



Letter from the Interim President

Dear Members,

Flower Show Tickets! Annual Meeting of the Members!

Zee Camp, our Membership Associate, is so very happy to announce that Flower Show tickets are once again a Massachusetts Horticultural Society membership benefit, in our run up to Paragon's Boston Flower & Garden Show planned for March 11-15, 2020.

We promised last spring that as soon as we had certainty that Mass Hort would be part of Paragon's Flower Show at the Seaport World Trade Center in 2020, we would again be able to offer Flower Show tickets as a membership benefit. That time has arrived!

By the end of February 2020, if you are an Individual Member, you will receive one ticket, a Family Member receives two tickets, and a Supporter Member receives four tickets.

For those who have already purchased their Mass Hort membership this year - *hold those phone calls and emails!* If the expiration date on your Mass Hort membership card is April 2020 or later, you will receive Flower Show tickets as part of your current membership.

We are so very grateful that the pause in this one particular benefit did not preclude our members' continued support. Thank you all for supporting Mass Hort and The Gardens at Elm Bank with your membership and contributions for so many other important reasons and benefits.

To all of our Members: The Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled for Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 5:30 pm. An exciting announcement regarding our Incoming President and Executive Director will be made at the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Suzanne Maas
Interim Director and President

Upcoming Classes & Events:

Harvest Celebration

Thursday, September 19
6:30 - 9:00 pm

Plants go to War

Thursday, October 3
6:00 - 8:30 pm

All About Dahlias

Tuesday, October 3
5:30 - 7:00 pm

Guided Garden Tour

Wednesday, October 9
6:00 - 7:30 pm

Hands-on Floral Design

Three Wednesdays
October 9, 16, and 23
7:00 - 8:30 pm

Herbs & The Plague

Wednesday, October 16
10:45 am - 12:30 pm

Guided Garden Tour

Thursday, October 17
11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Dig, Divide, Store

Dahlias
Thursday, October 17
10:00 am - 11:30 am

Dig, Divide, Store

Dahlias
Saturday, October 26
10:00 am - 11:30 am

From crafting gingerbread houses to building a fairy garden landscape families can now spend a morning learning, exploring, and having fun - together.

Join us from 10-11:30 am on a Saturday morning to create a masterpiece, learn from a garden educator, and enjoy the gardens in every season.

Floral Pumpkins - create a lasting decoration using faux flowers and pumpkins that are mess-free!

Gingerbread Houses - create a gingerbread house and let your inner designer - out!

Wildlife Feeders - put a fun twist on an everyday birdhouse by creating a delicious snack for backyard wildlife.

Fairy Gardens - create a miniature setting perfect for magical inhabitants.

For a complete list of upcoming classes, programs, and events, click[here](#).

Sprout a memory at The Gardens at Elm Bank!



Nature *into* Art: The Gardens of Wave Hill

by Thomas Christopher with photography by Ngoc Minh Ngo
Timber Press, Portland, Oregon: 2019

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco



Break the rules! Embrace the unplanned and serendipitous. Bury your mistakes. Perhaps unconventional gardening advice, but Wave Hill is no ordinary public garden. Here, on one of the last former Hudson River estates within New York City's boundaries, American gardening has been transformed. The story is shared in *Nature into Art: The Gardens of Wave Hill*.

A world-class garden and unique urban oasis, Wave Hill is located in the Bronx, just nine miles north of Manhattan. The site is stunning. Overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's 28 acres of gardens and woodlands support a vibrant center for the arts, nature and environmental education. Here human connections to the natural world are fostered within a landscape enriched by horticultural innovation and beauty.

But it was not always so. When Wave Hill was donated to the city of New York in 1960 the property, which included a pair of houses, was in a derelict state. Public funding was scarce. Yet, the property was slowly transformed under the guidance of its first director of horticulture, Marco Polo Stufano, his collaborator John Nally, and a dedicated gardening staff. *Nature into Art: The Gardens of Wave Hill* recounts this history with an exploration of the design principles and planting techniques that make Wave Hill unique.

Different areas of the grounds are explored in individual chapters that detail their design evolution. Gardeners, most of which have worked at Wave Hill a very long time, provide information about planning and caring for each area through their distinct perspectives. Full-color annotated photographs adorn almost every page. Topical vignettes provide additional information that is both practical and inspirational.

Each chapter is a story unto itself to be read, savored and be bemused by. Early on we learn of the founder's lack of, or aversion to, master planning and the incremental and organic manner in which Wave Hill evolved. Yes, there wasn't very much money and American Horticulture was at a low ebb when the gardens were established. But no, that wasn't necessarily a deterrent to success. Left to their own devices the gardeners at Wave Hill were forced to innovate and grow plants from seed on site. When established practice dictated things couldn't be done "that way" they could. And at Wave Hill they did.

