



Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION



Letter from the Interim President

Dear Members and Friends,

The autumn weather in the Boston area has been gentle this year. We have had beautiful days to enjoy the colors of the leaves and grasses, and to get all our work done in our gardens.

The first week of November has brought colder days, which are perfect for getting excited about our upcoming celebration of the holidays – Festival of Trees. As with all celebrations there is a lot of preparation, and we are pleased to welcome back many of our dedicated volunteers and new corporate groups to help us prepare.

The 2019 Festival of Trees offers more decorated trees than ever before, more lights in the gardens, and more S'mores! Plus, we will have live, lit and decorated trees this year as part of the raffle. Bill Meagher, our friend, volunteer and donor of Snow Village, is busy adding to Snow Village for our opening on the Friday after Thanksgiving, November 29.

This year, we are also extending the dates we are open to view the trains and lights right through the holidays. To plan your visit, click [here](#).

I am truly looking forward to the excitement of welcoming guests to The Gardens at Elm Bank to celebrate the holidays with us. We warmly welcome you to join us.

Suzanne Maas
Interim Director and President

Upcoming Classes & Events:

Shibori Indigo Dyeing

Thursday, November 14
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Festival of Trees

November 29 to December 29

Gingerbread Houses

December 7 & 14
10:00 - 11:30 am

Holiday Garland Workshop

Wednesday, December 18
7:00 - 8:30 pm



November Horticultural Hints

by Betty Sanders
Lifetime Master Gardener

For bulbs, it's now or never. Early November is your last call to get spring blooming bulbs in the ground. As a general rule, bulbs are planted three times as deep as their largest dimension

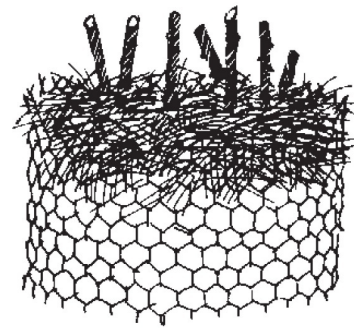
(measured from the top of the bulb). Add lime on top of the soil to confound squirrels, chipmunks and others who would dig the bulbs for dinner. The lime also acts to sweeten our generally acidic soil which bulbs prefer. And, take photos of the planting areas as a reminder for next spring of which bulbs you put where.

Plan now for certain spring flowers. Some flower seeds need a winter outside to germinate next spring. Sow seeds of calendulas, cosmos, cleomes and snapdragons outside. If you are gardening to attract birds and butterflies, also sow *Asclepias* (butterfly weed) and milkweed seed now.

Sweet scents for the holidays. Purchase bulbs now that you would like to give as Christmas gifts. Amaryllis and paperwhites are both easy to force. Paperwhites can be planted in soil or in small pebbles just deep to allow the roots to provide a sturdy base for the flowers. Planted by November 14, they should provide flowers for Christmas. Amaryllis take longer to bloom – up to 8 weeks – but also last longer once in bloom.

Give yourself a break on (some) fall clean up. Stripping the garden completely bare of vegetation is not good for the soil. Leaving some plant material (clean, not diseased) in place helps to hold the soil in place. A mulch of shredded leaves (from your lawn mowing, for example) will prevent winter-wind-caused soil erosion in beds where you have removed spent plants.

Rose care. Now that your roses have bloomed their last for this season, make certain they have a safe winter. Cut back long canes on roses to prevent damage from wind whipping them. Protect the remaining canes with a wire cage filled with leaves. Your roses will thank you next spring!



Thanksgiving for your garden. As you prepare for Thanksgiving and winter, remember wildlife needs a place to winter also. If you have room on your property, a brush pile gives birds shelter from both severe weather and predators. Dead flower stalks that have seeds are natural birdfeeders, leaving them in place provides food.

You can read more of Betty's horticultural advice at BettyOnGardening.com.



Pieces of the Past, Disguised as Garden Ornaments

by Neal Sanders
Leaflet contributor

Berkeley the snail went away for the winter this morning. So did the Turtle with the Broken Nose, the World's Ugliest Frog, and more than a dozen other old friends. They'll rest until next April in the safe confines of our basement. Before consigning them to their fate, though, everyone was first cleaned with a bleach solution and then placed carefully inside a pot or some other protective container.



