



Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION



JUNE 2023

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

For me, June is a month of pure horticultural enjoyment! Yes, there is so much to do, the vegetable garden is behind schedule, my annuals coming in smaller than hoped, but the permanent garden features are starting to truly sing. The beauty of the flowering trees and shrubs, the tapestry of color, texture and scent in the herb garden, the fragrant first flowering roses, all have suddenly arrived, demanding attention. For me, many single blossoms evoke a specific memory, a place, a person, a feeling, and as each appears in its turn, if I will just pause, I enjoy as if for the first time that long past sensation.



It is also the month that the Garden becomes truly social for me again, grilling out with friends, enjoying the weddings each weekend in the Italianate Garden, creating new memories that will return again in future years as the flowers again bloom in their turn.

Making memories is such an important part of our mission in the Garden at Elm Bank. It has been such a delight seeing the pure joy of families interacting with the 'Ribbit the Exhibit' sculptures in the garden. Each has its own personality and seemingly, a life of its own. At the same time, the Weezie's Garden for Children again becomes a focus for many member families with its lyrical waterfall, whimsical topiary, and archeological dig.

Massachusetts Horticultural Society has more activities, education, events and simple enjoyment available in the Garden at Elm Bank than ever before. As you make time to enjoy your own garden, we hope you will come and enjoy time with us too.

James Hearsum
President & Executive Director

UPCOMING CLASSES



**Introduction to Forest
Bathing: Healing with Nature**
Wednesday, June 7
10am-12pm



Culinary Herbs
Saturday, June 10
10-11:30am



Naturescape your Yard
Tuesday, June 13
6:30-7:30pm
VIRTUAL



**Colored Pencil Techniques
for Botanical Subjects on
Toned Paper**
Saturday, August 17
9:30am-3:30pm



**White Flowers of Summer in
Colored Pencil & Graphite**
Saturday, August 21
9:30am-3:30pm

FEATURED CLASS

The Art of Planting Design — Learn to design or redesign your gardens using plants you love in seasonal sequence

Saturdays, July 12, 19, 26
10am-2pm

In this 3-session, in-person class, at the Garden at Elm Bank, you'll learn color pairing and how to create your own color palette and use it to create stunning perennial and shrub combinations. You'll learn how to lay out your plant pairings to create an abundant, dynamic, and colorful flower garden in seasonal sequence. Learn flower garden design and also how to "wild" your garden if you'd like a more natural look with grasses and more. Native plants and pollinators will be discussed.

You'll have class time to practice new skills with in-class worksheets and apply them to a section of your own garden (Sun or Shade) (about 9 x 12'). The instructor takes time to individually review your worksheets and your design layout and plant pairing choices. You'll prepare before class by photographing and measuring the garden you wish to transform. A decluttering worksheet helps you take an inventory, so you'll be ready to start your garden design.

Lectures include extensive hand-outs. Lecture images are from gardens in New England, MHS's Bressingham Garden, and the author's design work to inspire you and give you examples you can use right away.

Instructor: Maria von Brincken, principal of Maria von Brincken Landscape Garden Design and award-winning certified designer (APLD and LI) celebrating over 30 years in professional practice.



VIEW JUNE CALENDAR



Meet the Authors:
Wayne and Beth Mezitt
 Wayne and Beth Mezitt, members of the Mezitt family of Weston Nurseries fame, have released their book, "For the Love of Gardening," to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the company. Join us for an evening event as we host them for a book signing and reading. Preorder your copy of the book at signup to have it signed during the event!
Monday, June 26
6:30pm

REGISTER & PREORDER

Ribbit the Exhibit On View During Garden Hours through Labor Day

Come visit our froggy friends who are here for the summer season! 25 frogs have found themselves at home in the Garden at Elm Bank. Find them all and read their backstories to learn about how these frogs are having fun this summer.



Weekly Mah Jongg Drop-in Sessions

Wednesdays at 12pm

This popular Chinese tile-based game is returning to the Garden at Elm Bank! Join us for our weekly drop-in sessions to play with other Mah Jongg lovers in our beautiful garden setting! Please RSVP so we have an idea of how many boards are needed. Please note, participants should have a working knowledge of the game for these drop-in Mah Jongg sessions.



MHS Book Club

Third Tuesday of the Month at 1:30pm

Join other enthusiasts in great conversation while immersed in the beauty of the Garden. Book Club meets at 1:30 pm in the Crockett Garden (weather location: Dearborn Classroom, Education Center).

Upcoming Dates and Books:

June 20: *We Are the Ark* by Mary Reynolds

July: No Meeting

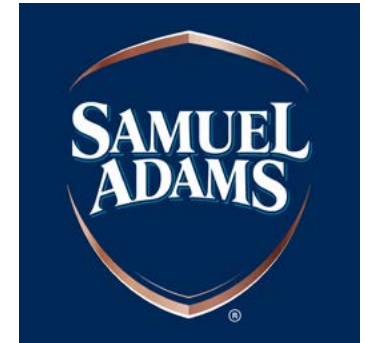
August 15: *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 GARDEN OPENING SPONSORS

PLATINUM



BRONZE



The Julie and Dennis Murphy Family Foundation

SILVER



In First Person

William (Ned) Friedman, Ph.D.

