

Lake Minnetonka Horticulture Committee Report  
June 18, 2020  
Submitted by Betsy Massie, Chair

We started off the year with active, fun and educational projects for The Lake Minnetonka Garden Club in the area of horticulture. The second half of the year proved to be challenging as the 2020 pandemic has changed the way we all gather, engage and volunteer. As part of the organization's mission “. . . to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, horticulture . . . ” the Horticulture Committee has adapted to fulfill this requirement. The Committee goals for the year included:

- Educate the membership on plant science through Hort Hints, the new LMGC website and other communications tools.
- Help to plan and implement a member meeting focused on Horticulture.
- Work with conservation on the Partners for Plants project.
- Develop a Seed Saving Project to provide seed packets to bring to the Shirley Meneice Conference.

And, with the COVID-19 situation a sub-goal was established:

- Horticulture outreach through different communication platforms.

We started the year by organizing a Seed Saving Workshop held on Wednesday, August 29, 2019. Thanks to many of our new members (Kathy Kessler, Ellen Phelps and Liz Weiner) and other seed enthusiasts, we saved seeds from native plants found in the Wayzata Depot Garden. For those members who had never done a seed saver project, the event proved to be very educational and it was fun to find the seeds in pods and flower heads! The group then packaged and labeled the seeds to take to the Shirley Meneice Conference and share with all GCA clubs.

Harriett Chute, Assistant Horticulture Committee Chair, represented our club at the Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference in Denver Botanical Gardens in September 2019. Harriett provided the garden club with an educational report from the conference and came back with great ideas for our club.

In October we worked with the LMGC Awards Chair, Tori Gagne, to develop nominations for both a Club and Zone Horticulture Award. We also consulted with past LMGC Horticulture Award Chairs, including Mary Meyer and Mary Morrison, to research a possible submission for the GCA Freeman Medal, awarded to a North American native plant worthy of special recognition. In reviewing the list of herbaceous plants that have already received this distinction from GCA, we submitted *Liatris*, a great native Minnesota plant for butterflies. Although our plant nomination was not selected, *drumroll please*, the 2020 GCA Plant of the Year is *Geum triflorum*, Prairie Smoke. Honorable mention was awarded to two species: *Asarum canadense* (Wild Ginger) and *Penstemon strictus* (Rocky Mountain Penstemon).

When the Governor of Minnesota issued a “Stay at Home” order in April 2020, we all scrambled to meet our goals and carry forth. LMGC President Mimi Keating was a calm and effective leader during these unusual times. Mimi came up with the idea of organizing a “Virtual Flower Show” and, with the help of the Photography Chair Holly Adams, Floral Design Chair Kathy

Gillum, myself representing the Horticulture Committee and, Vice President Mitzi Magid, we pulled off, Mayday, Mayday, May Day! The Horticulture Division offered three classes: Home Cooking Herbs, Victory Garden Vegetables, Growing Seeds and, Spring Bulb and Ephemeral Cuts. The online flower show was a success and is now housed on the LMGC website, thanks to Nancy Guldberg.

Thanks to Program Chair Dustin McGregor for organizing our May member meeting focused on horticulture. Luckily, we had scheduled Julie Weisenhorn, U of M Extension Educator, to speak as she is very tech-savvy and has experience in distance-learning platforms. Julie presented, “The Connection between Flowers, Pollinators and Food” via a Zoom Meeting where 35 members virtually attended.

As we were not able to gather as a large group in an effort to pull garlic mustard for the Conservation Committee and the Horticulture committee joint Partners for Plants project in Wolsfeld Woods, Bobbie Dressen (Conservation Chair) and I established “The Great Garlic Mustard Pull.” The LMGC challenged its members to independently pull garlic mustard during the month of May! What an effort! More than 30 club members organized neighborhood “pulls,” taught children home from school about invasive plants, posted the project on Facebook community pages, and collected more than 200 yard-bags of garlic mustard! Several members were able to get to Wolsfeld Woods too, so our P4P project continues with renewed interest in tackling this noxious weed throughout our community . . . from public trails and parks, to golf courses and backyards.

Finally, my thanks to Harriett Chute, Assistant Horticulture Committee Chair, for her support as well as her great additions to our monthly meeting notices. The Hort Hints found in the club’s program notices were very educational this year. Harriett will make a wonderful Horticulture Committee Chair for the next two years.