



**Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation**

PO BOX 292, LEXINGTON, MA 02420-0003
<http://www.clclex.org>

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This young tree has interesting leaves. What is it?

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Citizens for Lexington Conservation is a non-profit organization that relies on dues paid by members to cover its expenses. Look at your mailing label, or the address on your email notice, to check your membership status. If it says "Dues paid 2014," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2013" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2014. If it says "Complimentary Copy," you are receiving a complimentary copy of our newsletter because you are a Town Meeting member or other public official in Lexington. We hope that those who receive complimentary copies will find our organization of value and will become dues-paying members. To join CLC or renew your membership send \$15.00 to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003 or go to the CLC website (<http://www.clclex.org>) and use the link to PayPal.

There is an electronic version of the CLC newsletter, sent as an email notice, with a link to the newsletter on the CLC web site. This version of the newsletter has illustrations in color and live links, it arrives much sooner than the snail mail version, it saves paper, and it costs CLC about \$1 less per copy. If you are currently receiving your newsletter by snail mail, you may convert to e-mail by contacting Judy Mello at jmacmello@comcast.net.

But Please Note:

CLC receives very low non-profit bulk mail postal rates as long as it follows the prescribed postal regulations. To keep these rates we must send at least 200 snail mail copies at each mailing. If everyone were to ask for the email version of the newsletter, then we wouldn't have the required 200 copies in the mailing, and it would cost us much more. For that reason, sometimes we send a paper copy to someone who expects the electronic one. If this should be the case for you, we can change you back, or you can just pick up your electronic version at [clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org).

Meet Judy Mello

Judy Mello, the newest member of the Board of CLC, has volunteered to take charge of the CLC data base. This unseen job involves keeping track of members who have paid dues, recipients of complimentary copies, Town Meeting Members, and candidates for town office. She will also print the address labels and brave the post office regulations when mailing each issue of the newsletter. There may be some errors introduced by the change-over, as well as those errors remaining from the past, so please be patient. You can make corrections by emailing Judy at jmacmello@comcast.net

CLC Publications

Over the years CLC has encouraged members to write guides to the open spaces in Lexington. These guides have been scanned and are available at no charge on our web site, <http://www.clclex.org>. You may also use the web site to read past issues of the newsletter, or to contact us about conservation-related happenings or sightings of unusual birds and wildlife that we can use on our web site and in our newsletter.



A good year for mushrooms

Thank you Walk Leaders

CLC is grateful for the people who volunteer to lead our spring and fall walks. Our thanks to Tom Whelan, Alex Dohan, Bobbie Hodson, Harry West, John Andrews, Emily Schadler, and Bob Haussein for leading the walks last spring.

CITIZENS FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATION 2014 FALL WALKS

All walks are free and open to the public

Saturday, September 27, 8 - 10 AM

Bird Walk in Dunback Meadow

Since this is a time when migrants are returning to their more southern winter homes from northern areas, we have the possibility of viewing warblers, vireos, hawks, flycatchers and sparrows that are not usually at Dunback Meadow during the summer months. Our usual feathered residents, such as Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Black-capped Chickadee, American Goldfinch and Tufted Titmouse, will also be around. Beginners and children are welcome. If it rains the walk will be cancelled. Meet at the entrance on Allen St. where parking is available. Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (robertahodson@comcast.net; 781-861-9421).

Saturday, Sept. 27, 10:30 - 11:30 AM

Junior Ranger Walk in Dunback Meadow

Children and parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles/adult friends will enjoy a walk in Dunback Meadow, where varied habitats provide food and shelter for many kinds of wildlife. Citizens for Lexington Conservation has started a new Junior Ranger program for children to increase their enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world. A copy of the 9-page Junior Ranger booklet can be downloaded at CLC's website: www.clclex.org. (activities and publications). If possible please bring a copy of the booklet with you for the walk. We will primarily be observing, listening, identifying, and enjoying Dunback Meadow. If it rains the walk will be cancelled. Meet at the entrance on Allen St. where parking is available.

Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (robertahodson@comcast.net; 781-861-9421).

