

# Somerville Garden Club 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

26<sup>TH</sup> Edition



Plaque, Photo credit: Evelyn Persoff



SOMERVILLE  
GARDEN CLUB

[www.somervillegardenclub.org](http://www.somervillegardenclub.org)

P. O. Box 441895, Somerville, Massachusetts, 02144

The Somerville Garden Club is a 501(c)(3) recognized organization.

## About the Somerville Garden Club

Founded in 1994 by residents eager to share and expand their horticultural knowledge, the Somerville Garden Club is a thriving group of gardeners from Somerville and beyond.

Enthusiasm captures the spirit of this nonprofit organization dedicated to sharing gardening interests and expertise, sustaining the environment, and promoting urban green spaces.

Both novice and experienced gardeners benefit from monthly meetings featuring presentations by experts and may volunteer at community sites and events. The Somerville Garden Club welcomes anyone with an interest in gardens and gardening.

## Board Members

### Elected Officers

President: Rosemary Broome-Bingham

Vice President: Jonathan Rich

Secretary: Laura Brewer

Treasurer: Pat Cain

Membership Coordinator: Pamela McLemore

### Committee Chairs

Newsletter: Mary Person and Kelly J. Cooper

Programs: Judy Eisenberg and Evelyn Persoff

Publicity: Lina Morales

Sites: Irene Heim

Technology/Webmaster: Amy Cerrito

Graphic Design: Cynthia Frawley

## Message from the President

Rosemary Broome-Bingham, President

2019 has been a year of jubilee celebrations to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Somerville Garden Club.

The festivities started at the January 2019 potluck. A silver-themed decor, balloons, bubbly drinks, and heavenly chocolate opera cake (see inset photo) set the stage for the Club to recognize its



*Photo credit: Ann Steinberg*

founding members. The City of Somerville awarded a citation in celebration of the Club's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and I was privileged to accept the award at City Hall from Ward 6 councilor Lance Davis. In July, Pat Cain and I met with Mayor Joe Curtatone and Luisa Oliveira to discuss increased communication and collaboration with the City. Each month throughout the year, our newsletter has

delighted us with recollections of the past 25 years. The stimulus for the Club's founding back in the 1990s had been the City's Garden Contests, so over the summer, the Club held a Garden Contest open to all Somerville residents, with prizes presented by the Mayor of Somerville, Joe Curtatone. In November, we partnered with the Somerville Community Growing Center, who were also celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, to host a "Greening Celebration" event at the Somerville Museum with live music, food, drink, and a raffle. The Club wrapped up its Jubilee festivities at our December meeting, when Evelyn Persoff presented a heartwarming retrospective of the last 25 years.

I would like to extend a huge \*THANK YOU\* to the board, to the committee chairs and their members, and to all of you who volunteer throughout the year—whether it's writing articles for the newsletter, setting up/breaking down the meeting room, bringing refreshments, rolling up your sleeves and donning garden gloves at the sites, manning tables at community events, volunteering for the plant sale, or doing all the other tasks that make the Club so loved by us all. Finally, I would like to thank Kelly Cooper for editing this report.

