



*Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation*

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Kate Fricker, Editor **April, 2003** **Eileen Entin, President**

IN THIS ISSUE

Page

| | |
|--|----|
| <u>CLC Publications</u> | 2 |
| <u>Spring Walks</u> | 3 |
| <u>Invasive Plants, the Twelve Worst Offenders</u> | 4 |
| <u>Alliance for a Healthier Tomorrow</u> | 7 |
| <u>Garlic Mustard</u> | 8 |
| <u>Tell a Friend</u> | 8 |
| <u>Recommend a Book</u> | 8 |
| <u>Hazardous Products Drop-off</u> | 9 |
| <u>Let's Talk Trash</u> | 9 |
| <u>Report on Lincoln Park</u> | 9 |
| <u>Surf the Web</u> | 10 |



Have You Renewed Your Membership?

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 to check your membership status. If it says "Dues paid 2003," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2002" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2003. 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, please send \$7.00 for a regular membership or \$10.00 for a sustaining membership to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003.

Help CLC Save Paper and Postage

If you would like to receive your CLC newsletter as a PDF file attached to an email, ask Kate Fricker at kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu. All formatting and graphics will be identical to the snail mail version, but illustrations will be in color, links will be live, and you will receive your copy before anyone relying on snail mail. In addition to avoiding paper waste, CLC will save about one dollar per issue for each email version sent. If your e-mail provider refuses large attachments, ask to receive timely e-mail notifications containing the URL of the web site of the newsletter.

CLC Publications

These publications are available free on our web site,

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>

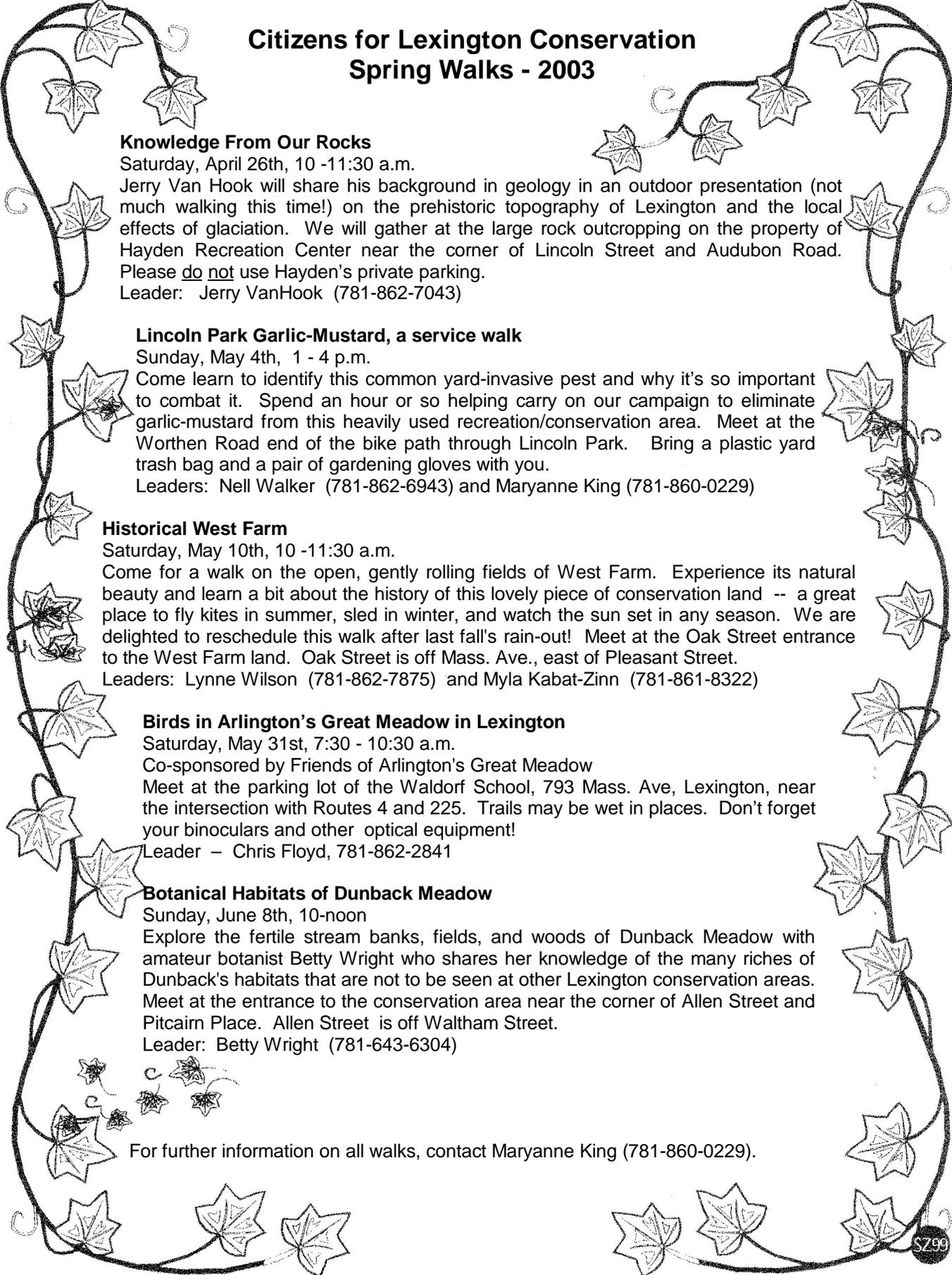
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| Birds of Dunback Meadow |
| Ferns of Whipple Hill |
| Introduction to Hayden Woods |
| A Walk Through Hayden Woods - New |
| A Wildflower Walk at Whipple Hill |
| Discovering the Paint Mine |
| Building a Brushpile |
| The Red Fox in Lexington |
| Insect Pests of Shade Trees |
| Winter Feeder Checklist |
| Checklist of Lexington Birds |
| Wildflower List for Lexington |
| Checklist - Birds of Whipple Hill |
| Flowers and Shrubs of Whipple Hill, 1982 |
| Flowers & Shrubs of Whipple Hill and Locke Farm, 2000 |
| Geological History of Lexington |
| Checklist of Birds of the Great Meadows, Lexington |
| Guide to the Great Meadows: A Walking Tour |

