



The Garden Club of Newtown

Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc. and The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.

Jan-Feb-March 2026 Quarterly Newsletter



Happy New Year Fellow Members!

We hope that all enjoyed a relaxing holiday season filled with love, laughter and special moments with those we hold dear.

Winter thus far has been fierce, snow, ice and bitter cold. If you are trying out winter sowing, this is looking to be a perfect winter to start our garden plants outdoors!

Looking ahead, all our meetings at The Municipal Center, 3 Primrose St. begin at noon with a bring your own lunch. Our business meetings begin at 12:30 pm and our programs start at 1:00 pm.

Our first meeting of 2026 is on January 27. Prepare to be amazed by Hope Sim's presentation at 1:00 pm of our newly updated website. This website is our voice to the community and beyond!

Our meeting on February 24 will include a wonderful presentation by Louise Zierzow and Jeannette DelVento where they will share their knowledge and tips for the Victory Garden and your own backyard garden. There may even be an opportunity to sign up to tend to our rows this summer at the Victory Garden.

At our meeting on March 24, you will make your own Spring Centerpiece guided by our very own award-winning designer, Peggy Townsend. This workshop will inspire you as we prepare for our flower show in May. Yes, May! Due to conflicts at the Community Center, we had to revise our show date to May 13-15.



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At each of our meetings this quarter, Peggy Townsend will provide some valuable teachable moments for floral arrangements and horticulture display, all in preparation for our Club Flower Show.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut is hosting their annual Flower Show, entitled “A Storybook Garden” at the Hartford Civic Center. The Show runs from February 19-22. The club is not entering any of the Club competition categories this year but that does not mean you shouldn’t go and enjoy the show, the vendors and many lectures. If there is enough interest in attending, carpools can be arranged. There will be a signup at the January 27th meeting.

Planning ahead to next quarter, you may want to visit The Wadsworth 43rd Annual Fine Arts and Flower show running from April 24-26. This is a wonderful show where you can view incredible arrangements designed to complement the assigned piece of art. Then to make the weekend even busier, Newtown Senior Center and the CH Booth Library are hosting a Volunteer Fair at the library on Saturday April 25! A sign-up will be available for you to volunteer to man our table.

Our Club year will come to an end before we know it, so please say yes if you are asked to fill an available Board position for the next year or two.

Read on for more information on upcoming events. There are many opportunities for you to get involved and foster new friendships!



Happy Winter!

Paula and Sue



<https://gardenclubnewtownct.org>



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Jan-Feb-March Club Calendar and Events

(For complete details please refer to your 2025-2026 Yearbook)

A Friendly Reminder Regarding the Change to the Club Meeting Location

Due to the on-going HVAC updates at C. H. Booth Library, we will be moving our meeting location for the entire 2025-2026 Club year to Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose St, Newtown. Meetings will be held in the Selectman's meeting room. For easy access park in the spaces across from the Community and Senior Centers.

Balance of JANUARY

January 27, 2026

Board meeting 10:30

Club Meeting 12:00 bring your own lunch

Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street

Program: Overview of Club's Website

Hope Sim will provide an overview of our refreshed website

DESIGN DISPLAY TABLE: Artistic Crafts (decorate a hat, box, shoe with fresh or dried plant material

HORTICULTURE DISPLAY TABLE: Holly, evergreen branches, air plant. Succulent or cactus or fern

Raffle Centerpiece: Paula Toi

Desserts: Louise Zierzow & Sandy Stromberg

FEBRUARY

February 19-22, 2026

CT Flower Show

Civic Center Hartford, CT

A Storybook Garden - An NGC Standard Flower Show

Enter a design class. Choose one and have fun creating your own design.

Enter a horticulture class with your best, oldest, or favorite houseplant; or enter a branch cut from your yard.

