



# Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION



**SEPTEMBER 2022**



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**With the end of the fiscal year less than a month away, MHS is in great shape... Thanks to YOU!**

In late-August, I attended the final concert in our Music in the Garden series. Seeing more than 100 other concert goers while tapping my foot to the music of the band Back Pages was delightful. I am grateful to Brookline Bank for sponsoring the series this year—which enabled us to offer this event free for our members—and I look forward to the many concerts we will schedule for next spring and summer!

Our Garden is bursting with color and I'd like to thank the many [organizations and businesses that participated in our 2022 Garden Opening Campaign](#), helping us create such a beautiful Garden experience for our guests. Their support helped make this year an incredible success.

You, our members and supporters, the heart and soul of MHS, were critical to our success this year. Just this past month we introduced two campaigns. The first appeal was to increase the number of our electric tools and equipment we use in the Garden. We reached our goal of \$5,000 and very soon MHS will own essential electric equipment that will keep the noise down, the air cleaner and our Garden beautiful! The second appeal is to refresh the Bressingham Garden. Breathing new life into this garden is close to becoming a reality with more than \$20,000 raised so far. With the blessing

of Bressingham Garden's original designer Adrian Bloom, our staff and volunteers will be refreshing the garden with perennials that will flourish in the Massachusetts climate. Walking through Bressingham Garden brings me great joy and I cannot wait to see it revitalized!

As I reflect back on the challenges we have all endured during the past few years, I am grateful to you for supporting MHS. Your membership, donations, participation in classes and events, and your visits to the Garden have given the entire staff enormous hope and excitement about what the future holds for Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Warm regards,  
Elaine Lawrence  
Director of Development



If you would like information on being a Garden Sponsor in 2023, donating to the [Bressingham Revitalization Campaign](#) and/or the [Annual Fund](#), click on the link or contact me: [elawrence@masshort.org](mailto:elawrence@masshort.org) or 617-933-4945.



# UPCOMING IN THE GARDEN



**Mah Jongg in the Garden**  
EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 1PM  
September 7, 14, 21, 28



**Houseplant Emergency Room**  
September 8, 10am-1pm



**Odd Houseplants Pop-Up Class**  
September 13, 10am-1pm



**Seeing the Invisible**  
Open with Garden Hours  
Mon-Thurs 10am-7pm  
Fri-Sun 10am-4pm



**Goddess Harvest Festival**  
September 24 & 25, 10am-2pm



**MHS Book Club**  
NEXT MEETING: September 20



**Garden Tails Story Time**  
Mondays and Wednesdays  
11-11:30am



**Family Fun in the Garden**  
Saturdays  
10am-noon

## GREEN PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Flash your membership card for a 10% discount with any of our Green Partners.



**VIEW  
SEPTEMBER  
CALENDAR**



# FESTIVAL OF TREES

## GET INVOLVED

Want to join the festivities? Thanks to our amazing tree donors and volunteers, Festival of Trees gets better each year! View the opportunities below to get involved in the 14th Annual Festival of Trees.

## TREE DONATIONS

We can't wait to see all of the beautiful tree donations this year, from previous and new donors alike! So get your minds in a festive spirit and start thinking of your tree ideas. You can sign up to donate (even if you don't have your tree theme yet!) by filling out [the form on our website](#).

## VOLUNTEER

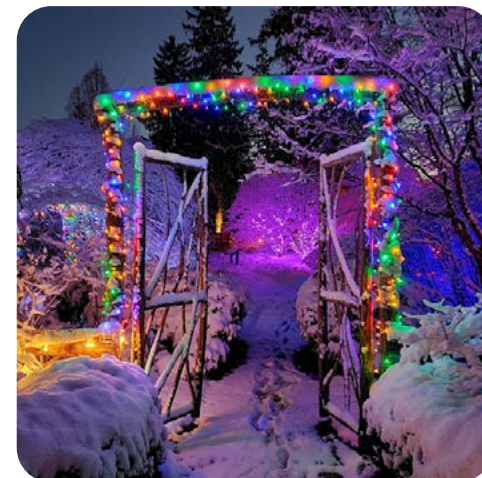
Festival of Trees is MHS's largest fundraiser, and it would not be possible without the help of volunteers. As a volunteer, you get a fascinating look at the show behind the scenes, support our fundraiser, meet new people with shared interests, and share in the delight and enjoyment of our visitors. We hope you will join us to welcome our visitors and help us raise vital mission-supporting funds for our Garden and educational programs! Fill out [the form on this page](#) to stay updated.

## EXCLUSIVE MEMBER ACCESS AND DISCOUNTS

One of your MHS member benefits is getting exclusive early access and member discounts on Festival of Trees tickets... and it's almost time to take advantage of this benefit!

Be on the lookout in the October Leaflet, where Festival of Trees tickets will be released to MHS Members! If your membership is about to expire, renew your membership now to make sure you're the first to hear about when Festival of Trees tickets are released!

Contact [festivaloftrees@masshort.org](mailto:festivaloftrees@masshort.org) with any questions!



**LEARN MORE**



# PARTY CRASHERS

By C.L. Fornari



You know the type. They weren't invited to the garden party, but they show up anyway. Some arrive alone, while others make an entrance in a big, bold group. They may not have been invited, but they're so colorfully dressed and amusing that we let them stay. They are party crasher plants and they travel in good company. Self-seeding, they often bring pollinators and other wildlife with them, so when they're around our gardens become a diverse, flower-filled celebration. Yes, occasionally there are too many of these uninvited guests and we need to escort them to the brush pile. But many plants that sow their seeds in our gardens are truly the life of the party.