Thursday, October 16, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Pond Exploration at Parker Meadow

This walk is geared for children in grades K – 5 accompanied by an adult. Join Fran Ludwig for a prowl around Parker Meadow to look for bugs, tadpoles, frogs, snails, and fish. We'll dip a net into the water to see what kinds of critters are wriggling around below the surface. Bring rain boots if you have them and be prepared to get dirty. If you have a small bug box or magnifier, bring it along. Rain or lightning will cancel the event. Meet at the Revere St. entrance to Parker Meadow. Limited parking is there; additional parking is available on neighborhood streets across Revere St.

Walk Leader: Fran Ludwig (fludwig12@yahoo.com; 781-861-7231)

Saturday, October 18, 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Paint Mine and Hennessey Field Walk

We will check out the field, forest and meadow areas of these North Lexington conservation properties. Frost is likely to have come before this mid-fall walk, and we can discover how our natural environment is preparing for winter. Sneakers are fine for this walk as damp areas have boardwalks. The walk is not strenuous though there are some hills. Inclement weather will cancel the walk. Meet at the Estabrook Elementary School parking lot. Walk Leader: Alex Dohan (amdohan@gmail.com; 781-863-5882)

Sunday, October 19, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

Walk ACROSS Lexington Route C

Join us to explore Route C, the most recent addition to Lexington’s ACROSS (Accessing Conservation land, Recreation areas, Open space, Schools and Streets) trail system. The walk will take us through a part of Arlington Great Meadow, where we hope to see colorful foliage, and around LexFarm and part of the Arlington Reservoir. Meet at the Waldorf School parking lot at 739 Mass Avenue. Heavy steady rain cancels the event. Walk Leader: Eileen Entin (Eileenhome@gmail.com; 781-862-6418).

Sunday, November 30, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

2nd Annual CLC Turkey Trot Walk

Join us to walk off those turkey leftovers as we explore the Cranberry Hill Conservation property and the adjacent watershed lands of the Cambridge Watershed Authority. Along the way we will enjoy some of the best vistas as well as one of the largest and best-preserved fieldstone foundations to be found in Lexington. We will hike in all but steady rain. Wear appropriate footwear for hilly woods trails and actual weather conditions. Hiking poles would be useful, especially if the ground is frozen. Meet at the end of parking lot C in the Cranberry Hill Office Complex. The entrance to the office park is on Massachusetts Avenue, just south of Marrett Road. Walk leader: Keith Ohmart (Kohmart@verizon.net; 781-862-6216).

CLC will be inaugurating a series of snowshoe walks for its program of winter walks this coming season. This will be a series of three walks that will be scheduled for weekend dates in the months of January and February. The purpose of the walks will be to simply get out and use those snowshoes that you have tucked away in your basement or garage, while enjoying exploring some of our open space parcels in their winter splendor. Watch for further details when we publish information about our winter walk series.

Maps of Lexington conservation lands can be found at
<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/conland.cfm>

Photo Credits

- Page. 1, 2, 8(top) Kate Fricker
- Page 5, 6 Fran Ludwig
- Page 7 Thomas Barnes
- Page 8(bottom) Karen Longeteif
- Page 9 Jordan McCarron

Answer to photo quiz on page 1: Sassafras Tree

ACROSS Lexington- An Update

By Keith Ohmart



The Greenways Corridor Committee (GCC) has spent the better part of this year working on developing the next segments of the ACROSS Lexington system. Route C would connect the Minuteman Bikeway with Arlington Reservoir and then Arlington Great Meadow via street connections over a distance of approximately two and a half miles. Route D would branch off of Route C and provide access to the southern entrance, to Whipple Hill off Summer Street via the existing path around the Arlington Reservoir, next to Lex-Farm, and then exit Whipple Hill on the north end and follow existing streets back down across Lowell

Street, to enter Arlington Great Meadow via the entrance on Orchard Street, covering a distance of a little less than three and a half miles.

Permission to mark this route across both Arlington's Great Meadow and the trail around the Arlington Reservoir must be obtained from the Town of Arlington before these routes can be finalized. Members of the GCC have been meeting with the Arlington Conservation Commission over the summer months to negotiate approval of this request.

Assuming these negotiations are successful, final route planning must then be reviewed with Lexington DPW personnel to arrange for Dig Safe approval for installing sign posts, and with the traffic safety officer in the Lexington Police Department for advice on safe road crossings before final installation can take place.

