Unfortunately, due to the Corona Virus pandemic some of our early programs have been canceled. As of this writing the parks are still open, but Governor Lamont’s executive orders only allow for solitary recreation—groups of more than 5 are prohibited and must maintain 6 foot social distancing. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

NEW BIRDHOUSE for the ROCK GARDEN

Garden Volunteer Kathy Kensel and her husband have made a new bird house for the Rock Garden over the winter! They made three houses, one for the rock garden at the park, one for Kathy’s garden and one which was donated to the Friends for a fund raiser. At it’s March meeting the Board voted to donate it to the park for a “spare”, so when one is being refurbished, another will take it’s place in the garden.
Grapevine enclosure being renovated!

The grape arbor enclosure is undergoing a renovation. In the 1930’s the Harknesses sent one of their gardeners to Italy to purchase the vines and learn about their care. We have three surviving vines: Muscat of Alexandria, Muscat of Hamburg and Schiava Grossa.

We are propagating cuttings from the vines and hope they will be available for planting in 2021.

Garden Volunteers Always Welcome!

The FOH garden Volunteers have been taking cuttings and potting up heliotrope in the greenhouse since February 1. Over 500 heliotrope have been started to date, including some standards (heliotrope pruned into tree form). Another group of volunteers have been pruning our heirloom apples. Upcoming tasks for April will be garden cleanup and pansy planting. If you love our daylilies, we need help weeding in that bed too. Please consider joining us on Wednesdays from 9AM to 12noon—social distancing is observed. You don’t have to commit to every Wednesday, most garden volunteers come as their schedule permits. You can email John Suhr, Garden committee chairman for more details and “meeting place of the week” at jshur159@gmail.com.

Gift Shed (shop) volunteers needed for summer 2020

We will need volunteers to keep our new shop open on weekends and selected weekdays. Hours are from 11AM to 3PM. We are open at the Plant Sale and from Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day. Please contact Deanna Bossdorf at matjge6@gmail.com if you are interested in donating some of your time here!
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS
If all is back to normal in May, we will be meeting on May 11, at 7:00PM in the Mansion. Our guest speaker, Kimberly Stoner, from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station in Hamden will present a program on “Planting for Bees Needs” - creating pollinator gardens.

In June, we look forward to hearing a program on Ellen Biddle Shipman, a contemporary of Beatrix Farrand and landscape designer, presented by Judith Tankard, author of “Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement” and “Ellen Shipman and the American Garden”

DOCENTS NEEDED FOR SUMMER TOURS
Looking ahead to summer, FOH needs docents for both house and garden tours. Docent led tours are offered from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 AM to 2PM. In 2019, 29 docents gave 2,237 tours and received $6,119 in donations. If you want to share your love of all things Harkness with visitors, please contact Gail Brookover at gailbrookover@gmail.com. Docent training for both house and garden tours is planned soon after the social distancing requirements are suspended.

NEWS FROM THE PARK GROUNDS
You may have noticed that the front fields near the road have been burned. A controlled burn suppresses invasive plants, rejuvenates the fields with native plants and improves the habitat for native species.

Last Fall there were a number of new trees planted at Harkness replacing the many trees that have been lost in recent storms. More trees will be planted this Spring including copper beeches.

Better Days Ahead!