



# THE EARTHWORM



WINTER 2023



*THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WINDSOR GARDEN CLUB.  
ONE OF CONNECTICUT'S OLDEST GARDEN CLUBS -  
CELEBRATING 85 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS EXISTENCE.*

## January 2023 President's Message

Happy New Year! On behalf of the Windsor Garden Club, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in good health, high spirits, and well-rested to get back outside for the 2023 growing season - which is just a few months away.

The club values your membership and involvement in the club. In all our offerings it is important to think about how we live up to our club's purpose: **to promote an interest in gardening, wild plant life, trees, civic beautification, environmental issues, and to carry on such activities as may be necessary or desirable to affect these purposes.**

I challenge you to do something new this year with the club that you may not have done in the past or have not done in quite a while. It may be serving on a committee, hosting a summer meeting, or stepping up to answer the call for service club leadership to name just a few of the possibilities.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me or any member of the executive board. We are here to serve the membership and offer leadership for the club, and we look forward to that work in 2023.

See you in the garden.

Sincerely,  
Dave Stender





## Fall Meeting Recap—September

After wrapping up our summer meeting series, we kicked off our fall programs in **September** with a special meeting at the [Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum](#) at Northwest Park in Windsor. We were hosted by Jim Daniels, President of the Connecticut Tobacco Museum and Duane Adams, Board member, who gave a wonderful history of tobacco farming in Windsor and the surrounding area as well a full tour and presentation in the tobacco shed, filled with all the equipment needed to grow and harvest shade and broadleaf tobacco for the use of cigar binders and wrappers and we were treated to the step by step tobacco process from seed to cigar.

In addition to the shed, we toured the museum, which houses additional history and memorabilia related to tobacco farming. Several of our members in attendance spent their summers working in Windsor tobacco fields and were able to share some of their memories and experience. The museum provides the opportunity to document this living history with its interactive history experience. If you have a tobacco story or memory to share, visit <https://www.tobaccohistsoc.org/tell-your-story> to contribute to Connecticut's tobacco history and heritage.





## Fall Meeting Recap—October

In **October**, as many of us started to think about transitioning our gardens into the cooler weather, we were provided with some pointers from Karla Dalley who encouraged us to work smarter, not harder, with her presentation, How to be a Lazy Gardener.

Karla's definition of a lazy gardener is someone who works a little more efficiently to have more time to enjoy their garden. We love the sound of that! A few of Karla's tips included leaving the leaves in our gardens and recommending saving major garden cleanup until the spring. Both of these practices help to feed our soil and provide shelter and food for beneficial insects and other critters who make our gardens their winter homes. Looking ahead to the spring, Karla encourages the use ground cover plants or planting perennials close together, so there is less need for mulching. She encourages organic gardening and planting natives that will thrive in our area. If you would like to read more about Karla and her gardening advice, check out her blog, <https://gardendaze.blog/>.



Although we are very interested in less work in our gardens, that didn't stop many of us from taking home tulip bulbs that were brought in by Tom Graywacz, someone who is the farthest from lazy gardener as we get in our club!





