



# Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

July 2018

[DONATE NOW](#)



## Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you in a cool place! While our gardens are extremely thirsty with this extended heat wave, it's important for our staff (and perhaps all the gardeners out there)... to keep out of the hot afternoon sun.

We hope to serve up some cooler evenings for you to enjoy with our summer events.

- **ARTS ON THE GREEN:** July 26, 5:30 p.m. Pack a picnic and enjoy the gardens, live music, and the artists who will be showcasing their work throughout the gardens. FREE
- **SHAKESPEARE ON THE LAWN:** August 1, 6 p.m. performance of *Henry VI, Part II*. Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's Apprentice performers will be here for the first time. Pack a picnic and bring your own chair or blanket. FREE. (Gate opens at 5:30; Performance is 90 minutes)
- **GODDESSES IN THE GARDENS:** August 16, 5:30-8 p.m. Join us for an evening of music, tastings, and tours. FREE

Warm regards,

Kathy

P.S. Please check out Mass Hort's new website! [www.MassHort.org](http://www.MassHort.org)

## Upcoming Classes & Events:

### Summer Stroll: Garden Tour

Wednesday, July 18  
7 - 8:30 p.m.

### **Free Fun Friday**

Friday, July 20  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### What's Buggin' Me?

Sunday, July 22  
10:30 a.m. - noon

### Arts on the Green

Thursday, July 26  
5:30 - 8 p.m.

### Fall Planting Workshop

Saturday, August 4  
10:30 a.m. - noon

### Photography Stroll

Thursday, August 9  
7 - 8:30 p.m.

### Perennial Plant Symposium

Tuesday, August 21  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

---

F O U R T H   A N N U A L

# Arts ON THE Green

— AN EVENING AT ELM BANK —

**Thursday, July 26, 5:30 - 8 p.m.**

Enjoy an evening in the gardens with family and friends at the most anticipated event of the season. This event is FREE to all! Don't miss it! [Find more](#)

[information here!](#)

Soak up the summer and stroll the Art Walk of artists showcasing and selling their work throughout The Gardens at Elm Bank. The jazz and blues sounds of LiveWire Boston will fill the air as you also discover sculptures set amid the tall grasses and flowers at the height of their summer splendor. Plenty of fun family art activities, face painting and garden tours are planned. Linger over a picnic in the Maple Grove as you enjoy a summer evening. Beer and wine will be available for purchase. A food truck by **Souped Up Food**, **Above the Clouds Catering** will be offering gourmet sandwiches, soups, and bowls.



For more information, or to be a showcased artist, please contact Amy Rodrigues at [arodrigues@masshort.org](mailto:arodrigues@masshort.org). Rain date: August 2

---

## Shakespeare on the Lawn

**Wednesday, August 1, Gates Open at 5:30 p.m.**

Join us in the Maple Grove for Commonwealth Shakespeare Company's Apprentice Program's production of *Henry VI, Part 2*. Set up your chairs, blankets, and picnic for a 6 p.m. production.



COMMONWEALTH  
SHAKESPEARE  
COMPANY

Please bring your own food and drink, \$5 donation requested. In the case of rain, the event will be held in the Hunnewell Building.

[Read more about the production.](#)

---

## Announcing: 2018 Northeast Region's Perennial Plant Symposium Lineup

**Tuesday, August 21, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Presented by Massachusetts Horticultural Society & the Perennial Plant Association, the regional PPA symposium is open to all levels of gardeners and professionals. This year's symposium includes four presentations led by some of the perennial industry's best! [Sign up soon to get Early Bird pricing.](#)



Bobbie Schwartz, Owner Bobbie's Green Thumb:  
*"Garden Renovation: Transform Your Yard into the Garden of Your Dreams"*

Landscapes, just like houses, sometimes need makeovers but homeowners are often stymied about how and where to begin. They need to know how to evaluate what they have, decide what they want, and put together a plan of action. This talk guides them through the process, offering strategies and advice: How to start, what questions to ask, setting goals, priorities, and budget, evaluating the existing landscape, balancing time vs. money, and discussing whether to hire a professional in order to actualize one's vision. In addition, some success stories demonstrate what can be accomplished.

C.L. Fornari, Author and Host of GardenLine and Plantrama podcasts:  
*"Shade Gardening"*

Successful gardening in shady locations is a matter of knowing the best plants, making good design decisions, and getting creative



with assorted colorful solutions The talk addresses all three with emphasis on underused plants and the recognition that each shady garden is unique.



Deborah Trickett, Owner of The Captured Garden:  
*"Power Couples: Perennial pairings for attention-getting gardens and containers"*

Perennials are perfect for adding beauty to gardens and containers. But are there some perennials that work better together than others? Are there some pairings that, like the power couples of Hollywood and industry, just naturally cause heads to turn? Join Deborah Trickett, owner of The Captured Garden, as

she shares some of her favorite Power Couples - perennial combinations that will get your gardens and containers noticed.



