

Native Plant Layers continued from page 4:

tolerate the most shade. Other shrubs may only tolerate partial shade. Plant tags tell how tall they become over time. They may be too tall to plant in front of windows. Again, plant these shrubs using the 1, 3, 5 rule. Use one as an accent or use 3 for a grouping. They are appropriate for property borders or behind shorter shrubs and perennial borders.

Small Conifers

Dwarf Alberta spruce is one of the few conifers that you can count on to remain small. They grow very slowly and need plenty of sun. They are good for foundation plantings or for a punctuation mark in a border.

Shorter Deciduous Shrubs

These shrubs are all good for foundation plantings and borders, because you can let them grow to their full size without pruning. They are low enough that they won't block windows. Dwarf fothergilla, St. John's wort, and Olga Mezitt and PJM rhododendrons are fine examples. In a narrow garden bed such as between a house and a driveway, modify the 1, 3, 5 rule. Break up border plantings into little groupings with accent plants in between. Put in three of one plant, then one other plant and then three of a third type. Put the groupings of three plants in as much of a triangle as your space will allow.

Lower Spreading Shrubs

These small shrubs typically spread out slowly in all directions but they won't get very tall and are good for filling up a blank area in a border or on a slope. Sweet pepperbush, dwarf fragrant sumac, and lowbush blueberry would like at least partial sun. Drooping leucothoe prefers shade.

Lower Spreading Conifers

Ground-hugging junipers are good for the front of the foundation bed or shrub border. Plumosa Compacta juniper is one of my favorites, growing to be about 18" high. It is a fluffy, bright green in the summer and plum colored through the winter months.

Groundcovers

This is a very important group of plants that may be missing from your garden. Bearberry grows happily on dry, sunny slopes. Allegheny spurge looks similar to Japanese pachysandra but is less aggressive, spreading very slowly. Wild ginger, Canada mayflower, partridgeberry and Allegheny spurge grow in partial to full shade. Bearberry and barren strawberry prefer sun to part-shade.

Wildflowers

Use the 1, 3 or 5 rule for this large group of plants too numerous to list. Plant in groupings. Be sure to put sun-loving plants in the sun and shade plants in the shade. Read the tags! Bugbane grows in deep shade. Woodland plants

grow in part-shade to shade. Prairie plants require more sun. Goldenrod may plant itself in your garden. If it does, let it grow or move it carefully to a better location.

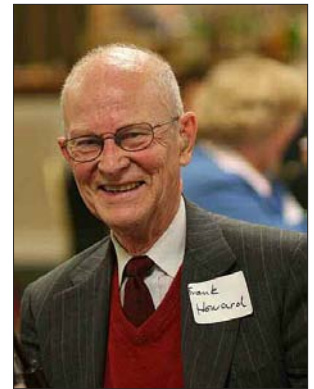
Ferns

Mix ferns in with your perennials in shady areas. Christmas fern looks best through the winter. Lady ferns and hayscented ferns may show up in your garden uninvited. If they look good where they turn up, leave them or move them to a better spot in your garden.

✉ Beth Schroeder - bsw1@comcast.net

Time Well Spent

Frank Howard has served for many years as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators. His wife Deborah has served the Conservators as well. Frank announced his retirement from the Board this year. He wrote this.



✉ Henry Finch

Frank Howard

Robert Browning wrote, "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be."

Our experience is that the best – or the opposite – comes along, throughout life. Our first best time was when my wife Deb and I met on a blind date and were married. Three more were at the births of our daughters and seven more with each grandchild. Travel has provided us with a number of best times. First to Waltham for an overnight camp out with the Girl Scout troop led by Deb and a colleague. Our "jungle breakfast" was doughnuts, bananas and cereal boxes tied in the trees. Other best times were camping out on the Cape at Nickerson State Park, as well as New Hampshire and Vermont stays, when friends hosted us at their vacation homes.

In 1985, we purchased Upton Farm in Whitingham, Vermont, where sheep had been raised since 1885. The 39 acres have become more or less reforested over the years. Bounded by the Green Mountain National Forest and the Deerfield River and close to Mount Snow, it has become the extended family home.

Another best time was when we bought our first and only home in West Newton from the Lennihans. Dick Lennihan had witnessed the neglect of Edmonds Park; it had been used as a trash dumping ground. He and others were part of the neighborhood groups that banded together to form the Newton Conservators Incorporated (N.C.I.) in 1961.