Why call them party crashers? Primarily because I like to view our landscapes and gardens as a celebration. Too often people approach their property like they do the interior of their house; they want to get it furnished and limit changes once they consider it done. Yet we all know that plants have their own agendas, and much of what happens in the natural world isn't in our power to change. Like a large party, there are things we can plan for and manage in our yards, but numerous others that are outside of our control.

Although there are many self-seeding plants, those that I call party crashers tend to mingle well in a crowd. They are the annuals, biennials and perennials

that grow in and among other plants without crowding their neighbors out. Usually these plants add to the celebration without overwhelming the venue or getting out of hand. Party crasher plants aren't for everyone, however, and it's important to know if you're the sort that will welcome their spontaneity and exuberance, or if you'll view them as a nuisance. The truth is, self-seeding plants aren't low-maintenance. Like all your other party guests, they'll need tending to. You'll have to welcome them at the door by not routinely mulching, which limits the germination of their seeds. While they're getting acquainted with the other guests, you'll need to remove weeds so they have plenty of space to mingle. And if they've had a bit too much partying and have passed out in your landscape, they

need to be pulled and escorted off the premises. Since these plants spread and socialize with others, they aren't for gardeners who don't want to weed and edit throughout the growing season.

If party crasher plants aren't easily controlled and require constant involvement from the gardener, why would you welcome them into your garden? From my experience, I'd answer this way: these plants bring drama and diversity. They turn a static landscape into a kaleidoscope of color that changes with the season, provides pollinator support, and produces visual exclamation points in the garden. These plants add serendipity and flare, often creating entertaining combinations gardeners would never consider trying.



*Asclepias tuberosa* and bee

Listed from A to Z, here are some of my favorite party crasher plants. Note that while these plants might be wonderful party guests for me in New England, in other areas they might become problematic. Before welcoming any crasher to your celebration, check to see what reputation it has in your state or region.

## *Asclepias tuberosa*

Commonly called butterfly weed, this perennial plant is drawn to party venues where the soil is well drained and not too rich. A North American Native, *A. tuberosa* happily brings its bright orange flowers to celebrations in Zones 3 to 9, and it does its best mingling in full sun. Flowering in



mid-summer, this self-seeder travels with an entourage of butterflies, bees and monarch larvae, so expect lots of buzz about your garden when these brilliant blooms show up.

### *Gomphocarpus physocarpus*

If you want gatherings on your landscape to come alive, grow a plant called hairy balls. Yes, this *Gomphocarpus* is also known as balloon plant or swan plant, but you know that heads will turn when someone says, "Do you want to see my hairy balls?" Growing about four feet tall in a single summer, *Gomphocarpus physocarpus* is native to southeast Africa, a perennial in Zones 8 to 10, and an annual in colder regions. Grow hairy balls in full

sun and soil that tends toward the dry side. This *Gomphocarpus* is one of the only non-native hosts for monarch butterfly larvae. It is listed as invasive in Hawaii and other tropical regions.

### *Lobelia cardinalis*

Late summer garden parties, especially those that are in part shade, will cheer when the cardinal flower arrives. They come to the party fashionably thin and dressed in bright red. True, they imbibe more than many guests, so be prepared to serve a few extra drinks to this American native. Once you see their brilliant flowers against green foliage, however, you'll be happy to indulge this *Lobelia's* thirst.



*Gomphocarpus physocarpus*, aka hairy balls



*Gomphocarpus* with monarch larva



*Nicotiana mutabilis*



*Lobelia cardinalis*

### *Nicotiana alata and mutabilis*

Flowering tobaccos are grown as annuals that self-seed in sun or part-shade. They come to the party wearing a perfume that is sweet but never cloying. Although *N. mutabilis* is native to Brazil, it's tolerant of light frosts in northern gardens, making it the perfect support plants for late-to-migrate hummingbirds.

### *Papaver rhoeas*

Annual poppies are the definition of flamboyant. Their brightly colored flowers wave on the tops of thin stems, and they are so pollen-rich that they seem to encourage bee debauchery. *P. rhoeas* is commonly called corn poppy or Flanders poppy, and is native to Europe. *Papaver somniferum*, aka bread seed poppy or opium poppy, is also an extravagantly beautiful flower that comes in a variety of colors. Some

gardeners shy away from letting *P. somniferum* crash their parties since technically the DEA could prosecute anyone growing this Mediterranean native in their gardens.

### *Rudbeckia triloba*

Brown-eyed Susan is a biennial or short-lived perennial in Zones 4 – 8, and is a prized party guest because she's just so darn cheerful. This plant is happy to party in part-shade or full sun, blooms for several weeks in late summer, and consorts with shorter perennials well since it grows 3 to 4 feet tall without shading the plants below.

### *Verbascum chaixii*

I've never met a *Verbascum* that I didn't love and based on the action in my garden when they're in flower, I'd say the bees feel the same way.



Corn poppies



Bread poppy with bees



Verbascum with bees



Verbascum chaixii



Rudbeckia triloba



Zizia



Verbena and Gomphocarpus in front of the garden shed



such as zinnias or dahlias.

### *Zizia aurea*

I offer three reasons to invite *Zizia* to your garden party. 1) The bright yellow flower umbels is a lovely cut flower that looks good with peonies. 2) This plant is the host for swallowtail butterfly larvae. 3) If you plant *Zizia* and *Asclepias*, you can truthfully say that your garden contains flowers “from A to Z.” Consider *Zizia*, aka golden Alexander, for your

guest list if you’re in Zones 3 – 8 and want a plant for moist soils in sun or part-shade.

