



Art in Bloom Garden Tours

Unlatch the Garden Gate....and step into a world filled with delightful destinations, creative experiences and new friends.

Growing Together Spring Newsletter 2024

Hello Spring! I guess I'm being punished for bragging about Vermont's glorious, but unusually warm February and early March. Last Saturday I was reminded of Mother Nature's fickle finger of fate, as we had a late Nor-easter storm that brought 18 inches of snow! My poor crocus that just opened up and my daffodils that just sprouted were buried in snow. A beautiful male robin was sitting in my crabapple tree with snow on his head and back and all puffed out to keep warm. The Canadian Geese, who just arrived, were waddling on the newly frozen ice, that was open water just days before. My shoveling muscles, that I had started to retune into gardening muscles, had a crude awakening after 2 days of shoveling. Okay, enough complaining! As the song goes, "the sun will come out tomorrow," and it did! Two days of beautiful, bluebird skies brought a rapid snow melt. My daffodils and crocus survived and the robins are happily pecking at the ground looking for treats. I think Spring is really here this time!

I hope you are enjoying some lovely spring-like weather and savoring the sites of new growth in your gardens. "Hope springs eternal!"

Gwendy

Spring Foraging

To many, foraging means finding and harvesting wild edible plants.

However, I like to forage for almost anything that grows, edible or not. In the Spring, I forage for pussy willows and flowering branches of dogwood, forsythia and lilac. Edible offerings include fiddleheads, ramps, wild garlic, dandelions, asparagus and mushrooms.

Wherever and whatever you forage, here are some guidelines to follow.

- Seek the help of an experienced forager or join a foraging club to learn about local wild edibles and poisonous lookalikes.
- Read and study books, guides and online resources about foraging.

GARDEN DESIGN

We are honored to partner with Jim Peterson and his staff at GARDEN DESIGN. Many of you receive Linda's weekly emails that offer a bounty of beautiful gardens, design tips, plant picks and gardens to visit, including our tours. If you're not on her list, sign up now: [click here.](#)

Monthly live webinars feature top speakers and horticultural icons of the gardening world.

The next webinar is "Artistic Flourishes: Pots with a Purpose," with Dan Benarcik, of Chanticleer.

- Know off-limit spaces and respect the laws and regulations of the land you are foraging on.
- Be prepared with the right tools, clothing and safety measures.
- Harvest responsibly, don't over-harvest or damage plants or the environment.



You will learn about container design and have a unique opportunity to gain insights from a seasoned expert at one of the most innovative gardens in the U.S.
**Thursday, April 18, 2024:
 6:00 pm EDT.**

This webinar is presented just in time for you to get new ideas before you plant those pots! And, what a great Mother's Day gift a seminar would be!
 To register and see the complete list of webinars, [click here](#)



Pioneering Women in Horticulture

The 4th in our series about these amazing women

Nature's Defender ~ Rachel Carson

A pioneering American biologist and writer who loved nature and warned of the dangers of human interference, Rachel Carson's name has been synonymous with the first vestiges of the environmental movement in the United States. She was a scientist, conservationist and editor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Her 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, exposed the harmful effects of pesticides on wildlife and humans, sparking a public outcry and an environmental movement that led to new laws and regulations. She died in 1964, but her legacy lives on in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Rachel Carson Prize and in the millions of people she inspired to protect the earth.



Featured Local Artist, Jennifer McCandless

Last year while waiting my turn on the pickleball courts, I had the good fortune to strike up a conversation with the charming woman who was sitting next to me. We could have talked for hours, but "the game must go on" as they say! Jennifer received her BFA in Sculpture from Otis/Parsons School of Art and Design and her MFA in Sculpture from

the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She recently segued into full-time sculpting, after serving as Art Department Chair, Curator and Director of the Mercy Gallery and a Nichols Fellow in Art at Loomis Chaffee. Her extensive exhibition history includes shows at the National Sculpture Society, the Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit, The Lemberg Gallery, the Housatonic Museum and the Hyde Park Art Center, to name a few. Jennifer is also an Eco Artist, creating outdoor sculptural works that double as pollinator habitats. She will be working with the Vermont Department for Natural Resources in creating a sculptural piece of garden art that will double as a watering spot for thirsty native pollinators (see photo above) such as mason and leaf cutter bees, beetles, moths and butterflies, and as bee habitats that are shown below.