The goal is to finish this process and complete all route markings before the ground freezes in November. An inaugural walk will be planned for the new routes in the spring of 2015. Watch the GCC web page on the Town's web site for updates and further information, or try this link:

<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/selectmen/committee/acrosslexington.cfm>

Missing Monarchs

By Fran Ludwig



Monarchs on New England Asters

Who is not delighted to see monarch butterflies dancing over a meadow or garden in midsummer? Monarchs in our area are the great-great-grandchildren of those that migrated to Mexico last fall. But in recent summers many of us have lamented the missing monarchs. Dr. Lincoln Brower estimates that the population of migrating monarchs has declined by 90% in the last 20 years. The number of monarchs in Mexico was the lowest ever recorded last winter. In fact, the group Xerces and other butterfly conservation organizations have proposed granting Monarchs "threatened" status under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act

Wintering monarchs are concentrated in small areas west of Mexico City. There they cling by the millions to oyamel trees in cool mountain air for about 5 months before journeying north in the spring. Illegal logging of the valuable oyamel trees has been an ongoing problem in this very poor area. But the major change in monarch population seems to be caused more by habitat loss in the summer breeding areas of the U.S., especially in the upper Midwest, an area that hosts 50% of the eastern monarch population. Monarchs need milkweed—the only plant they lay their eggs on and that monarch caterpillars eat. What is happening to monarchs? Look no further than your corn chip snack or local gas station. Dr. Chip Taylor of the University of Kansas' MonarchWatch project and other researchers attribute the decline in monarchs to three major issues: skyrocketing herbicide use, ethanol production, and land development. The use of herbicides on GMO corn and soy crops (both courtesy of Monsanto) in the midwest has greatly increased with the advent of crops that are genetically designed to resist the herbicide Roundup. More such crops are being considered for approval by the EPA. Milkweed and wildflowers that typically grew between rows or at the edges of planted fields have been eliminated. Also, grassland that was once reserved for conservation in the Midwest is now planted in corn to keep up with the demand for producing ethanol, a federally mandated additive to gasoline. Overzeal-

ous mowing of highway margins can also reduce habitat. In addition, severe weather, now intensified by climate change, can have a significant impact on the monarch population, for example the drought in monarch breeding areas of Texas.

Dr. Chip Taylor of the University of Kansas' MonarchWatch project, predicts a modest increase in monarchs this year due to more favorable weather conditions. This seems to be borne out in local sightings, a very few monarch butterflies, eggs and caterpillars seen this year vs. none last summer. But monarchs are still in trouble. What can we do to help?

- Express your concern about the increased use of herbicides on agricultural land. Contact Administrator Gina McCarthy at the EPA and Secretary Tom Villars at U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (<https://www.credomobilize.com/petitions/help-me-save-the-monarch-butterfly>)
- Find out about and comment on legislation that requires the labeling of GMO ingredients in food.
- Improve your own monarch habitat by allowing common milkweed to grow on your land. (Actually mowing or cutting some, but not all, common milkweed back in mid July allows succulent new sprouts for the larger August population to lay eggs on.) Milkweed varieties such as swamp milkweed or butterfly weed are an attractive addition to a garden and tempting to monarchs. Join the University of Kansas' MonarchWatch campaign to promote monarch habitat: <http://monarchwatch.org/waystations/> Let CLC know if you become an official Monarch Waystation.
- Grow milkweed from seed. Collect and plant milkweed seed <http://monarchbutterflygarden.net/> Fiske School's Landscape Committee is encouraging families to join the "Bring Back the Monarchs" program by planting milkweed, and even provides seedlings.
- Plant butterfly friendly flowers in your garden to provide nectar. Check with your garden center to be sure that these plants have not been treated with herbicides or pesticides. <http://monarchbutterflygarden.net/>
- Follow monarchs and report your sightings on Journey North: <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/> This data, collected by citizen scientists over 20 years, was essential in recent studies that identify the likely causes of monarch population decline.
- Check out this article from Scientific American: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/monarch-butterflies-under-threat-from-rising-herbicide-use/>



Monarch butterfly on Blazing Star

Let's do what we can to bring the Monarchs back

Blazing Star Reintroduction Project

By Alex Dohan

In conjunction with Grassroots Wildlife Conservation, a native species research organization based in Concord, a few members of Citizens for Lexington Conservation are involved in a project to bring back a native plant that has not been found in Lexington in recent years. Led by Bryan Windmiller and Susan Oman of GWC, these folks have planted tiny seeds and painstakingly cared for the resulting seedlings. The seeds are very slow to germinate and particular about their moisture levels. The results so far have been a little discouraging, but our intrepid volunteers are keeping at it, nursing along the little green shoots and hoping to be able to plant them outside in the spring. The intention is to continue this project into the coming years, so if you are interested in joining the project there will be another opportunity next spring.