Details in the **Flower Show Schedule** available at the FGCT website: <https://ctgardenclubs.org>

Or you may access the CT Flower Show website: <https://ctflowershow.com>



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February 24, 2026

Board meeting: 10:30

Club Meeting: 12:00 bring your own lunch

Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street

Victory Garden II - Presented by Louise Zierzow and Jeannette DelVento

These two experienced Garden Club of Newtown gardeners have taken the lead in designing and creating the Victory Garden at Fairfield Hills in Newtown. They will continue the conversation they started in 2025 about which vegetables and herbs do the best in the garden soil they have tailored for the sunny site. The public is invited to share their own observations about gardening in their yard..

DESIGN DISPLAY TABLE: Parallel Design

HORTICULTURE DISPLAY TABLE: Terrarium, Topiary, dish Garden, herbs, orchid

Raffle Centerpiece: Mary Liscinsky

Desserts: Vicky Taloni & Jeannette DelVento

MARCH

March 24, 2026

Board meeting: 10:30

Club Meeting: 12:00

Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street

Program: Make Your Own Spring Centerpiece

Teaching Design Principals

Presenter: Peggy Townsend

Peggy, an award-winning floral designer will share her knowledge of creating a floral centerpiece for the April holiday season. Peggy will teach principles of floral design. Members will bring their own containers and are invited to choose from flowers provided by the club and selected by Peggy. A modest fee is required.

DESIGN DISPLAY TABLE: Peg's creative holiday examples

HORTICULTURE DISPLAY TABLE: pussy willows. Lenten rose, African violet, Begonia

Raffle Centerpiece: Mary Thomas

Desserts: Mary Thomas & Mary Liscinsky



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HORTICULTURE

January, February and March---A Gardener's Hiatus

Text and Photo by Eileen Holleran



Now in the middle of January 2026, the great memory of last month's most successful greens' sale lingers on. The holiday gatherings, festivities and celebrations have come to a close, and I am thankful to have finally packed away 15+ containers of decorations. WHEW!

The first quarter of our new year is a relatively restful time for most gardeners. There are always thoughts and plans for new plants and changes to our gardens when spring arrives. However, this is a time to relax and enjoy the winter season. Plan a winter vacation, hike, ski, skate, build snowmen with kids., or...relax by the fire with a good read and/or a glass of wine.

These first three months might also be a good time to give more attention to house plants. Transplant them to bigger pots and move them to more desirable locations, if needed. Some of my plants are currently in recovery after returning "home", cranky from their unacceptable, temporary Christmas "housing".

Before you know it, February will be here, offering an opportunity to attend or be part of the CT Flower Show. Create a design or enter into the horticulture class a favorite houseplant or a cut branch. Just be aware that you'll be in danger of catching a disease at this event...spring fever!

The months of February and March are a time for gardeners to once again get physical with winter pruning, since there are several varieties of bushes and shrubs that benefit from being pruned at this time. The ones most familiar with us might be rose bushes (including knock outs), deciduous grasses, raspberries and grape vines.

So, sharpen your pruners...next comes April...VACATION IS OVER!!



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ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

Contributed by Peggy Townsend

Club Display Tables

Thank you, members, for all the designs and Horticulture exhibits you've been bringing in each month. These plants and designs have been very interesting and well received. They have inspired many well-deserved compliments and conversations, so please continue to bring something in each month.

The club yearbook has Design and Horticulture suggestions for each club meeting. You can create a design new to you as suggested or bring in whatever you created instead. These displays should be fun opportunities for you to share your special house plants, yard specimens, or design creativity and talents. I look forward to seeing your creations, sharing them with the club, and using them for a "teachable moment".

	January	February	March
Design Display Table	Artistic Craft: Use dried or fresh flowers to decorate a hat, shoe, purse, box or any other item	Parallel design	Creative holiday centerpieces
Horticultural Display Table	holly, evergreen branches, air plant, succulent, cactus, or fern.	terrarium, topiary dish gardens, herbs, orchids	pussy willows, Lenten rose, African violet, begonia

Please refer to the club yearbook for each month's display table suggestions.