Time Well Spent continued from page 5:

Our new next door neighbor, Barbara Hayes, introduced us to the Massachusetts Audubon Society. There, Deb became involved in ornithology research. Our neighborhood became the study area for her paper, entitled "Urban Robins: A Population Study." She became concerned for the lack of undisturbed wildlife habitats in Newton. One of her professors at B.U. informed the class that, if they wanted to save the birds, they must influence "the birds on Beacon Hill." She became active as a Mass. Audubon Volunteer, then as a staff member, where she initiated their advocacy work. While a member of the Newton Conservators Board for 19 years, she also served on the Newton Conservation Commission.

My own civic service began as an advisor to the City Physician. In retirement I enjoyed the activities of the Newton Conservators, serving on the Board for 13 years. With a new photography hobby, I learned about videography as a part of the team producing The Environmental Show for Newton TV and DVDs for the Newton Library.

Our family has been enriched by the energy, efforts, creative thinking and problem solving by our Newton Conservator presidents, vice presidents and task force leaders. The Newton Conservators was one of our best family experiences. With many members, as well as their friends and families, we witnessed and enjoyed the strength of collaborative efforts. We learned from these times. Our daughters and their families have found real satisfaction with such activities.

The future of the Newton Conservators depends on new young families. When they join, they are likely to experience family time well spent, as has been our pleasure.

✍️ *Frank Howard*

An Historic Summer on the Charles

Record high water, record low water, an aqueduct break and a new boat rental at Nahanton Park created much excitement on the Charles River in 2010. An early start to the growing season encouraged the spread of invasives, with water chestnut gaining new territory in spite of the efforts of over 1,000 volunteers.



✍️ *Dan Brody*

The spring started with the river cresting three feet above normal in mid March. To control the flooding, DCR

released flashboards at the Moody Street Dam in Waltham. This action had not been taken since the early 1970s, and repairs were required before the boards could be replaced. After the annual Run of the Charles canoe and kayak race through the partially drained Lakes District, DCR further decreased water flow by diverting much of the waters of the Charles River to the Neponset River through the Mother Brook diversion. The waters of the Lakes District of the Charles receded, exposing wide expanses of mud flats and much debris. DCR quickly fabricated and replaced the metal slots that retain the flashboards, and the lake filled almost overnight. If the water is lowered again to repair the walkway over the dam, a cleanup effort can remove the many tires and other debris resting underwater.

On May 1, the MWRA aqueduct broke in Weston across from the LaSalle Boathouse. The flow of the Charles doubled, increasing the river's height by about eight inches. A silt cloud moved all the way to Boston. A quick fix returned things to normal until a storm threatened near the end of August. In anticipation of possible flooding, DCR again diverted some of the flow of the Charles River to the Neponset. The low flow exposed several old autos by the dock at Nahanton Park. An Audi and a GMC pickup truck with roofs rusted away were removed by the State Police dive team.

The removal of the ditched autos and their jagged rusted metal made for safer boating at the newly opened Nahanton Park Canoe and Kayak Rental. In cooperation with Newton Parks and Recreation, Charles River Canoe and Kayak (www.paddleboston.com) opened a public boat rental on July 10. A mixture of canoes, stand-up paddleboards, and single and double kayaks catered to the interests of young and old. This section of the river offers 15 miles of paddling from Hemlock Gorge in Newton Upper Falls upstream through Cutler Park's marshes and around the Dedham loop to Cochrane Dam in Dover/Needham. An upstream drop-off service enabled one to paddle 10-13 miles downstream through wooded marshes and the Dedham meanders.

Downstream in the Lakes District of Newton, Weston and Waltham, the invasive water chestnut plants were flourishing after emerging three weeks early. Despite the efforts of over 1,000 volunteers who filled approximately 35 dumpsters, the plants have spread to new areas. Charles River Watershed Association's summer interns performed admirably in leading over 23 groups, including an international high school program, summer camps, corporate groups, and individuals to pull acres of weeds. For 2011, efforts are underway to solicit donations toward a matching grant so that both hand pulling and mechanical harvesting can be employed. Volunteers and potential donors are encouraged to contact CRWA.

✍️ *Larry Smith*