# Treasurer's Report

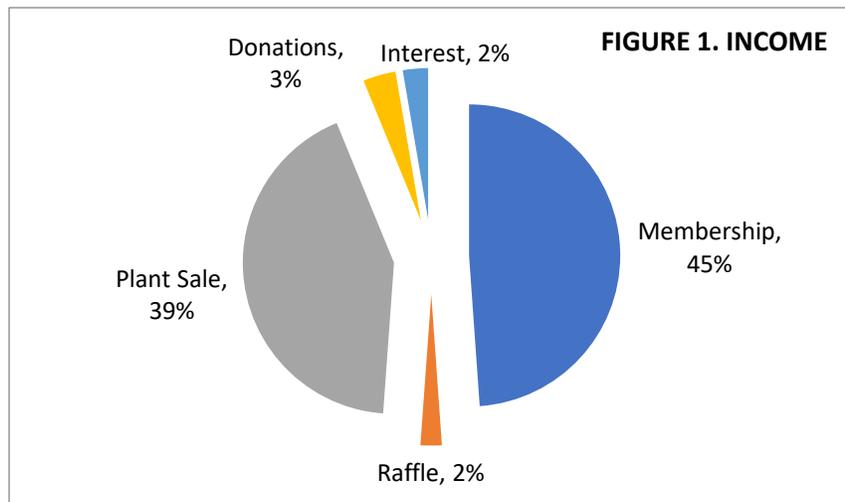
Pat Cain

The Club had a successful financial year in 2019, and—as normal—used some of its financial resources to help others. Proceeds from the Plant Sale continue to grow as more customers use credit instead of cash and do more impulse purchases.

**Remember:** *Your employer may donate to local charities like us in the name of employees who donate time to them. Please check to see if your employer will match your volunteer efforts with a contribution to us.*

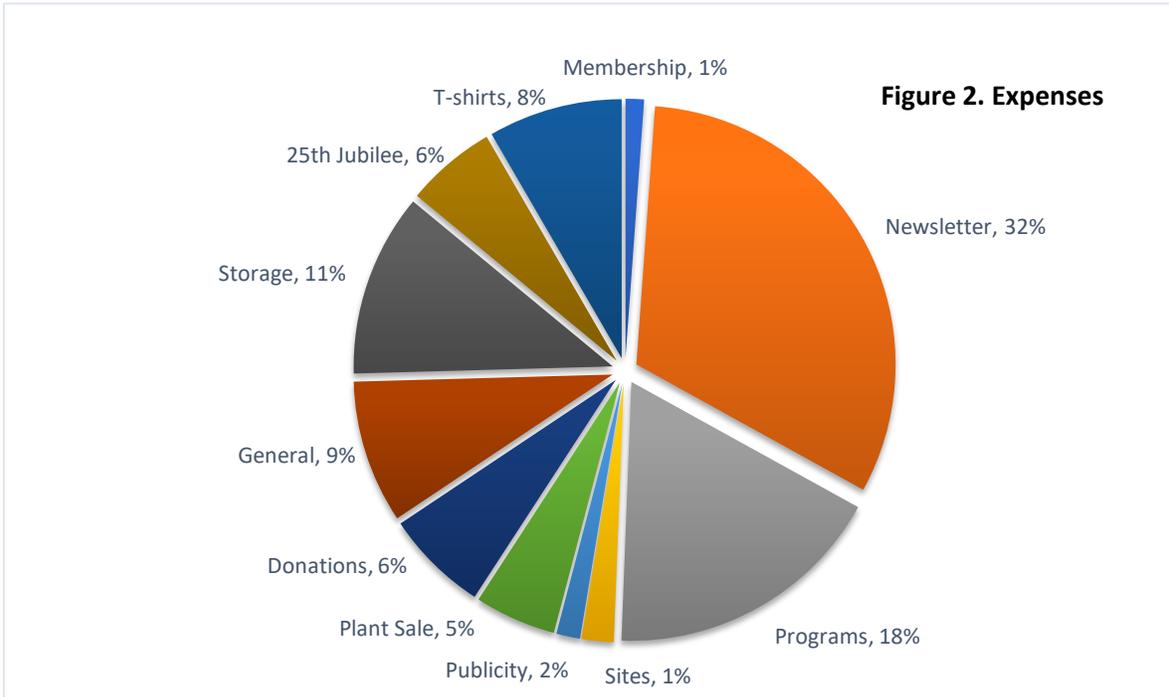
In terms of membership, most members used the online membership process and its ease generated some new memberships. Large expenses included purchasing a new projector for our meetings and buying t-shirts that were later sold to members. We also donated to the Somerville Community Growing Center's Cultivate campaign. This year we did not spend much on our planting sites as they were in transition, and unfortunately as usual, no one took advantage of the educational reimbursement program.

January through December Income, as shown in Figure 1, was composed mainly of membership dues and Plant Sale proceeds and totaled \$13,672.00—which is about 10 percent more than average.



The Club's expenses in 2019 were primarily used to cover the newsletter, speakers at the monthly meetings, and our storage locker, totaling \$15,600, as shown in Figure 2. This year we underspent on our planting sites as they were in transition.

