



BEE RESILIENT
Garden for Nature

The Garden Club of Newtown

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

Summer 2026 Special Edition Newsletter

August 20, 2026



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Thank You to all the contributors to this edition of our Newsletter.



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President's Message

Dear Fellow Club Members,

I trust that your summer has been full of good times with family and friends and, of course, time in the garden. Now that we are fully into August I am beginning to sense the earlier sunsets, the first hint of Autumn.

I look forward to the start of the Club's year with our first general meeting on September 22, 2026 at the CH Booth Library. The September meeting program will focus on flowering bulbs with a planned field trip one week later on September 29 to Colorblends Flowerbulbs in Bridgeport, CT.

Full information about the Club's meetings, programs, and activities will follow in our new 2026-2027 Yearbook to be distributed at the Sept. 22 meeting. Thank you to Vicki Boccuzzi for diligence and skill to create our annual yearbook.

We are excited to welcome four new club members to our team. Welcome to Colleen Boyd, Laura Duffy, Kimberley Neuenschwander, and Jody Tinios! Please remember to introduce yourself to Colleen, Laura, Kimberly, and Jody at the September 22 Club meeting.

I want to briefly acknowledge Club members who worked diligently throughout the summer and those who hosted wonderful events in their own gardens.

- Thank you to the Victory Garden team led by Jeannette and Louise with fellow team members including Joan Alexander, Vicki Boccuzzi, Marcia Cavanaugh, Linda Dunn, JoAnn Durkin, Jan English, Sue Greco, Eileen Holleran, Kimberly Neuenschwander, Joyce Pogers, Sandy Stromberg, Vicky Taloni, Paula Toi, and Peggy Townsend. I think there should be hearty shout-outs to members' significant others who added their support to the success of our crops!
- Joyce Pogers, Jane Sharpe, Joan Alexander and Peggy Townsend all opened their gardens and homes so that we could experience their favorite unique plants and the beauty of their gardens each complimented with whimsical garden art. So wonderful to enjoy social time together! Thank you Joyce, Jane, Joan, and Peggy for hosting these very special events.

Looking forward to being with all of you once again at our monthly meetings and diving into all the future activities that define our Club's contributions to the Newtown community.

My very best,
Hope



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Upcoming Events

Date	Time	Location	Event Description
Tues, Aug. 25	10:00 -12:00 pm	Library	Board Meeting
Tues, Sept. 22	10:00 -11:30 am	Library	Board Meeting
	12:00 - 1:00 pm	Library	Monthly Club Meeting
	1:00 – 2:00 pm	Library	Club Program: Color Your Garden-- Flowering Bulbs for Every Season
Tues, Sept. 29	To Be Announced	Field Trip	Visit to Colorblends Flowerbulbs, 747 Barum Ave, Bridgeport. Car-pooling to be organized.
Tues & Wed, Oct. 13--14	10/13: 3:30- 9:00 pm 10/14: 8:00—3:00 pm	Killington, Vermont	New England Garden Clubs, Inc. 10 th Annual Meeting. Killington Grand Hotel Resort Details & registration at: www.newenglandgc.org
Wed, Oct 21	SAVE THE DATE	Plainville, CT	FGCCT Annual Awards Meeting and Luncheon Details to follow at: www.ctgardenclubs.org
Tues, Oct 27	10:00- 11:30 am	Library	Board Meeting
	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Library	Monthly Club Meeting
	1:00 – 2:00 pm	Library	Club Program: History of Stone Walls in CT
Tues, Nov 3	10:00- 2:00 pm	To be announced	Greens & Gift Sale workshop
Tues, Nov 17	10:00—11:30 pm	Library	Board Meeting
	12:00-1:00 pm	Library	Monthly Club Meeting
	1:00- 2:00 pm	Library	Club Program: Seasonal Centerpiece “Make & Take” Workshop



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New Member Profile

Welcome Laura Duffy!



