

WILLIAMSTOWN GARDEN CLUB
GENERAL MEETING
August 4, 2026
1:00 p.m., Milne Library

- A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: President Karen Parker called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.
- B. WELCOME: Karen welcomed everyone to the meeting. We had 32 people in attendance. She called on some members to give announcements before introducing the speaker.
- C. UPDATES:
1. Trish Wilson, the lead organizer for this year's plant sale, shared details with club members and handed out a yellow sheet containing all the essential information. The sale is scheduled for Friday, September 11, from 8:30 a.m. until noon (or until all plants are sold) on the steps of the Paresky Center at Williams College. Members can now sign up to work the sale in one of three shifts: 7:30-9:00 a.m., 9:00-11:00 a.m., and 10:30-12:00. No plants will be accepted on the day of the sale. Everyone is encouraged to come to the potting party on Tuesday, August 25, from 9:00 a.m. until noon, at McKay's Family Farm greenhouse (next to Chef's Hat). Bring clean house plants, gloves, and tools. We should also bring clean pots and pots—either ceramic or plastic—as well as plastic container lids, to serve as "saucers" for the plants we sell. Fern Murtagh, who is in charge of our bamboo plants, reminded everyone to bring clean jars—small and narrow—for those plants. We have 60 sets of bamboo stalks to sell. Diane Van Kempen is in charge of our succulents, which will also need transplanting. Kathy McKnight asked any members who would like to paint a pot to contact her. Kathy also updated members on the recent vandalism of four of our new flower boxes along Walley Bridge, which were recently pushed into the river and damaged. Jesse Guiden, whom Kathy described as "our lifesaver" pulled them out of the river and has promised to repair them. We hope to put them back up this season.
 2. Mattie Kelley reminded us of the celebration of life for Susan Pike, a beloved and active member of our club for many years, which will take place at Buxton School on August 8 at 4 p.m. Sue's family has asked members of the Williamstown Garden Club to donate some of their own flowers for this service. Flowers may be dropped off at Buxton School at 4 pm the day before or 11 a.m. the day of the celebration.
- D. Karen introduced our speaker, Ken Gooch, a Massachusetts Certified Arborist, whose work is much admired in our county, and who last spoke to our club three years ago. He began by saying he hoped to help us to make better choices in what we buy, and to learn to be "kind to all of the trees." He had a wide range of suggestions, clear instructions for pruning, and lots of slides to illustrate his presentation, which lasted about an hour. "Every time you make a pruning cut, it's a wound," said Ken, and he illustrated many examples of correct and incorrect pruning cuts. He reminded us that no more than 25 percent of a live, foliated branch should be pruned—unless you are doing rejuvenation pruning, which happens after October, during a plant's dormant season. We should water carefully, with a slow trickle from a hose around the base of a plant. "Don't get your foliage wet; it promises disease," he reminded us. Five things keep plants healthy: a proper growing site, high quality plants ("always buy from a reputable nursery, never from

a big box store”), proper watering, nutrient availability (soil tests are a good idea), and good maintenance practices. He said it’s important to develop strong structures when pruning, and to always prune at the node (never leave a stud slightly above a bud at a right angle.) He said it’s always a good idea to take deadwood out. He shared some specific recommendations for tools, including his favorite Felco #2 pruner, and online site for Orchard Supply. In response to a member’s questions about brown leaves on lilac plants, he suggested rejuvenation reopening to take out deadwood and spraying with fungicide.

- E. ADJOURNMENT: Karen officially adjourned at 2:19 p.m. and encouraged members to enjoy the snacks and beverages at our hospitality table.

Submitted by

Pat Wilk

Recording Secretary

Note: the July 2026 meeting was a field trip to the Berkshire Botanical Garden so no minutes were taken.