PERENNIA L Y INSPIRED

Great Ideas for Today’s Gardeners

Designing gravel gardens and making the most of small garden spaces are among the topics at the annual winter seminar at The Conference Center at Sheppard Pratt. The Perennial Plant Association and the Horticultural Society of Maryland are sponsors of the event on Saturday, February 25, 2017.

CARRIE PRESTON, the 2016 Association of Professional Landscape Designers Designer of the Year, is based in Amersfoort, Netherlands, where she “designs small gardens that live large.” She was selected to design a garden for the 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show—one that she will install the week after the seminar. Her talk, The Power of Four Inches, will present ways to make the most of small spaces.

JEFF EPPING, director of Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Wis., oversees the horticultural operations and designs of inspirational display gardens. He and his staff have practiced sustainable gardening for years, and it is reflected in their environmentally friendly cultural practices and award-winning garden designs. His topic: Gravel Gardens.

JOHN MAGEE, owner of Magee Design in Middleburg, Va., and creator and host of the Native Plant Podcast (nativeplantpodcast.com) will discuss Native Plants and Design. He specializes in the use of native plants and works with stone and water, using these “earthy” elements to create a natural landscape that enhances not only the home of the landscape, but the surrounding area.

SHANNON CURREY of Hoffman Nursery, Rougemont, N.C., will discuss Building Today’s Landscapes with Grasses and Sedges. Through vibrant images and specific examples, she will show how grasses and sedges contribute to better landscapes.

In A Season of Inspiration: Nine Months at Chanticleer, horticulturist CHRIS FEHLHABER will share his insider’s view of the inner workings of this complex garden. He will soon continue his education at England’s renowned Great Dixter.

The seminar sells out every year, so be sure to register early. Sign up by February 3 for the early registration rate. See the enclosed flyer or go to www.mdhorticulture.org for more information.

LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday, MARCH 14, 7:30 p.m.
HOLLY SHIMIZU
The Best of Flavor and Fragrance
Have you ever wondered which oregano has the best flavor or which lavender would be the best for a small hedge? Holly H. Shimizu, former executive director of the U.S. Botanic Garden, will discuss the superior selections of herbs and fragrant plants to grow for specific uses, whether for harvest or garden beauty.

Tuesday, APRIL 11, 7:30 p.m.
MARILYN DALY
Out of Africa: Gardening with South African Plants
Our gardens reflect the places we’ve been and the people we’ve met. Marilyn Daly, who teaches at York College, will share her South African odyssey and show how South African plants can broaden our plant vocabulary.

Tuesday, MAY 9, 7:30 p.m.
C. COLSTON BURRELL
Obsession and Exploitation: A Cultural History of Trilliums
Connections between Trilliums and humans have existed since indigenous peoples first employed them as medicines. Join us for a romp through the culture and the cultural history of Trillium, presented by Virginia plantsman C. Colston Burrell.

For more information, visit www.mdhorticulture.org

Lectures are held in the Vollmer Center auditorium at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209. Members are required to show a current membership card for admission to lectures. Guests of members also receive free admission. In case of severe weather, check the HSM website for any cancellation bulletin.
HSM Honor Roll

We thank the following volunteers (members as well as non-members) who have supported the Society’s programs in recent months.

For the Plant & Seed Swap: Jennifer Forrence, Mary Jo Sherrod

For the Garden Tour Committee: Nancy Raskin, chair; Ann Betten, Nancy Blois, Anne Gossett, Nancy Grabowski, Donna Imhoff, Tanya Jones and Crystal Patterson

For the Sponsorship Program: Sally Barker

For the Program Committee: Paula Simon, Mary Jo Sherrod, coordinators; Nancy Blois, Helene Clapperton, Muffin Evander and Carol Oppenheimer

For Meetings Hospitality: Nancy Blois, Jennifer Forrence, Pat Sherman and Donna Watts

For the Plant Raffle: Nancy MicKey

For the Nominating Committee: Helene Clapperton, Muffin Evander and Marilyn Vantosh

For the Communications Team: Pat Cieslak, telephone messages; Helene Clapperton, webmaster; Aaron Haslinger, web consultant; Carla Hackley, Facebook manager; Nancy Raskin, event coordinator; and John Fitzpatrick, Maggie Neely and Teresa Dutton, September mailing

For the September 2016 issue of The Hort Report: Peter Bieneman and John Fitzpatrick, contributors; Janet Draper, Pat Sherman and Paula Simon, photographs; Joel Cohen and John Fitzpatrick, proofreaders