My Missouri grandparents were small, one-cow farmers. I admired what they grew but was too young to really be of much help. But the gardening seed had been planted. Fifty plus years later, it still doesn't seem like spring unless I'm planting something.

We moved to Sandy Hook in March from Redding 29 years ago. I inherited my huge wild "perennial garden". It turned out to be a gravel bed skim-coated with soil and seeded with a bucket of seed. Excitement evaporated when I attempted to transplant a selection of perennials from my former garden. My next garden project is to gear up for ticks and to restore it. Sadly, the raised bed vegetable garden is now completely over-shadowed by

neighboring trees starting at 2 p.m. Although healthy, I will be fortunate to harvest from it by late August. There are three other gardens which are doing much better.

My outside-of-motherhood professions were all in human services. I retired from my psychotherapy practice to be more available to my family.

I'm looking forward now to being of more service to my community through Garden Club and my other volunteer activities. I have always been an avid reader and patron of our wonderful library. My annual passion is entering vegetables and flowers in the Bridgewater County Fair in August.

"Gardening is an instrument of Grace that feeds the Soul"

(Attributed to May Sarton 1912-2012)



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New Member Profile

Welcome Jody (Joanna) Tinios!



Jody (Joanna) Tinios has always believed that a life well-lived should include family, friends, and beauty — whether from a canvas, a garden, or her surroundings.

She recently traded the charm of Charleston, South Carolina for Newtown, settling in with her husband, Haldor (an avid gardener and bonsai artist), and their beloved Border Terrier— a retired show dog who has traded in the ring for a much less formal career of chasing squirrels and raiding garbage cans.

Now retired, Jody spent thirty years teaching generations of middle school students art, and that learning isn't about getting it right — it's about showing up with curiosity and a willingness to make mistakes. In that spirit, she fills her days with art-making and crafting, always finding new mediums and projects to keep her hands busy and her mind inspired.

Gardening came into her life somewhat unexpectedly, taking root after she moved to Charleston, where she became intrigued with the lush, sultry beauty of Charleston's gardens. Once again settled in New England, she's discovering that Connecticut gardening is an entirely different process, and she's eager to learn the ropes. That's what has drawn her to the Newtown Garden Club, where she's hoping to soak up wisdom from seasoned Connecticut gardeners and cultivate new friendships. There's just one small hitch in her plan: years of an instinct of erasing anything that doesn't belong in the composition has left her with a habit of yanking up flowers as enthusiastically as weeds. She's the first to admit it and determined to learn the difference — one flower at a time.



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Summer Gardens - Alive with Activity

By Holly Kocet

Summer gardens are special, not only for providing a whole spectrum of color but also for flowers with unique shapes and sizes. It is these attributes that attract the real stars of the garden, the butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds who create movement and make our gardens come alive.

With this in mind, I set out to investigate my pollinator gardens to see which flowers are most attractive to pollinators and especially the flowers that attract many different species.

It comes as no surprise that the bright red of Cardinal Flower and Bee Balm are favorites of hummingbirds and hummingbird moths whose long tongues enable them to access nectar from these tubular flowers.

I'm particularly in awe of the plants that attract native bees, our most valuable pollinators. These flowers are mostly yellow, blue or white. Bumble bees in particular, love Wild Senna, Purple Anise Hyssop, Great Blue Lobelia, Shrubby St. John's Wort, and Summersweet Clethra.

The Mountain Mints with white fragrant flowers attract bees of all sizes, from the tiny sweat bee to the large carpenter bee - a species particularly valuable for pollinating many food crops.

Purple Coneflower, a garden staple, attracts a variety of pollinators. It offers a handy landing platform for butterflies like Tiger Swallowtails and Monarchs and also attracts bumble bees and tiny sweat bees.

However, the plant that consistently attracts the greatest variety of pollinators in my garden is Wild Bergamot. With fragrant leaves and lovely lavender blossoms, this plant attracts bumble bees (large and small), tiny bees, hummingbirds and hummingbird moths, as well as butterflies including Skippers, Tiger and Black Swallowtails, and Frillitaries. A garden simply cannot have enough Wild Bergamot.





