



October 2018

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Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Another growing season is coming to a close. The Gardens at Elm Bank will close for the season this weekend, although I'm still enjoying the gardens every day. Thank you to everyone who has visited and introduced new friends to the gardens this season. My appreciation is also with the volunteers who spend so many hours making the gardens look exquisite. I would also like to thank the sculptors and gardeners who exhibited their art and plants in the gardens and greenhouse. It's always lovely to see visitors delight in these unexpected surprises.

October brings celebrations of great harvests and great horticulture. On the evening of Thursday, October 18, we will be celebrating the 118th Honorary Medals recipients. These medals are awarded for excellence in horticulture, and we're thrilled by the list of this year's honorees. I hope you can join us for this special evening. The keynote address will be delivered by the garden writer and podcaster, Margaret Roach, who will receive Mass Hort's highest honor, the George Robert White Medal of Honor. Margaret has an illustrious career devoted to educating the public in all things horticulture. You can listen to her podcast, [A Way to Garden](#), before seeing her in person!

We will also host an open meeting for Mass Hort members on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 23. I do hope you can join us. We'll be discussing updates on the Master Plan process, and we welcome your feedback. Let us know you're coming [here](#).

It's been a wonderful season, and there is still much to come. Keep an eye out for your course catalog and sign up for a class this fall and winter. You can also volunteer to help with the gardens or the Festival of Trees (it's already around the corner)!

I hope to see you at an event or class soon.

Warm regards,

Kathy

Upcoming Classes & Events:

[Help with Hostas](#)

Saturday, October 13
9 - 11 a.m.

[Under the Spell of Succulents](#)

Sunday, October 14
1 - 2 p.m.

[Fall into Your Garden](#)

Tuesday, October 16
7 - 8:30 p.m.

[Honorary Medals Dinner](#)

Thursday, October 18
6:30 - 9 p.m.

[Painting for the Petrified](#)

Thursdays
Oct 18 - Nov 8
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

[Composting Workshop](#)

Sunday, October 21
10 - 11:30 a.m.

[Members' Open Session](#)

Tuesday, October 23
3 - 4:30 p.m.

[Controlling Invasive Plants](#)

Thursday, October 25
7 - 8:30 p.m.

[A Pumpkin Full of Flowers](#)

Saturday, October 27
10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

[Tour the Arnold Arboretum](#)

Tuesday, October 30
10 - 11:30 a.m.

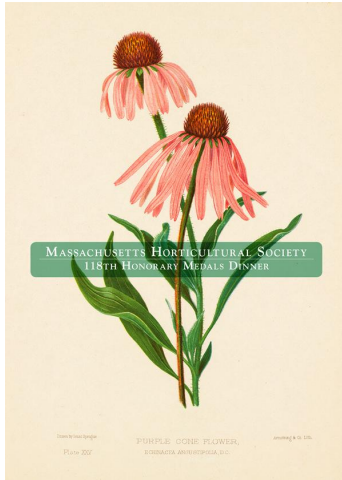
[Landscape Design Course](#)

Cacti and Succulents:
101

Saturday, November 3
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Join us at the 118th Honorary Medals Dinner

Thursday, October 18, 2018



We are excited to celebrate the 2018 Honorary Medal recipients at this year's **Honorary Medals** Dinner at Elm Bank!

The Society's honorary awards program continues a 118-year tradition of awarding medals to individuals and organizations for their contributions to excellence in horticulture for the public good.

Join us this year on Thursday, October 18. For more information or to RSVP, please visit our [Honorary Medals Dinner](#) webpage. You may also reserve your seats now by calling Elaine Lawrence at 617-933-4945.

Margaret Roach, the 2018 recipient of the George Robert White Medal of Honor, the highest honor given by the Society, will deliver the keynote address. Ms. Roach is honored for her distinguished

career in horticulture as a garden writer for publications, such as *Newsday* and *Martha Stewart Living*, where she was able to reach millions of people as she shared her knowledge of gardening. She is the author of several garden books, including *And I Shall Have Some Peace There* and her website, [A Way to Garden](#).