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Wadsworth Museum: 43rd Annual Fine Art & Flowers

APRIL 24–26, 2026 Friday, 12:00 – 5:00 pm | Saturday & Sunday, 10:00 – 5:00 pm

Enter a Design

Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning to this beloved tradition, your work will spark fresh conversations between art and nature throughout the galleries. Designers are assigned a specific piece of art (painting, sculpture, collection, etc.) and asked to create a floral design inspired by it. These designs are not judged and can be created by one person or a team of two or three people. Designers attend an Orientation Brunch/Meeting to receive their assigned art on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 10:00 am. Designs are entered Friday, April 24, 2026 from 8-10:00 am and removed on Monday April 27, 2026 from 8-10:00 am. A registration form must be filled out ASAP to enter this show. For a registration form or more information call Peggy Townsend (203-470-8120) or Andrianna Milner, Events and Special Programs Manager, (860-838-4027) or email: Andrianna.Milner@thewadsworth.org

See the Show & Museum

Plan to see the show and have lunch in the Museum Café (Check Café hours before visiting.) Our club has participated in this show for over ten years. Come to support our club designers and for an enjoyable “Ladies Day Out”.

44th Annual CT Flower & Garden Show

“A Storybook Garden” presented by The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.

CT Convention Center; 100 Columbus Boulevard; Hartford, CT 06103.

Feb 19 **Thursday - 10:00 am - 7:00 pm**

Feb 20 & 21 **Fri & Sat - 10:00 am - 8:00 pm**

Feb 22 **Sunday - 10:00 am – 5:00 pm**

Enter Design:

There are still a few classes of design that have openings. Advance Registration is required for designs. Register online at <https://ctgardenclubs.org>



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Enter Horticulture:

Advance registration is encouraged but not required. You can register several horticulture entries; but only bring your best plants or cut specimens to enter that day. Peggy T will help bring your exhibits to and from the Convention Center if needed. Think about entering some of the fun horticulture classes like terrariums, dish gardens, and/or house plants. Call or text Peggy T for more information and ideas.

Visit the SHOW:

- This is a “Must See” event this year as we are planning our own Flower Show in May. You definitely want to see how things are done in Hartford to familiarize yourself with some of the flower show procedures so you can bring that knowledge back to our show.
- Usually, the club carpools to the show on one day. Date and time will be arranged at the Jan club meeting.
- Order Tickets in Advance: \$15.00* PER TICKET if ordered before Feb 7, 2026. Tickets are non-refundable and non-exchangeable.
- Visit <https://ctflowershow.com> for more details or to purchase with a credit card. You may also purchase tickets by telephone at **860-844-8461**.

Important Update to Future Event

“April in Bloom” is now “MAY IN BLOOM” scheduled for May 13-15, 2026

Due to a double-booking glitch at the Newtown Community Center, we had to change the date of our Flower Show to **May 13—15** instead of April 21—23.

Our new dates will actually give us more planning time and most likely more blooms.

Our first Flower Show Committee meeting was very productive. We now have some Committee Chairmen and committees and already a few people have established some strategies and timetables. Please contact me if you have any conflicts with our new dates.

The timetable below is subject to change. We will discuss and modify if needed, the “Open to the Public” show times at our January 27 Club meeting.



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“May in Bloom” Flower Show Timetable

May 12, Tues. 8:00 -12:00 Set Up: All staging, pedestals, tables, and signs, etc.

1:00 -3: 00 Entering: Design, Horticulture, Education, Botanical Arts

May 13, Wed. 8:00 – 9:00 Entering Exhibits by special arrangement

10:00 –12:30 Judging (Only Judges and some Chairmen present)

