



THE HORT REPORT

NEWSLETTER OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF MARYLAND, INC. | JANUARY 2018

Gardening the Great Dixter Way With Fergus Garrett

By Harry Merritt



If you've been fortunate enough to visit Great Dixter, the renowned garden in East Sussex, England, you know what the fuss is about.

If not, the Horticultural Society of Maryland is about to give you a chance to learn more about Great Dixter, from Fergus Garrett, the head gardener for the last quarter century and chief executive of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust.

On April 18, in a 7 p.m. lecture at the Sheppard Pratt Conference Center, Garrett will discuss "Designing With Plants the Great Dixter Way." The next day, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Vollmer Center, he will lead a seminar, "Succession Planting in the Mixed Border." (Ticket price details will be announced later. Registration opens Feb. 1, 2018.)

English gardeners who have attended Garrett's talks said Society members should be prepared for a lively evening.

"I don't think we have hosted a speaker more enthusiastic, knowledgeable and friendly than Fergus Garrett. He was a real inspiration," wrote Sharin Ingleby, publicity director for England's Hardy Plant Society North East Group, in an email.

Continued on page 4

PHOTO: Fergus Garrett by Martin Ogden

LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday, MARCH 13, 7:30 p.m.

CAROL GRACIE

The Natural History of Spring Wildflowers: A Closer Look

Besides adding beauty to our woodlands and gardens, native spring wildflowers play an important role in the ecology of our eastern forests. Carol Gracie, author of *Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History*, will show how these plants have adapted to their shaded environment, discuss their methods of propagation and dispersal and their uses as medicines, foods and dyes. Book signing.

Tuesday, APRIL 10, 7:30 p.m.

BARBARA TIFFANY

Gardening Against the Grain

Most gardeners plant for the flowers: Barbara Tiffany's focus is on the architecture of the plant and leaf texture and color, because that is what endures most of the year. Tiffany, owner of Mill Fleurs, a Pennsylvania garden that is open to the public, will share her unusual ideas about grouping plants by color and her solutions for planting a collector's garden.

Tuesday, MAY 8, 7:30 p.m.

JOSEPH TYCHONIEVICH

Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style

Inspired by the tiny plants and dramatic rocky landscapes found on mountain tops, rock gardening uses a range of unusual, small plants with beautiful stones to create miniaturized landscapes. This approach to gardening is water-wise, perfect for containers, small gardens, and for those interested in a whole new group of plants. Tychonievich, author of *Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style*, will discuss the basic principles of creating rock gardens and suggest easy-to-grow plants to get you started. Book signing.

Lectures are held in the Vollmer Center auditorium, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209. Members are required to have a current membership card for free admission to lectures. Guests of members also receive free admission.

For more information, visit our web site: mdhorticulture.org

2018
Perennially Inspired!
PPA & HSM WINTER SEMINAR
Saturday, February 24th
See details on page 7.

COMING HSM EVENTS

JANUARY PLANT FORUM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2018

1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Vollmer Center auditorium

For HSM members only. Free but you must register in advance. Speakers: Marianne Willburn, *Tropical Foliage Plants*; Bob Farmer, *Japanese Maples*; Michael Rosendale, *Caudiciform Plants (Fat Plants)*

PERENNIAL PLANT ASSOCIATION & HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF MARYLAND SEMINAR

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2018

8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sheppard Pratt Conference Center, Towson, MD

Please join us for the annual winter seminar.

Members: \$105 before Feb. 2, \$125 after Feb. 2.

Non-Members: \$125 before Feb. 2, \$145 after Feb. 2.

For more information, see page 7.

FERGUS GARRETT LECTURE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2018

7 p.m., followed by dessert reception

Designing With Plants the Great Dixter Way

Sheppard Pratt Conference Center. Ticket details to come.

Registration will open Feb. 1, 2018.

FERGUS GARRETT SEMINAR

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2018

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Succession Planting in the Mixed Border

Vollmer Center. Ticket details to come. Registration will

open Feb. 1, 2018

27TH ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018

10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine

The 2018 tour will feature gardens of northern Baltimore County.

2018 EUROPEAN GARDEN TRIPS

MAY 21 through JUNE 2, 2018

Chelsea Flower Show, Wales & Northern England

SEPTEMBER 8 through 20, 2018

Italian Gardens : Bella Italia

See page 8 for trip details.