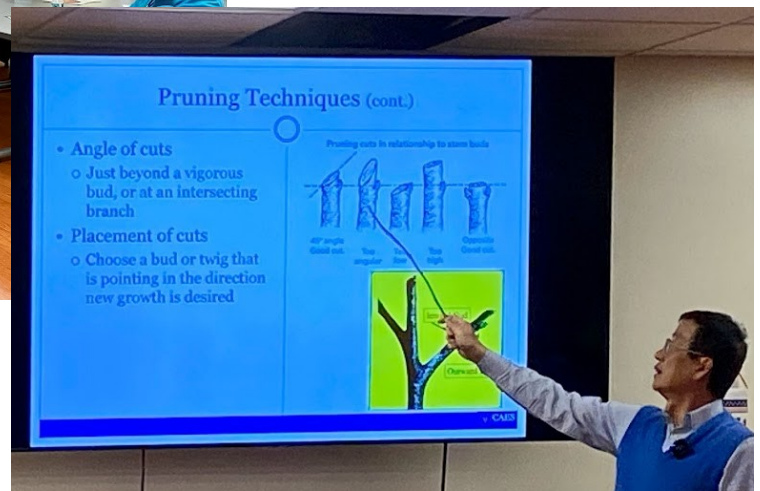
## Fall Meeting Recap—November

At our **November** meeting, we were treated to an incredibly informative presentation called Pruning 101 by Dr. Yonghao Li from The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Dr. Li walked through his lecture, including reasons to prune, when to prune, and pruning techniques and tools. He advised pruning for size, to remove dead or diseased parts of plants and shrubs, to encourage growth and flowers and for overall plant health. He advised pruning spring-blooming plants and shrubs right after they flower and summer-blooming plants and shrubs in the winter or early spring. He also advised safety first and calling in professionals or help for considerable pruning and trimming jobs.



Dr. Li reviewed several pruning techniques that differed based on your desired result, and reviewed many common shrubs and how to prune each one. He also brought examples of his pruning tools and demonstrated pruning cuts on a few evergreen examples he provided.

If you have any follow-up questions for Dr. Li, you can email him at [Yonghao.Li@ct.gov](mailto:Yonghao.Li@ct.gov).





## **Fall Outing—Smith College Chrysanthemum Show**

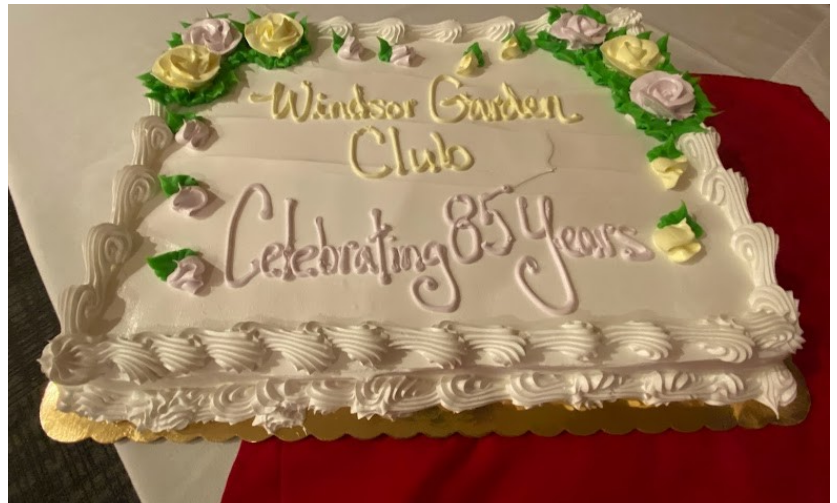
On November 5, a small group including Susan Joanis, Mary Walek, Auralee Eckman, Patty Crowley, Margaret Taff and Beverly Lowe traveled to the Fall Chrysanthemum Show at the Botanic Garden of Smith College in North Hampton, Massachusetts. Each year, Smith opens its doors for two weeks in November to showcase the incredible chrysanthemums grown by Smith students and staff. Contact Allison Joanis if you'd like to join our outing to the Spring Bulb show, departing the LP Wilson Center, 10 am, March 18.





## Windsor Garden Club Holiday Luncheon 2022

We hosted our 2022 Holiday Luncheon at the Officer's Club of Connecticut on December 3, 2022. With just shy of 30 members and guests, we enjoyed a festive lunch and celebrated the end of our 85<sup>th</sup> year as a garden club in Windsor with a cake. It was a lovely afternoon! Special thanks to Susan Joanis for organizing and finding a solution to keep our luncheon costs down.





## Civic Endeavors

### Windsor Historical Society

Laurie and Jim Durant continue to update the entry planters seasonally, providing bright cheer at all times of the year. Stop by the WHS and take a look!



The WGC also maintains the historic garden beds on the north side of the Strong-Howard House. Each of our visits make visible improvement; we're always amazed at what a difference 3-4 people make with concentrated efforts, and delight in seeing flowers through the seasons. Below, an earlier spring view shows the amazing progress the WGC has made and a taste of what next spring's garden will show.

Contact Debbie Baker at [dbaker.windsor@gmail.com](mailto:dbaker.windsor@gmail.com) or 860-280-7277 to join the group in 2023.



