



# The American GARDENER<sup>®</sup>

The Magazine of the American Horticultural Society November / December 2009

## Native Evergreen Hollies

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## NOTES FROM RIVER FARM

**T**HROUGH OUR WORK with the American Horticultural Society, the two of us are fortunate to have frequent opportunities to meet and hear from people all over the country who believe in the power of plants and gardens to change lives and make our world a better place. Some people pursue their interests individually, some follow their passion through involvement with clubs or other groups, and some have turned their interest in horticulture into a career. Whether the commitment is formal or informal, year-round or occasional, there are many paths to take and we are constantly reminded of the amazing breadth, depth, and influence of horticulture in America.

In early October, we attended the 2009 Annual Conference of the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) in Pasadena, California. How impressive it was to witness a gathering of people from all over the world who are dedicated to the healing power of horticulture in sustaining health and wellness. It was particularly gratifying to see so many of our past AHS Horticultural Therapy Award winners in attendance at the meeting, including Gene Rothert from Illinois, Karin Fleming from Pennsylvania, Rebecca Haller from Colorado, and Teresia Hazen from Oregon. To get some insight into the programs and gardens that these and other exceptional horticultural therapists across the country are involved in, be sure to read the article on healing gardens starting on page 20.

As a bonus, this year's AHTA meeting was headquartered at the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino—truly an American treasure. Visiting the gardens and being greeted by the director, Jim Folsom, provided us with a pleasurable sense of anticipation, because the Huntington is one of the host sites for the AHS 2010 National Children & Youth Garden Symposium. We hope you will join us in California next July for three days of inspirational programs set against a backdrop of world-class gardens and collections.

During the AHTA conference, we were encouraged to learn about the practical application of research that indicates plants have an important role to play in nurturing the body and spirit. These presentations confirmed something we have heard from AHS members. In a survey conducted last winter, the majority of AHS members said they garden for rest and relaxation; half said they garden for exercise, overall health, and nutrition.

So, it is with your best interests at heart that we offer up another issue of *The American Gardener* full of articles that will give you reason to exercise your body and mind. Inside you will find tips for creating garden vistas that can be enjoyed from inside your house, suggestions for using evergreen hollies for fall and winter effects, a profile of an influential perennial plant expert who flies beneath the radar, and a thought-provoking look at a plant that was once a garden classic—English ivy. With so much in store, we know you'll want to turn the page and start reading!

Happy gardening!

Susie Usrey, Chair, AHS Board of Directors

Tom Underwood, Executive Director



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## MEMBERS' FORUM

### BANCROFT GARDEN CLARIFICATION

The photograph of the Ruth Bancroft Garden published with the profile of Antonia Adezio on page 44 of the September/October issue shows a section of the garden that is not open to the public. Below is a photo showing a part of the garden that is open to visitors.



### VARIEGATED GRAPEFRUIT—OR NOT?

I enjoyed your article on citrus in the January/February 2009 issue of *The American Gardener*, which includes a photo captioned as a variegated grapefruit. I have found the other variegated citrus plants—calamondin, pink lemon, and 'Centennial' kumquat—from the suggested sources in the article, but I can find no one who lists a variegated grapefruit. Can you recommend a source?

Durell Nelson  
Horticulturist

Nauvoo Restoration, Inc.  
Nauvoo, Illinois

**Editor's response:** The photograph in the article was taken at Meadowbrook Farm in Pennsylvania, which does sell this plant in limited quantities—call (215) 887-5900 or visit [www.meadowbrook](http://www.meadowbrook)

[farm.org](http://farm.org). However, whether it is truly a variegated grapefruit has not been definitively determined. The citrus family has a long and convoluted history of cultivation, and there is often great variability among individual species. This means it can be difficult to positively identify specimens that may have been propagated and passed around for centuries. The Meadowbrook plant, which originated in a private collection, is thought to most likely be a grapefruit based on certain characteristics, such as its pronounced winged petioles. It reportedly blooms and sets fruit at a young age, but the fruits are incredibly bitter.

**PLEASE WRITE US!** Address letters to Editor, *The American Gardener*, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. Send e-mails to [editor@ahs.org](mailto:editor@ahs.org) (note Letter to Editor in subject line). Letters we print may be edited for length and clarity.

## COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG'S 64<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GARDEN SYMPOSIUM TIMELESS LESSONS FROM HISTORIC GARDENS April 11 and 12, 2010



Whether you're interested in designing a formal garden, growing heirloom plants, or making a garden structure, there are many lessons to be learned from historic gardens. Discover design concepts, gardening techniques, and plant selections for use in your own garden creation.

Scheduled speakers include renowned author and garden photographer Ken Druse, G. Michael Shoup, owner, The Antique Rose Emporium, and John Forti, curator of historic plants, Strawberry Banke Museum.

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## Underwood Serves as Judge for Community Garden Grants

OVER THE SUMMER, American Horticultural Society Executive Director **Tom Underwood** was chosen to represent the Society as one of three judges for the Gardenburger Community Grants Program. “This project,” says Underwood, “presented a fantastic opportunity to support the creation, expansion, and improvement of many gardens throughout the county.” This year marks the launch of this program, which offers non-profit organizations looking to develop a gardening project or activity grants of up to \$10,000. The aim of the program is to emphasize the health benefits of growing and eating fresh produce and to encourage a sense of community. Applications for the grants were judged on a number of criteria, including the innovation, practicability, and anticipated impact of the proposed garden project. The winners were notified of their award in early August.



Tom Underwood

Underwood and the other judges evaluated 362 qualified applications, a larger number than was originally anticipated. Fourteen organizations, including the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, were selected to receive a grant for their anticipated community gardening projects; for a full list, visit the Gardenburger website ([www.gardenburger.com/Grants.aspx](http://www.gardenburger.com/Grants.aspx)).

The funded programs will be taking place not only in garden plots but also in orchards, farmland, and other green spaces. The awarded grants will help to start and maintain the gardens and support educational spaces, activities, and programs held in and inspired by the garden.

“I am delighted to have participated in the process of evaluating and rewarding these deserving gardening projects,” says Underwood. “This grants program is aligned philosophically with the American Horticultural Society’s mission to support gardens and gardeners in America. I believe these projects will have an immensely positive impact on their surrounding communities.”

## AHS Supports Boston’s Garden Contest

ON AUGUST 20, AHS Director of Member Programs and Outreach **Stephanie Jutila** represented the Society at Boston Mayor **Thomas M. Menino**’s annual Garden Contest awards ceremony. “It was an honor to celebrate the individuals, companies, and organizations that are enhancing Boston’s neighborhoods with their gardens,” says Jutila.

This year was the 13th that the contest was held and the eighth consecutive year that the AHS supported the contest by providing one-year AHS memberships to the winners. A total of 35 awards were presented to people who placed in the 11 possible categories. Mayor Menino honors gardeners whose handiwork helps to show off the neighborhoods of Boston with this contest as part of his city-wide beautification initiative. First-place winners received a “Golden Trowel” award from the Mayor, packages from HGTV, and a one-year AHS membership. Second- and third-place winners also received a one-year AHS membership for their efforts.



Above: Stephanie Jutila (3rd from right) with Mayor Thomas Menino (2nd from left) and some of the award winners, including Marlene Karas (2nd from right), whose garden is shown on the left.

## New Members Join AHS Board of Directors

THE AHS recently welcomed four new members to its Board of Directors. Coming to the Society from diverse career backgrounds, these new Board members bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience.

**Sandra Address** from Chevy Chase, Maryland, co-owns Marvin A. Address & Associates insurance brokerage with her husband. **Amy Bolton** from Falls Church, Virginia, is an education specialist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and has been a long-time AHS volunteer. **Jane Diamantis** from McDonald, Tennessee, is an avid gardener and landscape design consultant in the Chattanooga area. **Holly Shimizu** of Washington, D.C., is the executive director at the U.S. Botanic Garden.



Amy Bolton is one of four new AHS Board members.

The AHS's Executive Director, **Tom Underwood**, is "looking forward to working with our new Board members as we continue to make

great things happen for the AHS." Underwood also expressed gratitude to former Board members **Albin MacDonough "Mac" Plant**, **Michel Sallin**, and **Steven Still**, whose terms ended in June. "We are greatly indebted to them for all they contributed to the Society over the last several years," he says.

Currently at 26 members, the AHS Board provides guidance and support to help the Society achieve its goals and mission.

## Wildlife Webinar for Members

IN SEPTEMBER, 147 participants from 37 states, the District of Columbia, and one Canadian province attended "Gardening for Wildlife," a webinar exclusively offered to AHS members. The hour-long presentation by **Douglas Tallamy**, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, delved into strategies for supporting a variety of wildlife in the garden, such as beneficial insects and birds. At the conclusion of the lecture, participants had the opportunity to have their questions answered—for a sample of the discussion, see the box on the next page.



Three other webinars were offered in 2009. Landscape designer and author **Julie Moir Messervy** spoke about "Home Outside: Creating the Landscape You Love" in March. This was followed by "A Little Garden Magic: Connecting Kids to Plants," presented by children's gardening expert **Norm Lownds** in May. (A recording of this presentation is available in the members-only area of the AHS website). In July, garden designer and author **Scott Calhoun** presented "Dry Beauty: Strategies for Designing Water-Thrifty Gardens."

The 2010 webinar speakers and topics will be announced in upcoming issues of *The American Gardener*. If you would like to receive announcements about future webinars via e-mail, please sign up for the mailing list in the members-only area of the AHS website at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

*News written by Editorial Intern Gwyneth Evans.*

LEFT: COURTESY OF AMY BOLTON. RIGHT: COURTESY OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

## Gifts of Note

If you would like to support the American Horticultural Society as part of your estate planning, as a tribute to a loved one, or as part of your annual charitable giving plan, please contact: Stephanie Perez, Development and Membership Manager, at (703) 768-5700 ext. 127 or [sperez@ahs.org](mailto:sperez@ahs.org).

In addition to vital support through membership dues, the American Horticultural Society relies on grants, bequests, and other gifts to support its programs. We would like to thank the following donors for gifts received between August 1, 2009 and September 30, 2009.

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## GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE: TIPS FROM DOUGLAS TALLAMY

During “Gardening for Wildlife,” a webinar presented on September 9, Douglas Tallamy answered several questions from participants. Here is a sampling of those questions and his responses.

**Some non-native plants, such as *Verbena bonariensis* and *Cleome gynandra*, attract a huge number of insects, so not all non-natives are “bad” for biodiversity, correct?**

*Mary Meyer, Chaska, Minnesota*



The flowers of non-native plants can be good sources of nectar and pollen for some pollinators. But most non-native plants do not support the growth and development of insects that eat leaves. The most productive garden is one that provides food for leaf-eaters as well as nectar and pollen. Joe-pye weed, for example, not only nourishes bees, wasps, butterflies, and moths at its flowers, but it also supports 40 species of caterpillars on its leaves.

**What are your thoughts on creating pollinator-friendly gardens (specifically for native bees) using native versus non-native herbaceous perennials?**

*Casey Delphia, Bozeman, Montana*

Some of our native bees can use the flowers of many non-native species, but many species of bees have specialized on particular native plants. Without those plants, specialized bees are disappearing. The best garden for native bees will include

several types of flower morphologies (shapes) that bloom sequentially from May through September.

**How small a region should we pick plants from to ensure they’ll contribute to biodiversity?**

*Cassie Banning, Muncie, Indiana*

The geographic size of the food web you are trying to restore will dictate the size of the area from which you can select your native plants. For example, if you live in the eastern deciduous forest biome, you probably will be safe choosing a plant from that biome. The provenance of the seed source from within your biome will be an important factor, however. You wouldn’t want to plant a beech tree that grew from North Carolina seed in New York state, even though beech is a member of the same food web in both North Carolina and New York.

**What would be the one thing a person with limited time and resources can do that has the most influence on supporting biodiversity?**

*Barbara Gerson, New York, New York*

Plant an acorn. It will cost you nothing. Oak trees are the best plants that we know of for supporting biodiversity. Watch it grow and flourish, and in 10 years, you will have an 18-foot tree that is both beautiful and productive. ☺



### AHS NATIONAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

## 2009–2010 CALENDAR

Mark your calendar for these national events that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the AHS. Visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org) or call (703) 768-5700 for more information.

- DEC. 1–24. **Holiday Trees Display.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.
- DEC. 10. **Annual Holiday Reception.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.
- MARCH 3–MAY 16. **Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival.** Lake Buena Vista, Florida.
- APRIL 11 & 12. **Colonial Williamsburg Garden Symposium.** Williamsburg, Virginia.
- APRIL 15–17. **Spring Plant Sale.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia. (Note: AHS Members-only preview sale is Thursday April 15.)
- APRIL 15–17. **National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc. District II Standard Flower Show.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.
- JUNE 10. **Great American Gardeners Awards Ceremony & Banquet.** River Farm, Alexandria, Virginia.
- JULY 22–24. **National Children & Youth Garden Symposium.** Pasadena, California.

## APPRECIATION: John L. Creech—A Giant in Plant Exploration

by Leah Chester-Davis

**A** WAR HERO, plant hunter, plant breeder, writer, and legendary figure in American horticulture, John L. Creech died August 7, 2009, in Columbus, North Carolina. He was 89.

In the spring of 1947, Creech, then a young man of 27, picked up a copy of *The National Horticultural Magazine* (a precursor to *The American Gardener*) in the University of Massachusetts library. An article about plant explorers with the U.S. Office of Foreign Plant Exploration and Introduction drew him in, and by the time he had finished reading it, he knew what he wanted to do with his life. The “tenor and seriousness of the magazine,” Creech said, set the direction for his career. He would go on to become one of the greatest American plant collectors of the 20th century.

At 27, Creech already had an amazing life story to tell. In World War II, serving as an officer in the infantry, he was captured by the Germans in North Africa and sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Poland. The site was a former boys’ school, and Creech, a recent horticulture graduate from the University of Rhode Island, discovered an unused greenhouse.

The garden Creech raised there and on a nearby plot helped feed his fellow POWs and earned him the nickname “Carrots Creech.” Clarence Ferguson, a fellow prisoner, later wrote that Creech, “in his quiet, unselfish, industrious way brought comfort, food, and beauty under the most difficult circumstances to more than 1,500 POWs in their time of depraved imprisonment, without hint of self-acclaim or public recognition.”

For his gardening efforts, Creech earned a Bronze Star, which, in his way of thinking, trumped the Silver Star he was awarded for gallantry in action.

### PLANT HUNTING AND BREEDING

After joining the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Foreign Plant Exploration, Creech completed a doctorate in botany from the University of Maryland in College Park and established himself as an authority on propagating and breeding ornamental plants. During his 33-year career



John Creech unwraps a bonsai specimen at the USDA’s Glenn Dale, Maryland, facility in 1975.

with the USDA, he conducted 10 plant explorations to Japan, Russia, Nepal, Taiwan, and Yugoslavia to search for wild and cultivated ornamental trees and shrubs.

The fruits of his travels and plant breeding work were the hundreds of plants he introduced into cultivation. Among the

most notable are *Betula platyphylla* var. *japonica* ‘Whitespire’, *Camellia lutchuensis*, *Cotoneaster* ‘Green Cushion’, *Chrysanthemum pacificum*, *Euonymus fortunei* ‘Longwood’, *Juniperis conferta* ‘Emerald Sea’, *Lagerstroemia fauriei*, *Osmanthus heterophyllus* ‘Gulf tide’, *Rhododendron* ‘Ben Morrison’, and *Rhododendron* ‘Mrs. LBJ’. Plants named in honor of Creech include *Sedum* ‘John Creech’ and *Abelia x grandiflora* ‘John Creech’.



The ‘Whitespire’ Asian white birch was developed from seeds Creech collected on a 1956 plant-hunting expedition to Japan.

### A CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL

Rising swiftly through the USDA ranks, Creech became director of the USDA plant exploration office, and, eventually, he was named the third director of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., a post he held from 1973 to 1980.

During his term as director, Creech oversaw the design and installation of the National Herb Garden. He worked with Japanese horticulturists to negotiate the gift of 53 bonsai and six viewing stones as a collective gift from the Japanese people in celebration of America’s Bicentennial in 1976. The gift eventually resulted in the creation of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum.

According to Skip March, a former colleague of Creech’s at the National Arboretum who accompanied Creech on plant

explorations to Japan in 1976 and 1978, Creech always took a personal interest in employees' lives and families. "He was a great inspiration and always very supportive," March says. March's wife, Marliese, recalled in a 2007 interview that Creech was "a man with much foresight and he always seemed to follow his dream. He appreciated the people around him and recognized them."

Creech was a member of many horticultural and scientific organizations. He played an active role with the American Horticultural Society (AHS) for many years, serving on the magazine's editorial committee, on the Board of Directors, and as president from 1953 to 1956. In retirement, he signed on for a second stint on the AHS magazine's editorial advisory board, which he served on until his death. He wrote many articles for a variety of publications, including *The Plantsman*, *The American Gardener*, and *American Nurseryman*.

Over the course of his career, Creech won numerous prestigious awards. He is one of the few horticulturists to receive

To view the original article that influenced John Creech's decision to become a plant explorer, along with other information about his life and accomplishments, click on the web special linked to this article on the AHS website at [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).

both the AHS's highest honor, the Liberty Hyde Bailey Medal (in 1989) and the Royal Horticultural Society's Gold Veitch Memorial Medal (in 1991). Among his other major awards were the Frank N. Meyer Memorial Medal from the American Genetic Association, the Norman Jay Colman Award presented by the American Association of Nurserymen, the American Association of Botanical Gardens & Arboreta Award of Merit, and the Medal of Merit from the city of Kurume, Japan.

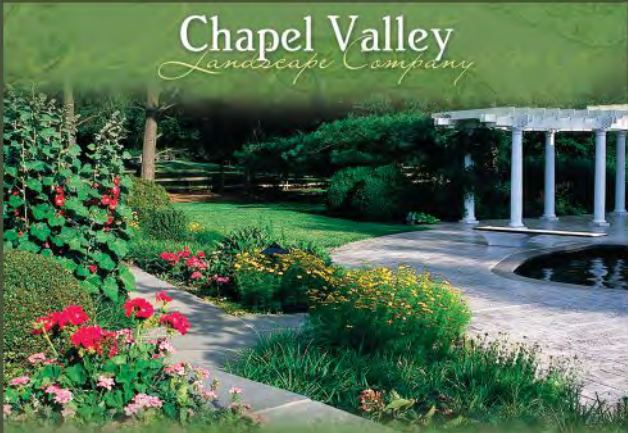
#### RETIREMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

After retiring to live in Hendersonville, North Carolina in 1980, Creech kept busy.

He introduced American nurserymen to the wonders of Japanese horticulture by leading them on tours to Japan. He was also instrumental in helping to establish the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville and served as its interim part-time director. Creech helped select George Briggs as the arboretum's first full-time director in 1987. To Briggs, Creech was a "mentor, confidante, and trusted advisor."


Briggs is one of many colleagues, acquaintances, and friends who hold this view of Creech. He was a legendary figure in the world of horticulture, yet he remained a kind, gentle, unassuming soul. This "giant" who made his life's work in the plant-hunting profession—which he called "the greatest game"—will be missed, but his contributions continue to enhance our lives and gardens in countless ways.

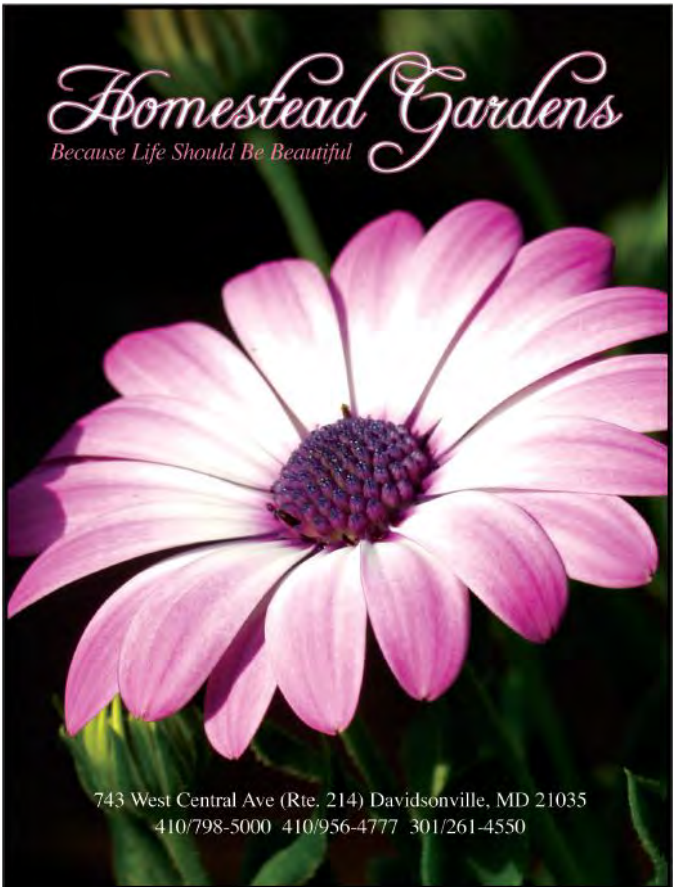
*Leah Chester-Davis is writing the biography of John L. Creech and would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew Creech and was influenced by him. She can be reached at [lchesterdavis@earthlink.net](mailto:lchesterdavis@earthlink.net).*



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# AHS NEWS SPECIAL: America in Bloom's 2009 Award Winners

by Gwyneth Evans

**T**HE EIGHTH annual America in Bloom (AIB) Symposium and Awards Program was held from October 1 through 3 at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pennsylvania. This event celebrated the urban beautification efforts of the 25 participating communities, hailing



from every region of the country. Six cities received awards by population category

and eight awards were given to communities ranking highest in each of the AIB criteria (see box, right).