To Scotland and back—now to the heart of England

In early September, a group of local garden enthusiasts toured Scotland, enjoying beautiful gardens, castles, towns and scenery. Claire Jones, leader of this tour, has planned another for May 2017: Chelsea Flower Show and Cotswolds Gardens. This nine-day, eight-night tour visits at least 10 superb gardens, including Hidcote, Sissinghurst, Highgrove, Great Dixter and more. For details, contact Jones at jonesb1@comcast.net, call 443-927-6285, or visit mdhorticulture.org/trips

ALSO IN THE WORKS—a tour of gardens of Japan is being planned for October 2017. For more information, contact Karen Offutt, 410-771-4799, karenoffutt1@gmail.com
Although Indian Pink was named “of Maryland,” the species has been virtually unknown in Maryland gardens until recent years. I first saw it in bloom in Richmond at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden around 1991. Over the past 15 years it has become increasingly available, especially through production nurseries for native plants.

The plant is a hardy perennial gem that grows 18 to 24 inches high with lush, medium-green foliage on abundant basal stems. In early summer, it is topped with bright red and yellow flowers. Each blossom consists of a red tube about two inches long that terminates in five pointed lobes. Because the inside of the tube is lemon-yellow, the lobes are yellow, making for a strong color contrast. I believe that these lobes are what prompted the use of “pink” in the name—a reference to the asterisk-like form of Dianthus flowers, commonly referred to as Pinks. The blossoms are not solitary but in a one-sided inflorescence of three to seven upright flowers, resembling that of a Freesia. As you might imagine, Hummingbirds are strongly attracted to the flowers.

Plants of Indian Pink, also known as Pinkroot and Woodland Pink, are found in the wild in the southeastern and south central United States, north as far as Illinois and Maryland. Its natural habitats are low moist woods, stream banks, thickets and woodland edges. The plants are winter-hardy in USDA Zones 6 through 9. Ideal garden conditions include shade for part of the day, moderately moist acidic soil and good drainage. Amending soil with organic matter will yield improved growth and flowering. Deadheading plants promptly after the first flush of bloom stimulates rebloom. The plant can be propagated by seed, division of the roots in spring or rooting from softwood cuttings. Because seeds are forcibly ejected from the ripe capsule, it is necessary either to gather them just before that happens or to bag the developing capsules to catch the ejected seeds.

The species was introduced to the British Isles in 1694 and was given its binomial by Linnaeus in the following century. The genus is named for Adriaan van den Spiegel (1578–1625), the renowned Flemish physician and anatomist. He also studied botany and published an introduction to the science (1606) as well as the first instructions on preparing herbarium specimens. Spigelia is in the Logania family, which includes the familiar Butterfly bush (Buddleia davidii) and Carolina Jessamine (Gelsemium sempervirens). All parts of Spigelia marilandica plants are poisonous due to the presence of the alkaloid, spigiline, but it is toxic only if large quantities are ingested.

To date, there appear to be two cultivars available: ‘Little Redhead’ and ‘Ragin’ Cajun.’ The first is a little shorter and more compact than the species, but otherwise the same. The flowers of the second are more orange than red and the plant is reported to produce up to one-third more flowers than the species. I expect to see more variety introduced in the future as the species is more widely appreciated and catches the attention of plant breeders.

**PLANT PROFILE**

*Spigelia marilandica*, Indian Pink

*By John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D.*

Indian Pink works well among other hardy perennials such as Hosta and Hakone Grass.

Dr. Fitzpatrick is an adjunct faculty member in the landscape architecture program at Morgan State University and immediate past president of the Horticultural Society of Maryland. Indian Pink thrives in the Vollmer Center entrance garden.
LEIGH BARNES did not intend to become president of the Horticultural Society of Maryland back in 1998. She was trying to devote her attention to Companion Plantings, her new container and small-space garden business.

But Barnes—who had been HSM program chair and head of the society’s garden tour committee—was an obvious choice to succeed Muffin Evander that year. Evander thought so, as did Bridget Maginn, the president from 1990 to 1994. They urged Barnes to take the job.

Barnes was reluctant, but finally she said yes.

During her first board meeting as president, Barnes said in an interview last June, she was a little unsure of herself. She looked toward Evander several times, mouthing the words: “What do I do next?”

Leigh Barnes soon mastered her duties. She would serve two two-year terms as president, until 2002, applying her knowledge, hard work and crisp efficiency to all aspects of the Horticultural Society. During the 2016 interview, Barnes seemed uncomfortable with praising her own accomplishments, saying they reflected the work of many people. But others long active in the society say Barnes was one of the best leaders in the organization’s 47-year history.