Nancy Lawson, Author of The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife:  
*"The Humane Gardener: Nurturing Habitat for Wildlife"*

Why do we call some insects "beneficial" while others are "pests"? Why are some plants considered "desirable" while others are "weeds"? In this myth-busting talk, learn how common growing methods divide the natural world into false dichotomies and

perpetuate misperceptions about the wild species living among us. Discover practical ways to put humane gardening philosophies into action by protecting wildlife nurseries, eliminating unintended hazards, nurturing plants that provide food and shelter, and humanely resolving conflicts with mammals and other commonly misunderstood creatures.

Early Bird Registration is Open Now: Get a full day of education for \$99!

**[Learn More and Register Here](#)**

---

## Free Fun Friday

Friday, July 20, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



Mass Hort will host a Free Fun Friday on July 20!

This is a program of the Highland Street Foundation that offers free access to museums, gardens, and other institutions for the general public.

Throughout our day, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., we will offer children's activities highlighting pollinators and pollinator plants. There will be much to learn for gardeners of all ages!

We will also have special tours of the gardens led by our horticultural staff and overseers.

Goddess Pizza truck will be on site selling pizza from their wood-fired oven.

---

# On Staking Tomatoes and Scientific Experiments

By Gretel Anspach,  
Overseer

One of the things I find frustrating about gardening information is the lack of practical science. I can find articles like “The 4 Best Ways to Support Your Tomatoes” that list techniques without any data behind them, or articles like “Transcriptome Analysis of Plant Hormone-Related Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*) Genes in a Sunlight-Type Plant Factory” which I can’t understand and probably couldn’t do anything with if I could, but nothing in between. In a fit of hubris, I decided to do a scientific experiment on the best way to stake tomatoes. I learned (1) practically nothing about how to stake tomatoes, and (2) quite a lot about how (not) to set up a scientific experiment.

I started with a row of 29 Beefmaster tomato seedlings in the Margaret Capasso Garden of Giving (aka the Marlborough Food Pantry Garden). The plants were divided into 5 groups to test 5 different trellising techniques, as follows:

- Vee – This technique requires pruning each tomato plant to 2 leaders. A 6-foot stake is pounded into the ground between every 6-8 plants and a beam (1x3) wired across the top connected stakes. Mason twine is then hung from the beam in a V with the point of the V attached gently to the base of the tomato plant and the tops of the V tied to the beam. As the tomato grows, the stems continuously wound around the twine as shown in Figure 1. 6 tomatoes were supported using this technique.

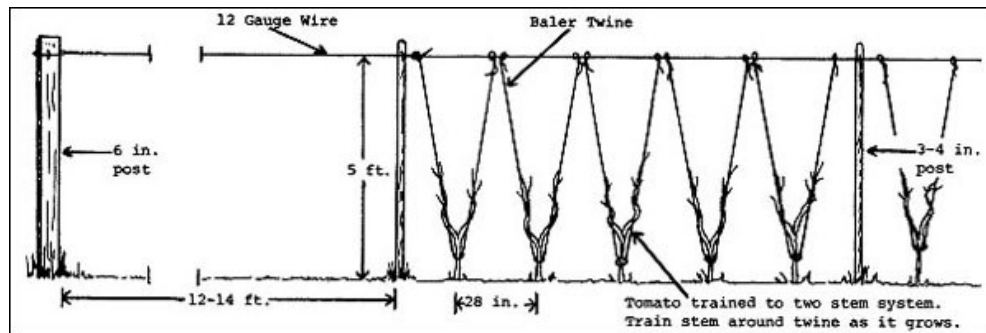


Figure 1 - V trellis system for tomatoes<sup>[1]</sup>

- Wave – This technique is actually called a weave, but I couldn’t make it work so the plants flopped over into a wave shape. The way it’s supposed to work is to pound in a stake every 2-4 tomatoes and then weave twine along the row of tomatoes back and forth and around the stakes (see Figure 2). As the tomatoes grow, additional rows of twine are added to support the growth. This technique only works if all the tomatoes are about the same height – if you are growing different tomatoes with different growth rates, the twine required to support the tallest will miss the shorter ones. What happened in my case is that the developing tomatoes were so heavy that I couldn’t figure out how to support them this way; they kept bending over despite all the string supporting them. By halfway through the season, these plants were basically just sprawling on the ground, so the following analysis should not be considered to reflect a well-executed weave. 6 plants were supported using this technique.



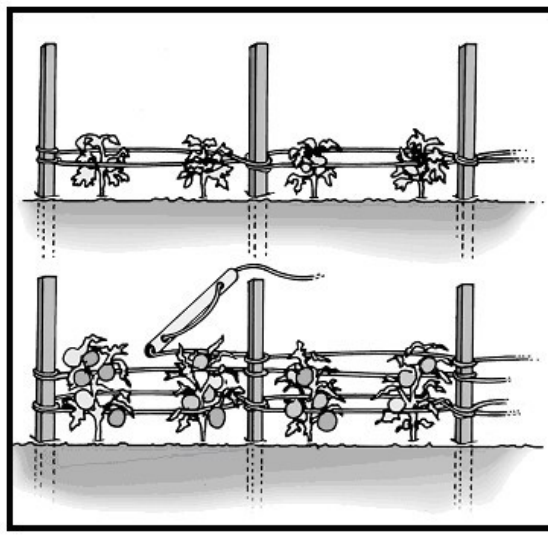


Figure 2 – Weave system for tomatoes<sup>1</sup>

- **Net** – This technique requires hanging a vertical net from stakes pounded in every 8', and then securing the plant to the net with plastic clips. Effort was made to spread the plant over the net to increase air flow and sun exposure. Five plants were supported using this technique.
- **Cage** – This technique involves building a cylindrical cage from 5.5' of remesh and placing it over the tomato plant. As the plant grows, any branches that grow out through the holes in the cage are tucked back in. Six plants were supported using this technique.
- **Stake** – This technique involves pounding a 6' stake in next to each plant and tying the plant to the stake loosely with mason twine. Six plants were supported using this technique.

