



THE HORT REPORT

NEWSLETTER OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF MARYLAND, INC. | MAY 2015

A Life of Gardening: Specimens and Spaces in Monkton and Jarrettsville

Four outstanding private gardens are yours to behold on Sunday, June 7, when the Horticultural Society of Maryland presents its 24th annual tour.

One garden features trees and other flora in such variety and profusion—among them *Parrotia persica* (Persian Ironwood) and *Cephalotaxus fastigiata* (Japanese Plum-Yew)—that its owners call the place “a horticultural zoo.”

Another garden is actually eight large garden areas on a 231-acre estate that also has orchards, woods and pastures. A third, in the heart of hunt country, has a “secret garden” enclosed by old stone walls and other beds labeled the Attitude Garden, the Oasis and the Old Fashioned Garden.

The fourth garden, the site of an old gristmill, features elaborate stonework, a meditation garden and life-size replicas of Chinese warriors. Look for the *Cunninghamia lanceolata* (China Fir).

The tour happens rain or shine. Be sure to dress for the weather and wear sturdy and comfortable shoes.

As always, the tour is free to members of the Society. Members will find the tour booklet enclosed in this mailing. Those who purchase tickets will be sent directions to the first garden where they will receive their booklet. Guest tickets may be purchased in advance on the Society website or at the stores listed below.



PHOTO: Ann Betten

24TH ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR • SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2015 • 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M. • RAIN OR SHINE

- MEMBERS admitted FREE with current membership card.
- NON-MEMBER tickets – \$35, if purchased in advance by June 6 at our website and at one of the following locations: Greenspring Nursery Stone & Gift House in Jarrettsville; Kingsdene Nurseries in Monkton; Lovely Manors Garden Design Center in Phoenix; Clark’s Ace Hardware in Ellicott City; Perennial Farm in Glen Arm; The Mill of Bel Air in Bel Air; Graul’s Markets in Ruxton, Mays Chapel and Hereford; Green Fields Nursery on Falls Road in Baltimore City; and Watson’s Garden Center of Lutherville.
- NON-MEMBER tickets – \$40, day of tour, at first garden.
- For more information and to purchase non-member tickets visit our website: www.mdhorticulture.org

Members who would like to volunteer for the tour, e-mail Crystal Patterson, cmp21@yahoo.com

COMING HSM EVENTS

ANNUAL TOOL DRIVE

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2015

6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.

Bring donations of garden tools, new or used, to the Vollmer Center before the May lecture. Tools go to "tool libraries" for loan to community garden groups. Donations of seeds and plants are also welcome.

LECTURE SERIES:

GORDON HAYWARD

The Inevitable Garden

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Hayward, a garden designer and writer who lives in Vermont, returns to HSM to discuss what he has learned about garden design over the last 35 years. In his view, "the inevitable garden" derives from three sources: the house, the people who live in the house, and the land.

BRANDYWINE COTTAGE BUS TRIP

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2015

Brandywine Cottage, in Downingtown, Pa., is the home of David Culp, author of *The Layered Garden*. Bus leaves from Meadowood Park & Ride, Joppa and Falls roads, at 9 a.m. Please arrive at Meadowood by 8:45 a.m. Price: members, \$85, non-members, \$100. Box lunch provided. Information: Crystal Patterson, 410-367-6050 (home) or 410-905-2050 (cell).

TASHIDING TOUR: BENEFIT FOR THE VOLLMER CENTER GARDEN

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2015

See page 3 for complete information.

24TH ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2015

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

See page 1 for complete information.

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.

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 January Plant Forum:

Jennifer Forrence and Helene Clapperton, coordinators; Peter Bieneman, Bill Kuhl and George Mozal, presenters; Paula Campos, Nancy Blois and Pat Sherman, hospitality; Catherine Cook, registration; Mary Jo Sherrod, Michael Bass, Bill Yonkers, Susan Yonkers and Nancy Raskin

For the PPA/HSM Winter Seminar: Janet Draper and Mary Jo Sherrod, coordinators; Sally Barker, Helene Clapperton, Catherine Cook, Crystal Patterson and Nancy Raskin

For the Garden Tour Committee: Ann Betten and Donna Imhoff, co-chairs; Anne Gossett, Tanya Jones, Crystal Patterson, Nell Strachan and Shelley Wygant

