



Leaflet

A MASSACHUSETTS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION



JUNE 2022

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REMEMBER TO STOP AND SMELL THE FLOWERS

It's finally here, summer officially starts this month! It's a perfect month to really learn how to enjoy the garden space or to recall why you decided to grow with us as a member. Take a moment to listen to the birds, soak in the warmth of the sun, and actually stop and smell the flowers. I know I'm not just speaking for myself when I say sometimes, even as a staff member, I forget to simply stop and smell the flowers.

Anytime I mention my career the first comment is always, "it must be so great to work in such a beautiful space" and the answer is always "Yes, it is" but the truth is many times I catch myself running from one task to another, sitting in front of my screen typing away, or grumbling about having to spend such a long day at the office. Too often to count, our team will remind each other that it's a gorgeous day out and we should back away from our

desk to go for walk.

So, let's all use June to remember why we enjoy the Garden and what really pulled us into this space in the first place. While the gorgeous blooms are usually a crowd favorite, think back to another reason of why you fell in love with the garden. Is this a space of tranquility, a favorite spot to meet family and friends, did it provide a piece of normality during the hardest months of the pandemic? Did you say your vows here? Leave a tribute to a loved one? We all have a different reason as to why we enjoy the space.

I hope to see you in June. Bring a picnic, take a stroll with a friend, volunteer for the morning; however, you chose to enjoy the space please remember to always stop and smell the flowers.

Allison Dush

Director of Education & Guest Experience



UPCOMING CLASSES



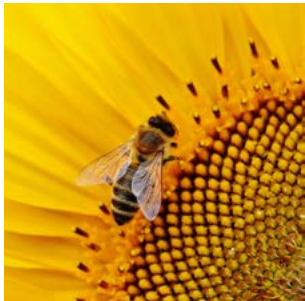
Houseplant Emergency Room
June 9, 10am-1pm



Guided Garden Tour
June 11, 10-11:30am



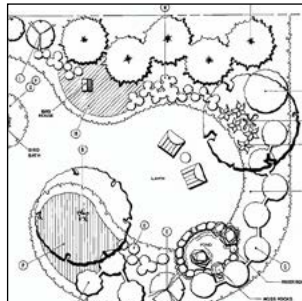
Shibori & Indigo Fabric Dyeing
June 25, 9am-4pm



Macro Photography Workshop
June 25, 10:30am-2:30pm



Guided Garden Tour
June 29, 9-10:30am



The Art of Planting Design: Learn to Design in Seasonal Sequence
July 13, 10am-2pm

[VIEW ALL](#)

GREEN PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

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



UPCOMING EVENTS



Music in the Garden Summer Concert Series
June 8, 7-8:30pm



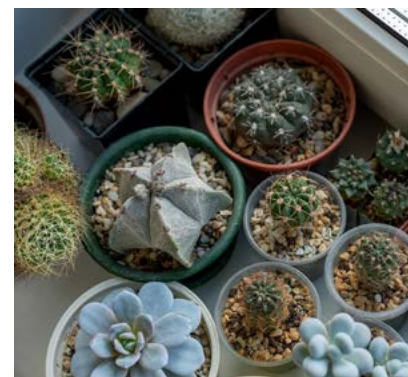
Late Nights in the Garden
July 28 & August 18, 4-8pm



Christmas in July
July 23-31
10am-5:30pm

POP-UP CLASSES

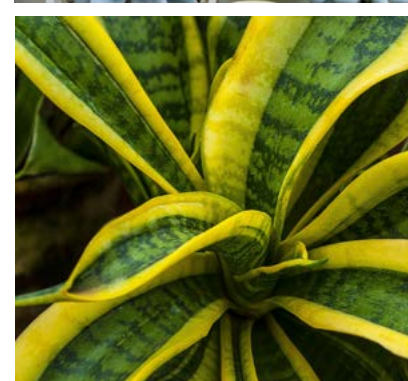
Join us for pop-up classes to learn all about cool and unique houseplants to add to your collection or start off your plant family!



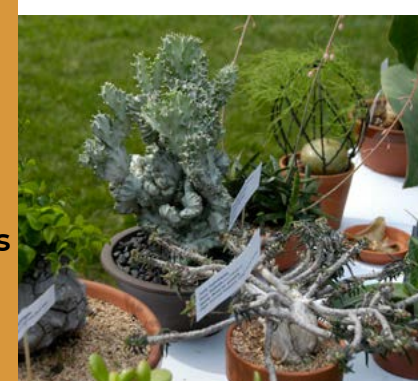
Windowsill Plants
June 14
10am-1pm



Terrariums
July 12
10am-1pm



Sansevieria
August 16
10am-1pm



Odd Houseplants
September 13
10am-1pm



Preparing to Enjoy

By Karen Daubmann, Director of Garden and Programs

Sometimes gardening seems overwhelming. The thought that brings me sheer panic is the total acreage or sum total of project areas to plant in interesting ways, whether at home or at work, and the idea that anything is possible. With such an open-ended assignment, sometimes, then, the idea of choice overload hits and the panic pauses projects and all plans are stalled.

June is the month to enjoy. How can you enjoy horticulture when you need to get plants in the ground, the weeds are unstoppable, and the irrigation is fussy? Throughout the winter months we are bombarded with seed

catalogs, online articles and views of flower shows, garden tours, and plant suppliers. I have a stack of ideas—plants I love and want to use, great combinations I’ve seen online – but how do the ideas work their way into action? When June arrives it is time for the rubber to meet the road; much of what we’ve thought and dreamed needs to be ready to be implemented. I have two tips to help you enjoy June gardening, and maybe even enjoy gardening year-round. First, get your ideas organized, second, think about gardening in bites rather than the whole.

My two tools for staying organized

are excel and Pinterest. I try to track all my plant purchases in an excel sheet that has plant name, where purchased, size, price, and location where I planted it. Having an “accession list” for your home garden is important. When you realize that you’d like to extend a bed or divide a plant and give it away you can look back and know exactly which cultivar you need more of, or what you’re dividing. Another great record-keeping tactic is keeping a wish list—when you’re doing your bulb orders and the lilies you want are sold out, you can make a note of how many you’d like and where you’d plant them. Having a wish list also might curb plant spending – when going shopping you’re more focused on what you need rather than the things that catch your eye. I often buy things that catch my eye, but I don’t have an area prepared for it. Throughout the seasons, you can look at your notes

and see what else you’d order next winter.

I know Pinterest often gets a bad rap as being the place for procuring casserole recipes but hear me out! I’ve created boards for each category in the garden (fences/gates, planters, seeds to buy) and boards for specific plant palettes I’m developing (hot fun pool party garden, sea mist garden, moonlight garden, melancholy meadow, hammock haven). It helps me to be able to organize my favorite photos, Instagram posts, auction listings, and plant catalog listings in a way that I can search them for future use and reorganize them as projects come to life. Most people in the gardening world are visual learners and being able to visually illustrate your ideas

Drawing inspiration from Instagram and Pinterest enables you to seek out and find flowers that match your color palette and overall garden design.



Hibiscus "White Texas Star"



Eremurus 'White Beauty'



'Clematis hexapetala'

Drawing inspiration from Instagram and Pinterest enables you to seek out and find flowers that match your color palette and overall garden design.



makes it possible for people to help you accomplish your goals.

During the height of the pandemic, I had time to see my home garden through the seasons and pay attention to the light and drainage in a way that I'd never done before. I saw that the grass along the roadway was in rough shape, the survey showed the property line was farther from the road than expected, mowing that swath of land seemed pointless, and with every storm, giant puddles would form and then get splashed farther and farther into my yard.

