



Sproutings

The Chatham Garden Club

chathamgardenclub.org | facebook.com/chathamgardenclub

May 2023

“Such simple instincts as bees making a beehive could be sufficient to overthrow my whole theory” - Charles Darwin

1.

2. What's Happening in May?

3. [All links are underlined in blue](#)

May 5th: Spring in Paris Soirée at Madonna's house *Invite Link:* [Spring Soirée](#)

May 9th: CGC Board Meeting 1:00 Community Center Small conference room

May 13th & 20th: Free Chatham Conservation Trail Walks Register on Link: [Trail Walks](#)

May 16th: CGC General Meeting - Community Center 12:30/1:00 Program:

Pollinator Pathways with Speaker Jean Stetz-Puchalski. For more information on Jean and this month's program, go to our handbook under the May 16th Program or see it on our [website](#) - then to Programs & Sproutings tab and scroll to May.

May 20th: Master Gardener Plant Sale 9:00 am CC Fairgrounds, Rte 151, E. Falmouth

May 20th: Village of Dennis Plant Sale 9 - 12 Dennis Union Church, Rte 6A. Dennis

May 20th: Wildflower Plant Sale 9-2 Rte 6a Sandwich [Green Briar Wildflower Plant Sale](#)

May 23-25th: Master Gardeners' [Hudson Valley Garden Tour](#)

May 27th: "Harwich By the Sea" Plant Sale 9 am - Noon, Doane Park, Harwich Port

May 27th: Wellfleet Gardeners Plant Sale 8:30 am on Main Street - next to Town Hall

SAVE THE DATE! June 28th @ 4:30 pm: CGC Conservation Committee is sponsoring the program "The Past, Present, and Future of Chatham Harbor: Coastal Storms, Sea Level Rise and Barrier Evolution" presented by Mark Borrelli from the [Center for Coastal Studies](#). Watch for coming details!

If you have not yet signed up to be a docent at our Hydrangea Festival Garden Tour on Friday July 14th, please email Cece Motz as we need all of our members to help at our biggest fundraiser! Email link: [Cece](#). We need to fill three two-hour shifts at five gardens, and if you can volunteer at more than one garden, or have a fellow garden club member you want to team up with, let Cece know!

Membership Renewal: We need to update our files, so please go to this link: [Membership Renewal Form](#), print, complete and return with your check for \$35.00, complete **Due: June 1st**. Send to Chatham Garden Club, PO Box 392, Chatham, MA 02633 or bring to the next meeting. Thank you!

Please scroll to the bottom of Sproutings - to have a successful, fun & profitable Club, we need your participation - please see committee & contact persons listed.



It's Pollinator Month!

In conjunction with our speaker this month from Pollinator Pathway...hit the link below to learn more about Pollinator Pathway.



[Pollinator Pathway](#)

The Horticulture Table for May will be presented by Cece Motz, so be sure to read her wonderful article below on “Becoming a Backyard Beekeeper”. The Hort table this month will include one of Cece’s empty bee packages, Queen cage, her bee suit, frames and other items she and her husband use in keeping their bees! Be sure to stop by her table and ask Cece questions on beekeeping!

Becoming A Backyard Beekeeper by Cece Motz

My husband and I had been living on our little less-than-a-quarter-acre plot of land, happily growing vegetables and flowers, and keeping chickens, when he announced what he really wanted was to have goats! When we originally purchased our home it was on a dirt road with very few houses around it. But now the road has been paved, and large expensive houses have been built up and down the road. We no longer have roosters because the neighbors were too close. Goats seemed out of the question, so he said ‘how about bees?’

So about twelve years ago, we signed up for the Barnstable County Beekeepers Association Bee School. Classes are held once/month every winter from January to May in the West Barnstable Community building in Marstons Mills. The ‘newbees’ learn about the life cycle of a bee; all the different types of bees at work in a beehive (Queen

bee, nursery bees, drones, worker bees, guard bees) and all the diseases and problems that can affect a hive (varroa mites, wax moths and honey robbers) and how to deal with these problems. We learned about the equipment needed (hives, frames, hive tools, bee suits, smoker, bee brush, uncapping fork, honey extractor) and – best of all – how to harvest honey! The Barnstable County Beekeepers Association (BCBA) also holds general monthly meetings on all sorts of topics relating to beekeeping and we were able to find another beekeeper living in Chatham who became our mentor.