According to Evander, Barnes improved the newsletter, found venues for meetings of the then-homeless society and encouraged new members.

“She added an air of refinement to the ‘Hort,’” said Helene Clapperton, the society’s longtime treasurer. “She polished us up.”

“She was very progressive and forward-thinking about the Hort Society,” said Christianna McCausland, a former editor of the newsletter who worked with Barnes. “Always interested in trying new things that would entice a broader membership while engaging the existing membership.”

Leigh Barnes, a self-described “Southern girl,” started life as Leigh Richmond Brenizer, born into a family that had been prominent in North Carolina for generations.

“I was not a gardener,” Barnes said last summer. “I had grown up around people who gardened. My grandmother and her sister gardened.”

After school in Charlotte and a year of junior college in Massachusetts, she worked on the society page of the Boston Herald, a job she said she enjoyed very much.

Around then she met a Harvard Law School student whose father was a judge in Maryland. They married and moved to Baltimore after he finished law school. They had three children.

The family lived in old Lutherville where, Barnes said, her gardening experience began with a large vegetable garden.
During Barnes’ tenure, society meetings were held at various locations: the Church of the Redeemer on Charles Street, Trinity Assembly of God on West Joppa Road, the Sheppard Pratt Conference Center, the Three Arts Club in Homeland and the Loch Raven High School auditorium. The permanent home at the Vollmer Center was years in the future.

The newsletter—not yet called THE HORT REPORT—was a simpler, more monochromatic venture back then. Barnes worked to make it more substantive. She praised Elaine Kasmer, Peggy Riccio, Christiana McCausland and Paula Simon, among others, for their efforts.

In the 1970s, Barnes was among the first group of docents trained by the staff at the Walters Art Museum “to have a broad knowledge of art history” and to give tours of the museum’s new wing.

In the late 1980s, she enrolled in Goucher College, “which I loved,” but she later transferred to the University of Maryland College Park to study horticulture. She commuted from Lutherville to attend classes, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in 1995.

She also met and learned from some notable people in horticulture, such as John Davidson, longtime Professor of Entomology at Maryland and a specialist in Integrated Pest Management for ornamental plants. Another was fellow Maryland student Lynn Batdorf, a renowned Boxwood expert at the National Arboretum. “I worked at the National Arboretum for a season and a half before graduation,” she said. “I took care of the gardens around the Visitors Center.”

“I also worked for Kurt Bluemel, at $5 an hour,” she said, referring to the influential Baltimore County plantsman who died in 2014. “I asked if I could come work [for him] so I could learn ornamental grasses,” Barnes said. “He said yes … very gracious of him … It was a great learning experience.”

About 20 years ago, Barnes started Companion Plantings. The business began “purely by chance,” she said, but now, “I’ve got more work than I can manage.”

“I’m so much happier dealing with plants,” she said. “It’s a perfect combination of personality and job.”

She became active in the Hort Society in the 1990s. She oversaw the annual garden tour and, according to Clapperton, “had the first tour party at her house on the spur of the moment.”

Barnes arranged lectures and workshops, including one in which participants made troughs in her garage on Cuba Road. “Talented professionals and many great gardeners shared their knowledge with our members,” Barnes wrote in an email.

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We’re Talking Tomatoes:
A Conversation with Craig LeHoullier

By Harry Merritt

If you were to call Craig LeHoullier Mr. Tomato he probably wouldn’t mind.

After all, LeHoullier, an expert on heirloom tomatoes, has trialed more than 1,200 varieties of tomatoes and introduced more than 100 varieties. He is the tomato adviser for the Seed Savers Exchange and a founder of Tomatopalooza, a tasting event in Raleigh, N.C., where he lives.

He is the author of Epic Tomatoes: How to Select and Grow the Best Varieties of All Times (Storey Publishing, 2015), a busy, bold and very helpful collection of wisdom, lore and practical advice about the flavorful garden favorite. The book is now in its third printing, and LeHoullier—name pronounced LeHoolyer—expects there will be a fourth.

Best of all, LeHoullier will be coming to Baltimore on Saturday, May 6, to do a two-part workshop for the Horticultural Society of Maryland. (Ticket price and details to follow.)

The workshop, Epic Tomatoes From Your Garden, will have “an aesthetic half and a practical half,” LeHoullier said in a November interview. He will spend part of the day “getting people excited about the stories of tomatoes” to illustrate the tomato’s remarkable history. The tomato was domesticated by the Mayans in Central America well before the arrival of the Spanish, and some early North Americans apparently thought the plant was poisonous.