Instead of worrying about how I'd design and garden the entire property, I decided to tackle THIS ONE BIT. The idea – create a moat garden (what others might call a rain garden) to capture rainwater and help it ease back into the ground. With this in mind, and the historic nature of my home, I narrowed my plant palette and decided to only use white flowers. With a stone wall separating the space paral-

lel to the road, and a stone walkway separating the space perpendicular to the road, I had four distinct gardening spaces and a limited pallet to create a visually compelling garden.

For bloom succession I chose: *Muscari* 'Siberian Tiger', *Narcissus* 'Thalia', *Primula japonica* 'Alba', *Iris* 'Snowcrest', *Asclepias perennis*, and *Hibiscus* 'White Texas Star.' I bought these six plants in large quantities. It looked sparse, but the plants will grow, and I can monitor their seasonality and fill in with other plants as needed to ensure consistent color. After getting all those plants in the ground I found that my eye was drawn to white flowers in catalogs, while shopping, and

while commuting. At that point, my wish list grew, and I thought through what else I needed and was able to buy plants on sale—adding in *Rosa* 'Pretty Polly', *Galium odoratum*, *Eremurus* 'White Beauty', and *Nicotiana sylvestris*.

Getting myself organized and tackling this one bit of garden has helped me to have a better gameplan for moving forward on the rest of my gardening projects, and I find, my time gardening is more enjoyable.

Plants selected to go in the moat garden, including *Primula japonica* 'Alba,' ferns, and ornamental grasses.



YOUR FLOWERS, YOUR CREATIVE EYE & YOUR ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

BY CRIS BLACKSTONE



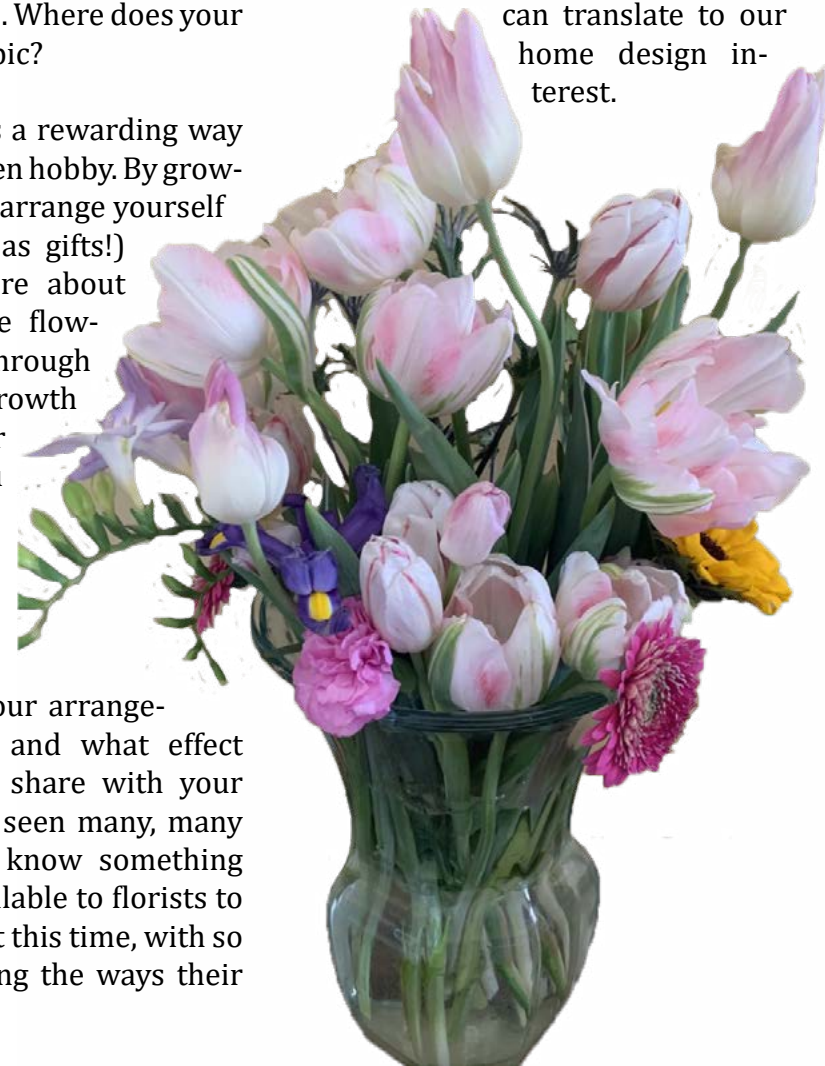
Understanding the flowers, not just their vase life, but their growing habit, can be an essential part of your flower arranging hobby. By growing flowers which have long stems, such as zinnia, certain marigolds, feather celosia and black-eyed susans, you can have a colorful palette to work with and have the joy of gardening. Deadheading the zinnias will net you more flowers than you have seen before! It may be tough to feel as if you are "wasting" blooms, but learning which plants put out more flowers by being deadheaded will be rewarding as this front yard cutting garden suggests. You can grow terrific 'filler flowers' by thinking about some natives or using herbs such as tulsii, for that filler role in an arrangement.

Fresh flowers carry such cultural significance, worldwide, and certainly in our own lives. From marking special personal events to marking overarching societal events, flowers arouse strong sentiments. Remembering a person or an event, years later when you get a waft of a certain flower's scent, you are transported with emotion, back to that day marked with that flower. Reviewing art history or architectural elements, from when peonies were replaced by roses in paintings or when laurel wreaths were carved in a temple's arches, flowers hold many stories throughout the ages. Where does your garden fit in this topic?

Flower arranging is a rewarding way to extend your garden hobby. By growing the flowers you arrange yourself (and keep or give as gifts!) you will learn more about botany through the flowers' names if not through learning their growth habits and their vase life once you are arranging with your own product.

You may have an image in your mind about how your arrangement should look and what effect you are hoping to share with your work. You've likely seen many, many arrangements and know something about products available to florists to use in their work. At this time, with so many florists sharing the ways their

practice is pivoting to acknowledge issues about sustainability, you can join that movement by learning some of the newest techniques to minimize the use of plastics and stay true to your message of using local flowers whenever possible. What is really involved by weaving sustainability with flower arranging? From what flowers to grow, (think native plants) to how to keep them viable in a bouquet (learn about vase life extension techniques) you can help by learning a technique to use right away, to minimize plastic use. Floral mechanics is on aspect of the florist industry we can translate to our home design interest.





By using tape in a tic-tac-toe shape, you will find you can use any shape or size vase, to help give your stems structure, support and let you really run with your eye for design and shapes you want to see develop in your flower arrangement. Tape from floral supply sites comes in several different widths, but also practice with an ordinary roll of tape you have on hand, to learn how it feels to visualize stems in the grid shape your tape mechanics offers.

What does the phrase “floral mechanics” mean? The mechanics involve the way stems, whether you grew them or bought them at the grocery store or farmer’s market, are placed where you want them, in a vase. Rather than putting your handful of stems in the fresh water, you can add your creative eye to the stems, and gain a defined shape for the arrangement. You may see certain flowers that will be the focus of the arrangement and want them to stand out a bit more. To do that, you need a mechanical way to help those stems stay right where you



see them most beneficial. If you had a bouquet in mind, from your previous experiences, you likely recall the green or black floral foam taped in the vase serving that purpose.

