



Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

September 2018

DONATE NOW



Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying summer, despite the extreme heat and wet weather! I am grateful for your support which has helped us maintain our gardens – they have never been more beautiful. Thousands of people have visited us this season, many enjoying our summer evening events in the “park,” including concerts, art shows, kids activities, and even Shakespeare! We hope you will continue to visit and help us introduce new people to Mass Hort and The Gardens at Elm Bank.

Our staff and volunteers have done a great job with garden maintenance and beautification of new areas of the property. The Manor House entrance and urns look lovely with new plantings. The crews at the Seed to Table Garden and our nonprofit partner, National Charity League, have made it possible to continue our food pantry donation program. This year we will provide more than two tons of organic produce to local food pantries to help families have fresh, local fruits and vegetables with their meals.



Our garden season continues through Columbus Day, so if you haven't visited this summer, please drop by. The gift shop in our Visitors Center has expanded with items designed by local artists and artisans, including beekeepers and soap makers. You can also get water, juice, and snacks for hungry children (and adults). Children will also enjoy the weekend family programs in Weezie's Garden for Children which are designed to engage our youngest gardeners in the natural world. Thank you for the many donations to the annual fund that support this and our other mission-focused programs.

We're happy to invite you to our annual program and celebration of excellence in horticulture! Please register for the Honorary Medals Dinner, October 18 in the Hunnewell Building. We are very excited to honor our keynote speaker Margaret Roach of “A Way to Garden”. This year, you can also register for an Open Session of the Annual Meeting, on Tuesday, October 23 at 3 p.m. The Board of Trustees is inviting Mass Hort members to a reception, an update on our Master Plan program, and our annual year in review. Garden and library tours for those who are interested, will follow.

Upcoming Classes & Events:

Planting Spring Bulbs

Thursday, September 13
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Elements of Drawing

Fridays
Sept 14 - Oct 19
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Developing Textures in Pen, Ink and Watercolor

Thursdays
Sept 20 - Oct 18
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Cold Frame Gardening

Saturday, September 22
10 a.m. - noon

Improve Your Watercolor Skills

Tuesdays
Sept 25 - Nov 13
Mornings: 9 - noon
Afternoons: 12:30 - 3:30

Foundations of Botanical Drawing and Painting

Wednesdays
Sept 26 - Oct 31
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Sunny Perennial Borders

Thursday, September 27
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Fall Flower Arrangement Workshop

Thursday, October 4
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Under the Spell of Succulents

Sunday, October 14
1 - 2 p.m.

And, speaking of the Master Plan, we reached our Master Plan Campaign goal of \$250,000 in May! This important initiative will help us plan for a bright future for Mass Hort and The Gardens at Elm Bank.

Thank you for being a member of Mass Hort and for helping to insure that we will fulfill our mission to connect people to the art and science of horticulture and the natural world.

Warm regards,

Kathy

Fall into Your Garden
Tuesday, October 16
7 - 8:30 p.m.

Honorary Medals Dinner
Thursday, October 18
6 - 9 p.m.

Painting for the Petrified
Thursdays
Oct 18 - Nov 8
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Members' Open Session
Tuesday, October 23
3 - 4:30 p.m.

September Education Programs



For this fall, we lined up a schedule to help you get the most enjoyment out of your garden and to appreciate the beauty of the natural world. We hope you can attend one of our classes!

On Thursday, September 13, at 7 p.m. join Lifetime Master Gardener, Kathi Gariepy, for a presentation on **planting spring bulbs**. Learn about the variety of bulbs you can plant in our region and best practices for successful growing in both the garden and in containers. **Sign up today!**

On Saturday, September 22, from 10 a.m. to noon, Lifetime Master Gardener, Gretel Anspach, will lead a workshop on **cold frame gardening**. She'll explain how these structures extend your season in spring and fall. Materials and tools will be provided for each attendee to build their own 2' x 4' cold frame. **Must pre-register; do so here.**

On Thursday, September 27, at 7 p.m. learn to design a **sunny perennial border**. Jana Milbocker and Joan Butler of Enchanted Gardens will explore how to you create a sunny perennial garden that will delight with colorful blooms and flowers for cutting from spring through fall. To attend, **register here.**

Painter and instructor, Nan Rumpf will be back this fall leading her eight-week course, **Improve your Watercolor Skills**. Sign up for the **morning session** or the **afternoon session**. Classes are designed to further develop your watercolor painting skills and techniques. Each lesson is an activity designed to explore a different art element, principle, or painting technique. This class will be held Tuesdays, September 25 - November 13.