During the season, I counted and weighed the harvest separately from each plant. At the end of the season I ran some statistics on the results; they told me that the Cage, Net, Wave and Stake methods all resulted in significantly more harvest weight than the Vee method, and that the Cage method resulted in significantly more harvest weight than the Stake system.

So, does that mean I can conclude that the Cage method is the best? No. There were two fundamental flaws to my experiment.

- I shouldn't have used the Beefmaster tomato variety. I picked that variety arbitrarily – it was planted in the first row. It's capable of producing massive tomatoes (my biggest was 1.7 pounds) but it doesn't produce a lot of them (my average was around 8). That means that one tomato more or less can make a big difference statistically. I should have used a moderate sized variety like Caimen or even Big Boy – small enough that one tomato more or less is not significant, and large enough that weighing each tomato individually wouldn't drive me nuts.
- I should have had more than one block of each staking technique. I Vee-ed the first 6 tomatoes, Weaved the next 6, and so forth. That meant that the Vee tomatoes were at the edge of my field. I don't think the soil at the edge of the field is as good as the soil in the middle, and I can't tell if the Vee technique performed so poorly because the soil was worse or because the technique is worse. If I had done 3 Vee, 3 Wave, 3 Net, 3 Cage, 3 Stake, 3 Vee, 3 Wave, 3 Net, 3 Cage, 3 Stake, I could have seen if the Vee tomatoes toward the middle of the field performed better than the Vee tomatoes at the edge.

It's also worth pointing out other limiting factors in this study.

- One season, my garden, my soil – The best way to stake tomatoes in New England in 2017 may not be the best way to stake tomatoes in California ever.
- I'm running a weird sort of garden. It's too big for me to pay much attention to each individual plant (We grew about 200 tomato plants, plus a bunch of other crops). It's too small to really take advantage of automation. It's possible that other techniques produce more weight by applying more labor or are not practical on a large scale. So this study, at best, is "most harvest weight for me."

So now what? I may try again next summer with a different tomato and mixing up the techniques some more. I need to understand why the Weave didn't work for me – there's something about that technique I haven't mastered yet. I'll give up the Stake technique, but I might try a "just let them sprawl". The plants potentially collect more light that way, though should be more prone to disease. If

any of you have any other ideas for things to try, please let me know.

In general, I like the idea of getting more involved in (small) science. If you grow two varieties of something, which does better? How do you define better? How do you measure it? We could count the bees on two different flowers for half an hour once a week to decide which is more attractive to pollinators. We could run two compost bins side by side for a summer to see if one is faster. We could do blind taste tests on the string beans we grow. I think when we slow down and measure things, we see a whole other level of beauty in nature. Plus we get away from our cell phones. Just a thought...

[1] <http://articles.extension.org/pages/18647/training-systems-and-pruning-in-organic-tomato-production>

---

## July Education Programs



This summer we have several classes designed to assist you in your gardening endeavors, we hope to see you in the gardens!

On Wednesday, July 18, at 7 p.m. take a tour through The Gardens at Elm Bank with our gardens curator, David Fiske. He'll highlight plantings and design elements that will inspire your own landscapes. This special evening walk is only \$5 per member. [Let us know you're coming!](#)

On July 22, Sue Scheufele of the [UMass Extension Vegetable Program](#) will help you identify common insect and disease pests and the damage they can cause to vegetable and herb plants. She will also discuss organic management strategies such as mulches, row covers, and bio-based pesticides. Sunday, July 22, 10:30 a.m. - noon. [Please register here.](#)

On Saturday, August 4 from 10:30 - noon, our senior horticulturist, Hannah Traggis, will lead a workshop that will help you extend your season by planting for the fall. She will cover succession planting and send you home with some cold-hardy seedlings. [Sign up today.](#)

Look ahead to our other summer programs in our [online course catalog](#). There are many interesting classes, like **Meditations in Ink: Asian Brush Painting with Bruce Iverson**. His six-hour course will help you capture the beauty of orchids. [Learn more and register here.](#)

---

## From the Stacks:

By Maureen T. O'Brien,  
Library Manager

*[Documentary photography] is unwittingly literary, because it is nothing other than an observation of contemporary life apprehended at the right moment by an artist capable of seizing it.*

- Pierre Mac Orlan (1928)

Much of what we think we know about horticulture history comes from secondary sources in archaeology, prehistoric wall paintings, literature and art. These sources generally depict the subjective impressions of the creator and more often than not the horticulture of the rich and famous. With the advent of photography in the nineteenth century, we start to see a wider range of images of everyday horticulture and events that serve as useful historical references. Of course, viewer beware—editing photographs began quite early after its invention in 1839.

