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**Wednesday Evenings at Elm Bank Returns July 14**

MassHort's 'Wednesday Evenings at Elm Bank' series of programs for the home gardener returns on July 14 with seven, first-rate presentations by experts in the field. Topics for this season range from talks on specific plant families (hostas and clematis) to 'how to' seminars on late-season plant shopping and tree care.

"We think of it as a garden club without borders," says Gretel Anspach, MassHort trustee and chair of the Horticulture, Education and Outreach Committee that sponsors the event. "It's all the best stuff you join a garden club for, without ever having to listen to someone read the minutes."

The series kicks off July 14 when Weston Nurseries' **Brian Karlsson-Barnes** offers down-to-earth advice about plant shopping in the summer and fall. There are four more months of great gardening and planting weather. Prices come down and although plants always look best early in a season (especially herbaceous perennials), if well-maintained at a nursery or garden center, and planted right later in the season, the plants will look great the following year. Brian will detail what to look for at a nursery/garden center and how to tell a merely good plant from a terrific one.

On July 21, **Betty Sanders** talks on 'Healthy Lawns – and Alternatives'. Betty is a well-respected gardening lecturer to groups around the region and the author of the Leaflet's monthly 'Horticultural Hints' column. She believes that homeowners are caught in a web of conflicting and frequently overstated claims about the virtues of 'four-step' processes and 'organic lawns'. As a chemist and Master Gardener, she's well positioned to sort out hype from truth. She'll describe how homeowners can have healthy lawns with a minimum of chemicals, and how a smaller lawn can be a better lawn.

On July 28, former New England Hosta Society President **Mary Arnerberg** will bring a long time of love for hostas (and a lot of samples) to Elm Bank to discuss what makes hostas such a terrific plant for the home gardener. There are more than 4000 named varieties of hosta and Mary will present examples of hosta lovers' favorites, as well as other varieties to appeal to gardeners with either sun or shade conditions.

In August, four more talks will be devoted to shade gardening, renewing a 'mature' garden or landscape, caring for trees (including protecting against winter moths), and the joys of clematis.

Sessions begin at 6:30 and go until 8 p.m. or until the last question has been answered. All sessions are held at Elm Bank, either in the Hunnewell carriage house or the Education Building.

MassHort members pay \$8 per session. The cost for non-members is \$10. Refreshments are offered.

**Antiques at Elm Bank Returns July 24 and 25**

The fifth annual Antiques at Elm Bank Show will be held Saturday and Sunday, July 24th and 25th on the Elm Bank grounds. Antiques will be displayed in outdoor tents surrounded by lush gardens with a select number of dealers to be showcased inside the Hunnewell and Education buildings at Elm Bank.

More than 100 quality dealers will be on hand featuring hundreds of sought-after items at Greater Boston's most magnificent outdoor summer antiques show. Antiques from the 18th to the mid 20th century will be available including Federalist and Victorian furniture, European and Asian ceramics, china, sterling silver, art, estate jewelry, antique toys and much more. Everyone from the casual collector to the experienced investor will be able to find that precious treasure they have been searching for.



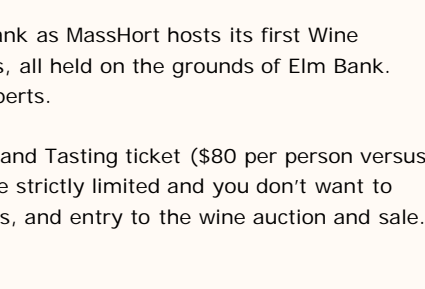
Dealers exhibiting at Elm Bank Estate come from all over New England and are selected for the quality of their items and displays. Additional antiques available at the show include Native American art and baskets, fine 19th and 20th century oil paintings, sewing items, quilts and linens, British enameware, antiques walking sticks, historic flasks, American Coin silver, antique lighting, European porcelain and Bohemian glass, silver heirlooms, Japanese art, period frames and mirrors, New England country and formal furniture, antique cupboards, brass bells, clocks, and 18th and 19th century vanity and desk accessories and other unique home furnishings.