1:00 – 8:00 Show open to the public

May 14, Thu. 9:00 –8 :00 Show open to the public

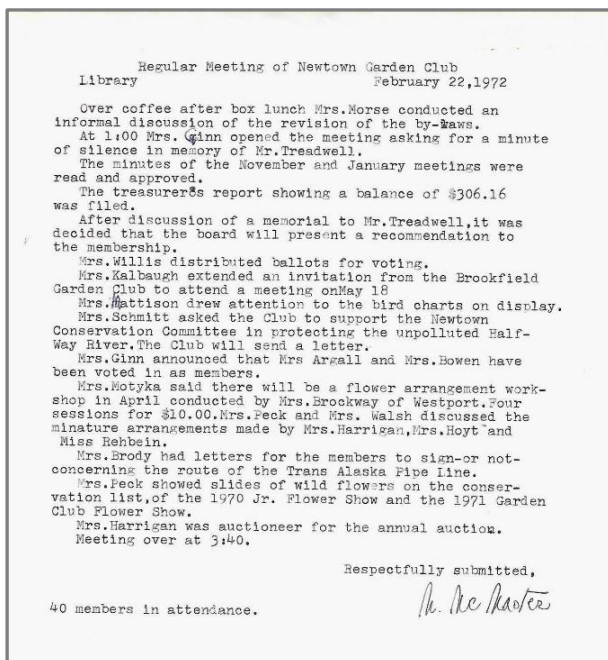
May 15, Fri. 9:00- 4:00 Show open to the public

4:00 - 5:30 Remove Exhibits and Show staging

CLUB HISTORY

Contributed by Joyce DeWolf

54 years ago on February 22, 1972, the Club met in the library. These are the minutes of the meeting.



Interesting highlights of this meeting:

1. 40 members attended
2. Each participating member was recorded as “Mrs.”--no first names.
3. A typewriter was used to document the minutes—no computer!
4. A moment of silence was observed for Mr. Treadwell
5. The Treasurer reported a balance of \$306.16
6. Political activism was a focus:
 - a) Request for the Club to support the Newtown Conservation Committee to protect the unpolluted Half-way River
 - b) Request for letters from members related to the Trans Alaska Pipeline. Member’s letter could be pro or con.



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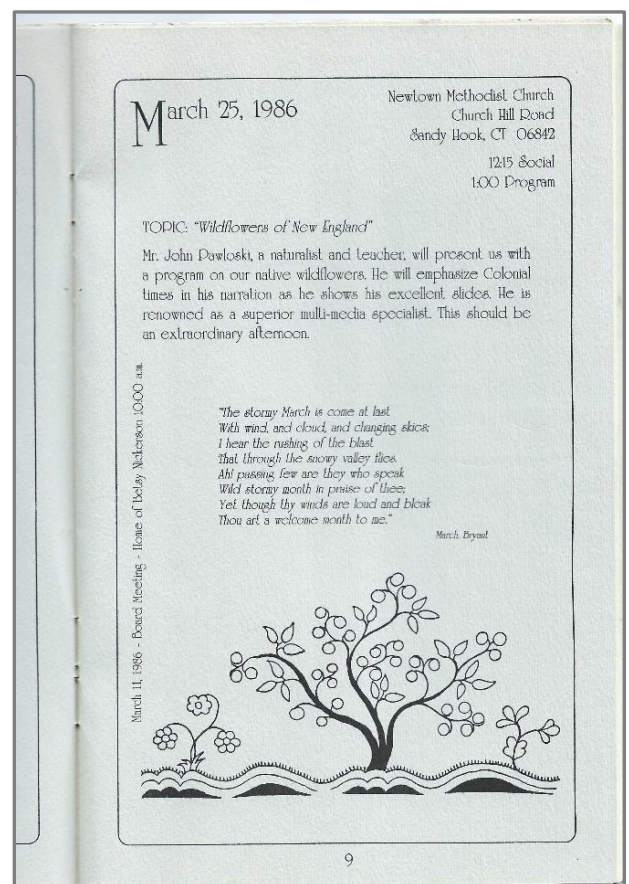


40 years ago on March 25, 1986, the Club met at Newtown Methodist Church for a program entitled “Wildflowers of New England” presented by Mr. John Pawloski, a naturalist and teacher.