Again, no one took advantage of the club's educational reimbursement opportunities this year (hint, hint).



The Club's 2020 budgeted income is projected to be about \$10,300 and is very similar to the current year. Expenses are budgeted to be slightly more than income. The Club continues to have sufficient free cash and funds in the bank to carry us forward.

## Membership

Pamela McLemore

It has been another busy year for Membership. Members continued to get more comfortable with our online database. Much time was spent this year encouraging sign-on and resetting passwords, but this was well worth the effort as once done it needs no further intervention by the Membership Coordinator. Membership is now on an annual 12-month rolling basis. This has helped spread out the membership renewal work as well as encouraged new members to join at any time of the year.

As a result of the database, we can offer some year-to-year statistics: We currently have 267 active members, up from 218 this time last year. Of this group, 156 paid online, 61 paid by check, and 11 memberships were paid with cash. Online payments

increased from “almost” 50% last year to over 66% this year. We think this is excellent participation for the 2nd year.

Of the active members, 105 are new memberships, and the remaining are renewals, complimentary and gift memberships. We awarded 9 complimentary memberships as prizes in the Garden Contest. A short note here about new members: We participate in a program with the Somerville Municipal Federal Credit Union which allows SGC members who might not otherwise qualify, to join the credit union based on their SGC membership. As a result, we receive about 40 new members each year recruited by the credit union who do not renew.

Geographics: Our membership is comprised of members living in 33 different cities in 8 different states. Most of our members (161) live in Somerville (up from 127 last year)! Next is Cambridge with 38 (up from 29), then Medford at 14, and Arlington at 5 members. It should also be noted that many of these communities have their own garden clubs, yet many gardeners choose to participate and enjoy ours. Some of our out-of-state members were once local members who moved away but have chosen to maintain their membership in order to continue to receive our excellent monthly newsletter. Interesting, of our more than 260 members, 60 are men and the remainder women or husband and wife joint memberships.

In 2019, we hosted our “first annual” New Members Garden Party. It was a great success! Sixteen new members attended along with 12 long-standing members. No politicking, just visiting and making new friends. We hope to do this each year.

Membership Coordinator is an elected Board position. It is a big job that is done best when shared. I hope to pass the Membership Coordinator reigns over next year and stay on in the position of assistant-coordinator to smooth the transition. If you are interested in getting involved in this area of the Club, please let me know.

All in all, an exciting and challenging year for Membership.

## Programs

Judy Eisenberg and Evelyn Persoff, Co-chairs

### *Field Trips*

Club members took three field trips in 2019:

#### **April 27th, Garden in the Woods**

SGC Members attended a field trip to the New England Wildflower Society's "Garden in the Woods" in Framingham. The 27<sup>th</sup> was Arbor Day and in addition to viewing all the lovely wildflowers growing in and around the woods, there was a demonstration given by Jonathan Dory on planting and pruning trees. Members also took advantage of the opportunity to buy potted native plants during the visit.

#### **May 18th, Fresh Pond reservation**

SGC member Elizabeth Wylde, a volunteer steward and program coordinator for Friends of Fresh Pond Reservation, led SGC members on a walk through the reservation's Lusitania Woodland Habitat. The Friends of Fresh Pond and Cambridge Water Department have been working collaboratively for several years to restore this Habitat. Invasive plants have been removed and many native plants, shrubs, and trees have been planted to restore the health and ecological balance of the Habitat's ecosystems.

#### **October 26<sup>th</sup>, Mount Auburn Cemetery**

SGC members went on a 3-hour guided tour of the horticultural highlights of Mount Auburn Cemetery. They viewed trees and plantings that were of seasonal interest, plus "individual specimens recorded as Massachusetts state or New England champions of their species."

### *Monthly Meetings*

#### **January 9, Annual Potluck Dinner**

A special 25th Jubilee anniversary was celebrated at our annual meeting and potluck. Some of the 1994 founding members attended and were recognized, while guests and other members socialized with Garden Club friends old and new.