Berkeley and his brethren are garden ornaments, and each one has a story to tell. Berkeley, for example, joined our garden menagerie as a result of a trip to London almost 20 years ago. I was there as part of a financial road show in deepest, darkest February. Because of its grueling, two-week duration, Betty was invited to join me for its final, transatlantic stop. The underwriters were responsible for all lodging and they chose for us rather a nice room at The Berkeley, a luxurious

Knightsbridge hotel a stone's throw from Hyde Park.

Going to gardens in February was a non-starter so, while I was in meetings, Betty went shopping and to museums. Just down the street from our hotel was a shop that dealt exclusively in garden ornaments (they have such stores in England). In its window was a large, metal snail. She purchased it, promptly named it after our lodgings - pronounced, by the way, "BARK-lee" - and we placed it in the overhead bin on the flight home. (In that pre-9/11 world, no one in airport security took notice of our carrying onboard a 20-pound cast-iron object.) Every year since, Berkeley has been positioned in a different perennial bed, waiting to be admired anew by us or a visitor.

The World's Ugliest Frog was a parting gift from a friend moving away. The frog had graced, if that word can be used for such a thing, her garden for at least as many years as we had lived in town. Its muted, polychrome décor had been the butt of numerous jokes on my part. On the day that the packers came, our friend brought over the ornament, explained *she* had been given it when a dear friend moved away. She was leaving town, but felt the World's Ugliest Frog must not only remain, but should come live with us. It has inhabited a rotating list of garden sites for at least 15 years.



I will not bore you with the individual stories for each of our other garden ornaments. I will tell you only that they all have back stories and that all those stories link us to times, places or people fondly remembered.

Oh, all right, one more. An outrageously overpriced concrete turtle at the Winterthur Shop was knocked down to a much more realistic five dollars after we pointed out a chip on its nose. For 25 gardening seasons now, the turtle's chipped nose has poked out of the water of a bird bath. The Turtle with the Broken Nose suffers its imperfection with as much dignity as it can muster. The butterflies and dragonflies that land on its snout don't seem to mind in the least.

Each April, we take out these items much as we take out Christmas tree ornaments in December. We discover them anew and, with great deliberation, place them around the property, taking into account changes in the landscape. Our move to our 'dream retirement home' four years ago forced a complete rethinking of ornaments: for the first two years, and the new garden got started, 'hiding places' were few and far between.

These garden ornaments are links to travels. They are reminders of old friends. They are also practical objects that draw the eye to certain plants or that break up expanses of mulch. Some are put in plain sight while others are deliberately hidden, awaiting someone to part the foliage and find a surprise. With the 2019 garden season officially over, their careful cleaning and storage are an annual ritual as distinct and ingrained as picking apples or harvesting the butternut squash.

Neal Sanders' 13th mystery, 'Never Too Old to Lie' was published earlier this year and is available on Amazon and in bookstores. He's currently at work on 'A Murder on the Garden Tour'.

Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants

by Catherine Horwood

Pimpernel Press Limited, 2019

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

It somehow seems so logical. Plants, like people, thrive in the right environment. Yet, it was not until Beth Chatto, plantswoman extraordinaire, emerged on the scene in the 1960's that the practice of providing garden plants with an environment closely resembling their natural habitats became

widely adopted. "Right plant, right place," was her motto.

In the extensively researched, *Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants*, author Catherine Horwood traces Chatto's evolution from her childhood in a small village in Essex to her career as a horticulturalist, author, international lecturer, and garden designer. It's a complex journey.

"I had no idea where or how I would go but I somehow felt I was driven or had the energy to discover a wider world," writes Chatto of her childhood. Determined, intellectually curious, and keenly attuned to nature, Chatto did indeed discover a wider world. She achieved such a profound level of success that she was recognized in the horticultural world by her first name alone - Beth.

Chatto had little formal horticultural training. With the support of her husband, Andrew, whose lifelong study of plants and their habitats provided an ongoing foundation for her own explorations, her philosophy on planting design steadily evolved. Chatto's earliest success, as a floral designer whose naturalistic creations were as likely to feature plants foraged from the local hedgerow as from the garden, established her reputation as a lecturer and demonstrator.

Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants chronicles the many close friendships that influenced the direction of her career including that of painter Sir Cedric Morris whose garden she and Andrew frequented. It included rare and unusual perennials and provided artistic inspiration to Chatto. Morris' influence also served as the impetus to move to Andrew's family's fruit farm (despite her own family's objections) at Elmstead Market in Colchester. Here, she would establish the acclaimed nursery of "unusual plants" for which she became known.

According to Horwood, Chatto planned every detail of the nursery with "steely determination." Its distinctive identity was evident in the design of the catalogue, simply titled, *Unusual Plants*. Within were lists of plants defined by where they should be sited, Chatto's trademark. These included; Hot, Dry Conditions; Cool Conditions; Dry Shade; Waterside and Bog; Ground Covering Plants; Handsome Foliage Plants; Seed Pods; Grasses and Sedges and Heathers.

In 1976, Chatto exhibited at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show where she won a silver-gilt medal. Her display, which featured plants in naturalistic settings optimal for their success, contrasted dramatically with the other exhibits. Unlike other exhibitors, Chatto refused to exhibit cultivars, for which she harbored a distinct disdain.

Journalist Graham Rose, of *The Sunday Times*, met Chatto at Chelsea. Three weeks later, impressed with her exhibit, he arranged a visit to her garden and nursery. One of the hottest summers in one hundred years had followed an exceptionally dry winter and spring. Rose realized that Chatto's approach to gardening was timely. His piece, 'Blooming Arid' detailed recommendations of "unusual plants" suited to drought as well as plans for planting a "dry" garden. It is credited as the turning point in Chatto's career. Offers to write a book followed and in 1978, her first book, *The Dry Garden* was published. Both Chatto's garden and nursery were firmly established.

Chatto would win 10 consecutive RHS Chelsea Flower Show gold medals and receive the Lawrence memorial medal, the Victoria medal of honor (the highest award granted British horticulturists by the Royal Horticultural Society), and the OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire).

Beth loved autumn, and for me, *Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants*, shines most in this season of transition, as her later years are chronicled. While maintaining a vigorous schedule of travel, Chatto continued to be actively engaged in the nursery. Her many friendships continued, including that of her dear friend Christopher Lloyd, which is chronicled in the book they co-authored, *Dear Friend and Gardener*, a compilation of their copious correspondence.

Biographer Catherine Horwood worked with Chatto directly and had access to her extensive personal archives of daily diaries, travel notebooks, and correspondence. Thus, *Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants*, tells a complete and intimate portrait of Chatto's professional and personal life. Complexities abound, yet the unambiguous conclusion is that of great talent, perseverance, and generosity of spirit summed up in one word - Beth.



Year-end Contribution

Please consider making a year-end contribution to Massachusetts Horticultural Society... and watch us continue to grow in 2020.



donate

From the Stacks:

By Maureen T. O'Brien,
Library Manager

*Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received.
Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling.
Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.*

— Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933)

November immediately brings to mind Thanksgiving—the holiday that celebrates family, friends and nature's bounty. This celebration presents the opportunity to give thanks for our blessings. We accomplished a great deal in 2019 with the help of our volunteers. We added to our collections, created new finding aids, organized our files, cared for our treasures and took stock of our holdings.

This month, we acknowledge and give thanks to the following volunteers who generously give their time to the Library.

Ruth Ciofli is recently retired from Boston University and brings her excellent organizational talents to the Library by reshelving our books, not an easy task as it is essential that it is done correctly for inventory purposes and easy retrieval. She is also responsible for the Edwin Hale Lincoln rehousing project where her attention to detail preserves the glass plates for future generations and makes them easy to find. This month she completed the initial batch of over 1500 glass plates that have been digitized. Her new project will be rehousing the recently discovered glass plate negatives.

Sarah Cummer is a Librarian, retired attorney and archeologist. She has been volunteering at the Library since 2003. She now handles all the cataloging on www.Masscat.org and renders invaluable guidance to Library operations. Sarah initiated the snaking project and worked with Iva Hayes shifting books on the shelves to make room for new acquisitions.