Admission to Antiques at Elm Bank is \$8 per person (12 and under free.) Hours are Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Tuesdays and Fridays Are Kids' Days at Elm Bank**

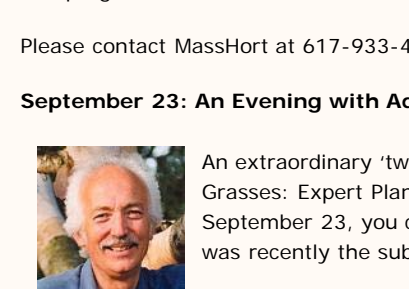
A walk in the gardens with your children can be just a pleasant stroll – or it can be an educational adventure. At Elm Bank on Tuesdays and Fridays, a pair of parent- (and child-) pleasing programs is making learning fun.

Each Friday at 10 a.m., Miss Gina (otherwise known as educator and Master Gardener Gina Poole) offers Weezie's Summer Story Hour. Each session includes singing, poetry, garden walks, horticultural education – and stories. Weather permitting, sessions are held each week in July and August in the Story Circle of Weezie's Garden. If it's raining, the sessions move indoors to the Education Building. Summer Story Hour will be offered weekly through August 6.



Gina Poole - Miss Gina - leads a nature walk through Weezie's Garden as part of Story Hour.

On Tuesdays, beginning July 6, the Caterpillar Club returns for an eight-week session. It, too, meets at 10 a.m. in the Story Circle of Weezie's Garden, intended for kids from pre-kindergarten through second grade; sessions will be held in the stone circle at Weezie's Garden. Leading the Caterpillar Club is Kathi Garlepy, who created the program in 2003. Kathi is a former pre-K and kindergarten teacher and a Lifetime Master Gardener. Sessions will include material on flowers, insects, trees and butterflies, which will be explored through reading, demonstrations and crafts.



Kathi Garlepy conducts a reading during Caterpillar Club.

**Calendar: Coming in August & September**

**August 7: Massachusetts Marketplace Festival**

New England farmers, specialty food producers, and artisans will come together with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for the 13th annual Massachusetts Marketplace Festival on Saturday, August 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Elm Bank Horticulture Center in Wellesley. Marketplace vendors will display and sell an array of foods, plants, and crafts representing the finest products from the region's fields, farms, gardens, and kitchens. You can read more about the event [here](#).

**September 19: MassHort Wine Festival**

Love wine? Love food? Love gardens? Mark your calendar for Sunday, September 19, 2010 at Elm Bank as MassHort hosts its first Wine Festival. It will be a spectacular full day of wine tasting, superb food, a wine auction and garden tours, all held on the grounds of Elm Bank. There will be more than a hundred wines to taste, a Champagne brunch, celebrity chefs and wine experts.

Why buy your tickets now? Because by signing up now, you can save \$10 to \$20 off the price of a Grand Tasting ticket (\$80 per person versus \$90 for later registration, and \$155 per couple versus \$175). Space for the Champagne Brunch will be strictly limited and you don't want to miss out. Grand Tasting tickets will include guided garden tours, the Champagne brunch, wine tastings, and entry to the wine auction and sale.

**September 22: All-day Symposium for the Serious Home Gardener**

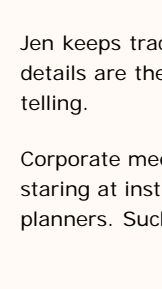
Reprising last year's standing-room-only symposium, MassHort and the Perennial Plant Association will hold a full-day series of talks built around the theme, "Exploring Design, Plant Selection, and Maintenance of the Mixed Border".

Speakers will include Adrian Bloom of Blooms of Breshingham, Roy Diblik of Northwind Perennial Farm, Kirk Brown of Joanne Kostecy Garden Design, Kerry Mendez of Perennially Yours, Brent Heath of Brent & Becky's Bulbs, and Laura Deeter of Ohio State University.

The registration fee is \$95 before September 14, \$110 after that date.

The program includes lunch. More information and registration forms can be found [here](#).

