

Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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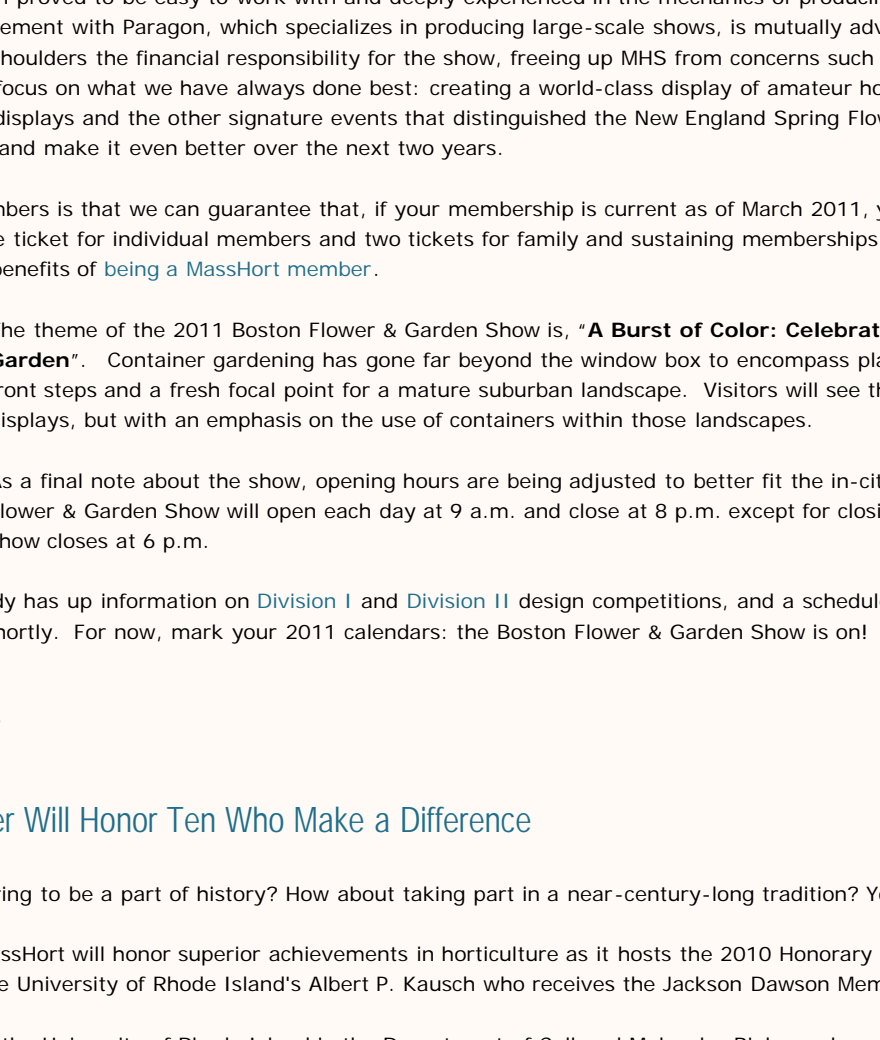
Leaflet - October 2010

The 2011 Boston Flower & Garden Show

Dear MassHort Members and Friends,

Yes, there will be a 2011 Boston Flower & Garden Show...and a 2012 Show, too. And, yes, MassHort will be part of it all.

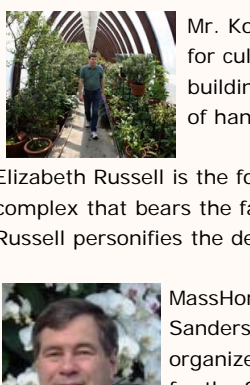
MassHort's Board of Trustees has approved a two-year agreement with the Paragon Group for our participation in the Boston Flower & Garden Show. The 2011 event will be held March 16 to 20 at the Seaport World Trade Center, the same venue as the show this past March.