Director & Faculty Fellow of the Arnold Arboretum,
Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University,
Faculty Associate, Harvard University Center for the Environment

For 'In First Person,' Leaflet Editor-in-Chief Wayne Mezitt interviews people in horticulture and adjacent fields by asking a standard set of questions about their work. The column offers an opportunity for people in these fields to share with readers about their passions, what motivates them, and how they define and measure success. Based on the idea that we're often reluctant to talk openly about ourselves because of the potential for miscommunication or misinterpretation, Wayne transforms his conversation with interviewees into a personal story from the interviewee's first-person perspective.

Anyone assessing my current responsibilities as director of the Arnold Arboretum would most likely agree with me that for me this is an “improbable” position—I am a botanist by training, not a horticulturist, with no management experience, prior to my arrival in 2011 at the Arboretum. It continues to astound me that I was asked to interview



Catalpa bignonioides 'Aurea', by Ned Friedman

at Harvard University for this position more than a decade ago, and that the search committee decided to take a chance on me and ultimately asked me to assume the responsibilities.

Having said that, I am continually amazed with how much our extraordinary community of Arboretum staff has accomplished during my twelve plus years at the Arnold. The day before my interview at Harvard (on the campus in Cambridge) I spent a day walking through the Arnold Arboretum to experience how stunning this institution is and to begin to comprehend its exceptional potential. To this day I personally walk the grounds at least weekly and explore the continuously changing dynamics so evident with the diversity of the collections.

The Arnold Arboretum is a unique botanical garden in many regards. We have no board of directors and I report directly to the Provost of Harvard University. As a part of the Boston Parks system, we offer a unique outreach opportunity for Harvard, to the citizens of Boston, and beyond. Every six years a Visiting Committee appointed by the Harvard Board of Overseers spends time with me and our staff to assess our activities and accomplishments and make suggestions about possible changes.

Over the last decade my primary motivation has been to enhance the horticultural and botanical eminence of the Arboretum. We are utilizing the reinvigoration of our Olmsted and Sargent heritage as a fundamental initiative, particularly with the recent Olmsted bicentennial observations and the Arnold Arboretum's own sesquicentennial in 2022. The subtlety of landscape design that characterizes our grounds helps make our plantings and gardens easier for the public to appreciate. Concurrently, we're working to assure that our arboretum accession records continue to focus on the great plant collections that characterize our 281 acres.

With most of our facilities being outdoors, we were unique among those few institutions able to remain open to the public during the



Ned Friedman, by Kathleen Dooher

Covid restrictions. Visitors tell us how much they appreciate our open spaces, and their freedom to commune with nature in such welcoming spaces. In some regards, we can pride ourselves as functioning as a “public health care” institution—offering a unique form of physical & mental therapy for all those who visit.

We have 14 main entrances offering public access to Arnold Arboretum grounds, so tracking attendance is historically challenging. During the 3 years of Covid, we were able to count entries at the Arboretum’s Arborway Gate near the Hunnewell building, which totaled an astounding 2.5 million visitors; we confidently estimate that our visitation currently totals some 3 - 4 million annually. The support from our friends and various city agencies is extremely gratifying, along with the collaboration with DCR and other Commonwealth organizations. Having city entrances, new and upgraded sidewalks, biking access, parking and public transportation possibilities all contribute to increasing visitation.



Perhaps most gratifying to me is our heroic staff, along with our teams of passionate volunteers—no one ever questions that this institution truly matters! We recently invested two years figuring out how to broaden the appeal and depth of *Arnoldia*, our quarterly magazine



that we started in 1911 - characterized as “the definitive forum for conversations about temperate woody plants and their landscapes.” *Arnoldia* is available by subscription to members of the Arnold Arboretum. All of us at the Arnold Arboretum are focusing on becoming well synchronized with the public through education and participation, connecting with underserved young people, particularly bringing out the passion of elementary, middle, and high school urban youth.

Surprisingly, the Arnold Arboretum has only 1,700 members—far fewer than most similar institutions that boast 20,000 or more. Especially because of this, we’re thrilled with the support our major capital projects are garnering. Our recent ventures into improving our irrigation capabilities are particularly encouraging: our Peter’s Hill irrigation endeavor yielded \$1,700,000 from donors, and we’re working on raising the \$3,500,000 needed to finalize the last phase – to keep our trees alive considering the ever-greater challenges of climate change and extreme drought. But in addition to the numbers, it’s the passion for horticulture that our institution inspires among our members, visitors and supporters that makes all our efforts so worthwhile.

▲ Peters Hill by Ned Friedman

◀ **Top:** *Taxodium distichum* 'Pendens'; **Bottom Left:** Explorer's Garden; **Bottom Right:** *Quercus palustris*. Photos by Ned Friedman.