Programs in Early October include a **Fall Floral Arrangement Workshop** with Barb Rietscha of Field and Vase, and **Under the Spell of Succulents** book signing with succulent specialist, Jeff Moore.

Watch for your course catalog of Fall and Winter classes this month! If there are any class topics you wish to see, let us know by emailing education@masshort.org

Help Us Keep the Momentum Growing!

Our fiscal year is coming to a close and we have you to thank for the successful year we are having.

Please consider a gift to the Annual Fund before September 30.

Thank you!

Donate Here!



Make Your Flowers ‘Pop’

*By Melissa Pace,
Garden Educator*

One of the most pleasurable activities at Mass Hort is taking photographs of plants, animals and insects in the garden.

If you do take that awesome photograph, don’t forget to enter one of our photo contests! The Boston Flower Show is March 13 -17, 2019! And locally, there is a [2018 Garden Photography Competition for The Gardens at Elm Bank.](#)

Here are a few techniques to try in the never ending quest to take the perfect shot:

Photograph during the ‘golden hours’– the hours before and after sunrise and sunset. This light is for warm, dispersed light which casts long shadows. This quality light will give you the most options in shooting your subjects. This will keep the color of flowers from washing out.

Keep your photos clean and simple. Too many details can clutter your photo- leave negative space in the composition. Move your camera around until you have eliminated non-relevant items from your composition. Take your time composing your image.

Change the angle from which you shoot-move around- show your subject from an unusual point of view. Don’t just “point and shoot” straight on. Lower the angle that you are shooting from- it will add drama to your photo and also add detail to the foreground that might have gone unnoticed.

Shoot close-up- Shooting close, whether it is a plant, animal or person, adds details about your subject. If you’re shooting a landscape, include some close-up detail in the foreground. To take extreme close-ups you must acquire an add-on macro lens.

Utilize depth of field in your photos- Use leading lines created by straight edges such as paths, roads, fences, water lines, and the like. This will move your viewer into your photo. Other ways to accomplish movement to the back of your photo are to:

- Include an item of interest such as a flower or rocks in the far background.
- Have subjects in the foreground, middle ground and background; use your grid to help you accomplish this.
- Use an item in the foreground such as an arched walk-way, or overarching tree branches to frame your primary subject.

Use the tools available to you- Use burst mode (also



called sports mode or continuous shooting mode) to photograph moving subjects such as animals or insects. Hold the shutter button down for a duration. You will have multiple shots of your subject- pick the best and trash the rest.

Use diagonal lines to create a sense of movement through your photo.

Include shadows, darks, and lights that come from your subject. Don't forget to use your exposure adjustment to create dark, rich shadows.



Use your flash during the day if the light is uneven. This will even out the light on your subject and improve skin tones.



Take photos in silhouette- This is easily achieved by shooting into the light. Shoot a lit subject through a doorway or an arch for a forward silhouette.

Shoot reflections of your subjects- Water is the best provider of reflections- whole reflections can be caught in a single droplet, so look for them in dew drops, ice, glass, and shiny surfaces. To shoot a reflection, hold the camera as close to the reflective surface as you can.

Create balance by placing your subject on one of the lines on the grid in your camera. If you do not have a grid, imagine your image in left-to-right and top-to-bottom thirds. Avoid putting your focal point dead center.

Read more like this in Mass Hort's blog!

Join us at the 118th Honorary Medals Dinner

Thursday, October 18, 2018



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.

The Honorary Medals dinner is scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2018, 6 to 9 p.m. Reserve your seats now by calling Elaine Lawrence, Director of Development, at 617-933-4945 or by visiting MassHort.org.