AIB's mission is to encourage communities nationwide to pursue urban beautification and community building. Its annual competition categorizes communities according to population size and scores each based on a number of criteria, including floral displays, urban forestry, environmental awareness, and community involvement. Since the contest's debut in 2002, more than 170 communities from 38 states have participated.

The American Horticultural Society partners with AIB each year and has sponsored one of the criteria awards—the Community Involvement Award—since 2004. The award honors collaborative efforts between community members, government, business, and non-profit organizations that have proved productive in improving and solving problems in their community. This year's award went to Aurora, Indiana.

**Laura Kunkle**, AIB's executive director, says she enjoys "every America in Bloom Symposium because you feel the excitement and dedication that attendees have for beautifying and improving their community." This year's symposium in Hershey "was a treat," she says, because Hershey was an "early AIB participant that has continued upholding the AIB ideals. It showcases community beautification at its finest."

This year's symposium included the presentation of the new John R. Holmes III Community Champion Award. The award memorializes the late Holmes, a strong supporter of urban beautification



## Population Category Award Winners

- 4,000 or less Echo, Oregon
- 4,001–10,000 Charles City, Iowa
- 10,001–20,000 River Falls, Wisconsin
- 20,001–50,000 Collierville, Tennessee
- 50,001–100,000 Lompoc Valley, California
- 100,001 or more Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## Criteria Award Winners

- American Horticultural Society Community Involvement Award **Aurora, Indiana**
- Ball Horticultural Company Floral Displays Award **Greendale, Indiana**
- Gardens Alive! Environmental Awareness Award **Fayetteville, Arkansas**
- J. Frank Schmidt & Son Company Urban Forestry Award **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**
- Meister Media Worldwide Heritage Preservation Award **Rising Sun, Indiana**
- Proven Winners Landscaped Areas Award **Collierville, Tennessee**
- Tidiness Award **Arroyo Grande, California**
- Turf & Groundcover Areas Award **Michigan City, Indiana**



who passed away suddenly this February. This award recognizes an individual from a city that has participated in the AIB program, and who demonstrates remarkable community leadership that reflects the AIB's mission to plant pride in America. The inaugural award went to **Rick Webb** of Logan, Ohio, for his

energetic involvement in his hometown.

For more information about AIB and how to involve your community in the competition for 2010, call (614) 487-1117 or visit [www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org).

*Gwyneth Evans is an editorial intern for The American Gardener.*

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# America's Evergreen Hollies

BY GIL NELSON

From leaves and bark to berries, these native evergreens offer four seasons of landscape appeal.

**A**LTHOUGH BEST LOVED for their clusters of fall and winter berries that appeal to both gardeners and wildlife, evergreen hollies make a substantial statement in the garden throughout the year. And several North American species and selections are among the most stunning of the lot.

The holly family (Aquifoliaceae) is considered by most taxonomists to be monotypic, meaning that all of its

species are contained within a single genus—in this case, *Ilex*. There are about 400 holly species worldwide, and 17 or so are indigenous to North America, distributed throughout the eastern half of the continent from New England to the southern tip of the Florida peninsula and west to Minnesota and Texas. Eight of these are evergreen, mostly ranging in the wild from Virginia to Louisiana.

## AMERICAN HOLLY

Of the red- or yellow-fruited evergreen hollies native to the United States, the American holly (*Ilex opaca*, USDA Hardiness Zones 5–9, AHS Heat Zones 9–5) is probably the best known and most widely distributed. Because of its similarity to the highly valued English holly (*I. aquifolium*), this was likely one of the first American trees to catch the attention of early British colonists. Its hallmark appearance is a com-

*Second of a two-part series on hollies native to North America; deciduous hollies were covered in the September/October issue.*



Opposite page: This mature specimen of the cultivar ‘Merry Christmas’ illustrates American holly’s attractive pyramidal shape. Above: Many other selections of American holly are available, including the popular red-fruited ‘Jersey Princess’, left, and yellow-fruited ‘Canary’, right.

ination of glossy, dark green, spiny leaves, bright red fruit, and attractive grayish bark. The availability of hundreds—perhaps thousands—of named cultivars and selections attests to the American holly’s enduring popularity.

“We sell about 30 *Ilex opaca* cultivars here in Baltimore,” says Bill Kuhl of McLean Nurseries, a well-known Maryland garden center that has specialized in propagating and growing hollies since

1946. “Everything we sell is one of my favorites, but ‘Dan Fenton’, ‘Jersey Princess’, ‘Miss Helen’, and ‘Satyr Hill’ stand out.” ‘Satyr Hill’ earned recognition as the Holly Society of America (HSA) 2003 Holly of the Year.

Mature American hollies growing in natural habitats tend to be pyramidal in shape with an open crown. The lower branches usually fall off naturally, allowing a clear view of the smooth, grayish, and

mottled bark. Cultivated specimens, especially those grown in sunny locations, are often more compact, with branching nearly to ground level. Southern trees—those from the Carolinas southward—average about 50 feet tall at maturity, but can be twice this height in optimal conditions; northern trees are often somewhat shorter.

Female trees produce conspicuous clusters of bright red fruit that contrast sharply with the dark green leaves. The

## FLOWERS, FRUIT, AND POLLINATION

Hollies are textbook examples of a dioecious species—one whose flowers are functionally unisexual and borne on separate individuals.

The female flowers contain an obvious superior ovary, usually surrounded by several reduced, clearly non-functional stamens. The plump ovary is typically topped by a short, thick style and a flattened, buttonlike stigma, although in some species the style is absent and the sticky stigma sits directly atop the ovary.

Typical male flowers have prominent stamens with conspicuous pollen-filled anthers surrounding a diminutive ovary that in some species aborts early, leaving a tiny cavity in the center of the flower. Male plants seem to produce more flowers per cluster and are often showier in the spring than female plants, but only females produce the colorful fruits for which hollies are best known.

Gardeners who value winter fruit should plant mostly female selections, adding a few males to ensure pollination.

Where native hollies are relatively abundant in nearby woodlands or neighboring yards, additional male plants may not be needed for abundant fruit production. In landscapes devoid of other native hollies, however, planting one male for every five or six females is the suggested ratio.

For maximum pollination and fruiting, it is usually best to plant male and female plants of the same species. Hollies, however, tend to be somewhat promiscuous. Male plants of one species might contribute pollen to female plants of another species if flowering times overlap—especially if the two are closely related.

The fruits of the hollies are commonly called berries, or described as “berrylike.” But in botanical terms, they are more accurately considered drupes. Berries are defined as fleshy fruits with a skinlike covering (exocarp) surrounding a juicy pulp (mesocarp) that contains naked seeds. In a drupe, the seed is protected by a hard, bony structure called an endocarp.

—G.N.

best of the red-fruited female cultivars include ‘Old Heavy Berry’, ‘Satyr Hill’, and ‘Vera’. As many as 50 yellow-fruited selections are available, including ‘Canary’, ‘Oak Grove’, ‘Fire Chief’, and ‘Fallaw’, as well as *I. opaca* forma *xanthocarpa*.

Selections like ‘Slim Jane’, a red-fruited female, and the yellow-fruited ‘Lady Blakeford’ display a tighter, more columnar form than typical plants and are suited for small spaces. For pollination services, ‘Jersey Knight’, ‘David’, and ‘Baltimore Buzz’ are good males, especially for the mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

*Ilex opaca* is not a tree for impatient gardeners. Although it grows faster in sun than shade, it may take 20 years or more to attain its most attractive form. Some gardeners report faster growth with intensive fertilization. Providing sufficient water in the heat of summer also tends to spur the growth rate.

“Ten to 12 inches of growth per year is a reasonable expectation in the mid-Atlantic,” Kuhl says, “perhaps somewhat faster for the cultivar ‘Glen Ellen’. It may be that the forms with larger leaves grow a little faster than those with smaller leaves, but I know of no research that confirms this.” As it turns out, Kuhl’s hunch may be spot on. The faster-growing cultivars for USDA Zone 8 and northward include ‘Angelica’, ‘Carnival’, and ‘Clarissa’, all of which are female plants with at least moderately large leaves.

The scrub holly (*I. opaca* var. *arenicola*, Zones 8–9, 11–9) is a smaller, often shrubbier variety of American holly that is especially suited for xeric sites. The smaller leaves—usually less than three inches long—and strongly rolled leaf margins are particularly attractive. Scrub holly grows naturally only on sandy inland dunes of the central Florida peninsula but has been planted successfully as far north as the Florida panhandle and may have even wider uses in xeric gardening. Unfortunately, its availability is currently limited.

## TOPEL HOLLY

The original topele holly (*Ilex x attenuata*, Zones 6–9, 9–4) arose as a natural hybrid whose parentage likely includes the American and dahoon hollies (*I. cassine*), although the myrtleleaf holly (*I. myrtifolia*) is also a suspected parent. The selections ‘Savannah’ and ‘East Palatka’ are



An attractive screening and hedge plant, ‘Foster #2’ is a cultivar of topele holly.

good fast-growing substitutes for American holly, particularly in USDA Zones 8 and 9. Both are similar to American holly in form and foliage.

‘East Palatka’ was selected by legendary holly expert H. Harold Hume in the 1920s from a tree growing near East Palatka, Florida. It produces abundant fruit on plants that grow 30 to 45 feet tall and 15 feet wide. With their dark green foliage and symmetrical crowns, they make excellent specimen trees. Uniformity in shape and size coupled with a positive response to pruning make ‘East Palatka’ useful where consistency is important. Huge ‘East Palatka’ hollies are scattered throughout the campus of Florida State University in Tallahassee,

where they have maintained their beauty despite being trampled by foot traffic and crowded by parking lots for years.

‘Savannah’ (Zones 7–9, 9–4) was found in the 1960s in Savannah, Georgia. It more closely resembles *I. opaca* in leaf form than does ‘East Palatka’, but its foliage is often a lighter, yellowish green. ‘Savannah’ features a dense, symmetrical crown and abundant bright red fruits that give winter trees a reddish cast even from a distance. It grows faster than American holly and can become 45 feet tall with a six- to 10-foot spread.

The Foster hybrids (sometimes listed as *Ilex x attenuata* ‘Fosteri’, 6–9, 9–4) started as chance seedlings of crosses of the dahoon and American hollies, in Bessemer,



Alabama, in the 1940s. ‘Foster #2’, probably the best female selection, is a dense conical tree with glossy, dark green leaves that are often longer than wide and bear conspicuous marginal teeth. This is one of the few *Ilex x attenuata* selections that performs well north of the southeastern coastal plains. Typical trees are 15 to 25 feet tall, about 12 feet wide, upright and pyramidal. It is excellent as a screening hedge on large properties.

Three yellow-fruited selections of *Ilex x attenuata* are particularly attractive. ‘Alagold’ originated as a seedling of ‘Foster #2’, to which it is very similar in form and

super here with only slight damage from the severe cold we had last winter.”

### YAUPON

Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*, Zones 7–10, 12–7) is the native holly most often grown in the southeastern United States. This is primarily a plant of the coastal plains from southeastern Virginia to Florida and west to Texas, but it has a much wider range in cultivation. Its many forms, selections, and cultivars are favorites of home gardeners, growers, and commercial landscapers.

The leaves are small and medium green with bluntly toothed margins.



Yaupon holly selections come in a range of shapes and sizes, including the compact ‘Nana’.

foliage. The bright-yellow-fruited ‘Benville Gold’, with its narrow form and dark green leaves, was introduced in 1995 by Tom Dodd, owner of Dodd & Dodd Native Plant Nursery in Semmes, Alabama, and is suitable for warmer climates. ‘Longwood Gold’, introduced in the late 1980s by Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, is reportedly more cold hardy than typical red-fruited hybrids.

Even with its coastal plains origin, *Ilex x attenuata* can be used well north of its southern provenance. “We’ve had some highly favorable experiences with clones of *Ilex x attenuata*,” says Richard Larson, propagator for the Dawes Arboretum in central Ohio. “‘Sunny Foster’ holly from the U.S. National Arboretum has done

Those of cultivated plants are usually less than an inch-and-a-half long and not more than about a half-inch wide, with the leaves of shade-grown plants being larger and darker green than plants growing in full sun. Female plants typically produce abundant, conspicuous bright red drupes in winter.

For gardeners who enjoy plants with cultural connections, yaupon is unsurpassed. It is touted by ethnobotanists as the plant from which certain Native American tribes brewed a ceremonial black drink, a caffeine-rich concoction that also served as a purgative when consumed in quantity—hence the specific epithet. A similar beverage was also used by American colonists as a tea substitute.

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Yaupon’s popularity as a landscape shrub stems more from garden-worthiness than from its historic significance as a folk remedy. It is tough, adaptable, drought and salt tolerant, requires little maintenance, and with its numerous forms, it fulfills many landscape needs. Dwarf, densely fo-

liaged compact forms such as ‘Schillings’, ‘Nana’, and Bordeaux™ make excellent low hedges or borders and can be pruned to any size up to about three feet tall.

Most of the dwarf forms are similar to one another and can be mixed in a single hedge that includes both male and female plants. Bordeaux™ is a sport of ‘Schillings’ that features burgundy-colored winter foliage. Larger upright forms include ‘Gray’s Greenleaf’, ‘Lynn Lowery’, ‘Fencerow’, ‘Will Fleming’, and the yellow-fruited ‘Yawkey’, all of which can grow 20 feet tall.

The weeping forms of yaupon are arguably the most attractive of this species; cultivars such as ‘Pendula’ and ‘Folsom’s Weeping’ are widely available and are perfect for accenting corners or tall facades. Both are narrow and upright, grow to about 20 feet tall, and have strongly drooping branches that should be allowed to hang gracefully and never be pruned, except to keep the branch tips off the ground.

## DAHOON

The dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*, Zones 7–10, 12–7) is naturally distributed along the coast from southeastern North Carolina to Louisiana, including all of Florida. It is primarily a wetland tree, but it adapts well to the garden, even in relatively dry sites. Dahoon is faster growing than American holly and will produce fruit in part shade or full sun. The one- to four-inch leaves are much longer than wide, medium green, somewhat glossy, and typically lack spiny lobes. Dahoon produces flowers and fruit at an early age, responds well to pruning, and bears numerous bright red drupes in winter. Mature plants in the wild can grow 35 feet tall, but garden plants rarely exceed 20 feet.

The best dahoon cultivars include ‘Perdido’ and ‘Tensaw’, introduced by Tom Dodd. ‘Perdido’ is a small, adaptable tree or large shrub with a mostly rounded crown and a profusion of red winter fruit. ‘Tensaw’ is slightly smaller, but is also a single-trunked tree or medium-sized shrub. Its densely borne leaves are shorter and rounder than other dahoon selections. Yellow-fruited forms are sometimes marketed as *I. cassine* forma *aureo-bractea*.

Ray Head, president of the Holly Society of America, grows ‘Tensaw’ and ‘Perdido’ in his North Carolina garden and counts them among his favorite evergreen



Top: The ‘Perdido’ selection of dahoon holly shows off pearly pink and red fruits. Above: The aptly named inkberry is widely adaptable in American gardens.

hollies. “These may be coastal plain plants but they do very well for me here in the Piedmont where winter temperatures can drop to zero,” says Head. “My plants produce loads of winter fruit to feed robins and waxwings. The fruit of ‘Tensaw’ is an orange color, which adds to its interest.”

### MYRTLEAF HOLLY

The closely related myrtleleaf holly (*I. myrtifolia*, Zones 7–10, 12–7) is considered by some authorities to be a variety of dahoon but is probably better treated as a distinct species. It has the smallest leaves of any of our native evergreen hollies, averaging less than an inch long and only about a quarter-inch wide, similar in length to those of yaupon, but much narrower. The margins are usually smooth, rarely with a few tiny sharp teeth. Myrtleleaf holly grows to about 15 feet in cultivation, with an open crown. Yellow-fruited forms of this species are particularly stunning.

### BLACK-FRUITED HOLLIES

Among the native black-fruited hollies, inkberry (*Ilex glabra*, Zones 4–10, 10–4) is the most popular and widely available. It is primarily a wetland plant in nature, broadly distributed in low pinelands and along swamp margins from Nova Scotia south to Texas. But it adapts well to garden soils, as long as they are at least moderately acidic. Mature plants can potentially grow to eight feet tall, but are usually much smaller. They can be pruned to a more compact form, lending themselves to use in foundation plantings or along walkways. The main stem of inkberry grows somewhat slowly, but plants can spread fairly rapidly by vigorous, quick-growing underground runners. Mature plants of some selections can create a dense hedge if pruned.

There are at least two dozen inkberry cultivars, distinguished mostly on the basis of form, foliage, and fruit color. Compact forms are most popular, the best of which include ‘Compacta’, ‘Densa’, and ‘Nigra’. Unlike other selections, ‘Nigra’ does not lose its lower leaves with age—a typical problem for standard inkberries.

‘Leucocarpa’ (sometimes referred to as *I. glabra* forma *leucocarpa*) is a white-fruited form that has been available in nurseries since at least the 1950s. ‘Ivory Queen’ and ‘Alba’, both of which are probably selections of ‘Leucocarpa’, also bear white fruit.



‘Will Fleming’, an upright yaupon holly selection, forms an allée in this Austin, Texas, garden.

Like many natives, inkberry does well in the garden beyond its natural range. Eric Garris, curator of the holly collection at the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest in north-central Kentucky, grows several cultivars. “*Ilex glabra* is not native to Kentucky but performs well here,” says Garris. “We currently have nine cultivars in our collection. I like ‘Compacta’ for its hardiness and rounded form and ‘Ivory Queen’ for its great, glossy foliage and white berries. ‘Winter Wine’ is also a favorite because it is very hardy and has a burgundy tint during winter.”

### HOLLIES IN THE GARDEN

Whether you’re seeking winter interest, four-season appeal, or sources of food for wildlife in your garden, you can’t go wrong with native evergreen hollies. “They can add wonderful year-round texture and depth to any landscape,” says landscape architect Lisa Delplace of Oehme, van Sweden and Associates in

Washington, D.C. “This is particularly true when used in the mid-ground of a planting bed where the leaf shape, gloss, and berries are visible.”

Several make stunning specimens, either with a single or multiple trunks. Some selections perform as elegant street trees. Others can be massed as a screen, planted as an informal hedge, or pruned for a more formal landscape. “Hollies are a wonderful counterpoint to the seasonal variations of perennials and grasses,” says Delplace.

While other components of the garden wax and wane throughout the year, evergreen hollies contribute elegant stability. Few native species equal them for enlivening the winter landscape.

*Gil Nelson is an author, photographer, and botanist based in Georgia. His next book, The Best Native Plants for Southern Gardens: A Handbook for Gardeners, Homeowners, and Professionals, is scheduled for release by University Press of Florida in 2010.*

# Gardens *for* Recovery

Like their precursors thousands of years ago, healing gardens are therapeutic sanctuaries that heal the body and mind and comfort the soul.

BY DOREEN G. HOWARD

**K**ATHY HAMILTON leaned against her walker as she slowly bent to pick a blueberry with her gauze-wrapped hands in the courtyard healing garden at the Oregon Burn Center at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland. A propane stove had exploded 10 days previous while Hamilton was in the family camper at a vacation site on the Washington coast. More than 20 percent of her lower body was covered with first-, second-, and third-degree burns, and her hands were severely burned. Yet despite skin graft



Burn patient Kathy Hamilton, left, spent time recuperating from her injuries in the healing garden at the Oregon Burn Center at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland, above.

surgeries and intense pain, she was in the garden every day, touching, smelling, and reveling in the beauty of the plants. “I can stop at any point, sit and watch butterflies and hummingbirds,” said the recent retiree from Rosburg, Washington. “It’s put my injuries into perspective, and they’re not as overwhelming. You know you, too, will heal,” Hamilton added emphatically.

## LONG HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Healing gardens have been around for centuries. The Greeks incorporated them into green spaces. Medieval monks grew healing plants in cloistered gardens where their patients flourished just as the plants did. However, it’s only been in the last 30

years that the healthcare community has pushed to integrate healing gardens into their facilities and therapies.

According to Naomi Sachs, founder and director of the Therapeutic Landscapes Network (see “Resources,” page 21), the modern concept of healing gardens began in the late 1980s and started to take hold in the 1990s. “Because there is no certification, clear definitions, or system for registering healing gardens, it’s difficult to know exactly how many there are,” says Sachs. “But, my educated guess is that there are about 500 healing gar-

dens across the country.” Healing gardens serve a broad range of therapeutic constituencies, ranging from AIDS patients to burn sufferers, recovering addicts, dementia patients, children with life-threatening illnesses, hospice care, and many others.