Helmich Nurseries exhibit at 2010 Boston Flower & Garden Show

At this year's show, Paragon proved to be easy to work with and deeply experienced in the mechanics of producing a large-scale, well-attended event. The arrangement with Paragon, which specializes in producing large-scale shows, is mutually advantageous. Of special importance to us, Paragon shoulders the financial responsibility for the show, freeing up MHS from concerns such as attendance-busting bad weather and allowing us to focus on what we have always done best: creating a world-class display of amateur horticulture, floral design competitions, plant society displays and the other signature events that distinguished the New England Spring Flower Show. Our goal is to build on a great 2010 show and make it even better over the next two years.

What this all means for members is that we can guarantee that, if your membership is current as of March 2011, you will be ensured free admission to the show – one ticket for individual members and two tickets for family and sustaining members. This ticket policy is in addition to the other great benefits of being a MassHort member.



The theme of the 2011 Boston Flower & Garden Show is, **'A Burst of Color: Celebrating the Container Garden'**. Container gardening has gone far beyond the window box to encompass plantings for city terraces, front steps and a fresh focal point for a mature suburban landscape. Visitors will see the customary garden displays, but with an emphasis on the use of containers within those landscapes.

As a final note about the show, opening hours are being adjusted to better fit the in-city location. The 2011 Boston Flower & Garden Show will open each day at 9 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. except for closing day, March 20, when the show closes at 6 p.m.

The MassHort website already has up information on [Division I](#) and [Division II](#) design competitions, and a schedule for amateur horticulture should be available online shortly. For now, mark your 2011 calendars: the Boston Flower & Garden Show is on!

Betsy Ridge Madsen
President, Board of Trustees

Honorary Medals Dinner Will Honor Ten Who Make a Difference

Have you ever had a hankering to be a part of history? How about taking part in a near-century-long tradition? You're invited to do both.

On Thursday, October 7, MassHort will honor superior achievements in horticulture as it hosts the 2010 Honorary Medals Dinner. Ten people will be recognized, led by the University of Rhode Island's Albert P. Kausch who receives the Jackson Dawson Memorial Award.

Dr. Kausch is a professor at the University of Rhode Island in the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology where he focuses on molecular improvement and gene discovery in grasses and cereal crops. His work led to the first genetically modified corn plants; and he has directed diverse research areas in agricultural biotechnology of corn, rice, alfalfa and other crop plants including herbicide and insect resistance, drought tolerance and yield stability, and nutritional improvement.

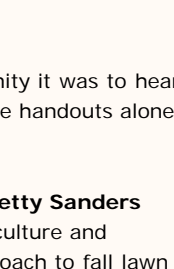


Also being honored is Eliot Wadsworth, the owner of White Flower Farm, who will receive the Thomas Roland Medal. Wadsworth, a one-time investment banker, purchased White Flower Farm from its founders, William Harris and Jane Grant, in 1976. Thirty-four years ago, few home gardeners ventured beyond a small group of plants for their landscapes. Fortunately, a growing niche of gardeners wanted more sophisticated plant selections, and White Flower Farm was there to cater to their needs. Today, with a full-time staff of 65, White Flower Farm offers 1,200 plant varieties that are sold via its ubiquitous catalog and at its destination garden in Litchfield, Connecticut.

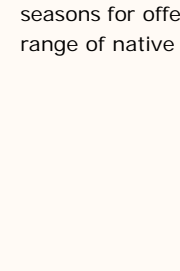


Gold Medals will be given to Warren Leach, Stanley Kozak, Elizabeth Russell, and Neal Sanders.

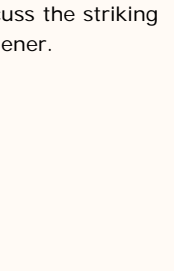
Mr. Leach, co-owner of Tranquil Lake Nursery is best known for his garden design talents which have won numerous awards for both public and private landscapes. In fact when the Massachusetts Horticultural Society first moved to Elm Bank it was Warren that they asked to design the very first garden at their new home – the garden at the Education Building. Later the Hemerocallis Society also recruited him to help design the daily garden at Elm Bank. Warren is a passionate plantsman with an impressive knowledge of plants. He is also a popular garden lecturer and educator and has also been a frequent exhibitor at the New England Spring Flower Show in both the landscape and miniature garden categories.