When frustrated by the City's slow progress on the property, for three consecutive years \$16.30 of annual seeds were purchased from a garden catalogue and planted in the Flower Garden to illustrate what could be achieved with minimal resources. The volunteer seedlings that proliferated, gave rise to one of Wave Hill's foundational gardening philosophies and self-seeding flowers became a mainstay of the property. The \$16.30 of annual plantings also inspired the soft and undulating style of planting for which Wave Hill is known.

One of the earliest projects undertaken at Wave Hill was the rebuilding of the glass houses and the conservatory, which holds a central position in the garden and offers horticultural respite during the harsh winter months. This was followed by the planting of the Wild Garden, on beds designed when the property was a private estate.

While it is one of the most intensely maintained areas of the property, the Wild Garden, like the Flower Garden, also embraces an element of unpredictability, allowing annuals to set seed and self-propagate. Originally only plants taken from the wild and not altered by plant breeders were planted here, but this rule, too, was broken by Stufano and Nally as the garden was designed, in what is described as a "fever of discovery."

Do not, however, mistake a willingness to experiment, with a lack of rigor. Stufano and Nally originally trained in art history and printmaking and the principles of those disciplines underlie many of the gardening decisions made at Wave Hill. As an example, in the single-hued Gold Border, flowers are likened to sculptural elements enabling a range of rhythms, harmonies and contrasts that complement and serve as visual counterpoints to the colors. It is the fit and look of a plant that matters, with form and shape primary and color following.

Designed to embrace the seasons, Wave Hill remains a work in progress where change and unpredictability are embraced. As a whole, it is a carefully choreographed composition within which creative expression, artistic license and experimentation is celebrated. This is a refreshing concept for those of us who garden, plant what we love and hope for the best, no matter how idiosyncratic. For ultimately, nature will take its course and, thankfully, we can always bury our mistakes.

During the past 50 years Wave Hill has pioneered a new way of American gardening within a public landscape, gifted to the City of New York. *Nature into Art: The Gardens of Wave Hill*, celebrates and humanizes the history, artistry and legacy of this remarkable accomplishment and is likewise a gift to the reader.

Patrice Todisco is the author of the award-winning blog, [Landscape Notes](#).



September Horticultural Hints

by Betty Sanders
Lifetime Master Gardener

Weed every chance you get. Every weed you remove in September - so it doesn't spread seeds - is a thousand weeds you won't have to remove in the spring!

Plant woody plants ASAP. If you find yourself with a

new tree or shrub, get it in the ground as soon as possible. It will need to grow roots to withstand winter winds and to supply water to the plant until the ground freezes. Dig a hole wider than the root ball of the plant (to help the new roots) and create a saucer around the stem to direct water into the root zone. Water until the ground freezes if the autumn rain is not generous. Evergreens, because they keep their foliage, are especially vulnerable in their first winter. Add six inches of mulch (for the first winter only, and keeping the mulch away from the plant's stem) before the temperature drops, to keep the roots warmer a little longer so they can continue to grow and take up water.



Get a soil test this fall. If you wait until spring to send in soil for a soil test, you may find yourself with a lengthy wait, as labs are inundated with requests as soon as the soil is workable. A test done in the fall gives you a chance to start improving your soil over the winter when you have time to affect beneficial changes.

Feed woody plants and your perennials with a layer of good compost (two to three inches) followed by a layer of chipped leaves, straw or wood chips. The material will be naturally incorporated into the soil by the freezing and thawing over the winter and be available to your plants in the spring. If you have not used herbicides on your lawn this year, leaves shredded by your mower, along with grass clippings, are excellent mulches.

Begin the vegetable garden clean-up by removing plants that have passed. Any diseased plant should be bagged and put in the trash. Only healthy, disease-and insect-free plants should be composted. Also remove any fallen fruit (vegetables can host disease or insects over the winter as well as the plant.) If you are not planning a fall/winter garden, plant a cover crop of annual rye grass or use leftover peas and bean seeds. These will die during the winter but continue to prevent soil erosion over the winter and add nutrients next spring.

Keep planting your winter vegetables as you open up space in the garden. Spinach, arugula, beets, swiss chard, radishes, many oriental greens and even peas can tolerate enough cold to produce a crop between now and the first serious frost. Add a layer of row cover (available at nurseries and online) and you can serve fresh garden vegetables for Thanksgiving, and possibly beyond.