Delicious appetizers, entrées, hot dishes, side dishes (vegetables, pasta, salads), and desserts along with a special jubilee sheet cake were shared.

#### *MONTHLY MEETINGS:*

All Somerville Garden Club meetings are free and open to the public every second Wednesday, from 7-9pm. Meetings are held at the Tufts Administration Building, (TAB), 167 Holland Street, second floor, wheelchair accessible. Parking is available, and the building is a ten-minute walk from the Davis Square MBTA stop.

**February 13, Scott Glanzman & Cathy Reuben, “The Art of Cannabis Cultivation”**

Somerville residents Scott Glanzman and Cathy Reuben gave a crash course on the basics of growing marijuana (cannabis) in your home or back yard. After a brief summary of applicable law, they moved to the nuts and bolts of cultivation. They reviewed the various growing stages from seed to harvest and shared tips on light, water, food, and common mistakes. Scotty and Cathy, both lawyers, have lived in Somerville for over 30 years. Scotty is a lifelong gardener and has successfully grown marijuana in Massachusetts.

**March 13, Lindsay Allen, “Food for Thought—Urban Gardening”**

Lindsay Allen, the Rooftop Farmer at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and Operations Director at Higher Ground Farm, described these operations. We learned about the history of urban gardening, food justice, and innovative ways to grow food at your home!

**April 10, Courtney Kirk, “Recalibrating Beauty: Shifting Perceptions of Landscape Aesthetics”**

Courtney Kirk, Public Space Planner for the City of Somerville’s OSPCD Parks & Open Space division, a Registered Landscape Architect in Massachusetts and former Sustainable Planting Design Instructor at the Boston Architectural College, talked about the evolution from well-kept lawns to high performing landscapes, provoking discussion on maintenance and public green space.

**May 8, Betsy Williams, “Pots, Plots, and Window boxes: Gardening in Small Spaces”**

Attendees learned which containers work best for patio and dooryard gardening, the plants that thrive in local exposure, and tricks for growing in raised beds. The talk covered the best soil to use in plots and containers; seeds and plants that work well in containers; watering techniques; feeding; and vertical gardening.

**June 12, David Falk, “Native Plants for Shady Gardens”**

David Falk, affiliated with the New England Wildflower Society, gave a presentation on shade gardening with natives throughout the growing season, including ground covers and lawn alternatives. David has been working with the City of Somerville on tree planting and pollinator corridors. And he and a coworker installed the pollinator habitat garden at Morse-Kelley playground on Summer Street last fall.

**July 10, Movie Night! British horticulturist Monty Don**

A BritBox video from Britain’s *Gardeners World* horticultural series were shown in lieu of Amy Mertl’s presentation tracking ant species and their habitats at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, as Amy was unable to come to the meeting.

**August 14, Prizegiving! Elizabeth Almeida, “Local Mushrooms: How Do They Grow.”**

After Mayor Joe Curtatone awarded the prizes for our Greening Somerville Garden Contest, Elizabeth Almeida of Fat Moon Mushrooms in Westford talked about growing mushrooms; their nutritional and environmental needs; and how mushroom compost introduces unique bacteria and loads of earthworms to your garden. With the right climate, they can be grown indoors all year. They are excellent recyclers of waste material, turning indigestible byproducts such as sawdust, coffee grounds, and straw into food. A few mushroom kits were donated to the raffle and packages of mushrooms were offered for sale. Fat Moon Mushrooms currently grows shiitakes, oysters, and lion’s mane.

**September 11, Annual Garden Bounty**

Members shared samples of fresh or cooked produce from their own gardens and talked about growing and preparing their own produce.

**October 9, Allison Houghton, “Gardening for the Planet in Your Own Backyard”**

Allison Houghton, Soil Health Advisor, Writer, and Naturalist spoke about “Gardening for the Planet in Your Own Backyard: Permaculture and Carbon Sequestration.” She recently wrote *The Carbon Sequestering Garden: Gardening for the Planet While Growing Some of the Best Food Possible*. She currently works at the Northeast Organic Farming Association with their soil technical assistance program. Guided by the principles of permaculture (also known as agroecology), gardeners can learn to become stewards of the immense thriving world beneath our feet. Learning these skills not only has benefits for our gardens and the food we grow, but also for our local ecosystems, watersheds, communities, and for the planet.