No matter what type of self-seeding plants you invite to your garden celebrations, be sure to let the seeds mature on the varieties you wish to encourage, but promptly remove those who are already on the verge of overwhelming the party. Let seed pods stay on the plant until they turn brown. At that point you can either let them fall to the ground to seed in place, or you can scatter them in other locations where you’d like them to grow. Don’t mulch the areas where you’ve spread the seeds, and the following spring you’re likely to see young plants arriving as your celebration gets started. When it comes to party crashers, they’re always up for a good time.

*Chaixii*, aka nettle-leaved mullein, is a party guest that tends to invite *all* of its relatives, however, so it’s one that requires a heavy hand with editing excess plants. I cut all that have finished flowering to the ground before they set seeds, and pull excess plants as they appear. This also improves the look of the garden once the blooms have faded and keeps my gardens from becoming a nettle-leaved mullein forest.

### *Verbena bonariensis*

This tender perennial shows up in great numbers where soil is well-drained, and grows quickly to 4 feet tall. It is a perfect plant for perennial garden celebrations, since the stems and leaves are so thin that it always plays well with others. The small purple blossom on the end of a thin, stiff stem lasts well in bouquets and dances well with other cutting flowers

*This article was originally published in 2MillionBlossoms, and won the GardenComm Silver Award for writing in 2022.*

C.L. Fornari is an author, speaker and host of GardenLine on WXTK.. She works at an independent garden center on Cape Cod and grows an abundance of plants in her gardens at Poison Ivy Acres. Connect with her at [www.GardenLady.com](http://www.GardenLady.com).



# MHS Staff Take a Field Trip to Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

Boothbay, ME



As an MHS Member, you get access to the AHS Reciprocal Admission Program, which grants you free or discounted admission to hundreds of botanical gardens and arboreta across the country, including Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens!





# Allen C. Haskell Public Gardens Preserved for Everyone. Forever.

By Haskell Gardens Horticulturist Kristin McCullin

Many readers may be familiar with Allen C. Haskell from his Boston Flower Show fame of the 80s and 90s, or you may have taken a pilgrimage to the Haskell family nursery for “plants and compliments” before its closing. Allen Clifton Haskell (1935-2004) has been described as “a nurseryman with an artist’s eye.” In the early 1950s Haskell created a 6-acre urban oasis, - meandering cobblestone pathways, a dozen greenhouses, ivy-covered brick buildings, and rare plant specimens in New Bedford, MA.

In 2012 the property went on the open market for sale. Threatened by development, The Trustees of Reservations received a concerned call from city hall in New Bedford. For-

mer Director of the Southeast Region for The Trustees, John Vasconcellos and the Trustees team, tirelessly began fundraising to save this special place for the community of New Bedford. A large funding stream came through Gateway Cities Park Grants dictating the property be open and free to the public 365 days a year. This piece is critical in an urban lower income neighborhood where many people do not have back yards. As a result, many of the typical walls in public gardens have come down and the property is more accessible “for everyone” as the Trustees mission states. “It’s a bittersweet moment,” said Ellena Haskell. “I hate to see it go but am happy to see it go to a good cause. It is kind of a dream come true.” While The Trustees owns and

manages the property, the city holds a conservation restriction that prohibits its devotement and secures the preservation of this special place.

I began working on the project in December of 2013 after the acquisition was legally complete- first as a superintendent, and later focusing on the plant collections after renovations as the staff horticulturist. Together with countless volunteers, we began the conversion of a family run nursery into a public garden. Many of the historic structures, and bones of the garden were still on site but many invasives had moved in and us gardeners know, once you stop watering you lose plants quickly. There were considerable amounts of deferred maintenance in the gardens and to the many structures and homes. Many of the dead and dying plant material was composted and former nursery infrastructure removed and donated to other nurseries and local farmers. The Trustees reopened the property in October of 2014 to the public while continuing the needed renovations. One of the oldest homes in New Bedford (dated 1725) was renovated for staff, while outbuildings were converted into four-season public bathrooms, office space, a visitor center, and a classroom. Greenhouses were removed and the abandoned planting fields were converted to a town common style lawn for yoga, garden parties, and many other events.

Allen Haskell’s partner, Eugene “Gene” Bertrand (1949- 2019), signed

on with the Trustees in 2014 and became a mentor to staff and volunteers. Gene was the closest that we had to Allen Haskell. Gene was his partner in life and business- working and living on the property for 30 years as the nursery manager. Allen was not a record keeper and Gene became critical in identifying the collection with the help of many professional plant people. Gene also provided many colorful stories of the past and recorded an oral history that can be found in our archives and research center. One of Gene’s favorite tasks was working with the volunteers on Wednesday morning. He would show us different techniques and cheerlead many a regenerative pruning of a historic specimen shrub, while sharing old stories of parties held on the nearby terrace. He was a pleasure to work with and he is dearly missed, yet we still hear him quite often with his advice and quick wit in the garden.

Today the Allen C. Haskell Public Gardens host many area non-profits for programming. New Bedford Wellness Initiative funds a free yoga on the lawn every Thursday night which brings 30-60 people depending on the weather. This August we hosted a New Bedford based theater company for outdoor theater. As the horticulturist, I curate plant sale fundraisers every year, lead tours, and teach a handful of classes. There is a very active creative economy in New Bedford, so in addition to horticulture, we also celebrate the artist (painter) side of Allen Haskell. Currently we have