Contact Us

Use our web site comment page to send in interesting conservation-related happenings or sightings of unusual birds or other wildlife that we can use in our web site and our newsletter:

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/Comment.htm>, or contact Eileen at ebe@aptima.com, or Kate at kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu.





Citizens for Lexington Conservation Spring Walks - 2003

Knowledge From Our Rocks

Saturday, April 26th, 10 -11:30 a.m.

Jerry Van Hook will share his background in geology in an outdoor presentation (not much walking this time!) on the prehistoric topography of Lexington and the local effects of glaciation. We will gather at the large rock outcropping on the property of Hayden Recreation Center near the corner of Lincoln Street and Audubon Road. Please do not use Hayden's private parking.

Leader: Jerry VanHook (781-862-7043)

Lincoln Park Garlic-Mustard, a service walk

Sunday, May 4th, 1 - 4 p.m.

Come learn to identify this common yard-invasive pest and why it's so important to combat it. Spend an hour or so helping carry on our campaign to eliminate garlic-mustard from this heavily used recreation/conservation area. Meet at the Worthen Road end of the bike path through Lincoln Park. Bring a plastic yard trash bag and a pair of gardening gloves with you.

Leaders: Nell Walker (781-862-6943) and Maryanne King (781-860-0229)

Historical West Farm

Saturday, May 10th, 10 -11:30 a.m.

Come for a walk on the open, gently rolling fields of West Farm. Experience its natural beauty and learn a bit about the history of this lovely piece of conservation land -- a great place to fly kites in summer, sled in winter, and watch the sun set in any season. We are delighted to reschedule this walk after last fall's rain-out! Meet at the Oak Street entrance to the West Farm land. Oak Street is off Mass. Ave., east of Pleasant Street.

Leaders: Lynne Wilson (781-862-7875) and Myla Kabat-Zinn (781-861-8322)

Birds in Arlington's Great Meadow in Lexington

Saturday, May 31st, 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Co-sponsored by Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow

Meet at the parking lot of the Waldorf School, 793 Mass. Ave, Lexington, near the intersection with Routes 4 and 225. Trails may be wet in places. Don't forget your binoculars and other optical equipment!

Leader - Chris Floyd, 781-862-2841

Botanical Habitats of Dunback Meadow

Sunday, June 8th, 10-noon

Explore the fertile stream banks, fields, and woods of Dunback Meadow with amateur botanist Betty Wright who shares her knowledge of the many riches of Dunback's habitats that are not to be seen at other Lexington conservation areas. Meet at the entrance to the conservation area near the corner of Allen Street and Pitcairn Place. Allen Street is off Waltham Street.