### Wadsworth Atheneum Festival of Trees Wreath

Sharon Ahern has again made the Windsor Garden Club very proud by creating a holiday wreath for the Wadsworth Atheneum Festival of Trees & Traditions in Hartford. This year, entitled Mother Nature – The Great Outdoors, her wreath included woodland animals and natural elements from a winter garden.

Each year, Sharon creates her masterpiece sold at the December event to raise funds for the museum's special exhibitions, educational programs, and operating expenses.

Thank you to Sharon for continuing to participate in this event on behalf of the club.

Sharon has expressed interest in possibly handing over this task. If you are interested in taking over or shadowing Sharon with the plan to take over, please get in touch with Sharon directly or connect with Allison Joanis.





## Civic Endeavors—Continued

### Local Holiday Wreaths

In keeping with our time-honored holiday tradition, a group of volunteers decorated 14 wreaths and two evergreen sprays for Windsor nonprofit organizations and town buildings on November 28. The wreaths were purchased from Woodland Gardens in Manchester and used member craft supplies and extra greenery from our yards. Wreaths were decorated and distributed later in the week. You can now see the wreaths and displays at the following locations, Windsor Town Hall, Windsor Post Office, Poquonock Post Office, Windsor Chamber of Commerce, Windsor Public Library Main Branch and Wilson Branch, CRIS Radio, Windsor Independent Living Association, Mary's Place, Kimberly Hall North and South, Windsor Health & Rehabilitation, Viability, Vinfen, Windsor Caring Connection and the Windsor Senior Center.

Special thanks to everyone who decorated wreaths, brought supplies, helped clean up and delivered wreaths around town.





# Civic Endeavors—Continued

## Local Holiday Wreaths





## HOW TO CARE FOR THOSE HOLIDAY PLANTS ONCE THE SEASON IS OVER

By Jeff Lowenfels; Associated Press

Holiday horticulture tends to revolve around the same handful of plants. So if you don't already have any or all of these five holiday plants, now is the time to get them.

**Paper Whites**—The bulbs of these daffodil family members are pre-chilled so they can be planted now and produce flowers in a month to six weeks. If you find them for sale, by all means buy as many as you can. The only caveat is that some family members may object to the unbelievably sweet smell of their blooms.

**Poinsettias**—Poinsettias, of course, are for sale in all manner of venues this time of year. Many of us buy them, keep them for the next few weeks and then toss them. The trick is to keep them alive for the holiday season. This required first bringing the plant home with minimum exposure to cold air. If you live in a cold climate, consider warming the car before transporting them. Once home, the plants should not be exposed to drafts from doorways or windows. Place them where daytime temperatures are between 65- and 70-degrees Fahrenheit, and with 60 as an ideal night temp. Soak the entire pot whenever the surface turns dry. Let them drain, and keep checking the soil surface for the next dunking. Poinsettias should never sit in water, so if you want to keep the decorative foil that accompanies many of them, poke a hole in it to let the water out.

**Christmas trees**—These, too, are their own gardening activity. Make sure your tree is kept in plenty of water and pay the strictest attention to safety rules if you use lights. After Christmas, look for a place that will chip up and recycle your tree, or place it in a back corner of your yard as cover for the birds.

**Amaryllis**—These are the easiest and showiest bulbs you can buy, and produce the largest flowers you are ever likely to grow. They are usually sold together with pot and soil, and all you need to do is ensure yours is planted so that  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the top bulb is above the soil line. Keep the plant growing right through summer. Then put yours into a cool, dark location so it goes dormant, to be brought out again next holiday season for flowering.

**Christmas cactuses**— Or Schlumbereras, are another great plant that blooms during the mid-winter holidays. They will live for dozens of holiday seasons (some are passed on from one generation to the next) and bloom each year if exposed to shortening days. Rooting cuttings is easy using just a leaf, so it is not uncommon for a clone of the same plant to be in more than one family member's home.

Christmas cactuses do best in bright light. When it is in bloom, a Christmas cactus, should only be watered when the soil is dry. Too much water and the flowers will drop off, so this is one of those times when too dry is better than too wet.

