

Branching Out: Getting to know your fellow club members

Sue Mandell

Member since 2013



What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

I mostly have a shade garden with one sunny spot that is a perennial flower garden (The only garden I can't see from one of my windows!) I love when seeds spread, so I'm not really a neat, manicured type of gardener. I would love to do vegetables, but there are so many "critters" here. Two huge maples are coming down this winter due to disease, so it will be a new adventure to see what happens in the shady areas.

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

I started gardening with my mom who always planted red geraniums and morning glories and my dad who always paid me a nickel for each dandelion I pulled up from the front lawn. A dollar was good money back then! I love being outdoors and

continued whenever I had a home that had some land. I've had vegetable gardens in the past, but I love flowers and anything that blooms in the spring.

What would you like to tell the Club about yourself?

I am a happily retired French and Spanish teacher who loves to travel and can hardly wait to start again. I'm also very content at home, doing paper crafting, cooking, reading. I also love the Y, but that's on hold at the moment! I volunteer at A Place to Turn, Friends of the Morse Institute Library and now at Town Hall, working on pre-election issues.

How did you become involved with Natick Garden Club?

My neighbor, Geri Wadness, and I started gardening our shared back property line almost as soon as I moved in. Geri joined the NGC in 2012, and she is very convincing! When I left my post-retirement part time job at The Container Store in 2013, it was perfect timing for me to join too, and it has been a great fit.



What is the most important thing to you about NGC membership?

I love the members, their warmth and welcoming attitude. I have learned so much from the lectures, horticulture letters, visiting member gardens, trips and advice that so many are willing to offer. And I love working with everyone, at downtown plantings and on committees. Our members have incredible talent.

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

I would like to see new members try out a couple committees of their choice as soon as possible. It's the best way to meet the members, see what the work is all about and step up when a committee has an opening.



Jill Miller

Member since 2006

What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

I garden with native plants for wildlife which creates an unkempt sort of garden. I'd like a more organized look, but haven't gotten there yet. I would like to do some veggie gardening again, but have given up because of a super abundance of bunnies.

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

I was always interested in gardening, following my Dad around as he built veggie gardens in the various places that we lived. I majored in botany in college. My real gardening started when we bought our home in Natick and I made a veggie garden in our front yard, the only part of the yard with sufficient sun for veggies. Over the years I've tried various annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees looking for things that would grow on my pile of glacial sand and cobbles. I transitioned to organic gardening in the '70's and native plants in the past 15 or so years. During the dot.com bust I started a gardening business, planning and maintaining perennial gardens. I successfully ran that business until two years ago when I decided to retire at age 75.



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



I am an ex-software engineer, passionate knitter and gardener, do family history research, and love science, especially the biological sciences. I have been very interested in controlling invasive plants and in introducing people to gardening for wildlife including pollinators. I designed and maintain the pollinator garden at the Morse Library in downtown Natick.

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

I had been a member of a group promoting organic gardening and thought I'd like to join a garden club, but every club I checked out seemed more interested in flower arranging-type programs. As I was leaving the library one day, I found a group of women tidying up the gardens in front of the old building. Upon inquiring, was told that they were members of a relatively new, service-oriented garden club, the Natick Garden Club. Just what I'd been looking for! I immediately joined and never looked back.

What is most important to you about NGC membership?

I love the community spirit of the NGC. I love that we reach out to help and educate the wider community. I love that we are mutually supportive. I've never seen the catty sniping cliques that I've seen in some other groups. The programs are always interesting, even when the topic doesn't align with my main interests.



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

A couple of years ago, I tried to get a 'weed warrior' group together to battle invasives on members' and public properties. My organizing skills were not up to keeping it going. I'd love it if that idea were to be followed up by others in the NGC.

Joanne Rampe

Member since 1998

What kind of gardening do you do? Or prefer?

Anything that involves flowers ...bulbs, perennials, annuals and flowering bushes. My dream has been and continues to be, to cut bouquets of flowers for family, friends and neighbors from mid-April until mid-October. I have accomplished that goal and it makes me so happy!

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

When we bought our house in 1984 I knew absolutely nothing about gardening. After the birth of our daughter Taylor in 1990 I became a stay at home Mom which enabled me to focus on learning about gardening. I was very fortunate to have an English neighbor who shared her extensive knowledge and even helped me double dig rose beds that are still flourishing today.



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



My husband and I are parents of a big, blended family of 5 children and 9 Grandchildren. We live in an old 1850 School House (The Felchville School). I loved gardening so much and worked on so many volunteer gardens that my husband suggested that I open my own business. Thus "Garden Angel" was born! For 12 years I enjoyed designing, installing and maintaining gardens. I have also had careers in Teaching and International Recruitment.

How did you become involved with the Natick Garden Club?

I have been with the Natick Garden Club since its inception. My good friend Elizabeth Carroll asked if I would like to go to the first meeting with her. I was hooked and continue to feel like I am always learning something either from our fabulous speakers or knowledgeable members.



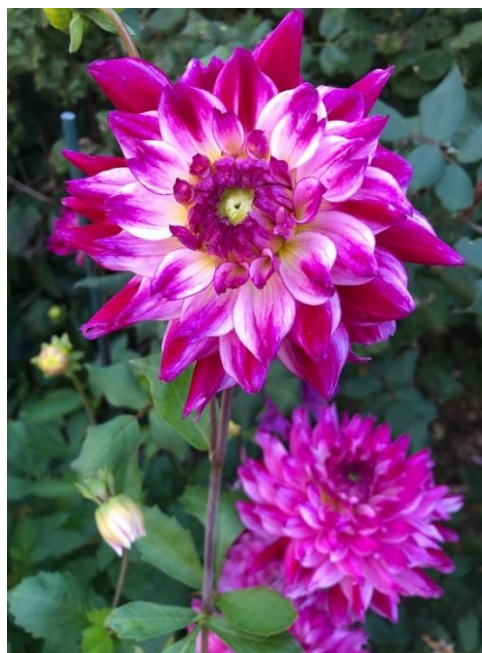
What is most important to you about NGC membership?

The most important thing to me is the camaraderie and friendships with people who share the same love of gardening and love to dig in the dirt!

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



The club is thriving and so successful.... I would love to see even more outreach to our community, perhaps involvement with schools or nursing homes.



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