**November 13, Dorothy Gilman, Adventures in House Plants**

Dorothy Gilman, longtime Somerville Garden Club member and a former Club president, gave a lively and informative talk about houseplants. Dorothy maintains almost two hundred plants at home and in her greenhouse. She discussed her favorites and demonstrated how to propagate new plants through division and cuttings. Some of the plants she propagated at the meeting were donated to that evening’s plant raffle.

**December 11, Evelyn Persoff, The Somerville Garden Club’s First Quarter Century**

To honor the final month of the Somerville Garden Club’s 25th anniversary jubilee year, Evelyn Persoff, another longtime SGC member, presented a talk and slide show on the history of the Club’s “First Quarter Century.” Attending members reminisced about their experiences going back to 1994, when the Club was founded, and even earlier.

## Public Relations

Lina Morales & Eleanor Ramsay

The Public Relations Committee promoted the activities of the SGC and the contributions the Club makes to the community.

Coordinating with the Program Committee, we sent press releases for SGC monthly meetings to community news sites and promoted the Club activities on the SGC website, on Facebook, through local gardening groups, and via local listings. We also used targeted online advertising to promote the Plant Sale. Because the sale is the primary fundraiser for the Club, we not only sent out press releases, but also contacted other local garden clubs, universities, and green groups. As usual, Cynthia Frawley created our poster for the Plant Sale. We used it online, shared it with members, and placed a small number of posters around Davis Square and other parts of Somerville to remind people of the sale.



**SOMERVILLE GARDEN CLUB**

**MEET FRIENDLY FELLOW GARDEN ENTHUSIASTS**

*You are invited to join our meetings.*

When: Second Wednesday of each month, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

Where: Tufts Administration Building, (TAB), 167 Holland Street, second floor, wheelchair accessible.

All Somerville Garden Club meetings are free and open to the public.

The Somerville Garden Club welcomes both novice and experienced gardeners.

**INTERESTED IN PLANTS? LOVE TO GARDEN? JOIN THE CLUB!**

*For \$25 a year you get:*

- A monthly newsletter filled with tips.
- An expert monthly lecture on gardening near Davis Square.
- 10% off local garden centers including Pemberton's.
- Volunteering opportunities on Club gardening projects.
- Special private garden tours.

[www.somervillegardenclub.org](http://www.somervillegardenclub.org)

Credit: Mattman

Richard Chase

Laraine Allen

The Committee also set up and supervised volunteers for the SGC table at Art Beat in Davis Square, where we provided literature, advice, and examples of invasive plants such as Black Swallowwort to the greater community. The day was lovely, and we were grateful to all our table volunteers. In addition to ArtBeat, we shared a bi-monthly table at the Union Square Farmers Market with the Somerville Community Growing Center. The market proved to be a good place to engage with active local gardeners. The Club also had a table at the SustainaVille event at the Somerville Central Library on April 27<sup>th</sup>. We shared similar information and advice as we did at ArtBeat. This year, we urged people to sign up for memberships or renewals at our website.

In 2019, we added two new items of collateral. In February, we printed a new bookmark (shown above). We printed 500, and dropped some off at City Hall where they are now included in Somerville's new resident packet, and kept the rest to give out at ArtBeat, Farmers Markets, etc.

We were excited to have new SGC t-shirts (logo on front and website URL on the back) printed up in the colors "Leaf" and "Berry." The new V-neck style proved to be very popular, but the traditional crew neck also sold well. There are still limited styles and colors available at \$15 each, but future t-shirt orders are likely to be slightly more expensive. We used a local company, Hemlock Ink, to silkscreen the t-shirts. If you have ideas for other branded items you think would be popular, please tell us!



Photo credit: Lina Morales

Finally, journalist Denise Keniston published an article about Club members John Hallam and Teri Swartzel in the *Somerville Times*.

