



# North Shore Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 171, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944

March 2024 Volume XXVI Number 6

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

## Meeting Location

Sacred Heart Parish Hall  
62 School Street  
Manchester-by-the-Sea

## Upcoming Meetings

### Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

*Our Favorite  
Gardening Tools*

7:00 PM Social Time  
7:30 PM Meeting

### Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

*Rake, Shovel,  
Sweep, and Lift:  
An Ergonomic Workshop*

### Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

Annual Plant Sale  
and Auction

## Next Board Meeting

Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>  
7:00 PM

## Annual Meeting Notice

Our Annual Meeting is held each year in April. This April, we will approve the slate for the Board of Directors. If you are interested in joining the NSHS board, please contact Carol Batdorf at (978) 525-3528.

## Our Favorite Gardening Tools

*Thad Closson*

Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>



Having access to a proper set of gardening tools is essential to helping your plants blossom, bloom, thrive, and flourish. Owning or renting these tools can increase your garden's productivity by streamlining processes, minimizing effort, and reducing the time required to complete gardening tasks. All of this means more time to enjoy the fruits of your labors.

*Thad Closson is a member of the NSHS Pro-gram Committee who has enjoyed landscaping and gardening for decades. After college, he completed a Master Gardener program. Later, he applied his gardening knowledge to operating a 5-acre farm in Rhode Island that specialized in field-cut flowers, organic greens, and pumpkins. These products were sold to Stop & Shop, Whole Foods, and a co-operative of local floral wholesalers. He was a judge at the New England Flower & Garden Show and a member of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers for several years. Moving to Beverly Farms in 2015 presented Thad with the opportunity to re-landscape a property. He has created several cut-flower beds and vegetable and herb gardens. Doing much of this work himself, he has learned to appreciate the availability of great tools.*

## President's Message

*Carol Batdorf*

Hi Everyone,

The windy month of March has blown in. Spring is here and the croci, hellebores, snow drops and winter aconite are blooming in my garden. The growing season has started. This month's program will be about the tools we use in the garden. What do we use these tools on? The soil and plants of our gardens. So, I am thinking that our garden's dirt should be high on our list of components of the garden. To get the best use of our soil we should understand it.

One of our members, Kathy Harney, has sent information to me about soil testing. The NSHS board will be working on your behalf with the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association (MMGA) to set up a soil testing event that would be held at one of our meetings. We will fill out an application and then be given instructions on how and when you should collect your soil samples for the test date. Thank you, Kathy, for getting this information to the board.

There is also a newsletter that Kathy told me about sent out by MMGA called *The Dirt* that may be of interest to everyone. To sign up, go to:

<https://www.massmastergardeners.org/educational-resources/stay-informed>

Looking forward to getting into the dirt! See you at the March meeting; please bring your favorite gardening tools.

~ Carol



## Bring Your Favorite Gardening Tool!

Thad Closson, this month's speaker, invites you to bring your favorite gardening tool to show at our March meeting.

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## Refreshments

Thank you in advance to the following members for volunteering to bring treats to share at the March meeting: Peter and Kathy Burns, Joan Johnson, and Marguerite Schering.

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## Interesting Facts about Daffodils and Narcissi

- They are the birth flower for March. They are one of the first signs that spring has arrived.
- The Romans believed that the daffodil sap would heal wounds. In fact, the opposite is true. Daffodil sap contains sharp crystals to deter animals from eating the flower. This actually irritates the skin rather than heals it.
- They are named after a Greek myth. A nymph called Echo fell in love with a Greek named Narcissus, who told her to leave him alone. She lived alone, heart-broken. Nemesis, the God of Revenge, heard the sad story and lured Narcissus to a pool. He was so distracted by his handsome reflection that he fell in the pool and drowned. Afterwards he turned into the flower.
- A daffodil field can bloom for decades. If the conditions are right, a successful daffodil field can bloom for up to 50 years. They need an area with good drainage and sunlight. They also like areas where the grass can be left unmown which is why hillsides and open spaces are popular daffodil spots.
- Always present cut daffodils in a bunch. Legend says daffodils are associated with cheerfulness. When they are presented to someone as a bunch, it is meant to provide happiness. However, if they are only given as a single flower, it is meant to mean misfortune.
- Avoid mixing them with other flowers in a vase. Daffodils release latex from their stems once they are cut which can shorten the life of other flowers. Although its best to keep them separate, if you use special bulb food or soak the daffodils alone for 12 hours before, they can be used alongside other



## The Plant Box

by Anne Morin



As we head out into nature with the unfolding of Spring, it is best to be mindful of where we step. Lurking along paths and swirling around trees is a pretty green vine – the poison ivy. Unless you're a rare bird who is not allergic to its touch, it can be helpful to know a few things about this particular member of the flora.

As you are out walking, there is a rhyme to remember: leaves of three, let them be. It may not prevent you from stepping amongst the poison ivy tendrils, but it can help you with a hint of what to watch for.

The poison in the ivy is a substance called urushiol and it is found in the leaves, stems, and roots. Only a tiny bit can bring a rash to those who are sensitive—85% of the population—and it usually will appear within 12–48 hours, lasting up to three weeks.

The leaves turn a lovely gold or red color in Autumn. But don't let the prettiness fool you. Urushiol is produced all year long by the poison ivy, waiting there for you to come along no matter the season.

While we humans are affected, animals are not, with some of them eating the leaves and stems. Many a goat has cleared a lot dense with poison ivy.

Should you encounter this plant, soap and water will help remove the irritating urushiol. To relieve the itch, don't scratch; instead, apply a cool compress or calamine lotion.

When you return home from your hike and indulge in a snack, perhaps choosing cashews or pistachios, you might keep in mind that they are in the same family as poison ivy: Anacardiaceae. So take care, poison ivy and its cousins are everywhere.

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