Preparing for the nibblers and gnawers. Deer, rabbits, and rodents damage your plants by feeding on foliage, twigs, and bark when their regular diet disappears in the winter months. Wrapping tree trunks is a way to keep your landscape safe from hungry critters. Place plastic tree guards around the bottom of your deciduous trees (especially young or newly planted ones) to keep rabbits and mice from gnawing. Chicken wire barriers or cages around your trees, shrubs, and plants are often the best solution to keep rabbits at bay. Applying repellent sprays to the trunks, branches, and stems of trees and shrubs is a great option. Repellent sprays will need to be re-applied monthly but teach critters to look elsewhere year round.

Dig up your gladioli, caladiums, canna and tuberous begonias before the first frost. Dry them in a garage or airy garden shed, remove the excess dirt and browned shoots. Place them in mesh bags or in open boxes with identifying tags, and lightly cover them with Styrofoam 'peanuts' in a dry, cool (not freezing) location for the winter.

Edging along sidewalks and driveways late this month should leave them looking neat and clean throughout the winter.

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

This Old "One-Use" Plastic Pot

by Neal Sanders
Leaflet contributor



Four years ago this spring, Betty and I began the process of buying trees and shrubs for the garden at our new home. Many specimens had root balls of a size that required rope wrapped around burlap wrapped around a wire cage. But six smaller trees came in black, ten-gallon plastic pots that were each 19 inches wide and 13 inches deep.

After the first trees went in, we contacted the selling nurseries to recycle the pots, but were informed these were 'one-use' containers (on top of which they had likely, themselves, been made from recycled materials). The reason for declining to take back the tubs was because they were encrusted with soil and might contain diseases. Instead, we were advised to take them to our town's transfer station. We asked at the transfer station what would become of the pots. Because they weren't 'clean', we were told, the containers would be incinerated.



As it turned out, we had an almost immediate, though temporary, need for the pots. We had covered our newly-spread loam with several inches of mulch. As we dug holes for arriving shrubs – more than 50 that summer – we had to find a short-term parking spot for the displaced soil other than a pile adjacent to the hole (which would inevitably mix with the mulch). The pots were perfect. Also, I was building a stone wall and needed to group like-sized rocks for easy transport. There were times when there were more uses for the vessels than available tubs.

That autumn, our first 1500 bulbs arrived. We excavated winding, foot-deep trenches around the property, with those containers serving as a brief way station for displaced soil. Trenching for pipes to carry rainwater from downspouts to the wetlands behind us provided yet another use.

In the spring, we started the next round of planting and, by now, those single-use plastic containers were becoming indispensable friends. We lost one to necessity: Betty acquired a lovely specimen of *Sanguisorba canadensis* (American Burnet), a wonderful wildflower that produces magnificent plumes. Unfortunately, it thrives best in a moist environment, and the ideal visual location on our property was 'well drained'. Our solution was to sacrifice one of our containers. We cut out part of its bottom, sunk it a foot into the ground, and planted our American Burnet in it, pledging to throw a gallon of water into the mini-wetland whenever things were getting dry. It has thrived, and the black neck of the container is still visible.

Another year went by and, each spring, the four remaining tubs were roused from their off-season resting place by our compost bins. All spring and summer they served as either warehouses or transports for the soil/mulch/compost that made our ever-denser garden possible. In the fall, UPS brought another avalanche of bulbs to be planted.



There was hardly a week that went by that our one-use containers weren't pressed into service.

This year, they have been in near-continuous use to transport compost, heel in perennials and, of course, to hold topsoil for the plants destined for the final frontiers of our garden. This past weekend, an *Aronia* (Chokeberry) and *Ilex verticillata* (Winterberry) found new homes on our property, as did a tray of native ground covers.

As we planted those most recent shrubs, though, I noticed for the first time our remaining containers are showing their age. Two have large cracks in their base that make carrying them problematic; they need a wheelbarrow as a 'crutch'. One also has a cracked rim. In short, their life span may be five seasons.

But they have been five glorious seasons. They were present at the inception of the garden and proved to be useful as soon as their original purpose was completed. They started out as walk-ons but have, through steady, uncomplaining work, become stalwarts of the regular garden troupe. If they were sentient beings, their ears would perk up as soon as they heard Betty or me reaching for a trowel or spade, because they knew they would soon, themselves, be called into action.

All right. Maybe I'm over-romanticizing a bunch of pots. The thing is, I'm going to be sorry to lose them, albeit to advanced age and general wear and tear. What I know is this: they were manufactured to contain a single plant on its journey from a nursery to our home. They have stuck around to help build an entire garden.

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'.