LeHoullier will discuss the tomato’s seemingly endless varieties—from the candylike ‘Sun Gold’ cherry tomato to the Cherokee Purple, a LeHoullier favorite that he says “defines the ideal intersection of sweetness, tartness,

CHEROKEE PURPLE came to me as an unexpected gift one day in 1990. It arrived in the form of a letter and packet of seeds from John D. Green (he calls himself J.D.) from Sevierville, Tennessee. He could not have imagined what would happen after I grew the seeds he so generously sent.

All we know of the actual history is that J.D.’s neighbor shared the seeds with him, and that they descended from a purple tomato given to the neighbor’s family by Cherokee Indians about a hundred years ago. As is often the case, I wish I had spent more time asking Mr. Green more about the background of the tomato—the neighbor’s name, for example.

The seeds arrived in time for me to include a plant of the yet-to-be-named “purple” variety in my garden that year. I loved the story that J.D. told but was skeptical about the color designation; all known tomatoes up to that date with “purple” as a descriptor ended up being pink.

... The unnamed purple ... [was] definitely among the most interesting varieties I grew that year. To my amazement, ripening brought forth a color that I’d never seen before: a deep, dusky rose color that shaded to nearly true purple at the shoulders.

... When sliced and tasted ... Cherokee Purple exploded in our mouths in a symphony of flavors and nuances. We loved it (and do to this day). Clearly needing a name, I considered the brief history provided by J.D. and named it Cherokee Purple.”

From Craig LeHoullier, Epic Tomatoes: How to Grow and Select the Best Varieties of All Time (Storey Publishing). Used by permission.
depth and texture.” He will share stories from more than three decades of growing the plant. LeHoullier, who owns a collection of some 400 tomato catalogs, will bring examples for workshop participants to peruse. In the hands-on part of the workshop he will demonstrate seed starting and lead participants through the process of potting up an assortment of his heirloom seedlings for them to take home.

LeHoullier grew up in Pawtucket, R.I. His French ancestors, who came to America in the 1700s, were farmers, something LeHoullier points to with pride. Gardening “is something I’m supposed to be doing, there’s farming in my lineage.”

He became aware of gardening at an early age. His grandfather “would take me for walks in the garden when I was three,” LeHoullier said. “My father hand dug our first garden when I was six, but before that he took me for walks in the park to look at the lilacs.”

In 1980, LeHoullier planted his first garden when he was in graduate school in New Hampshire, working toward a doctorate in chemistry at Dartmouth. He later worked as a project manager for GlaxoSmithKline, the pharmaceutical giant. It was his day job that brought him to North Carolina but he has since left the company.

Years of growing and testing so many varieties of tomatoes gave LeHoullier a wealth of knowledge that he was only too happy to share. But his wife, Susan, told him he was “giving everything away,” and urged him to write the book.

Epic Tomatoes was “a lot of fun to write,” LeHoullier said. He professes a great love of history and of stories. “I do know how to tell stories. The book is a collection of stories.”

He is glad, though, that he waited to write the book. “It’s a better story because there was more of my brain to draw from,” he said.

“I’m one of those people, I believe in fate,” he added. “You do the things you do when you’re supposed to do them.”

MURDER IN THE GARDEN by Leigh Barnes

EDITOR’S NOTE: In addition to running her business, Companion Plantings, former HSM President Leigh Barnes writes occasional articles about gardening. This piece, titled “Murder in the Garden,” appeared on Lutherville/Timonium Patch on Sept. 7, 2010. Used by permission.

I have never liked the idea of using pesticides. For years I maintained a large vegetable garden that was chemical free and often vegetable free as well.

My green beans provided a feast for Mexican Bean Beetles. The strawberries, at the point of perfect ripeness, would be eaten hollow on the underside by stealth slugs who always beat me to them. But, knowing that pesticides were unhealthy for beneficial insects and humans alike, I was willing to sacrifice abundance and give the insects their due.

What a dumb idea!

It was a huge amount of work for minimal return and maximum frustration. I plowed the garden under and drove to the local Farmers’ Markets.

But this year, a friend dropped off six fancy tomato plants he had grown from seed and I felt it would be an insult not to plant them. So, I prepared the far end of one of the garden beds and planted the roots deep into the soil.

That was a month and a half ago. The plants are rising to amazing heights—all that good manure I added—and I can see many fruits forming. What I did not notice was the presence of a Tomato Hornworm that had been feasting on the upper leaves of several plants.

I saw the stripped stems and then discovered the culprit—lined up in perfect green camouflage along the stem on which he had been feeding. He was not moving; his entire body was covered in tiny, white rice-like structures. I knew this creature had been parasitized by a beneficial wasp, but couldn’t remember any of the details. I did take the time to grab my camera and capture this wonderful act of nature in the moment and then I went to my computer.