For the Sponsorship Program: Sally Barker and Paula Simon

For the Lecture Series Committee: Paula Simon and Mary Jo Sherrod, coordinators; Helene Clapperton, Muffin Evander, John Fitzpatrick, Karen Offutt and Carol Oppenheimer

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

For the Plant Raffle: Nancy MicKey, Jodi Cantler, Barbara Sutton and Foxborough Farms

For the Communications Team: Michael Bass, telephone messages; Helene Clapperton, webmaster; Carla Hackley, Facebook manager; and Nancy Raskin, event registrar; and Alex Cook and Catherine Cook, January mailing

For the January 2015 issue of The Hort Report: Beth Succop, Nell Strachan, Carol Oppenheimer (photographs) and John Fitzpatrick, contributors; Joel Cohen and John Fitzpatrick, proofreaders



A colorful collection of African Violets found new homes with our members at the January Plant Forum, thanks to a thoughtful and generous donation by speaker Peter Bieneman.

PHOTO ABOVE: Paula A. Simon

Welcome New Members!

Cynthia Albright
Paula David
Paul Dorsey
George Grillon
Jane Halpin
Rebecca Henry
Jane Holloway
Robert Johnson

Darcy Kelley
Karen Lock
Patricia Martin
Diane Owen
Patsy Perlman
Patricia Pretl
Mark Sander
Terry Schulz

Ruth Seaby
Damon Smith
Karen Smith
Mary Jane Sundius
Janet Surges
Veronique Williams

TASHIDING—Horticulture in Harmony



Two decades ago, the rundown property near Western Run in Baltimore County was, at best, an eyesore. Trees lay dead or dying, many engulfed in Poison Ivy. Multiflora Rose and Porcelain Berry abounded. A lake was thick with algae and filth. An 1810 Quaker stone farmhouse was past its prime.

Today, however—after its new owners ripped out the dead trees and the invasives, dredged the lake, restored and expanded the farmhouse, planted 1,200 trees and about 20 acres of gardens infused with Asian-inspired charm—the property is one of the secret showplaces of the East Coast.

It is Tashiding, and its owners, HSM members Douglas and Tsognie Hamilton, will open the property to the Society from noon to 3 p.m. on May 31 for a tour and luncheon to benefit the garden at the Vollmer Center.

Doug Hamilton's family has been involved with horticulture in the Baltimore area for generations. Tsognie Hamilton is from Sikkim, a former Himalayan kingdom that

is now part of India. (In Sikkimese, Tashiding, pronounced Ta-SHEE-ding, means “the center of all auspicious things.”)

Guests will stroll the gardens, walk across narrow stone bridges, and see the teahouse on the lake and an aviary with peacocks, Doug Hamilton said. (“Be sure to wear your walking shoes,” he said.) Lunch will be served near a pavilion. The house will be open, allowing visitors to look at the courtyard rock garden, “viewable only from the house.”

In an interview, Hamilton said he and his wife were living in “a Japanese house in a forest in Monkton” when they decided, about 17 years ago, to shoulder the Western Run property's many challenges. Noted architect James R. Grieves oversaw the makeover of the farmhouse, and the Hamiltons began the large-scale cleanup and plantings.

“We started with the trees,” Hamilton said. “We do something every year. We’ve been working on the gardens for 15 years.”



Tickets for the Tashiding benefit cost \$85 and may be purchased at www.mdhorticulture.org, or by check mailed to The Horticultural Society of Maryland, P.O. Box 4213, Lutherville, MD 21094. Please reserve early as space is limited. For more information, call 410-821-5561 or email contact@mdhorticulture.org.

Top photo, looking across the lake at the island.

Above left, the house from below. Above right, the courtyard garden with stone lantern that is viewed from within the house on three sides.

Aronia arbutifolia (Red Chokeberry) and *Aronia melanocarpa* (Black Chokeberry)

By Jean Mellott

In the very large and mostly edible Rosaceae family is a group of small trees or shrubs known as Aronias or Chokeberries. Gardeners love these woody plants for their spring flowers and fall color, as well as the birds that their berries attract. They are native to much of the eastern United States and grows well in Maryland. Lately, they have been of interest to commercial fruit growers, as the berries have many anti-oxidants and vitamins.