Leader: Betty Wright (781-643-6304)

For further information on all walks, contact Maryanne King (781-860-0229).

Invasive Plants: The Twelve Worst Offenders

By Peter Alden, author of *National Audubon Society's Field Guide to New England*, reprinted (with permission) from the Belmont Citizens Forum

Photograph of Loosestrife © Barry Rice/The Nature Conservancy. All other photographs © John Randall/The Nature Conservancy

There are more than one hundred aggressive non-native plants in Massachusetts that are crowding out native species. The number of fertile seeds, fruits and live rhizomes being spread increases every year. Here is a list of the twelve worst, with tips on how to identify them and control them.

Oriental Bittersweet, *Celastrus orbiculatus*



This woody vine is the most invasive plant in Massachusetts. It can envelop trees up to 80 feet tall. Older specimens can be up to five inches thick. Bittersweet eventually kills the host tree. Weakened by the weight of the vine, the tree is then vulnerable to wind and snow damage. The fruit of the bittersweet is red and fleshy, with a four-pointed yellow base, and grows in clusters along the branches. (Rare native American Bittersweet produces fruit only at the branch tips.) Decorators consider the fruit attractive, and it is eaten and spread by European Starlings, American Robins, and other birds. Its leaves vary in shape from oval to round, with pointed tips, and turn yellow in the fall. Its flowers are white and inconspicuous. This vine should be cut before it fruits and herbicides should be used on cut stumps. Great care is needed in disposing of cuttings to prevent the bittersweet from spreading.

Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*



If eaten, the seeds, leaves, and bark of this tree are poisonous to most animals, including humans. Black Locusts, which can grow to be 80 feet tall, are native to the southern United States, but not to Massachusetts. Once planted, they spread underground, forming ever larger colonies that shade out native plants. This tree is a huge nuisance on Cape Cod. You can distinguish it by its trunk, which is deeply furrowed when mature, and its fruit: reddish, four-inch, hanging pods. It produces large clusters of pretty white flowers on its branch tips in May or June. If cut it will sprout again. Repeated cutting is necessary for several years, or you may apply full-strength glyphosate herbicides on fresh stumps.

Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*



This perennial herb with showy clusters of tiny pinkish purple flowers is popular in gardens. It can grow to be 10 feet tall. The stems feel woody; the leaves have smooth edges and grow opposite each other or in whorls of three. Each plant can produce two million tiny seeds per year, which spread rapidly by water and wind but provide no food for local wildlife. Purple loosestrife forms impenetrable mats that sterilize freshwater marshes and ruin homes of native freshwater plants and animals. The sale and growth of this European plant is prohibited in many states, but not yet in Massachusetts. Pulling new colonizers before they set seed is vital. Eliminating large stands is difficult. Some hope that European beetles may control its spread.

Phragmites, *Phragmites australis*



This giant European grass is commonly found on the edge of salt marshes, where its monolithic mass can keep all other native plants and animals from surviving. It can grow as tall as 15 feet. Its stems are round and hollow and very thick at the base. It produces plume-like silky seed heads. The leaves are up to two feet long. It spreads via underground rhizomes and its shoots are so sharp that they can grow through pavement. Most new colonies start in dumped soil. Controlling this plant is labor-intensive. It can involve cutting, application of herbicides, dredging, burning, or flooding of an area for four months in summer.

Japanese Knotweed, *Polygonum cuspidatum*



Native to Japan and east Asia, this shrub-like herb grows 6 to 12 feet tall in dense stands that shade out all native species. Its stems are hollow and bamboo-like, its leaves broad and heart-shaped. Four-inch clusters of tiny white flowers appear in August through October. The seeds are black and triangular and are enclosed in three-winged papery calyxes. Ugly masses of Japanese knotweed can be found on roadsides, in gardens, and in wild areas. To eliminate it, persistent cutting is required during the growing season, and licensed workers can apply herbicide after each cut. This plant can keep sprouting from rhizomes in the soil for many years. Major infestations can be seen along Route 2 in the Alewife area and around the Belmont Center railroad station.