**September 23: An Evening with Adrian Bloom**

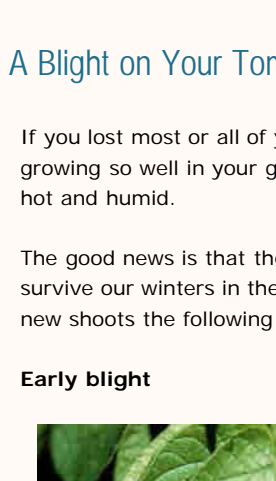


An extraordinary 'two-fer' for a great cause. Adrian Bloom is in America with a new book, "Bloom's Best Perennials and Grasses: Expert Plant Choices and Dramatic Combinations for Year Round Gardens". On the evening of Wednesday, September 23, you can meet and talk with Adrian in the extraordinary Cape Cod garden of Paul Miszkovsky. Paul's garden was recently the subject of a cover article in the Boston Globe's Sunday magazine and is rarely open to the public.

Tickets are \$150 per person for an evening of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and conversation. To register, contact our reservation line at 617-933-4995.

**Festival of Trees - First Call for Entries!**

Yes, it's July and we're all thinking about going to the beach to get cool. But the Festival of Trees is just a little over four months away and now is the time to register if you would like to have a tree at this amazing holiday event at Elm Bank in November and December.



The Festival of Trees makes money by raffling off the dozens of trees that visitors come to see. Trees come in two sizes: full (up to eleven feet including ornamental toppers) and miniature (up to eighteen inches). The theme of a tree is completely at the discretion of the giver. Some donors decorate a tree in memory of someone, and businesses find a tree donation as great advertisement for their businesses. Trees and their sponsors are fully described in the program given to all adult visitors. (All trees are identified as to their donor unless anonymity is requested.)

If your time does not permit you to design and decorate a tree, the Festival of Trees staff can do it for you. Let us know your budget and any decoration motifs you may have in mind. Give us any specific items you may want incorporated into the tree (gift certificates, event tickets, etc.) and we will do the rest. The Festival of Trees staff includes several award-winning floral designers.

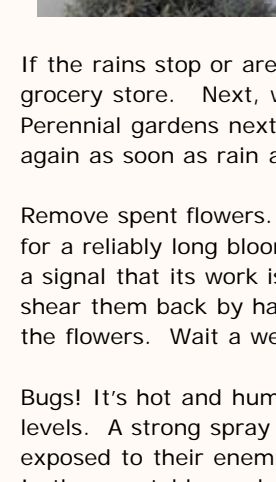
Your decorated tree is a donation to the MassHort Festival of Trees and will be raffled as part of the fund raising efforts of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society is a 501(c) 3 private non-profit organization as defined by the US Internal Revenue Service code. MassHort can provide you with a donation verification letter should you desire it for tax purposes.

Please use the MassHort's Festival of Trees [Donate a Tree Form](#) if you are considering being part of the event this year.

**The Joint is Jumping**

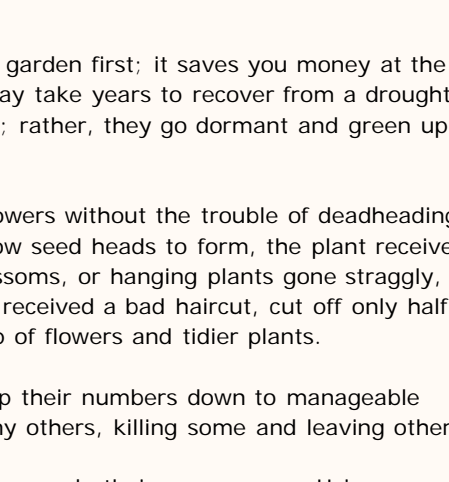
Thursday, June 17 wasn't your typical day at Elm Bank. Over in the Maple Grove, 400 members of Advocates, Inc., a group that assists individuals with special needs, was holding its annual corporate outing. In the carriage house, 200 guests of the Natick Visiting Nurses Association were attending a fund raiser. A fifth grade class from the Wellesley Public Schools was hosting a college event with dancing and a DJ. A plein air painting group had canvases set up around the gardens and a group of Wellesley College faculty were holding an impromptu business discussion around the picnic tables adjacent to the Education Building.

Welcome to Elm Bank, an excellent meeting site that just happens to have some spectacular gardens. Revenues from meetings – everything from weddings to corporate picnics – represent upwards of 30% of MassHort's annual revenues and the figure is growing at a 15% annual clip.



