

WILLIAMSTOWN GARDEN CLUB GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.
St. John's Church, lower level

MINUTES

- A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. There were 19 members present.
- B. President's Report (Maria Siskind): Maria thanked the hospitality committee for refreshments at this meeting, and reminded members that we still need volunteers to man the WGC table at the Penny Social in the Lasell Gym from 12 noon-3 p.m. during the Holiday Walk on December 2, and the Holiday Greens Workshop on December 5 at the Harper Center from 1-2:30 p.m. She passed around sign-up sheets for these events. She spoke about plans for the Holiday Luncheon to be held at the Williams Faculty Club in December. Since this is our 90th anniversary year, Karen Parker has been researching the history of our club at the Williamstown Historical Museum, and we want members to tell stories about past club events they participated in. Maria also announced plans for the club to visit Hildene, the Lincoln Family home, in Manchester, Vermont on Thursday, June 13th, when we will hear a lecture on peonies. It will be our first visit there since 1991.
- C. OUR GUEST SPEAKER: Diane Van Kempen arranged for our speaker, Dale Scalise-Smith, who introduced us to the art of terrariums. Dale has a 30-year career in academia, but also trained at Cornell to become a Master Gardener. Through slides, several physical specimens, stories, handouts, and helpful advice, she introduced us to the art of terrariums. She has been creating and caring for her own terrariums for many years. Dale began with historical context. The first terrariums were designed by Dr. Nathaniel Ward in London, in the 1830's. He wanted to protect his ferns from London's air pollution. There are still some Edwardian terrariums that survive. These old-school terrariums were beautiful, and some looked like glass houses. She defined terrariums as self-contained ecosystems that thrive on diffused light, not direct sunlight. Terrariums can be either open or closed; both kinds need slow-growing plants. Closed terrariums do not need watering, but open ones should be misted every couple of weeks. She gave us a list of items necessary for terrariums (rocks, activated charcoal, soil, moss, and decorative items, such as shells, stones, or miniature figures.) She assembled one, giving advice and suggestions as she worked (chopsticks are handy for pushing tiny plants into the soil), and handed out lists of appropriate terrarium plants and resources for us to

investigate on our own. Her sample terrariums were intriguing and lovely. The presentation was fun and filled with factual information.

- D. SOCIAL: We shared beverages and an assortment of goodies after the presentation.
- E. NEXT MEETING: Our Holiday Luncheon 2023 will be Tuesday, December 12, at noon, at the Williams College Faculty Club

Submitted by Pat Wilk, Recording Secretary