Exploring the floral foam leads to understanding what it’s made of and how it works. The benefits of this product include its ability to stabilize the arrangement, and continually add hydration to the flowers. Floral foam can be easily cut to meet any shape you have in mind, and increase creativity easily by that utility. It comes in different densities, which means you can buy it to be used with delicate stems as well as sturdier stems for your work. With those features, floral foam allows you to design with fewer stems, since you can place them with an eye on the arrangement itself and leave the desired open areas between flowers to allow the space needed for

With a taped grid, replacing floral foam as a mechanical support, stems such as tulips or others which benefit from some support, can continue to add value to your arrangement while allowing all the elements in the vase to be seen and appreciated for their shape and colors. Avoiding too many stems in a vase allows you the chance to make more arrangements! Make some for yourself and watch your friends and neighbors surprise and amazement at the beauty of nature and your creative outlet landing in their hands.

each flower to be seen and to continue to have space as the flowers continue to evolve in their lifespan in the arrangement. It is a petroleum product, with these benefits, but with known downsides.

With these positive aspects in mind about floral foam as a preferred mechanic, bear in mind several professional networks, such as the Sustainable Floristry Network or research articles published in *Flowers Magazine*, point out this product doesn’t fully biodegrade, but does breakdown to miniscule pieces of plastic, and never is dissolved by a degradation process. It lasts for tens of decades, in our water sources, and disturbing the environment just as other plastics do. At this point, we are unaware of microorganisms like fungi and bacteria breaking it down to the safe simple compounds.

Many florists cite recycling or reusing floral foam for more than one arrangement and suggest that you can retain it, resoak it, and use it multiple times, which offers some remedy to the ecological problems it may cause. But, beyond the pros or cons of floral foam, there are ways you can design with various workarounds.

One of the most readily available mechanics you can try is probably on hand in your desk drawer, or work backpack. TAPE! There are several widths of floral tape available at craft supply stores, which have some waterproof qualities, but your own role of ordinary tape is a great way to begin getting familiar with this technique. By making cross-hatching lines of tape across the top of your vase, you will net a grid to help you place the stems. The same flower design thought processes you may be familiar with are still front of mind, with the confident feeling you’ll get by avoiding single use plastic products in your work. Fillers, focus flowers, accents, statements, line, form. . .no matter which recipes you are following for your flower arrangements, you will be able to use the tape grids to help your stems stay right where you feel you need them to be.

Once you have tried this a few times with your store bought flowers to give the lines and depth you want to infuse in your arrangement, you will be able to branch out and combine flowers from your garden, or use a mixture of store-bought, home grown or foraged stems, for your arrangements. Moving into the summer months when your garden offers more and more to choose from, you will be able to also save money by buying fewer products

at the craft stores to use in your hobby work.

When your garden is going full force this summer, you'll find you want to make more and more arrangements. Once you see your arrangements are a source of such joy and feel the benefits in your own home, you will want to share more of your work with others and want to grow more flowers. It may not be necessary to grow more flowers – it may simply fall on you to learn more about the flowers you are experimenting with in this year's garden.

Until you began exploring flower arrangements on your own, you likely let your garden flowers blossom and did some conscientious work creat-

ing compost with the spent blooms or postponed fall cleanups until late spring so nesting bugs had homes in your ecological corners of your lawn and garden. With avid flower arranging, you'll find deadheading many types of flowers will yield more flowers and more profuse blooms to choose from for your work! Some of our most beloved and colorful flowers benefit the most from deadheading – think about zinnias and dahlias, for example. Learning more about the flowers in your garden will give you more insights about how you can be a sustainable floral design hobby enthusiast by helping the plants produce more flowers for your pleasure.

What you grow will be the source of your flower work, and how you set the stems in your designs will reflect your level of interest in sustainable practices and ecological approaches to your garden both outdoors and once inside. With all the work and mindfulness you've put in your flowers, it's time to consider the vase life and ways to keep that arrangement

Tulips and other bulb or corm flowers are sometimes dug, rather than cut, to include the bulb or corm which is then discarded. You can leave some in your garden, which will regenerate in the coming year, or you can dig / trim and discard as the large floral distributors do. No matter which flowers you use, remember to trim off any leaf or foliage that will be beneath the water line to avoid hosting bacterial growth on the degenerating leaves or foliage. Peeling off leaves is effective on just about any flowers you use - turn the stem around and see the origination point of the foliage and peel or trim with the flow of that growth pattern.

offering you its joyful bounty as long as possible.

Research shows that all flowers benefit from refreshing the vase water as often as possible. Daily? Yes, if you can, but certainly every couple of days' freshened water will be beneficial. As we understand the enemy of freshly cut flowers is bacterial growth in the vase water, it becomes evident that any extra foliage under the waterline will be the host for bacterial growth. Cut off, strip or pluck off, any foliage to leave bare stems supporting the flowers whenever possible. You may find some foliage is helpful to the arrangement's structure, but that will be remedied by the frequent freshening of the water. And, putting a fresh cut on the bottom of each stem during the arrangement's life, will be helpful, since the cells in the stem cut begin to close and limit the water intake for many types of flowers. A fresh cut eliminates the places on the base of the stem where bacteria may be lurking and give a fresh area for water uptake to be more effective for the whole stem and bloom. A diagonal cut helps the stem have the most surface area for water uptake, but a diagonal cut also gives a place for the stem to start water uptake if the stem is touch-



Here, you see a still life, with other vases carrying out the sparse, dynamic and sleek visuals being related. With the faciated pussy willow branch (which can be dried and saved, to be used repeatedly) and the Alstroemeria, which has an exceptionally long vase life, the central focus of the arrangement delivers texture - but the other elements can be rearranged after the mum and carnations lose their vase life. Refreshing the water and giving each stem a fresh cut will add days to your arrangement, whether the flowers are from your own garden or store-bought.

ing the bottom of the vase. A blunt straight cut, resting on the bottom of the vase, limits the open stem taking in water. Without fresh water readily available, your other considerations still limit vase life. So, diagonal cut, fresh water, and taped grids on your vases supporting stems will result in breathtaking displays of your garden's bounty and your diligence from seed to stem, and garden to vase, for your flowers!

Cris Blackstone is a NH Certified Landscape Professional, UNH Master Gardener, UNH Cooperative Extension Natural Resources Steward, and Garden Communicators International Region 1 Director. Cris is the owner of Make Scents, located in Newmarket, NH.





Caring for Your Soil: Understanding Soil Aggregation and Compaction

By Christine Manuck,
NOFA/Mass Soil Health
Projects Manager

I'm frequently telling my kids, "you get what you get and you don't get upset." With soil, however, you get what you get and you can learn how to deliberately make it better. Aggregation and compaction are two key competing components of healthy, productive soils, yet maintaining soil aggregates and banishing compaction requires time and proper management. Well-managed soil develops into clusters, called aggregates, of varying sizes and strengths that can help build the foundation for the network of pores and channels that allow roots, soil dwellers, air, and water to infiltrate easily. Soil aggregates are responsible for establishing a

soil's structure, resiliency, productivity and are generally best when big, abundant, and strong. Developing and maintaining strong soil aggregates is considered one of the more difficult facets of soil management, but it's also one of the most important due to the control they exert over everything that goes on in the ground.