A great deal of “stuff” was moved to Elm Bank from Massachusetts Avenue in Boston in 2002. While some was sorted and cataloged, some was not. Treasures are still being uncovered. This month we discovered a treasure trove of photographs by George Taloumis (1918-2000), recipient of the Society’s Gold Medal in 1986 for his lifetime work in horticulture. Taloumis was past editor of *Horticulture Magazine*, lecturer, author, photographer and garden columnist for *The Boston Globe* for 37 years. Taloumis stated that he was smitten at age 9 by an “incurable disease” and that his “...purpose in life [was] to spread the gospel of horticulture to people.” Accompanying the photographs is a meticulously annotated file of film negatives of the images. These images will serve as a valuable record of midcentury horticulture in New England that we will preserve for the future. Our volunteers will be working on this project and we will report their progress in future issues of *Leaflet*.



### **Featured Book**

To many gardeners, joy in June means peonies (*Paeonia*). Peonies are reliable herbaceous perennials that sport exquisite blooms. They are extremely cold tolerant and long-lived. The cut blooms last up to three weeks in water. Their lush foliage adds texture, contrast and fall color. They are easy care and thrive on benign neglect.

*A Study of the Genus Paeonia* by F. C. Stern (London: Royal Horticultural Society, 1946) was presented to the Society from the RHS “in grateful recognition of the friendly relations which have always existed between the Societies. This book is beautiful, scholarly, scientific and beautiful. Of particular note is the fact that Stern consulted many of the most renowned herbaria of the time to document his findings.

*Paeonia* are found naturally only in the northern hemisphere. When Stern started this work, new findings had not been cataloged, clarified or updated since the last study by E. Huth in 1891. The book encompasses species found naturally in the wild, not hybrids. In addition to the comprehensive scientific classifications and descriptions, the book contains a comprehensive history of the *paeonia* in literature starting in 370 B.C. that is akin to an annotated bibliography.

The author, Sir Frederick Claude Stern (1884-1967) had a garden, **Highdown**, located in Surrey, England which is open to the public. The 8.5 acre garden was created out of an old chalk pit where there was little soil and unfavorable conditions for plant growth. Many of the original plants from the early expeditions of Reginald Farrer and Ernest Henry Wilson to China and the Himalayas can be seen in the Garden today. Its creation is recounted in Stern’s posthumously published book **A Chalk Garden**.

The book is illustrated by Lilian Snelling (1879–1972) who was the most important botanical artist of the first half of the 20th century. The beauty and accuracy of her work is revealed in the image *Paeonia cambessedesii*, above, one of her 15 color plates in this book.

### ***In the Windows – TV Celebrities!***

This month the Library windows feature books by local TV gardening celebrities. Throughout history, horticultural celebrities influenced public taste and design in horticulture. Some were designers, others authors or tastemakers. With the advent of television, a new celebrity brought gardening wisdom to the masses. Beginning in the 1960’s with Thalassa Cruso, often regarded as the “Julia Child” of gardening, PBS later followed by *The Victory Garden* and *This Old House*. Home and Garden Television brought us the short lived, but comfortable, *People Places and Plants* filmed at *Weston Nurseries*. Alas, today most of the gardening shows in the United States are formulaic with phony suspense and suspect advice. Listed below are the local celebrities we are featuring:

Celebrity Authors	TV Show	# Books
Thalassa Cruso (1909-97)	<i>Making Things Grow</i>	5
James Underwood Crockett (1915-79)	<i>Crockett's Victory Garden</i>	23
Jim Wilson (1925-2010)	<i>The Victory Garden</i>	8
Bob Thomson (1929-2003)	<i>The Victory Garden</i>	2
Thomas Wirth	<i>This Old House</i>	1
Michael Weishan	<i>The Victory Garden</i>	3
Paul Tukey	<i>People, Places &amp; Plants</i>	1
Roger Swain	<i>The Victory Garden and People, Places &amp; Plants</i>	5

Crockett (1978,) Cruso (1985,) Swain (1996) and Tukey (2003) were recipients of medals from the Society. Although the books are not new, their advice and methods are perennial.

A benefit of Mass Hort membership allows members to borrow our most recent books. You may return your borrowed books at the Visitors Center.

### ***Our Collections are Growing...***

Since its inception in 1829, the Library relied on the generosity of its members to build its Collections. We thank Ruth Ciofli, Martha Krache, and Heidi Kost-Gross for their generous donations of books and periodicals to the Library and our continuing book sale. The Library offers used books for sale in the Library and at the Visitors Center. All are at bargain prices of \$1 to \$5! We have books on design, garden travel, plants and how-to books, including some by our featured celebrities.