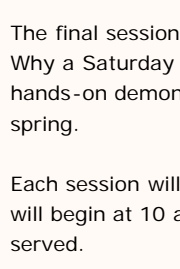
Mr. Kozak is head gardener at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. There, he is responsible for cultivating a series of year-round indoor and outdoor displays that beautifully complement the 1903 building that was Mrs. Gardner's home and which houses her world-class collection of art and artifacts. His annual display of hanging nasturtiums, alone, is worth a trip to the museum.



Elizabeth Russell is the fourth generation of Russells to own and operate the sprawling Wayland nursery and greenhouse complex that bears the family name. The Russells have been tireless champions of new cultivars and native plants. Ms. Russell personifies the dedication that, in turn, breeds customer loyalty.



MassHort traditionally recognizes one of its volunteers, and this year's recipient is Neal Sanders. Mr. Sanders chaired Blooms! 2010 at the Boston Flower & Garden Show and will do so again in 2011. He organizes the Wednesdays Evenings at Elm Bank series and provides articles for The Leaflet along with other written materials for the Society.



Four Silver Medals will also be awarded at the event.

Roberta Clark will be honored for her work with the University of Massachusetts as an extension educator in landscape, nursery and urban forestry for the Cape Cod region. Ms. Clark is a tireless advocate for preservation of the Cape's unique ecology.

David Fiske's Silver Medal is in recognition of his role as Gardens Curator for the Elm Bank estate. Mr. Fiske has helped keep MassHort's home an island of beauty and color with minimal resources.

Jill Nooney has spent the past two-plus decades creating Bedrock Garden, an extraordinary marriage of horticulture and sculpture in Lee, N.H. The 30-acre site incorporates innovative landscape design and unusual specimen plantings with art derived from 'found objects.' She has won numerous awards for her self-described 'quirky' exhibits at the New England Flower Show.

Honoree Ellen Wells, editor-at-large for Green Profit magazine, combines a solid knowledge of horticulture with excellent marketing credentials. She provides superb advice for garden center owners on how to grow their business.

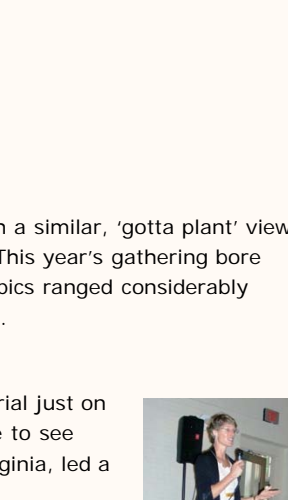
To learn more or to order tickets, [click here](#).

Horticultural Society seeks trees. Gingerbread houses, too.

In a little less than two months, the Festival of Trees will kick off its second season. You can help make it a success – and show off your imagination.

The Festival needs sponsors for trees. Trees must be artificial, pre-lit and between two and ten feet in height. The theme of the tree is entirely up to you. How about a New England Patriots tree? A tree devoted to the admiration of cats? A tree that cherishes Cape Cod or skiing? The theme is limited only by your imagination. There is no entry fee if you supply a fully decorated tree. Your tree is tax-deductible.

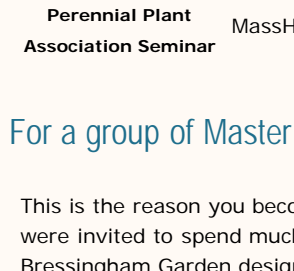
If your time doesn't permit you to decorate a tree but you'd like to sponsor one, thank you! You'll get full credit for the tree and our volunteers will do the work (some of the nicest trees at last year's Festival were entered that way). Whether you're decorating your own tree or want to put in the hands of imaginative experts, please contact Joyce Bakshi at Joyce@MassHortFestivalTrees.org for details of how to be a sponsor.



The Grinch tree and its winners.

The Festival is also looking for gingerbread houses. They can be up to 24 inches in length and width (smaller is OK, too), and decorated in any style you like. There are separate classes for professional bakers (restaurants and bakeries) and 'amateurs.' It's an opportunity for people whose skills lie in the kitchen rather in the family room to show what they can do.