Soil aggregation develops through a combination of biological, physical, and chemical processes within soils. Some of the aspects contributing to soil aggregation are out of your control, such as soil type (sandy soils have a looser structure and are less likely to aggregate than soils with a

lot of clay, more about this later), but you can directly control most other aspects through management. Soil type regulates the physical and chemical components available for aggregation through the soil's clay content. Clay particles are negatively charged, causing them, like magnets, to attract or repel other charged particles in the soil, including other soil particles, fertilizers, and elements such as iron, sodium, magnesium, and calcium. Aggregation resulting from biology is dominated by the movement of earthworms and other soil dwellers through the soil, and sticky glues released by roots, bacteria, and fungi as they make their way through the soil. What you put into your soil and how you treat it directly impacts the ability for these living beneficials to thrive and develop aggregates.

soil management. Additions of organic matter through compost, mulch, leaf litter, and cover cropping provide carbon and fuel for soil microbes and earthworms to simultaneously develop their communities and help them help your soil. Similarly, the growth of roots created by maintaining a constant living cover helps move the soil around, causing soil particles to attract and aggregate while also releasing the beneficial glues that help them stay together. Practices that encourage these organic inputs, as well as increasing the diversity of plants, can increase the subsurface ecological diversity and the formation and strength of soil aggregates. Conversely, soil disruption damages aggregate formation and stability. Soils with the strongest and most abundant aggregates are typically in permanent beds or infrequently tilled and receive regular organic inputs.

Strong, well-formed soil aggregates develop over time through careful



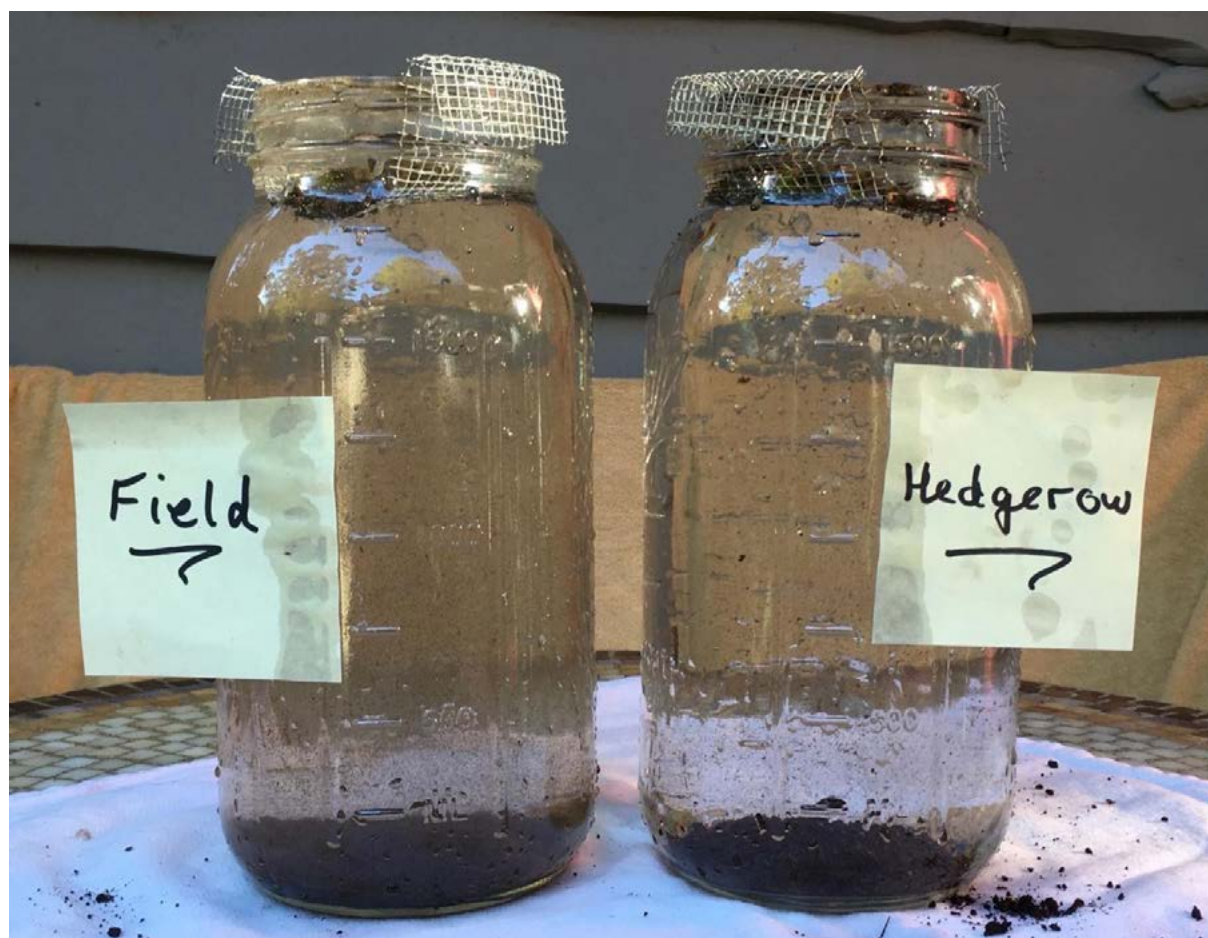
Rubén Parrilla using a soil penetrometer at Assawaga Farm, CT. Photo credit: Monique Bosch

In contrast to the wide-ranging benefits provided by soil aggregates, soil that is without structure and channels for air, water, roots, and soil dwellers is likely compacted. Compaction can occur in response to any load or pressure on a soil, ranging from human and livestock foot traffic to heavy machinery use, that ultimately compresses the soil into a smaller total volume. As a child I remember, one day while in a bored or distracted state, using my fingers to flatten a single piece of sandwich bread from its thick, porous original form into a hard, thin, dense bread-pancake. While my 7-year-old self marveled at this metamorphosis in bread, as an adult I shudder when considering that soil essentially undergoes the same transformation when it becomes compacted. Just as it's harder and less enjoyable to sink your teeth into a piece of sandwich bread devoid of air pockets and structural channels, it's harder to get roots, air, water, and soil dwellers into compacted soil (and probably less enjoyable, too!).

Compaction and size of soil aggregates are inversely correlated: as compaction increases, size of soil aggregates decreases, as the bigger aggregates are broken down into clumps of progressively smaller particles. Less-disturbed soils, such as those in permanent beds, are less likely to become compacted, in part due to the increase in soil organic matter, as well as be-

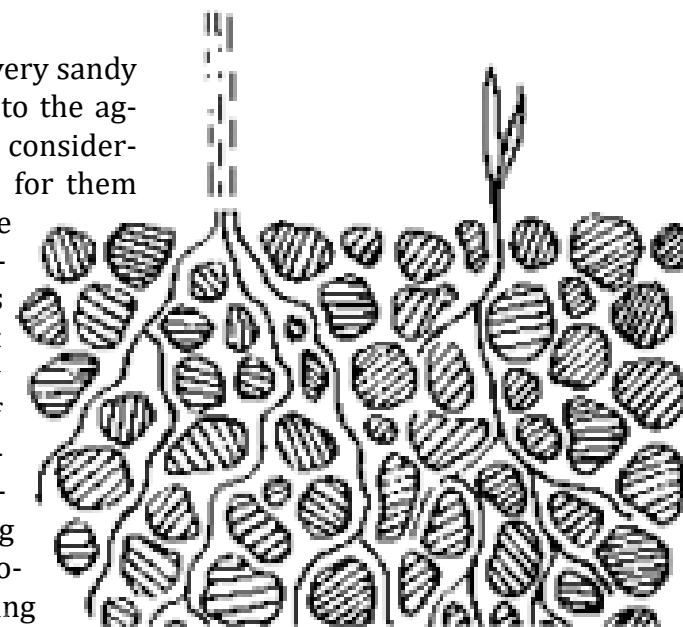
cause of the decrease in compacting activities.