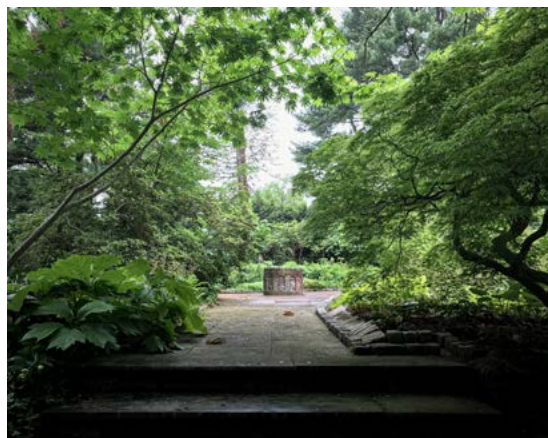


4 different installations where art and horticulture meet and encourage visitor interaction. Many of us in the industry speak about designing for “Instagramable moments” and these sculptures provide a beautiful backdrop for a selfie or a quiet picnic snap. In 2020 glass artist, Tracy Barbosa, quarantined in one of the old Lord and Burnham glasshouses and transformed it into a magical rainbow-colored exhibit which certainly attracts children of all ages. As the horticulturist, I love designing seasonal displays that interact with these art pieces. This year the foreground of the rainbow greenhouse was a silver tropical plant bed with giant Agaves in traditional Allen Haskell terracotta. Every year is different and that is what makes a garden so dynamic- it is always changing and there are so many reasons to come back and visit.

This autumn the Trustees is installing a new garden room through a grant funded by the South Coast Community Foundation. This half acre garden will highlight native plants to our county in Southeastern Massachusetts. The space is a story of succession—a meadow punctuated by clusters of *Juniperus virginiana*, Eastern Red Cedar; *Betula populifolia*, Gray Birch;

and *Pinus rigida*, Pitch Pine with under plantings of *Schizachyrium scoparium*, Little Blue Stem and other coastal wildflowers. Visitors are encouraged to enter the spiral pathway taking them inward to a glade that can be used for meditation, contemplation, and rest. Currently we are collaborating with artist, Mike Medeiros of Poesia Pottery, a former Haskell Nursery employee with family roots in the nursery industry in New Bedford. Keep an eye out for yoga nidra, mindfulness, and other plant-based classes in this garden as the space evolves and grows into itself. We are very excited to reveal this new space.

I am not quite sure what Allen Haskell would say about some of these contemporary art pieces and new garden trends. He most definitely would share his opinion. I’m pretty confident we are successful welcoming the community and the next generation into the space. The Trustees have flipped the script- no longer only a space for the elite, but now a place of belonging, welcoming all.



Above: Haskell Garden, photo credit Peter Marotta

Left: Drawing on the Sacred Circle by Andy Moerlein, photo credit Frank Grace.

## All About Plants: Three from Timber Press

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

*The Gardener's Palette: Creating Colour Harmony in the Garden*  
by Jo Thompson

388pp | Timber Press | \$45.00

*The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide: How to Combine Shape, Color, and Texture to Create the Garden of Your Dreams*  
by Jenny Rose Carey

364 pp | Timber Press | \$29.95

*The Northeast Native Plant Primer: 235 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden*  
by Uli Lorimer

250pp | Timber Press | \$ 24.95

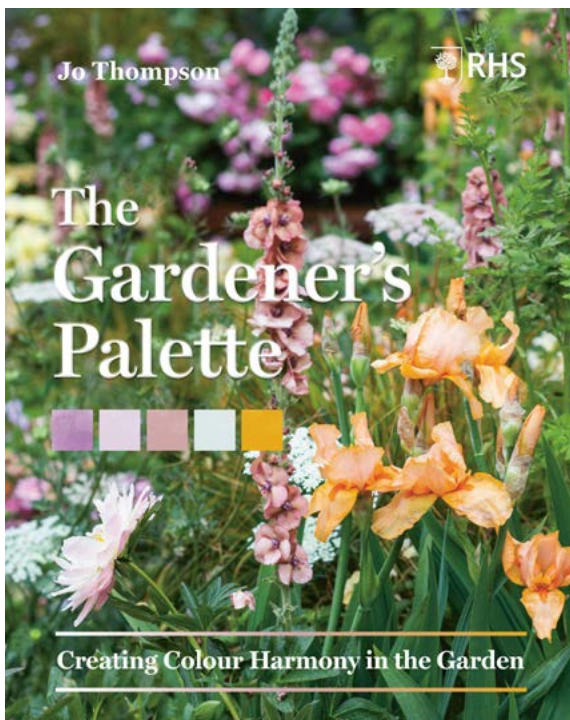
After this extraordinarily water challenged summer, you, like me, may have decided to cut your losses and begin thinking about next year. If so, a trio of books recently published by Timber Press offers both inspiration and practical examples about using plants effectively – whether for beauty, personal edification, or environmental benefit. The choice is yours and is most likely a hybrid of the three.

Founded in 1978, [Timber Press](#) publishes books that share the wonders of the natural world. Internationally recognized, they work with experts in the fields of gardening, horticulture, natural history, nature and science, and health and wellness. I have reviewed many of their publications, which have received awards from the American Horticultural Society, the Garden Writers of America, the Garden Media Guild, and the National Garden Club of America.

With a robust annual catalogue of publications, it can be difficult to keep up with their titles while keeping abreast of new books by other publishers. I don’t know why I was surprised to learn at the presentation by Jo Thompson at the Garden Museum’s Literary Festival in June that her new book, *The Gardener's Palette: Creating Colour Harmony in the Garden*, is published by Timber Press in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society and that the royalties support the Society. It’s another example of the diversity of Timber Press’s [portfolio of authors](#).

Thompson is one of England’s ten top garden designers and plants women.





The recipient of four Gold and five Silver Gilt medals at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and the People's Choice award at the first RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, she maintains an active practice known for its relaxed yet sophisticated designs.

