar stage for 10 to 14 days.

Monarch Migration

After spending years trying to figure out a way to successfully tag monarch butterflies, Fred and Norah Urquhart finally had a breakthrough in 1940, thanks to a new adhesive invented by the company that eventually became 3M. They created a tag with a similar material to what is now used on post-it notes. Needing more help to tag huge scores of monarchs, they founded the very first *Insect Migration Association*, known today as *Monarch Watch*. "Citizen Scientists" from all across North America help tag hundreds of thousands of butterflies and track their migration routes. In 1975, this ultimately helped Dr. Urquhart find out that these monarchs migrated from Canada all the way to the forests of Central Mexico. Present-day scientists now use epoxy between the wings of the butterfly, then affix a custom-designed sensor—a stack of computer chips powered by a miniature solar panel that together weigh less than three grains of rice.

The Monarch that leaves Mexico is not the same one that arrives in Canada. The annual migration is an odyssey involving three to five generations, from a first group that survives just weeks to descendants that can live up to nine months. The first and second generations are born and remain in the U.S. and Canada. Most migratory monarchs are from the third generation emerging in late summer and early fall.

Source: wildcenter.org

GARDEN POTPOURRI

FLOWERS FOR BEGINNERS



“White Nite”
Sunflower

Whether you're ready to sow your first-ever garden seed or are looking for a fun, foolproof project to do with grandchildren, the flowering varieties shown here are some great places to start: Sunflowers, Zinnias, Cosmos, Marigolds.



*Queeny Lemon
Peach Zinnia*



Astra Gold
Sunflower

Their seeds are easy to handle, the time is quick, and the blooms are beautiful. Sow them right into your garden soil or potting mix, and before you know it you'll be admiring big, bright blooms!



*Deep Orange
Hybrid Marigold*



Sensation (Mix) Cosmos



GARDEN LIMERICKS

Well now it's a new year again
A tossup of pleasure or pain
But if this year's as bad
As the one we just had
Please shoot me with novocaine.

2024

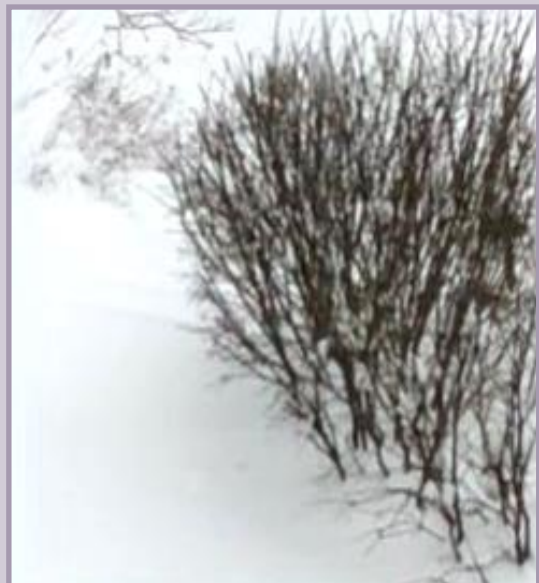
2024 FLOWER OF THE YEAR

1-800-Flowers.com has announced that the peony is the 2024 Flower of the Year. Selected because it symbolizes love and growth, “Peonies, with their vibrant and delicate petals, are the perfect gesture for romantic and celebratory occasions.” If you’ve gone to a few weddings recently, you might’ve noticed an abundance of peonies in the bouquets of the bridal party.

The wonderful thing about peonies is that if you plan to incorporate them into your decor; you don’t need much filler in your arrangement— you don’t want too many other stems in the bunch taking attention away from the peonies. Essentially, they’re incredibly easy to style—available in delicate or assertive shades of pink, white, red, and purple so they will complement most color palettes. To help your flowers last a bit longer after you’ve purchased them (but before they’re in the vase), cut the stems about ½-inch on a diagonal and remove all leaves from the stem that will touch the water.



WINTER OUTSIDE



WINTER WHERE IT'S WARM



Photo by Joe Da Rold



Photo by Barb Spellmeyer



Photo by Inge Bossert



Photo by Diana Kazazis

ENVIRONMENT

Masters of Disguise



Some herbivores look like leaves, twigs, and bark—giving new meaning to the phrase “You are what you eat.” **Phasmids**, commonly known as stick or leaf insects, often fade into the flora to become virtually invisible. It is an effective survival strategy: Their predators want to snack on an insect, so they ignore what appears to be a plant. The Malaysian leaf insect (*Pulchriphyllyium giganteum*) [photo left] starts life as a reddish brown color but turns green after eating the leaves in its surroundings.

Camouflage can be part of every stage of a phasmid’s life. The giant prickly stick insect (*Extatosoma tiaratum*) imitates crumpled foliage as an adult, its nymphs look like ants and then bark, and its eggs look like seeds. The eggs are taken in by spider ants, which eat only the nutrient-rich, knoblike capitulum. When the phasmids hatch, they look similar to their ant guardians, which wards off predators. Then they climb trees, soon becoming indiscernible from the bark. At the treetops, they blend in with the leaves. It’s a life cycle that tells the story of their ecosystem.