Organic matter, or all the carbon that remains from anything you added to your soil and didn't remove, such as through compost applications or cover cropping, plays an amazingly important role here by both stabilizing soil structure (making aggregates stronger) and decreasing the likelihood of compaction. Soils that are high in organic matter are able to better bind into aggregated particles and are less likely overall to become compacted. Soil organic matter content can even be used as a predictor of



Slake test comparison between Field and Hedgerow (Photo credit: Monique Bosch)
potential soil compaction.

It's important to note that very sandy soils present an exception to the aggregation and compaction considerations. While it is possible for them to become compacted, the large size of all the individual sand particles makes it harder for them to get compacted than clay-heavy soils. Similarly, the lack of charged clay particles within sandy soils makes it harder for them to form strong aggregates. Therefore, biological processes are a driving



Well-aggregated soil provides the structure that can allow water, air, roots, and beneficial microorganisms to easily penetrate and move around. [Image credit](#)

force in the aggregation that does occur in sandy soils. If you're trying to keep your sandy soils well managed, don't despair! For sandy soils, the large particle size of each grain of sand creates natural channels and pores within the soil, facilitating both good water infiltration and a low propensity for compaction and thus offering many of the benefits of aggregation without the actual formation of aggregates.

For more information regarding how to evaluate your soil's compaction and aggregation at home, please check out the full text of this article at [NOFA/Mass](#) which includes in-depth DIY instructions and information on how to have NOFA/Mass evaluate your soils to help you be a better grower.

ENJOYING YOUR BODY...



Hughes. They visit 13 private gardens and specialty farms across the U.S., meeting gardeners of all ages from 30-95 and helping these individuals get GardenFit.

Madeline, an avid gardener who is a former trustee of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden current Vice Chair of the Berkshire Botanical Garden, was experiencing chronic back and neck pain while working in her garden and decided to find a solution. A friend referred her to trainer Jeff Hughes, who taught her healthier ways to move causing no stress. Madeline was so relieved that she could now enjoy all her gardening activities pain-free, and so inspired by Jeff's easy-to-do techniques, that she wanted to share this new-found wisdom with all gardeners. And so, joining forces with Jeff, GardenFit was born.

and gardening techniques at each unique space.

Jeff focuses on the gardeners' aches and pains, including back pain from lifting, hand pain from pruning, and knee pain from weeding. You name the ache- Jeff has the fix. He teaches the gardeners—and viewers—new habits they can use in and out of the garden. The fixes incorporate minor changes in the way people move that bring immediate and long-term relief. Four weeks after each initial garden visit, Jeff and Madeline return for a follow-up visit to see how the training tips worked and celebrate what's new in the garden.

One episode highlights a special place right here in Massachusetts: Black Barn Farm in Richmond, a stunning forest of large-scale topiaries created and maintained by Matt Larkin, who specializes in custom-design topiaries for clients all over the United States. Matt obviously enjoys his work, but he doesn't enjoy the constant pain that comes with the clipping and pruning required to maintain such a vast landscape. Jeff showed him how to adjust the way he holds his legs and feet to relieve pressure. Jeff also recommended one of his favorite GardenFit fixes: the "county fair method." The object is to spend a limited time on a task—30 to 45 minutes—and then walk away, go to another task for a limited time and then walk away from that and go to another task. After completing that third task, go back to the first one. Alternating from one task to another



...WHILE ENJOYING YOUR GARDEN

with Madeline Hooper and
Jeff Hughes from GardenFit

When we think about what we enjoy most, gardening is at the top of many people's list. Hours fly by spent planting, pruning, weeding, and digging. Each of us knows the joy of seeing a new crocus sprout up through the snow, a once sickly plant coming back to life, or the beauty of a perfect dahlia.

What we don't enjoy of course are the aches and pains that often come along with our gardening activities. But gardening does not have to equal pain.

You can, in fact enjoy both your garden and your body... if you know how to "Get GardenFit."

GardenFit is a new movement and public television series focused on helping people take care of their bodies while taking care of the gardens. The show is currently available on PBS and online at pbs.org/gardenfit.

Your guides to getting GardenFit are expert gardener, Madeline Hooper, and professional fitness trainer, Jeff



Top: Madeline and Jeff tour Black Barn Farm with Matt Larkin
 Bottom: Jeff shows Matt a GardeFit fix



allows the body to rest, change postures and muscle groups, and allow the mind to be a little more open and creative.

One of the best fixes for all gardeners is the Armchair. Jeff refers to this as “home base.” It ensures that the ground—not your back—is holding your body as long as there is one arm on one leg. To do the Armchair, spread your feet to just slightly past hip width. Then start by squatting down like you are sitting on a chair, keeping your knees from jutting forward beyond your toes. Rest your forearms on your legs, which relieves the lower

back from the supporting role. If you do it right, you should feel in balance.

From this position you can weed or dig with a trowel. This also puts you in a great position to pick up something heavy such as a potted plant. Last, but not least, you are in an ideal position to twist to the left or right to land on the ground softly on one knee. To get up, twist back to the armchair, stopping off at “home base” before standing.

Each gardener featured in the show has his or her own set of unique challenges in their garden environment, but a recurring theme to all the advice Jeff gives is common sense. Jeff stresses that the fixes he gives work because they make sense to the gardener, and therefore he or she will actually do them. It’s not about complicated exercises or expensive equipment.

Madeline suggests that their bodies are gardeners’ most important tool. They need to stay in tip-top shape to use their pruning shovels and hoes. This mindful approach will keep them gardening their whole lives and staying healthy. So in fact, it is possible to enjoy your body while enjoying your garden.

To learn more about how you can get GardenFit, visit www.gardenfit.fit, check your local public television listings for show air dates, and stream episodes online at pbs.org/gardenfit.

You Get Out What You Put In: Enjoying your June Garden

By John Lee

'Long about early June, the days are getting about as long as they are going to get. Pretty soon the daylight hours will start to fade (almost imperceptively) before full-blown early on-set sunsets clearly define the changing season ahead. Right now, Bert's thin-skinned neighbors are beginning to shelter in their gauzy gazebos seeking refuge from the miseries of black fly and mosquito bites. Seemed like neither Bert nor his wife, Brenda, were terribly bothered by these winged marauders that drove their flat-lander neighbors indoors if not to strong drink. Bert claimed to all who would listen that a B-complex vitamin helped. But more help was massaging himself with a large garlic clove every morning. Brenda was pretty sure the clove of garlic was enough to keep anything and everything at arm's length. She preferred a capful of cider vinegar every day in season. She claimed it sweetened her disposition and did whatever to make her less attractive to black flies (and mosquitos, to be sure). Mostly, the welt-ridden neighbors thought the two of them were just a bit hard-bitten or leather-skinned.

Whatever the case may be, little suited

them better than getting back out into their early gardens. Every winter, Bert's tools which he had carefully put away, were gotten out and cleaned. He disinfected everything whether it need-be or not so as not to spread soil-borne diseases next season. He carefully linseed-oiled the wooden shafts so they'd last forever and then put them away to wait for spring. And as the weather warmed and the potato cellar waned, the certainty of another summer in the garden gathered momentum. Middle of May, he'd long-since laid the trenches and lined them with compost for this year's spuds: Kennebecs, Red Norlands, PEI's and Green Mountains were his favorites. On a sunny May day, he sat on their stoop and divided most of what was left over. He kept the varieties separate and two 'eyes' to a cut to wait for the last hint of frost before planting.