The George Robert White Medal of Honor was established in 1909 and is among the most distinguished horticultural awards in the United States. The first honoree was Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum. Other recipients include Gertrude Jekyll, Jens Jensen, The Royal Horticultural Society, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Tasha Tudor.

Dale Deppe of Spring Meadow Nursery is the 2018 recipient of the Jackson Dawson Memorial Award. This award is given for exceptional skill in the science or practice of hybridization or propagation of hardy, woody plants.

William Cannon is the recipient of the Thomas Roland Medal, which honors men and women who have shown exceptional horticultural skill. Mr. Cannon is honored for his expertise of holly and his garden in Brewster, MA.

Betsy Ridge Madsen will receive a Gold Medal for her leadership as Chair of Massachusetts Horticultural Society from 2008 – 2012 and her dedication to helping continue the Society's legacy. Her volunteerism at the Flower Show as a judge, clerk, and many other positions helps continue the Society's tradition of promoting Amateur Competitions for passionate designers and plants people. As a floral designer, gardener, horticulturist and spokesperson, Ms. Ridge Madsen has advanced the art and science of horticulture by example and her willingness to share her expertise with others.

Carol Stocker will receive a Gold Medal in recognition of her work as a garden writer for *The Boston Globe* and other publications, which has promoted the art and science of horticulture to thousands of readers.

Karen Perkins will receive a Silver Medal for her efforts in the propagation and promotion of Epimediums. She is the owner of Garden Vision Epimediums and has demonstrated her dedication to the science of horticulture and promoting plants for people to enjoy in their gardens.

Trish Wesley Umbrell will be awarded a Silver Medal for her extraordinary skill as a garden educator and lecturer. Currently serving as Farm Administrator for Natick Community Organic Farm, she has served as Director of Education and Outreach for Mass Hort and as Editor in Chief for *Horticulture*

magazine.

The Honorary Medals Dinner will take place Thursday, October 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hunnewell Building, 900 Washington Street, Wellesley. Tickets for the event, including dinner, wine and beer are \$125. Proceeds benefit excellence in horticulture at Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Please call 617-933-4945 for tickets or visit MassHort.org. We hope you will help us celebrate with our 2018 nominees at the October 18 event!

Don't Confuse Me with Those Scientific Names!

By R. Wayne Mezitt

Mass Hort Trustee Chairman



At our garden center people often ask why we can't simply use common names for the plants we sell--those scientific botanical names seem so complicated to pronounce and remember! While this approach may sound appealing, it tends to create confusion because many common names are ambiguous. For example, "ironwood" is a common name for a tree that could be *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Ostrya virginiana* or *Parrotia persica*; "red maple" could be either *Acer rubrum* or a red-leaf form of *Acer palmatum*. And bamboo could be any of the dozens of species and cultivars on the market.

Also, some plants can have more than a single common name depending upon where you live. Our friends from other countries (or even from different regions in the USA) often call the same plant a different name. For example, we use beebalm or Oswego tea for *Monarda didyma*, but others can refer to it as bergamot, scarlet beebalm, crimson beebalm and scarlet monarda. And some plants that are really closely related can have significantly different common names; blueberry, cranberry, bileberry, cowberry, huckleberry and lingonberry are all *Vaccinium* species.

Scientific botanical names on the other hand, are specific and succinct, using an agreed-upon system to minimize confusion: the tree correctly identified as *Tilia cordata* is identical everywhere, whether you are in the United States, China or South Africa (even though various people use the common name of linden, lime, or basswood).

In the mid 1700's, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (often called The Father of Taxonomy) created the system that we now use to classify all plants. Linnaeus came up with the system which was quickly adopted to become the worldwide standard for naming species still in use today. He did this by simplifying the previously cumbersome plant-naming practices by using a binomial system which designates one botanical name to indicate the genus, and one for the species. The result is a simpler but exact designation for the name of every plant: swamp maple (also known as red maple) is *Acer* (its genus, always capitalized) *rubrum* (its species, always lower-case).