For more information about our events, visit www.mdhorticulture.org

In case of severe weather, check the HSM web site for any cancellation notices.

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: Peter Bieneman and Jennifer Forrence

For the Sponsorship Program: Sally Barker

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

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

For the Plant Raffle: Nancy MicKey

For the Communications Team: Pat Cieslak, telephone messages; Helene Clapperton, webmaster; Carla Hackley, Facebook manager; Nancy Raskin, event coordinator; Kate Blom, John Fitzpatrick and Maggie Neely, September mailing

For the September 2017 issue of THE HORT REPORT: Holly Shimizu, article and photographs; Claire Jones, Paula A. Simon and Darlene Wells, photographs; Joel Cohen and John Fitzpatrick, proofreaders



PHOTO: Richard McDuffie

What rain?

In October, members and friends of HSM visited gardens in Japan. Despite rain that settled over the island of Honshu for more than a week, the group visited over thirty gardens and temple sites and enjoyed the spirit and cultural aesthetic that makes Japanese gardens unique. Here they are with the Great Buddha at Kotokuin Temple.

See page 8 for our 2018 foreign garden travel opportunities.

Welcome New Members!

Donna Atwood-Dowling
Peter Babcox
Tracey Brocato
Terrence Burns
Margaret Eby
Jeannette Festa
Francis Flanigan
Monica Flynn
Valerie Griffith

Michele Haas
Emily Hiller
Brenda Horn
Melinda Kelly
Kathy Lauten
Corinne Lears
Rose Love
Michelle Malis
Sandy Parker

Susan Randall
Barbara Schaum
Rosemary Starkey
Renu Suresh
Melvin Thomas
Terry Weisser
Bill Wilfong &
June Chew

Hydrangea quercifolia, Oakleaf Hydrangea

By Harry Merritt



Oakleaf Hydrangea is one of the great entertainers in my garden, putting on a show year round.

As I write this in mid-October, my largest Oakleaf, in partial shade and visible from the kitchen windows, still has dark green leaves, but some are becoming edged in burgundy. Soon the

burgundy will take over. The blossoms, white clusters from summer into fall, are turning a pale but pleasing light and dark brown. Another Oakleaf, shaded somewhat in the “birch bed” at the front of the house, still has all its green leaves and white blossoms. By the time you read this, the leaves will be gone, exposing the exfoliating bark.

Native to the southeastern United States, from North Carolina west to Tennessee, and south to Florida and Louisiana, Oakleaf Hydrangea was discovered by the renowned botanist William Bartram (1739-1823) during his travels in the Southeast in the 18th century. The “querci” part of the botanical name is for its resemblance of its catcher’s-mitt-size leaves to the leaves of some oak trees, or *Quercus*.



Oakleaf Hydrangea can grow from 4 to 10 feet tall, spreading that much as well, without pruning, but there are more compact cultivars.

Oakleaf Hydrangea can tolerate full sun but prefers part shade—“filtered shade,” as the Mount Cuba Center web site calls it. Plants do well in average dry soil; they do not like wet feet, which in extreme cases could cause root rot. In fact, once an Oakleaf is established you can pretty much forget about watering it except in times of severe drought (and then not often). Mine seem to flourish in benign neglect.



The only failure I have had was with a plant of ‘Alice’ that I planted in the fall of 2016. I’m not sure what happened. Oakleaf Hydrangea seems immune to pests of the insect variety but, having seen a rabbit munching on Oakleaf leaves, I suspect a rabbit was the culprit. ‘Alice’ was reduced to a miserable leafless, budless stick and I had to remove it.

The Oakleaf’s white blossoms are flower enough for me. Unlike with *Hydrangea macrophylla*, which will bloom blue in acidic soil and pink in alkaline, the Oakleaf flowers are not affected by soil pH.

But there are Oakleaf cultivars that will bloom in color, such as ‘Snow Queen,’ with blossoms that age from white to rose pink, and ‘Ruby Slippers,’ with—you guessed it—ruby red blossoms.

PLANT FACTS

Hydrangea quercifolia

Common Name: Oakleaf Hydrangea

Family: Hydrangeaceae

Hardiness: USDA Zones 5 to 9

Size: 4 to 10 feet tall. Spread, about the same unless you prune.