Whether it's a tree or a gingerbread house, or as a sponsor for a tree, please let Joyce know as soon as possible that you're interested in providing an entry for the Festival of Trees.



At the Red Sox tree

Autumn Edition of Wednesday Evenings at Elm Bank Starts October 6

If you attended any of the seven 'Wednesday Evening at Elm Bank' talks in July and August, you know what a great opportunity it was to hear top speakers in subjects of relevance to home gardening. The presenters stayed until the final question was answered and the handouts alone were worth the price of admission.

By popular demand, the series is returning this month with four autumn-themed sessions. It all starts on **October 6** when **Betty Sanders** talks about **'Getting Your Lawn and Garden Ready for Winter'**. Those who heard her speak in July knows she uses horticulture and science to knock down marketing hype and deliver sound advice on how to be a better gardener. She'll bring that same approach to fall lawn and garden care, offering a list of 'must do's', 'should do's', 'could do's' and 'don't do's'. Her talk is not to be missed.

On **October 13**, the subject turns to **'Everything You Need to Know About Bulbs'**. From late October until the ground freezes here is the right time to plant the bulbs that will enliven next spring. **Peter Vera**, **'Mister Bulb'** for **Mahoney's Garden Centers** will discuss how to select them, how to plant them, and how to design a garden around bulbs.

Then, on **October 20**, **Laura Eisener** returns to speak on **'Native Trees and Shrubs for Autumn Interest'**. Spring and summer are easy seasons for offering an attractive, colorful landscape. Autumn – and especially late autumn – is much tougher. Laura will discuss the striking range of native cultivars that offer vivid color deep into the season. She is an articulate horticulturalist and a passionate gardener.



Laura Eisener gives her presentation on shade gardening

The final session – which was thrown open to the MassHort membership for suggestions – will be held on **Saturday morning, October 30**. Why a Saturday morning instead of a Wednesday evening? Because the topic will be **'Autumn Pruning'**. We're bringing in an expert to give a hands-on demonstration of what to prune and how to prune it to get your trees and shrubs through the winter so that they'll look great next spring.

Each session will start at 6:30 p.m. and concludes at 8 p.m. or when the last question has been answered. The Saturday, October 30 session will begin at 10 a.m. and last until approximately 11:30 a.m. Sessions are \$8 for members, \$10 for non-members. Refreshments are always served.

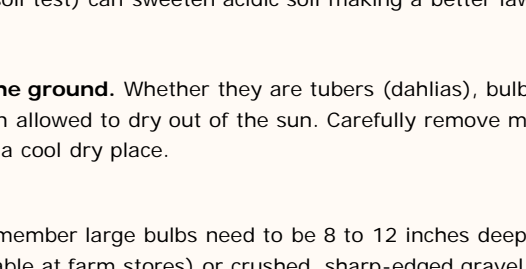
What a great month September was... and what a terrific month October is going to be!

An all-day symposium on perennials featuring outstanding speakers: a garden party with Adrian Bloom; and acres of gardens at their end-of-summer glory. Those were just a few of the events that happened in September. If you weren't at Elm Bank, then you missed a lot.

There's even more to do at Elm Bank this month. Anyone who believes that New England gardens go dormant in the autumn can get an education just by walking the Elm Bank property, as the nearby photos attest. If you're a home gardener, you'll not want to miss the fall Wednesday Evening at Elm Bank programs slated this month. Each one will focus on a different aspect of fall gardening. And, on October 7, the beautiful Hunnewell Carriage House will be the site of the 2010 Honorary Medals gala, which will feature a talk by Jackson Dawson Memorial Award winner Albert P. Kausch. It's an opportunity to be part of a grand tradition.

This Leaflet issue explores all of those upcoming events. Read, enjoy, and then make your plants to be part of a spectacular autumn at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

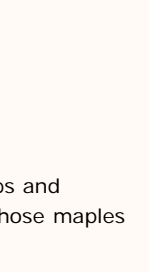
Perennials seminar hits on multiple themes



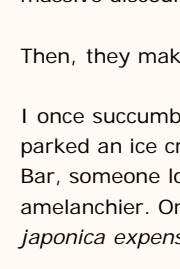
Adrian Bloom delivering his talk at the Perennial Plant Association seminar.