FROM THE STACKS

MAUREEN T. O'BRIEN, LIBRARY MANAGER



“*When I encountered rich people for the first time,
I discovered that not only do they holiday in places that are hard to find on a map,
but that they also use the names of seasons as verbs.
When they asked me, 'Where did you summer and winter growing up?'
I would usually say, 'As a child? The same place I springed and autumned.'*

Arte Lange (b. 1967)

”

The north shore of Boston became a popular summer place for the monied class during the mid nineteenth to twentieth centuries. They built large mansions surrounded by wonderful gardens, most of which are mere memories today. They are part of our landscape and social history.

Featured Collection: Maps

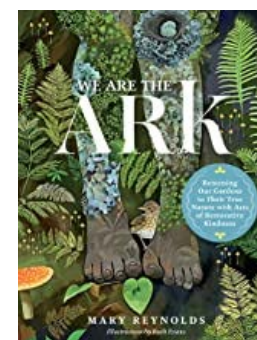
Objects, images, maps, plans and ephemera provide a more complete understanding of our past, in addition to information in books. Our Library Collections has a beautiful map on canvas entitled Members' Estates North Shore Garden Club by renowned cartographer Ernest Clegg. While the map is undated, we were able to determine that it was likely created during the 1920's by comparing the names on the map with additional research on the owners and on Clegg. In 1929, the Club also commissioned Raymond C. Allen to create a ROUTE Map for the North Shore Garden Club. In the mid-1920s, many of these estate owners hired renowned photographer Herbert Wendell Gleason to document their gardens. You can view images of the estates in the Society's Gleason's Collection [here](#). A searchable Research Aid to the entire Gleason Collection is [here](#).

Clegg (1876 - 1954) was a British cartographer, graphic artist, and calligrapher. He emigrated to the United States in 1909 when he was recruited as a jewelry designer for Tiffany. He returned to the United Kingdom and served in World War I. When he returned to the United

States in 1919, he became known for his decorative cartography and map design. His work included a special limited edition of Canadian war poet John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*, (New York: William Edward Rudge, 1921). He was commissioned to create an illuminated manuscript for a wedding gift to British Princess Royal (Princess Mary.) He then moved to decorative cartography and map design. Clegg is probably best known for his pictorial maps that combined precise illustrations with historical facts and accuracy, his most renowned being the beautiful [A Map of Lindbergh's Flights](#) (1928).

Book Club

The next meeting of the Book Club is on Tuesday, June 20th at 1:30. The club will be discussing *We Are The Ark* by Mary Reynolds. Meetings take place at 1:30 in the Crockett Garden. If the weather is poor, the meeting will be in the Education Building. All are welcome to attend.



There is no meeting in July.

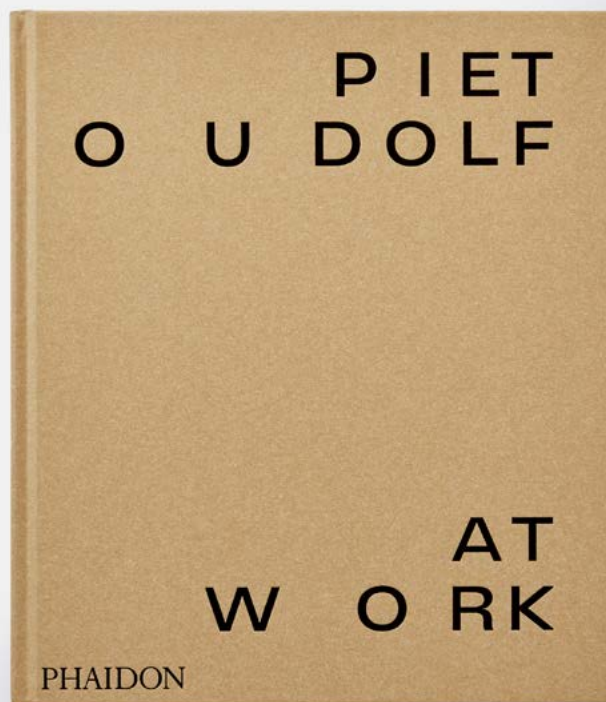
The Windows – Books on Summer Gardens

Help Grow our Collections

Consider making a donation from the Society's [Amazon Smile Wishlist](#). It is just a click away! The list is searchable or you can browse to see what the Library and other departments wish for.

COME VISIT!

The Library is open by appointment and when the lights are on. Please email Library Manager Maureen O'Brien at mobrien@masshort.org for an appointment if you want to schedule a visit.



Piet Oudolf At Work

By Piet Oudolf, with an introduction by Cassian Schmidt
Phaidon | 276pp | \$79.95

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

So much has been written about—and by—iconic landscape designer Piet Oudolf that it was difficult to imagine there was anything more to say when Phaidon Press reached out to ask if I'd be interested in reviewing Piet Oudolf At Work. For more than thirty years, Oudolf's life and landscape projects have been extensively chronicled. He has written, co-written, or been the subject of at least eleven books, beginning with Droomplanten

(1990) and including the 2015 classic, Hummelo: A Journey Through a Plantsman's Life.