European Buckthorns, *Rhamnus*



There are two species of these invasive small trees or shrubs. Both can grow 25 feet high. The Common Buckthorn has unscented twigs and roundish leaves with fine tooting on the edges. Short thorns appear on the branch tips. Its fruit is black like huckleberry and it prefers dry, limey, neutral, or alkaline soils. The Glossy Buckthorn has acrid-smelling twigs and fine white spots on its stem. The leaves are glossy and smooth edged. It has no thorns, and its fruits are red at first, later turning to purplish-black. It prefers wetter acidic soils. Birds love the fruit and spread the seeds everywhere; the fruit is a laxative. Buckthorn can be controlled by persistent hand pulling of younger pioneer plants. Weed wrenches are useful for getting out the roots of older plants. A 50 percent glyphosate herbicide applied in fall and winter is also helpful.

Ailanthus, *Ailanthus altissima*



This tree, known as "Tree-of-Heaven," is the tree in the book *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Now common along the edges of Route 2 on Belmont Hill, it can grow up to 90 feet tall. Its bark is smooth and gray; the younger trees resemble a feather-leafed palm. It produces a mass of greenish flowers in summer and reddish-brown papery winged seeds, which are dispersed by wind in the fall. Its compound leaves can be

three feet long, with a single tooth on each side of the base (unlike a native look-alike, Staghorn Sumac, which has fully-serrated leaves). It dominates many urban lots and is spreading outside of cities, where it displaces native plants and their dependent animals. It also releases a chemical compound into the soil that inhibits the growth of other plants. It can be controlled by removing any new growth from stumps. Glyphosate herbicide can be applied to a stump or to the base of the tree once the bark is removed.

Norway Maple, *Acer platanoides*



This European tree is the most widely planted street tree in Massachusetts. It can grow as tall as 80 feet and is rapidly invading native woodlands. Its trunk, when mature, is furrowed in a barbecue-grill-like pattern. Norway leaves are wider than those of native Sugar Maple, and are smooth on the bottom instead of fuzzy. Norway Maple leaves exude a milky latex, turn only yellow in the fall (Sugar Maple leaves turn yellow, orange, or red), and drop later in the season than Sugar Maples. Winged Norway Maple seeds are paired at a 180-degree

angle. This tree's dense shade canopy eliminates native plants beneath it. Seedlings can be pulled; mature ones may be cut close to the ground.

Black Swallow-wort, *Cynanchum louiseae*

This twining vine is native to southeastern Europe and can grow up to seven feet tall. Its small flowers are maroon or purple-black. Its leaves are dark green, smooth-edged, and taper to a point; they have a disagreeable odor when crushed. The fruit is a long, thin milkweed pod. Once established, this vine is very difficult to eradicate because of its dense mass of knobby roots. Yank new sprouts when you spot them and remove all root pieces of mature plants.



Japanese Barberry, *Berberis thunbergii*



This shrub, native to Japan, grows up to six feet tall and invades both garden edges and wild lands. The stems form a dense mass, with short sharp spines. Its leaves are small and rounded, and it produces a multitude of small, elongated, bright red berries. Wear heavy gloves when pulling young plants to protect your hands from the spines. If you remove it mechanically, you must pull most of the roots to avoid new

growth. If you choose to use glyphosate herbicides, they are best applied at the cut by licensed permittees.

Oriental Honeysuckles, *Lonicera*



These shrubs, between four and 12 feet tall, have opposite leaves and red berries. The commonest one, Morrow's Honeysuckle, is from northeast Asia and has 1-1/2-inch leaves with short pointed tips. The Tatarian Honeysuckle is from Turkey and the Caucasus Mountains. Its leaves are 2-1/2 inches long, tapering to a long point. All varieties, including hybrids have seductively sweet-smelling white flowers, often

tinged pink and fading to yellow. They are loved by gardeners but spread quickly into wild lands via bird droppings. There they become the dominant shrub of the understory, choking out native plants. You may pull seedlings up to three years old. Older plants require the use of glyphosate herbicides.

Multiflora Rose, *Rosa multiflora*



This native of northeast Asia was once promoted by the U.S. government for living fences. It can grow ten feet tall, and has sharp, stout thorns. The flowers, which are white and one inch wide, appear in clusters in late May or June. Unlike rarer native roses, its leaves have feathery, fringed stipules at the base. Its red rose hips are eaten and defended by Northern Mockingbirds. It is found at garden edges, in

pastures, and along roadsides, where it usurps native plant habitats. Use heavy gloves to pull small plants. Cut older plants repeatedly until dead. Herbicides can be used on cut stems in fall and winter. Repeated mowing in fields is also effective.

Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow Promotes Bills to Foster a Healthier Massachusetts

by Myla Kabat-Zinn and Ellie Goldberg

The Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow (AHT), a Massachusetts environmental health coalition, is a statewide coalition of over 100 organizations, including health, environmental, labor, scientific, faith and community groups. The Alliance is currently working to promote five bills to establish new protections from the environmental hazards that contribute to illnesses and disabilities such as asthma, autism, birth defects, cancers, developmental disabilities, diabetes, endometriosis, infertility, Parkinson's disease, and ALS.

Lexington residents who support the AHT goals can thank Representative Kaufman for sponsoring and cosponsoring some of this legislation and Representative Stanley for agreeing to support four out of the five new bills. These bills correct the regulatory flaws that allow toxic substances to end up in our bodies without our knowledge or consent. They are meaningful changes that will reduce pollution and protect our children and the sustainability of our communities.

S1268 & H2275 An Act for a Healthy Massachusetts, Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals

(Sponsored by Rep. Kaufman)

This bill targets ten of the worst chemicals that we are exposed to in everyday life. It requires the development of action plans to phase out these chemicals wherever safer alternatives are available.

- ? Lead
- ? Formaldehyde
- ? Trichloroethylene
- ? Perchloroethylene
- ? Dioxins and Furans
- ? Hexavalent chromium
- ? Organophosphate pesticides
- ? Pentabromodiphenyl ether (Penta BDE)
- ? Di-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP)
- ? 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4, D)



S692 & H2482 An Act Relative to Mercury Reduction and Education (Co-sponsored by Rep. Kaufman)

This bill will phase out the use of mercury-containing products and keep them out of incinerators, landfills and the environment, in part by requiring manufacturers to take back the products at the end of their useful life.

S694 & H2966 An Act to Reduce Asthma and Other Health Threats from Cleaning Products Used in Schools, Hospitals, Day Care Centers, and Public Housing

This bill will give the Commissioner of the DPH the mandate to create a list of healthy cleaning products (products screened to avoid health impact) for use where children are especially vulnerable: schools, day care centers, hospitals and health care centers, and public housing. It makes the use of healthy cleaning products mandatory in all public buildings and provides training for cleaning personnel.

S320 An Act to Promote Sustainable Agriculture and the Use of Non-Toxic Pest Management

This bill would remove the sales tax exemption from toxic pesticides and fertilizers and dedicate those dollars to a fund for non-toxic pest management. It is estimated that approximately \$1.1 million would be raised annually from this sales tax.

H1930 An Act Relative to Corporate Accountability

This bill would protect consumers and investors by requiring corporate disclosure of potential liabilities for product hazards and environmental problems. It would require the executive director of the state pension fund and retirement trust fund boards to avoid such investments.

For the full text of House and Senate bills go to <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/legis.htm>.

CLC has joined in support of these bills. Individuals and groups can join the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow at www.healthytomorrow.com or by calling Elizabeth Saunders, AHT Coordinator, (617) 338-8131. Individuals who wish to receive email alerts about Healthy Tomorrow events and these policy initiatives can sign up on the website.

Garlic Mustard



As you must know by now, the alien invader, Garlic Mustard, must be pulled up before it goes to seed in May. The following article may interest weed-pullers.

From The New York Times, May 23, 2002, Garden Q & A by Leslie Land
"The toothed heart-shaped leaves of *Alliaria petiolata* have been cooked and eaten in Europe for centuries. The nicest use may be in salads, where the small white flowers and tender top leaves add a welcome bite. But that doesn't use up much compared with cooking, which shrinks a large pile of leaves to a small serving and also helps tame the mustard flavor.

"For the tastiest results, use leaves from plants that have not yet flowered (discard stems). Saute in olive oil till wilted, add a sprinkle of water, cover and steam till tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in a few raisins or toasted pine nuts. Add salt and lemon juice to taste.

"Don't overindulge. Garlic Mustard can have laxative effects."

Tell a Friend

CLC membership is getting older. Why not persuade a younger friend to join. Lend your newsletter to someone who might be interested in becoming a member.

Recommend a Book

by Kate Fricker

Would you like to recommend a book that would be of interest to CLC members? Send your recommendation and one or two sentences describing the book to kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu and I will put it in the next newsletter.

For a start, I recommend *Winter World, The Ingenuity of Animal Survival*, by Bernd Heinrich. This book is full of fascinating first-hand descriptions of animal adaptations that enable them to survive in the winter months.

Hazardous Products Drop-off April 26

Assemble your hazardous products and get rid of them all on the big day.