For two hundred intrepid gardeners, September 22 was a day to learn, to get inspiration, and to meet people with a similar, 'gotta plant' view of life. MassHort and the Perennial Plant Association sponsored a second annual day-long seminar at Elm Bank. This year's gathering bore the somewhat ungainly title, 'Exploring Design, Plant Selection, and Maintenance of the Mixed Border', but the topics ranged considerably deeper and wider. Six speakers talked knowledgeably about every kind of perennial under the sun or in the shade.

The very energetic Kerry Mendez, who travels widely from her base in Ballston Spa, NY, kept up an hour-long tutorial just on the plants growing in her own quarter-acre garden. Visitors to the 2011 Boston Flower & Garden Show will be able to see Kerry twice, once under the MassHort banner. Brent Heath, of Brent & Becky's Bulbs in the Tidewater region of Virginia, led a wonderfully colorful journey through a year's worth of bulbs.



Laura Deeter, a professor at Ohio State, delivered a stand-up comedy routine that was cleverly disguised as a talk on perennials maintenance. And Adrian Bloom, the consummate head of the UK's Blooms Nurseries, gave a dazzling tutorial on garden design built around color and texture.



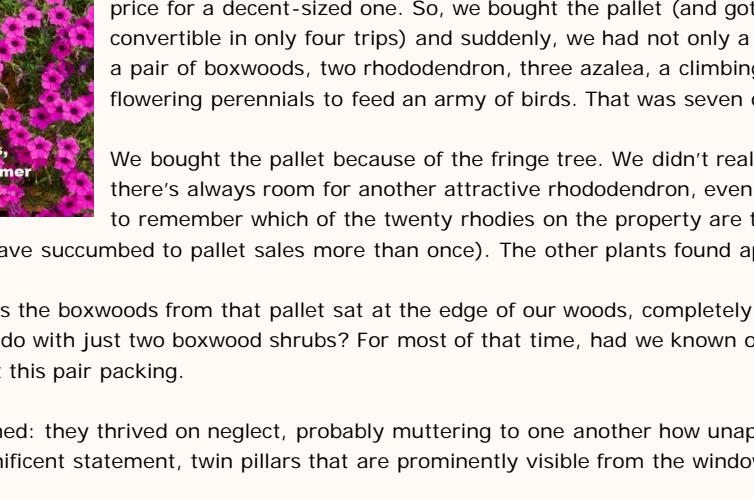
Roy Diblik at the Perennial Plant Association Seminar

Perhaps the day's most riveting speaker was Roy Diblik, of Wisconsin's Northwest Perennial Farm, who gave a talk that was as much about ecology as it was about planting perennials. He started with a photo of a non-descript lakeside park. In the foreground was a forlorn patch of daylilies amid a sea of mulch. Any other speaker might have tossed off such a slide with a quick, 'this is what not to do' and then gone on to more pleasant gardens. But Diblik stayed on that photo ten minutes, describing everything that was wrong with the mindset that produced such a landscape. By the time he was finished, Diblik had offered a view of garden design that was clear, concise and firmly rooted in science, even as he reminded the audience of its environmental stewardship responsibilities.

MassHort hopes to make the seminar an annual event.

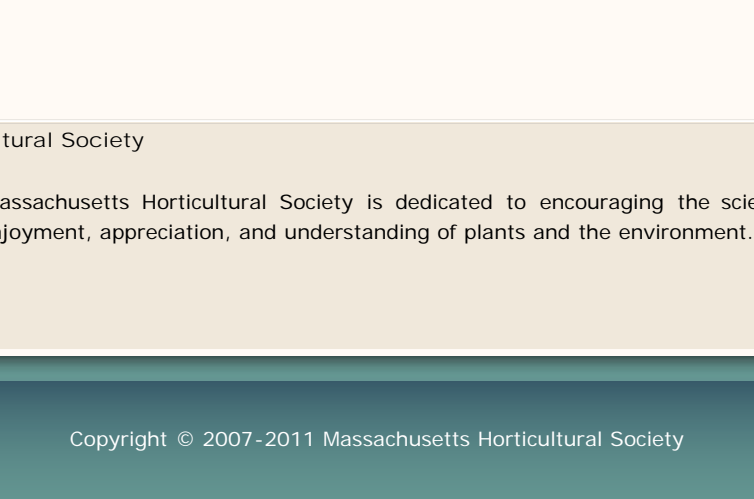
For a group of Master Gardeners, a memorable day with Adrian Bloom