And then there are the countless articles that profile individual commissions. Featured within the March 2023 issue of the Royal Horticultural Society's magazine, The Garden, is an update on Oudolf's plan to redesign the twenty-year-old glasshouse borders at the RHS



Garden Wisley. Composed of 36,000 perennial plants, including 117 species and cultivars new to the garden, at nearly two acres in size the project will become one of the largest and most significant landscapes Oudolf has executed in the United Kingdom.

I am therefore pleased to share that my skepticism about the book is unfounded. Piet Oudolf At Work is a remarkable achievement and worthy addition to the literary oeuvre chronicling Oudolf's visionary career. Containing the largest collection of his drawings ever published, it is the first book to present an overview of his planting plans. The subject of a

2014 exhibition at Hauser & Wirth in Somerset, England, these hand-drawn works of art are beautifully executed and harken back to an era before the advent of computerized planting plans made everything look the same.

"I discover beauty in things that on first sight are not beautiful. It is the journey in life to find out what real beauty is and notice it is everywhere," shares Oudolf, who began his career in earnest in 1982 when he and his wife, Anja, purchased a 3.2-acre derelict farm outside the village of Hummelo in the eastern Netherlands. Here they established the nursery where his ideas on plants

De Vlinderhof, Máximapark, Utrecht, Netherlands, 2013-14.
Courtesy and copyright of Piet Oudolf.

Left: Lurie Garden in Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 2001-04. *Courtesy and copyright of Piet Oudolf.* **Right:** Piet Oudolf, Hummelo, Gelderland, Netherlands. *Photograph by Mark Ashbee.*



and planting evolved, providing the inspiration for his burgeoning landscape design practice. A mecca for plant enthusiasts, Hummelo became ground zero for the “new perennial movement” for which he is celebrated.

Oudolf, known for his collaborative spirit, worked closely with others to write the book which features profiles of the gardens and landscapes he has created worldwide, including those previously unpublished. There is an introduction by Cassian Schmidt, director of Hermannshof, a botanical trial garden in Weinheim, Germany known for its habitat-based approach to planting, and an interview with

Swiss art curator Hans Ulrich Obrist. Essays by Gardens Illustrated founder Rosie Atkins, gardener Johnny Bruce, landscape architect James Corner and plantsman Noel Kingsbury provide insight into Oudolf’s design ideology and professional evolution.

A key aim of the book is to teach about well-functioning plant combinations and seasonal progressions. A plant directory of perennials, trees and shrubs presents the “raw materials of the Oudolf signature style,” illustrating the characteristic plant combinations prevalent in his designs. Scenically arranged and abstract, these represent a highly structural representation of the

natural world with the seasonal cycles of life and death celebrated in the landscape. Described as the opposite of traditional high-maintenance gardens, they are carefully orchestrated to embrace seasonality and amplify the temporal dimension which distinguishes the garden as fine art.