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While some flowers are starting to fade, there are still plenty of blooms to carry us through late summer into early fall. These include the lovely pink Obedient Plant, Cut-leaf Coneflower, and Sunflower Everlasting whose seeds attract agile Goldfinch picking them as they sway in the breeze. And as summer winds down, there will be even more late-season bloomers ensuring that our gardens will be alive with activity until leaves start to fall.

Summer Garden Standouts

- ❖ Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis*
- ❖ Bee Balm *Monarda didyma*
- ❖ Wild Senna *Senna hebecarpa*
- ❖ Purple Anise Hyssop *Agastache foeniculum*
- ❖ Great Blue Lobelia *Lobelia siphilitica*
- ❖ Shrubby St. John's Wort *Hypericum prolificum*
- ❖ Summersweet Clethra *Clethra alnifolia*
- ❖ Mountain Mints *Pynanthemum muticum* and *P. tenifolium*
- ❖ Wild Bergamot *Monarda fistulosa*
- ❖ Obedient Plant *Physostegia virginiana*
- ❖ Cut-leaf Coneflower *Rudbeckia laciniata*
- ❖ Sunflower Everlasting *Heliopsis helianthoides*



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What My Garden Taught Me

From our Club Members

Thank you to Mary Thomas for her suggestion to ask our members to submit their thoughts, learnings, and inspirations on what they have learned from their gardens whether just outside in the front or back of their home, in containers on a deck, or on a sunny windowsill.

Thank you to all who contributed to “What My Garden Taught Me”.

I am a long-time gardener, learning much from my mother, the gardener. For years I have kept a pot of parsley on my windowsill or in summer on my deck. It's always handy to have in the kitchen. About three years ago, I noticed quite a few black “worms” streaked with yellow. Wow! How mysterious. I clipped them off and threw them in the woods far from my deck. Then I read about those “worms:” being the larval of the swallow tail butterfly. The next year I did not disturb those “worms” and within a week or ten days, they hatched and flew off (sadly, I did not see them). I was more than happy to provide a few parsley leaves for them to eat. I also read that they only lay their eggs on parsley and Queen Ann's lace. I thought that kind of odd, until last fall I let my parsley plant go to seed and it looked just like Queen Ann's lace! I have come to realize that the garden teaches many lessons.

Vicki Boccuzzi



Feeding hummingbirds was a long-time joy that I missed living in a condo.

I learned of some beautiful flowers that hummingbirds loved: Dipladenia (bushy version) and Mandevilla (climbing version). They come in red, (hummingbird favorites) and pink and white.

They are a neat, tidy plant, bloom vigorously and attract hummingbirds!

Marcia Cavanaugh



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Wineberries

Things My Garden Taught Me”



For years I thought I had wild raspberries growing next to my garage, however, explaining the berries to Joyce DeWolfe a few years ago, Joyce came over took a photo & told me there are wineberries. I have picked the wineberries for years & make pies with them often adding my blueberries with the wineberries.

The difference is:

Wineberry: The developing fruit is completely enclosed in a sticky, hairy green-and-red husk that peels back only right before the deep red, shiny berry ripens in June or July. The taste is slightly juicier and tarter than a standard raspberry.

Wild **Raspberry**: Grows and matures completely out in the open without a sticky enclosing husk and ripens to a soft berry.

In researching the wineberry, it was introduced in North America in 1890 from China, Japan & Korea as ornamental plants & breeding stock to hybridize new raspberry cultures.

Jeannette Del Vento

I continue rejoicing at the freedom to choose what to plant and to watch it grow.
I enjoy the pleasure I feel when friends welcome gifts of fresh vegetables and flowers.
I am happy with the assurance that there is always next year!

Things I Do and Recommend:

- Don't plant trumpet vine!
- Always check the salinity of fine sand before using it to help broadcast dust---like seeds.
- Go ahead and pull “volunteer” sunflowers before they overwhelm the tomatoes, even though the birds and pollinators are happy to have them.
- Remind yourself to always listen to the happy bird sounds while you are in the garden.
- Take a break and admire your garden world!

