

**WILLIAMSTOWN GARDEN CLUB  
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

**May 15, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

**Milne Public Library**

- A. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** President Maria Siskind called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. This was an open meeting held in the evening to accommodate guests and working members of the community. More than 40 people attended, including over a dozen community members
- B. **WELCOME:** Maria welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked our many guests, thanked Louise and Betty for hospitality and asked for brief updates from members.
1. Denny Meneghelli: all containers have an assigned club member. Plants should be picked up at her home (319 Hancock Road) on Friday, May 24 and planted ASAP. Please water containers after planting until Town DPW takes over. Inform Denny of any plant problems.
  2. Kathy McKnight: our plant sale will be on Friday, September 6 at 10:00 am in front of Paresky Hall on the Williams campus. She requested member support for second plant propagation workshop at Diane Van Kempen's home (66 Orchard Lane) from 2-4 pm on Thursday, May 16. She displayed a terrarium created at party #1 and a polka-dot plant and asked each member to start now to propagate at least one small, attractive plant for the sale. With students as our primary customers, we will not be offering large pots for sale this year. Our aim: well-rooted, healthy plants for September. A "potting party" will be scheduled in August to get plants into attractive containers.
  3. Diane Van Kempen will speak on pocket pollinator gardens at Wild Oats this Saturday at 2pm.
- C. **SPEAKER INTRODUCTION:** Carol Oshinsky introduced Ken Gooch, a former Massachusetts State arborist now working independently from his home in Worthington. This is Ken's fourth presentation to our club. His topic: Right Plant, Right Place.
1. Ken identified the needs of woody plants:
    - a) Appropriate amount of sun or shade
    - b) Hardness zone (unchanged in his opinion)

- c) Soil types and amendments
- d) Ph test importance!!! (ag.umass.edu for high quality test)
- e) Pests and diseases
- f) Pruning (never more than 25%, not during active growth, and importance of good training)
- g) Water needs – especially important within the first 3 years after planting. 15 gallon water donuts ideal for trees.
- h) Human and non-human inflicted plant injuries
- i) Maintenance (protect bark from weed-whackers and mowers, and from wind only if necessary and with flexible supports)
- j) Ultimate size considerations (plants will grow so don't plant too closely or in a spot that will become shaded)
- k) Photosynthesis needs

2. Ken made several important points:

- a) The high quality of information on plant tags now: read them carefully!
- b) Always call 811 (dig safe) before breaking soil
- c) Be wary of too much shade
- d) Planting before hot weather gives the best growth conditions and cuts water usage. Use a slowly trickling hose to water and don't let plants dry out.
- e) If you can't plant bare-root plants right away store roots in damp mulch
- f) Tree root balls are rarely large enough
- g) Beware large trees offered in small containers
- h) Watch out for trunk injuries
- i) Check all plant material in nurseries to avoid girdling roots – tease roots apart gently if necessary
- j) Dig planting holes 2-3 times the size of root ball and amend very little (maybe just a little compost and loam?) No fertilizer at planting time. Do not plant too shallow or too deep – root flare at soil level
- k) Trust only the very best-trained nursery and garden maintenance staff
- l) Ken sees the largest threats to our gardens coming from more damaging ice storms and snow storms
- m) Monitor carefully and treat insect and disease damage

- n) Do not use cedar mulch – hemlock preferred
- o) New bad beech leaf disease identified – don't add them to your landscape
- p) Mass Ag website offers great webinars on quick spread of spotted lanternfly

D. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, June 13 – club-members only tour of Hildene in Manchester VT. Car-pooling from far end of parking lot at bottom of Spring Street – time 9AM.

E. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:10 p.m. followed by refreshments and a brief board meeting.

Submitted on behalf of Pat Wilk, Recording Secretary, by Karen Parker, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President