## Up close: An inspirational Somerville urban garden

By Denise Keniston

John Hallam and Teri Swartzel consider themselves amateurs on Somerville's flourishing home gardening scene. They relish the challenge of growing crisp, colorful vegetables and bright, bouncy flowers in an urban environment set against the backdrop of New England's often inhospitable growing conditions.

Ten years of trial and error and they've learned a few things first: a great garden starts with good water. Last year, they installed an underground, low-tech rainwater harvesting system that holds 2000 gallons of water collected from two roof gutters, enough water for their backyard garden.

Trevor Smith, President of Land Escapes Design, designed the system. "The rainwater comes from the downspouts and into a catch basin with [what looks like] big milk crates that filter out large debris like leaves and twigs," he says. "There's a mesh bag on the inside which filters our fine debris, such as dust and grit and pollen and flows into the cistern holding 2000 gallons of cleaned rainwater. The pump draws up the water for garden irrigation."

John and Teri planted dozens of seedlings in their cellar back in January and February. They purchased the best seeds possible and, using containers like recycled food and drink containers,

boxes, and jars, put seeds in the soil and watched them grow.

After the starters grew to an inch or more Teri and John carried them out to the raised beds and under Teri's makeshift cold frames. "Getting a jump on things is important because the New England growing season is short and you extend your growing season with starters," says Teri. "This year we brought some starters out to the raised bed area and had to bring them back in at night because the temperatures starting dropping a lot. We had to wait to put them in the ground."

Makeshift cold frames are the intermediary step between starters and direct planting. John uses salvaged pieces of wood for a box and then covers it with plastic to capture heat and diffuse direct sunlight. They are situated on the corners of the raised beds where eventually the starters will be planted directly into the ground. "Cold frames are the gardener's best friend! If you don't want to splash out lots of money buying one," says John. "Ours isn't expensive or elaborate but they get the job done, which is a place to transition your starters before putting them in the ground."

Teri and John have a mixture of vegetables, flowers, and trees. Their raised beds are seeded with beans, peas, lettuce, tomatoes and more. A makeshift cold frame is a starter for seedlings nearly ready to be planted directly into the ground. "We



John Hallam and Teri Swartzel's backyard urban garden incorporates state-of-the-art techniques and whole lot of effort on the part of the gardeners. More photos on page 12. — Denise Keniston

have four raised beds this year for our vegetable garden. Every year we rotate crops to maintain the health of the soil," says John. "You also keep track from year to year what works well and what doesn't and then you try new things. For example, plant vegetables that grow well together, like tomatoes and basil. Perfect!"

For beginners, John and Teri have a list of "no fail" vegetable plants that will get you started your first couple of years. "Tomatoes, asparagus, peas, beans, and peppers are fairly easy to grow," says Teri.

But, they can be finicky and difficult to grow. "We had a severe winter a couple of years ago and many of my roses never recovered," says John. "I've had to prune back several of them in hopes they will bounce back. I'll just have to wait and see."

John and Teri are members of the Somerville Gardening Club where they get much of their information and information. The SGC meets the second Wednesday of every month. They can be reached at Somerville Garden Club, 600 N. ...

## Sites

### Irene Heim

In 2019, the Somerville Garden Club maintained gardens in three public sites: at the Somerville Museum (1 Westwood Road), at the Central Library (79 Highland Ave), and along the Somerville Community Path near Highland Road. This is one site fewer than we maintained last year, since the West Branch Library and its grounds are now closed for renovations. Last year's effort to rescue plants from the WBL, however, led to significant expansions at the other sites, so all in all, our volunteers took care of almost the same volume of plantings as before. For example, a previous lawn area next to the Pollinator Garden at the community path is now a flower-bed surrounding a Japanese maple, and at the Central Library, an older row of yews to the left of the bicycle parking area has been broken up to make room for winterberries, ironweed, tall asters, and many other new perennials.



The Museum site was maintained mostly by Susann Wilkinson and Sarah Quilter, with help from Irene Heim, Laura Ramsey, Suzie Teegarden, Rosemary Broome-Bingham, and Cynthia Frawley.