Laura Duffy



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VIRGINIA CREEPER- (Parthenogenesis Quinquifolia) is a vigorous native North American woody vine known for its five leaflet leaves that turn brilliant red in the fall, and its ability to climb surfaces using adhesive tendrils. It's a fast-growing, low maintenance plant that can cover walls, fences, and the ground, but it can become invasive and damage wood siding, so it requires management. It produces small, inconspicuous flowers followed by blue-black berries that birds eat.



MISTAKEN IDENTITY: Often confused with poison ivy, but it does not cause a rash like poison ivy (though some people may experience mild irritation from its sap). I Did!!!! Severe gastrointestinal distress in companion animals, birds, and humans. Grows on my Sugar Maple tree!

Peggy Jepsen

This is what my potted garden taught me this summer:

- That Marigolds RULE & have overtaken my two Geranium plants causing me to provide an un-bullied pot of their own where they can also bloom nicely!

Doris Naughton



Several years ago I stumbled across a prickly pear cactus. I was told it was native. I bought one and planted it in a crack in the front ledge. Lo and behold it grew and flowered and dropped its seeds.

Now there are many growing in several cracks of the ledge. It flowers for one day and the mature fruit is supposedly edible, but I haven't tried it!

After two years of neglect it is thriving. Our gardens no matter the form always seem to take care of themselves.

Paula Toi



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In the Victory Garden-- A Summer of Abundance

By Louise Zierzow

On the occasion of my birthday Sandy Stromberg sent me this garden poem by Dorothy Francis Gurney:

*"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth"*

The Victory Garden effort this year has been outstanding!

About half of our membership devoted time and effort, working in teams or solo, beginning in late May through the summer on steaming hot days and torrential downpours. Ideal weather conditions for bountiful crops of: Peas, Swiss chard, Salad greens, Bush Beans, Peppers, Cucumbers, Squash, Onions, Culinary herbs and Tomatoes! New this year, Corn and Melons. All the organic produce has been enthusiastically received by our friends at FAITH Food Pantry, Nunnawauk Meadows, and the Senior Center.

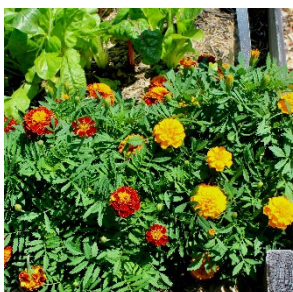


May, the beginning!



And now, August!

Belonging to the Garden Club of Newtown, may well have "something for everyone," from novices to "veterans." Gardening is above all a learning experience. For those who think they "don't know anything about gardening", what an opportunity to learn how we are growing our four rows of raised beds, to produce much-appreciated organic vegetables! We're learning to test the soil each year before planting crops in rotation. Companion planting is benefiting plants, saving space, and sometimes discouraging pests.





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Corn is a favorite summer vegetable, new to our garden this year. Did you know that corn, the long-awaited summer vegetable, gets fertilized when wind blows pollen from the male tassels at the top of the plant down onto the sticky female silks emerging from the developing ears below? Every single strand of silk must catch a pollen grain to grow an individual corn kernel on the cob.

Take a look at our neighbor's statuesque Sunflowers. Now we learn that those giants whose seeds the birds so enjoy are "related" to a vast array of edible plants: Chicory, Chamomile, Tarragon, Dandelions, Frisée, Safflower, Artichoke, Burdock, Cardoon and Lettuce. There are books written about this Asteraceae family as well as a stunning botanical print on a recent issue of **Cooks Illustrated**.



Many thanks to the following members: Joan Alexander, Vicki Boccuzzi, Marcia Cavanaugh, Jeannette DelVento, Linda Dunn, JoAnn Durkin, Jan English, Sue Greco, Eileen Holleran, Kimberly Neuenschwander, Joyce Pogers, Hope Sim, Sandy Stromberg, Vicky Taloni, Paula Toi, Peggy Townsend, Louise Zierzow.