In *The Gardener's Palette*, Thompson shares what is described as an "entirely new way for home gardeners to confidently incorporate colour" into their gardens. A brief introduction acknowledges that each of us perceive color differently and provides a brief overview of the history of color theory. Notable is a discussion of the RHS Colour Charts created by J.H. Wanscher in

1953, which remain the standard reference used by horticulturalists worldwide for recording plant colors, each with a unique number, letter code, and name.

One hundred case studies featuring curated plant palettes inspired by the RHS Colour Chart follow. In most, images of professionally designed gardens accompany plant portfolios and charts with details about each plant. Thompson's work is featured, as are other leading British and international designers. The case studies are titled by color scheme or other descriptive text such as "Hot Garden," "Naturally Pretty," "Zing," or "Your Red is My



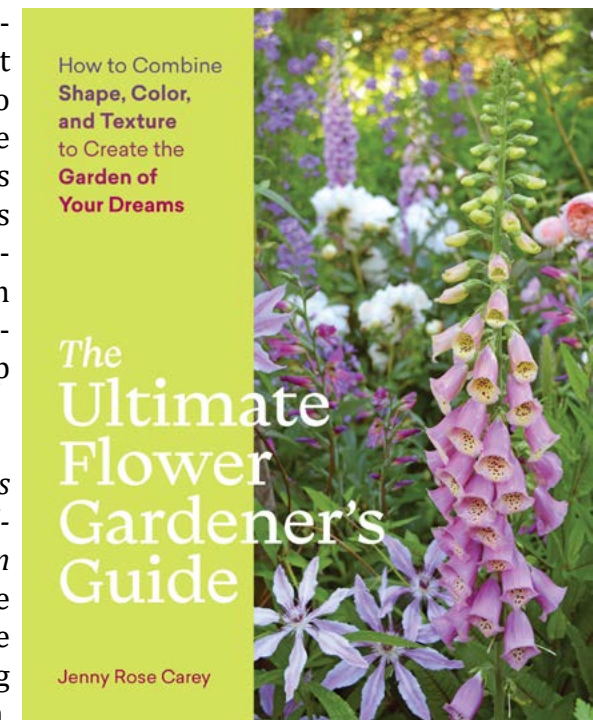
Design by Jo Thompson, photo by Marianne Majerus



Green;" however, there isn't an easily accessible cross reference that lists what gardens are featured so one must carefully read each case study to understand where one is and what makes the compositions work. In the introduction, Thompson advises the reader to "fasten your seatbelt," and while it's a glorious ride, a bit more of a roadmap would have been welcomed.

In *The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide: How to Combine Shape Color and Texture to Create the Garden of Your Dreams*, author Jenny Rose Carey provides a comprehensive and practical approach to planting a uniquely personal flower garden. Carey, an educator, historian, au-

thor, and the former senior director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Meadowbrook Farm in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, started gardening as a child in her parent's English cottage garden. Wherever she has lived since, she has grown flowers. In *The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide*, she shares her personal, creative process and encourages the reader to pursue the same.

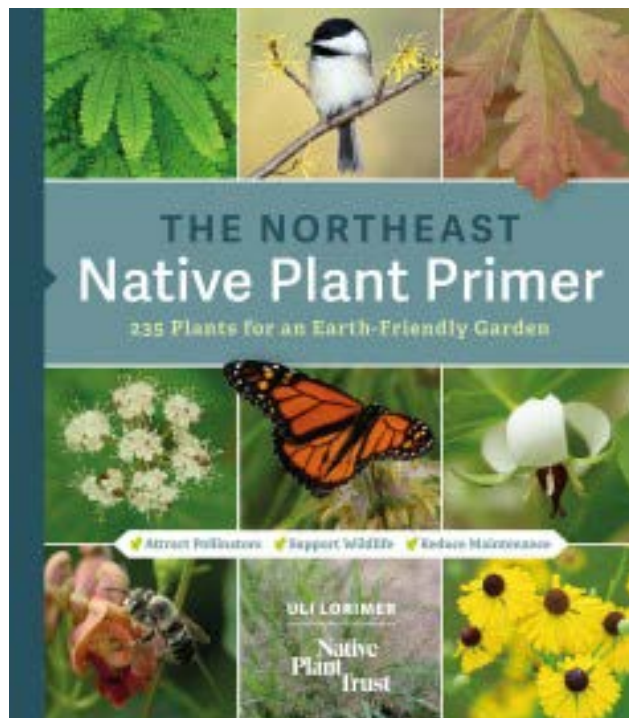




Using individual flowers as the building blocks of garden design, *The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide* begins with a chapter explaining how to look carefully at individual flowers and develop a “wish list” that merges flower attributes such as shape, color, and presence. A guide to the gardening year details tasks, activities, and seasonal plant favorites followed by a chapter devoted to the plant palette, which contains a list of 200 of Carey's favorite flower garden genera, species and cultivars that flourish in a sunny (six or more hours a day) location.

The concluding chapters provide insight into laying the groundwork for your garden with practical considerations about where, when, and how to plant (such as how Carey learned to buy in threes), planting in drifts, combining flower colors, and finding inspiration. How to prepare, plan, plant, and maintain your flower garden is also covered. A complement of full-color photographs (by Carey) accompanies every page.

There's a lot of information packed into *The Ultimate Flower Gardener's Guide* and some topics are covered more thoroughly than others. There is an introductory section on gardening for pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, a topic that is covered in



depth in *The Northeast Native Plant Primer: 235 Plants for an Earth-Friendly Garden* by Uli Lorimer, director of horticulture at the Native Plant Trust's (formerly the New England Wild Flower Society) Garden in the Woods in Framingham, Massachusetts.