At the center of this whirlwind is Functions Manager Jen Courtney. On any given day of the week, Jen can be found showing the gardens to prospective brides and grooms, corporate event planners, and parents looking for sites for bar and bat mitzvahs. Jen has an effervescent personality and an engaging smile coupled with a "we-can'take-care-of-that" attitude. She instills confidence when it is needed most.

This year, Elm Bank will host 33 weddings among nearly a hundred events, she says. The Italianate Garden with its formal gardens and fountain is the favorite spot for outdoor ceremonies with receptions in the Hunnewell carriage house. The Breshingham Garden also has a "wow" factor that impresses couples and their parents.

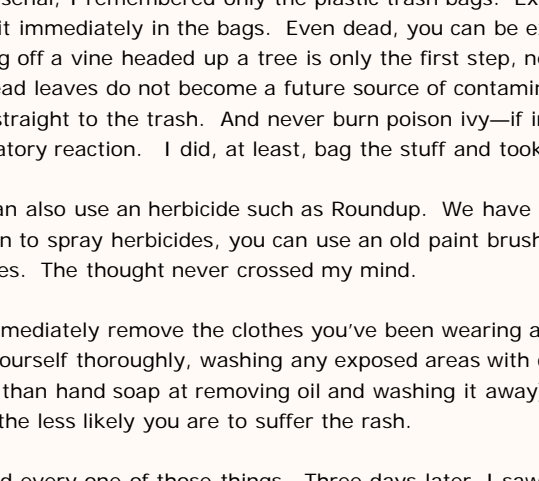


Booking a year or more in advance is necessary for summer weddings. If you're looking for a Saturday opening in May and one in July, Friday or Sunday weddings are much easier to accommodate.

Some groups bring their own tents. BJ's Wholesale Club erected a massive white tent in the Maple Grove to hold 800 employees for their summer picnic in June. Cognex Corporation turns the Hunnewell building into a haunted house for their annual Halloween party. For most weddings, elaborate chandeliers and party lighting are de rigueur.

Jen keeps track of everyone's needs from her cubicle in the education building and her phone rings endlessly. Mothers of brides attending to details are the most frequent callers, though more than a few brides-to-be have poured out their concerns to Jen. What do they say? Jen isn't telling.

Corporate meetings are the newest frontier for Elm Bank. A stroll through gardens between formal sessions is a better mental fresher than staring at institutional carpeting and wallpaper in a hotel conference center. Elm Bank has started to show up on the radar of corporate event planners. Such meetings also shift visitors to weekdays from the current Friday-night-to-Sunday-afternoon demand.



Under a huge tent, BJ's Wholesale Club invited 800 employees to Elm Bank for their annual picnic.

If you're interested in Elm Bank as a site for an event, you can contact Jen at 617-933-4921.

**A Blight on Your Tomatoes? Maybe Not This Year...**

If you lost most or all of your tomato crop last year to the combined attacks of early and late blight, you may be wondering if the plants growing so well in your garden today will be wiped out tomorrow. The weather for the last few weeks has been perfect for fungal diseases: hot and humid.

The good news is that there have been no reports of late blight – the far more deadly of the two – in New England this year. Because it cannot survive our winters in the soil, late blight must be transported in on seedlings or reappear when potatoes, infected and not harvested, send up new shoots the following year.

**Early blight**



The absence of late blight doesn't mean that your tomato plants are in the clear. Early blight is endemic in New England, the spores can survive the cold temperatures of our winters and return in abundance the following year. A strong spray from a hose (in the morning please) will wash off aphids and many others, killing some and leaving others exposed to their enemies.

In the vegetable garden, potato beetles, corn borers and squash borers have made their appearance. Using row covers of spun fabric will prevent the bugs from invading, until covers must be removed for pollination. There are several varieties of Bt, an effective organic solution that targets specific pests. Talk to the staff at a reliable nursery or call the Master Gardener Helpline for more information on which variety to choose to use for your specific pest.

Diseases! Bad bugs are enough of a problem, but what about when everything looks great one day and the next you have fungal disease, mildew or mildew? Start with what you can control. Always water early in the day so the leaves dry quickly. Keep a clean garden, removing plant debris, especially if there is any chance it is infected. An organic preventative is a solution of one tablespoon of baking soda in a gallon of water sprayed on the leaves. This makes it difficult for fungal spores or mildew to become established. Finally, there are organic sprays that will control the problem. For information on tomato blight, look for a more complete article in this Leaflet.