Margaret Roach is the 2018 recipient of the George Robert White Medal of Honor, the highest honor given by the Society. Ms. Roach will be 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*. She also hosts a public-radio show and podcast which all continue to make meaningful connections between people, plants, and their beloved gardens.

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 help 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 the Society and Editor in Chief for *Horticulture* magazine.

The Honorary Medals Dinner will take place Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the Hunnewell Building, 900 Washington Street, Wellesley, MA. 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!

Fall-Clearance Bargains

By R. Wayne Mezitt

Mass Hort Trustee Chairman



A fundamental challenge for garden centers is effectively matching seasonal customer demand with on-hand availability. So each autumn as their sales-seasons draw to a close, many garden centers find they have extra plants in stock and insufficient facilities to properly store all of them over the winter.

Fall is a great time to enhance your landscape: by the end of summer most plants have finished their top-growth and still-warm soils encourage new root growth. Plants installed in autumn are ready to begin growing as soon as the soil thaws next spring. This gives them a significant head-start over just-planted trees and shrubs in becoming “established” (thereafter requiring less rigorous care).

As trees and shrubs enter their winter dormancy, their appearance changes, often making it difficult to adequately judge their condition and health. Reputable garden centers must maintain long term trust with their clients and will not offer plants that are in poor or failing health. But at their often-dramatically-reduced prices, clearance plants are typically not guaranteed.

Garden centers often include plants with foliage/stem blemishes or minor branch defects in their

clearance sales that shouldn't affect their long-term health. Some winter twig/stem dieback is normal and should be expected. Once new shoots appear next spring, clip off dry twigs, or simply let the spring growth cover them.

A key aspect of fall planting is assuring the roots stay healthy over their first winter in their new location. Water-in your new plants well when you install them, and make sure their root area is sufficiently moist as the ground starts to freeze. As winter sets-in, root growth slows and newer plants may not be as firmly anchored in the soil as those planted earlier; soil temperatures alternating between freezing and thawing can actually lift the plant out of the ground--this is called "heaving". To help moderate soil temperature fluctuations and reduce the chances of heaving, apply 6-8" of mulch around the root area for the first winter. But next April be sure to pull back all but 2" of this mulch (and down to the root-crown level at the trunk) to enable proper air exchange for a healthy root system.

Fall clearance bargains are enticing, and the potential savings may inspire you to invest more than you expected. So it's important to understand what you are buying and where they will best succeed in your yard. Be sure to check hardiness ratings, light and moisture requirements, ultimate size, compatibility with companion plants and any other features you consider important for your garden enjoyment. Selecting the right location first is far more prudent than discovering problems after the plant has grown and becomes more difficult to move.

By their nature, clearance sales rarely offer a full range of choices--after all, these are leftovers. If you are simply seeking an economical way to enhance the appearance of your yard, fall clearance sales can be a fine opportunity. Some forward-thinking (and horticulturally astute) customers save a lot of money by relying upon clearance sales to implement their garden designs. If you have specific cultivars in mind, you may need to wait until they become available next season. But be sure to take a look this fall; you may be surprised to find some unexpected bargains.

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.

Wellesley College Botanic Gardens brings Botanical Art Classes to Elm Bank

Starting this fall, we are excited that Wellesley College Botanic Gardens (WCBG) Friends will be hosting their botanical art classes at Elm Bank while their site is under construction.

The friends have arranged a special class for Mass Hort members and guests, and Mass Hort members are welcome to sign up for the following classes at a reduced rate.

Drawing and Painting for the Petrified (Exclusive for Mass Hort Members and Guests)

This class will help you get started with painting.

All abilities and anxiety levels are welcome to attend this four-week class led by Sarah Roche, Education Director of the WCBG Friends. Sarah will encourage you your observational skills to grow as you experiment with line drawings and the accurate representation of botanical forms. \$125/Member, \$150/general admission.