We sometimes refer to "the Latin name" for a plant, but some names were not originally in Latin. Many scientific names are actually "Latinized" forms of words from other languages that have been accepted by the main authority for naming plants, the [International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants](#). This code applies the principle that the earliest recorded name for every plant takes precedence over any others.

Most plant species can be grown from seed; every seedling plant is similar to other plants of that species but is genetically an individual. You'll see that many plants on the market today are cultivars (meaning "cultivated varieties", often abbreviated as "cvs"). Cultivars are clones selected from the species or hybrids. Every true-to-name cultivar is genetically identical to its parent because cultivars can only be vegetatively propagated (i.e. from cuttings, grafts or divisions). Cultivar names are always written in English, capitalized and should be enclosed with single quotes: *Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Hopkinton' is a single clone of the Atlantic white (or coast) cedar.

So even though using scientific botanical names may appear complicated to those unfamiliar with horticulture, it greatly simplifies communication; it also avoids potential confusion, ambiguity and disappointment, and ensures the proper plant is being considered. Many plants like *Forsythia*, *Magnolia*, *Rhododendron* and *Viburnum* already share the same common and scientific genus name. With a bit of practice you'll become comfortable using botanical names; you'll find that it makes a lot of sense to assure we're all talking the same language when we're discussing plants.

*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 Massachusetts Horticultural Society.*

Mass Hort Members' Open Session

You are encourage to join us at our Annual Meeting

Join us Tuesday, October 23, 2018, 3 - 4:30 p.m. in the Hunnewell Building for a reception and Members' open session.

Meet other members, staff, and trustees at the social reception from 3-3:30. We'll have beverages and light snacks.

Once the meeting is called to order, we will present on the progress of the Master Plan and review our year. Mass Hort members are welcome to participate by asking in questions and making comments.

After the meeting, attendees can take a special tour of the gardens or the Library.



Please let us know you're coming!



2018 Garden Photography Competitions

Give it your best shot! Share your photos from your visits to The Gardens at Elm Bank this May 1 through October 8.

This competition is open to all ages and levels. Winning photographs will be selected by a panel of Mass Hort staff and volunteers, and will be displayed during the winter season. To learn more about the competition and how to submit a photo, please [visit our website](#).

Submissions are due October 12

October Education Programs

Members should receive a copy of our **Calendar and Courses** in the mail next week!

We have lined up a schedule to help you get the most out of your garden and to appreciate the beauty of the natural world.

There are so many classes this month:

Help with Hostas

Saturday, October 13, 9 – 11 a.m.

Spend a morning in our shade garden and learn about hosta maintenance and varieties. After a quick tutorial from our horticulturists, you'll get hands-on experience properly dividing and transplanting hostas and finding out about their habits and ideal growing conditions. \$5/member (and Hosta Society members) [Register Here](#).

Under the Spell of Succulents

Sunday, October 14, 1 - 2 p.m.

Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston MA

Succulent nursery owner, Jeff Moore, introduces us to the world of cultivated succulents, offering insight into how we engage with these plants, from the casual enthusiast to collectors and growers. Learn about their use in container gardening, landscaping, bonsai and more. Moore will also showcase the major genera, including aloes, euphorbias, agaves, cacti, crassulas and kalanchoes, with stunning images, and plenty of opportunity for questions.

\$10/member, [Please sign up here](#).

Fall into Your Garden

Tuesday, October 16, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Horticultural educator, Warren Shepard, will help you put your garden to bed, preparing it for another great season ahead. He'll review pruning and propagation techniques, fall planting advice, and discuss what you can do to care for your garden now and through the winter. \$12/member, [Register Today!](#)

Drawing and Painting for the Petrified

Thursdays, October 18 – November 8, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

In this four-week course, Wellesley College Friends of Botanic Gardens' Education Director, Sarah Roche, encourages your observational skills to grow as you experiment with line drawings and the accurate representation of botanical forms. Leap into watercolor painting with a series of fun exercises. \$125/member, You must [pre-register, do so here!](#)

Composting Workshop

Sunday, October 21, 10 a.m. – noon

Senior Horticulturist, Hannah Traggis, will review the different types of compost systems you can set up on a home-scale. She will present the biology of the compost pile and help you understand the maintenance required for healthy compost. \$25/member, [Sign up Today!](#)

Understanding and Controlling Invasive Plants

Thursday, October 25, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

This talk will be an introduction to common invasive plants found in the Northeast. Horticulturist and Ecological Landscaping Alliance Board member, Bruce Wenning, will discuss why these new pests of the landscape are dangerous to the ecology and sustainability of unmanaged landscapes and what you can do to manage these plants at home. \$12/member, [Register here](#).