There’s general agreement among practitioners that the current popularity of healing gardens can be traced to Dr. Roger Ulrich’s landmark 1984 study that proved the healing effects of gardens and nature on hospital patients. Ulrich, who is director of Texas A&M University’s Center for

Health Systems & Design, tracked the medical outcome of gall bladder surgery patients who had a bedside window view of either trees or a brick wall. Patients in both groups were similar in age, weight, and medical history. The data showed that those with the view of nature, compared to those who looked out at the brick wall, had shorter hospital stays and suffered less post-surgical complications. Patients with views of trees required far fewer doses of narcotics to kill pain compared to those with views of brick walls. And they were also more cooperative patients.

Further research by Ulrich suggested five primary design guidelines for any healing garden, including ones for home backyards:

- **Include a variety of spaces such as rocks surrounded with groundcovers, seating areas, beds of brightly colored flowers, and water features.** When people are stressed, the ability to choose a space that suits their needs at the moment reduces the negative consequences of that stress.

- **Include quiet space for families and friends to provide support that helps improve a patient's outcome.** Make these seating spaces conducive to conversation in a private setting.

- **Encourage movement and mild exercise with easy-to-navigate paths and destinations such as a pond or fragrant herb garden.** Studies indicate that exercise lessens stress and lifts moods.

- **Make green space dominant.** Plants, trees, and shrubs should comprise two-thirds of the garden, and hardscape (walls, patios, sidewalks, pergolas, etc.) no more than a third. The greener the garden, the greater its positive effect on health.

- **Create privacy.** Situate healing gardens away from noise, heavy foot traffic, and bright lights. These negative stimuli can negate the garden's benefits. If intrusive elements cannot be avoided, the best recourse is to diminish them as much as possible with greenery or even walls.

Since Ulrich's groundbreaking study, research has shown that healing gardens can be designed to successfully treat a variety of physical, cognitive, psychological, and social problems (for a list of therapeutic applications for healing gardens, see the web special linked to this article on the AHS website, [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)).

## Resources

**Legacy Emanuel Medical Center**, Portland, Oregon.

- There are regularly scheduled open days at the various Legacy healing gardens in Oregon. For more information, visit [www.legacyhealth.org](http://www.legacyhealth.org).

**Open Spaces Sacred Places** by Tom Stoner and Carolyn Rapp. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, Vermont, 2008.

**Rosecrance Serenity Garden**, Rockford, Illinois.

- The garden is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is free, but registration is required. For more information, visit [www.rosecrance.org](http://www.rosecrance.org).

**Therapeutic Landscapes Network**, Beacon, NY. (845) 264-2026. [www.healinglandscapes.org](http://www.healinglandscapes.org).

- The website includes listings of healing gardens around the country, links to related organizations, and other resources.

### NEED-DRIVEN DESIGN

The therapeutic objectives and clientele of each individual facility dictate the design and plant selection for healing gardens. "Based on the therapeutic needs of patients, gardens evolve as we go back and forth with the staff to define the therapeutic requirements for each program," says landscape architect Brian Bainnson of Quatrefoil, Inc. in Portland, Oregon. Bainnson designed the Oregon Burn Center Garden and 14 others across the country. "Meeting these requirements becomes integral to the design so that patients enjoy the garden as a 'garden' and not as a piece of equipment," says Bainnson.

For example, even though many healing gardens incorporate soothing curved paths, in gardens for the visual-

ly impaired, straight paths are the safest. People with partial sight can see vivid foliage and flower colors, so plants with these attributes should be included, along with textured plants that provide tactile interest, and fragrant ones for olfactory appeal.

Hospitals that treat cardiac and other critical-care patients incorporate telemetry—an electronic system that monitors vital signs—so that a patient can sit in the garden, relax, and visit with family without the constant presence of medical staff. These serenity or meditation gardens feature plant palettes in cool colors with focal points such as small ponds around which people can sit for contemplation.

Materials used to build gardens at psychiatric hospitals must be able to withstand abuse. In addition, for safety reasons, poisonous plants and those with thorns must be excluded. Windows looking into the garden need to be shielded with shrubs, vines, and tall flowers to avoid a "fish bowl" effect in the garden that agitates some patients.

Gardens for patients with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias are designed to be simple. Often they include a continuous, level loop of paths with walking rails. The loop avoids dead ends, which may frustrate those with dementia. Seating has to be sturdy, with arm rests and backs for failing bodies and minds. Incorporating widely grown plants like pots of petunias and raised beds of tomatoes, creates a familiar, soothing atmosphere.



**Brightly colored flowers and foliage are used in gardens for the visually impaired.**

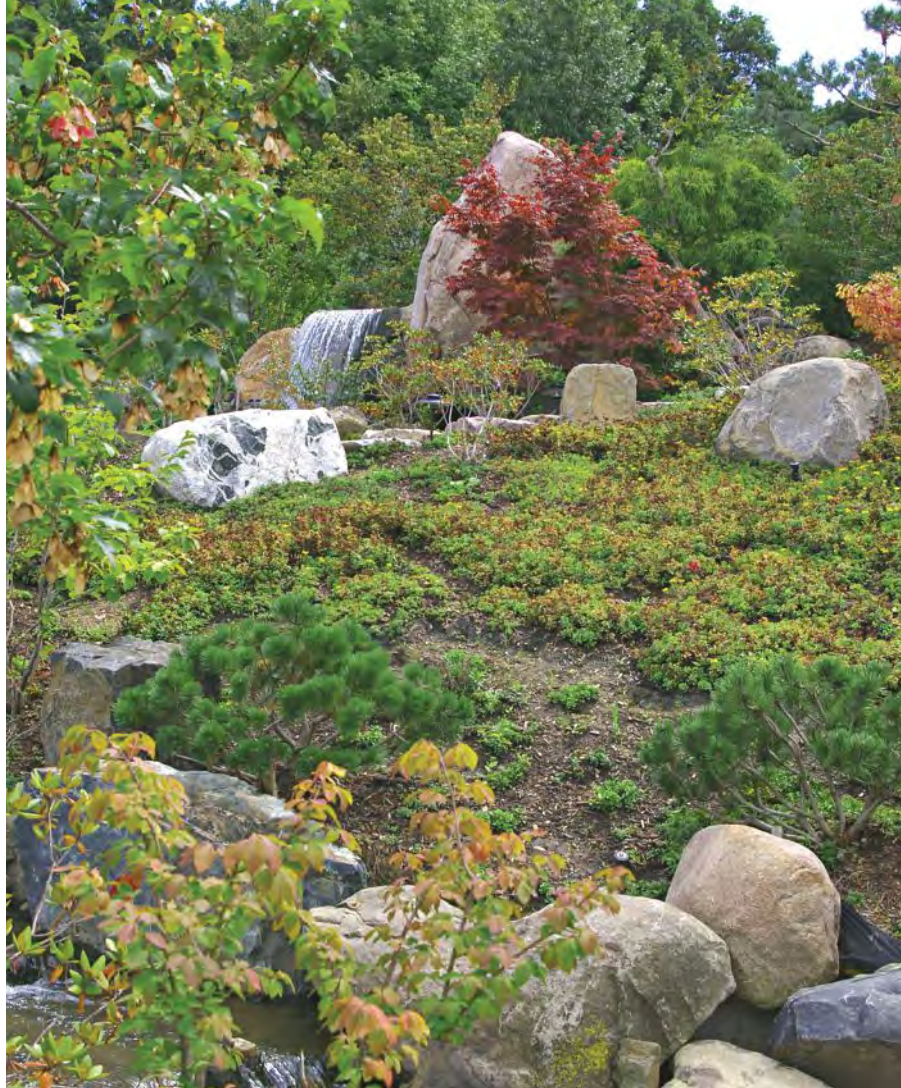
Transition spaces between indoor and outdoor areas in hospice gardens are important to allow adjustment to bright outdoor light. Natural sounds in the garden, such as running water and birds singing are important, too, because hearing is often the last of the senses retained by patients who are nearing death.

Bainnson emphasizes that in all cases, healing gardens must be visually inviting and “distinct from the moving, busy environment of a modern hospital.”

To get a sense of the many ways healing gardens are being used, it’s worth taking a closer look at a couple of highly regarded facilities that are serving very different clientele.

### A HEALING GARDEN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Rosecrance Serenity Garden in Rockford, Illinois, surrounds a facility that treats young people from 12 to 18 who have addiction problems. The 60-acre garden is an excellent example of how intended use determined design, as well as how Japanese garden style was adapted for specific therapy needs. There are three essential building blocks of a Japanese garden: soothing and reflective qualities of water; rocks for the sense of stability, and plants with nu-



The Japanese-style Rosecrance Serenity Garden, top and above, provides a relaxing setting for treatment of young people with addiction problems.

merous textures and shades of green. Rosecrance features two cascading waterfalls, a pond stocked with fish, one-and-a-half miles of winding paths, and an abundance of plants ranging from towering Scotch pines to oakleaf hydrangeas. Eighteen acres of woodland surround the facility. Areas to sit and reflect are located throughout.

Symbolism abounds in the garden. Each waterfall has 12 drops, representing the 12 steps of recovery. Paths are

how to sense energy, and get back in tune with their senses again. They do metaphor exercises, too, such as exploring how the process of pruning a tree is like cutting loose counterproductive people and elements in their lives, says Rice. Nicholson adds, “We teach patients how to use nature to ground themselves, instead of getting angry, flipping out, and making bad decisions.” Before the garden was built, patients would run away when upset. Now,

she saw when she woke up from anesthesia. She used her desire to touch the plants, smell the flowers, and see the birds as motivation to progress beyond the pain and walk to the garden.

Landscape architect Brian Bainson worked with Teresia Hazen, Legacy’s coordinator of therapy gardens, in modifying standard healing garden features to improve accessibility for all patients. The goal was for rehabilitative therapy to take place in the garden daily, weather permitting.

Foremost was privacy for the patients and their families. Because severe burns often leave a person with permanent scars and even altered body parts, it’s imperative that there be shelter from the outside world. The healing garden was constructed in the 9,000-square-foot hospital courtyard. Away from the main paths, five private areas with seating were created for patients and their families to connect. Some of the garden beds were raised to accommodate wheelchairs and those unable to bend. Paths were made wider for wheelchairs, gurneys, and walkers. A play space for young burn victims was designed to stimulate their imagination.

To prevent direct sunlight from causing discomfort to burned skin, shade was a requirement. Trees were planted everywhere and vine-covered pergolas were constructed for seating and places to gather. Plants such as fragrant lavender and lemon-scented pelargoniums, fuzzy lambs ears (*Stachys byzantina*), and tasty strawberries and cherry tomatoes, were included to engage all the senses. Nectar- and seed-producing plants such as coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), along with bird feeders, were included to attract wildlife. “This beautiful garden is a wonderful way to work your way back into society,” says Hazen, who was the recipient of the American Horticultural Society’s Horticultural Therapy award in 2007.

Kathy Hamilton—who is now home, tending her garden, painting watercolors, and walking further every day along the scenic roads of her neighborhood—wholeheartedly agrees with Hazen. “Life is good,” she says.

*Freelance writer Doreen G. Howard lives in Roscoe, Illinois. Her blog, The Edible Explorer, is linked through the Christian Science Monitor website.*



Horticultural therapist Teresia Hazen works with patients at several Legacy Health facilities in Portland. Here she helps stroke patient Lee Jordan practice techniques of gardening from a wheelchair in a garden at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital.

curved, because there are no straight lines in life, according to Susan Rice, public relations director for the Rosecrance Health Network.

The ordered, relaxing healing garden is designed so that adolescents who have addiction problems can explore life analogies, exercise, and participate in group therapy. Many of them have issues such as attention deficit disorder and depression. The Japanese garden model was used because it’s designed to help a person look inward and reflect. “Our patients have used drugs to hide their inner feelings,” says Rice. “The garden is a safe, nurturing place where those feelings can now come to the surface. That is when lasting recovery begins.”

Christine Nicholson, supervisor of experiential therapies, uses the garden as a backdrop for art, music, and meditation therapies. Patients learn to breathe deeply,

patients go for a walk by the water or go to a place in the garden that is special to them.

Landscape architect Hoichi Kurisu created the Rosecrance Serenity Garden, which is one of two full-size Japanese-style healing gardens in the United States. The other, also designed by Kurisu, is at the Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, in Lebanon, Oregon.

### **MOVING BEYOND PAIN AND DISFIGUREMENT**

Burn gardens such as the one at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland have a host of requirements that other healing gardens don’t. Many patients have life-threatening and disfiguring injuries, and the road to recovery is long. The view of the healing garden through a window next to his or her bed in intensive care may be a patient’s first experience after awakening. Kathy Hamilton says it was the first thing



# A “Look-Into” Garden

An often neglected aspect of garden design is how the landscape looks when observed from primary indoor viewing areas. Contributing writer Carole Ottesen offers tips for making your garden look spectacular from the inside out.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLE OTTESEN





Opposite page: From the living room of the author's home, a 'Natchez' crape myrtle dominates the view, along with hydrangeas in summer. Left: In winter, the crape myrtle shows off its bark and sculptural form against the backdrop of an evergreen. Above: Fall tints gild the foliage of bigleaf magnolia, viewed from a window.

FOR MOST of us—even if we are in the garden every day—more time is spent inside looking out than the other way around. With this in mind, I thought, why not create “look-into” gardens—beautiful little scenes to enjoy from indoors, especially during the long winter months? This idea was both practical and fanciful.

The fanciful part goes back to my childhood, to the spring my favorite aunt presented me with a confection in the shape of a giant, hollow Easter egg. It was decorated with pink and white icing and had a hole at one end. When you peeked through the hole, there was a tiny world inside: a house, a little garden, a wide-spreading tree with gnarled roots, and rabbits poking up among the flowers. I found it enchanting.

The magic of that perfectly enclosed little world from long ago has stayed with me over the years and certainly played a role in creating “look-into” scenes in my own gar-

dens. But if that long-ago gift was the 10 percent inspiration, the other 90 percent was thought and labor.

The first thing I realized was that gardens look different when viewed from inside a house. That's because, most often, we design gardens when we are actually *in* them for movement through them to be viewed, perhaps, as we walk along a path from one focal point to another. Sometimes gardens are designed primarily for the view from the street or driveway. In either case, being conscious of how your garden looks from the interior of the house brings a new perspective to its design and will help increase your enjoyment of it.

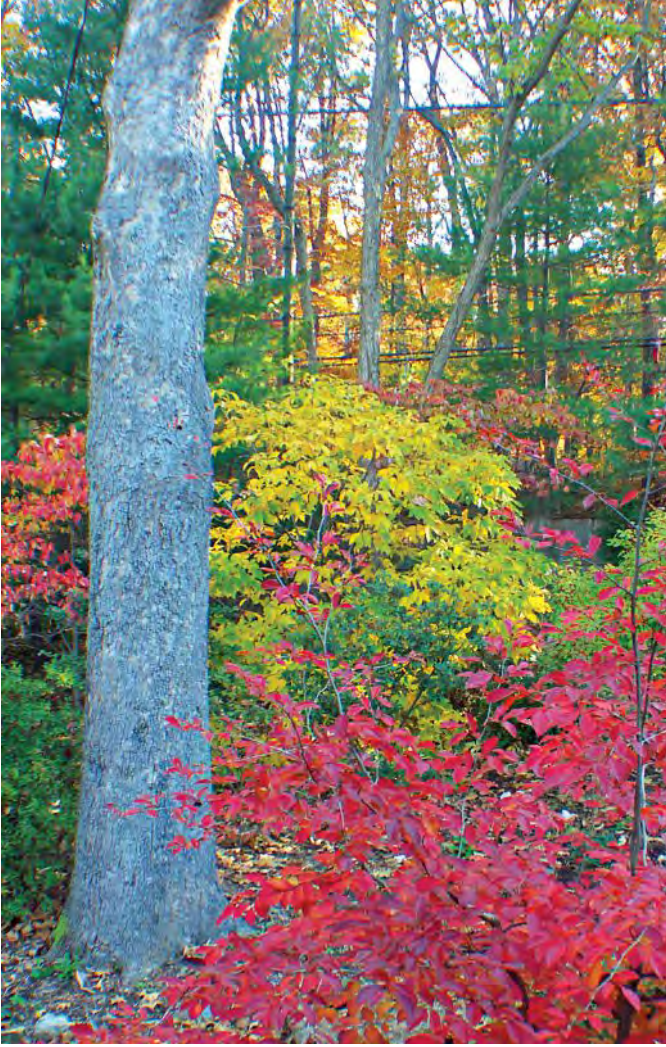
### THE EPIPHANY

I started creating look-into gardens around my current house in Maryland soon after I began to escape the hot mid-Atlantic summer months by turning the care of the garden over to my housesitter

and spending time in a vacation cottage on the Canadian coast. Each fall, when I returned to Maryland, it was to a few weeks of a diminishing garden. And then, all too soon, winter arrived and I was spending more time indoors.

What I discovered was that, viewed from the inside, my garden was lackluster. One of the primary reasons was that most of my plants were summer bloomers, so throughout the fall and winter, there was not enough to please the eye.

Like that proverbial tree falling in a lonely forest, summer-flowering plants go right through their life cycles whether or not you are there to see them. And if you aren't there, you miss the entire show. Summer is so gloriously awash in perennials and flowering shrubs that it is tempting to keep adding more, but it's always best to exert self-discipline and aim for a mix of plants that shine at different times of the year.



In fall and winter, views from the author's home office are enhanced by the colorful foliage and arresting form of stewartias.

This line of thinking led me to the bittersweet recognition that most of the plants in my garden belonged to a phase of my life that was now over. This epiphany had a bright side: On the next trip to the garden center, the choices were clear. Any new plants had to be showy in spring, fall, and winter when I would be there to see them.

Does it flower in summer? No, thank you! Does it bloom in spring, fall, or winter? Does it have berries and/or outstanding fall color? Is it evergreen or does it have an interesting shape or bark when leafless? Yes, please!

"It's a long, long time from May to December," goes an old song. But it always seems even longer from January to March, especially for gardeners. That's when you need evergreens and the bark of crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia* spp.) and stewartias; the buds of magnolias; and the berries of

hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.) and winterberries (*Ilex verticillata*). Masses of winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*), snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) or tommy crocuses (*Crocus tommasinianus*) can follow as cheerful reminders that winter is ending.

Finding ornamentals that shine in the off seasons turned out to be delightfully easy. Integrating them among the ones already in the garden was more challenging.

### NEW PERSPECTIVES ON DESIGN

Looking out of my house, it also seemed to me that many of the long-established plants were awkwardly placed. To remedy this, all through the cold months, I would garden through the windows with my eyes, moving a shrub here, limbing up a tree there, expanding a bed to achieve more graceful proportions and, sometimes when it couldn't be helped, removing a plant. By earliest spring, I knew what had to be

changed and, with the help of the notes and sketches I had made, rushed outside to accomplish it.

With each change I made, the satisfaction level inside ratcheted up. To enjoy the garden from inside, you have to shift a point, or points, of view to the inside—ideally to the places where you spend the most time. Then you'll be able to enjoy your garden in a different way. It's a bit like watching a sporting event on television: You're not in the stands, but you have a much better view of the action.

Snug and warm in your favorite chair, you can admire the coral bark maple's brilliant limbs while, outside, the snow settles slowly upon them. As winter warms into spring, you can observe a field of winter aconites push up through snow from, say, the window above the kitchen sink. When the leaves of a Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*)

flame scarlet in the autumn sun, you can enjoy the conflagration from your desk.

The place to begin planning a look-into garden is at a window—the bigger, the better. Then narrow the point of view to a chair, your desk, or the kitchen sink. Place ornamentals where they form a pleasant tableau that you can easily see from that window. This part may take some running inside and out as you move the plants around to get the arrangement right.

## ENCLOSURE

Because you are aiming for a diorama effect, generally it is best to arrange plants with the lowest-growing ones closest to the window and increasingly taller shrubs and trees toward the back of the scene.

Tall trees and shrubs in the background impart a sense of enclosure and stop your eye from wandering over to the neighbor's

house or to the street. It's great if they're evergreens, but the trunks and branches of deciduous shrubs and trees can do a good job of trapping your gaze—especially if they are dramatic. For instance, the arresting bark on the trunks of crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia* spp.), birches (*Betula* spp.), paperbark maples (*Acer griseum*), and stewartias is almost as good as a fence for stopping your eye. In the same way, the brightly colored berries on the stems of winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) and American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) rivet attention from fall onward. When grouped together, their branches produce a cloud studded with berries that functions as a see-through fence.

Sometimes, though, the best solution is the real thing. A fence is quick and easy and provides immediate enclosure and privacy. It doesn't have to completely en-

## Resources

**The Garden View: Designs for Beautiful Landscapes** by Tara Dillard. Sterling Publishing, New York, New York, 2004.

**Inside Out: Relating Garden to House** by Page Dickey. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, New York, New York, 2000.

**Outside the Not So Big House** by Julie Moir Messervy. Taunton Press, Newton, Connecticut, 2009.

**Your House, Your Garden: A Foolproof Approach to Garden Design** by Gordon Hayward. W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., New York, New York, 2003.