Take computer parts and TV's to the DPW Garage at 201 Bedford St: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Take your Household Hazardous Products to the Hartwell Avenue site at 60 Hartwell Ave from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Take button batteries (mercury or silver) to special boxes at Theatre Camera, Cary Library, Town Hall, or the Council on Aging.

If you miss the Household Hazardous Products Drop-off on April 26, you can still dispose of Mercury-containing items (thermometers, thermostats, blood pressure devices) at the Board of Health, Room G-8, Town Hall, 1625 Mass Ave. on weekdays from 9am to 1pm. Mercury thermometers can be exchanged for new digital thermometers at the Board of Health. Discarded mercury thermometers are the single highest contributor of mercury to the municipal waste stream, adding over 17 tons of mercury to the environment each year.

Let's Talk Trash

Do you read the Let's Talk Trash column by Laura Dickerson in the Lexington MinuteMan? You can read all of the articles on the SWAT web site at

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/swat/TrashTalkx.htm>, or to find answers to particular questions you may have, you can search through the columns for a topic of your choice at <http://www.lexingtonma.org/Lexington.htm>.

Report on Lincoln Park, April 1, 2003

By Concerned Citizens for Lincoln Park

The saga of Lincoln Park continues with major reconstruction of the athletic fields and expansion and relocation of the parking lot expected to last into late summer of 2003.

A Special Town Meeting on January 22 was called by a petition of 297 citizens in order to discuss a number of issues that seemed to shortchange the usual public process required by such a large capital investment. A motion to appoint a special committee of all the stakeholders to look into the design and cost problems and report back to the selectmen in a month's time was voted down by Town Meeting, which wanted to get on with the project as soon as possible. The concerned citizens made a good presentation, but Town Meeting did not want to reconsider the different design issues of artificial vs. real grass and the need to ameliorate some of the flaws in the original plans.

On February 4 the Conservation Commission on a tied vote reaffirmed its position that drainage issues were out of its purview, - because all construction was beyond the 100 foot wetland buffer zone and an outfall drainage pipe was not directly connected to an existing drain into the wetlands (even though they were positioned so excess water would flow from the outfall pipe across the ground into the existing drain).

The issue of Lincoln Park has been complicated by the fact that the original landfill there did not have a proper cap and methane gas collection system. The town elected to not seek a permit for any part of the project from the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). When construction began early in the year, abutters filed a letter with the DEP. As a result, the DEP has recently confirmed that indeed the project should come under their purview because

construction penetrated the cap and the trash layers. The DEP gave the Town a choice between two procedures:

- (1) Halt the project until the DEP assesses what has to be done, or
- (2) Continue construction in an at-risk phased approach by providing a grading plan that meets certain conditions, proving that the drainage plan will not result in significant infiltration into the landfill, and providing a set of post-construction assessments.

The Town chose option (2), opening up the risk that it might not meet these criteria. The impacts of these requirements are presently unclear.

The DEP also said that the lack of connection of the three outflow pipes to existing drains was considered not the best management practice.

However, Lisa Baci reported to the April 7 Town Meeting that as a result of discussions at the Special Town Meeting and other meetings with key members of the Recreation and Lincoln Park committees and other Town officials following the Special Town Meeting, it is clear now that some of the design issues can be solved without major construction costs. Problems involving the fitness/nature path have been resolved, and large intrusive berms have been reduced in height and reconfigured. Left unresolved is the issue of an increased volume of field drainage into the surrounding wetlands and adjacent neighborhoods. Left to the future is the issue of cost - Was it a wise decision for the Town to spend 3.4 million dollars for three synthetic athletic fields?

Overall, we believe the opportunity for citizens to bring the details of this project to Town Meeting brought about a much-improved process from that which went before. We regret that it took a Special Town Meeting to force this kind of attention, but the result will be a much improved fitness/nature path design.

Another benefit of the Special Town Meeting was the realization that the regional resource that is Lincoln Park needs a focused constituency. A Friends of Lincoln Park (FLP) group was formed in February 2003. Its mission is to promote appreciation for the whole Park. CLC members and others who would like to join may call or email Margaret Heitz, president of FLP (phone 781-861-0190, email mbheitz@msn.com), for a membership brochure.

Surf the Web Some Interesting Sites

www.friendsofalewifereservation.org
www.walthamlandtrust.org
www.belmontcitizensforum.org
<http://foagm.org>
<http://arlington2020.org/reservoir>
<http://www.mysticriver.org>
<http://www.crwa.org>