Weeds! Keep removing them, they steal, water, nutrients, sunlight and space from your plants. Pulled on a hot day, they will die quickly when exposed to the sun.

**The Bane of the Garden**



by Neal Sanders  
 Leaflet Contributor

*Toxicodendron radicans* is an attractive native vine, an important food for birds, and it displays great fall color. Were it not for its oily resin (called urushiol), it would be an ornament in any garden. I am referring, of course, to poison ivy, the most common cause of rashes in America. A month ago, I made the mistake – and I did this willingly – of wading into a large patch of it.

And it was a week ago today that I finally was able to put out of my mind the thought of self-amputation of my left leg at the knee. For the three weeks before that, I was, to put it delicately, in agony.

Poison ivy, of course, to be avoided. It's a simple rule, really: stay away from poison ivy and you will never look like a bug-eyed idiot at a party, resisting the urge to scratch your arms or legs into temporary submission. I leapt into that poison ivy because my wife asked me to clean out some that was encroaching onto some prized plants. After patiently ignoring her request for several weeks, I spontaneously did it one hot afternoon. Maybe it was the heat.

If you are heading out to do battle with a major infestation, shoes for battle. A long-sleeved shirt, long pants tucked into socks, a hat and gloves. I did not follow this advice. Instead, I wore shorts, shoes, and a tee shirt, with plastic bags wrapped around my hands. In hindsight, I was foolhardy. At the time, I was avoiding being 'too warm'.



Tools for removing poison ivy include shovels, trowels, hoes, clippers and heavy duty plastic bags. Of this arsenal, I remembered only the plastic trash bags. Experts say that as you remove poison ivy, place it immediately in the bags. Even dead, you can be exposed to the oily resin that causes the rash. Cutting off a vine headed up a tree is only the first step; next you need to remove it from the tree so the dead leaves do not become a future source of contamination. This does not go in the compost. It goes straight to the trash. And never burn poison ivy—if inhaled, the fumes can cause a serious respiratory reaction. I did, at least, bag the stuff and took it straight to the dump.

You can also use an herbicide such as Roundup. We have a bottle of concentrate in our garage. Why didn't I use it? Stupidity. If you're not keen to spray herbicides, you can use an old paint brush to simply paint the poison ivy leaves with the Roundup. I have lots of old paint brushes. The thought never crossed my mind.

When you finished pulling out poison ivy, immediately remove the clothes you've been wearing and place them in a washer. You should clean yourself thoroughly, washing any exposed areas with cool water and dish or laundry detergent (better than hand soap from removing oil and washing it away). The faster you wash off any contamination, the less likely you are to suffer the rash.



I swear on a stack of seed catalogs that I did every one of those things. Three days later, I saw the first signs of a rash. A day later, the rash ran in multiple bands the length of my leg.

Over-the-counter cortisone and antihistamines are recommended for mild cases of poison ivy. Severe cases may merit a trip to the doctor. I discovered that calamine lotion now goes by the name of "ant-itch lotion" and is no longer pink. It works, up to a point. The *Wall Street Journal*, which fortunately dispenses far better financial information than it does medical advice, suggests that buttermilk and soaking in a bathtub with a dozen tea bags can help. I elected not to try either home remedy.

Finally don't forget to clean the tools you used. Wash them with a household cleaner designed to remove oil so you don't pick it up the next time you head out to garden. Having not bothered to use tools, I didn't need this particular piece of advice, but I washed them thoroughly anyway.

You may never be too careful with poison ivy.

Neal Sanders is a frequent contributor to the Leaflet. We encourage you to read his contributions to our *In the Gardens Blog* where he focuses on interesting cultivars that can be found in the Elm Bank gardens. Neal's first novel, **Murder Imperfect**, has been published. You can learn more about it [here](#) or order it through Amazon.com.

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**About the Massachusetts Horticultural Society**



Founded in 1829, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society is dedicated to encouraging the science and practice of horticulture and developing the public's education, appreciation, and understanding of plants and the environment.