The coral bark maple's fiery stems are even more vivid with a coating of ice.

circle your garden. A few judiciously sited panels can provide the backdrop and the privacy you are looking for.

## WORKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Most gardens have established perennials, shrubs, and trees. While moving and dividing perennials is relatively easy, digging up large shrubs or trees is usually not feasible for the average homeowner. But removing them or pruning them is. It seems to go against some deep-seated American mores, but there really are times when cutting down a tree or large shrub is the right thing to do.

Before you give them the axe, however, consider pruning up dense, vigorous shrubs. Sometimes just removing the lower branches opens up a vista. Pruned-up shrubs or tree trunks in the foreground force perspective. They are a wonderful means of augmenting depth of field, framing the view of the garden beyond. In my garden I have successfully pruned up a tall nandina, a Florida anise (*Illicium floridanum*), and very large leatherleaf viburnum (*Viburnum rhytidophyllum*).

With a shapely shrub or tree in the foreground, draw the eye into the background with pleasing texture or color. A field of ornamental grasses such as fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) or dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon 'Kyoto'*) makes a good, homogenous foil for a foreground silhouette.

## MAKING USE OF NEW REAL ESTATE

Pruned-up shrubs yield space around their bases for lower-growing ornamentals. Another place to find bonus space is behind foundation plants where space up against the house is lost from sight when viewed from the garden. When viewed through a window, this space can become an important part of the overall scene. It is the foreground—an excellent place to view small, shy plants such as emerging woodland wildflowers or little bulbs.

Be sure to intersperse these early-blooming ephemerals with plants that shine when the early flowers fade. In shady, moist spaces hostas, hakone grass (*Hakonechloa macra* and cultivars), and Japanese beech fern (*Thelypteris decursive-pinnata*) are great at dovetailing with early bulbs, becoming full and lush, but never too tall. All are great as frames for other, more dynamic plants. To keep a look-into garden lively, include plants that offer interest in the different seasons.



## ROCK-STAR PLANTS

There are a few plants that celebrate all of the seasons with panache. In their arsenals are attributes to combat boredom at any time of year. Often, because of superior size, rock-star plants tend to be trees. Ideally, each look-into garden needs at least one rock-star plant to bring it to life.

In my garden, one of the celebrities is a coralbark maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku') that shows off lacy green leaves all summer. In fall the leaves become yellow stars before dropping to reveal stems and limbs of an almost unbelievable coral-red hue.

In the garden view from my office, a mountain stewartia (*Stewartia ovata*) with exfoliating bark and early summer flowers becomes an exhibitionist in fall when its leaves turn a vivid orange. Its relative, the more reserved silky camellia (*Stewartia malacodendron*), exquisite with white spring flowers that balance on its branches like so many eggs, turns yellow in fall and exhibits a wonderful wide-branching, elegantly twiggy winter silhouette.



Solely by virtue of its stunning, exfoliating, cinnamon-colored bark, a crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Natchez') stands alone in the foreground of the living room garden. The smooth, muscled trunks are colorful sculpture—an elegant foil to the changing seasons.

**Above:** The cheery yellow flowers of winter hazel and ground-level color of Lenten roses are harbingers of spring. **Left:** Franklin tree's incandescent fall foliage is worthy of a prime viewing site.

My garden's biggest diva in both size and effect is a bigleaf magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*). Its enormous, wide-spreading branches dominate the view along an entire side of the house. Picturesque from the kitchen, dining room, and reading room, this botanical leviathan grandly marks the seasons with foot-wide flowers in summer, three-foot banana-yellow leaves in fall, and smooth gray bark and big, promising buds in winter. (For more rock-star plants, see the box, on the opposite page.)

## THE FINISHING TOUCH

In all seasons, the bigleaf magnolia is a magnet for birds. Hung with bird seed and suet feeders, it draws birds to the window where they can be closely observed. After birds come to feed, they claim territory in the garden and soon

## BEST PICKS FOR YEAR-ROUND GARDEN INTEREST

Here are a few of Carole Ottesen's favorite plants for providing special effects or interest at different times of the year.

### Dense Evergreen Background Plants

China fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*, USDA Hardiness Zones 7–9, AHS Heat Zones 9–7)

Clumping bamboos (*Fargesia* spp., Zones 5–9, 8–5)

Hollies (*Ilex* spp., Zones 6–9, 9–6)

Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*, Zones 6–8, Zones 9–4)

Sweet bay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*, Zones 7–9, 9–1)

### Eye-Stoppers

American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*, Zones 6–9, 9–1)

Canoe birch (*Betula papyrifera*, Zones 2–6, 7–1)

Deciduous magnolias (*Magnolia* spp., Zones 4–9, 9–1)

River birch (*Betula nigra* 'Heritage', Zones 4–9, 9–1)

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*, Zones 3–9, 8–5)

### Rock Stars

Bigleaf magnolia (*M. macrophylla*, Zones 5–8, 9–6)

Coral bark maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku', Zones 6–8, 8–1)

Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica* 'Natchez', Zones 6–8, 9–6)

Hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis* 'Winter King', Zones 4–7, 7–5)

Mountain camellia (*Stewartia ovata*, Zones 3–9, 8–1)

Paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*, Zones 4–8, 8–1)

Silky camellia (*Stewartia malacodendron*, Zones 7–9, 9–6)

Variiegated pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia* 'Variegata', Zones 4–7, 8–1)

### Fall Stars

Bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*, Zones 4–8, 9–4)

Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*, Zones 5–8, 9–6),

Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*, Zones 5–8, 8–2)

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*, Zones 4–8, 8–1)

Toad lilies (*Tricyrtis* spp., Zones 5–9, 9–5)

### Late-Winter Stars

Lenten rose (*Helleborus* × *hybridis*, Zones 4–8, 9–6)

Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*, Zones 3–7, 8–1)

Tommy crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*, Zones 3–9, 8–1)

Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*, Zones 3–7, 9–1)

Winter daphne (*Daphne odora*, Zones 7–9, 9–7)

Wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*, Zones 7–9, 9–7)

### Spring Stars

Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*, Zones 4–8, 9–5)

Silverbells (*Halesia* spp., Zones 5–8, 8–4)


Winter hazels (*Corylopsis* spp., Zones 5–8, 8–5)



Include plants and design features that draw wildlife, such as this blue heron, within view.

nourish new generations in secret nests. There are robins, wrens, chickadees, woodpeckers, cardinals, mourning doves, blue jays, titmice, juncos, and—seasonally—finches. A blue heron shows up from time to time, stalking majestically around the property and worrying the fish in the garden pond.

These lively inhabitants of the world outside the window provide the finishing touch for the garden. As birds flit from tree to shrub to grass, they involve you intimately in their affairs and bring movement and song into the landscape.

As never before, the life of the garden penetrates deeply into the interior of the house. You may be sitting at your desk in the office reading and writing, or standing in the kitchen chopping vegetables, cooking, or washing up, but you are also very much outside in the midst of a private, self-contained, complete, and magical little universe. 

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*Contributing writer for The American Gardener, Carole Ottesen splits her gardening time between Maryland and Nova Scotia.*



# Allen Bush

*unsung horticultural hero*

While happily staying out of the limelight, plantsman Allen Bush has quietly left his mark on the perennial plant industry in North America.

BY BOB HILL

**I**T WAS THE spring of 1974 and at the age of 23, Allen Bush had reached his personal and horticultural crossroads. The Louisville native had gone off to the University of Kentucky, unsure where life would lead. It led him to the country farmhouse of Jessamine County tobacco farmer Elsie Lowery.

As Bush tells it—and he’s a consummate story teller—he had been sharing the farmhouse with college roommates, read-

ing *Organic Gardening* magazines all winter, and was ready to plant his first garden. Lowery, taken with Bush’s raw enthusiasm, offered a strip of ground along a field.

“It was,” says Bush, “about 400 feet long and maybe one foot wide.”

The Jessamine County gardening opportunity was more linear than he had in mind, but at least it seemed like a great site for tomatoes. “Elsie supplied about 100 tomato plants because he wanted

some, too,” recalls Bush. “So I lined them out one day, and watered them. And then I had to go someplace for about 10 days. I came back and they were all dead. Man, I was crushed. I thought, ‘I’ll never be a gardener.’”

## FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Bush proved as inept at self-prophecy as he was at growing his first tomatoes. Over the next 35 years he would help fire

In his Louisville, Kentucky, garden, Allen Bush grows many of the perennials he has helped introduce to American gardeners.



Bush named *Heuchera* 'Molly Bush', after his daughter, above. Introduced in the early 1990s, the selection has ivy-shaped leaves that are a deep purple-bronze color.

the nation's craze for perennials with a specialty nursery in North Carolina, introduce several new plants to the trade, become an influence on the entire industry, and join Jelitto Perennial Seeds, an international company that offers some 3,400 varieties of seeds. He would speak on garden panels, hunt for plants on several continents, and successfully cultivate long, broad rows of gardening friends,

nurseryowners, plant propagators, and fellow plant explorers around the world.

One of them is Dan Hinkley, author, plant explorer, and co-founder of the original Heronswood Nursery in Washington, who credits a visit to Bush's North Carolina nursery as the inspiration for Heronswood. "For such an unassuming and contemplative man, Allen has had an enormous impact on the fabric of American horticulture," says Hinkley. "Traveling with him has, as one would expect, been a pleasure and a privilege; he exemplifies the entire notion of Southern charm."

"Allen is a good man in a way that we do not often see these days," says another prolific writer and plant explorer, Richard Bir. "He is generous, caring, sensitive, a good listener, good writer, and good friend," says Bir, a long-time Extension nursery specialist at North Carolina State University. "He is interested in plants but also in a lot more than plants—in the world we are creating or leaving for our children and grandchildren."

## STARTING OUT

Even before the tomato fiasco, Bush wasn't a complete plant novice. His mother always had a garden and there was that little hunk of woods down the street where he played almost daily as a kid. He found early delight in watching the leaves of a buckeye tree unfold in spring along the banks of the Kentucky River near Lowery's farm.

He left the University of Kentucky with a degree in sociology—and grew himself into a plantsman. He learned the business from the shovel up; he volunteered in the AmeriCorps VISTA national service program in his senior year, starting a children's garden. After college, he worked on a landscape crew at Hillenmeyer Nurseries in Lexington, Kentucky.

Then there was that trip to Europe when he thought he would explore the rooms of Buckingham Palace and tour exotic museums but instead found himself outside in their gardens. He experienced an epiphany of sorts as he sat in the Jardim da Estrela in Lisbon, Portugal, and took in the wonder of the old park and its children's garden.

"It's just this little city park off the beaten path," he says. "It had a little grotto, and it was enchanting in some sort of way I can't properly describe." It was there that he decided he wanted to work with plants professionally.

So Bush and a buddy opened a landscape business in Louisville with "a pickup truck and some hand tools." The first night in business, a contractor called saying he had 10 houses that needed landscaping.

Bush thought they had it made, but reality set in when they met the contractor and asked about their budget; they were informed it was only one hundred dollars per house. "And then," says Bush, "we didn't get paid."



Left: With Hans Hansen of Shady Oaks Nursery in the background, Bush and former Heronswood Nursery owner Dan Hinkley compare notes on a plant specimen during a 2003 plant-hunting trip to China. Above: On the same expedition, Bush takes a close look at a plant growing on a forest floor.



**Above:** In the 1980s, the Holbrook Farm & Nursery catalog helped launch the trend toward perennial plants. **Right:** Bush, pictured in 1983 in the nursery's daylily field.



About two years later, Bush gave up on the landscape business and worked for a summer at the Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest south of Louisville. His boss was Kentucky landscape legend Buddy Hubbuch, a tough taskmaster who quickly warmed to anyone who cared about plants.

“It was just the summer, but it was probably the greatest job I ever had,” says Bush. “Buddy was terrific. I kept my mouth shut and just listened to him and learned.”

### FROM KENTUCKY TO KEW

Bush’s horticultural horizons widened even more with his admittance to the international trainees program at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. “It just changed my life,” says Bush. “It was plants, plants, plants, and I was in way over my head because all these kids had lots of natural history and I hadn’t had any science since high school biology. I mean, I was way out of my league.”

But he persevered. With his writing skills, innate passion for plants, and cartographer’s memory for detail, he found his way. After Kew, he spent three months at Birch Farm Nursery in West Sussex, a nursery then run by renowned alpine expert and plant explorer Will Ingherson.

### THE BIRTH OF HOLBROOK FARM

The experience inspired Bush to open his own nursery. With some inherited money from a grandmother, in 1980 he bought 37 acres of land near Asheville, North Carolina, where the more benign mountain climate suited his dreams of

growing new and interesting perennials and bulbs. He named the venture Holbrook Farm & Nursery, for his great-grandfather Holbrook, who grew up in western North Carolina.

“Then it turned out there was this sudden interest in perennials,” says Bush. “A couple of years later, the Perennial Plant Association started, so it was kind of off to the races.”

Holbrook was mostly a mail-order business. Bush put out two catalogs a year. He contacted a national gardening magazine about placing a one-third page ad. The magazine’s circulation was about 100,000. The ad salesman told Bush to expect about a two percent response.



**Bush found this phlox growing under a speed limit sign, hence the name ‘Speed Limit 45’.**

“I thought, ‘This sounds pretty easy,’” says Bush, “so I put together this \$50 bulb sampler. The ad cost \$1,500 and I’d sell \$100,000 worth of bulbs. I mean, this is a piece of cake. So I put the ad out and waited for the orders to come in. And I got about 10. I think five of them were from my mother’s friends.”

### EXPANDING INFLUENCE

Within the North Carolina horticultural community, Bush was making friends. He was among a group of plantsmen, including J.C. Raulston, John Creech, and Richard Bir, who helped plan for the development of the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville.

His influence on the regional gardening scene included arranging for a legendary English horticulturist to speak at a seminar. Bir recalls that Bush brought Christopher Lloyd to the southern Blue Ridge “on his own nickel, when I do not think Allen had two nickels to rub together, but he was excited about exposing us to international speakers and gardening.”

“As I recall,” says Bir, “Christopher Lloyd slept on a sofa at Allen’s house. Can you picture Christopher Lloyd sleeping on a sofa?”

Along with Dan Hinkley, Bir also credits Holbrook Farm & Nursery as having an influence far beyond North Carolina—with many of its gardening staff going on to manage larger nurseries, community college programs, and public gardens.



“Allen started from scratch and built Holbrook into something with influence far exceeding its annual sales because it was a reflection of Allen Bush,” says Bir. “Holbrook farm had a personal touch that made you feel cared about.”

Bush developed Holbrook for 15 years. He also introduced many exciting new plants to the trade, including: *Stokesia* ‘Klaus Jelitto’, *Heuchera* ‘Molly Bush’, *Heuchera* ‘Palace Purple’, *Calycanthus floridus* ‘Michael Lindsey’, *Phlox* ‘Speed Limit 45’, *Salvia koyamae*, and *Gladiolus* ‘Boone’. He estimates that when he closed the nursery in the mid-1990s, it had an inventory of about 100,000 plants.

But increased competition and costs made it a tough business. “We made a modest living, but it was never profitable,” says Bush. He closed the nursery in 1995—but retained the 37 acres he still loves to visit—and moved back to Louisville.

“It was really hard to come to that decision,” he says. “I shed some tears over it and folded the tent.”

## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Not long afterward, an old friend, Klaus Jelitto of Jelitto Perennial Seeds in Germany, asked Bush to open the company’s North American branch. The offer was made to order: Get an office, do some marketing, attend conferences and conventions, maintain that strong network of friends, increase sales, and find new plants.

On his worldwide plant exploration trips, Bush was accompanied by a diverse mix of nurseryowners, seedsmen, horticulture professors, and landscape architects, including Kurt Bluemel, Klaus Jelitto, George Uebelhart, Kirk Alexander, Steve Still, Dave Schultz, Ozzie Johnson, Hans Hansen, and Pierre Bennerup. This group first traveled in 1987 at the invitation of Bluemel and Jelitto to tour German perennial nurseries and gardens.

For more than two decades, various members of this group have searched for plants in nurseries, gardens, and in the wild of the United States, Europe, South America, and China. “Plants are our love and living,” says Bush.

## KENTUCKY HOME

As you might imagine, plants also play a role in Bush’s personal life. He and his wife, Rose Cooper, have surrounded

## ALLEN BUSH PLANT INTRODUCTIONS

Here are six of Allen Bush’s favorite introductions:



***Calycanthus floridus* ‘Michael Lindsey’.** “I bought this somewhere, don’t remember where. It was a sweetshrub, plain and simple,” says Bush. “A few years later [University of Georgia horticulturists] Mike Dirr and Allan Armitage came by. Dirr saw something unique. He’d never seen a sweetshrub with glossy leaves and sweet-scented flowers. Talk about dumb luck.” Named for Michael Lindsey, the newborn son of Bush’s nursery manager, Tracy Lindsey, this cultivar was first sold in 1993.

***Gladiolus* ‘Boone’.** This hardy plant with apricot-colored flowers was discovered by Jeff Owen, an Extension agent in Avery County, North Carolina. Owen shared it with fellow plantsman and Extension horticulturist Richard Bir, who passed it on to Bush, who put it on the market.

***Heuchera* ‘Molly Bush’.** “It’s nothing fancy by today’s coral bell standards,” says Bush, “but it did receive an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society and got high marks after trials at Chicago Botanic Gardens.” It is named for Bush’s daughter.

***Heuchera* ‘Palace Purple’.** Probably the best known of Bush’s introductions, this cultivar helped launch widespread in-



terest in colorful foliage on coral bells. According to Bush, he first introduced (or re-introduced) the plant to the American market in 1986. He notes, however, that the plant’s convoluted seed lineage and naming involved various others—including Tony Hall and Brian Halliwell at Kew gardens, plantsman Alan Bloom, and garden writer Fred McGourty—but the original seeds may have come from American botanist and explorer Edgar Wherry, who found them in Appalachia and sent them to England in the first place.

***Phlox* ‘Speed Limit 45’.** “I found it under a ‘Speed Limit 45’ sign down the road from Holbrook,” says Bush. “The name has been whipsawed around,” he adds. “The taxonomists didn’t go along with the numbers, and for a long time a cultivar could only have two name components. It’s a nice pink; nothing fancy, but mildew resistant.”

***Stokesia* ‘Klaus Jelitto’.** This cultivar was found as a seedling in the Holbrook garden. Bush recalls that it was recognized one summer day in 1989 by a group of visiting Dutch growers led by Klaus Jelitto and Kurt Bluemel. “The cultivar was anointed on the spot,” he says.

—B.H.

their Louisville home with gardens—filled with an ever-expanding palette of plants the pair has collected, or that Bush is testing for Jelitto.

Cooper has planted the front yard with shrubs such as winter hazel (*Corylopsis spicata*), beautyberry (*Callicarpa dichotoma*), leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), witchhazel (*Hamamelis* ‘Angelly’), and sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus* ‘Michael Lindsey’).

Bush’s backyard garden is lovingly stuffed with fun exotica. Near the house is a pool, a millstone fountain, and a mirrored hideaway. The yard falls away, leading to a terrace created by an artistic gardening friend.

His well-protected USDA Zone 6 garden includes dwarf white *Phlox* ‘Minnie Pearl’, crinum, leafy native horsebalm (*Collinsonia canadensis*), dwarf peonies ‘Tiny Tim’ and ‘Aaron Potts’, pincushion plant (*Scabiosa lachnophylla*), and a yellow blanket flower (*Gaillardia aristata* ‘Amber Wheels’) that he is testing for Jelitto.

## Sources

**Arrowhead Alpines**, Fowlerville, MI. (517) 223-3581. [www.arrowheadalpines.com](http://www.arrowheadalpines.com).

**Jelitto Seeds**, Louisville, KY. (502) 895-0807. [www.jelitto.com](http://www.jelitto.com).

**Woodlanders, Inc.**, Aiken, SC. (803) 648-7522. [www.woodlanders.net](http://www.woodlanders.net).

A gray-flowered native *Penstemon calycosus* has found its way into his garden, along with a beautiful clump of Mexican feather grass (*Stipa tenuissima*), and a violet-flowered hardy geranium (*Geranium wlassovianum*).

Bush’s scree garden—with benches at the bottom offering a full view up the scenic slope—is still a work in progress. Built with the help of friend and garden

designer Kirk Alexander, it allows some of the alpine plants Bush loved in England to survive in hot, humid Louisville. A wide variety of cacti, yuccas, thymes, agaves, and sempervivums are represented—as well as a European fan palm (*Chamaerops humilis*), native to the Mediterranean, which he drags inside for the winter.

## NEW PRIORITIES

In recent years, Bush has turned over management of Jelitto’s North American office to Mary Vaananen, who says of her former boss, “he has been called an icon (which would make him shudder) but mostly everybody calls him a wonderful guy.”

Now 58, Bush still seeks out new plants, travels to conferences, and looks forward to more plant trips. He is doing more writing, sharing his distinctive voice through garden blogs and on websites such as “Daily Yonder” ([www.dailyyonder.com](http://www.dailyyonder.com)) and “The Human Flower Project,” an in-



Above: Bush and his wife, Rose Cooper, enjoy gardening around their Louisville home. Left: The terraced back yard is home to favorite perennials and new ones being tested.

ternational newsgroup that focuses on humankind’s relationship with the floral world ([www.humanflowerproject.com](http://www.humanflowerproject.com)).