At the Central library, Julie Corwin, Lindsay Locke, and Irene Heim did most of the work, helped by Cynthia Stillinger and Paula Minihan. This site has improved dramatically from a couple of years ago, but construction of the new High School and the redesign of the entire Central Hill Campus are now beginning to disrupt

our progress. We already had to dismantle the circular bed around the library sign and will probably have to pause gardening along the library's foundation in the next year or two. Courtney Kirk, the

City's new Streetscape and Open Space Planner, has expressed a commitment to keep the Garden Club involved in the design and maintenance of garden space on the renovated library grounds after renovation.

Our largest and most complex site now is the one at the community path, consisting of the Native Pollinator Garden at the end of Highland Road as its prominent center; the new Japanese-maple bed next to the Native Pollinator Garden; the south side of



*Photo credits (3): Irene Heim*

Highland Road with a large garden of sun perennials, shrubs, and small trees; and north of Highland Rd with a shade garden under a mature cypress and several more beds in part-sun/part-shade. Janet Campbell takes care of the areas south of Highland and under the cypress, while

Anna Warrock directs all work in the pollinator garden as well as the remaining beds to its north. Regular collaborators on Anna's team are Suzie Teegarden, Irene Heim, and Paula Minihan. Giles Kotcher also has been active.

Looking to the future, we have started to explore the possibility of creating a new site on the community path at Thorndike Street, behind the two memorial benches for Margaret Sanfilippo, but we have yet to come to an agreement with the abutters about sharing their water faucet. We are also prepared to get involved at the West Branch Library again when it reopens, although there are no specific plans so far for the division of labor between the City and the Club.

## Technology

### Amy Cerrito, Technology/Webmaster

In 2019, the Club moved its email communication platform from Yahoo to Mailchimp. We connected Mailchimp to our MemberPress membership database to ensure our membership email list is up to date. We made various updates to our MemberPress integration with input from the Membership Coordinator and set up the monitoring of emails from MemberPress to make sure members receive subscription reminders, such as expiration notices.

We maintained website operations: WordPress updates, backend software updates, and backups. We also coordinated with the Public Relations team to make website content updates. Finally, we assisted the Garden Contest Committee by setting up the contest submission form and email group.

## Newsletter

Mary Person and Kelly J. Cooper, Co-editors

In 2019, at least 25 SGC members contributed to the newsletter in ways large and small, and we the editors are grateful to every single one of them! Their voices make the SGC newsletter an engaging and enlightening read, every single month. As usual this year, the issues were full of garden-related tips; a calendar of nature-related events; observations of the natural world within and beyond the garden; book reviews; synopses of Club meetings and field trips; photographs; and quotations.

### *NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE:*

An archive of club newsletters is available in the Local History room at the Somerville Library.



To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SGC, we ran articles that looked back on aspects of the Club's history, including its first meeting and early newsletters; the beginnings of our public sites; the Plant Sale; and members' recollections of various SGC events over the years. For all this, heartfelt *thank yous* to both the regular and the occasional newsletter writers who contributed material on a wide array of garden and nature topics.

Special thanks to Dorothy Gilman for assuming leadership of the writers' group; to Bill Bennett for proofreading the final PDFs with an eagle eye; and to Pam McLemore for getting it all stamped, labelled, and mailed every month. Extra special thanks to Cynthia Frawley for 25 years of exceptional graphic design! Finally, many thanks to Classic Graphx in Cambridge for beautifully and expeditiously printing the newsletter every month. As always, we welcome all members' contributions, large or small. The newsletter is by you, for you.

# Black Swallowwort

Laura Brewer, Cynthia Stillinger

**Identifying Black Swallow-Wort**

**LEAVES**  
These green, shiny leaves come in pairs along winding vines that are often found growing on fences and shrubs.

**SEED PODS**  
These slim, green pods can be seen starting in June. They turn brown as they mature to produce and disperse wind-borne seeds.

**ROOTS**  
BSW emerges in the spring. These fleshy, white, and dense roots break easily. If the plant is not uprooted completely, it will regrow.

**FLOWERS**  
These small, dark purple flowers grow in clusters. Each star-shaped flower has five petals with a green center.