Thursdays, October 18 - November 8, 9:30 - 12:30 p.m. [Register with Mass Hort, online.](#)



Foundations of Botanical Drawing and Painting

Explore the world of botanical art in this six-week course for anyone starting their study of botanical painting, as well as those with some experience. Sarah Roche guides students through structured exercises, projects, and demonstrations, introducing the techniques of botanical drawing and watercolor painting. \$295/Member, \$345/general admission. Sign up by contacting the WCBG Friends at wcbgfriends@wellesley.edu

Wednesdays, September 26 - October 31, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. -OR-
Wednesdays, February 6 - March 13, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Developing Textures in Pen, Ink, and Watercolor

Ellen Duarte will show you how to use ink and watercolor to render textures found in plant life, ranging from bark and roots to flower and leaf surfaces. For artists at all levels. \$175/Member, \$225/general admission. Sign up by contacting the WCBG Friends at wcbgfriends@wellesley.edu
Thursdays, September 20 - October 18, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Elements of Drawing: Value and Form

Ramp up your drawing skills in this class with artist and instructor Jeanne Junze. Take the mystery out of representing three-dimensional botanical subjects in two dimensions. It all starts with accurate observational skills. Learn to develop form and value with Jeanne's demonstrations and individual teaching moments. \$225/Member, \$275/general admission. Sign up by contacting the WCBG Friends at wcbgfriends@wellesley.edu
Fridays, September 14 - October 19, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Mass Hort Members' Open Session

You're invited to this session 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 in questions and commenting.

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

[Please let us know you're coming!](#)



Volunteer with Us!



We've had a terrific volunteer corps in the gardens this summer. Thank you to all of the volunteers who so meticulously cared for the plants and helped make the gardens a success. Now that the temperatures have dropped a bit, it's an even better time to spend a few hours in the gardens, get your hands dirty, and learn about plants with our hands-on horticulture opportunities.

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 weed, plant, rake, prune, and harvest in the gardens. 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

*Let's not see any letters, let's not answer the phone
Let's just pretend that there's no one at home
In our rooftop garden
In our rooftop garden
In our rooftop garden
Up on the roof.*

- "Rooftop Garden" by Lou Reed (1942-2013)

Roof gardens have been around since ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia, the most famous of which was the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Roof gardens are found throughout history, e.g., in ancient Greece, Pompei and during the Renaissance. In the United States, roof gardens were especially popular during Victorian times through the 1930s. Today we are seeing a renewed interest in roof gardens and appreciation of their benefits.



A roof garden is a secret garden that both soothes and awakens our senses. It takes many forms: a viewing garden such as a green roof, an outdoor room elaborately decorated with container gardens or a mere terraceⁱ adjacent to a living space. The benefits of roof gardens include temperature and water control, habitat corridors for wildlife, architectural and monetary enhancement to the building, extension of the life of roofing materials, expansion of living space and an opportunity to grow food and plants.

To experience a sense of tranquility a roof garden can impart, take a listen to [Lou Reed](#) and experience the laid-back pleasure his rooftop garden gave him.

Featured Folio

The Library's collection includes folios, defined for our purposes as a collection of loose, unbound artworks that are usually related by author or subject. This month's featured book is a folio, *The Roof Garden of F.W. Slocum in New York City*. The garden was located at The Berkley Building at 19 West 44th Street in New York City, which was built in 1916. The folio consists of professional photographs from the early 1930s by Robert M. Glasgow, John Wallace Gilles and Mary A. Williams. Papers accompanying the photographs reveal that the garden was begun in 1917. The garden was adjacent to an Asian inspired penthouse with a tiled roof. The paved garden consists of features such as trellises, a pergola and tender and hardy container plants. The 1930s plant list reveals this is was a four-season garden with a variety of evergreen trees and shrubs as well as annuals including over 20 varieties of morning glories. Slocum recounts that the winter of 1933 was "... a hard one for the "murmuring pines and hemlocks". Privet that stood the Winters without any protection for ten years was killed when in a separate pot, though the privet in beds came through all right. The pines and box were also killed." This folio is fun to view and gives us a glimpse into a secret garden of a wealthy Manhattanite in the early twentieth century.

In the Windows – Container Gardens!

Roof Gardens are essentially container gardens, i.e., plants and soil ensconced in a container with a bottom and sides. This month the Library windows feature books on container gardening.

Container gardening is a convenient and versatile way to garden that adds height to garden design and allows for modifications and the addition of splots of color throughout the seasons. Containers are also useful in overwintering tender or tropical plants. Container gardening has specific requirements such as soil, fertilization, watering and plants. Want to learn more? Come in and browse our collections and borrow a book or two.