The rest of the year, water by soaking the pot when the surface soil dries out. Next fall, give yours natural light and keep cool, up against a window, and they will bloom again.



Contributed by Alice Lang.



## **Financial Corner—Summer Treasurer's Report**

*By Margaret Taff, WGC Treasurer*

Our club is in strong financial shape as we start 2023. We did fairly well with keeping close to our planned 2022 budget. We had budgeted expenses of \$6,095 and actually spent \$5,865 during the year, so slightly under what we expected to spend. This was despite unplanned expenses with a community partner with one of our on-going civic endeavors, about \$200 more than budgeted. However, these extra expenses were offset by spending less in several areas including newsletter distribution, board expenses, holiday wreaths for the town and Wadsworth wreath donation, and printing costs for the membership booklet- about \$440 in savings over what was originally budgeted.

We had budgeted income of \$5,650 and our actual income was \$5,495, so slightly less than budgeted. The areas of less income than expected were the Garden Marts (had not budgeted for expenses – that is now included for 2023) and the Tovah Martin presentation in April. Sometime after the initial budget planning for last year, we had decided not to charge WGC members admission for the April event, so the income number was smaller. Areas of more income than expected included membership dues, approximately \$600 more, a raffle held during the Tovah Martin presentation that netted approximately \$280, and donations/paid advertisement of slightly more than \$100.

So overall, for the year, our expenses exceeded our income by \$370. We had actually expected and budgeted for a net loss of \$445 for 2022, due to not having a garden tour. The garden tour is held every other year and has added over \$2,000-\$3,000 in each of the previous two tours. The bottom line is that every other year we typically overspend by a small amount knowing that the next year we will have an increase in revenue from our garden tour.

In looking ahead for 2023 one of the first items that you can help with is ensuring you have renewed your membership. Membership dues have remained unchanged over the past several years - \$20 for an individual and \$35 for a household membership. The earlier that you renew your membership helps with an earlier production and distribution of our membership booklet. To those who have already renewed: thank you! Membership renewals and even new memberships can be mailed with payment and the membership form to our post office box or brought to our next meeting happening the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in February.

In the 2023 planned budget, we are in a solid financial position to continue to bring in valued paid guest speakers and increase the amount of our high school scholarship. If you have any questions about the budget, please contact treasurer Margaret Taff. If you have any questions about membership, please contact president Dave Stender.

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## **Club Constitution & Bylaws Update**

*By Dave Stender, WGC President*

This fall proposed changes are coming to club membership, who will have the opportunity to review and then ultimately vote during a club monthly meeting. A committee of members is reviewing our club governing document with the goal of presenting proposed changes, reviewing with club membership and answering any questions. We will then vote at a subsequent monthly meeting.

Most proposed changes will reflect our fairly recent change during the pandemic to our program year of January 1-December 31 (we used to operate from July 1-June 30).

Our current governing document is available on our club website and was last updated March 2020.



## What's Coming Up in 2023

February 23-26, 2023

Greater Hartford Flower & Garden Show  
*Connecticut Convention Center*

March 4-19

Spring Bulb Show  
*The Botanic Gardens at Smith College*

March 13, 2023

*WGC Meeting*  
Soil Health  
with Nancy Bowden from UCONN Master Gardeners  
*Windsor Senior Center – 6:30pm*

April 10, 2023

*WGC Meeting*  
Spring Floral arranging tutorial and activity  
with Kathleen Baker  
*Windsor Senior Center – 6:30pm*

### Other notable dates to save:

*May 13—Spring Garden Mart*  
*July 15—WGC Garden Tour*

## CONTACT INFORMATION 2023

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## Earthworm Content Submission Deadlines 2023

The Publicity Committee is always looking for submissions for the Earthworm, the website and social media. If you have material you would like to see published, please contact Jim Durant, Debbie Baker and Allison Joanis.

### Deadlines for Earthworm material 2023:

April issue deadline: **March 15**

July issue deadline: **June 14**

October issue deadline: **September 13**

January 2024 issue deadline: **December 11**

## Not a WGC member yet?

Join us!

Visit <https://windsorgardenclubct.org/membership/>

•Join electronically

•Print a form and join by mail

•Come to a meeting and join in person!