Heidi Kost-Gross is a former President of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts and a landscape designer and historian. She is an Overseer and on the Development Committee of the Society and Chairs the Library Committee. The Library is her favorite place at Elm Bank. In addition to her work on Society Committees, Heidi worked on the rehousing of our treasured *British Jungermanie*, inventory of the Society's wall art and sculptures, culling records and the Library exhibits at the Society's Annual Meeting in October.

Iva Hayes is a retired caregiver who assisted Sarah on the snaking project that made room on our shelves for new books. She also worked on the archival folders for the glass plate negatives and various sorting projects. Her current project involves sorting, labeling and filing domestic and international garden ephemera that will provide invaluable information to future researchers.

Maureen Horn is the retired Librarian for the Society and Secretary of the Library Committee.

Maureen provides institutional knowledge and advice to the Library. She continues to assist the Library on research and editing. She worked on the inventory of the Society's wall art and sculptures, culling records and the Library exhibits at the Society's Annual Meeting in October. Her new project is transcribing our handwritten historic archives.

Kathy Trumbull has a background in medical diagnostics. She brings her analytical and detail oriented skills to creating finding aids. She worked on our Flower Show Ephemera Collection, Contemporary Seed and Nursery Catalogs and the Pamphlet Collection that you can access on the Library's [website](#). She is now compiling a comprehensive finding aid for the Society's awards.

Jennifer Wilton is a member of the Library Committee and landscape historian. She brings years of business experience from her former career to render sage advice and service to the Library. This year she has worked on the inventory of the Society's wall art and sculptures, culling records, research, editing and the Library exhibits at the Society's Annual Meeting in October.

In the Windows – Story Boards

On display in the windows are two of the story boards from the Library's Exhibit at the Society's Annual Meeting on October 17, 2019. They illustrate two preeminent pioneers in fruit culture in the United States: Robert Manning, Sr. and Charles Mason Hovey. Step into the Library and we will be happy to show you the original manuscripts of these preeminent authors.

Our Collections are Growing...

The Library relies on the generosity of its members to build and preserve its Collections. This month we thank Ruth Ciofli, Sarah Cummer, Leslie Frost, Phyllis Andersen, David Fiske, Longwood Gardens, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Library, Missouri Botanical Garden Peter H. Raven Library and the Estate of Betty Ferris for their donations in kind that enrich our Library.

Come Visit the Library...

Drop into the Library when the lights are on to browse or go shopping. The Library has a section of horticulture books for sale at bargain prices. They make wonderful eco-friendly gifts or additions to your personal reference library. For hours or to make an appointment visit our [webpage](#).

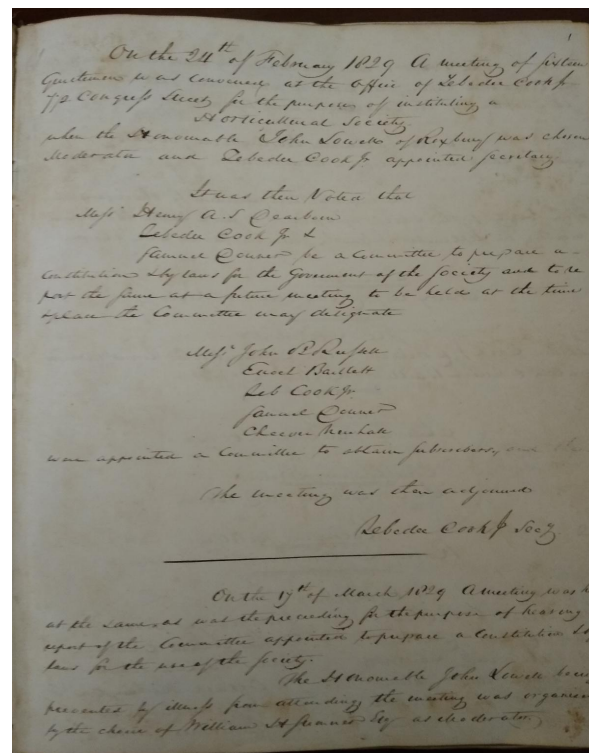


Image: First page of the minutes of the meeting that founded the Society on February 24, 1829. Displayed at the Annual Meeting.



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