Our Collections are Growing...

Since its inception in 1829, the Library relied on the generosity of its members to build its Collections. This month, we thank John Thorndike of Westwood, formerly of Dover, who made a generous donation of the library of his late wife Dorothy Dudley Thorndike. Dorothy was an avid horticulturist, volunteer and owner of a landscape planning business. She won the Buckley Medal at the Society's Spring Flower Show in 1966 for her display of native New England orchids.

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 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: Slocum roof garden in winter, c. 1930. Photographer Robert M. Glasgow.

[1] The origin of the word garden is from Middle English, Anglo-French and old high German meaning an enclosed place. Today, in the United Kingdom, garden is equivalent to our usage for yard, i.e., a small enclosed area of land, usually adjoining a building.

Donate a Tree for Our Festival of Trees!

It's time to start planning! Members, friends, garden clubs, businesses, and other groups are invited to donate a decorated tree for this year's Festival of Trees.

This year's festival opens on Friday, November 23 and runs through December 9. Our tenth annual Festival of Trees will welcome young and young at heart to a dazzling assortment of decorated trees with varying sizes, colors, and themes. Tree size can range to any height, beginning at tabletop and going up! The color of the tree, lights, and decorations are at your discretion (but tasteful, of course).



The success of this Mass Hort fundraising event is assured by our generous donors. All are welcome.

We've been given trees from elementary and pre-schools, Girl Scout troops, sewing and knitting clubs, exercise groups, garden clubs, garden centers, small and large businesses, as well as individuals working alone or in pairs. Their creativity is amazing, there's something new each year!

You can also sponsor a tree. Find the instructions to [donate or sponsor a tree](#).

For those not familiar with the Festival of Trees, we note that each tree is raffled off on the final Sunday of the festival. Throughout the event, visitors purchase 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, and the fabulous Snow Village model train display.

Details about the Festival of Trees can be found on our [website](#) or you can call us at 617-933-4988 for further information. There are full instructions about tree donations posted there as well. We look forward to hearing from you. Everyone's participation is needed and welcome!

American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic

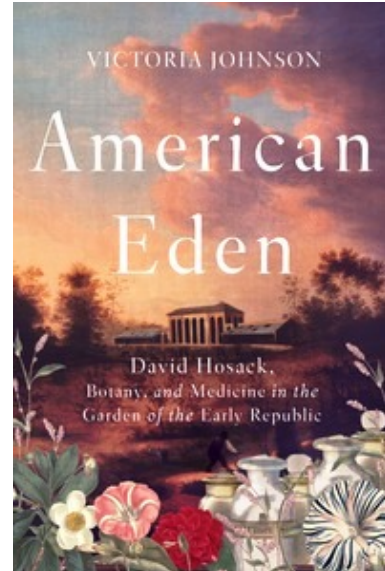
By Victoria Johnson

Liveright Publishing Company: A Division of W.W. Norton & Company, NY, 2018

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

In 1801, on a hilly wooded 20-acre site in Manhattan, New York physician David Hosack founded the Elgin Botanical Garden. Named after his father's birthplace in Scotland, it was the first public botanical garden in the United States and the first research institution devoted mainly to the cultivation and study of native plants. Its scientific laboratory was critical to the advancement of medicine in America.

Today Rockefeller Center is on the site where the Elgin Botanical Garden stood and Dr. David Hosack, perhaps fueled by the popular musical *Hamilton*, is best remembered as the attending physician at the 1804 duel of his friends and colleagues, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. In her sweeping biography, *American Eden: David Hosack, Botany and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic*, Victoria Johnson elevates Hosack from a historical footnote to his rightful place as a key figure in New York City's history.



Born in Manhattan in 1769, Hosack's life paralleled the shaping of the new nation and the transformation of New York from a bucolic town to a cosmopolitan city, overtaking Philadelphia in prominence. His prodigious talents and seemingly endless energy for social reform was shaped by the enlightenment. A physician, botanist, educator and civic-minded forward-thinking visionary, Hosack was at the forefront of the creation of many of New York City's key institutions including the Historical Society, the Horticultural Society, the American Academy of Fine Arts, Bellevue Hospital and the medical school that became Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. He seemingly knew everyone and became known as the "First Citizen of New York."