We purchased a hive kit through the BCBA and put the hive and frames together (it involves bobby pins!); painted it green and yellow (paint left over from our house trim and downstairs bathroom) and set it up in the sunniest part of the yard. We were both excited and nervous when picking up our first package of bees filled with approximately 10,000 bees and a 'marked Queen'. The Queen, who is larger and longer than the other bees, is painted with a colored dot on her back, usually blue, green or red, to make her easier to identify in the hive. She is in a separate 'Queen cage' along with a few attendant bees and a candy fondant plug. A few friends came over to watch as the bees were placed into their new home. The Queen cage stays in the hive for a few days until the Queen eats through the candy plug and all the bees accept her. The Queen will mate with drones during her mating flight and eventually there will be between 40,000 and 60,000 bees in the hive.

After checking the hive several times throughout the spring and summer, we were ready for our first honey harvest. In Bee School we learned that it can be a messy, sticky project so we cleaned out a spot in the cellar, borrowed a honey extractor from our mentor and got to work. The bees are smoked to help keep them calm as we remove frames, uncap or remove the wax, and place the frames into the extractor. A fine mesh strainer is placed over a large kettle put under the extractor and we were quite excited the first time we saw honey from our own bees dripping into the strainer! We harvested 12 pounds of honey our first year and thought it was the most delicious thing we ever tasted! We now have our own extractor and harvest honey in our kitchen (it's not as messy as we thought). It used to be an all-day project, but now we can do it from start to finish in about 5 to 6 hours, depending on if we are harvesting from one or two hives. Some years we've only harvested 40 to 50 pounds, some years no honey at all, and one year we harvested twice (early summer and late fall) from two hives and got 150 pounds of honey! We began selling the honey calling it 'Twine Shed Honey' because many years ago, when we bought the house on the less-than-a-quarter-acre property, it was a tiny two-bedroom cottage that had originally been a twine shed where a Chatham fisherman named Poge Johnson kept his fishing gear (we've pulled up lots of twine over the years as we've dug into the soil to make our gardens).

Honey has many uses and benefits. Honey is a food product that never goes bad if stored properly. It is the only substance produced by insects that is edible for humans. The average bee produces only about 1/12 of a tablespoon of honey in its lifetime - which is approximately 6 weeks. The Queen will live for 2 to 3 years. Eating local honey is said to aid in reducing allergies and helps with sore throats and coughs as well as acts as an anti-inflammatory and it can be used topically to treat wounds and burns. It is beneficial as skin and hair treatment and, of course, is gluten free. It is delicious in tea and coffee, baked goods, salad dressings and marinades. I put it on

toast, yogurt and use it to make granola. One of my favorite cookie recipes is Bee's Knees Snowballs: [Bee's Knees Snowball Cookies](#).

Honey has a different flavor and color depending on what is in bloom when the bees are gathering nectar to bring back to the hive. A bee may visit anywhere from 50 to 100 plants on a single flight and it takes up to two million flowers to make one pound of honey. On Cape Cod honey is usually light in color in the spring (willow, clover and locust) and dark in the late summer/fall (goldenrod, Blackeyed Susan, clethra). Bees may fly up to five miles from the hive for nectar and pollen so you can help honeybees thrive by planting native plants that attract pollinators. Dandelions are one of the very first source of food for pollinators in the spring, so be sure to leave those beautiful yellow flowers in your yard!

Bee School is an excellent way to learn to become a beekeeper, but there are also many resources to help the 'newbee'. One book we have found to be incredibly useful is 'Beekeeping for Dummies' by Howland Blackiston. For anyone who loves novels, an excellent book on the inner workings of a bee hive is 'The Bees' by Laline Paull. I have found becoming a beekeeper to be fun, rewarding and delicious!

For more information on Barnstable County Beekeepers Association hit this link: [BCBA](#)



Bee package



Cece & Tony's bee hives

Cece in her bee suit!!!!