On the sunny south side of the house, his lettuce starts were almost ready for the big day – the day the garden started anew, freshly dug, manured and clean.

Of course, Brenda had a few things to say about what went where every year. Bert could be a little head-strong on an early summer evening. If he



Above: *Dicentra canadensis* (squirrel-corn) flowers by Donald Cameron. Copyright © 2022 Donald Cameron, courtesy of Go Botany.

Right: *Dicentra canadensis* (squirrel-corn) roots by Larry Mellichamp. Copyright © 2022 Larry Mellichamp. U. of Michigan Herbarium, courtesy of Go Botany.



had his way, the whole garden would be planted and spring into verdant plenitude almost immediately and they would bask in its abundance as soon as the weather permitted. Brenda was rather oppositional about eating the whole lettuce crop in a week before it bolted or the entire tomato crop in two weeks early August. She wanted a fresh green salad everyday of every week until the garden froze solid (or as long as possible). Similarly, she did not want to stay up all night every night putting up the next big thing hoping to waste nothing. Bert's occasional over-excitement and impatience could be exhausting – better to spread things out and get a good night's sleep more frequently.

Needless to say, about the time the rhubarb stalks were about six to eight inches in length and fluffy verdure over-spreading the patch, Brenda could inveigle Bert into doing a little work in 'her' flower beds. Every spring she would tell him just how the clean-up should proceed. It would be the same procedure this year as it had been for as long as Bert could remember. He knew it word for word and could repeat it verbatim under his breath as she regaled him as if he'd never seen a flower bed before. Of course, early every year, something (a plant, a stone) was in the wrong place and must be moved (again). This year it was the two clumps of Bleeding Hearts standing formally at either end of the bed. This year they 'must' be dug and replanted at either

side of the front stoop and, by the way while you're at it, the eximia 'must' be relocated and carefully spread out in front of the lilac in the southeast corner. Maybe, if he was careful, Bert could also interplant the Squirrel Corn with the eximia. That would add a little color under that old lilac's knobby trunk.

And so it was according to the Gospel of Bert and Brenda. As the spring rolled on into early summer, the days lengthening ever so slightly, their gardens began to take shape. Change happened slowly but the net result was always the envy of every passer-by. Summer evenings, strangers would slow on the road and occasionally someone would emerge camera in hand. If they asked if they could take a picture, whoever was tending the garden that evening was happy to oblige. As often as not, a question about this plant or that would ensue. Soon everyone was out of the car and all were deep in conversation about how bad the mosquitos are this year, what kind of gloxinia does best in a north-facing window, why don't you like Red Finn potatoes, I think Green Mountains are mushy. On and on until a pitcher of iced tea comes out and the guests turn off the ignition in the car.

Then the conversations would turn to 'why.' Why are some local gardens more prolific than some others? 'Is there something I don't know' some wondered as they stared impressively at the burgeoning bounty before them. Why was Bert's garden so obviously

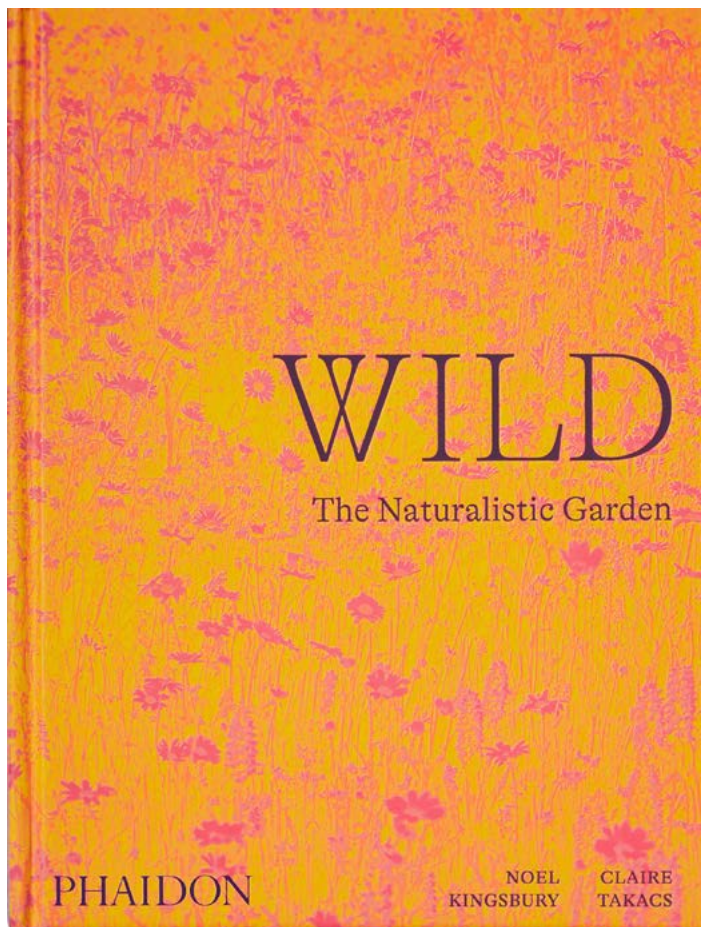
healthy-looking and their own 'not so much'? Did Bert apply some special kind of fertilizer, have some secret spray that made everything look so good? Brenda thought the answer to that was a question of perspiration. If you put in the time to nurse the plants along, the results would always be impressive. You would get out what you put in.

Bert, on the other hand, had a different theory. Although he had little truck with the divine, he was pretty sure there was more than sweat equity that made for a good garden. While he had no proof (he was no scientist by his own admission) he was pretty sure that the apparent silence of the garden was more likely some kind of rapture that he could not see or understand. Intuitively, he was pretty sure there was what he thought of as intelligent life alive and well in a well-tended garden. Bert believed (from his observations), for instance, as soon as the annual aphid infestation set upon green beans in one of the gardens, parasitic wasps were soon to come because the beans 'asked' for help and because he had a healthy soil, his beans 'talked' to each other somehow. He believed that when a large amount of artificial fertilizer and over cultivation was the practice, plants did not share natural resources

and tended to be socially deprived. He explained to anyone who would listen that their garden was more like town meeting where everyone shared their opinions and resources to the benefit of everyone. Over-fed, sprayed and cultivated gardens left plants lonely and deprived of community, less able to defend against disease and insect infestation and, therefore, less prolific.

At this, some visitors rolled their eyes. But the evidence was as plain as day. Bert may not know what he was betting on, but apparently it worked year in and year out. Measure for measure, Bert picked more beans, more of everything than those folk's tidy plots with naked dirt and a cupboard full of things to spray or dust. Bert believed, evidently, that somehow plants 'knew' how to take care of themselves for the most part, that dirt was not soil and when the soil was healthy, the plants would be healthy often without his help.

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.



WILD: The Naturalistic Garden by Noel Kingsbury,
with photography by Claire Takacs (Phaidon Press, 320 pages,

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

America is running out of water while temperatures are rising. By 2050 it is predicted that temperatures could be almost 6.0% warmer and within as little as fifty years many regions of the country may see their freshwater supply decrease by as much as thirty percent. Immediate action is imperative, and the gardening world is responding.