Blazing Star

New England Blazing Star (*Liatrix scariosa* var. *novae-angliae*) is a native New England plant that is no longer extant in Lexington, though it has been found here historically. It is listed as a species of Special Concern in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There are a few remaining areas in the state where it is found, primarily on the Cape and Islands with a smattering of spots in the central part of the state and toward the North Shore. It likes dry, sandy soil and plenty of sun. It blooms from August to October.

Junior Ranger Program

By Bobbie Hodson

This summer saw the start of a new program sponsored by Citizens for Lexington Conservation: **Junior Ranger for Lexington Conservation Lands**. You can find the 9 page booklet describing it on the CLC website, <http://www.clclex.org>. It can be used by children and their parents, grandparents, and adult friends to explore our many Lexington conservation lands. As the child enters three different conservation areas, s/he is encouraged to use all available senses to become better acquainted with those natural areas. In the booklet are many fun games to increase awareness of plants and animals that live within the wilder parts of Lexington. Upon completing the activities and taking the "Lexington Ranger Pledge" to keep our natural areas safe for plants, animals and people, the child can take the booklet to the Community Development Office in Town Hall to receive an official JUNIOR RANGER CERTIFICATE.

On September 27th, 10:30-11:30 at Dunback Meadow we will be sponsoring a walk for those who would like to know more about the Junior Ranger program. All interested children and sponsoring adults are welcome. Please bring a copy of the booklet to use during the walk. We'll meet at the Allen Street entrance.

Tuliptrees in Lexington

By Karen Longeteig

Tuliptrees are the tallest native deciduous trees in the American East. Lexington is near the northern edge of their range, so they don't attain the great sizes that they do in the South of up to 190 feet. Nevertheless, Lexington has a few grand specimens. People love them for their uniquely tulip-shaped leaves in "2-D" and their beautiful yellow and orange tulip-shaped "3-D" flowers.

Up until Irene, the hurricane of 2011, there was a magnificent Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) that stood at the door of the Buckman Tavern. While not a "witness tree" dating back to 1775, it was nevertheless well over 100 years old. Many mourned its passing and I went to pay homage and count its rings before the stump grinder machine arrived.

At 561 Massachusetts Avenue, below Wilson Farms on the opposite side of the street, is another very large Tuliptree, which, although encroached upon by scrub brush that impacts its dignity, nevertheless maintains its vigor. Some branches exhibit typical Tuliptree "elbows", or branches that extend from the tree horizontally before taking a 90 degree turn upwards. There is a 3-foot long piece of iron embedded horizontally in the trunk at about 8' above ground. You have to approach closely to see it now. Did it hold up a shop sign -- a placard for a village smithy -- in the past?



Tuliptree Blossom



Tuliptree at Ballard Terrace

Another lovely Tuliptree is at 2 Stratham Road (if you drive by, watch out for the potholes on this road). This one is approximately 90 feet in height and nearly 9 feet in circumference. It's on private property so admire it from the street.

There are several younger Tuliptrees on Tyler Road, beginning with #5. One of them, according to the owner, was given to her by a friend after it self-seeded in the latter's garden. Oddly, while Tuliptrees will self-seed in this climate, one almost never sees one in a wild area, only in cultivated sites.

When a Tuliptree is transplanted in a place where it is happy (good soil, medium to abundant water) it can demonstrate rapid growth. In my back yard we planted one in 2000, a little thing easily handled by two people and about 8' tall. It has now attained around 45-50 feet, despite having once lost part of its top in the same hurricane that snapped the Buckman Tavern's chief adornment. Three feet of growth per year is noticeable

to even the casual observer!

In Lexington there has been difficulty getting Tuliptrees established as roadside trees, or even in more open settings like the High School or the Buckman Tavern grounds. They are “particular” about their planting sites, and seem to especially hate compacted soil and road salt. Their value to wildlife is somewhat low, unlike our oaks and pines; nevertheless, their abundant seed provides some nourishment to birds and small mammals.