He still enjoys his gardening—even at the far end of the tomato row. “I think every winter, ‘Oh my God, I can’t do it again, I’m getting too old.’ I think I’ve kind of come to the end of the frontier. And then there are a couple of nice days in spring, and I’m back in the game.”

Garden writer and radio host Bob Hill is owner of Hidden Hill Nursery and Sculpture Garden in Utica, Indiana.

# English Ivy Paragon *or* Pariah?

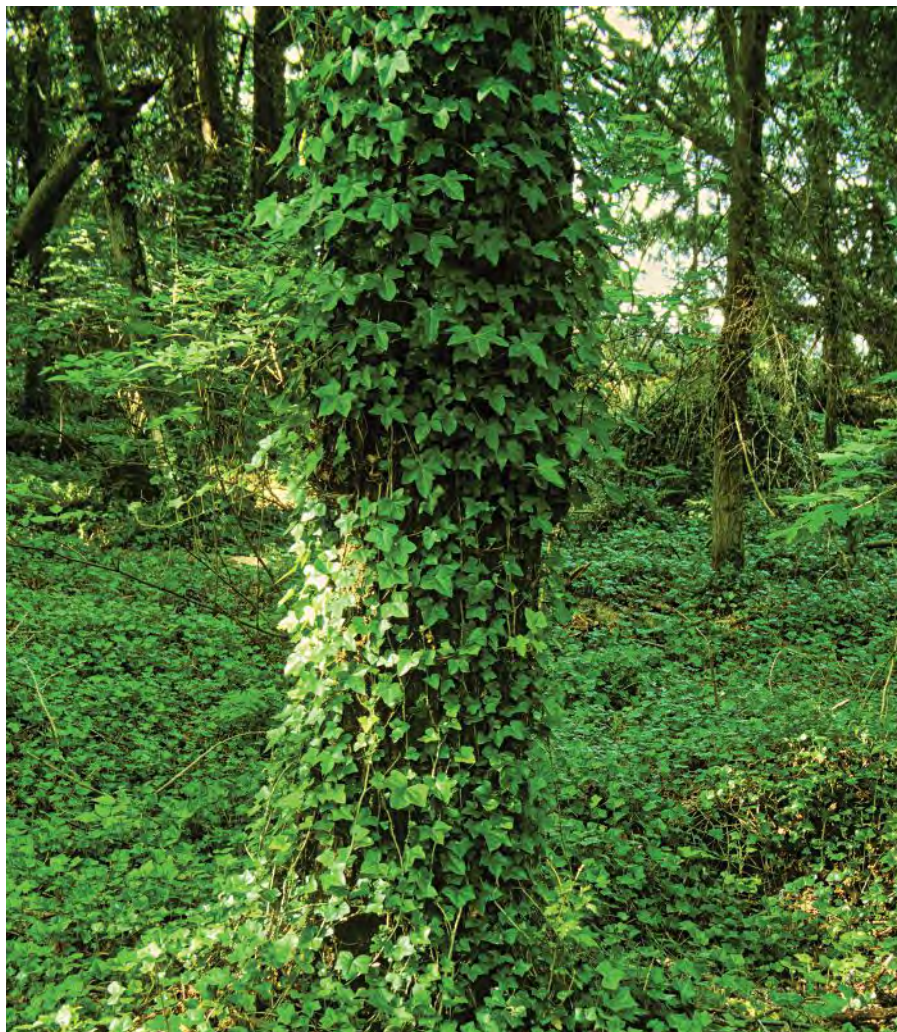
BY LISA ALBERT

Long considered a classic garden plant, English ivy's tendency to escape gardens in many regions of North America has gardeners rethinking its place in the landscape.

**T**HROUGHOUT time, poets have praised ivy while artists and craftsmen recreated its leaves. Mythologically, it is associated with Osiris, ancient Egypt's god of the underworld, and Bacchus, the Roman god of intoxication, who is often depicted wearing a wreath of ivy. It symbolized immortality in many pagan religions, including Druidism, before Christians embraced it as a symbol of eternal life.

English ivy (*Hedera helix*), the most familiar of the ivies, has been cultivated for centuries. According to Peter Q. Rose's *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Ivies*, (see "Resources," page 38) ivy was one of the first plants imported by American settlers. Thomas Wilcox planted ivy taken from his native Devonshire, England, against a wall of his Pennsylvania paper mill, built in 1727. Shortly afterwards, John Bartram, America's first great botanist, naturalist, and plant explorer, planted ivy in his garden near Philadelphia.

Given ivy's long and rich association with humankind, it's not surprising that ivy is an iconic image in all forms of cultural expression and is a widely grown garden plant. What is surprising is that there wasn't a book on ivy published in the United States or an American plant society dedicated to ivy until the early 1970s.



Escaped ivy densely blankets the ground and climbs trees in this Northwest woodland.

Both are the result of Suzanne Pierot's attempt to purchase ivy to soften a wall she had built along a small stream on her Stamford, Connecticut, property. It was a frustrating process. "Most of the ivies didn't have a name except 'ivy'. If a nursery was really good, they called it *Hedera*, and a few nurseries listed cultivar names. I found everyone had it all mixed up," recalls Pierot.

Pierot's research led her to conclude that there were about 50 to 60 correct names for cultivars of English ivy. But there was still the tricky task of differentiating one ivy from another. She gathered all the cultivars together, laid them out, and developed a method for grouping them based on appearance. Today, the Pierot System of Classification (see "Ivy Species and Cultivars" on next page)

is used by many organizations and gardening books.

In 1973, Pierot founded the American Ivy Society (AIS). Today, she lives in Woodstock, New York, and serves as the president of AIS, an organization of several hundred ivy enthusiasts that serves as the world's official registrar of ivy cultivars. She wrote *The Ivy Book: The Growing and Care of Ivy*, published in 1974. Since then, the number of ivy cultivars, predominantly English ivy, has grown from 50 to 500, thanks to the tendency of many ivies to sport, or develop new leaf shapes or patterns of color. Ivy is also very easy to propagate from cuttings, making it an attractive money-maker for the nursery industry.

"Ivy grows wonderfully," says Pierot. "Some say too wonderfully." And that's where the ivy story takes a darker turn.

## DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

For every admirer of English ivy, you can find someone who hates it with a passion. Ivy is blamed for a wide range of problems, including becoming a maintenance nightmare in gardens, escaping into natural areas, smothering native vegetation, damaging trees, and providing breeding habitat for pests such as rats and mosquitoes. Its fruits are reportedly mildly poisonous to humans if eaten in quantity and its foliage can cause contact dermatitis.

But the primary rap on ivy is that it spreads into natural areas and outcompetes native vegetation. Its ability to overwhelm existing plants may be because it has an unfair advantage. "There is some evidence that ivy is somewhat allelopathic," says Scott Aker, gardens unit leader at the U.S. National Arboretum in Wash-

ington, D.C. "It releases compounds in the soil that are not conducive to other plants; that's one reason why you don't see many weeds growing up through it."

Botanists and land managers across the country have reported problems with escaped ivy (see map link in "Resources," page 38). In the last decade, two states, Oregon and Washington, have gone as far as adding English ivy to their state noxious weed list. Environment Canada lists English ivy as a high-priority species for removal from Point Pelee National Park, Ontario, and notes it has been reported in the wild in British Columbia.

Pierot is dismissive of reports that ivy is widely invasive. "It depends on where you live," she says. "The only spots that are really a problem are Oregon and Washington and a little spot in Virginia. The rest of the U.S. has no problem, but the people in Oregon and Washington make a lot of noise."

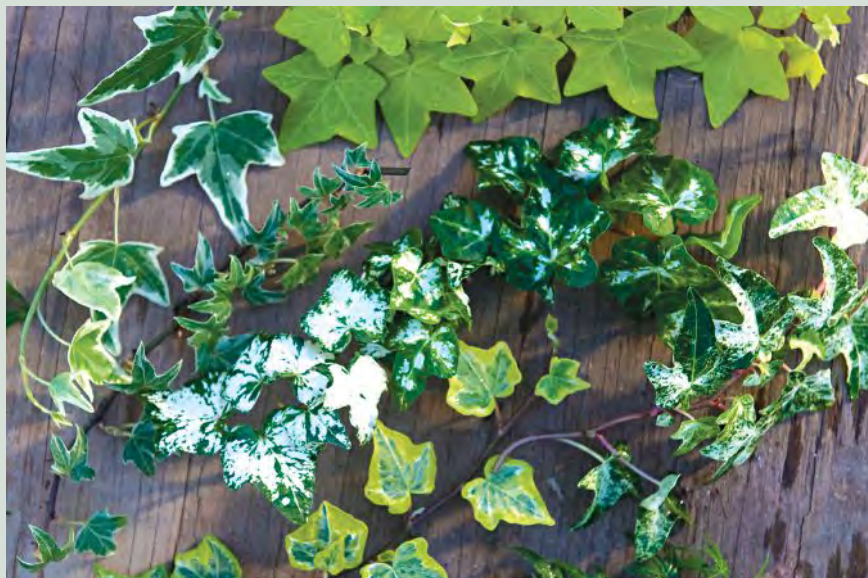
Jil Swearingen, invasive species specialist with the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., disagrees. "Currently, ivy is reported to be invasive and a problem for natural areas and ecosystems in 29 states and the District of Columbia," says Swearingen. According to Aker, English ivy is "among the top five alien invader issues" at the National Arboretum, despite the fact nearly all ivy has been removed from the arboretum's collections.

## BORN TO SPREAD

"Ivy is fascinating," says Sarah Reichard, an associate professor of conservation biology affiliated with the University of Washington Botanic Garden in Seattle. "It's a vine, and vines usually start to reproduce really early, but ivy can live a decade or more before it becomes reproductive and it usually doesn't start to reproduce until it's on a vertical surface." Once ivy starts growing vertically, it enters its adult or aboreal stage, where it becomes shrubby and the leaves change from palmately lobed to ovate. As it climbs higher up on a tree, exposure to increased sunlight triggers prolific flowering and production of berrylike fruits that birds relish. "Ivy," says Reichard, "has figured out how to get itself dispersed very effectively."

Because ivy propagates easily by stem cuttings and seed, it can spread into nat-

## IVY SPECIES AND CULTIVARS



Breeders have developed ivies with hundreds of different foliage shapes and variegation.

Between eight and 12 ivy species are recognized by taxonomists. All are woody-stemmed evergreen vines that trail or climb by way of clinging roots. English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is the best known and most widely grown species. Other cultivated species include Azores ivy (*H. azorica*), Perisan ivy (*H. colchica*), Irish or Atlantic ivy (*H. hibernica*), and Japanese ivy (*H. rhombea*). Persian ivy is often used as a groundcover in the western United States; it has the largest leaves among the various ivy species, growing up to 10 inches long and seven inches broad.

Suzanne Pierot's classification system divides ivies into the following categories: variegated (V), bird's foot (BF), fans (F), curls (C), heart-shaped (H), ivy-ivies (I), miniatures (M), adult (A), and—for those that didn't fit any of the categories—oddbits (O).  
—L.A.



**Top:** Once ivy starts growing vertically, its leaves change shape and it starts flowering.  
**Above:** The bluish-black fruits are eaten by birds and other wildlife, who spread the seeds.

ural areas through illegal dumping of yard waste and by birds doing what Reichard refers to as “perch and poop.” It’s birds that keep Reichard busy pulling ivy seedlings on a weekly basis and removing ivy patches, as time allows, from her half-acre property in Seattle. What she’s observed from removing ivy has been revelatory for her.

“When I’ve pulled up ivy, almost instantly I saw native species returning,”

Reichard says. “I’ve had western bleeding heart (*Dicentra formosa*) that wasn’t there before pop up. I’ve seen young western red cedars (*Thuja plicata*) that weren’t there before. Ivy does seem to inhibit growth of native species. There’s some mechanism, whether it’s competition or poisoning of the soil, that is inhibiting the next generation of forest.” This results in what some ecologists refer to as “ivy deserts,” where thick mats of ivy carpet the forest floor,

suppressing understory plants and tree seedlings while vines climb tree trunks into the canopy. Ivy deserts reduce diversity of habitat and food for native wildlife.

### IDENTIFYING THE THREAT

According to Reichard, awareness that English ivy was an invasive threat in the Pacific Northwest goes back at least 20 years. Initially, Reichard says, there was a lack of communication and cooperation between conservationists and the nursery and landscaping industry, but over time the two groups have worked together to promote alternatives for invasive forms of ivy.

In Oregon, the late Sandy Diedrich of the No Ivy League, a division of the City of Portland’s Parks & Recreation Department, spearheaded a volunteer-based, grassroots effort to remove ivy from Forest Park, the country’s largest forested natural area within city limits, and to educate the public about ivy’s invasive nature. Since 1994, No Ivy League volunteers have removed more than 267 acres of ivy from the ground at Forest Park.

Diedrich also lobbied for ivy to be listed as a noxious weed in Oregon. During his tenure on the State Weed Board, Don Richards, president of Applied Horticultural Consulting, Inc., in Lake Oswego, Oregon, and member of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, heard Diedrich’s testimony detailing ivy’s environmental impact and control costs. Prior to that, according to Richards, few members of the nursery industry “realized how aggressive ivy was and how prone it was to overtaking our natural environment in Oregon.”

Based on the testimony of Diedrich and others, the Weed Board concluded that the costs to control ivy exceeded its value to growers. In February 2001, Oregon became the first state to classify English ivy as a noxious weed. A year later, the state placed it under quarantine, making it illegal to transport, propagate, or offer to buy or sell any part of the plant in Oregon.

### IVY IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

Paul Kovenock, a volunteer with the Remove Invasive Plants (RiP) program in Arlington, Virginia, has first-hand experience with English ivy’s invasiveness in the mid-Atlantic. When he moved from Washington, D.C., to his current home, “the ivy

## Resources

**American Ivy Society**, P.O. Box 163, Deerfield Street, NJ 08313.  
[www.ivy.org](http://www.ivy.org).

**The Gardener's Guide to Growing Ivies** by Peter Q. Rose. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 1996.

**GardenSmart Oregon, Stop the Invasion campaign**, [www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/oregon/files/gardensmart\\_oregon\\_reduced.pdf](http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/oregon/files/gardensmart_oregon_reduced.pdf).

**Garden Wise: Non-Invasive Plants for Your Garden, Washington Invasive Species Coalition**, [www.invasivespeciescoalition.org/GardenPlants](http://www.invasivespeciescoalition.org/GardenPlants).

**Invasive Plant Atlas**. Two maps showing regions in which ivy has been reported growing in natural areas: the EDDMapS is still under development, awaiting reports from agencies around the country: [www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=3027](http://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=3027).

**The Ivy Book: The Growing and Care of Ivy** by Suzanne Pierot. Macmillan Publishing, New York, 1974.

**No Ivy League control methods**, [www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=47820&a=201791](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=47820&a=201791).

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**Remove Invasive Plants program**, Arlington, Virginia. [www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/scripts/parks/ParksRecreationScripts/ParksInvasive.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/scripts/parks/ParksRecreationScripts/ParksInvasive.aspx).

**Virginia Native Plant Society**, [www.vnps.org/resources/ALTERNATIVESENGLISHIVY.htm](http://www.vnps.org/resources/ALTERNATIVESENGLISHIVY.htm).

was almost coming in my kitchen window! It was so aggressive."

It took a few winters, but Kovenock eradicated the ivy from his property, which abuts the 25-acre Lubber Run Park. He also convinced his neighbors to remove ivy from their properties. As a RiP volunteer, he organized ivy-weeding events at the park, where ivy is now under control.

Kovenock credits RiP's successful control and public educational efforts to the inspiration and guidance provided by Diedrich and the No Ivy League and the leadership of Jenn Truong, a Virginia Co-

the plants were offered. Plants that became naturalized had been sold for an average of 15 to 20 years, compared to about seven years for non-naturalized plants; the naturalization rate of plants sold for 30 years or more was 70 percent.

### VILIFYING THE WRONG VINE?

In a new twist to the ivy story, research from the last few years indicates the ivy that escaped in so many regions may not be strictly English ivy. Reichard and two collaborators conducted a genetic assessment of invading populations of ivy in



In a Virginia suburb near Washington, D.C., school children join adults from Arlington County's Remove Invasive Plants program to help remove English ivy from one of the county's parks.

operative Extension agent and program coordinator for Arlington County Invasive Species Control.

The group's attempt to get English ivy listed as a noxious weed in Virginia, however, was not successful because ivy isn't yet seen as a problem in rural Virginia.

But there is concern that, given time, ivy's invasive tendencies may show up in other regions. A study published in the January 2009 issue of *Ecology* concluded that many introduced plants adapt to local climates and growing conditions, making them potentially invasive. The study, which analyzed 40 years of sales data at a Florida nursery, found the probability of plants becoming naturalized increases greatly with the number of years

areas from British Columbia to northern Oregon. The research, published in a 2006 issue of *Biological Invasions*, revealed that Irish, or Atlantic, ivy (*H.ibernica*) represented about 80 percent of the samples, with English ivy and several cultivars representing the remainder.

Justin Ramsey, an assistant biology professor at the University of Rochester, New York, recently completed a similar study expanding the sampling into northern California as well as studying ivy populations in the mid-Atlantic region. His findings, as yet unpublished, indicate that the percentages of Irish and English ivies in the mid-Atlantic region were reversed: Eighty percent of the samples taken are English ivy and 20 percent are Irish ivy.

Based on the research by Reichard and her colleagues, Washington became the second state to formally list ivy as a noxious weed in January 2002. English ivy, Irish ivy, and four English ivy cultivars ('Baltica', 'California', 'Pittsburgh', and 'Star') were added as Class C Noxious Weeds.

### OLD HABITS DIE HARD

"English ivy is difficult to eradicate because of its long history as a great plant for homeowners," says Truong. "Nurseries only change what they sell to match



Irish or Atlantic ivy, above, is difficult to distinguish from English ivy.

changing demands of consumers. So as long as there are still homeowners buying it, nurseries will keep selling it."

The problem is compounded because not all growers identify their ivy carefully. "Often they label anything that looks like ivy as English ivy," says Pierot. "You can go to a big box store today and if you find ivy, it's often misnamed." She notes that the average person doesn't have the botanical knowledge to differentiate English from Irish ivy.

Ultimately it is up to gardeners to prevent ivy and other potentially invasive plants from becoming a problem. Swearingen and other experts recommend that gardeners stay informed by checking their state noxious weed list regularly and looking for information provided by local Master Gardeners and botanical gardens. 🍀

*A contributor to the Sunset Western Garden Book, freelance writer Lisa Albert lives in Tualatin, Oregon.*

## PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING PROBLEMS WITH IVY

Before taking steps to remove ivy in your garden, determine what kind you have. Take a sample to a local botanical garden or Extension office for positive identification.

If it is English or Irish ivy—and you live in a region where these are listed as noxious weeds or invasive—consider removing it from your garden. Weeding ivy is effective but can be time-consuming. At the U.S. National Arboretum, Scott Aker says large areas of ivy are removed using a technique he calls the "skim and roll," in which volunteers use spades to cut swaths of ivy just below the soil surface, then roll up the resulting strips of soil and vines and compost them. Some gardeners have successfully used old carpeting or cardboard to smother ivy. Herbicides are sometimes recommended, but repeated treatment is often needed.

If you have existing ivy that you want to retain, keep it confined to a manageable area and prune it away from trees to prevent it from maturing and producing berries. Properly dispose of ivy cuttings by composting them. Watch your ivy for signs of reversion and invasiveness, taking more aggressive action if necessary.

### SLOW GROWERS

If you would like to add ivy to your garden, seek out non-invasive and slow-growing ivy cultivars. Suzanne Pierot recommends the following slow-growing, self-branching cultivars of English ivy: 'Anita', 'Duck Foot', 'Kobold', 'Lady Frances', 'Mini-Ester', 'Misty', 'Shamrock', and 'Spetchley'. Be aware, however, that some research indicates that English ivy cultivars, including variegated forms generally deemed safe because they are slow-growing, can revert to their parent, English or Irish ivy, with its attendant bad behaviors. So if you live in an area where ivy is known to escape, consider selecting other plants. (For a list of alternatives to ivy for use as shade groundcovers, view the web special linked to this article on the AHS website.)



*Hedera helix* 'Anita'



*Hedera helix* 'Shamrock'

### IVY ON TREES

Arborist Rex Bastian, vice president of field and development with the Care of Trees in Wheeling, Illinois, says he doesn't like to see any vines, including ivy, growing on trees. According to Bastian, vines can hide defects, such as decay or cavities, making it more difficult to accurately assess tree health and structural integrity, and potentially camouflaging the hazards that weakened trees pose to people and property.

Bastian notes that vines add weight, especially in winter when ice can form on them. English ivy can grow up to 90 feet in length, so it can eventually reach the top of even tall trees. Vines also provide shelter for insects and rodents, which may damage trees. Cloaking vines may block sunlight from reaching tree foliage, reducing the intake of nutrients through photosynthesis. And although Bastian doesn't know of studies to support this, he theorizes that vines could trap moisture against the bark and stems, keeping them wet longer and thereby increasing the chance of decay.