While once viewed as an idealized version of the natural world with stylized formal plantings representing a human-oriented set of values, a new

garden aesthetic has evolved during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Committed to sustainable practices, restoring degraded landscapes, and choosing plants that suit existing conditions, what is dubbed as the “New Planting” is reshaping how gardens are designed and built.

At the center of this phenomenon are a cadre of landscape designers who have pioneered new ways of using plants to achieve naturalistic plantings that work with the land aesthetically,

emotionally, and environmentally. In *Wild: The Naturalistic Garden*, Noel Kingsbury explores their work, the evolution of this planting style throughout history, and the different brands and styles of the genre. An in-depth, global survey of more than forty gardens accompanies Kingsbury’s introductory essay, providing context and inspiration.

Many of the landscapes profiled are well known and perhaps none more so than New York City’s High Line,

written about extensively and the subject of numerous documentaries. Kingsbury acknowledges its role as “a game-changer in the way plants have been used in a public setting,” while noting that this carefully crafted landscape is a manmade creation that, despite being ‘naturalistic’ and inspiring, does not necessarily serve an ecological function. While this does not diminish its value to the urban environment it enhances, naturalists or those familiar with the city’s wild spaces are not fooled. The High Line

Above: James Hitchmough Garden, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England. Designer: James Hitchmough. Photography by Claire Takacs. Private garden.

is an artistic creation.

At the other end of the spectrum are plantings that are genuinely ecological, dynamic, and allowed to develop organically over time with minimal human control, including meadows. These may be planted primarily with native wildflowers and other species but that is not a

prerequisite and often, non-native plants are included to add color and lengthen the planting season. James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnett, two professors at the University of Sheffield in England, have pioneered this methodology of planting design and urban horticulture to create low-input, high-impact ecologically based landscapes often within the

cultural context of public greenspace. London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, created in collaboration with garden designer Sarah Price, is a well-known example of their work.

The desire to create natural habitats, including wildflower meadows in western and central Europe and prairies in the United States in the 1970s, coincided with a growing interest in the use of native plants. Conventional garden making began to evolve, spurred on by a new generation of domestic gardeners including English writer Margery Fish and garden designer Beth Chatto, who championed the logical but revolutionary idea that plants should be planted in places that match their ecological requirements. In America, Oehme, Van Sweden Associates, founded in 1975, pioneered the informal use of grasses and perennials to create an innovative approach to garden design to reflect the year-round beauty of the natural landscape. Departing from conventional styles of American landscape architecture, their "New American Garden" is

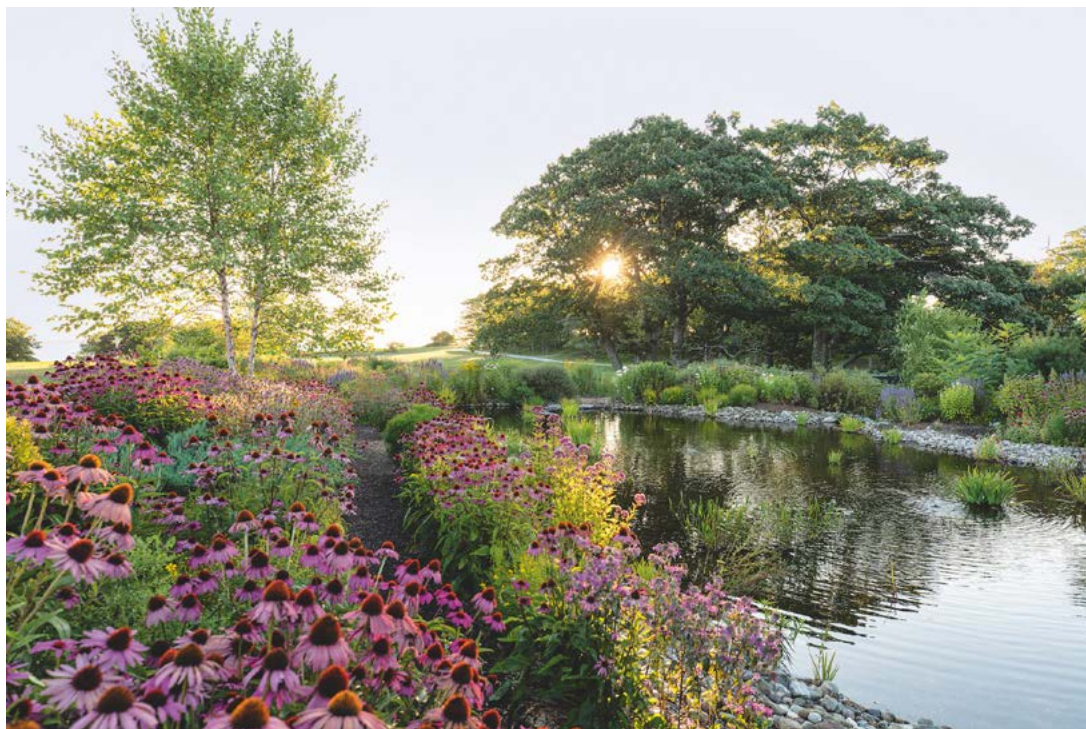
included in *Wild: The Naturalistic Garden* according to an aesthetic gradient, beginning with those that are more cultivated and designed to those that are less formal and 'wild' with natural processes that are more pronounced. Each entry is accompanied by descriptive text and the book includes 350 luminous images by award-winning photographer Claire Takacs with captions by Kingsbury. A directory of key plants, gardens visited and biographies of individuals who have been influential in the naturalistic planting movement are included.

Of the 40 gardens profiled nine are in the United States and one, the 1.5-acre Children's Garden at Fort William Park in Portland, Maine, features predominately native plants from open prairie habitats, forming a cultivated prairie. Its designer, James McCain, describes his work as bookended by Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf and American landscape designer Larry Weaner, both profiled in *WILD*. Other influences include Oehme, Van Sweden and *The American Woodland Garden* (2002) by American landscape designer Rick Darke, one of the most influential books in the field over the past two decades.

There are six page-length essays in *WILD* on themes related to naturalistic

viewed as a metaphor for the American meadow.

Kingsbury curates the landscapes



Top: Fort William Park, Cape Elizabeth, Maine, USA. Designer: James McCain. Public garden. **Bottom Left:** Le Jardin Sec, Mèze, France. Designer: Olivier Filippi. Experimental garden for Pépinière Filippi nursery. **Bottom Right:** Grey to Green City Garden, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England. Designer: Zac Tudor and Sheffield City Council landscape team. Ornamental plantings in public spaces.



Top: New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York City, New York, USA. Designer: Sheila Brady of Oehme van Sweden Associates. Public garden. **Bottom:** Innisfree, Millbrook, New York, USA. Designer: Lester Collins, with Walter and Marion Beck; Curator: Kate Kerin. Public garden.

planting that provide further insight into the key principles of this rapidly evolving discipline at the intersection of ecology, horticulture, and design. The field continues to grow and practitioners such as Thomas Rainier and Claudia West, authors of *Planting*

in a Post-Wild World who are mentioned by Kingsbury but not profiled, are pushing the boundaries even further to create a hybrid of the wild and the cultivated as green infrastructure that can flourish in cities and suburbs.

And perhaps this is the best and most profound use of this style of planting as we look to the future. As the need to implement sustainable gardening practices becomes a major factor throughout the world, the use of naturalistic plantings will become more than just an option—it

will be a necessity. The next time you purchase a plant ask yourself, “Is this the right plant in the right place?” And if your garden starts to look a little different, embrace the change.