For more than twenty years Lorimer has worked in public horticulture as an advocate for the use of native plants in public gardens and the designed landscape, as well as in the wild. His approach differs from others in that he uses only native species and no cultivated varieties, noting that cultivated plants have been produced by and for humans only and that asexually propagated and cloned plants do not adapt to the environment. Unlike gardening for the five senses, the approach taken in the previous two books where color and passion are tantamount, Lorimer endorses ecological horticulture, questioning why, how, and for whom we garden. He views the use of native plants in the garden as an act of liberation, noting that pollinators and wildlife prefer them.

To that end, Lorimer includes preliminary information on how to get started, but devotes most of the book to plant profiles of native trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, ferns, grasses, sedges, and rushes, providing their scientific and common names, native habitats, height at maturity, preferred light conditions, wildlife value, and description. Additional keys show if the plant is attractive and beneficial to birds, native pollinators, and butterflies as a food source or larval host, or provides food, forage, shelter, nesting material, or cover for mammals, reptiles, or amphibians.

Reviewed together these three titles provide different takes on how to garden and there is an audience for each. Perhaps, Carey best sums up how to proceed with her advice to “get stuck and get started” and find inspiration in your own garden, whatever path you choose to follow.

A flower truss of *Rhododendron periclymenoides* (below) and emerging foliage of *Caulophyllum-giganteum* (right), courtesy of the Native Plant Trust.





# What to Do with What You've Got

By John Lee

'Nature has taught the wild things how to live; human beings must learn the art themselves' he muttered under his occasionally resentful-sounding breath. 'And that's hard when you start to get old.' Bert was sitting in the garden lovingly tended, he willingly conceded, by his wife, Brenda. But it's not that he was getting old (Heaven forfend!) but sitting in his easy chair looking over the floral abundance, the panoply of pastels spreading to his left and right made him a little nostalgic. If he thought long and hard enough, these border gardens were a fitting memorial to a life well-lived, a monument to their individual and collective industry. These gardens

had produced dozens of bouquets much appreciated by their neighbors and shut-ins (friends and family who might be counting their days). Despite Brenda's cutting and culling, his vision remained fulsome. She was careful to select stems at the right time and not wantonly pillage. Who knew that a careful harvest only improves the product? As for the berries, these days when it was hard to keep up, he figured 'two thirds for me, a third for the birds. It seemed a bit generous but even with netting, he and Brenda could not keep up with the production. It was not as though he had over-planted, the berries, all of them now over-produced in his humble es-

timation. This despite the remarkable drought everyone was experiencing. The stream behind the house was down to a trickle and had they not put in a well, they would have run out of water this summer as had some of the older (and newer) homesteads in the area – lessons learned a bit late for some.

If the well ran dry in mid-August, they would have an extraordinary problem on their hands. Aside from the inconvenience, what to do with the burgeoning where-with-all in the vegetable gardens bordered on sinful. Every late-winter and early spring he and this wife poured over countless vegetable and flower catalogues imagining their summer labors. Bert studied the fine print for hardiness, length to harvest and such details. Brenda scanned the fine print for such insights as 'freezes well' or 'slightly sweeter than...'). Then there was always a robust exchange of views as whether 'early to harvest' was better than 'season extender' or 'most prolific' because what came in when and how heavily was important in the home kitchen. An over-production of pickles might mean either a pending paucity of sleep or diminution of late-berry jams or jellies. Brenda, oddly enough, had never been able to manage putting up jam and making chow-chow at the same time. It was the same with the spring had it run low. There was only so much water when the recharge was slow and as August pushed into September, no matter how much the garden yielded,

there was only so much time and energy that the two of them had to put into putting food by to preserve their bounty. Of course, now being blueberry and raspberry season, finding an alternative use for those berries was commonplace come breakfast time. Bert nearly died most of the year pinning for fresh berries in his pancakes - he could have frozen berries any time. Brenda's home-made were about the only pancakes they would eat because pancake house pancakes were almost always made only with white flour or something like Bisquick which, without fail, meant textureless, doughy flapjacks usually accompanied by fake maple syrup. There was hardly anything more humbling than a disappointing breakfast which always got the day off on the wrong foot.

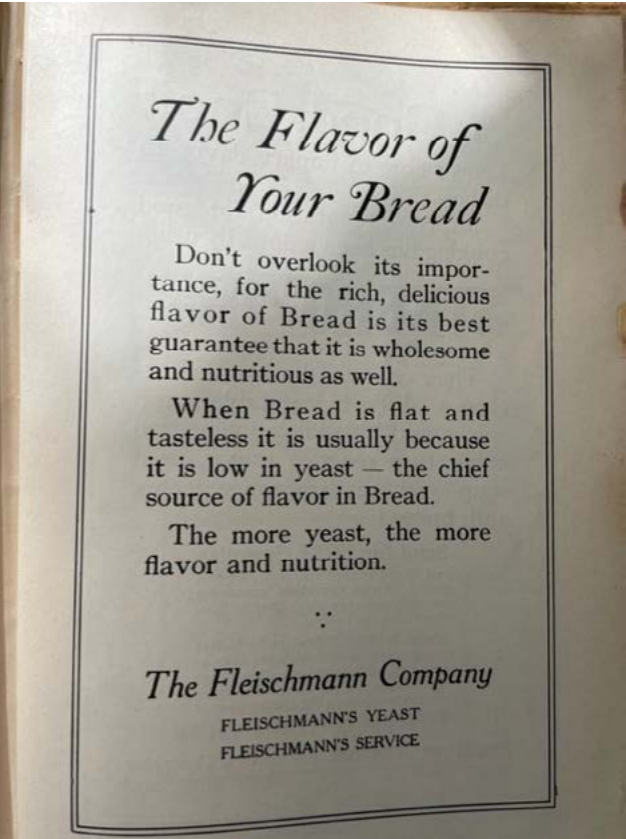
## Brenda's Favorite Griddle Cakes

- 1c unbleached flour
- 1c finely ground corn meal
- 1 Tbsp Baking Powder
- 1c milk
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 fresh eggs
- 1/4c vegetable oil