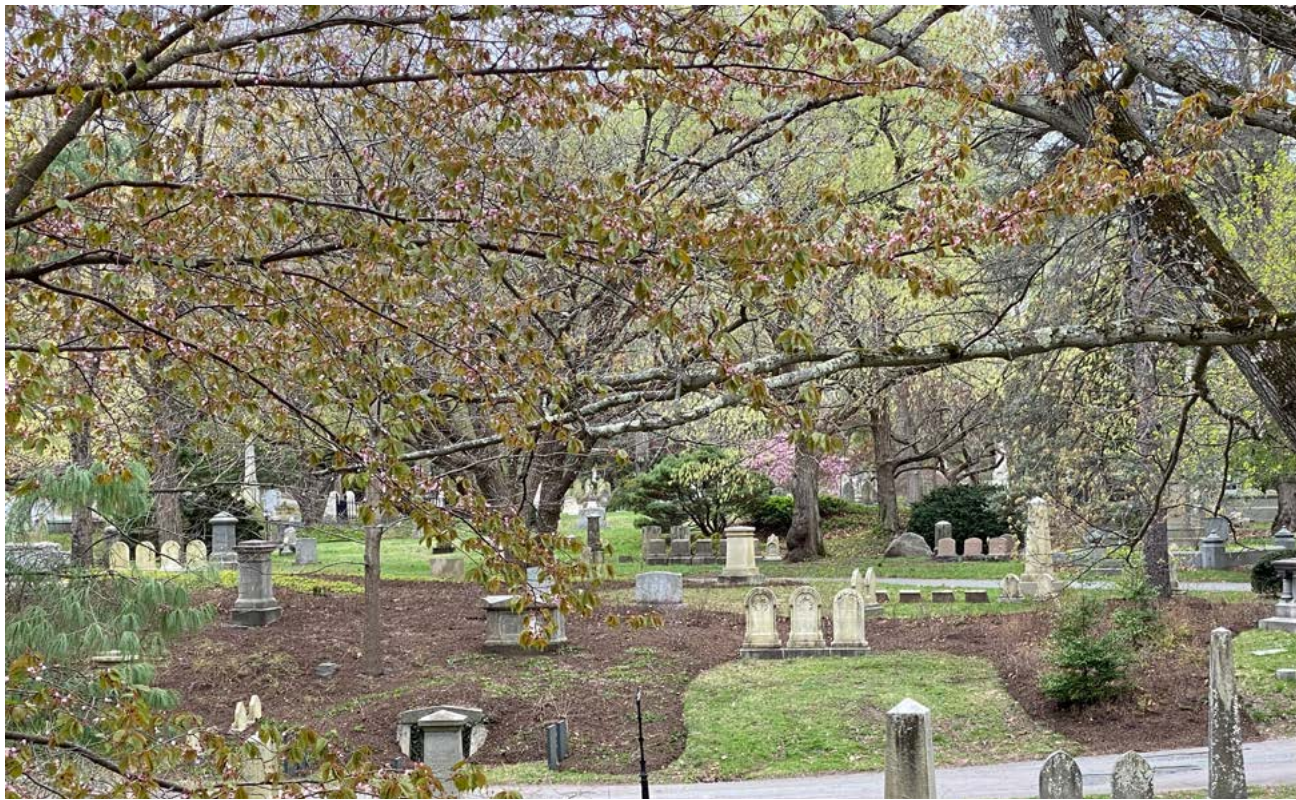
Lavishly produced and elegantly designed, Piet Oudolf At Work offers unparalleled insights into Oudolf’s design processes and working methods. Profiles of individual gardens include a brief history of the project illustrated with extensive full-color photographs and accompanied by the garden’s planting plans. These

are presented in detail. Beginning with Lurie Garden in Chicago’s Millennium Park (completed in 2004) and continuing through recent projects at the Vitra Campus in Germany and Belle Island in Detroit, Oudolf’s planting designs are shared in an incredible act of generosity toward the reader.

Oudolf is described in the book’s introduction as an approachable individual who has kept his feet firmly on the ground. Unlike many designers, he willingly shares his knowledge and experience with others, as illustrated in Piet Oudolf At Work. If we, as gardeners, benefit from his expertise it’s all the better as he has most likely moved on in his creative journey, exploring and experimenting with new ideas and plant combinations. It is this spirit of constant evolution that is a hallmark of Oudolf’s work, searching for new plants and using them in unique combinations.

Few garden designers have impacted the field of landscape design as greatly as Oudolf. Described as the leading figure in a movement that promotes a more natural and resilient approach to urban landscape design, his work embraces natural processes and the inevitability of change. If the “the garden is a stage play in which plants perform” and everything “is a playful intermezzo with time,” as Oudolf suggests, Piet Oudolf At Work may best be described as a beautifully orchestrated production in which the master’s genius is revealed.

Patrice Todisco writes about parks and gardens at the award-winning blog, [Landscape Notes](#).



Mount Auburn Cemetery: A Model of Sound Land Stewardship

By Marie Chieppo

with a beautiful large fountain and over 175 varieties of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, and grasses. Approximately 5 years ago, the lawn was replaced with grass that is much more drought tolerant. Shrubs that encircled the fountain were augmented with native and non-native plants to enhance the beauty and ecological value. I stopped by again yesterday (4 weeks later) to see what was in bloom and leafing out. Witch-alder's (fothergilla) beautiful bottle brush-like blossoms were at peak and the oak leaf hydrangea's leaves had recently opened. I was thrilled to see the dense groundlayers ginger and Appalachian barren strawberry. All are so beautiful and valuable to wildlife.

Massachusetts Horticultural Society was a newly formed entity when Dr. Jacob Bigelow, their corresponding secretary, proposed the idea of acquiring land to create American's first garden cemetery. It's establishment in 1831 marked the beginning of a movement that would brighten the hearts and rest the minds of visitors from a bustling world outside the gates. What was a loss to the former land owner (who fell ill and lacked resources), became a pastoral paradise to the grieving and a place to connect with nature for the public at large. Mature beautiful trees (some more than a hundred years old) still stand, offering proof of the level of care they and all other plants receive. Within the past eight to ten years, a particular emphasis has been placed on the biodiversity of plant species that attract and sustain many kinds of wildlife. A commitment to sustainable practices, that improve the health and resilience of the landscape has been an ongoing effort. I decided to learn more about current and future projects by taking what turned out to be a chilly and inspiring walk with Stephanie Almasi, the Director of Horticulture at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

The 175 acres provide habitat and breeding grounds for a large biodiversity of wildlife. In 2015, the Wildlife Action Plan was established to improve the Cemetery's ecosystem to help stabilize the declining populations of birds, insects and other wildlife from the surrounding area's habitat loss. Stephanie and I started at Gray Gardens, the large demonstration garden near the entrance