This is the reason you become a Master Gardener. On September 21, a dozen members of the [Massachusetts Master Gardeners Association](#) were invited to spend much of the day with the noted horticulturalist Adrian Bloom. Bloom's purpose was to review progress on the Bressingham Garden designed by Bloom and built in 2007. But the review was also a seminar in garden design and maintenance.



Adrian Bloom and Paul Miskovsky and Master Gardeners in the Bressingham Garden.

When the garden was planted, it was a real-world test of whether certain of the selected perennials could withstand a New England climate. For more than two hours the group walked every foot of the acre-sized garden with Bloom commenting on what had worked and what needed replacement or improved maintenance. Questions were encouraged and answers were frequently lengthy.



Adrian Bloom and Paul Miskovsky and Master Gardeners in the Bressingham Garden.

April Daly, who has spent the past three months as an intern dedicated to the care and maintenance of the Bressingham Garden, said she came away with fourteen pages of notes of things to be done. "But I also gained a clear understanding of the philosophy that is the foundation of the garden and the way Adrian expresses himself through plant selection. Days like that aren't quickly forgotten.

A new Master Gardener class got underway in September. Another one is planned for the spring of 2011. Contact Sonja Johanson if you are interested.

A Memorable Garden Party

It was a stunning evening, the last day of summer, and the weather on Cape Cod could not have been more favorable. Nor could the location: the stunning garden of MassHort Trustee Paul Miskovsky. As someone who values his privacy, Paul's garden is seldom opened to the public but on this evening, he made it available for a very worthy cause: a fund raiser for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

The guest of honor was Adrian Bloom, who spoke about horticulture and autographed copies of his book, *Bloom's Best Perennials and Grasses*, but the evening focused on exploring the garden with its meticulous, lush plantings of specimen trees and shrubs: and the gurgling of a 90-foot-long waterfall cascading down a ridge behind the home.



October Horticultural Hints



by Betty Sanders
Lifetime Master Gardener

Finish harvesting your herbs and vegetables. It's been a good year for most gardens if you had supplemental water. Green tomatoes can ripen indoors on windowsills if frost threatens. Root vegetables such as carrots and potatoes store well in cool humid locations. Harvest winter squash with one inch of stem attached. Clean, then dip in a 10% bleach solution. Dry before putting away for the winter. Herbs can be dried or frozen for storage.

Clean-up Your Beds. Don't let this year's diseases and insects carry over to next year in the fallen leaves and plant debris in your vegetable and ornamental beds. Remove all the debris, bag it, and trash it. Never compost plant material that may be diseased. Healthy leaves can be left in place now, or a better solution is to rake them off beds, chip them up by creating a pile and running through it repeatedly with your mulching mower and return them to the beds. They will return the nutrients to the soil over the winter. Alternately, you can spread a layer of compost over the garden beds and compost your leaves.

Dig and divide overgrown summer bloomers. Siberian iris with dead centers will benefit from the division. On bearded iris, look for any pinholes in the tubers. These indicate iris borers and mean a quick trip to the garbage. Healthy plants can be divided and replanted, providing more for your garden or gifts for friends.

The heavy recent rains make **this a great time to fertilize the lawn.** If you have not fertilized this year, the moist soil will allow good root growth. If you haven't had a soil test this year, it's not too late to send a sample to UMass. [Follow this link](#) to download a soil test form. An application of lime (as recommended by the soil test) can sweeten acidic soil making a better lawn or garden. But don't put the lime down until two weeks after the fertilizer is applied.

It's time to **get your tender bulbs out of the ground.** Whether they are tubers (dahlias), bulbs (caladiums), rhizomes (cannas) or corms (gladioli), they need to be gently lifted, then allowed to dry out of the sun. Carefully remove most of the dirt and check for insect or disease damage. Store healthy ones in paper bags in a cool dry place.