Her current project, "Sculpting for Nature" is one you simply MUST see. She is reimagining outdoor sculpture as something that can blend in and grow nature rather

than dominate it. What a commendable mission! These make great gifts for gardeners or for anyone celebrating an occasion, including yourself! To contact Jennifer directly: **phone:** 860-818-4641 • **email:** jennifermccandless@icloud.com www.jennifermccandless.com, or, [click here to visit her Esty shop](#)



Here's a great Spring Supper!

The change of any season provides a ideal opportunity to change your pallet, from winter soups, to fall spices, to summer barbecues, to the freshness of spring vegetables. One of my favorite spring dishes is Asparagus Risotto. Asparagus is now available to us on a year round basis, but there's nothing to compare to the first, tender spears of the season. I hope you enjoy this delicious recipe.

1 bunch asparagus
1 large leek or white onion
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
4 cloves chopped garlic
1 cup arborio rice
1/4 cup white wine
3 1/2– 4 cups hot [veggie broth](#) (or use hot water with 2 teaspoons veggie bouillon)
1/2 cup basil leaves
1 lemon, zest and juice to taste
salt and pepper

Cut fibrous ends off asparagus and discard. Cut off the pretty tips and set them aside. Cut the "middles" into 1 inch pieces. Blanch 1 1/2 cups of the "middles" in a small pot of boiling water for about 5 minutes. Drain, and reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Blend until silky smooth, either in a blender or using an immersion blender, the blanched asparagus with the 1 cup of cooking liquid, 2 tablespoons oil and the basil leaves. Set this aside to add to the risotto at the end.

Thinly slice leeks into half moons and cook in two tablespoons of oil until soft-about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook about 2 minutes more. Add rice and stir to coat. Deglaze pan with wine. Add 1 cup of hot veggie broth and simmer and stir until broth is absorbed. Continue adding broth, 1 cup at a time, letting rice absorb it each time. Stir frequently. At the same time that you add the last cup of broth, add the pile of left-over asparagus "middles" and the tips, letting them cook in the risotto 3 minutes or so. At this point, rice should be creamy, yet slightly al dente. Stir in blended asparagus-basil "sauce," add the salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice. Heat just until slightly thickened. Serve in bowls and garnish with [pecorino](#) cheese, lemon zest and chili flakes. Bon appetit!



Milk as a deer repellent? Really?

According to George Longnecker, executive director of the West Virginia Botanical Gardens, the answer is yes! They have used milk for over a decade with great success. Mix one part any type of milk to three parts water and spray on foliage and flowers that are normally favored by deer. It's best to apply on sunny days so the spray will dry quickly. The milk solution remains on plants for at least 10 days or until there's a heavy rain.

One warning: According to some recent articles, milk applied to the soil can be harmful to microflora in the soil. However, with a layer of mulch under the plants, small amounts of milk that drip off will not harm the soil organisms. It seems too simple to be true! It's worth a try, and it's economical as well.

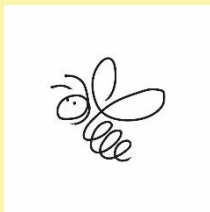


The Pine Siskin: That fickle little charmer

This tiny finch keeps birdwatchers on the lookout year after year, and sometimes they never show up! Their winter movements are erratic, as they frequent certain bird feeders and backyards one year and maybe not the next. Traveling in large flocks, they migrate together, taking their cue from the status of available conifer seeds. They love thistle, so if you add it to your feeders, maybe they'll come. You'll recognize them by their brown, heavily streaked bodies and yellow-tipped wings. And, you'll definitely know they have arrived when you hear their endless chattering with their flock mates!

A Message from the Pollinators

Don't "Spring" into garden clean-up too soon! Wait until temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Many butterflies, bees and other pollinators may still be wintering in dead leaves and hollowed out stems of last year's plants. **LET THEM BEE!**



Here's some laughable, in-the-garden comments that we can all relate to!

(authors unknown)

- Weeds have mastered every survival skill except learning to grow in rows.
- When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant, is to pull it out. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.
- You know you're a gardener when you're happy to devote 3 months of your life to growing tomatoes to save \$1.27.

Our 2024 Tours are all sold out!

We extend a super-sized thanks to all of you who have made reservations to join our tours and we look forward to traveling with you. And, at the same time, we are sorry to disappoint those who we had turn away. Please keep in mind that on occasion, we have cancellations and spaces become available. We will send emails to make you aware of availabilities.

We are busy as bees working on our 2025 tour calendar. We can't wait to share the "buzz" with you!

Grow Happy!

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