A Pumpkin Full of Flowers

Saturday, October 27, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

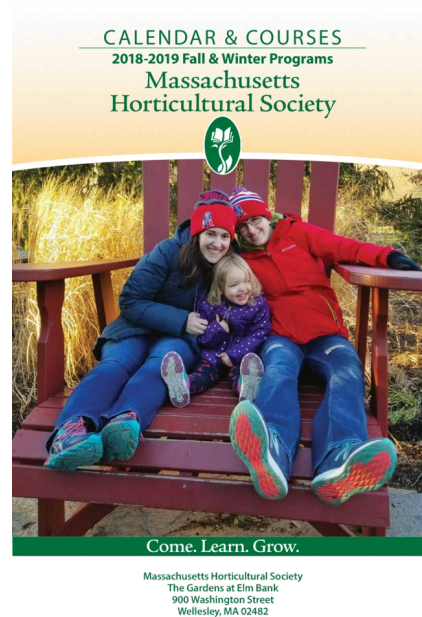
Putnam Building

Peter Pumpkin Eater kept his wife in a pumpkin shell, but you can fill your hollowed-out pumpkin with vibrant autumn flowers, preserved leaves and seasonal grains to create a grand welcome to Halloween, America's favorite scary holiday. Families with young children are welcome to create an arrangement together. Please bring floral scissors and an apron to class-- Pumpkin cleaning can be messy! \$65/member. You must [pre-register, please do so today!](#)

East Meets West Tour of the Arboretum

Tuesday, October 30, 10 a.m. – noon

Meet us at the Arnold Arboretum for a special tour highlighting familiar native plants and their Asian cousins. Hear stories about how these plants come together. We'll also check out the bonsai collection of the Larz Anderson Collection of Japanese Dwarfed Trees. \$12/member, [please register here](#).



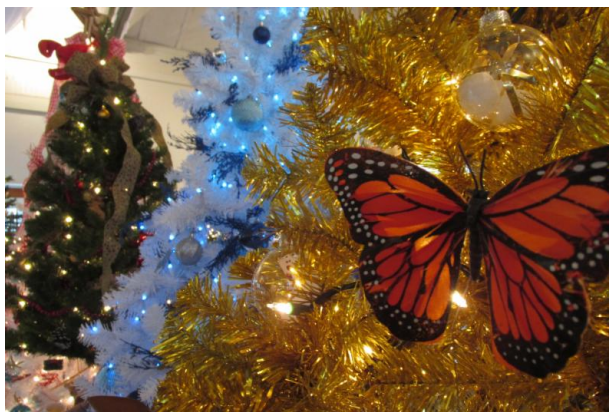
In early November, you might want to sign up for a three-session course on [Landscape Design for Your Residence](#). Designer Terrance Duffy will instruct each participant and help them create a landscape design of their own. Or, join us for [Cacti and Succulents: 101](#) on Saturday, November 3!

If there are any class topics you wish to see, let us know by emailing education@masshort.org.

Donate a Tree for Our Festival of Trees!

Plans for the 2018 Festival of Trees are well under way, even though it is still almost a month until Halloween. This is Mass Hort's largest fundraiser. The Festival opens the day after Thanksgiving and ends on December 9.

Last year, many visitors asked how they could donate a tree. It is not difficult and we welcome new participants. Come up with an idea for a theme, and go for it! Some of the recurring and favorite themes center on gardening, pollinators, toys, pets, stuffed animals, birds, Santa, angels, bears, and holidays. Whatever is tasteful and appealing can be used. Further information concerning tree donation is available [here](#). If you are thinking about it, we encourage you to let us know soon so we can plan a space for you!