Ivy uses rootlike structures, called holdfasts, which allow it to climb flat surfaces such as trees and walls. Ivy's rootlets can grow into tree bark fissures, making it difficult to remove freshly cut vines without tearing off bark in the process. Bastian recommends cutting the ivy around the base of the tree, then letting the vines dry out and become brittle before pulling them off the trunk.

—L.A.

## Petite and Sweet Alpine Strawberries

by Renee Shepherd

**T**HE SWEETLY flavored fruits of alpine strawberries (*Fragaria vesca*) are a Continental delicacy and the plants are as attractive as the berries are delicious. The dainty, pointed berries boast an ambrosial woodland flavor that is a combination of strawberry, pineapple, and rose. Alpine strawberry plants are well behaved in the garden and are remarkably easy to grow, so I heartily recommend them to all gardeners who love ornamental edibles.

These comely perennial plants are cultivated strains of wild or woodland strawberries and reportedly were transplanted into European gardens as early as the 12th century. The ancestors of the improved alpiners we grow today were first introduced in Paris more than 100 years ago. Plants develop gracefully rounded mounds of evergreen foliage and yield modest summer-long harvests of delicate three-quarter-inch fruit. In France, where they are called *fraises des*



**The fruit of alpine strawberry is smaller than that of common strawberries, but it makes up for its size with intense flavor.**

*bois*, alpine strawberries are carefully hand-harvested seasonal specialties worthy of being served simply with whipped cream and candied violets in crystal gob-

lets as dessert in many fine restaurants.

### GROWING GUIDELINES

Alpine strawberries grow best in USDA Hardiness Zones 5 (with protection) through 9. Young plants are often available from garden centers and nurseries, but you can also grow them from seed (see “Planting Basics,” below).

Site alpiners in full sun, although in hot-weather regions, they appreciate some afternoon shade or dappled shade. A rich, fertile, and—above all—well-drained soil is critical to success. Alpiners need little special care beyond consistent moisture

and feeding several times during the growing season with a balanced fertilizer. Mulch the plants to keep roots moist unless snails or slugs are a menace in your garden.

Unlike the commonly cultivated strawberry (*Fragaria ×ananassa*), most varieties of alpine strawberries do not self-propagate by sending out runners.

### Planting Basics

Young plants can be purchased through mail-order catalogs or some local nurseries, or you can start your own plants indoors from seed.

#### GROWING ALPINE STRAWBERRIES FROM SEED

In early spring, sow seeds one inch apart and an eighth-inch deep in a container of moistened, fine seed-starting mix. Provide a strong light source and maintain a temperature of 60 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit until seedlings are ready to plant outdoors. Keep the container evenly moist but not soggy. Seeds may take three to four weeks to germinate.

Feed young seedlings every two weeks with half-strength fertilizer. When they have several sets of leaves, transplant them three inches apart into a deeper container or individual pots so roots have room to develop. When seedlings are three inches tall, gradually acclimate them to outdoor conditions.

#### PLANTING

Prepare a planting site by incorporating generous amounts of well-rotted organic matter; be sure the soil is well drained. A sunny spot is best, except in very hot climates, where part shade is preferred. Transplant young plants into the garden after all danger of frost has passed and outdoor night temperatures have warmed into the 50 degree range.

#### SPACING

Space plants about two feet apart. At maturity, most varieties produce a mound 12 inches in diameter.

#### FRUITING PERIOD

Plants grown from seed started in early spring will produce their first berries the same season.



## Sources for Seeds

Renee's Garden Seeds, Felton, CA. (888) 880-7228. [www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com).

Swallowtail Garden Seeds, Santa Rosa, CA. (707) 538-3585.  
[www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com](http://www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com).

## Sources for Plants

Papa Genos Herb Farm, Milwaukee, MI. (262) 752-4880. [www.papagenos.com](http://www.papagenos.com).

The Strawberry Store, Middletown, DE. (302) 378-3633.  
[www.thestrawberrystore.com](http://www.thestrawberrystore.com).

## Resources

Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden by Lee Reich. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2004.

They'll stay wherever you plant them, gradually growing into soft leafy mounds about a foot or so in diameter and height. After a few seasons, plants can be divided and replanted in early spring to double or triple the size of your planting. Plants bear fruit the first season after sowing or division and continue to be productive for up to four years with regular feeding and watering.

With their neat, serrated leaves, white flowers, and bright red or pale yellow to white berries, alpine strawberries are very ornamental. They are ideal edging plants along a garden path or flower border. They also make handsome additions to rock gardens.

One of my favorite ways to grow alpine strawberries is in containers—in window boxes, patio planters, or cascading from strawberry pots or hanging baskets. They will grow well in any container that is 15 to 18 inches in diameter and at least 12 inches tall. Use fresh, good quality potting soil that has excellent drainage.

### PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Alpine strawberry plants are relatively pest-free as long as the soil is consistently moist and well drained. Mulch around plants to protect their shallow root systems from drying summer heat and to retain soil moisture. Where slugs and snails are a problem, be sure to harvest ripe berries regularly, which also encourages more fruit production.

### RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

■ 'Alexandria' (sometimes listed as 'Alexandra'): a good producer of dark red fruit on mounding plants up to a foot in diameter.

■ 'Baron Solemacher': an older selection that is exceptionally winter hardy. It bears aromatic, red fruit on vigorous plants.

■ 'Mignonette': a selection of the heirloom 'Reine de Valée' that grows easily from seed, producing small, pointed, scarlet fruit its first year on compact, mounded plants.

■ 'Yellow Wonder': very productive variety with fragrant, pale yellow fruit.

### ENJOYING THE HARVEST

Pick and enjoy the fruits of alpine strawberries as soon as they turn a rich red and give slightly to the touch. There are also white- and yellow-fruiting varieties available, but I like the jewel-tone red ones best for both flavor and appearance.

Seven or eight mature alpine strawberry plants will produce about a cup of petite berries several times a week throughout the season. I often eat them right off the plants in the garden, but they are also delectable and beautiful as garnish for breakfast cereal, pancakes, or waffles, or atop individual tarts. For a wonderful, simple dessert, fold them inside thin crepes with fresh sour cream.

*Renee Shepherd is the owner of Renee's Garden Seeds in Felton, California.*

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## John Greenlee: Meadow Revolutionary

by Mary Yee

THREE LINES FROM an ad for his ornamental grass nursery in southern California sum up the message that John Greenlee has been advocating for more than 25 years: “Kill Your Lawn—Plant a Meadow—Save Your Planet.” “The number-one gardening activity of Americans is maintaining lawns,” says Greenlee. “Lawns are an ecological *disaster*. Most lawn mowers are more wicked than cars. Every day, 22 tons of pollutants go into the air in and around Los Angeles just from lawn culture. If everyone would convert even part of their lawns to meadow, it would make our planet a better place.”



Lawn culture—Greenlee calls it “mow and blow”—is something he knows well having grown up in the tidy suburbs of Orange County, California. He studied horticulture at California State Poly-

technic University in Pomona, where in 1978 he received, as he puts it, his “better living through chemistry college degree.” Even then, he notes, it “didn’t jibe with my growing awareness of nature.” Setting up his own landscape business afterward, he installed his share of lawns. Then, in 1984, while visiting the ornamental grass nursery of Kurt Bluemel in Maryland, he saw a field of tall, waving grasses, and his view of gardening became clear. In 1987, he founded Greenlee Nursery in Pomona to produce ornamental and native grasses for his landscaping work. Now located in Chino, it’s the oldest such nursery on the West Coast.

Greenlee’s blunt views haven’t gone unheard over the years. “Sometimes my reputation precedes me,” he admits. But he’s had no shortage of clients, which include institutions such as Disney’s Animal Kingdom and the Getty Museum, and he travels regularly, lecturing about meadows, grassland ecology, and sustainable gardening.

His 1992 book *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses* (Rodale) established him as one of America’s leading experts on the subject. His new book, *The American Meadow Garden* (Timber Press, see review on page 53), was released this October. Managing Editor and Art Director Mary Yee caught up with Greenlee recently to discuss the book and his ongoing crusade to turn America into a meadow, one garden at a time.

**Mary Yee:** It’s been 17 years since your last book. Why are you coming out now with a book on meadow gardens?

**John Greenlee:** I took 10 years to plant many of the meadow gardens you see in the book before I could write it. There’s no other book out there that tells you *how* to make a meadow. One of the keys to success in making a meadow is starting with a clean slate. Usually, the best place for a meadow is where your lawn currently is, so you have to know how to kill it. My book covers both organic and properly used chemical methods.

**What’s behind the growing interest in meadow gardens?**

Concern for the environment. We’ve made such a mess of the planet that gardens can no longer be just decoration. I gave a talk recently to landscape architects about using meadows on rooftops and as vertical wall gardens. A meadow is a habitat for birds, a way to reduce the use of water and herbicides—creating one is giving something back to nature.

But I don’t want people to plant meadows *just* because it’s the politically correct thing to do—which it is—but because they’re also *beautiful!* Sometimes I feel like grasses don’t get any respect in horticulture. It’s easy for people to get excited about flowers, but they don’t see that grasses also have a variety of colors and textures—and that they do flower!

**I think of a meadow as a large, open space. But you say it can be just a border. How do you define a meadow?**

For me, a meadow isn’t defined by size. It’s anyplace that’s a compromise between nature and cultivation—a controlled wildness. The “meadow” of my childhood was just a field in the neighborhood that hadn’t been developed yet. It was the closest thing to nature I had growing up.



Kurt Bluemel, whose Maryland nursery of ornamental grasses inspired John Greenlee's career in making meadows, helped install this meadow at the American Horticultural Society's headquarters in Virginia. The meadow's mixture of grasses and other perennials provides year-round interest.

**Your book offers a lot of how-to information, but in many cases you advise gardeners to get professional help installing a meadow. Why?**

Making meadows is one of the newest directions in gardening. It's taken decades for the nursery industry to even start catching up with the growing interest in it. Most home gardeners just can't get many of the

ornamental and native grasses because they're being grown wholesale for landscapers, so it's best in many cases to seek the help of a professional. Many people also don't realize how much work goes into creating a meadow.

**In your book, you encourage gardeners to find out about their local natural ecosystems, but how do you suggest they do this, especially in urban areas?**

Networking with your local botanic garden is one way. Another way is finding remnant natural landscapes in your area, which can be tough. In California, some of our best remnant ecosystems have been preserved only because some endangered plant or animal lives on it.

The most degraded grassland ecologies are in the desert. Before urbanization, many of the cactus ghettos you see today had a beautiful, ephemeral cover of grasses after the spring rains.

**Does working with the natural ecology in your designs mean non-native plants are taboo?**

My view is that a meadow of non-native plants is a whole lot better than any traditional lawn. People in the native-plant

movement are unrealistic if they think they can stop evolution or freeze the time machine to before Europeans came over. The irony is that in a lot of so-called native gardens, there's a lawn, which is not native!

**What groundcovers do you recommend as substitutes for turfgrass that can withstand foot traffic and other use?**

Many sedges (*Carex* spp.) are tough enough to use for dog runs and recreational areas. No matter where you live, there are sedges native to your region. *Carex praegracilis* (clustered field sedge) and *C. pansa* (California dune sedge) make great natural lawns in the western states. For gardens on the East Coast, there's *C. pennsylvanica* (Pennsylvania sedge), and for hot and humid climates, there's *C. albolutescens* (greenwhite sedge).

**Do you think the traditional lawn will become obsolete in America?**

I would like to see it. I'm not saying there's no place for turf lawns—primarily for athletic events—but athletic fields as a gardening paradigm doesn't work. ☺

*Mary Yee is Managing Editor and Art Director of The American Gardener.*



Clustered field sedge makes a durable groundcover for gardens in the west.

## A Season's Worth of Favorites

by Rita Pelczar

AS THE growing season winds down in many areas of the country, including mine in North Carolina, it's a good time to review our gardening year. What grew well and why? What tools and techniques minimized maintenance chores? And what products made our time in the garden more productive and enjoyable? The following are a few that contributed to my garden's successes in 2009.

My tomatoes got a good head start on the growing season last spring with **Kozy Coats plant protectors**. These red plastic cylinders have channels that hold water for extra insulation. Placing them around newly transplanted seedlings provided significant protection from both low temperatures and wind. My tomatoes protected with Kozy Coats grew much faster and suffered less transplant shock than those without.

My region enjoyed plentiful rainfall this year, but the memory of last year's drought remains vivid, and it inspired me to expand my water-collecting from a single rain barrel to three. Rain barrels are an easy way to conserve water, diverting rain from gutters into the collection unit. **Fiskars Rainwater Collection Systems** offer a good selection of rain barrels, in a range of sizes and earthy colors, and they are designed for easy integration with your existing downspouts. In addition to the barrel, the system includes a barrel cover, base stand,



**Fiskars Rainwater Collection System**

spigot assembly, and two diverters sized to fit most downspouts. Some barrels have a flat back that can be placed flush against the side of your house or garage.

The **Dramm ColorStorm™ Soaker Hose** helped conserve both time and water in my vegetable garden, efficiently delivering water along the rows at soil level. Very little water was lost to evaporation or wasted on weeds between rows. The 50-foot-long, five-eighths-inch diameter hose is made of recycled material.

A pair of wearable tools from Clean Air Gardening has gone a long way to

improve my gardening efficiency. Extra pockets always come in handy, and that's the beauty of the **Organic Cotton Gardening Apron**. Its comfortable bib style includes seven durable boar-hide pockets in different sizes so it's easy to keep tools, seeds, sunscreen, gloves, and even a cell phone within easy reach while moving about in the garden.

The **Waistie Garden Apron** is a large canvas pouch that cinches around the waist, freeing up both hands for gardening tasks. Clippings can be collected easily as you move from plant to plant. And



**Kuhn Rikon Ultimate Shears**

it's ideal for harvesting from a ladder; the pouch provides a large, secure, and handy container. A holster for your garden snips is included.

If I were cutting flowers for indoors, that holster would hold a pair of **Kuhn Rikon Ultimate Shears**. These Swiss garden shears are self-sharpening with a serrated lower blade for clean cuts. The ergonomically designed curved handles are comfortable and the spring-loaded blades are strong and reliable. Although they are also recommended for pruning small branches, I reserve my pair for cut-



**Kozy Coat**



**Dramm ColorStorm™ Soaker Hose**



Leverage Cultivator

ting fresh flowers and deadheading.

Two long-handled tools from Lee Valley have helped make working my clay soil significantly less taxing. The **Leverage Cultivator** is designed for loosening soil to a depth of about eight inches. To use it, step firmly on the wide center step to push its offset tines into the soil, then pull back on the plastic-coated T-handle to lift the soil.

A hybrid of a garden spade and fork, the **Spork** is great for digging in heavy or hardened soil. It is 42 inches long and has a sturdy carbon steel blade equipped with sharp teeth that makes for easy penetration and a T-shaped ash handle. It is a great tool for edging a bed and it makes short work of digging and dividing perennials.



Spork

Labeling plants has always been a bit of a conundrum for me. I need to identify those perennials that are slow to emerge in the spring so I don't crowd or plant on top of them. And I like to label the varieties of vegetables along with the sources of the seed and planting dates so that I can compare them as they grow. But finding a label that is big enough and sufficient-



Teak Plant Marker

ly sturdy to retain the information without being an eyesore can be a problem. This year, I tried the 10-inch **Teak Plant Markers** offered by Gardener's Supply and found they suited my needs perfectly. They are sturdy and have a one-inch-wide writing area. Made of sustainably harvested teak, they are attractively understated. The markers also come in a six-inch size, but I like the extra writing space on the large size. A **Permanent Paint Marking Pen** is available to ensure

## Sources

**Clean Air Gardening**, Dallas, TX.  
[www.cleanairegardening.com](http://www.cleanairegardening.com)

**Fiskar's Rainwater Harvesting Systems**, Madison, WI. [www.rain-barrel.com](http://www.rain-barrel.com)

**Gardener's Supply**, Burlington, VT.  
[www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)

**Gempler's**, Madison, WI.  
[www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com)

**Kuhn Rikon Corporation**, Novato, CA.  
[www.kuhnrikon.com](http://www.kuhnrikon.com)

**Lee Valley Tools, Ltd.**, Ogdensburg, NY. [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com)

**Songbird Essentials**, Mexico, MO.  
[www.songbirdessentials.com](http://www.songbirdessentials.com)



Seed Hoop

that all that information remains legible despite sun and rain.

Volunteer plants that grow from spilled birdseed are a mixed blessing. I sometimes let sunflowers grow where they please, but too many of those and other birdseed sprouts can be a nuisance. The **Seed Hoop** from Songbird Essentials provides an effective solution. It's a mesh-covered hoop with hooks that attach to and suspend it beneath a bird feeder to catch the seeds that your avian visitors drop. It comes in 16-inch and 30-inch sizes. Sprinkle additional seed on the hoop and it also serves as a platform feeder.

*Rita Pelczar is a contributing editor for The American Gardener. She tests gardening products in her North Carolina garden.*

## Horticultural News and Research Important to American Gardeners

### THE WORLD'S FAVORITE ROSE

Every three years, the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS) inducts a new World's Favorite Rose into its Rose Hall of Fame—one of the highest honors in the rose world. The 2009 selection, chosen by rose society members in 41 countries, is Graham Thomas® (*Rosa* 'Ausmas') from David Austin Roses ([www.davidaustinroses.com](http://www.davidaustinroses.com)).



David Austin with Graham Thomas® rose

Introduced in 1983, this rose produces fragrant, butter-yellow, double blooms and has an upright, bushy habit reaching to five feet. It is hardy in USDA Zones 5–9, and performs well in hot and humid climates, too (AHS Heat Zones 9–5). The rose is named for the legendary British horticulturist, artist, and garden writer Graham Thomas, who died in 2003.

### SUSTAINABLE SITES INITIATIVE SEEKS PILOT PROJECTS TO TEST RATING SYSTEM

The Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SSI), a national coalition that works to “promote sustainable land development and management practices that can apply to sites with and without buildings,” is seeking pilot projects that will be used to test the first national rating system for sustainable landscapes. The SSI is modeling its rating system on the very successful

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program for green buildings, which is coordinated by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Eligible projects for the pilot program include academic and corporate campuses, parks and recreation areas, transportation corridors, and single residences so long as the total size of the designed landscape exceeds 2,000 square feet. Applications will be accepted until February 15, 2010. For more information, visit [www.sustainablesites.org](http://www.sustainablesites.org).

### FIRST LADY RECEIVES APGA COMMENDATION

The G-20 Summit that took place in September in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, officially opened with a dinner at the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. In welcoming President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama to



First Lady Michelle Obama receives an official APGA commendation from Richard Piacentini, director of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh.

Phipps, director Richard Piacentini presented Michelle Obama with an official commendation from the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). The commendation, presented on behalf of the more than 500 member gardens that make up the APGA, recognized the First Lady’s “leadership in fostering a renewed interest in gardening and community environmentalism.” Most notably, her role in establishing a vegetable garden on the

White House lawn this past spring has helped bring greater attention to issues such as the sustainability of the American food system and developing healthier eating habits, especially for children.

“Mrs. Obama’s demonstrated belief in the value of gardens for educating present and future generations on the importance of environmental stewardship is inspiring to us all,” says Dan Stark, executive director of the APGA.

### FROM FEATHERS TO FLOWER POTS

Some four billion pounds of chicken feathers are accumulated yearly as a waste product of the poultry processing industry in the United States. Like spinning the proverbial straw into gold, researchers are finding creative ways to turn this waste into useful products—among them: biodegradable flower pots.



A flowerpot made from chicken feathers

In 1993, Walter Schmidt, a chemist with the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Environmental Management and Byproduct Utilization Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland, found that the feathers can be used in paper and fil-

## PEOPLE and PLACES in the NEWS

### Name Change for Philadelphia Flower Show

The Philadelphia Flower Show, an annual horticultural celebration with an impressive 181-year-history, has a new name: the Philadelphia International Flower Show. The theme of the 2010 show, "Passport to the World," highlights the updated name.



"Our new name raises the flower show up on the world stage," says Jane Pepper, president of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, which produces the flower show, "and it is an invitation to gardeners everywhere to join us in Philadelphia for this fabulous show that does so much to highlight the best of horticulture and design."

Next year's show will run from February 28 to March 7 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. For more information and advance tickets, call (215) 988-8899 or visit [www.theflowershow.com](http://www.theflowershow.com).

### A New Name and a New Children's Garden for a California Public Garden

Known as Quail Botanical Gardens since 1960, the San Diego Botanic Garden (SDBG) in California assumed its new name this past September. The change of name is expected to raise the level of expectation for the public's experience at the garden, clarify the garden's identity, and appeal to a wider region of support for, and interest in, the garden.

Another recent development at the garden is the opening this past June of its Hamilton Children's Garden, reportedly the largest interactive children's garden on the West Coast. Designed for children ages six to 12, it features a tree house and a meandering stream where children can experiment with objects that sink or float and move boulders to alter the stream's current. This new space complements SDBG's pre-existing children's garden, which is designed to appeal to toddlers.