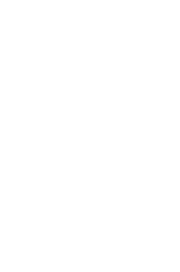
After the first frost, **start planting bulbs.** Remember large bulbs need to be 8 to 12 inches deep, small bulbs six inches. Add some chicken grit (available at farm stores) or crushed, sharp-edged gravel around the bulb to deter moles. A dose of red pepper on the bulbs and lime on top of the loess will deter squirrels.



This is the month to plant spring bulbs

Take advantage of sales at local nurseries to buy shrubs and trees. Remember to loosen root balls on the material you buy, and plant in saucers not teacups: holes wider than deep to allow roots to quickly spread. Water frequently until the ground freezes because the roots will keep growing after the leaves have dropped.

The Siren Call of the Garden Center Special



by Neal Sanders
Leaflet Contributor

As September turns to October, garden center owners fixate on their remaining stock of unsold trees, shrubs and perennials. They face the unappealing possibility that they might actually have to pay someone to replant those maples and azaleas lest their roots freeze over the course of the approaching winter.

The more appealing alternative, of course, is to get me to buy them.

And so, at this time of year, the offers come. First in a trickle and then a flood. Take 30% off. Buy one and get a second one at half price. HUGE markdowns. The really clever garden centers send me colorful, floral-themed plastic cards with my name pre-printed on them together with the massive discount to which I am entitled if I act immediately.



Then, they make it really irresistible: they throw in pizza or maybe ice cream.

I once succumbed to an invitation to a large garden center's end-of-season sale because they parked an ice cream truck in the middle of their container display area. While I unwrapped a Dove Bar, someone loaded a viburnum in the trunk of my car. Another time, I ate a piece of delicious grilled corn and somehow purchased an amelanchier. One memorable year I enjoyed a slice of an open-oven grilled pizza and found myself the owner of a Japanese maple (*Acer japonica expansivus*) so special that it requires its own trust fund.

None of this is the fault of garden center owners. By the end of September, gardeners' thoughts have gravitated to the post-season, yet autumn is the near-ideal time to plant trees and shrubs. In reality, they're doing me a favor.

My problem, of course, is that I've run out of room for new stuff. But because the prices are so good we go looking anyway... and invariably bring something home.

The most excruciatingly wonderful discovery is the 'pallet sale'. This is the garden center industry's finest invention: their contribution to the pantheon of marketing. Take a pallet. Fill it with roughly a dozen trees or shrubs and top it off with half a dozen perennials. Mark the price at roughly a third of full retail.



That's how we acquired our fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*). This was, of course, back when we had room for new specimen plants. Betty really wanted that fringe tree but had chafed at the price for a decent-sized one. So, we bought the pallet (and got its contents home in a Saab convertible in only four trips) and suddenly, we had not only a great looking fringe tree, but also a pair of boxwoods, two rhododendron, three azalea, a climbing rose and enough summer flowering perennials to feed an army of birds. That was seven or eight years ago.

We bought the pallet because of the fringe tree. We didn't really 'need' the other plants. But there's always room for another attractive rhododendron, even though today I am hard-pressed to remember which of the twenty rhodios on the property are the two that came off that particular pallet (confession: we have succumbed to pallet sales more than once). The other plants found appropriate sites.

Except for the boxwoods. For years the boxwoods from that pallet sat at the edge of our woods, completely aloof from the rest of the landscape. What can you possibly do with just two boxwood shrubs? For most of that time, had we known of a home for unwanted Buxus sempervirens, we would have sent this pair packing.

But something unexpected happened: they thrived, probably that or another how unappreciated they were by their owners. Today, they make a magnificent statement; twin pillars that are prominently visible from the window from which this is written.

The moral of the story is that serendipity ought to play a role in every landscape and those autumn sales can be the catalyst for a horticultural adventure. *Carpis diem*.

Neal Sanders is a frequent contributor to the Leaflet. We encourage you to read his narrative to our *In the Gardens Blog*. 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 enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of plants and the environment.