

HORTICULTURE ANNUAL REPORT

Kathleen Leddy, Horticulture Chair

The year passed quickly with a variety of activities for horticulture! We began with our 9 awards from the GCA Zone II Flower Show in Newport last October. We proudly received 2 First Place, 4 Second Place, and 3 Honorable Mention ribbons for our hort entries. Included in these was an award for our beech tree entry, which brings a sense of esteem, as many of you know it was such a difficult seed to propagate. However, Francis Tafton's green thumb 4" seedling took Second Place!

October was also the month of our horticulture workshop featuring Clem Desjardins presentation on *Plant Diseases and Invasives*. His well-attended lecture featured an informative slide show on pests and diseases commonly found in our yards, and methods to eradicate these troublesome issues. Clem's knowledge and congenial disposition also brought us to a round of "Stump the Chump", where members brought in fresh-cut problem specimens as cuttings or plants which he cheerfully identified and diagnosed.

Attending the Zone Horticulture meeting at the Griswold Museum, CT in November was an inspiration of ideas and projects. I have seeds for Birdhouse Gourds to grow this summer, and obtained 10 chestnuts for our Zone II gavel challenge this November. Fortunate members have nurtured these nuts in their refrigerators and now have them planted in soil through summer. Fortunately, chestnuts grow rapidly, and it should only be a mere 6 to 8 years before we are roasting chestnuts from these trees.

We offered members paper white bulbs, at cost, ready for forcing at St. Mary's Home in December. These produced a wonderfully scented holiday bonus to those of us who were lucky enough to be there!

On a personal note, I obtained a 25-foot, 5 year old Princeton Elm from the backyard of Jill Brody and have planted it in a corner of my yard where it has room to thrive and bejewel our street. Jill received this seedling at a garden club event in Texas and it was getting too large for her yard. Last week I noticed it was budding out and to me it represents the gardening aspect of our horticulture initiative. Appreciate all who have helped with this years hort programs, and good luck to all you nut growers!