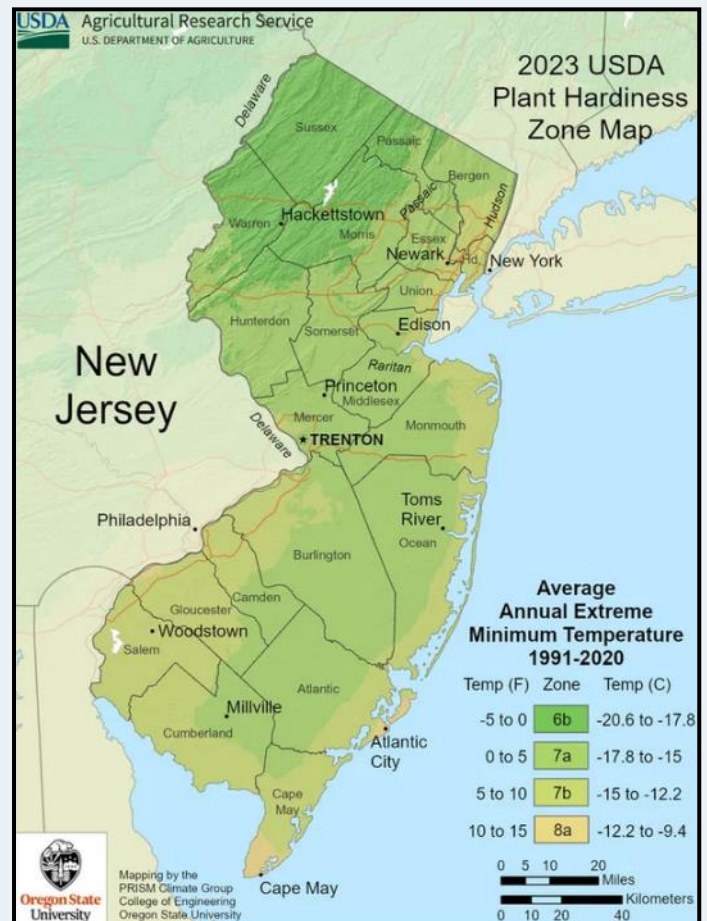
Source: *National Geographic*

2023 USDA PLANT HARDINESS ZONE MAP

In mid-November, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a new version of its Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM), updating this valuable tool for gardeners and researchers for the first time since 2012. USDA’s Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. As with the 2012 map, the new version shows that most of New Jersey’s counties fall within more than one zone. Westfield is now designated in zone 7a.

The new map—jointly developed by USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Oregon State University’s (OSU) PRISM Climate Group—is more accurate and contains greater detail than prior versions. Scientists incorporate the plant hardiness zones as a data layer in many research models, such as those modeling the spread of exotic weeds and insects.

The designations do not reflect the coldest it has ever been or ever will be at a specific location, but simply the average lowest winter temperature for the location over a specified time. Low temperature during the winter is a crucial factor in the survival of plants at specific locations.



JERSEY GEMS

by Richard Pelikan

Fifth in a series of articles by Richard Pelikan, featuring overlooked places of interest to visit.

Cape May, Part 1 - Birds & Butterflies

Most of us know of the amazing biannual migration of the Monarch Butterfly – from Southern Canada 3,000 miles to the mountains of Mexico in the Fall. Then, a new generation returns in the spring. Just as in taking a long motor trip, these amazing creatures need a rest stop before enduring the most difficult part of their journey – crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Cape May’s location, at the southern tip of NJ, is ideal because of its strategic location. After the tourists leave Cape May around Labor Day, the Monarchs arrive in September and October. They will spend days in the surrounding wetlands resting and stocking up on nectar from native plants before continuing their journey. Visitors can spend days in Cape May discovering the best Monarch destinations for viewing.



Outside of the tourist parts of Cape May is the relatively rural Cape May Point. One of best viewing locations for Monarchs is Cape May Point State Park adjacent to lighthouse. It has several acres of wetlands, forested boardwalk trails and meadows, all of which are good for viewing Monarchs. Also, the barrier vegetation along the Cape May Point beaches and dunes, the circle around Cape May Point Park and Lily Lake, all near the lighthouse, provided several sightings.



The Monarchs will go to any floral location in Cape May for food. One morning we spotted a Monarch sanctuary in a large Lantana bush around the sign of a downtown pancake house known as “Uncle Bills.” It was the most Monarchs we saw in any one location (I guess they preferred the nectar from Lantana bushes over the pancakes).

Cape May is also ideal for bird watching. It is an important stopover on the “Atlantic Flyway” for birds migrating from Canada to Southern destinations and the Caribbean. The same Monarch viewing areas are also ideal for bird watching. The Cape May Point State Park location has a bird watching observation platform “Hawkwatch” overlooking the dunes and a bird sighting billboard with bird counts and dates.

Check the following for today’s and previous days’ bird sightings: <https://njudubon.org/watches/cape-may-hawkwatch>. Unfortunately, climate change, over-development, pesticides and deforestation in Mexico have led to decreasing Monarch habitats and populations. Cape May remains as one of the few places to observe large gatherings of Monarchs in their natural surroundings.



Part One of this article, *The History of Cape May*, appeared in the December 2023 issue of *Bloomin’ Times*.



Read more about Monarchs on page 4 of this issue of *Bloomin’ Times*.