Culture: Average dry soil. Go easy on the watering.

REFERENCES

Botanica’s Trees & Shrubs

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, wildflower.org

Mount Cuba Center, mtcubacenter.org

Missouri Botanical Garden, missouribotanicalgarden.org

Harry Merritt is editor of THE HORT REPORT.

Gardening the Great Dixter Way with Fergus Garrett

Continued from page 1



PHOTO: Carol Casselden

Tony Ewin, who wrote about Garrett and Great Dixter for the Hardy Plant North East newsletter, described Garrett as “a bundle of energy: a torrent of words describing his methods. Noting that it was impossible to please everybody so you might as well please yourself, he [said] that he and his team had great respect for the past but were also concerned to look to the future.”

Garrett trained in horticulture at Wye College of the University of London. Before joining Great Dixter in 1992, he worked for Rosemary Alexander of the English Gardening School, Beth Chatto at the Unusual Plants Nursery, and the Sackler family at Cap d’Antibes, France, and Gstaad, Switzerland.

At Great Dixter, Garrett worked side by side for 14 years with the owner, Christopher Lloyd (1921-2006), the noted plantsman and author of many books on gardening. Lloyd did not design the original garden but his careful nurturing and innovative—

some might say wild—ideas transformed it into a place that is cherished by garden enthusiasts worldwide.

“Despite his traditional background, he was an original artist whose gardens defied classification,” The New York Times said in an obituary of Lloyd. “He was known for his willingness and eagerness to experiment, saying gardeners should live on the frontier of their experience.”

More than a decade after Lloyd’s death, Great Dixter continues to flourish in the hands of Fergus Garrett. Today, writes Tim Richardson in *The New English Garden*, “Dixter is gardened at a connoisseurial level that is probably unmatched worldwide.”



PHOTOS: LEFT, the Long Border in June, design and scale of plantings complement the house, adjacent garden path and meadow lawn. CENTER, the Long Border in late July showcases the Great Dixter way of using relatively common plants to great artistic effect. Bold architectural shapes and strong colors hold up beautifully to the full summer sun. RIGHT, the front gardens at Great Dixter still show details of their original Lutyens design. Clipped yew hedge walls enclose this garden with giant topiary birds resting atop their structural evergreen plinth.



PHOTO: Darlene Wells



PHOTO: Great Dixter

SOURCES:

The Great Dixter web site, greatdixter.co.uk

Tony Ewin, Hardy Plant Society North East Group, excerpts used by permission. The web site is hardy-plant.org.uk. The society offers international memberships.

Tim Richardson, *The New English Garden* (Frances Lincoln, 2013)

The original house of Dixter—at Northiam, East Sussex, 10 miles from the sea—dates to about 1460. But the modern story of Great Dixter began in May 1910, when Christopher Lloyd’s father, Nathaniel (1867-1933), who had made a fortune in the color printing business, bought the rundown property.

Nathaniel Lloyd hired Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), the foremost British architect of the 20th century, to renovate the house. Lutyens, whose work ranged from public buildings in New Delhi, India, to Queen Mary’s Dolls’ House, designed a new wing and oversaw the attachment of another whole building, “a medieval hall house” moved from nine miles away. Finished in 1912, the much larger house was renamed Great Dixter.

Lutyens, who had worked on various country house projects with the garden designer Gertrude Jekyll, designed the six-acre garden at Great Dixter, making “a series of ‘rooms’ incorporating the barns and other farm buildings,” Ewin wrote. “The house sits in the middle of the garden, so that the views are mostly inward looking. The garden has many typical Lutyens features such as circular steps.

Yew hedges were planted; some were clipped into crenellations. Yew was used and four peacocks adorn the upper garden. The garden has a wonderful bone structure and a lovely feeling of age.”

“Into this bone structure the planting is uninhibited, an attitude shared by both Lloyd and Garrett,” Ewin wrote. “No rules of colour [sic]. Anything could be tried to see what the effect was. There would be bold and vibrant combinations. But this seeming anarchy in fact masked a heightened sensibility and discrimination.”