However, it was medicine and nature that were his true passions. The son of a Scottish merchant, Hosack received an M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and traveled to London and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland to further his medical studies. While there, his experiences of the two cities' universities and gardens combined with studies in anatomy and botany to provide a new, more holistic way of thinking about medical practice. Convinced that the exploration of the vast, unexplored American wilderness was integral to the advancement of medicine in America, medical botany became an obsession.

Determined to create America's first Botanical Garden, Hosack purchased land from the City of New York and using his own funds began to develop a site and manage it as a working farm and horticultural classroom. Seedlings and plants from Thomas Jefferson, William Bartram, Meriwether Lewis and others arrived and European scientists, including Baron Alexander von Humboldt, and Emperor Napoleon's botanist visited. One of the largest greenhouses in America was built. That the enterprise ultimately failed, from a lack of funding, municipal support and political turmoil, did not diminish the enormity of Hosack's undertaking.

In *American Eden* Johnson describes Hosack as an urban pioneer and visionary who, despite skepticism, sought to learn from and celebrate nature. His pioneering efforts foreshadowed many of the environmental practices we take for granted today. These include organizing citizen-scientists to map out native plants before they were overrun by invasive species, advocating for city-wide tree planting for beauty and health and proposing a national system of agricultural stations eighty years before one was established.

Johnson, an associate professor of urban planning at Hunter College, is an authority on botanical gardens and her expertise makes her uniquely qualified to tell this story through both a historical and contemporary lens. While the accomplishments of Hosack can occasionally overwhelm the reader, Johnson provides a compelling narrative in which to absorb their impact both on and within history's context.

The Elgin Botanical Garden helped changed how American's perceived the natural world, including their own bodies, and it is remarkable that Hosack's story has until now been largely forgotten. As we continue to explore new frontiers in medical botany while struggling with climate change and its implication for plants and the environment, his pioneering work remains more relevant than ever.

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



Here's Mud in Your Shoe

By Neal Sanders,
Leaflet Contributor

Life is always interesting for the spouse of an active gardener. You have an enormous garden at home and a 600-square-foot plot at a community vegetable garden to look after. Even with all that to take care of, though, my wife can never turn down a cry for help, especially if it's from a friend. Which is how I came to be up to my calf in mud this past week'.

'Sally Kahn' is a lovely lady. I know because she is the first person I ever murdered. That was more than a decade ago when I was writing *A Murder in the Garden Club*, and I use her fictional name here to spare her unwanted notoriety. Sally maintains one of the most prominent wayside gardens in town and, last week, she called Betty to ask for her help in planting a new sedum at the site. I should probably mention that Sally is closing in on 90, though she looks and has the energy of someone twenty years her junior.



Although not specifically included in the invitation, I came along and ended up removing the mulch, digging the hole for the new specimen, toting the water, and then looking for opportunistic weeds in the bed while Sally and Betty did the actual planting.

As they planted, Sally described another issue bothering her. The parking lot at one of our town's civic buildings has been something of a horticultural desert since its construction several years ago. While maintaining the foundation plantings at the building, Sally and a group of friends have pressed for the addition of trees for the parking area. Earlier this year, Sally got her wish: four trees were procured and planted by the town.

The problem Sally described to Betty was this: the trees were a mess. Although they bore sales tags from a highly regarded nursery, the specimens came with dead or broken branches and had clearly been grown with inadequate space to its brethren trees. Everything pointed skyward; nothing grew laterally. Could Betty help? And so, the next morning, I once again piled tools into a car and drove with Betty to the site.

The role of an Undergardener is to dig holes and move rocks. A Principal Undergardener (that would be me) may, from time to time, be asked for advice by the Head Gardener (that would be Betty). However, my charter has never extended to 'skilled labor'. On this day, my writ would be to move Heavy Stuff (ladders and hoses) and create mulch rings around the four trees. In the meantime, Betty assiduously climbed the aforementioned ladder and pruned extraneous branches from the trees; reshaping them to allow air circulation within the tree and prevent branches from crossing and rubbing.