For those not familiar with the Festival of Trees, we have dozens of beautifully and festively decorated trees which are raffled off at the end of the event. Visitors may purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win the tree(s) of their choice. It's fun for every age. In addition to the raffle, there are visits from Santa, weekend horse-drawn carriage rides, and the fabulous *Snow Village* model train display.

The elaborate *Snow Village* display provides a totally different experience from the tree display. Model trains run through small villages and vignettes; each year the display changes and you can never see all of the details!

Horse drawn carriage rides will return this year (as will the horses, Bill and Bob) for weekend visitors. Santa will be visiting on Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

Have questions? Visit our [website](#) or call 617-933-4988 for further information.

Volunteer with Us!



We are recruiting volunteers to help with a variety of gardening projects this fall. No experience is necessary to volunteer in the gardens. Bring a friend! We need volunteers to help us put the gardens to bed.

It's an opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills and enjoy the great health benefits of gardening. You learn about plants from horticulturists and certified Master Gardeners and your work helps us to fulfill our mission and maintain a large landscape enjoyed by so many for recreation, education and reflection. Did I mention we provide snacks and water to all volunteers?

If you have a few hours to give, we hope you will consider signing up to join us in the gardens this fall.

[Check Out Our Volunteer Opportunities](#)

From the Stacks:

By Maureen T. O'Brien,
Library Manager

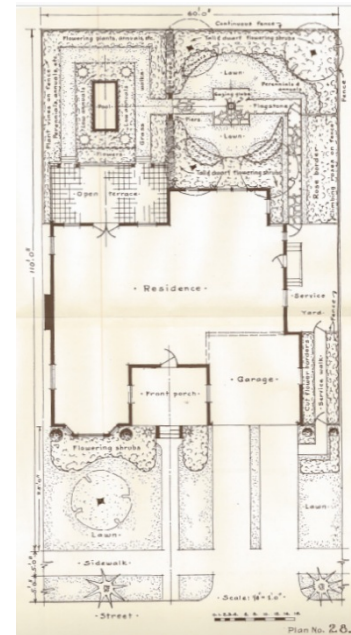
*"Every garden is unique with a multitude of choices in soils, plants and themes.
Finding your garden theme is as easy as seeing what brings a smile to your face."*

- Teresa Watkins, *Gardening With Soul*

The home landscape can be a joy, a chore and an expense. It frames your home, guides the visitor to your door, contains many utilitarian features to maintain your home and provides a space to relax. Sometimes, though, it is not as easy as Watkins implies to develop a good garden design and theme. Basic knowledge of landscape design principles used in conjunction with your inspiration will yield results that will widen your smile and delight your guests.

Featured Book

While rearranging our shelves, we found an intriguing landscape design pattern book, *Landscape Plans for Beautiful Gardens* by George Martin (Los Angeles: Landscape-Craft, 1939.) The only information we have is that Martin donated the book to the Library in 1941. It appears to be self-published but we have not had any luck finding out more about Martin and the book. It may have been compiled to document his past work or as a sales tool to show potential clients. Over the years do-it-yourself homeowners have referred to pattern designs for their landscapes and gardens. Maybe it was intended as a design source for the public. What we do know is that the book gives us a glimpse into middle class residential design in the early 20th century.



Despite the lack of provenance, this book is a worthwhile example of the complexity of the landscape design process. It contains 20 landscape designs for small rectangular lots. Each plan has a descriptive title such as "The Combination of Beauty Garden," "A Garden of Birds and Flowers" or "The Octagonal Garden" that defines its design intent. Accompanying each plan, the author includes a descriptive narrative and walking tour through the garden that imparts a three dimensional passage through the design. He gives reasons for his selections and presents alternative treatments to those depicted.