I Googled “natural predators of Tomato Hornworms” and all the information I needed popped up on the screen. You can do the same, but here is a quick account. There is a fascinating insect called a Hawk Moth, also known as a Sphinx Moth or Hummingbird Moth.

It has a wing span of 5 to 8 inches and can hover, like a hummingbird, over a plant to collect nectar in its incredibly long straw-like proboscis, which rolls up when not in use. The caterpillar stage of this moth is the dreaded Hornworm (so called because of a black, harmless hook-like horn at the tip of its tail), which can do a lot of damage to agricultural crops.

The good news is that these destructive caterpillars have a natural predator, the braconid wasp. This is a good wasp—yes, I said “good” because, where there are hornworms on tobacco or tomato plants, more than likely these natural killers will be present.

The females lay their eggs under the skin of the hornworm. When the larvae develop, they eat the viscera of the worm. I know, it is gross. One website refers to this process as “meals on wheels” for wasps. They then emerge through its skin and spin tiny cocoons from which the adult stage wasps emerge.

The female wasps will then find new hornworms and repeat the cycle.

If you find a parasitized hornworm in your garden, do not throw it away. The resulting generation of new wasps will protect your tomato crop. Nature takes care of its own and we do not have to do a thing to aid in the process. No chemicals, no sprays, no cost and minimal damage to the plants. That’s hard to beat.
The New American Garden Exhibit comes to the Vollmer Center

If you missed last winter’s exhibit about the work of landscape architecture legends Wolfgang Oehme and James van Sweden in Washington, you’re in luck, much closer to home. The exhibit—“The New American Garden: The Landscape Architecture of Oehme, van Sweden”—will be at the Vollmer Center from January 14 through March 26, 2017. It will be open to the public Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The date of an opening reception and other details were still being determined at press time.

“The New American Garden” features “52 contemporary and newly commissioned photographs of important residential, civic and commercial projects,” according to the web site of the National Building Museum, which sponsored the 2016 exhibit in Washington. The exhibit marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of Bold Romantic Gardens (1990), which Oehme and van Sweden wrote with Susan Rademacher.

PHOTO: Wolfgang Oehme (left) and James van Sweden (right) in 1990. Photo: Volkmar Wentzel, courtesy of The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Welcome New Members!

Anne Barone
Edmund Bender
Tracy Bumba
Louise Cather
Leslie Erickson
Patricia Frank
Marcia I. Froomer
Nathan Hubler
Charlotte L’Esperance
Paulette Matteson
Carolyn McDaniels
Lenore Nii
David Pos

The 2016-2017 Baltimore County Master Gardener interns were given complimentary memberships. They include:

Margie Bowen
Marie Brannan
Susan Brennan
Linda Epstein
Deborah Fuller
Vanessa Harvell
Susanne Houston
Sue L. Kane
Deana Karras
Jennifer Keetley

Penelope King
Elaine Lea
Billie-Jo McIntire
Kim Pearce
Paula Raimondo
Carolyn Richardson
Jonathan Sagner
Shari Schwartz
Marina Shwartz
Judy A. Slide

Susan Snyder
Pamela Suarez
Gussie Watson-Price

Several awards for On Walnut Hill

On Walnut Hill: The Evolution of a Garden, the lush and colorful book about the garden of HSM members A.C. and Penney Hubbard of Ruxton, has won several awards.

Photographer Roger Foley received two Media Awards Silver Medals from GWA: The Association for Garden Communicators. One was in the category of Photography in a General Readership Book of More Than 120 pages; the other was for a portfolio of 10 pictures from the book.

Foley also won second-place recognition in the “Beautiful Garden” category of the International Garden Photographer of the Year 2016 competition for “Sun Shower,” which appears on page 160 of On Walnut Hill.

The book’s printer, Schmitz Press of Sparks, Md., received two awards—Best Use of Photographs and Best Case Bound Book—from the Printing & Graphics Association Mid-Atlantic. The awards were presented in March 2016 at a gala at Martin’s West.

On Walnut Hill was published by Hillside Press LLC, of Wilson, Wy., in October 2015 and was presented at a book launch that month at the Vollmer Center. The book was written by Kathy Hudson, HSM member and garden writer, with a foreword by Allen Bush. The book’s website is onwalnuthill.com.

The Horticultural Society of Maryland, Inc.

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 4213
Lutherville, MD 21093-4214
Telephone: 410-821-5561
www.mdhorticulture.org

The Horticultural Society of Maryland, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) educational organization.