Jamie Werner, SDBG's public relations coordinator, reports that the garden is already experiencing a 30 percent increase in visitation since the recent changes. Werner believes this is because "young families are now seeing the garden as an attraction where they can get their children outdoors and connect them with the natural world."

In addition to its children's gardens, the SDBG boasts the nation's largest bamboo collection and a diverse topography that allows for gardens representing many microclimates on its 35 acres. For more information, call (760) 436-3036 or visit [www.sdbgarden.org](http://www.sdbgarden.org).



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tration products. Two years later, he and Masud Huda, a research associate Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) in Washington, D.C., integrated chicken feathers into plastic car parts, and two years after that, found that the plastic made from the feathers can have properties similar to commonly used plastics.

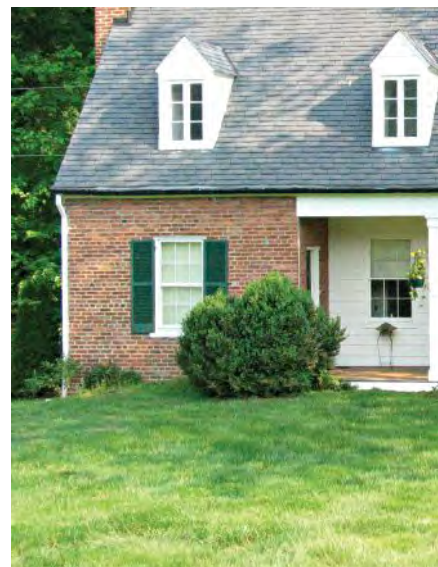
Now, Schmidt and Huda are working with several manufacturers to create fully biodegradable flower pots with the chicken-feather plastics. To make the pots, the feathers are first shredded, then powdered,

converted into pellets, and molded into pots. The pots are designed to break down over one to five years, naturally releasing nitrogen into the soil as they decompose.

The hope is that the plastic can be made into other materials as well—anywhere strength and biodegradability might be useful. An alternative to other plastic pots, which are made from petroleum-based materials, these flower pots offer a sustainable alternative while making lucrative use of what has previously been considered a waste product.

## LAYING IT ON THE LAWN

Health care isn't the only thing up for reform these days—a new group calling itself the Lawn Reform Coalition has recently launched in the hopes of bringing about a sea change in America's lawn practices. Manicured, monocultural expanses of turfgrass are under increasing scrutiny for a number of reasons. For one, pesticides and fertilizers typically required to maintain them have been shown to have harmful effects on the environment and human health. Emissions from lawn care equipment and the large amounts of water often used to keep turf-



grass looking green are also causes for concern. The coalition's mission is to create more awareness about these issues and offer alternatives for mitigating or eliminating them.

“Our group includes lawn-haters, lawn-improvers, and whatever is in between,” says Susan Harris of Takoma Park, Maryland, one of the Lawn Reform Coalition's founding members, “but we're all pro-science and pro-what-ever works.”

Some strategies the organization encourages include selecting regionally appropriate species of grass for lawns, using organic lawn care practices, and reducing lawn area or replacing it entirely. Find resources for learning more about these and other strategies at [www.lawnreform.org](http://www.lawnreform.org).

*News written by Editorial Intern Gwyneth Evans and Associate Editor Viveka Neveln.*

VIVEKA NEVELN

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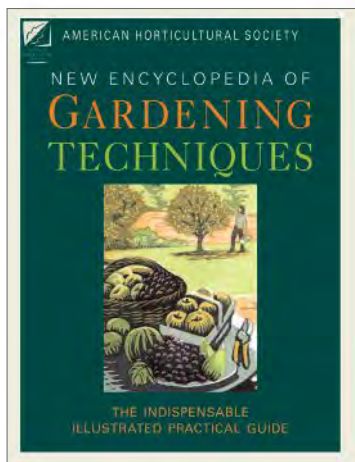
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## GIFTS FOR THE GARDENER

*Wondering what to give your gardening friends or what to put on your list this holiday season? Here are a few suggestions that are practical and decorative.*



### *AHS New Encyclopedia of Gardening Techniques*

The American Horticultural Society's *New Encyclopedia of Gardening Techniques* describes organic and environmentally-friendly gardening practices for growing plants of all kinds and maintaining and improving your garden. Includes more than 2,000 photographs and illustrations. Available for \$45 through [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).



### *OXO Garden Knife*

Be prepared for every gardening task with this handy stainless steel knife. It features measured markings, a serrated edge, and a sheath with a belt clip. Available from OXO for \$24.99. (800) 545-4411. [www.oxo.com](http://www.oxo.com).



### *WheelEasy LE*

Save your back—or that of a gardening friend—with this canvas wheelbarrow. Its low center of gravity and durability enables you to easily move loads of up to 150 pounds. The canvas edge lies flat on the ground for the easy loading of heavy objects or raked piles. Available for \$74.99 from Allsop Home & Garden. (866) 425-5767. [www.allsopgarden.com](http://www.allsopgarden.com).

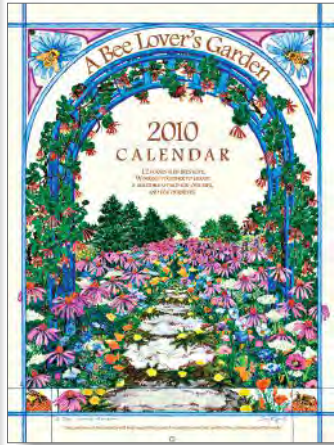
### *Red Ceramic Cascade Solar Fountain*

Add the soothing sound of water to your garden with this decorative cascading fountain. Powered by a solar panel that can be placed up to 14 feet away from the fountain, you will be spared the hassle of wiring. This model is available for \$119.95 from Plow & Hearth. (800) 494-7544. [www.plowhearth.com](http://www.plowhearth.com).





## *A Bee Lover's Garden 2010 Calendar*



Support a gardener's love of bees by supporting the bees themselves. Each month of this calendar features an illustration by artist Jay Pfeil of a bee-friendly plant and facts about bees. Calendars are \$20 each; proceeds support research on Colony Collapse Disorder, an affliction that is currently threatening the honey bee population. (828) 645-8008. [www.abeeloversgarden.com](http://www.abeeloversgarden.com).



## *Adventure Hat*

Sun protection is essential for anyone who gardens, and the adventure hat has you covered. Designed for maximum UV protection of your face and neck, this hat will also keep you cool and dry—and it packs easily for travel. Comes in two adjustable sizes, two styles, and a variety of colors from Sunday Afternoons for \$38. (888) 874-2642. [www.sundayafternoons.com](http://www.sundayafternoons.com).



## *Salt & Pepper Shakers*

Sprinkle salt and pepper on your garden-fresh meals with this pair of petite watering cans. These high-quality containers will be a complimentary addition to anyone's kitchen table. Available for \$31.95 from The Cook's Garden. (800) 457-9703. [www.cooksgarden.com](http://www.cooksgarden.com).

## Recommendations for Your Gardening Library

### Our Life in Gardens

Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, New York, 2009. 332 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$30.

GOOD WRITING leads readers on a journey and opens windows on the author's private world. *Our Life in Gardens* is a journey worth taking, for the pure joy of the experience. The deft prose evokes pictures as vivid as those of illustrator Bobbi Angell, which are scattered throughout the book. It gives readers a voyeuristic view of the rewards of partnering in gardening, and of partnering in life. Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd have shared 30 years creating North Hill, their rural garden in southern Vermont. Fifty personal, entertaining, and informative essays recount their collective experience.

First you'll meet the chickens that ultimately forced the authors to flee the city for the coop space afforded by country living. Compelled by a vision of farm and garden, the narrative begins on a raw, 23-acre site with a newly constructed house. Folklore, design concepts, and sound gardening advice are seamlessly woven into this more-or-less sequentially told retrospective of creating North Hill.

Along the way, Eck and Winterrowd gibe garrulous guests, recount culinary revelations, reminisce about old friends, and extol excellent plants. They also dole out instructional tidbits such as, "It is an absolute truth that the shorter the interval between harvesting and cooking, the better the corn will taste," tempered by intractable opinion: "No garden is a natural thing, of course, and people who garden as a way of getting in touch with Nature are actually only getting in touch with fantasy." Though one could debate the merits of such high-minded statements, none can dispute the fact that everything the authors relate stems from extensive personal experience.

By book's end, the couple is left, as many of us are, wondering about the ultimate fate of their garden. "Sooner or later, anyone who cultivates a garden will become concerned for its future," they muse. "For their very survival [gardens] depend...on the very transitoriness of the lives of their owners, for none of us lives forever or particularly wants to." North Hill was born of a shared passion for soil and chlorophyll, and will endure through a shared passion for words.

—C. Colston Burrell

*C. Colston Burrell is a plantsman, garden designer, and co-author of 2007 AHS Book Award winner Hellebores: A Comprehensive Guide (Timber Press, 2006).*

### Understanding Perennials

William Cullina. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, Massachusetts, 2009. 272 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$40.

WILLIAM CULLINA'S newest book, *Understanding Perennials*, is ideal for any gardener who desires to learn about the ins and outs of the growth and behavior of perennials from a botanical point of view and then see how these fundamentals connect with the how-to of horticultural practices. In Cullina's words, "...when I conceived this project, I saw it as an opportunity to both fill a real need for what amounts to an owner's manual for plants and to challenge myself to grow and learn, for as any teacher knows, the best way to truly understand something is to try to explain it to others."

Drawing upon his considerable experience and passion for the subject, Cullina moves comfortably between the role of teacher and fellow gardener, using an accessible, conversational, and welcoming voice. The chapter titles, such as "What is a Perennial," "At the Roots," "Flowers and Seeds," and so on, belie the often delightful subheadings, which sometimes evoke a familiar feeling: "You Should Have Seen It Yesterday!" and "Why Do the Most Expensive Plants Die the Fastest?" At other times they inspire curiosity: "Have You Been Working Out?" and "Canvas Stretched Over Poles," for example.

Allow yourself to linger over the sumptuous, yet informative, photographs—the majority taken by Cullina. The pictures of various root structures are especially amazing. But do not neglect the text. It merits careful reading, not only for the in-depth yet digestible explanations, but also for the many laugh-out-loud moments, which I'll leave for you to discover. (Hint: Start with the chapter on nomenclature.)

Cullina does not shy away from controversial topics, such as "Are Garden Hybrids Bad for the Planet?" The chapter "Cultivation with an Ecological Eye" reflects his leanings toward studying plants in their natural habitats and ties together earlier portions of the book. Within it, you'll find lessons learned from nature, the basics of soil, compost, and more. Coupled with chapters on design, pests and diseases, and propagation, gardeners will have many of the tools they need to help their perennials thrive.

—Nancy Beaubaire

*Nancy Beaubaire is director of communications for Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. She is a former editor of Fine Gardening, Country Living Gardener, and Organic Gardening magazines.*

## The American Meadow Garden

John Greenlee. Photographs by Saxon Holt. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2009. 280 pages. Publisher's price, hardcover: \$34.95.

IF YOU'VE EVER thought of abandoning your lawn but haven't yet, *The American Meadow Garden* will surely inspire you to action. In a brilliant partnership with photographer Saxon Holt, John Greenlee has produced the most beautifully persuasive book to date on why meadow gardens are the smart, joyful alternative to mowed turf.

The book offers a virtual tool kit for designing, installing, and maintaining meadow gardens, sedge lawns, and other turf-less landscapes. In "The Lure of the Meadow," the first of eight chapters, Greenlee describes meadows' powerful dynamics: their response to sky and light, time of day, and season. He presents meadows and sedge lawns as solutions to the toxicity and energy consumption of traditional lawns. "How and Where Grasses Grow" begins with a brief overview of the botany and physiology of grasses and grasslike plants, then hits its stride with portraits of North American grassland regions, packed with insights on grasses' response to climate, soil types, and the influence of human activity on regional ecologies.

"Meadows for a Purpose" makes the case for starting with site analysis and then fitting the design and plantings to ex-

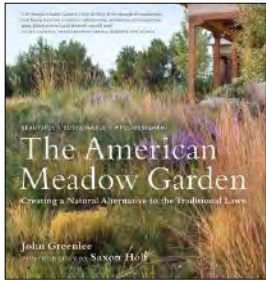
isting conditions. "Accent on Design" discusses the use of grasses as groundcovers, backgrounds, fillers, pathways, and accents, then follows with a colorful romp through what Greenlee calls "sweeteners"—bulbs, daisies, umbellifers, ferns, poppies, and other non-grass plants that combine well with grasses.

Even the best-designed meadow isn't in bloom all the time. The visual appeal and livability of such landscapes owe much to texture and luminous qualities. Saxon Holt's eye has always been finely attuned to these qualities, and his images throughout the book are stunningly alive with light. The majority of examples in "A Portfolio of Meadow Gardens" are from Greenlee's native California, with others from New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

"Grasses for Meadows" describes a wide range of grasses and grasslike plants suitable for meadows and meadow lawns. Symbols with each entry designate suitability for various purposes. "Making a Meadow" offers advice on site preparation, planting techniques, and weed control. Although the final chapter, "Establishing and Maintaining a Meadow," reflects the author's familiarity with drier regions and the need for irrigation there, it offers universally appropriate advice on editing a meadow landscape as it inevitably evolves. Take a long look at your lawn mower, and then go buy this book.

—Rick Darke

*Rick Darke is the author of The American Woodland Garden and The Encyclopedia of Grasses for Livable Landscapes.*



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## Books You Might Have Missed

WHEN THE WEATHER turns colder, it's a great opportunity for staying indoors and reading up on your favorite gardening subjects. And with the holiday season upon us, if you're looking for some gift ideas for all the gardeners in your life—or maybe a treat for yourself—here are profiles of some recently published books sure to provide fresh insight into a variety of gardening topics, contributed by various members of *The American Gardener* staff.

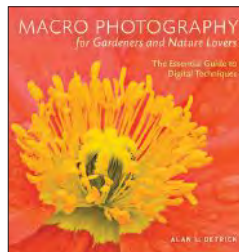
Liz Primeau's captivating memoir of her life as a gardener, *My Natural History: The Evolution of a Gardener* (Greystone Books, 2008, \$27), is infused with gardening advice, recipes, and historical information. From her father's 1940s Victory Garden that sparked her first interest in gardening, to the *giardini* she toured in Italy, to her own personal gardens, Primeau—a Canadian author of gardening books and a television personality—discusses the different designs, plants, and atmospheres found in the various gardens she has encountered throughout her life. She tells her story in a generally chronological progression of her personal experiences with gardening, including the relationships that fueled her passion for it. This book will leave you hungry to jump-start or continue your own gardening journey.

—Gwyneth Evans, Editorial Intern

If you pride yourself on thriftiness, you'll find plenty of ideas in *The Dirt Cheap Green Thumb* (Storey Publishing, 2009, \$10.95). An expanded version of a similarly titled Storey book published in 1994, this compact book contains hundreds of tips and tricks for pinching your pennies while still creating a garden that looks like a million bucks. As author Rhonda Massingham Hart points out, money is certainly helpful for garden needs, but “what separates the great gardeners from average ones is knowledge and skill.” The book is all about getting common sense and gardening know-how to pay bigger dividends for both novice and experienced gardeners.

—Viveka Neveln, Associate Editor

*Macro Photography for Gardeners and Nature Lovers* (Timber Press, 2008, \$24.95) is aimed at “users of digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras.” With an approach both thorough and

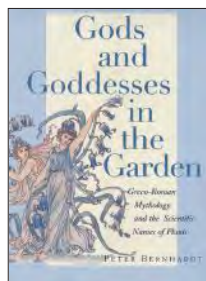


user-friendly, garden and nature photographer Alan L. Detrick covers the basics of close-up or macro photography, its history, digital cameras and other required equipment, and techniques for taking good photos. This book abounds with Detrick's stunning macro photos. Each one is accompanied by an explanation of the thought

process, equipment, and technique that produced it. Each photo, then, is a short lesson in making outstanding photos, taught by a pro. Reading this book is like walking through a garden and seeing through the eyes of a master photographer.

—Carole Ottesen, Contributing Writer

Did you know that your garden may be full of more than flowers and foliage? There may be nymphs and dryads, gods and heroes, wise centaurs and hideous monsters. In



*Gods and Goddesses in the Garden* (Rutgers University Press, 2008, \$24.95), Peter Bernhardt reconnects us to the myths behind the botany without belaboring either Greek mythology or plant nomenclature rules. There's something for everyone, from brief summaries of major myths to obscure facts or little-known alternate versions, from famous heroes to near-forgotten nymphs. Along the way, Bernhardt reveals the romantic side of 18th- and 19th-century botanists, the creative side of taxonomists, and, best of all, that many scientists have a sense of humor.

—Talia Goldman, Editorial Intern

One of my ongoing goals is to get to know the trees around me better, so the *Sibley Guide to Trees* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, \$39.95) by David Allen Sibley caught my eye. Organized by family, this book includes “668 native and commonly cultivated trees found in the temperate areas of North America north of Mexico.” After a succinct overview of each family, Sibley describes the main species in it, both with words and with his superb color illustrations of distinguishing features such as leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs, bark, and growth habit. The book's introduction also provides helpful guidelines for honing your arboreal identification skills.

—Viveka Neveln, Associate Editor



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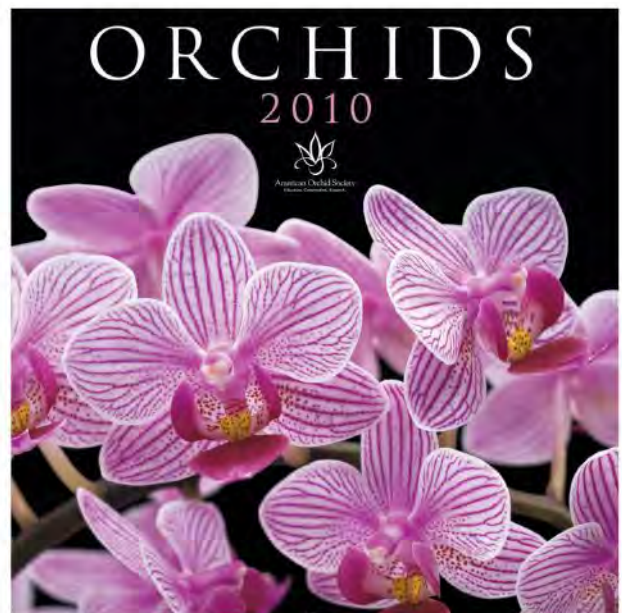
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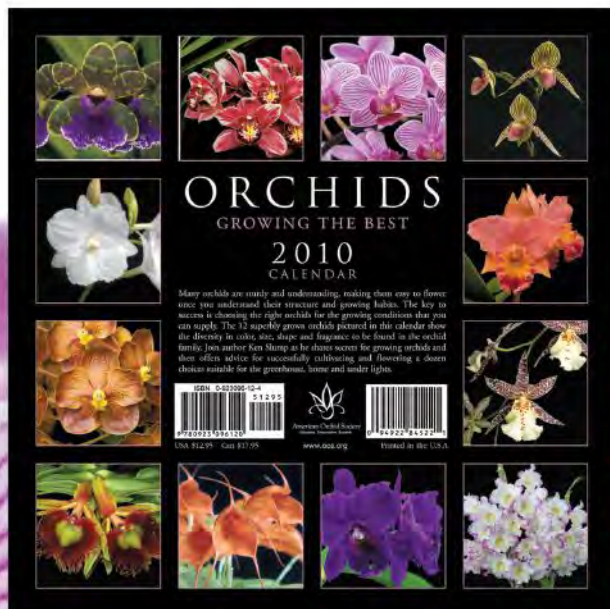
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## REGIONAL HAPPENINGS

# Horticultural Events from Around the Country

### NORTHEAST

CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT

NOV. 19–22. **Ocean State Orchid Society Show.** American Orchid Society. Cranston, Rhode Island. (401) 946-3314. [www.aos.org](http://www.aos.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Composting for Winter.** Class. Queens Botanical Garden. Queens, New York. (718) 539-5296. [www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Growing Roses Organically.** Class. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Brooklyn, New York. (718) 623-7200. [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org).

**RAP** DEC. 10. **Gathering of Greens.** Holiday décor workshop. Heritage Museums & Gardens. Sandwich, Massachusetts. (508) 888-3300. [www.heritagemusumsandgardens.org](http://www.heritagemusumsandgardens.org).

### MID-ATLANTIC

PA, NJ, VA, MD, DE, WV, DC

**RAP** NOV. 21. **Floral Design Workshop Series: Thanksgiving Design.** Green Spring Gardens. Alexandria, Virginia. (703) 642-5173. [www.greenspring.org](http://www.greenspring.org).

NOV. 26–JAN. 10. **Holiday Magic Garden Display.** U.S. Botanic Garden. Washington, DC. (202) 225-8333. [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov).

**RAP** NOV. 27–JAN. 3. **Holiday Garden Railway.** Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (215) 247-5777. ext. 181. [www.morrisarboretum.org](http://www.morrisarboretum.org).

**RAP** NOV. 27–JAN. 11. **GardenFest of Lights.** Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Richmond, Virginia. (804) 262-9887. [www.lewisginter.org](http://www.lewisginter.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Holiday Greens Sale.** Adkins Arboretum. Ridgely, Maryland. (410) 634-2847. [www.adkinsarboretum.org](http://www.adkinsarboretum.org).