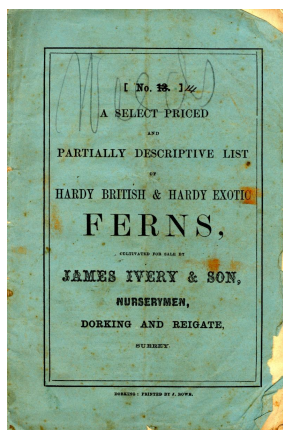
The Library received a very precious donation of historic horticulture and related books from our neighboring Society in South Natick—the **Natick Historical Society** (NHS), the earliest dating from 1796. Society Trustee and Museum Educator Jan Parson relates a brief history of the NHS below. We are very pleased to accept this donation.

The Library is open on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at other times by chance or appointment. We suggest you email [mobrien@masshort.org](mailto:mobrien@masshort.org) or call 617-933-4912 before venturing out on days the Library is not open.

---

## **Natick Historical Society Contributes Historic Books to the Library**

*Jan Parsons,  
Trustee*



The early interests of the Natick Historical Society were centered on Natural History, as demonstrated in its charter as *The Historical, Natural History, and Literary Society of South Natick* May 1873. Early committees included Botany, Zoology, Entomology, and Ornithology. The minutes of the Society's first twenty years reflect great enthusiasm in collecting specimens and academic books to display and share with members. Family names of the Society members concentrating in areas of Natural History featured Cheney, Hunnewell, Edwards, Perry, Clark and Kingsbury. Honorary members of the Society elected in 1873 included Harvard professors Asa Gray, Botanist and Louis Agassiz, Biologist.

In a bequest, Physician and Botanist J.W. Robbins of Uxbridge, Massachusetts left his extensive collection of specimens and his private botanical library to the Society in 1880. Mary Wheeler, in *The Natick*

*Bulletin* newspaper of 21 May 1909, describes "the Robbins collection of choice minerals and shells, books and pamphlets and an herbarium comprising thousands of botanical specimens representing the flora of ....our own country and several foreign lands, mounted and arranged by Miss Ella Drury of this town. This acquisition places the Botanical Department of the Society in an equal rank with much older organizations in amount, variety, and quality."



Over the years the scope of the Natural History collection has diminished and the mission of the Natick Historical Society has changed to focus on the history of Natick and its people with natural history becoming a minor aspect. The decision to deaccession a collection of over thirty Botanical and Natural History books led us to reach out to Maureen O'Brien at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society Library, our neighbor on Route 16 at Elm Bank. We are delighted that 23 Botanical volumes and two Natural History volumes will be rehomed at the Society and are sure that the founding fathers and mothers of the Natick Historical Society would approve.

Image: *Catalogue of Hardy British and Hardy Exotic Ferns* of James Ivery & Sons Nurseryman, Surrey, U.K., c. 1836, donated to the Library by the Natick Historical Society. This nursery was founded in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in Dorking and was known for its azaleas

---

## Volunteer with Us!



We are looking for volunteers to help us on Free Fun Friday, July 20. Help us greet and orient visitors, promote membership and volunteerism at Mass Hort, and help with wayfinding and parking. [Sign up here!](#)

Check out our other [volunteer opportunities](#) for the summer. We hope you can join us!

Is your business or group looking for nonprofit volunteer opportunities? We invite you to join Mass Hort for a [team building day](#) in The Gardens at Elm Bank.

To learn more, contact:

Amy Rodrigues, Volunteer Engagement Manager, [arodrigues@masshort.org](mailto:arodrigues@masshort.org),  
617-933-4934

---

## Tips on Creating an Educational Garden for Children

By R. Wayne Mezitt

Mass Hort Trustee Chairman

Originally run in *The Boston Globe*



We're all becoming increasingly aware that we need to find ways to reconnect with the natural world. Understanding and appreciating nature helps ensure that future generations can continue to love, honor, and respect our world.

Today's demands for our time — jobs, school, sports, social expectations, and technology — can seem overwhelming, and we're continuously barraged by information detailing dangers and threats in our environment: sun exposure, tick bites, germs, poisons, sprays, and chemicals. As we voice our worries, our children listen and learn and may become even more reluctant to leave their screens and spend time in the "risky" outdoors.

A garden designed for kids can help young minds put these concerns into healthier perspective. As trustee chairman of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at

Elm Bank, I've found that providing spaces that encourage children to connect safely with nature

helps them learn how the natural world functions and why it's important to them. It's also ideal for building self-confidence and learning new skills.

Young minds perceive their world in far different ways than adults; a child's mind is always actively seeking new information and making connections — some that may seem bizarre and unrealistic to adults. This is how creativity develops: trying new ways to combine what their senses are telling them. Here are ideas for planning your home landscape with children in mind.

## Smell

Scientific research reveals that our sense of smell is one of the most powerful components of memory and emotions. We've all noticed that a child's first impulse is to smell a flower to determine its fragrance. Lilacs, Koreanspice viburnum, David Austin roses, and summersweet (*Clethra*) offer some of the most aromatic flowers to delight the nose. Many herbs release distinguishing scents when touched: thyme, lavender, basil, and rosemary. Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum*) reveals a most distinctive and unusual cotton candy-like perfume each autumn as its leaves fall to the ground.