Below is a recipe for **Green Bean Salad with Tomatoes and Feta cheese**. A favorite treat prepared by Arthur Zierzow....tasty and beautiful on a white platter.



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Green Bean Salad with Cherry Tomatoes and Feta

Why This Recipe Works

To make the beans in this salad tender, bright green, and deeply flavored, we blanched them in highly concentrated salt water (¼ cup of salt to 2 quarts of water).

This quickly softened the pectin in the beans' skins, so they became tender before losing their vibrant color; it also seasoned them inside and out. We made these flavorful green beans the star ingredient in a summer-perfect salad.

Before You Begin

If you don't own a salad spinner, lay the green beans on a clean dish towel to dry in step 2. The blanched, shocked, and dried green beans can be refrigerated in a zipper-lock bag for up to two days

Ingredients

- 1 ½ pounds green beans, trimmed and cut into 1- to 2-inch lengths
- ¼ teaspoon table salt, plus salt for blanching
- 12 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 ounces feta cheese, crumbled



Instructions

1. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large saucepan over high heat.
2. Add green beans and ¼ cup salt, return to boil, and cook until green beans are bright green and tender, 5 to 8 minutes.
3. While green beans cook, fill large bowl halfway with ice and water.
4. Drain green beans in colander and immediately transfer to ice bath. When green beans are no longer warm to touch, drain in colander and dry thoroughly in salad spinner. (Or clean dish towel to dry.)
5. Place green beans, tomatoes, oil, mint, parsley, lemon juice, pepper, and salt in bowl and toss to combine. Transfer to platter, sprinkle with feta, and serve.
6. Serves 4 - 6



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Finally, the familiar and beloved **Garden Song** by singer/songwriter David Mallet. (Included this summer in our church service)

Inch by inch and row by row
Going to make this garden grow
All it takes is a rake and a hoe
And a piece of fertile ground
Inch by inch and row by row
Someone blessed these seeds I sowed
Someone warmed them from below
Until the rains come tumbling down

Pulling weeds and picking stones
Man is made of dreams and bones
Feel the need to grow my own
Because the time is close at hand
And grain for grain, the sun and rain
Find my way in nature's chain
And tune my body and my brain
To the music from the land

Inch by inch and row by row
Going to make this garden grow
All it takes is a rake and a hoe
And a piece of fertile ground
Inch by inch and row by row
Someone blessed these seeds I sowed
Someone warmed them from below
Until the rains come tumbling down

Plant your rows straight and long
And temper them with prayer and song
And Mother Earth will make you strong
If you give her love and care
An old crow watching hungrily
From his perch in yonder tree
And in my garden I'm as free
As that feathered thief up there, up there

Inch by inch and row by row
Going to make this garden grow
All it takes is a rake and a hoe
And a piece of fertile ground
Inch by inch and row by row
Someone blessed these seeds I sowed
Someone warmed them from below
Until the rains come tumbling down



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Our Club Summer Events

June 15, 2026

Garden Tour at the home of Joyce Pogers

Thank you to Joyce for hosting the first of our Summer Garden Tours. It was a glorious early summer day, and Joyce's lavender border was in full bloom.



Amazing clematis



Smoke Tree on Joyce's front lawn

July 14, 2026

Ice Cream Social at Ferris Acres Creamery





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July 12, 2026

Lakeside Party at the home of Jane Sharpe

Thank you, Jane, for hosting a spectacular party at your home on Lake Zoar.
So wonderful to have the two garden clubs together for a lovely afternoon of socializing, perfect summer weather, boat rides on the lake, great food and drink.