We walked to Indian Ridge an 1,800 foot long path that is in the final phases of habitat restoration. Phase one included removal of invasives like the Norway Maple trees from the Ridge and the slopes below it. Native shrubs and white-flowered Silverbell trees were planted to improve the habitat resources for resident and migratory birds. Many of the existent plant material was left in place or transplanted. Phase two involved removal of stretches of turf along the path to make way for native species. Larry Weaner and Associates, well known for their ecological work, were brought on board for phase three to design the Ridge with plants characteristic of what would be found in New England woodlands and meadows. The design was broken up into sections to create communities of plants appropriate for the soil and light conditions along the path. Particular attention was given to views and grades of plants that highlight areas rather than obstruct. Once established, fine textured groundlayers of sedges, ferns, Barren Appalachian strawberry will

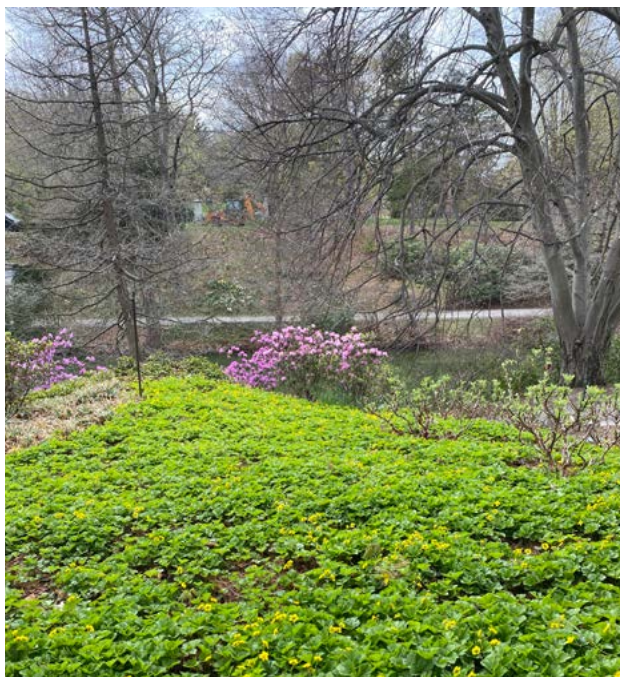


Joyful spring

complement the structural forms of the monuments in a very naturalistic style. Sections of mini meadows with floriferous plants and beautiful colors will bring smiles to faces of those meandering the path. Stephanie also pointed out the beautiful meadow surrounding Washington Tower; a welcoming bonus for walking up the steep terrain. By June a mixture of beautiful wildflowers and grasses will reappear.

In addition, Hazel Dell a hidden oasis bounded on the north and east by the Indian Ridge Path, was renovated with a wheelchair accessible path. Large granite hillside tombs that were built in 1859 encircle the newly restored pathway. Toby Wolfe, a landscape architect, designed adjacent garden beds with a selection of beautiful native species. Soon, the planting for this project will begin.

Plants and how we design with them play huge roles in environmentally friendly landscapes. Dense groundlayers like the Barren Appalachian strawberry maintain soil temperature and moisture levels, naturally. Once established, plants become ecologically valuable green mulch that replaces the need for annual mulching and extensive amounts of labor. Energized with excitement about the hard work that has been done and the efforts currently underway, I wished I could have stayed longer. Stephanie has an amazing staff committed to Mount Auburn's stewardship. This year alone they have acquired 8000 plants, primarily perennials. Throughout the cemetery some sections that had turf grass are covered with wood chips to reduce weed pressure and stabilize the soil until it is time for the sedums, purple coneflowers, blazing stars (*Liatris*), asters, ferns and warm season grasses to be planted. It brings joy to my heart to watch the birds fly amongst the trees and go about their spring conversations. Wildlife knows better than any human what is truly a "sense of place"; they co-evolved and depend on plants that are native to the region. To visitors, Mount Auburn Cemetery is a beautiful space to wander that draws you into nature.



Section of Indian Ridge with Barren Appalachian strawberry, azaleas and oak leaf hydrangeas.



Ostrich fern, Hosta and Fothergilla in the Asa Gray Garden

Marie Chieppo is an ecological landscape designer who graduated from the MA Master Gardener program in 2000.

SENSORY GARDENS:

Appreciating Gardens with all Five Senses



By Catherine Cooper

With the coming of June summer unfolds an abundance of sensory delights. Even if our outdoor spaces are not intentionally designed as sensory gardens, being outdoors can surround us with multiple ways to stimulate the senses. Blooming plants offer a broad palate of color and some will also scent the air. Others offer an interesting texture, or bear edible leaves, roots or flowers thus bringing experiences to our fingertips and taste buds, and while plants themselves do not often make sounds, it is rare that a garden will be totally silent.