From UMassAg Extension: [Month by Month Planting for PollinatorsNortheast](#)



[Pollinator Plants](#) *from the Xerces Society*

For more information on MassEcan (The Massachusetts Ecosystem climate adaptation Network): [Mass ECAN](#) and [Climate Change and Pollinators](#)

Watch this beautiful video from Oprah Winfrey Network on Pollinators - [enlarge your screen](#) and skip any ads! It's not only relaxing, but fascinating to see the beauty of our natural world all around us!

No one can watch it just once, and no ads the second (or third) time around!

["The Beauty of Pollination"](#) *from Oprah Winfrey Network*

Other Links on Pollinators:

[Protecting Pollinators](#) *from Xerces Society*

[Wild Bees to the Rescue](#) *From Laidback Gardener*

Neonicotinoid (aka "neonics")

(pronounced neo-nico-tin-oid) A harmful insecticide that was widespread but being banned in many states.

In an Act to protect pollinators, effective March 3, 2021, Massachusetts put a ban on using neonicotinoids.

From UMass: "Users of neonicotinoid pesticides should be aware of the risks to bees. Bees can come in contact with these insecticides through direct exposure during spraying, as residuals on foliage and other surfaces, and as contaminants in nectar and pollen."

The U.S. EPA recently introduced a label change for insecticides that contain one or more of the neonicotinoids to protect bees. The bee icon (see below) will be placed in

the Environmental Hazards section of the pesticide label. There will be further instructions concerning bees in the "Directions for Use" section on the label."



Side Note: I stopped in at Agway Chatham to look for any insecticides with the bee icon above, and was told that they removed all products that were banned AND that Bayer products are now under "BioAdvanced" label, and no "bee" was on any of those products. Concern to me is that on Amazon, certain products were banned in NY, CT, MD. VT and I couldn't find more info on why?? Should this be a future "Somethin to Talk About"?

[Understanding the harm of Neonics](#) *from Xerces Society*

[Myth Busters about the Bee decline](#) *from Center for Food Safety*

BUMBLEBEES VS. HONEY BEES: POLLINATION AND FEEDING *from Student Conservation Association*

Of the two groups, bumblebees are the better pollinators. The reason for this is there are more species of bumblebees, there is a wider variety in lengths of tongue and, thus, the kinds of flowers they feed from. They are fast workers and, because of their larger bodies, can carry larger loads.



Honey Bee



Bumble Bee

Side Note: Honeybees can only sting once before dying. Bumblebees can sting multiple times, but they do not form swarms like honeybees and they only sting when truly provoked.

Save the Bees! The following link will lead you to the **Bumble Bee Project** and how to create a habitat for native pollinators, including a list of recommended native plants/

[The Bumble Bee Project](#) *from Sudbury Valley Trustee*



The “Buzz about Bees” and other Beneficial Insects: *From UMass Ag*

“Scientists have recently sounded the alarm over the “insect apocalypse,” or massive die-off of the world’s bugs. By some estimates, the past 50 years have seen a 75% decline in the world’s insect life. Among the many ecological implications of this apocalypse is the collapse of pollinator species, some of which scientists estimate have died back by 90% in the US during the last twenty years.”

Reasons for this decline:

“Though there are many reasons for the apocalypse, including habitat loss, pesticide use and more, one cause is the devastation wrought by pathogens*. For bumble bees, a parasite called *Crithidia bombi*, (see link under Bee Poop) often transmitted by bee poop, has been a widely prevalent scourge.”

Bee Poop: *from a study at UMassAg:* Flowers with shorter petals may transmit fewer pathogens* than flowers of the same species with longer petals.

This is because, in their search for nectar, bees crawl deep into flowers. When the petals are long, a bee might wiggle its entire body inside. When that bee defecates, its feces remain inside the flower, and the next bee to come through in search of nectar and pollen will wind up smeared in another bee’s poop. If that poop happened to contain [C.bombi](#), then the second bee would be at high risk for infection.

But in shorter-petalled flowers, “bees’ butts hang out,” and their feces fall harmlessly to the ground.