And so I began watering. However, I could not help noticing an odd phenomenon: no matter how much water I put on that first tree, the water did not puddle. And I am not talking about water trickling out of a hose. This water was gushing out at the rate of four or five gallons a minute. And it just disappeared into the mulch surrounding the tree. I was standing on pavement while watering. Intrigued, I stepped onto the mulch to investigate.

And promptly sunk my crisp, white sneakers into more than a foot of a thick, swamp-worthy slurry of mulch and water.

These trees had been planted in good, old-fashioned wood mulch. There was no soil underneath what we all assumed was a veneer of mulch. Like the turtles that support the earth, it was mulch all the way down.

Betty gave Sally the delicate task of communicating to our town's Department of Public Works that a slight error had been made in the preparation of the site. With luck, a crew will be dispatched to the building to dig out the mulch surrounding the trees' root balls and replace it with something that will hold moisture and contain nutrients to allow the tree to grow.

As for my sneaker, an afternoon in OxyClean followed by a bath in bleach left my shoestring a dazzling white, but the canvas of the shoe a dispiriting brown. That is the fate of an Undergardener.

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.



September Horticultural Hints

*by Betty Sanders,
Lifetime Master Gardener*

Water, water, almost everywhere. The rains of August have kept most of our gardens and lawns green without need for watering. Only the Cape and southeastern part of the state are showing any dryness according to the **Drought Monitor**.

The downside of rain is that downy mildew and diseases that thrive in wet conditions are showing up in the garden. Phlox, monarda and dogwood should be checked for infections. The simplest way to control powdery mildew is to spray it with a solution made from one tablespoon of baking soda in a gallon of warm water. It's perfectly safe and harmless to you and your plants (after all, you put it in your cakes...).



The other downside of rain the **explosion of weed growth** that comes with it. Poison ivy enjoyed a nice growth spurt in August and is everywhere. Be on the lookout for it as it gets more potent as the season goes on. Be aware that pets can transfer the irritating oils to you after they've had a romp through the fields and woods or through your garden.

And then there's the **snail and slug explosion**. They, too, appreciated the wet weather. They're hungry and ready to lay eggs for next year. Fortunately, there is a safe, effective solution. Purchase only products that contain the chemical iron phosphate. It doesn't hurt the environment, animals, your plants or anything *except* slugs and snails. Luckily the bad guys find it appealing and fatal. Reducing their numbers in the fall means fewer will hatch next spring to eat your hosta, your tomatoes and just about anything else they find.

Vegetable gardens are starting to wind down now. As crops finish, remove plants from the garden in order to reduce the number of pests that can overwinter. Whether it's bean beetles, corn borers, tomato hornworms or something unknown, sending your spent plants to the local dump or transfer station is worth the effort. You are preventing eggs or other forms of the insect from wintering over in (or near) your garden, which gives you fewer problems from the start next season. NEVER compost any plant material that has had insect or disease problems.

If your vegetable garden is in a protected area, plant cool season vegetables seeds such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, kale, or even peas. You have a very good chance of eating fresh vegetables from your garden into November – or even for Thanksgiving if you use row covers to protect plants on cold nights.

Lawn care starts with a soil test. If you didn't do one in the spring, do it now. The **\$15 test from UMass** tells you what your soil needs to grow what you want to grow. They give you specific recommendations for improving lawns, gardens, whatever you ask about. Do it now and you'll have plenty of time after you get the results back to add lime, or fertilizer or whatever is recommended by the experts in October or November.

Support migrating pollinators and other birds as they travel through your backyard on their way to a winter home. Here are a few tips on how to help them on their way:

- *Hummingbirds* may travel up to 2,000 miles to Central America. A hummingbird feeder in your garden is a welcome refueling stop for them.
- *Monarch butterflies* are heading south toward Mexico and southern California, flying up to 3,000 miles. If you don't have them already, plant native milkweed and late blooming nectar plants such as goldenrod and asters to feed them.
- *Migratory songbirds* need you to plant trees and shrubs to provide them with a place to roost and to refuel on berries or insects during their travels.

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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