DEC. 15 & 16. **Holiday Centerpiece Class.** Brookside Gardens. Wheaton, Maryland. (301) 962-1400. [www.brooksidegardens.org](http://www.brooksidegardens.org).

### SOUTHEAST

AL, FL, GA, KY, NC, SC, TN

**RAP** NOV. 3–JAN. 3. **Holiday Train Show.** At-

Events sponsored by or including official participation by AHS or AHS staff members are identified with the **AHS** symbol.

Events hosted by botanical gardens and arboreta that participate in AHS's Reciprocal Admissions Program are identified with the **RAP** symbol. Current AHS members showing a valid membership card are eligible for free or discounted admission to the garden or other benefits. Special events may not be included; contact the host site for details or visit [www.ahs.org/events/reciprocal\\_events.htm](http://www.ahs.org/events/reciprocal_events.htm).

lanta Botanical Garden. Atlanta, Georgia. (404) 876-5859. [www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org](http://www.atlantabotanicalgarden.org).

**RAP** NOV. 21 & 22. **Garden Festival.** Heathcote Botanical Gardens. Fort Pierce, Florida. (772) 464-4672. [www.heathcotebotanicalgardens.org](http://www.heathcotebotanicalgardens.org).

**RAP** NOV. 27–DEC. 31. **Holiday Lights at the Garden.** Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden. Belmont, North Carolina. (704) 825-4490. [www.dsbgo.org](http://www.dsbgo.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Holiday Greenery Sale.** Aldridge Botanical Gardens. Hoover, Alabama. (205) 862-8019. [www.aldridgegardens.com](http://www.aldridgegardens.com).

DEC. 5. **Orchid Seminar.** Rock City Gardens. Wabasso, Florida. (772) 589-5835. [www.rockcitygardens.com](http://www.rockcitygardens.com).

DEC. 12. **Holiday Centerpiece Workshop.** Callaway Gardens. Pine Mountain, Georgia. (706) 663-5187. [www.callawaygardens.com](http://www.callawaygardens.com).

### NORTH CENTRAL

IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI

**RAP** NOV. 21. **Holiday Tidings Floral Centerpiece.** Class. Boerner Botanical Gardens. Hales Corners, Wisconsin. (414) 525-5659. [www.boernerbotanicalgardens.org](http://www.boernerbotanicalgardens.org).

**RAP** NOV. 27–JAN. 3. **Wonderland Express.** Holiday display. Chicago Botanic Garden. Glencoe, Illinois. (847) 835-5440. [www.chicagobotanic.org](http://www.chicagobotanic.org).

**RAP** DEC. 4. **Evergreen Centerpiece Workshop.** Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory. Fort Wayne, Indiana. (260) 427-6440. [www.botanicalconservatory.org](http://www.botanicalconservatory.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Understanding Conifers.** Class. The Brenton Arboretum. Dallas Center, Iowa. (515) 992-4211. [www.thebrentonarboretum.org](http://www.thebrentonarboretum.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5–JAN. 18. **Holiday Flower Show.** Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory. St. Paul, Minnesota. (651) 487-8200. [www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org).

### SOUTH CENTRAL

AR, KS, LA, MO, MS, OK, TX

**RAP** NOV. 25–JAN. 3. **Greenland Express.** Holiday flower and train show. Missouri Botanical Garden. St. Louis, Missouri. (314) 577-5100. [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org).

**RAP** DEC. 4–6 & 10–13. **Illuminations.** Botanica, The Wichita Gardens. Wichita, Kansas. (316) 264-0448. [www.botanica.org](http://www.botanica.org).

**RAP** DEC. 5. **Holiday Farmers' Market.** Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. Fayetteville, Arkansas. (479) 750-2620. [www.bgozarks.org](http://www.bgozarks.org).

**RAP** DEC. 8. **Plants of Christmas.** Lecture. Biedenharn Museum & Gardens. Monroe, Louisiana. (318) 387-5281. [www.bmuseum.org](http://www.bmuseum.org).

### SOUTHWEST

AZ, NM, CO, UT

**RAP** NOV. 21. **Garden Cornucopia.** Thanksgiving centerpiece workshop. Red Butte Garden and Arboretum. Salt Lake City, Utah. (801) 585-4747. [www.redbuttegardens.org](http://www.redbuttegardens.org).

NOV. 23–DEC. 30. **River of Lights at the Botanic Garden.** Rio Grande Botanic Garden. Albuquerque, New Mexico. (505) 764-6212. [www.cabq.gov/biopark/garden](http://www.cabq.gov/biopark/garden).

**RAP** DEC. 4–JAN. 3. **Blossoms of Light.** Denver Botanic Gardens. Denver, Colorado. (720) 865-3500. [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org).

Looking ahead

**AHS** JAN. 15–17. **Maricopa County Home & Garden Show.** Arizona State Fairgrounds.



Phoenix, Arizona. (602) 485-1691 ext. 117. [www.maricopacountyhomeshows.com](http://www.maricopacountyhomeshows.com).

## WEST COAST

CA, NV, HI

**RAP** NOV. 21. **Succulent Wreath Workshop.** Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Claremont, California. (909) 625-8767. ext. 200. [www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org).

**RAP** DEC. 10–30. **Garden of Lights.** San Diego Botanic Garden. Encinitas, California. (706) 436-3036. ext. 206. [www.sdbgarden.org](http://www.sdbgarden.org).

DEC. 12. **Garden Tour.** Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden. Captain Cook, Hawaii. (808) 323-3318. [www.bishopmuseum.org/exhibits/greenwell/greenwell.html](http://www.bishopmuseum.org/exhibits/greenwell/greenwell.html).

DEC. 14. **Fabulous Holiday Décor From Over-Looked Garden Treasures.** Lecture. San Diego Horticultural Society. Del Mar Fairgrounds. Del Mar, California. (760) 295-7089. [www.sdhortsoc.org](http://www.sdhortsoc.org).

**RAP** DEC. 19. **Mushroom ID Workshop & Walk.** Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens. Fort Bragg, California. (707) 964-4352. [www.gardenbythesea.org](http://www.gardenbythesea.org).

## NORTHWEST

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY

**RAP** NOV. 26–JAN. 10. **Winter Garden aGlow.** Idaho Botanical Garden. Boise, Idaho. (208) 343-8649. [www.idahobotanicalgarden.org](http://www.idahobotanicalgarden.org).

**RAP** DEC. 4 & 5. **Holiday Bazaar.** Leach Botanical Garden. Portland, Oregon. (503) 823-9503. [www.leachgarden.org](http://www.leachgarden.org).

### Looking ahead

**RAP** JAN. 9. **Pruning Your Trees and Bushes.** Lecture. Cheyenne Botanic Gardens. Cheyenne, Wyoming. (307) 460-4768. [www.botanic.org](http://www.botanic.org).

JAN. 27–31. **Tacoma Home & Garden Show.** Tacoma Dome. Tacoma, Washington. (253) 756-2121. [www.otshows.com](http://www.otshows.com).

## CANADA

DEC. 4–JAN. 3. **Christmas at the Garden.** Exhibit. Montreal Botanic Garden. Montreal, Quebec. (514) 872-1400. [www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/menu.htm](http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/menu.htm).

**RAP** DEC. 11–13. **Christmas Wreath Making.** Class. Glendale Gardens & Woodland. Victoria, British Columbia. (250) 479-6162. [www.hcp.bc.ca](http://www.hcp.bc.ca).

DEC. 11–JAN. 3. **Festival of Lights.** Van Dusen Botanic Garden. Vancouver, British Columbia. (604) 878-9274. [www.vandusengarden.org](http://www.vandusengarden.org).

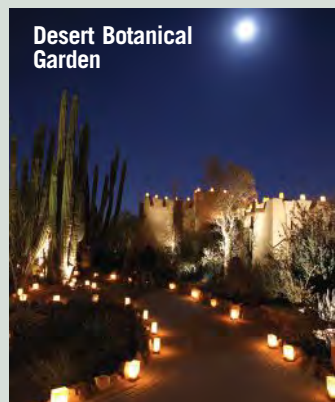
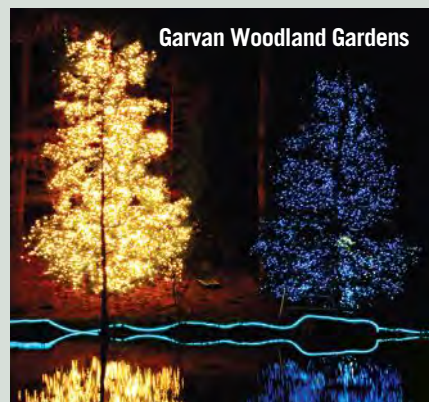
## Gardens Light Up for the Holidays



AS LEAVES DROP with the temperatures at this time of year, botanic gardens everywhere are celebrating the season with light, and lots of it. Here is a sampling of some of the displays taking place in three different cities around the country—you'll find many more listed to the left and on the preceding page.

As a final celebration of its 40th anniversary year, **Brookside Gardens** in Wheaton, Maryland, will be decorated with more than 700,000 colorful lights in the interactive displays of seasonal images: spring and summer flowers, autumnal leaves, and snowflakes. Existing trees, shrubs, and garden structures will also be embellished with glowing bulbs. The Garden of Lights display will run from November 27 through January 3. For more information, call (301) 962-1453 or visit [www.brooksidegardens.org](http://www.brooksidegardens.org).

In Hot Springs, Arkansas, **Garvan Woodland Gardens** will be aglow with its Lights on the Landscape display from November 21 through December 31. Every evening its woodland landscape will be lit up by more than 1.7 million lights. Garvan participates in the American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program so AHS members receive free admission with a valid membership card. For more information, call (501) 262-9300 or visit [www.garvangardens.org](http://www.garvangardens.org).



The **Desert Botanical Garden** (DBG) in Phoenix, Arizona, is presenting Las Noches de Las Luminarias from December 10 through 30. A Southwestern holiday tradition, the display features thousands of hand-lit luminarias and other festive lights throughout DBG's gardens. For more information about the event and ticket purchases, call (480) 941-1225 or visit [www.dbg.org](http://www.dbg.org). While DBG is a participant in the Reciprocal Admissions Program—so AHS members receive free admission to the garden—tickets must still be purchased for this event.

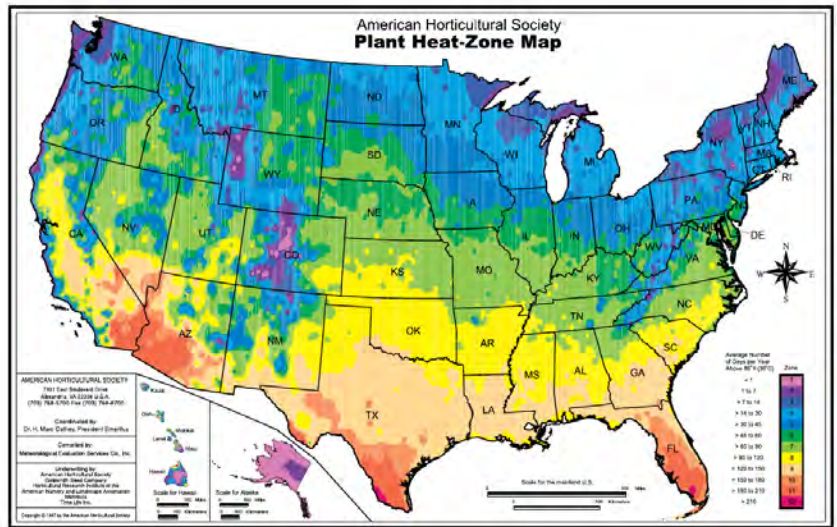
—Gwyneth Evans, Editorial Intern

## PRONUNCIATIONS AND PLANTING ZONES

Most of the cultivated plants described in this issue are listed here with their pronunciations, USDA Plant Hardiness Zones, and AHS Plant Heat Zones. These zones suggest a range of locations where temperatures are appropriate—both in winter and summer—for growing each plant.

While the zones are a good place to start in determining plant adaptability in your region, factors such as exposure, moisture, snow cover, and humidity also play an important role in plant survival. The codes tend to be conservative; plants may grow outside the ranges indicated. A USDA zone rating of 0–0 means that the plant is a true annual and completes its life cycle in a year or less.

To purchase a two-by-three-foot glossy AHS Plant Heat Zone Map for \$9.95, call (800) 777-7931 or visit [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org).



### A–F

- Acer griseum*** AY-sur GRIS-ee-um (USDA Zones 4–8, AHS Zones 8–1)
- A. palmatum*** A. pal-MAY-tum (5–8, 8–2)
- Callicarpa americana*** kal-lih-KAR-puh uh-mair-ih-KAN-uh (7–9, 9–6)
- C. dichotoma*** C. dy-KOT-o-muh (5–8, 8–5)
- Calycanthus floridus*** kal-ee-KAN-thus FLOR-ih-dus (5–9, 9–1)
- Carex albolutescens*** KAIR-eks al-bo-LEW-tes-enz (3–9, 9–1)
- C. pansa*** C. PAN-suh (4–8, 8–1)
- C. pensylvanica*** C. pen-sil-VAN-ih-kuh (4–8, 8–1)
- C. praegracilis*** C. pre-GRASS-ih-lis (4–8, 8–1)
- Chamaerops humilis*** kah-MEE-rops HEW-mih-lys (11–11, 12–10)
- Collinsonia canadensis*** kol-in-SO-nee-uh kan-uh-DEN-siss (4–8, 8–1)
- Corylopsis spicata*** kor-ih-LOP-siss spy-KAY-tuh (5–8, 8–5)
- Crocus tommasinianus*** CRO-kus tom-muh-sin-ee-AY-nus (3–9, 8–1)
- Dicentra formosa*** dy-SEN-truh for-MO-suh (4–8, 10–1)
- Dirca palustris*** DEER-kuh pah-LUS-triss (4–9, 9–1)
- Eranthis hyemalis*** ee-RAN-thiss hy-ih-MAL-iss (4–9, 9–1)
- Franklinia alatamaha*** frank-LIN-ee-uh uh-lah-tuh-MAH-hah (5–8, 9–6)

### G–I

- Gaillardia aristata*** gay-LARD-ee-uh ahr-iss-TAY-tuh (3–8, 8–1)
- Geranium wlassovianum*** juh-RAY-nee-um vlah-so-vee-AN-um (4–8, 8–1)
- Hakonechloa macra*** ha-kon-ee-KLO-uh MAK-ruh (5–9, 9–2)
- Hedera azorica*** HED-er-uh ah-ZOR-ih-kuh (5–10, 12–5)
- H. colchica*** H. KOAL-chih-kuh (6–11, 12–1)
- H. helix*** H. HE-liks (5–11, 12–1)
- H. hibernica*** H. hy-BURN-ih-kuh (6–11, 12–6)
- H. rhombea*** H. ROAM-bee-uh (6–11, 12–6)
- Ilex aquifolium*** EYE-leks ah-kwi-FO-lee-um (7–9, 9–7)
- I. xattenuata*** I. uh-ten-yew-AY-tuh (6–9, 9–4)
- I. cassine*** I. KASS-een (7–10, 12–7)

- I. glabra*** I. GLAB-ruh (4–10, 10–4)
- I. myrtifolia*** I. meer-tih-FO-lee-uh (7–10, 12–7)
- I. opaca*** I. o-PAH-kuh (5–9, 9–5)
- I. opaca var. arenicola*** I. o-PAH-kuh var. ah-ray-NIK-o-luh (8–9, 11–9)
- I. verticillata*** I. vur-tih-sih-LAY-tuh (3–9, 8–5)
- I. vomitoria*** I. vom-ih-TOR-ee-uh (7–10, 12–7)
- Illicium floridanum*** ih-LISS-ee-um flor-ih-DAN-um (7–9, 9–4)

### J–Z

- Lagerstroemia faurei*** lag-ur-STRO-me-uh FAR-ee-eye (7–9, 9–7)
- L. indica*** L. IN-dih-kuh (6–8, 9–6)
- Magnolia macrophylla*** mag-NOLE-yuh mak-ro-FIL-luh (5–8, 9–6)
- Pennisetum alopecuroides*** pen-ih-SEE-tum al-o-pek-yew-ROY-deez (5–9, 9–2)
- Penstemon calycosus*** PEN-steh-mon kal-ee-KO-suss (5–10, 10–5)
- Scabiosa lachnophylla*** skay-bee-O-suh lak-NO-fil-luh (4–9, 9–1)
- Stachys byzantina*** STAY-kiss bih-zan-TY-nuh (4–8, 8–1)
- Stewartia malacodendron*** stew-AR-tee-uh mal-ak-o-DEN-dron (7–9, 9–6)
- S. ovata*** S. o-VAY-tuh (3–9, 8–1)
- Stipa tenuissima*** STY-puh ten-yew-ISS-ih-muh (7–11, 12–7)
- Thelypteris decursive-pinnata*** theh-LIP-ter-iss de-KUR-sive-pin-NAY-tuh (7–8, 8–5)
- Thuja plicata*** THEW-yuh ply-KAY-tuh (6–8, 8–6)
- Viburnum rhytidophyllum*** vy-BER-num ry-tih-doh-FIL-um (6–8, 8–6)

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*Index compiled by Barbara Lockett, AHS Volunteer, and Guyneth Evans, Editorial Intern.*

## Variegated Potato Vine (*Solanum laxum* 'Aurea')

by Caleb Melchior

AMERICAN GARDENERS today have a choice of innumerable *Solanum* varieties. Although we've grown some species for many years—two staples of the American kitchen garden are potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) and eggplants (*S. melongena*)—we still have barely touched on the genus's potential, perhaps because it is part of the notorious nightshade family (Solanaceae). One ornamental member of the family that I'd like to recommend is the variegated potato vine (*Solanum laxum*, syn. *S. jasminoides* 'Aurea').

Unlike some of the “prickly” ornamental members of the genus, its glossy green-and-gold leaves—shaped like elongated arrowheads—have no spines. Likewise, its wiry stems are completely smooth. It's not until you see its flowers that you'll place this lovely tropical twiner, native to Brazil, in the nightshade family.

### OUT OF THE TROPICS

The standard potato vine—*S. laxum*—is used as a vigorous wall cover in the United Kingdom, where it's revered for its fragrant flowers and exuberant growth. Probably the most frequently visited of its haunts is the White Garden at Sissinghurst, where it sprawls out over the walls in a spectacular coverlet of frothy white blooms. It is generally regarded as root-hardy to USDA Zone 8 (possibly Zone 7), although it will die back to the ground in areas that receive significant frost. In regions where it is winter-hardy, it will eventually become quite large—to 20 feet or more tall.

I find the variegated version—which travels under a variety of names including 'Aurea', 'Aureovariegata', 'Aureovariegatum', and 'Variegata'—to be an ideal container plant for gardens in frost-prone climates. It is neither as vigorous nor as floriferous as its fully-green cousin, but the exquisite foliage more than makes up for the paucity of flowers.

### GROWING REQUIREMENTS

If you start out with a small variegated potato vine, say a well-rooted cutting in a four-inch pot, and treat it well, by autumn you'll likely have two to three feet of growth—and at most six to eight. That's enough for



Variegated potato vine is a good choice for growing in containers and hanging baskets.

most containers, and you can plant it with less vigorous mat-formers such as *Evolvulus pilosus* without fear of smothering them.

This restrained growth habit doesn't mean that variegated potato vine lacks vigor. It loves heat and humidity and adapts to a wide range of light levels. I've seen it thriving in full sun, afternoon

shade, and indirect light. Plants that receive more sun seemed in general more vigorous than those in part shade, but all appeared healthy and full of life. Like most tropicals, variegated potato vine will grow faster with lavish helpings of nutrients and plenty of warmth. Keep young plants away from exposure to cold, or their growth will be stunted.

*Solanum laxum* 'Aurea' looks fabulous in a container or hanging basket, trailing over the edges in wonderful cascades of gold and green. It's also easy to grow and won't take over the garden, making it a vine well worth growing.

### Sources

**Forestfarm**, Williams, OR. (541) 846-7269. [www.forestfarm.com](http://www.forestfarm.com).

**Logee's Greenhouses**, Danielson, CT. (888) 330-8038. [www.logees.com](http://www.logees.com).

*Caleb Melchior is a garden writer based in Perryville, Missouri.*



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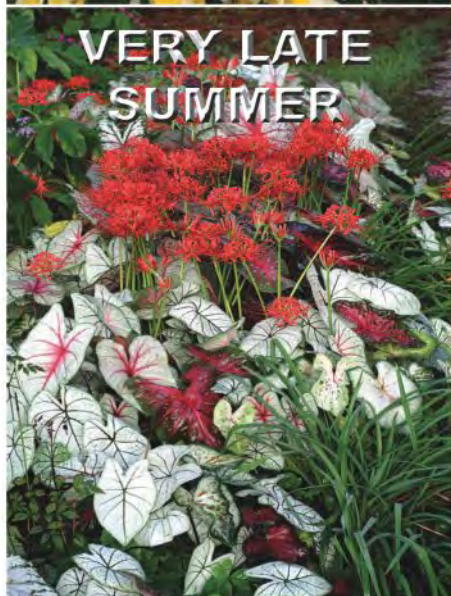


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