From the Stacks:

By Maureen T. O'Brien,

Library Manager

*We have descended into the garden and caught three hundred slugs.
How I love the mixture of the beautiful and the squalid in gardening.
It makes it so lifelike.*

— Evelyn Underhill, Letters (1875-1941)

Featured Collection — Gleason Landscape Negatives

In our Archives we recently found four boxes of 5x7 film negatives of beautiful estate gardens from the beginning of the 20th century. These pictures were taken by Herbert Wendell Gleason (1855-1937.) Gleason was born in Malden, Massachusetts and graduated from Williams College in 1877. After attending Union and Andover seminaries, he served as a congregational minister in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the age of 44, Gleason left the ministry and turned to photography. He moved to Melrose, Massachusetts in 1900.

Gleason was a well-known photographer for the National Parks Service. He made a as a photographer for a variety of clients and as a popular lecturer featuring his photographs. Later in life, he was the official photographer of the Arnold Arboretum.

He is probably best known for his depictions of Walden Pond and other places Thoreau wrote about. One hundred and one of Gleason's photographs illustrated the 20 volume set of *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* (Houghton Mifflin, 1906). One hundred years after Thoreau's birth, Gleason authored *Through the Year with Thoreau* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917) illustrated with his photographs. Today several institutions have collections of Gleason's work. He was a member of this Society, we are grateful he chose to give this collection of images of gardens to us.

The Library's Collection includes 141 negatives in paper envelopes with detailed description of the subjects. The data on the negative wrappers include the date, the garden owner's name and location of the property. He also meticulously described the view of the image. The images depict estate gardens in the Northeast, 59 of which are in Massachusetts. Some are extant, while others have

disappeared, although some are extant. They document a by-gone era and will provide a valuable resource for researchers.

When we acquire funding, we hope to digitize these negatives and publish them online for all to enjoy and study. You can view and search the collection [here](#).



Negative: "Pink Dogwoods by gate at Mrs. Holden McGinley's Milton Massachusetts, May 21, 1932." This garden was designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman (1869-1950) in 1925, one of the first female landscape architects in the United States. It was awarded a blue ribbon by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for its "great charm and restraint ... planted in an unusually interesting manner." The Gleason collection has 8 images of this extant garden from 1930 to 1932. The black and white image depicts an ornamented arched metal gate, set in a brick wall with a glimpse of the garden beyond, flanked by trees and other plantings. Image by Herbert W. Gleason ((1855-1937).

In the Windows – Books on Pests

A search of the word “pests” on the Society’s online [catalog](#) brings up 304 results. Searching “insects” produces 191 results. Searching “disease” produces 69 results. As you can see, we have lots of books on these subjects, the earliest from 1807. The Library will feature a few in our windows during the month of September.

Our Collections are Growing...

The Library relies on the generosity of its members to build and preserve its Collections. This month we thank Stephen Klein, Sarah Cummer, Penni Jenkins, the Lenhardt Library at the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Estate of Betty Ferris for their donations in kind that enrich our Library. Do you want inspiration for donating to our collections? Consider donating a book from the Society’s Amazon [Wish List](#).

Thanks...

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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. We want people to use these books as resources and for pleasure. Although some of the books are old, the information in the books rarely get dated. One recent visitor from Minnesota was thrilled to find a beautifully illustrated book that was over 100 years old (we already had 3 copies in better condition) that he was planning to gift to a friend. Reusing

books is more eco-friendly than buying new or recycling.

The Library is open on Thursdays from 9 am to 1 pm, at other times by chance or appointment. Before you venture over, we suggest you email mobrien@masshort.org or call 617-933-4912 on days the Library is not scheduled to be open. A benefit of Society membership allows members to borrow our most of our recent books. Have a book and cannot come in when the Library is open? You can leave it at our new Gatehouse when the **Gardens are open to the public.**

An Open Letter from the American Public Gardens Association

"Branches of the federal government have proposed to significantly change enforcement regulations of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the most important legislation ever enacted to protect threatened plants and animals in the United States..."

Read letter [here](#).

Expanding Our Reach...

Massachusetts Horticultural Society Library supports researchers around the world

The Massachusetts Horticultural Society library maintains a unique collection of older books, pamphlets, and articles that are important research materials for gardeners and botanists from around the world - *if they know we have them.*

Enter volunteer librarian Sarah Cummer who has been cataloging the Society's holdings for over 15 years. Sarah enters our historic assets into the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) database so that the world knows what we have available.

Cataloging is a complex job. It is important to follow strict protocols and input accurate information into the system. To do this, Sarah references resources like the Library of Congress, university libraries, and Worldcat.org databases.

Occasionally, Sarah comes across a book that does not show up in any database, anywhere. When that happens, a representative from MLS makes an in-person visit and does an "original cataloging."

Thank you Sarah Cummer for helping Massachusetts Horticultural Society share our unique resources with the world.

Connect with us



www.MassHort.org - 617-933-4900