Please admire the artistic drawing and the inclusion of a poem by March Bryant, also known as William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), an American poet and journalist known for this poem, “March” and many others.

*“The stormy March has come at last
With wind and cloud, and changing skies,
I hear the rushing of the blast
That through the snowy valley flies
Ah! passing few are those who speak
Wild stormy month in praise of thee;
Yet though thy winds are loud and bleak
Thou art a welcome month to me”*

I think we would all agree with Mr. Bryant’s sentiment to welcome March!





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9 years ago on January 24, 2017 the Club's program on "Ikebana: Art of Flowers" was cancelled due to "typical New England weather".

Deb Osborne would have provided the Centerpiece.

Connie Urso and Marcia Cavanaugh supplied the Desserts.

Alas, no meeting!

The Art Of Ikebana At Next Garden Club Of Newtown Meeting

The upcoming meeting of The Garden Club of Newtown on Tuesday, January 24, will feature a program on "Ikebana: The Art of Flowers," presented by Pat McNelis. Ms McNelis is a certified master instructor from the Ichijo School of Ikebana. Using minimal materials, Ms McNelis will create a dramatically beautiful arrangement showing the spiritual connection to nature through branches and flowers. Ikebana integrates natural materials with shape, line, space, rhythm, and order, revealing a Japanese respect for beauty and the natural world.

Ikebana International describes the Japanese art of flower arrangement as "more than simply potting flowers in a container. It is a disciplined art form in which the arrangement is a living thing where nature and humanity are brought together."

"It is steeped in the philosophy of developing a closeness with nature," the organization's website also states. "Ikebana is an art, in the same sense that painting and sculpture are arts... As is true of all other arts, Ikebana is creative expression within certain rules of construction. Its materials are living branches, leaves, grasses, and blossoms. Its heart is the beauty resulting from color combinations, natural shapes, graceful lines, and the meaning latent in the total form of the arrangement. Ikebana is, therefore, much more than mere floral decoration."

Ms McNelis will also discuss the history and principles of Japanese floral design as applied to Western spaces.

This informative program is free and open to the public. It will begin at 1 pm. Registration is not required, although donations are appreciated.

The program will be held in the Olga Knoepke Meeting Room on the first floor of C.H. Booth Library, 25 Main Street.

For additional information on the program send e-mail to thegardenclubofnewtown@yahoo.com.

TUESDAY JANUARY 24, 2017

BOARD MEETING: 10:30
GENERAL MEETING: 12:00

CONSERVATION MOMENT

PROGRAM:
**IKEBANA -
ART OF FLOWERS**

PRESENTER:
PAT MCNELIS

CENTERPIECE:
DEB OSBORNE

DESSERTS:
CONNIE URSO
MARCIA CAVANAUGH

JANUARY

PAM MCNELIS IS A CERTIFIED MASTER INSTRUCTOR IN THE ICHIJO ART OF IKEBANA. HAVING STUDIED AND TAUGHT IN TOKYO, JAPAN, SHE NOW CONDUCTS WORKSHOPS AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE ART OF JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGING FOR VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. BEYOND FLOWER ARRANGING, IKEBANA INTEGRATES NATURAL MATERIALS WITH SHAPE, LINE, SPACE, RHYTHM, ORDER.... INTO AN ART FORM REVEALING A JAPANESE RESPECT FOR BEAUTY AND THE NATURAL WORLD.

Cancelled due
to typical
New England
weather



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Reflections on the Season

Text and Photos by Louise Zierzow

Can you believe it?

Thanksgiving and Christmas have come and gone, and now the seed catalogues are arriving. The pictures and descriptions are stunning!

Last season's bounty from the Victory Garden was exceptional. Best-in-class was a new cultivar, **Rosa Bianca eggplant**. Looking ahead, be sure to join us on **February 24th** for a look ahead to the 2026 VG season.



Saved seeds for winter-sowing in milk jugs are ready to plant.