This book is valuable as an illustration of residential designs for home grounds in a subdivision. While some may deride cookie cutter landscapes, a good, albeit everyday cookie with good ingredients, is certainly better than a bitter one, or in the case of landscapes, an eyesore! Stock designs serve as a starting point and a tool for the do-it-yourselfer to employ to create a pleasing backdrop to those individual touches we all cannot resist!

In the Windows – Landscape Design Books for Your Home...

Landscape design involves much more than the plants. Put in the plants, and you will have an adequate garden but something will be missing unless attention is paid to those principles that can raise the design to a work of art. The principles of landscape design are timeless and are based in art theory, not the latest fashion.

Even if you don't have the talent or the money to hire a landscape designer, you can, with a little training, observation and reading vastly improve your home grounds into your personal work of art. Drop by the library and browse our collection of landscape design books that will introduce you to the basic [**elements and theory of landscape design that will help you create an enduring design.**](#)

Preserving Our Collections...

This past year the Library inventoried, digitized and published our [Edwin Hale Lincoln Collection](#) of glass page negatives. Lincoln was very careful in packaging the plates, but after 100 years, the housing is deteriorating. We are pleased to announce that the Library has received a generous donation from Colleen and Richard Fain that will enable us to rehouse the plates and preserve them for future generations.

Come Visit the Library...

The Library will be open for a tour after the Annual Meeting for Society Members on October 23, 2018. We will show you what we maintain on site and bring out some of our treasures for viewing. The Library is open on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 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. You may return your borrowed books at the Visitors' Center.

Image: Plan 28, "Garden Color Schemes," *Landscape Plans for Beautiful Gardens*, George Martin.

Ellen Shipman and the American Garden

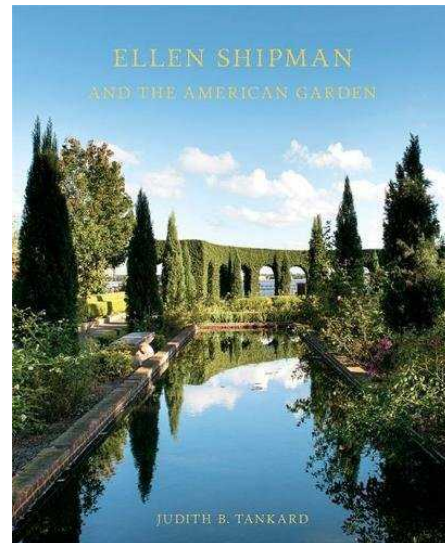
By Judith B. Tankard

University of Georgia Press, 2018

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

Described by landscape architect Warren Manning as "One of the best, if not very best, Flower Garden Maker in America," Ellen Shipman was one of the most prolific and accomplished twentieth-century garden designers in America. Yet remarkably, her portfolio of work, commissioned by industrial leaders, patrons of the arts and financial titans, has only recently reemerged from the shadows.

Ellen Shipman and the American Garden by landscape historian and preservationist Judith B. Tankard, reveals the impact of Shipman's legacy. Building upon the 1996 publication, *The Gardens of Ellen Shipman*, the book explores the ongoing efforts to identify, catalogue and preserve or restore Shipman's gardens, placing them within the context of her personal and professional life.



Shipman's ascendancy as a garden designer mirrors that of many women of a certain era. While accidental may not well describe her professional trajectory, her introduction to garden design intersected with her personal and creative life, sparked by family connections and the community of artists centered in Cornish, NH. It is here that Shipman, upon a visit to High Court designed by Charles Platt, dated her desire to become a landscape designer.

Her association with Cornish and Platt was essential to Shipman's creative evolution and identity. It is in Cornish, described as "the most beautifully gardened village in America" that Platt provided Shipman her first professional opportunities and it is here that Shipman designed her first real garden. Quintessentially New England in character, the garden included a dirt path lined with borders of traditional, old-fashioned flowers with a low stone wall separating it from the road. This garden prototype, permanently etched in Shipman's imagination, reemerged in many of her future projects.