Sensory gardens are mostly created with children or those with disabilities in mind, but appealing to our senses is something that can be both soothing and stimulating for all of us. While the growing season can demand much of us gardeners (especially if we get a little over ambitious about how many flowers and vegetables we can cultivate in any one year!), summer is also a time when we should literally stop and smell the roses.

Sight is the sense that most of us use as our primary way of experiencing our environment, and our plantings will reflect this. Whether we choose a riot of color from blooming plants, trees and shrubs or prefer a more soothing experience from using pastel colors, or just one particular flower color, personal taste is reflected in what we plant. I tend to fall into the former camp, mostly because my borders were not planted in one go, but supplemented over the

course of several years. Fortunately I have repeated several shrubs and perennials, so there is some visual cohesion, but these days I can only find space if something succumbs to drought or intense winter cold. At first glance my color palate in June has a rather patriotic theme, which came about because I like the plants in question rather than any intention. White is supplied by the flowers of several massive fleece flowers (*Persicaria polymorpha*)*, a perfectly well-behaved knotweed, which at 6 feet tall and wide acts as summertime shrubbery at the back of my borders. There are also some near white bearded iris, variety unknown as they were purchased from a local garden club's plant sale. The blue comes from Siberian irises, also an unknown variety as the original plant was discovered in the undergrowth when I moved into my home. And there are also a couple of false indigo plants (*Baptisia australis*) adding to the effect, except where I have the variety American goldfinch growing! The red comes from oriental poppies with their crinkled, papery petals and deep purple-black anthers. However, if my eye travels around the planted beds I will see shades of pale pink (*Penstemon*), bright magenta (*Lychnis coronaria*) through to the deep wine-red of the flowers on my sweetshrub (*Calycanthus*) Aphrodite. These colors are rapidly augmented by the pinks, purples, yellows and oranges of other plants that caught my eye so that the borders become a changing palate of colors.



When it comes to scent, I have to admit I love scented plants and flowers, although they are not the primary feature of my plantings. I only have a couple of roses (too many deer to fend off), although they will not touch the rugosa roses, much preferring my David

Austin climber, which thanks to those sneaky browsers never gets to reach its full potential. Still, I persevere as I love those old-fashioned style blooms with their strong scent. Matching the rose in color and scent are clumps of common milkweed, which invited itself into my yard a number of years ago. Two other plants that bring scent to my garden in the month of June are a couple of lemon-colored Itoh peonies Bartzella and a number of garden heliotrope plants (*Valeriana officianalis*), which because I allow them to go to seed (the seed heads look attractive) they feature in various locations and act as perches for territorial hummingbirds. Scent not only comes from flowers - there are herbs and foliage that release scent when touched. Chives and thyme are grown both for the kitchen and for ornamental reasons. My sun baked yard can become difficult for herbs like basil, but nothing evokes warm summer days like the smell of basil, lavender or rosemary. And lastly, the final smell of summer is that of fresh cut grass. Despite the work involved in getting a good lawn, the smell of cut grass always evokes summer for me.

Top: Patriotic colors from White Fleece Flower (*Persicaria polymorpha*), Oriental Poppy and Siberian Iris
Bottom: Rose Campion and Blanket Flower

Taste comes not only from those herbs but by late June strawberries will be ripening. Leafy salad crops along with peas and young kale are also ready, but my garden in June is more a case of anticipation of future harvests than having much ready to consume. The sense of touch is not featured so strongly either, but I have that classically tactile plant, *Stachys byzantine*, which is so perfectly named lamb's ears. Unopened buds on the oriental poppies with their coating of soft bristles also invite curious fingers. Grasses can also offer interesting texture that invites touch. The one that most evokes this is Mexican feather grass (*Nassella tenuisima*) which is not hardy in our region, so sadly doesn't feature in my garden, but the grass that features prominently is the humble lawn. In June when the lawn is still lush, the experience of walking barefoot across the soft, cool turf is an experience to bring back memories of childhood summers playing barefoot in my parents' garden.

And lastly there is sound; sound comes from the breeze that moves through the leaves of trees and

causes the wind chimes to play their gentle erratic tune. This is complimented by the various birds that make my yard their home. Some of them are instantly recognizable: chickadees, mourning doves and mocking birds. Others I need a crash course in bird song in order to identify. And then there are the insects - the buzzing of bees and at some point cicadas. And lastly there is the deep bumble bee buzz of hummingbirds as they whiz to and from the feeders.

So if you were to see my garden and note that the weeds are rampant in some parts and that I'm behind on a number of other tasks, it is because I have determined that I should take opportunity to enjoy my surroundings rather than spend all my time trying to make nature conform to my ideas of a garden. All living things are fleeting in the grand scheme of things, and therefore moments taken to pause and enjoy the riches of nature is time well spent.

*The hard frost we experienced on May 17th damaged the buds and tender new growth on a number of plants including the fleece flowers. While they will not look great this year, it is just one year.

Born in England, Catherine learned to garden from her parents and from that developed a passion for plants. Catherine is in charge of the greenhouse at Weston Nurseries - Chelmsford. When not at Weston Nurseries, she can often be found in her flower beds or tending to an ever-increasing collection of houseplants.