Patrice Todisco writes about parks and gardens at the award-winning blog, *Landscape Notes*.

From the Stacks

By Maureen T. O'Brien, Library Manager

“I rather think that archives exist to keep things safe--but not secret.”
Kevin Young (b. 1970)

Archives are records created or received by a person, family or organization and preserved because of their continuing value. Family archives often include bibles, journals, photographs, correspondence and ephemera. Often, one family member appreciates the value of collective memory and becomes the family historian. They research and preserve the collective ephemera for present and future family members.

Government and organizations also have archives that document their history. In 1791, Thomas Jefferson recognized the importance of preserving records so history is not lost. Faced with disappearing documentation of the country's founding, he noted “[t]he lost cannot be recovered...” and urged saving and sharing broadly what remained. From its inception, this Society recognized the importance of documenting and sharing its history, beginning with publication of its activities in *The New England Farmer* and later its *Transactions*.

Featured Collection – Archives

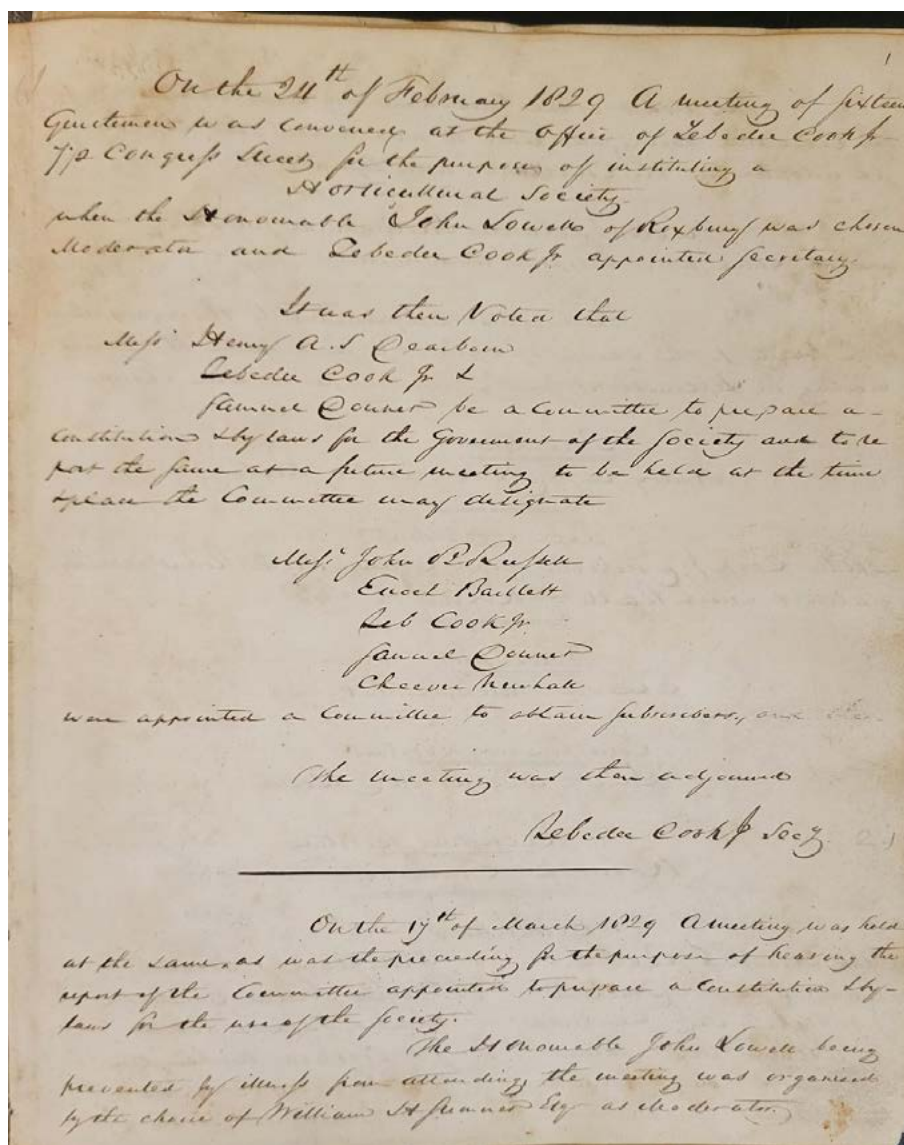
Massachusetts Horticultural Society holds a special place in horticultural history in this country. It is the oldest formally organized horticultural

society in the United States, founded and incorporated in 1829, just 41 years after the ratification of the Constitution of the United States in 1888 and just 7 years after the incorporation of the town of Boston. Our founders took the creation of the Society very seriously. Our Archives reflect their zeal and its subsequent history.

Today the MHS Archives are maintained at its headquarters at the Garden at Elm Bank and in an off-site climate-controlled storage facility. These items include 193 years of MHS's business, membership, operations records, objects, images, and ephemera. The Library is diligently cataloging its treasures and sharing them with the public. You can find some of these records listed on searchable spreadsheets on the Library webpage here.

In the Windows – Books on the Summer Garden and Books for Sale

The Library has pre-owned horticultural books for sale, most in the \$1 to \$5 range. Consider dropping by and picking out a book for yourself or for a gift. Second-hand gifting is an environmentally friendly way to reduce your environmental footprint. Used books fit that bill perfectly!



Above: Spine and first page of minutes for first meeting of MHS on February 24, 1829.



Left: The Little Free Library in the Garden

Book Club

Contributed by Eileen Kramer

The MHS Book Club met for the second time on Tuesday, May 17. We enjoyed a spirited discussion of Michael Pollan's book, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, which is a delightful combination of humorous memoir, social history, and reflections on the gardener's relationship with nature. Participants were particularly inspired by Pollan's declaration that "gardening is not for the perfectionist."

There were many favorite passages shared by the group and we ended by confirming our commitment to reading and discussing excellent horticultural books, with a consensus that we will take turns facilitating the meetings.

Our next book discussions are:

Tuesday, June 21, 1:30pm
Tulipomania by Mike Dash

No meeting in July

Tuesday, August 23, 1:30pm
The Orchid Thief by Susan Orlean

All Massachusetts Horticultural Society members are welcome to join our book discussion group.

Meetings are in the Crockett Garden. If the weather is poor, the meeting will be held indoors.

Summer Volunteer Opportunities for High School Students

We have two opportunities for high school students to volunteer at the Garden this summer.

WHEN

- Tuesdays or Wednesdays, morning or afternoon
- Two hours per week
- Starting in mid-June

POSITIONS

Scanner and data input: This position entails scanning plans to a digital file, following naming conventions and editing an excel spreadsheet with the file name, description and type.

Managing the Little Free Library, reorganizing the children's section, labeling and filing: This position entails keeping the Little Free Library outside the Education Building stocked, filing in the vertical files and working with the children's books to make it more accessible for children to browse.

The applicant should send an email of interest that includes the position applied for and their skills that are relevant to that position to Library Manager Maureen O'Brien at mobrien@masshort.org.

Thank you to our 2022 Garden Opening Sponsors

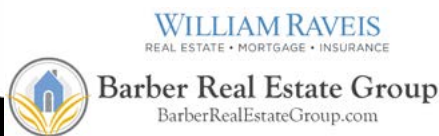
Platinum Level



Gold Level



Bronze Level





The Garden at Elm Bank
Open April 1-October 31
M-Th 10am-7pm; F-Su 10am-4pm
Classes, Programs Year-round



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