The Tuliptree is an ancient species related to magnolias, with heavy blossoms dependent upon beetles and larger insects for pollination. Nevertheless its beauty makes it a very positive addition to a modern garden. And with a warming climate, we can expect more of these Southern trees to thrive here.

Summer Trail Improvements

By Keith Ohmart

Lexington’s Conservation Stewards and a variety of volunteers from several organizations have been hard at work over the last several months repairing old and constructing new boardwalk and bridge structures in two of the town’s Conservation properties.

The improvements at Whipple Hill are part of a three year project to improve trails throughout the property. This year’s projects when completed will see the construction of over 240’ of boardwalks and bridges at 8 different locations where seasonally wet trail conditions exist. Half have been completed as of this writing, with completion of the remaining sites expected this fall.

The work began this spring when approximately forty members of the Lexington High boy’s track and field team spent a Saturday morning in mid May hand carrying the lumber for these projects to their respective locations. The construction of seven of these projects is the work of Eagle Scout candidates and their scouting colleagues. The eighth project, a bridge over the outlet of the pond on the property, was constructed by a team of Conservation Stewards.

The second property receiving attention this year has been Dunback Meadow. Thirty volunteers from Cubist Pharmaceuticals joined by Conservation staff and Steward volunteers put in over 200 hours removing and replacing the large and aging bridge on the trail midway through the property along with replacing several sections of old boardwalk and adding some 50 feet of new boardwalk. The critical part of the operation involved transporting and positioning two 27’ stringers weighing in excess of 400 lbs each! The next time you cross this new bridge, pause for a moment and take a peek under the decking to appreciate the skill and muscle it took to put these replacement supports in place.



Dunback Meadow Bridge

Additional work replacing several of the remaining older boardwalk sections on this property totaling 120’ are planned for completion in late August as this issue goes to press.

As you enjoy these improvements on your next visit to either of these properties, take a moment to appreciate the dedica-

tion of our volunteer Stewards and the successful partnerships they have forged with other groups and businesses in our community who collaborate on these projects. All of the trail structures throughout the over 60 miles of trails throughout the Town's 27 Conservation properties have been constructed and are maintained by the volunteer efforts of the Town's Conservation Stewards. If you should wish to learn more about joining in these activities on either a regular or periodic basis, contact the Conservation Department office in Town Hall or through the Town's web site.

Rick Abrams: In Memorium

By Keith Ohmart and Eileen Entin

CLC and the wider Lexington Conservation community lost a valued friend and dynamic emerging leader earlier this summer with the passing of Rick Abrams due to complications from thyroid cancer. Rick was new to CLC, having joined our Board less than a year ago, prior to the precipitous final decline in his health this past spring.

Rick brought to CLC his trademark enthusiasm and seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy that was already well known to those of us who had worked with Rick previously on the Greenways Corridor Committee (GCC). Rick was perhaps best known to the wider Lexington community as the public face of GCC's ACROSS Lexington trail system project.

Rick's forte was in marketing and working with people to make things happen. It was these traits that made him so successful in his career in scholastic publishing, and it was these same traits that translated so well to his growing involvement with service to the Lexington community.

Prior to his appointment to the Greenways Corridor Committee in 2011, Rick had not previously worked with Lexington's various conservation organizations, but it quickly became apparent to all of us who got to know Rick that this was a perfect match. Rick's personal interest in the growing walking-for-health movement combined with his own passion for walking as exercise could not have found a better outlet than the newly formed GCC's ambitious plans for creating a 40-plus mile network of signed walking routes throughout Lexington.

What became the ACROSS Lexington project was the perfect vehicle for engaging Rick's formidable skills and wide-ranging interests. We are grateful for all that Rick accomplished in the less than three years that he was active in Lexington's conservation community.

Many Routes lead to Lexington Community Farm!

By Janet Kern

If you have not yet visited the new Lexington Community Farm, it's worth a visit to enjoy the landscape and some fresh veggies! Walk around the edge of the farm as part of the new Route "C" of the ACROSS Lexington Trail System. Or if you prefer public transportation, the new Route 1 of the Lexpress bus system travels by the farm every hour each weekday. You can continue to enjoy local fresh vegetables organically grown from your community farm through the end of October: Address: 52 Lowell St, Lexington; Farm stand hours: Wed - Fri: 2 - 7 pm; Sat: 9 am - 5 pm; Sun: 10 am - 4 pm. www.lexfarm.org for more information