Curiouser & Curiouser

By John Lee

John shares stories of Bert and Brenda and their gardening wisdom. These chronicles feature recipes, tried-and-true gardening practices, and seasonal struggles and successes. Bert and Brenda were first introduced in the March 2022 issue of Leaflet.



Soon as U-29 closed and school was out, Forest and Sue Beth (now 'SB' she announced recently) headed south to take up what everyone hoped was a quiet summer at Uncle Bert and Aunt Brenda's farmstead. There had already been a couple of trials-by-fire as the four of them learned how to sort things out and learn to live together in some semblance of cooperation. Bert had cleaned up the old hired-man's hide-away from when Brenda's family had kept a few cows in the now long-since fallen down barn. (Brenda's mom would not let the hired man through the kitchen door unless he had cleaned up a bit and changed out of his barn boots.) They had made a room for him with a wash-up stand in the abutting shed.) Bert was no dairyman. In fact, he really did not like cleaning barns or stalls much. He'd gotten rid of

everything above the foundation, taken out the floor and turned the space into gardens. He then jacked up the shed and saved the hide-away just in case. Forest liked the idea of sleeping out so they put in a roll-away bed and a dresser for what few pieces of clothing he had brought. He stayed up late and got up early to tinker with Bert's tools and equipment downstairs so being out of the house suited him fine.

SB, on the other hand, was a bit of a slug – went to bed early and didn't tend to get up until Brenda rapped at the door of what had been the sewing room. Her feral habits could not be tolerated so a routine had to be established, a menu of required chores was quickly inculcated: as soon as the breakfast dishes were washed and put away and SB had taken care of what few personal habits she claimed, the two were out into the gardens to start plugging and planting what would soon become their bread and butter. At the outset, SB was less than enthusiastic because she did not recognize anything in the gardens that looked like anything she'd want on a pizza. Brenda did her best to explain the order of the garden year - the science and the folk-lore – and why eating out of the ground was better for you than eating out of a box. SB wasn't convinced until the first

lettuces were ready to pull; then she started to come around.

It wasn't long after that when suddenly life in the gardens and the landscape became a family affair. Bert became the conductor; Forest prepped the beds. His earlier tune-up of the tiller had been masterful apparently and it was now a joy to use - no more burping and bellowing. They spread compost only where there was to be planting. Bert liked planting in 30" beds because it was more efficient than single rows. He then marked with string the 4 rows to be planted in each bed and SB either seeded or dibbled for whatever was coming next. This morning it was root crops because the moon was waning: beets, carrots, early turnips and radishes. In their garden, Bert always planted the radishes in with the carrots because the carrots are slow to germinate (unlike the radishes) and they helped mark the rows and helped thin the carrots several weeks later. Forest had been hot to plant the peas a week or so earlier but Bert told him to hold his horses: peas planted in cold soils came up but there would be fewer peas per pod than if they waited for the soil to warm. Thanks to laggard germination in colder soils, he professed, later-planted peas grew much faster and would be ready to

pick pretty much at the same time as the early-planted peas. He also claimed they were sweeter. Brenda liked to dish up peas with a sprig of fresh-picked horse-mint that grew wild down by the brook. She also always threw a few pods in the steamer when she cooked them.

Over the course of the winter, Bert had been experimenting with better ways to trellis his beans. For many years, he had been using a tripod which seemed to work pretty well. He no longer enjoyed picking beans on his hands and knees. So he preferred the more robust, heavy-yielding Kentucky Wonders. But every year, no matter what, it seemed that the deer ate more beans than he did despite a variety of deer-defying trickery (lights, DVD discs, even midnight micturition). Last year, he had tried a four-legged pyramid with cross-supports with and without interior netting. Native Americans had planted



squashes around their corn and beans because the deer did seem to like wading through the rustling runners. (Burt didn't either.) His inspiration this year was more organic: pyramids with interior and exterior plantings of deer-resistant annuals. Supplemental beauty could only be an asset. He would plant coreopsis, echinacea and bee balm at the base of each pyramid (or hang some really sweat-laden laundry on the inside

- maybe that alone would be sufficiently discouraging). Forest thought the tired overalls was brilliant; not so Brenda.

SB, being of the young female persuasion, was fascinated by the idea of moon-gardening and

the purported relationship to the zodiac. While no-one could produce what might pass for rhyme or reason, SB took it upon herself to re-arrange all of their summer and late-season planting times just to see if it made any difference. While Bert was maybe on board with the idea of waxing and waning, planting by the zodiac was way beyond his ken. He set aside a research plot for SB to experiment in. 'We'll see', he said with only a hint of dubiousness even though The Old Farmer's Almanac claimed that Cancer was the optimal sign under which to set transplants in 2023. Mostly, he felt reminded of Sackville-West's wry remark that 'if one were as good a gardener in practice as in theory, what a garden one would create!



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