## Sight

What we see and how we perceive it is a primary aspect of garden design. Children distinguish distances and perspective on a different scale from adults. A turn in a garden pathway can conceal an unexpected bold-leaf surprise like Hosta 'Gentle Giant', regal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), or the dinner-plate-size flowers of a rose mallow hibiscus. One of the ultimate insect-attracting plants — perfect for showing kids how pollinators work — is mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum*), a profuse summer-bloomer with fragrant gray-green foliage. And climbing only a few feet up into the branches of a willow tree affords a much different vantage point of the garden for a small child.

## Touch

Kids should be encouraged to touch and feel the texture of plants. They can compare the smooth, distinctively-colored bark of a birch, Stewartia, or paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) with the rough-textured trunk of a flowering crabapple. The fuzzy, velvety foliage of lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) provides a gentle sensation for young fingers. Shrubs with sharp features like American holly (*Ilex opaca*), roses, juniper, and raspberries can guide pathways and deter entry into an area.

## Hearing

Hearing a trickle of water from a fountain or stream can entice a child to explore further, as can the tone of a wind chime hidden among the branches of a ginkgo tree. The crunch of gravel underfoot as the path changes might indicate we're entering a new section of the garden. Cheeps of baby birds nesting in a wren house add a musical touch to the area. A bamboo garden clacker (shishi-odoshi) at a stream or pond entices young minds to investigate the unusual sound and learn how it works.

## Taste

Taste is a significant sense to be nurtured, but with greater caution: Be sure children understand that they need to confirm with an adult the safety of anything before they put it in their mouths. Tasting mint leaves, chewing a sweet yellow birch (*Betula*) twig, nibbling a cilantro leaf, and biting into the stem of lemon grass each offer a unique flavor experience perhaps unfamiliar to many children.

Though the temperate seasons are probably when children will be enjoying their gardens, they may be excited about playing outside even in winter, when the weather is agreeable. Cold weather garden activities might include examining an icy water feature and climbing a low-branched tree. Trees with colorful bark, weeping deciduous plants whose structure is most visible when their leaves have fallen, and evergreens that form a snowy cave all appeal to kids' senses.

Many public gardens feature areas for children. Take the time to visit one near you; it will help you develop ideas on designing a kid-friendly oasis right in your own yard.

*R. Wayne Mezitt is a third generation nurseryman and a [Massachusetts Certified Horticulturist](#), now chairman of [Weston Nurseries of Hopkinton and Chelmsford, MA](#) and owner of "[Hort-Sense](#)", a horticultural advisory business. Wayne currently serves as Trustee chairman for*

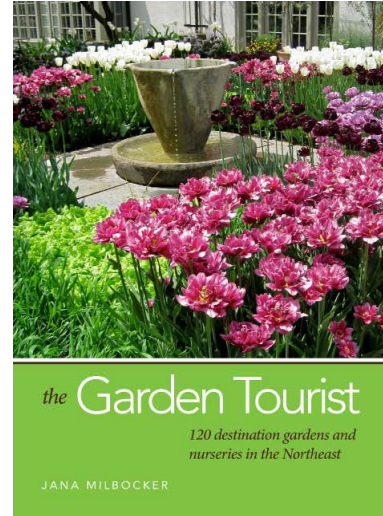
## ***The Garden Tourist: 120 Destination Gardens and Nurseries in the Northeast***

by Jana Milbocker

2017

Reviewed by Pamela Hartford

Every summer, Phyllis and I (fellow landscape historians), plan several day trips to visit parks and gardens, as well as places of interest we want to revisit, or places we have always intended to visit. Typically, an event or an exhibit provides the geographical starting point for a day's worth of sightseeing. Years ago, we started with New York City adventures. One year we walked the entire High Line and then zigzagged our way uptown through Greenwich Village to Washington Square Park and then Grammercy Park. Another year we walked from Battery Park across the Brooklyn Bridge (in the rain!) to Brooklyn Bridge Park and the River Café. We took the 59th Street tram to Roosevelt Island to see the newly installed Louis Kahn designed park across from the UN, and recently took a ferry from the Battery Maritime Building to Governor's Island - a trip well worth taking. We've made two trips to Rhode Island to enjoy gardens, vineyards, waterfront settings and sublime countryside, and to Cape Ann – Gloucester, Rockport and Lanesville. Last year, we spent a particularly memorable day in Concord, motivated by our interest in seeing the Concord Museum's tribute exhibit for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thoreau's birthday. After taking in the exhibit – which was deeply absorbing and thought-provoking – we then went to Walden Pond for a stroll, taking time to study the exquisite craftsmanship of the recently opened visitor center there. After a leisurely lunch at one of Concord's oldest inns, we walked around the grounds of the Old Manse, of Hawthorne and Emerson association, and walked down to the Concord River and the site where the first battle of the Revolutionary War ended. On the way back to our car, we stopped to sample some apples recently fallen on the ground, which prompted a delightful and very informative discussion with the grounds manager, an expert on historic apples. On the way home, we reviewed all the joys of the day.



This is the kind of day trip Jana Milbocker envisions in her enterprising guidebook for people like us -- garden tourists. The core of her book features profiles of 120 locales in the Northeast -- from Maine to Pennsylvania -- which range from public gardens, historic estate gardens and private gardens, to destination nurseries and botanical gardens. Each locale receives a two- page spread with consistent formatting -- site address, web site, and specifics about amenities, hours, fees and events, and a well-written narrative which includes an overview of the place, its background history, and guidance on distinctive features. The inclusion of specialty retail places and nurseries is especially fun, and -- what garden tourist wouldn't want to go to a great nursery!