Great Dixter rates a dozen pages in Richardson’s lavish book, which highlights many of Britain’s finest gardens, including Highgrove, the home of the Prince of Wales, and several designed by the contemporary Dutch master Piet Oudolf. Richardson is especially high on Great Dixter’s Long Border, calling it “the main showcase of the succession planting which is the hallmark of Great Dixter. This border changes in appearance radically every month from April until October—and in each of those months it appears to be ‘at its best.’ It is an astonishing achievement.”

A New and Better Manual for Landscape Plant Identification

By Harry Merritt

If you, like me, have neighbors who insist that the Virginia Creeper growing in your Pachysandra is Poison Ivy, don't get irked.

Get a copy of *Landscape Plant Identification Manual*, by John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., designed and illustrated by Margaret C. Neely, and prove them wrong.



The first of the book's 429 images of plant leaves happens to be *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, or Virginia Creeper. Two images to the right, same row, is *Toxicodendron radicans*, Poison Ivy. Not the same plant, not even close.

The book—full title *Landscape Plant Identification Manual: Maine to North Carolina and West to Illinois Exclusive of Conifers* (Blue & Green, \$28)—was published in August 2017. It is the result of a collaboration between Fitzpatrick and Neely that began in 2008.

At the end of spring semester that year, Fitzpatrick said, he had a conversation with Neely, "one of my best students" in the sustainable horticulture courses he taught at the Community College of Baltimore County. They discussed the shortcomings of the plant identification textbook Fitzpatrick used for the course. "We said, we could make a better book," Fitzpatrick recalled.

Fitzpatrick and Neely, an artist and a nurse case manager at Johns Hopkins Hospital, devised a plan, and by that summer Fitzpatrick was collecting leaves from the plants he wanted to display in the book.

"I would press the leaves in telephone books" to protect them, he said. "Every week I would give her a batch of 25 to 30 and she would scan them." Neely scanned the top and the bottom of the leaf and used Adobe Photoshop to "knock out some of the details," he said.

Over several years, Fitzpatrick found specimens at Cylburn Arboretum, the National Arboretum in Washington, Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College and even by the side of the road. "I would say, 'Stop the car, I need that one.'"

Fitzpatrick began writing descriptions of the plants in 2010, the same year he began a four-year stint as president of the Horticultural Society. He did the writing around his duties as an adjunct faculty member in the landscape architecture program at Morgan State University and as the owner of a garden maintenance, design and consulting business.



HSM members Margaret C. Neely (left) and John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D. (right).

"By the beginning of 2015, I had written everything and Maggie was well along in manipulating images," Fitzpatrick said. They had images and descriptions of all the plants, but omitted details about their cultivation or hardiness zones, and made no judgments on whether a plant is desirable or invasive.

"It's all about identification," said Fitzpatrick, who finished editing last spring. "There definitely is a basic need for anybody in the 'green' industry to be able to identify plants."

Landscape Plant Identification Manual is available at the Howard P. Rawlings Conservatory and Green Fields Nursery. It may also be purchased from Fitzpatrick. His email address is john.fitzpatrick.phd@gmail.com.

Perennially Inspired!

A DAY-LONG SEMINAR WITH FIVE HORTICULTURAL EXPERTS

Saturday, February 16, 2019 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Conference Center at Sheppard Pratt, 6501 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21204

Morning and afternoon sessions with several breaks and lunch included. See prices on registration form below.



NIGEL DUNNETT, Professor of Planting Design, Urban Horticulture and Vegetation Technology at England’s University of Sheffield, described as “a pioneer of the new ecological approach to planting gardens and public spaces.”

CHING-FANG CHEN, project manager and landscape architect for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. She is “reinventing the public park” as she redesigns Little Bennett Regional Park near Clarksburg, Md.

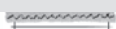
NICK MCCULLOUGH, plantsman and owner of a lanscape and nursery company in Johnstown, Ohio, is a former PPA Young Professional of the Year with a forward-thinking garden design blog called thinkingoutsidetheboxwood.com.

DEAN DIETRICH is a horticulturist at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Va. His background in includes assistant grower at Longwood Arboretum, gardener at Jenkins Arboretum and assistant horticulturist at Chanticleer.

DAVE MATTERN, assistant horticulturist at Chanticleer, is a graduate of Longwood Gardens’ professional gardener training program, and has worked at Dallas Arboretum and Botanic Garden and West Dean Gardens in West Sussex, England.

