

Branching Out: Getting to know your fellow club members

Linda Vitagliano

Member since 2016

What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

All kinds, but my passion is growing heirloom tomatoes from seeds that I save. I grow about 15 different varieties in my 4 raised beds along with eggplant, peppers, asparagus and zucchini. (I have seedlings to share if anyone is interested).



When did you start gardening? What drew you to it?

When I bought my house 25 years ago there was a neglected perennial garden that my mom, an avid gardener, revitalized. I have a lot of space here and have been gardening since I moved in. I come from a long line of gardeners. Both sets of my Italian immigrant grandparents were gardeners. My mom gardened with her dad when she was a young child. She was one of the first ones to have a community garden plot at the Wellesley college community garden on Weston Rd back in the 80s. (I recently came across the attached article while cleaning out her condo – she is going strong at 89 and up until last year still maintained a garden on Cape Cod). I love gardening because I can be out doors and

physically active.

What would you like to tell the club about yourself: other passion(s); work (current/former/volunteer); family; gardening credentials; etc.?

I started my career with the state when I was 22, working as a social worker for the Department of Public Welfare. I then transitioned to become a computer business analyst working for the Welfare Department and later for the MassHealth state agency from which I retired from in 2014. I continue to work part time doing the same kind of work. I'm an avid cook, baker, reader and gym goer. I'm also a 20 year survivor of ovarian and breast cancer. (I mention this to give hope to others).

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

I had it in my mind that once I retired and had more free time I would join a Garden Club to learn more about gardening. Also, I always admired the plantings in downtown Natick and in other towns on public property planted by other garden clubs. I went to an open meeting of the Natick Garden Club and was impressed by how welcoming it was.



What is most important to you about NGC membership?

I really enjoy the trips and learning from others about gardening. There's a wealth of knowledge among club members. The club is run like a well-oiled machine. Too bad the club leadership isn't running our country.

What would you like to see the club do that it isn't doing now?

Can't think of anything lacking.



Linda Lentz

Member since 2019

What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

I've got a very small space so I've focused on perennials with annuals to compliment in window boxes and pots anywhere I can put them! I've just started with patio vegetables and herbs.

When did you start gardening? What drew you to it?

When I bought my house in the early 90's it looked pretty sad so that got me started; I then realized that I love playing in the dirt and watching things that I planted actually grow and return the following year.

What would you like to tell the club about yourself: other passion(s); work (current/former/volunteer); family; gardening credentials; etc.?

I've been fortunate to have had two careers and loved both of them; first as an early childhood educator and then as a hospital administrator in Worcester and Boston. I recently retired from my role as the Director

of The Organ Transplant Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Both careers gave me the opportunity to be involved with really important work —child development, healthcare and clinical research. Prior to the pandemic I was once again working with young children and volunteering at a hospital which I hope to continue.

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

For many years I saw members planting in downtown Natick - it looked like so much fun so I made joining the club one of my retirement goals.

What is most important to you about NGC membership?

It's been very nice meeting all of the folks in the club, learning that there is more to the club than planting downtown and the educational programs/speakers are wonderful.

What would you like to see the club do that it isn't doing now?

Perhaps developing some programming or activities to include young adults, children, families



Marci Sapers

Member since 2019



What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

My husband, younger son and I moved into a new home we built in Natick 4 years ago. When we built the house, I needed to start developing the garden areas from scratch as NOTHING existed. We loved our new home, but the landscape was completely bare. We hired a professional to design and put in the "big" items and I have spent the past 3 summers adding the "little" plants and ground covers to make my gardens "warmer" and more welcoming. Most of my garden desires and efforts are to add areas of interest and more recently color to different areas. I haven't quite figured out how to make my garden interesting and colorful from Spring to Fall and would love to learn more about how to leverage different bloom times to keep it interesting as long as possible.

When did you start gardening? What drew you to it?

I initially planted a LOT of Hostas to fill up the space and now I have been adding many different plants to add interest and color. I am trying to establish two areas with wild flowers, but haven't been successful yet. Last week my husband and I spread 12 yards of mulch so things are starting to look quite nice. I also have a vegetable garden off my back porch and was thrilled to finally plant tomatoes, herbs and a few other veggies over the past few weeks.



What would you like to tell the club about yourself: other passion(s); work (current/former/volunteer); family; gardening credentials; etc.?

Until recently, I worked full time as a marketing executive at Gillette for 20 years, raised 2 boys and had very little time for gardening. Although I loved playing around in the garden when I did find some extra time, I really didn't know what I was doing and tried (and failed) a lot. Now that my sons are both out of college and I am consulting from home and teaching at Tufts each fall, I have a lot more time on my hands. I have found that I love gardening because it's a great way to be outside, get some exercise and I love seeing the results of my efforts.

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

I joined the club to meet my new neighbors and to educate myself to become a better gardener. I enjoy swapping plants with other member and trying new items in my garden. I also love visiting other members' gardens and have been blown away by the gardens I've visited, the skills of the other members and quite frankly, the interesting lives they've lived.

In addition to spending a lot of time gardening at my new home (especially now that I hardly leave my house), my whole family spends a lot of time on the water as our house is right off of lake Cochituate. I love to water ski, kayak or paddle board on the lake. I'd be happy to share this wonderful spot with other Natick Garden Club members.

What is most important to you about NGC membership?

I joined the club last Spring and really enjoyed going to the meetings. I learned a lot and met some wonderful women. In particular, I really appreciate the friendship and support my "big bud" Joanne Rampe has given me and the tips and plants Joyce and others have offered me.

What would you like to see the club do that it isn't doing now?

You asked what I'd like to see the club doing that it's not. Honestly, I couldn't ask for anything more as the club has totally exceeded my expectations as a fun, informative and professional club. I hope we are able to keep having the Zoom calls until these crazy times pass and we can start meeting and planting together.

Judy Sabol

Member since 1998

What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

My love and appreciation of native plants and shrubs has grown tremendously over the years and I'm drawn to tough and often tall perennials. I have always had an interest in herbs and vegetables, growing them mostly in pots to avoid critters. For the past few years, I have enjoyed a Community Garden plot.

When did you start gardening? What drew you to it?

Gardening was always a part of my life growing up. My grandmother, who lived with us, grew up on a farm and enjoyed spending an amazing amount of time in her garden with me in tow. My dad was an avid vegetable gardener, and now my daughter shares the family's love of growing things. My son is an entomologist, studying native bees (of which there are over 4000 species in North America alone) and has a great knowledge of native plants.



What would you like to tell the club about yourself: other passion(s); work (current/former/volunteer); family; gardening credentials; etc.?

I retired a few years ago from work as a nurse manager in dementia care. While I was working, I found it very relaxing and gratifying to spend time in the garden. I naively thought I would finally whip my gardens into shape after I retired. They remain a work in progress.

My husband and I are avid (some say "mad") hikers and have thoroughly enjoyed hikes and trekking near and far. Our most adventurous trip was a 70-mile trek in the Himalayas of Nepal to Annapurna Base Camp.

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

Marilyn Lustig, one of the founders of the Club, and I have been friends since our children were small. As a busy working mom, I was thrilled with her vision of a Garden Club that met in the evening. I've been involved since the first meeting, in a few different roles, most recently as photographer for the past few years.

What is most important to you about NGC membership?

I have thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie of working in the Club. The speakers continue to draw me in, the trips are great fun and the civic projects are a point of pride for the Club.

What would you like to see the club do that it isn't doing now?

I'm looking forward to being able to get together again in person! In the meantime, I hope we all find ways to continue to stay connected.



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