Organized by state, Milbocker suggests potential daytrip itineraries, and includes lunch stop recommendations and a state map with the profiled locales. In addition to the profiles, however, she has added in some particularly helpful features, like an index of the 120 descriptions is organized by state in the front of the book. At the back of the book, she offers an expanded list of sites organized by categories of special interest, such as early spring gardens, early autumn gardens, rose gardens, herb gardens, rhododendron gardens, greenhouses, gardens with historic houses or art, and college campus arboretums. On the "Eating & Shopping Page" one can find 'Best Eateries,' 'Best Gift Shops,' and 'Where to Buy Plants.' An excellent reading list of books is included on the "Resources" page.

A well-planned day trip can feel like a vacation and be inspiring. Enjoyed with a fellow garden enthusiast, it is day of pure pleasure.

*Pamela Hartford is a landscape historian and preservation consultant. She can be reached at [bookbosk@covad.net](mailto:bookbosk@covad.net).*



---

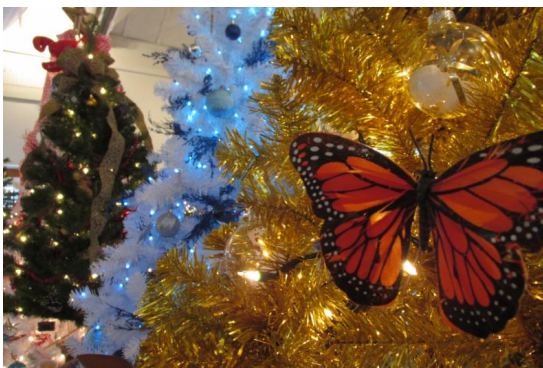
## Thinking About Christmas in July

The Festival of Trees will take place November 23 - December 9, 2018. While it is months away, we are planning now for this wonderful holiday event.

Each year, our event is supported by garden clubs, plant societies, community groups and businesses which contribute to the fun by donating a decorated holiday tree or by sponsoring trees for the event.

For information check out our [website](#), and [see this form to learn more](#) about donating or sponsoring a tree.

---



### Garden Tour at the Sanders'!

*By Neal Sanders,  
Leaflet Contributor*

Garden tours are educational and instructive. They open your eyes to new vistas and ways of thinking about horticulture. They are, in short, wonderful.

Except when it's your garden that's on tour. I know this because, last month, our garden was the one everybody wanted to see.

Betty and I began planting our 'dream retirement garden' in June 2015. As readers of this column know, we started with a true 'tabula rasa' – we had taken out 947 cubic yards of what could politely be called 'builder's crud' and replaced it with 18 inches of screened loam into which we would plant trees, shrubs and perennials... and not a single blade of grass.

Fending off requests to see the garden was easy for the first two years – there really wasn't a lot to see. Last year, we pleaded for more time with the explanation that, well, we needed more time. Trees needed to grow some more; shrubs still had to spread out their roots, and perennials were just starting to fill in the gaps between them.

But this is the start of the garden's fourth year. That old but accurate aphorism about "sleep, creep, leap" has proven true. And so, Betty agreed to open our garden for two hours for Master Gardeners.

You would think that having a group in your garden would be a snap... put out signs, bake some cookies and set out the lemonade. No, that's not the way it happens. And it *especially* doesn't happen that way if the group in question has more than a passing knowledge of horticulture and a keen eye for detail.

For three weeks before the event, Betty labeled plants. We have three viburnums behind the house. We even know what kind of viburnums they were because we've saved all their paperwork. But which one is which? This is why Google Images exists, and I suspect the fine folks in Mountain View are compiling quite an interesting, if puzzling dossier about our internet search habits. And, of course, common names are so... common. Why call it an 'arrowwood viburnum' when '*Viburnum dentatum*' is more botanically correct?





And then, of course, there's the weeding and deadheading. Every bed was gone over multiple times, and paths were plucked of everything even resembling a weed. Of course, our paths are also supposed to be 'natural'. Our heucheras and tiarellas are prolific self-seeders. One especially fecund cultivar had cute brown and gold seedlings popping up everywhere. How many stayed and how many were composted was a question being answered up to the morning of the tour.

There is also the 'prayer factor,' otherwise known as "will it bloom in time?" and "will it still be in bloom?" We have a stand of gorgeous *Asclepias tuberosa*, also known as butterfly weed. It is garnet red and is a magnet for every pollinator in town. Up until Saturday morning, it appeared as though only a single stem would be showing color. But nearby, an entire colony of *Asclepias syriaca* – rose milkweed to the rest of us – blossomed with white flower clusters that, while not as showy as its cousin, perfumed the air magnificently. They were a perfect complement to the *Asclepias tuberosa*, which opened a dozen flowers just as cars began arriving.

Finally, there was the scourge of parking. We are on a narrow, winding road that is a favorite of bicyclists and walkers. We have a parking pad at the front of the property that will hold three cars and a driveway that will accommodate four more. Fearing being blocked in, no one wanted to use the driveway and, when the pad filled up, visitors began parking on the street (Betty had provided detailed instruction of how to park at a nearby elementary school).