MANY THANKS TO OUR 2019 SEMINAR SPONSORS:

NEED CURRENT SPONSORS



To learn more about the seminar and the speakers, visit the Winter Seminar page at:

www.mdhorticulture.org



REGISTRATION: Mail this form with your check or register online with your credit card at www.mdhorticulture.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Names of additional attendees: _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Horticultural Society of Maryland, Inc.

MAIL TO: Horticultural Society of Maryland, PO Box 4213, Lutherville, MD 21094

Registration fee includes lunch and refreshments. Cancellations: Refunds will be made, less a 20% processing fee, if cancelled prior to January 30, 2019. No refunds after that date.

QUESTIONS? Visit our website, call 410-821-5561 or email winterseminar@mdhorticulture.org

REGISTRATION FEES:

Current HSM Members:

_____ \$105, if purchased by Feb 1

_____ \$125, if purchased after Feb 1

Non-HSM Members:

_____ \$125, if purchased by Feb 1

_____ \$145, if purchased after Feb1

Deadline for registration is February 14; no tickets will be available at the door.

HSM in the Community

The Society's sixth annual tool drive, in May, collected donations to help support community garden groups. Bev Compton, Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff and Bill Yonkers coordinated the event with Katja Kleine and Brooke Petruzzelli, representing MUGS (Mondawmin Urban Green Space).

In addition, the Society gave Cylburn Arboretum \$2,000 for the Wolfgang Oehme and James van Sweden retrospective, "The New American Garden," at the Vollmer Center, and \$1,500 for Cylburn's deer fence.

The 29 Baltimore City and 15 Baltimore County Master Gardener interns of 2017 were given complimentary memberships.



Melanie M. Hotham of Towson, a Master of Landscape Architecture student at Morgan State University, was the 2017 summer intern at Cylburn Arboretum. The internship program is co-sponsored by the Society, the Cylburn Arboretum Association and the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, each of which contributed \$2,500.

International Landscaping & Design (ILD), based in Baltimore and Centreville, received the Society's award for the most effective and practical use of plants at the Spring 2017 Home & Garden Show.

PHOTO: Melanie M. Hotham



Two great garden trips planned for 2018

Join members and friends of HSM and the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland for these two small-group trips to Europe in 2018. For details contact Claire Jones, jonesb1@comcast.net, call 443-927-6285, or visit mdhorticulture.org/trips.

CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW, WALES & NORTHERN ENGLAND – May 21 through June 2, 2018

Last year's trip to England sold out so quickly that trip organizer Claire Jones decided to offer it again with some variations. Just a few highlights of this year's trip include: a full day at the Chelsea Flower Show, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Hampton Court, the town and botanic garden in Oxford, the David Austin Roses Garden & Plant Center, Highgrove, Chatsworth House, as well as Powis Castle, Bodnant Estate and the town of Portmeirion in Wales.

ITALIAN GARDENS : BELLA ITALIA – September 8 though September 20, 2018

In the fall, you can visit many of Italy's finest gardens in Venice, Rome, Tuscany, Siena, and the Italian Lakes. Trip includes: guided city tours, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Padua, a wine tasting in Tuscany, the Vatican Garden/Museum and Sistine Chapel, Pitti Palace and Boboli Gardens in Florence, gardens of Lake Como and Lake Maggiore, the Italian Riviera town of Portofino, Villa d'Este, Ninfa and more.

PHOTO: Rosa 'Evelyn', Creative Commons

Allan Armitage is coming to Baltimore in January



The Howard P. Rawlings Conservatory will present an evening with Dr. Allan Armitage, Professor Emeritus of Horticulture at the University of Georgia. The talk, *Who put those Naked Ladies in my Garden? Stories your mother never told you!* will be given at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12, 2018 at the Vollmer Center. His talk will include tales from his latest book, *Of Naked Ladies and Forget-Me-Nots*, and will be followed by refreshments and a book signing. Proceeds will benefit the Rawlings Conservatory. For information and to purchase tickets, go to www.rawlingsconservatory.org.

PHOTO: Allan Armitage



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MEMBERSHIP

For information about membership or to join, visit the society's website: www.mdhorticulture.org or telephone Catherine Cook at 410-821-5561.

Benefits of Membership

Newsletters and membership directory; admission to the spring and fall lectures and the annual garden tour; and discounts on workshops, trips and special events.

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