For more information, please visit: [somerwillemas.gov/BSW](http://somerwillemas.gov/BSW)

SGC members Laura Brewer and Cynthia Stillinger met with Luisa Oliveira, Senior Planner in Somerville’s Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, to discuss how the Garden Club could collaborate with the City to address the proliferation of Black Swallowwort. The plan was that over the summer, the City would step up publicity regarding Black Swallowwort on the City’s website, Facebook page, UrbanAg blog, and SLUG (Somerville Loves Urban Gardening) group. Luisa invited the Garden Club to post relevant information on UrbanAg and SLUG as well as on the Club’s website and Facebook page. Luisa also organized the design and printing of informational door hangers to be placed by SGC members on residents’ doorknobs over the summer (shown left).

Through these educational efforts, we hope to motivate more individuals and groups to help control the spread of Black Swallowwort by digging it up, regularly cutting it back, and/or picking its pods before they open.

## “Greening Somerville” Garden Contest

Laurie Allen, Gaëlle Martinat, and Rosemary Broome-Bingham.

The City of Somerville Arts Council’s Garden Awards had been the impetus behind the founding of the Garden Club. So, to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Club ran a garden contest. Our goal was



to reward those gardeners in our neighborhoods whose creativity, hard work, and resourcefulness, beautify our community. Gardeners (any resident of Somerville) could enter in one of four categories and in late July, teams of judges from the Club viewed each entry, scored them against criteria, and selected winners.

*Photo credit: Ann Steinberg*

At the August general meeting, the Mayor of Somerville, Joe Curtatone, presented awards.

### **Congratulations to our winners!**

Garden:

1. Lucy Borodkin
2. (tie) Kathe Gregory, Kristin Bumiller
3. Macy Coffey & Anastasia Zagoskina

Balcony, deck, or patio:

1. Rob Page
2. Peter Kirschmann & Christine Koh
3. Frances McCormick

Vegetables:

1. Leanne Darrigo
2. Michele Ostraat
3. Erin Geno

Storefront:

1. Thalia Tringo Real Estate
2. 2nd Prize Dave’s Fresh Pasta

## Plant Sale

Dorothy Africa, Dorothy Gilman, Paula Minihan, Jonathan Rich, and Rosemary Broome-Bingham

The Somerville Garden Club Plant Sale held each year on the third Saturday in September is the Club's main fundraiser and a long-standing tradition for many local gardeners.



*Photo credit: Ann Steinberg*

In May, former Club President Brad Stearns, who volunteers at the Perkins School for Blind, let us know they were clearing out their greenhouse and that anything remaining was ours if we wanted, so five of us spent two mornings digging and potting up around 50 unusual and in some cases, very mature specimens of Kangaroo Paw Fern, Blue Hares Foot Fern, Cobweb plant, Banana, Pomegranate, Climbing Onion, Zamoculos, Coral Cactus, and assorted Begonias. House plants are always best sellers with so many Somervillians living in condos and apartments, and we were thrilled this year to offer such a unique selection.

In addition to the usual logistics, volunteering, and publicity planning, the Plant Sale committee tries to improve the Plant Sale each year. This year, we focused on table layout and flow (and next year, there's more room for improvement here!). We added

two tables for Native plants. We moved Lucy's "Ask the Expert" and the Information Membership table into the center of the Square, set up a drop-off/pick-up table for the holding area (and added volunteers to that role) and tried to implement some sort of entrance and exit flow.

It was good that we did expand our footprint as when we did a count of the plants the night before the sale, we discovered we had over 1,000, far surpassing our previous record of 875.

What a successful sale it was! Gorgeous weather! The lines stretched down Holland Street! Everyone from the Garden Club kept their cool. Special thanks to those volunteers who spotted the problem and swung into action to work the line, totaling up prices and speeding up processing. When the dust had settled, a record-breaking 1,000+ manicured plants had sold for over \$5,000.

Over 40 Club members volunteered for either the clean-up days or on the day of the sale. You know who you are! THANK YOU!

Thank you also to Cynthia Frawley for designing the poster. It's a fun event and amazing community builder for the Club.