Visitors ignored the school parking option. They not only parked on the street; they parked *on both sides* of this narrow, winding road. It did not take long for the local police to take notice and we soon had two cruisers, one with flashing lights, in front of our house. It took all of Betty's charms and persuasive powers to get everything back to normal. I am in awe of her for this.

Was it worth it? Of course. The compliments were both genuine and numerous. People said they *learned* and called what Betty has created, 'the new American yard.' Am I in a hurry to do it again soon? If you have to ask...



## July Horticultural Hints

by Betty Sanders,  
Leaflet Contributor

**Watering wisely.** Because the flow in the Charles is low, the state has just mandated an odd/even watering schedule in my town. Watering bans may already be in place or will be soon where you live. This means we all need to think twice before running for the hose. Most trees, shrubs, lawn and perennials do well during dry periods if they have been in the ground for a couple of years. Watering early (finished before 9 a.m.) or late in the day (after 6 or 7 p.m.) reduces water loss to evaporation. Remember to water only plants—not sidewalks, driveways or mulch beds.

Save water indoors with all the old standbys—shorter showers, collecting the water run to get hot water, collecting the water used to rinse vegetables to water outdoor plants. Use mulch to hold water in the soil, but never more than two inches deep. Thicker mulch prevents water from getting through to plant roots.

**Perennial upkeep.** Deadheading perennials not only keeps the garden more attractive, but also leads to repeat blooms on many plants such as salvia, geraniums and even delphiniums. While you're at it, clean up any diseased leaves to prevent spreading the problem. Finally, trim back any perennials or annuals that are getting too vigorous and taking over their neighbor's space.

Planning ahead, you can fight mildew before it appears on plants such as monarda (bee balm) and phlox. A solution of one tablespoon of baking soda in a gallon of water is a safe treatment which slows down this annual nuisance.

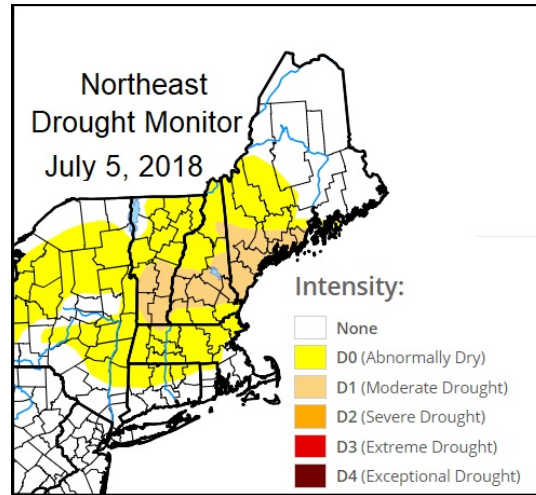
**Annuals** need additional fertilizer throughout the summer. If you are using a slow-release fertilizer, check the container to see how long it should last - usually three to six months. Liquid fertilizers allow you to 'dose' those who seem to need a mid-summer pick-up.

If the blooms are slowing down, or the plants are getting scraggly, give them a hard shearing to encourage new growth and new flowers. A shearing just before you leave on vacation should mean you come home to lush new growth - if you have a faithful waterer tending the pots.

**Lawns.** If you haven't already, move the blade on your mower up to 3". The higher grass will shade its own roots, making them less water hungry while shading out new weeds. Consider replacing the grass in hard-to-grow areas (shady spaces, for example) with perennials or shrubs that are happier in shade and require less maintenance. With watering bans now a reality for some of us, remember that grass which browns out in the summer will come back green and healthy with late summer and fall rains.

**Vegetable gardens.** Vegetables need regular watering to produce well. Dry spells stunt the plants and reduce the size of the crop they produce. But you can save water by keeping plants mulched, watering in the early morning or just before sunset when you won't lose water to evaporation. Mildew can be a problem on basil, so keep leaves dry by watering at the root level.

It's too early for most tomatoes, but you should be harvesting green beans, lettuce, peas, beets, chard and onions among others. Plant a new row of lettuce, carrots, beets and chard to extend the



season for those. Replant zucchini and green beans when the first batch blooms, keeping the new plants under floating row covers to exclude squash borers and bean beetles. Though row cover looks opaque, they allows plenty of sunlight and water into the plants.

Spinosad, a biological control, can be sprayed on plants up to eight days before harvest. Once it dries it affects only those insects that weaken plants by chewing on leaves. Always spray very early in the morning or at dusk to get the bad guys and leave the beneficial bugs to work for you.

If you are growing corn, it may need a supplemental feeding this month. Carefully scratch in a small amount of nitrogen fertilizer around the roots, then water thoroughly if rain is not expected. Dried blood from garden centers or farm stores is an excellent biological source of organic nitrogen.

*Betty Sanders is a widely known speaker and writer on gardening topics. You can read more of her horticultural advice at [www.BettyOnGardening.com](http://www.BettyOnGardening.com)*

---

Connect with us



[www.MassHort.org](http://www.MassHort.org) - 617-933-4900