Thoroughly mix dry ingredients then add the eggs, milk and oil in no particular order beating until smooth. Vary amounts according to how many you plan to serve. Add fruit just before cooking. To prepare griddle, heat to medium and melt just enough butter so that the cakes do not stick. (Cast iron griddles are preferable to non-stick pans (hence 'griddle' cakes).







clockwork to help. As Brenda's older sister, she knew pretty much everything about anything in the kitchen, or so she thought. Francis, her kindly and capable husband, cared only that he get three meals a day for which he was eternally grateful. He actually cared little about the preparation since growing up in Starvation Corner, any number of square meals was a minor miracle more often than not depending on the season. As soon as they arrived on the scene, both Bert and Brenda heaved a sigh of relief because Bert and Francis could share the pickings while their wives put the pickings to good use. Mrs D and Brenda made good company in the kitchen even as they debated whether to salt the pickles or the pancakes or not.

While Bert had little control over production in the garden, Brenda and Mrs D knew pretty much just how many jars of jam or bread and butters they each could consume year to year. If they were lucky enough to produce more than that, they also knew who in town to share it with. 'Old John' Atwell down the road (amongst many others) was not getting around much anymore. He and his wife no longer had family to help them get ready for the long winter ahead so they were happy to accept anything put by (nevermind anything fresh) that would ease the pains of their decrepitude and keep the proverbial wolf from their door.

If, after their neighborly charity, there was yet crop to spare, Bert would put a table by the roadside for the newer, younger neighbors to pick over and maybe leave a little spare change in return.

Every late-August, the local Grange put on a home-maker's chicken pie supper for all the neighbors. It was the social event of the season. Such dinners were heritage celebrations from the time when every homestead raised and slaughtered their own hens. Suffice it to say, every family swore by one breed of pullet or another: some favored Brahmins of varying stripes while others were partial to Silver-laced Wyandottes. Truth be told, however, the breed of bird was never the topic of conversation around the boarding-house/family-style tables in the Grange Hall. The friendly banter always devolved around who made the best chicken pie that (or every!) year. All of the ladies made deep-dish pies but some made chicken and dumpling pies, while other produced pies with a biscuit crust. ((Insert KA Flour advert.)) Some of the ladies made whatever came to mind that morning just to be sure there were enough pies to go around. All the ladies universally agreed about the basic ingredients in their pies (not how many carrots or peas because nowadays almost all of them used store-bought hens) were what made the recipes - that's where

technique and just the right amount of elbow grease came in. These dinners were also a time to take the temperature of the general health of the neighborhood and perhaps have a look-see about who might need looking in on in the wintry months ahead. Oddly enough, most folks knew from past experience who liked a chicken pie and just whose pie it was that they preferred. Some folks just get that way, most agreed. But everyone agreed that currant jelly always improved anybody's chicken pie:

Wash currants but do not remove stems; place in a kettle with as much water as fruit. Cook until currants are soft and colorless then drain in a jelly bag; add 3/4c sugar per cup of juice. 'Then follow the apple jelly recipe of your choice' according to Imogene Wolcott in the 'incomparable' Yankee Cook Book.

John Lee is the recently retired manager of MHS Gold Medal winner Allandale Farm, Cognoscenti contributor and president of MA Society for Promoting Agriculture. He sits on the Governor's Food Policy Council and UMASS Board of Public Overseers and is a long-time op-ed contributor to Edible Boston and other publications.





# FROM THE STACKS

MAUREEN T. O'BRIEN, LIBRARY MANAGER



“*All an instructor needs to teach is a student, a book and a bench.*”  
Walter Punch (1948-2022)

## Featured Collection — Herbert Wendell Gleason Negative Collection and Plans

We are pleased to announce that Digital Commonwealth, in conjunction with the Boston Public Library, has digitized and published online the Society's Gleason negatives. These images show early 20th century estate gardens, many of which are no longer in existence.

Herbert Wendall Gleason (1855-1937) was a renowned photographer of nature. He worked for the National Parks Service (NPS), National Geographic,



The Craftsman and other publications. He was close friends with the first Director of NPS Stephen Mather, noted botanist Luther Burbank and the "Father of National Parks," John Muir. Later in life, he was the official photographer of the Arnold Arboretum and Massachusetts Horticultural Society. You may view these images [here](#). The next phase of the project is to update the spreadsheet of the collection to add additional information on the properties and owners. When completed, we will post a link in Leaflet. Thank you to volunteer Kathleen Glenn for her work on this precious collection.

An update of the plans in our collections and archives is found [here](#). Thank you to volunteer Anita Blaine-Dzialo for her painstaking work on this project that is an important resource for our staff and the public. This is a long-term project since we have a large stack that await rehousing and documentation.

## Book Club

The Tuesday, August 23rd Meeting Report  
Contributed by Kathleen Glenn – The Setting

The Book Club met outside in the garden under grey skies. Our conversation was accompanied by rumbles of thunder. Members were torn between wanting it to rain because our gardens need it so, and not wanting to be rained out!

Contributed by Maureen Horn – The Discussion

The latest book discussed by this group of avid readers prompted thoughtful comments about human psychology. The Orchid Thief, by Susan Orlean was the story of the author's adventures with a self-described orchid poacher who drove her around Florida and introduced her to sundry citizens who shared his fascination with the flower. From the book, one can learn myriad facts about orchids and the history of an industry, and it requires one to speculate on the reasons for collecting. Some participants think that collecting makes

"Italian gardens and lake, view through stone carved urns at Walter Hunnewell's." June 24, 1924. Photographer: Herbert Wendall Gleason (1855-1937). Massachusetts Horticultural Society. This garden still exists and is located on the private Hunnewell Estate, on Lake Waban in Wellesley, Massachusetts.



the world more manageable and all agreed that that we now don't take plants for granted anymore. We also agreed that Susan Orlean was a likeable character, trusting and non-judgmental.