Sharing information from the Master Gardener’s course with all of you, here’s a couple of words that briefly describe some of what we learn and you may want to know more about:

* “A pathogen is an organism that causes a disease on a plant”. I can offer examples of pathogens, but I don’t want to overwhelm you - I encourage you to apply for the Master Gardener course to learn extensively about the different types of pathogens and to learn more about IPM.

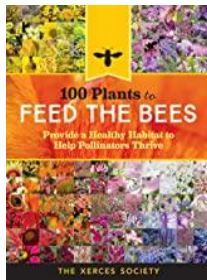
[IPM \(Integrated Pest Management\)](#) *from ucanr.edu (University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources)* Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. *(from epa.gov)*



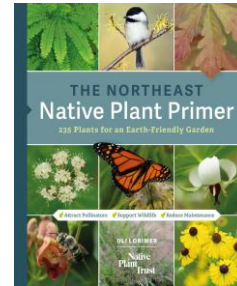
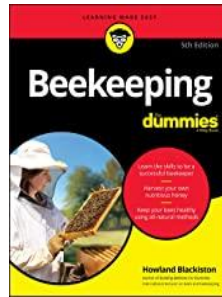
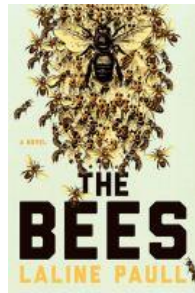
Click the Link below, Save a Bee

Consider supporting state legislation to increase pollinator habitat across the state. Click the Link below, **Save a Bee**. You can help to protect our bees, moths, birds, and other pollinators! Link: [Save a Bee](#)

Books on Bees & other Pollinators - All in our CLAMS network



from Xerces Society



[The Benefit of Ladybugs and other insects in your Gardens](#) By Donna Maiocca



With all of us trying to cut back or eliminate the use of toxic insecticides, I have been doing some research on pesticide alternatives, and ladybugs (aka ladybird beetle) seem to be a great way and here's why:

From Natural Living Ideas: "Ladybugs are voracious feeders, gobbling up 40-50 aphids a day. A single adult bug probably eats about 5,000 insects and insect larvae in its lifetime. Each female produces around 1,000 eggs a season, which it lays close to food sources in batches of 10's, 50's, or even 100's at a time."

[How to attract ladybugs](#) from *the spruce.com*

[Benefits of "Good Bugs"](#) from *ag.umass.edu* - also see the "fact sheet" in upper left entitled "Beneficial Lawn Insects"

[Insect Management in the Home Vegetable Garden](#) from *ag.umass.edu*

Earth Day - Chatham Roadside Cleanup: Thanks to our nine members who “hit the road” to keep Chatham’s roads clean! *Not pictured:* Ellen Heim & Jen Stello



Photos by Jen Stello

Pictures from our April meeting

Photos by Jen Stello



Linda Halvorsen & Speaker Lorraine Ballato



Mary Ellen's Horticulture Table featuring shade plants



Lovely edible centerpiece by Lynne Payne

Contact person of Committees: *Email links are underlined in blue*

None of our events are possible without member support. Please email any of the following if you can help with their needs! Fun is included in any of these events!

Spring Soiree: May 5th - To sign up to attend or help: [Marilyn Sink](#)

Fourth of July Parade: To help make flowers, walk in the parade: [Katherine Touafek](#)

Hydrangea Festival: July 14th: Docents needed Email: [Cece Motz](#)

Beautification Awards: Help choose a local homeowner's garden for "curb appeal"

[Madonna Hitchcock](#)

Festival of Trees: December 2nd - Atwood House Email: [Lynne Payne](#) , [Ellen Healy](#)
or [Bette Hahner](#)

Mentors: To help welcome our new members: [Mary Ellen Sobol](#) or [Kit Curtis](#)

Horticulture Table: Help with horticulture-related displays at one of our general meetings: [Mary Ellen Sobol](#)

Membership Renewal: We need to update our files, so please go to this link:

[Membership Renewal Form](#), print, complete and return with your check for \$35.00, complete **Due: June 1st**. Send to Chatham Garden Club, PO Box 392, Chatham, MA 02633 or bring to the next meeting. Thank you!