As her career flourished Shipman established a professional practice, eventually opening an office, staffed exclusively by women, in New York City. By the early 1920's, her work, featured in magazines and books, included an expanding portfolio of prestigious commissions for private, public and institutional clients. Working within a variety of scales and sizes, Shipman's design skills, honed from

decades of practical experience, retained their intuitive qualities. She moved her office home to Cornish each summer.

Shipman's gardens, influenced by the Colonial Revival and the Arts and Crafts Movement, are described as intimate, sensual and domestic in scale. It is perhaps these subtle qualities, combined with their need for a high-degree of maintenance that contributed to their impermanence. Whatever the reason, by the end of the twentieth century most of her 600 gardens were lost, altered beyond recognition or demolished.

It is through the painstaking research of landscape historians that Shipman's artistic oeuvre has been rediscovered, resulting in the revitalization and restoration of many of her projects. Tankard, who has written or coauthored nine illustrated books of landscape history, has been at the forefront of this renaissance. Her masterful evocation of Shipman's legacy infuses **Ellen Shipman and the American Garden** with an immediacy that is both a compelling and a highly engaging story.

Including an updated list of Shipman's clients, commissions and collaborations **Ellen Shipman and the American Garden** is lavishly illustrated with duotone images from the 1920s and 1930s, by notable photographers such as Maddie Edwards Hewitt as well as garden plans. An introduction, featuring color photographs provides an overview of Shipman gardens that have recently been restored as well as information about the growing field of American garden history and preservation. There is an extensive bibliography and listing of archives and resources.

Ellen Shipman and the American Garden provides a poignant reminder of the transitory nature of garden art and the ease in which landscapes, and the careers of those who create them, can be obscured or lost by the passage of time. Its story, of rediscovery, reimagination and recreation is an inspiration to those dedicated to the history of the American garden.

Patrice Todisco writes about gardens and parks at www.landscapenotes.com.



Farewell to the 2018 Gardening Season

By Neal Sanders,
Leaflet Contributor

What can you say about a gardening season that was perfect for growing... weeds?

New England summers are notorious for being fickle. May frosts, monsoon rains in June, July droughts, humidity festivals in August. You name it, New England can deliver it. And, this year, boy, did it deliver.

The lettuce, spinach, and beet seeds we planted in early April were washed away. We replanted, and it was so cold that nothing germinated. In mid-May, we had a 600-square-foot garden that was barren except for a large patch of dill that sprang from self-planted 2017-vintage seeds. We were so desperate to show progress in the garden, we left it in place.

Our first square of corn was also a no-show for three weeks, even though we covered the area with netting to dissuade marauding crows. Finally, in mid-June, we had sufficient sprouts that we could assemble a passable seven rows of corn – from the ten we originally planted.

Because of the rains of May and June, we tented everything with row covers. Our garden began to resemble a refugee camp. Eggplant, zucchini, green beans, and winter squash were all sequestered until they burst out of their covers... whereupon the squash borers and Mexican bean beetles descended on the plants.



Some vegetables were a bust. Five pepper plants mysteriously became three. In the end, we harvested four usable peppers. Our re-planted lettuce crop bolted so quickly we picked enough for perhaps half a dozen salads and I never did harvest any spinach.

All was not lost, of course. Eight tomato plants thrived in the midsummer heat and began producing prolifically. Our corn, not quite 'knee-high by the Fourth of July', grew like a teenager in July and early August; so much so that our first and second squares of corn looked identical despite having been planted 20 days apart. A modest-sized third square produced enough September corn to be worth the effort to cajole it along.

The weather was, apparently, perfect for cucumbers because we handed out dozens of them to our neighbors. Our zucchini exploded between mid-July and mid-August to the point we had to pick twice a day lest they turn into baseball bats between sunrise and sunset. We had our best crop ever of fennel, and harvested enough green beans before the bean-beetle onset to feed us through the winter.

We also had a bumper crop of weeds. They grew everywhere, cozying up to plant roots, hiding between rows, and boldly popping up in pathways. When we pulled the row cover off our second crop of green beans, the weeds were higher than the surrounding vegetables.