### **Tuesday, September 20**

*Around The World In Eighty Plants* by Jonathan Drori.  
For those who have read this one, another option could be *Around The World In Eighty Trees* and again we might have an interesting discussion comparing the two books.

### **Tuesday, October 25**

*Old Herbaceous* by Reginald Arkell

### **Tuesday, November 15**

*The Gardener's Bedtime Book* by Richardson Wright

### **Tuesday, December 13**

*Hands On The Land*, by Jan Albers

New members are welcome to join. Meetings are in the Crockett Garden @1:30pm. If the weather is poor, the meeting will be held indoors.

## **In the Windows – New Books on Our Shelves and Books for Sale**

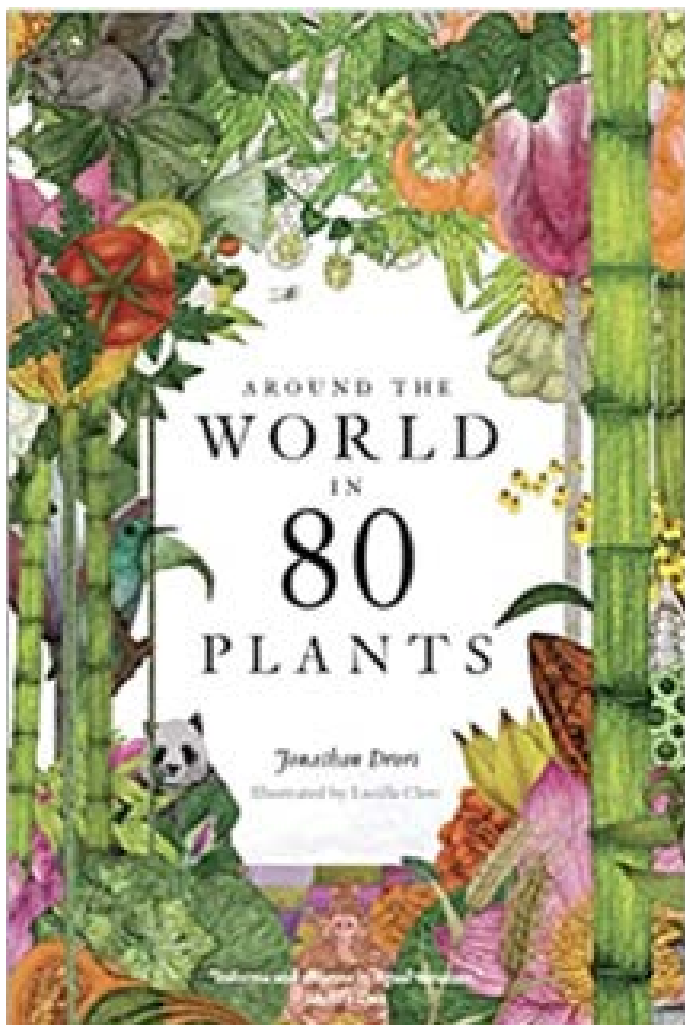
### **Our Collections are Growing**

We thank the following people and organizations for their generous in-kind contributions to the Library this month: Phyllis Andersen, Arleyn Levee, Maureen Horn, Mount Cuba Center, Philadelphia Horticultural Society and North Carolina Botanical Garden.

Support our mission by donating a book to the Library from the Society's [Amazon Smile Wishlist](#). Make sure you leave your name and we will thank you in the next Leaflet. Then come to the Library and borrow some books—one of your membership benefits! Borrowing books from a library is a great, green way to reduce your consumption.

### **A Passing**

We are sad to report that Walter Punch, former Head Librarian at the Society



passed away on May 23, 2022, after a brief illness. While at the Society, Walter edited *Keeping Eden: A History of Gardening in America* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1992.) Author Judith Tankard stated “[t]his splendid book combines rich visual material with an unusually high standard of writing that makes it a book definitely worth keeping.” These standards were what Walter encouraged his students to attain. You can read Tankard’s review [here](#). Walter received the Large Gold Medal from the Society in 1992 for his contribution as Editor for *Keeping Eden*. Walter was also on the Editorial Board of the New England Garden History Society.

Walter was a popular instructor at the Radcliffe Seminars, later the Landscape Institute, and had quite a fan club. One of his students described his classes as “electrifying and methods original. He once invited his students to come to the Library and dust the rare books so they could get to know the books as beautiful objects.” Walter was known as a witty raconteur and intellect. His memory brings smiles to our faces and he will be missed.

## **Do you Love Libraries and History? Consider volunteering at the Library for 2-3 hours per week**

The Library has a dedicated staff of volunteers who have varied backgrounds and interests, all of whom contribute to preserving our collections and sharing them with the public. We have a lot of fun!

We have openings for a few volunteers. Some of the tasks we need assistance with include filing, labeling, scanning and data input. Other tasks are reorganizing and shelving books and working with Archival projects.

If interested, send an email of interest that includes a brief summary of your relevant skills and your availability to Library Manager Maureen O’Brien [here](#).

### **Come Visit**

The Library is open Thursdays from 10 am to 1 pm, by appointment and when the lights are on. Please email Library Manager Maureen O’Brien at [mobrien@masshort.org](mailto:mobrien@masshort.org) for an appointment if you want to schedule a visit.



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