Forget-Me-Nots and **Swamp Milkweeds** that benefit from the winter freezing and thawing to break their dormancy. These plants will be protected from "wildlife" in repurposed milk jugs.



How do "seedless" watermelons, cute "sweet-and-seedless" Lolipeppers,[™] (grown in Canadian greenhouses) and "seedless" grapes come about? Bananas? Pineapples? Who are their parents? Google and AI provide endless explanations, but I may need to go back to college to understand it all. Some people prefer the original, better-tasting seeded watermelons. One cultural observation, regarding 'seedless' watermelons: no more seed-spitting contests...no more admonitions to gullible children to avoid swallowing watermelon seeds, "or else..." You know the story.

Spanish students at the Newtown Senior Center are earning "extra credit" (for a no-credit course) for enjoying imported Bananas and Pineapples (Costa Rico), Avocados and Blackberries (Mexico), Mangoes (Ecuador) Asparagus and Blueberries (Peru). Would you believe the exotic bounty we enjoy!



Take a look at this **Christmas cactus**, a faithful bloomer every year.



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Arthur has a variety of **African violets** blooming in south and east-facing windows. The bright red **Amaryllis** spent the summer outside, autumn in the basement, and winter on the windowsill and is joined by a mug full of **Paper White Narcissus**.



With winter upon us, we're enjoying signs of wildlife...check out **tracks in the snow**, dainty mice, chipmunks and bird tracks, jumping squirrels and a fox or two. Hopefully, no skunks or bears are stomping around our house.



"The early bird catches the worm," is not just for Springtime. Every morning this winter, a variety of birds flock to their feeder on the north side of the house, to feast on a combo of Sunflower Chips, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Cherries...covered with Red Pepper to discourage the squirrels. Some birds sighted are **Woodpeckers, Cardinals, Bluebirds, Black cap Chickadees**.





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After the snow melted, we wondered “who is tearing up the lawn?”



Please click on link below to see photos. Click on photo to enlarge. Ignore purchase prompts.

<https://www.smugmug.com/gallery/n-VWwwTZ>

Greens Sale is Community, Friendship and Fun

Photo Recap of 2025 Greens & Gift Sale

Photos by Louise Zierzow

Post-Green Sale Reminders

1. Yard Signs

- If you still have a yard sign please bring it to the Jan. 27, 2026 club meeting. Or please arrange to return to Joan Alexander.

2. Thinking ahead to 2026 Greens Sale

- Now is the perfect time to purchase Christmas and holiday decorations, accessories, etc. at discounted prices. Please look for these opportunities to purchase items for the next Greens Sale at discounted prices.



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*The BEE article and photo
December 12, 2025 issue*





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*Creativity **on** Display!*

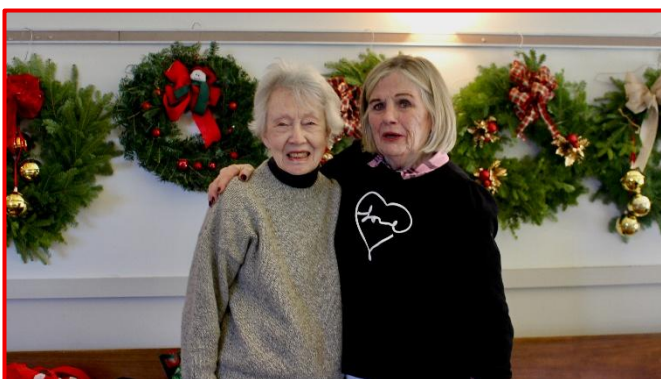


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Community, Friendship, and Fun





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Technical Tip: How to Access Websites from this Newsletter

In this PDF document you will see a number of website addresses highlighted in blue and underlined. Example: <https://ctgardenclubs.org>

This indicates a hyperlink to the actual website.

1. To activate this hyperlink, place your cursor over the website address.
2. The cursor will change *from* a black arrow  *to* a hand with a pointed index finger  finger
3. Click on the website address with this pointed finger.
4. The website will automatically open.