View across the Lake Zoar from Jane's deck





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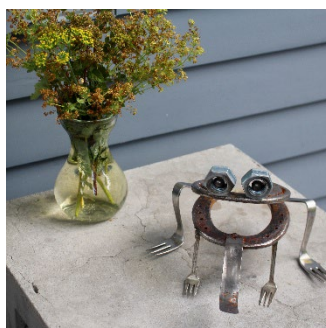
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July 27, 2026

Garden Tour at the home of Joan Alexander

The original date for Joan's garden tour was July 21, but intense storms caused a postponement to the following Monday. Hurrah!---the revised date brought beautiful AND dry weather. Members from both garden clubs enjoyed a tour of Joan's gardens and views from her deck down to her pond. Thank you, Joan, for sharing your gardens, engaging stories, whimsical garden structures, and a delicious luncheon.





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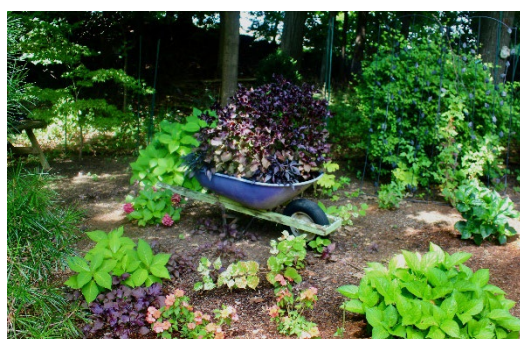
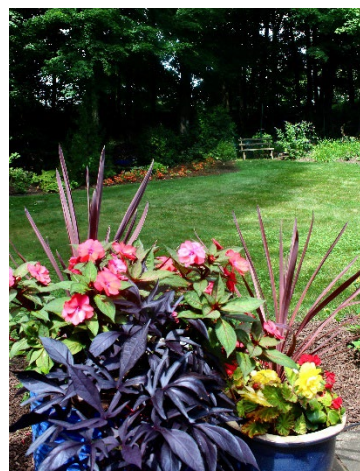
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August 18, 2026

Garden Tour at home of Peggy Townsend

A beautiful and warm summer day set the scene at Peggy's home for a tour of her diverse gardens with so many unusual plants. So great to have our new members—Laura, Kimberly and Jody—join us for a wonderful afternoon of exchanging plant stories, socializing, a demonstration of Peggy's efficient hoe, and, of course, food. Thank you, Peggy, for the visit to your garden and your hospitality!





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Member Photo Gallery

Joyce's Garden Story Photos and Words by Joyce Dewolfe



The archway calls out, "Through here".

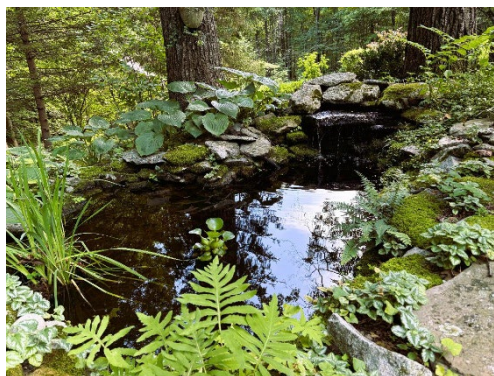


Gnarled root demands inspection.

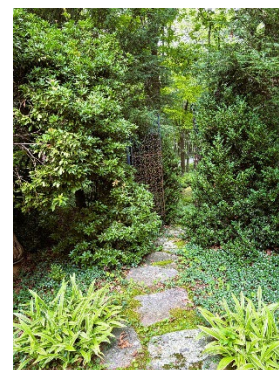


Two chairs invite secrets.....

PJ's trough shouts, "See me".



The pond whispers, "Listen".



The gates whistles, "Don't forget me".



Left: The Dutchman's pipe brags, "I'm the tallest".

Right: The mushrooms murmur, "We're the smallest".



Where the boxwood hedge hides old memories



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Member Photo Gallery

Photos and Words by Sandy Stromberg

Who lives here?

*Tree stump
Lake Dunmore, VT*



On Sandy's Deck



*The Beauty of
Queen Anne's Lace*



*Like the vines of my Mandevilla,
life winds and intertwines with
what surrounds me.*