I have spent the past two weeks taking apart the garden - hauling it to the transfer station by the carload to ensure the hitchhiking bugs and diseases do not have an opportunity to burrow in for the winter – and, now, much of the garden is again bare ground. The late arugula is thriving and I have hopes some late tomatoes will ripen.

You might think from reading this that I've begun to despair of gardening. Not for an instant. It took three years to figure out how to grow fennel in our garden and, now that we've mastered it, we will enjoy its unique flavor for years to come. We just enjoyed the last of our corn and marveled at its sweetness.

Give up gardening because of a little rain and a lot of weeds? Not in a hundred years. Once it's in your blood, it's there forever.

Neal Sanders is the author of twelve mysteries, most with horticultural themes. His latest, Fatal Equity, was published in March and is available at Amazon and at bookstores. You can read more of Neal's writing at www.thehardingtonpress.com.



October Horticultural Hints

*by Betty Sanders,
Lifetime Master Gardener*

Clean up your flower beds and vegetable garden. By getting rid of insect pests, plant diseases and weeds that have made their way into your garden this month, you'll start next spring with far fewer problems. Old vines (tomato, squash and cucumber); old plants (beans and cauliflower) and corn stalks all should be bagged up and taken to your town's transfer station because many insects and diseases can over-winter on the debris. Home composting is not hot enough to kill off pests or disease.



Plant seeds that need winter chilling, like bachelor buttons and milkweed now. Would you like more butterflies? Plant swamp milkweed now. That dismal name disguises a plant with a lovely pink flower with a wonderful scent. And, later in the season, swamp plant will be visited by many butterflies,

including our endangered Monarchs for which the milkweed is required to produce the next generation.

Divide any perennials with a dead center. In some plants such as irises and grasses, the centers die as the plant grows. Cut the perennial into four or more pieces, discard the old center and replant. Next year, you will have more plants to enjoy or share.

Bring houseplants in carefully. Your houseplants that summered outside (or on a porch) are used to much more sunlight than they will get in the house. A first stop on a sheltered porch will give them an opportunity to begin adjusting. While they are still outside, spray them with an insecticidal soap or Neem oil to kill any pests they may have picked up over the summer.

Cool weather is a great time to turn the compost bin Once it's turned, put new additions on the bottom and the older, partially composted material on top. Next spring your work will provide more compost to enrich your garden beds. What goes to the compost bin? Any clean plant material, including lettuce that has turned bitter, carrots that have gotten woody, annual flowers that are at the end of their lives.

Avoid using 'weed and feed' now more than ever. The fertilizer (the 'feed') won't be used by grass, which is no longer growing rapidly, and the herbicide (the 'weed') is pointless because weed seeds are no longer germinating. Instead of improving your lawn, these chemicals will find their way to local waters, kill beneficial microbes in the soil and feed overwintering weeds.

Keep mowing, with the mower set to two inches for as long as your grass keeps growing. Mow leaves into the lawn. Mowing saves you the task of raking and, by chopping leaves into small pieces, they will break down over the winter. It's a virtuous cycle - putting vital nutrients back into the soil, for the grass and surrounding trees for the coming season.

Do NOT rake leaves from under shrubs. Those leaves act as a mulch protecting the bush's root over the winter. Moreover, a number of beneficial insects winter over in those leaves. Once you rake them, cart them away or chip them, you've removed insect friends from your garden.

Make notes on your successes and failures. Every year I try to grow plants that have failed in the past... and I often have success. Was that initial failure your fault or a bad combination of weather and animal attack? Did you go away and miss watering when it got very hot? Did a helpful friend overwater? Did you not choose the right site for the plant? A few notes will help you remember what happened, and perhaps encourage you to try again.

How's your fall color? New England is beloved for its fall color. Most people think the best color shows up on trees. But, if you have a smaller garden or a property surrounded by pine trees, you might find your best color comes from native shrubs. Itea (sweetspire), fothergilla, clethra (summersweet), vaccinium (blueberries), and physocarpus (ninebark) all offer brilliant and long-lasting autumn color.

Betty Sanders is a widely known speaker and writer on gardening topics. You can read more of her horticultural advice at www.BettyOnGardening.com

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