Like most gardeners, I like to know the botanical name of the plant I am planting, because this avoids the confusion of many plants having the same common name. However, this doesn't work for Chokeberries. In the current rush for renaming and reclassifying plants, most of the plants in this group have three or more possible botanical names and there are questions about whether they all belong in the same genus, and whether some "species" are really just crosses between others. In the nurseries, these plants are (fortunately for me) usually still labeled as Aronias.

The two species most likely to be familiar to Maryland gardeners are *Aronia arbutifolia* (Red Chokeberry) and *Aronia melanocarpa* (Black Chokeberry). Both flower in the spring, with small, five-petaled white flowers, similar to apple blossoms. *A. arbutifolia* 'Brilliantissima' and *A. melanocarpa* 'Autumn Magic' are known for particularly fine fall color, and the taller cultivar *A. melanocarpa* 'Viking' is known for its proliferation of blue-black fruit. *Aronia x prunifolia* (Purple Chokeberry) is another species available in the trade; some authorities class it as a natural cross between the first two.

Everyone seems to agree that the Chokeberries are part of the Rose family. But when you get to the genus level of classification, there is some confusion due to attempts to reclassify these plants. Black Chokeberry, for example, is known as *Aronia arbutifolia* var. *nigra*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, *Aronia nigra*, *Pyrus arbutifolia* var. *nigra*, *Pyrus melanocarpa*,



In autumn, the shiny green leaves of Red Chokeberry turn orange and red.



The small white flowers of Black Chokeberry resemble apple blossoms.

Sorbus melanocarpa, or *Photinia melanocarpa*. Red Chokeberry is known as *Aronia arbutifolia*, *Pyrus arbutifolia*, *Sorbus arbutifolia* and *Photinia arbutifolia*. (Thank you to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the Missouri Botanical Garden for all the aliases.)

Don't confuse Chokeberries with Chokecherries (*Prunus virginiana*), which are much taller and have pendulous racemes of white flowers.

Diseases: Unfortunately, as members of the Rose family, these lovely woodies are susceptible to Cedar Apple Rust, so do not plant them near Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). They are relatively disease-free, especially when planted where they get good air circulation.

Appearance and Landscape value: Both varieties provide multi-season interest. Their shiny, small green leaves provide a neutral backdrop for more showy plants in the summer. Berries provide either blue-black or red punctuations in the late summer and fall. The foliage

turns a bright red-orange in the fall. The berries of the Aronias are very popular with birds, and the Black Chokeberry's are usually stripped very early. The Red Chokeberry's berries persist into the winter, as they require a period of very cold temperatures for the fruit to be harvested by the birds.

While both species have suckering growth habits, they can be easily maintained, if desired, as vase-shaped, multi-stemmed tall shrubs. These plants fill the bill for those looking for a multi-season native shrub for a landscape in the eastern U.S. They are increasingly available in commercial and retail nurseries, as straight species or in the form of one of their cultivars. Their adaptability to a wide range of soil conditions and freedom from major problems make Chokeberries good candidates for wetland

reclamation projects, roadside and highway plantings and parking lots. They are excellent choices for rain gardens and wildlife gardens. The tendency of these plants to sucker and expand also makes them excellent choices for holding a slope or preventing erosion.

Culinary, Nutraceutical and Pharmaceutical value: The name Chokeberry comes from the extreme bitterness of the berries, which supposedly causes the eater to choke. Despite the bitterness, berries can be harvested for jam and jelly making, if one outsmarts the birds. There is historical evidence that the Potawatomi people used the fruits as food and made an infusion of fruits as a treatment for colds. The Abnaki also used the fruits as a food. More recently, Eastern European and Russian markets have been interested in producing juices and cancer medicines from the fruit of the Black Chokeberry. The berries are popular in juice combinations, due to the high concentration of vitamins and flavonoids. Aronia juice has been found to have more flavonoids than cranberry juice. In the United States interest in commercial production is more recent. State extension services are offering literature for interested growers and Iowa State was host to an Aronia growers conference, where locally produced Aronia wine was offered.

PLANT FACTS:

Aronia arbutifolia (Red Chokeberry); *Aronia melanocarpa* (Black Chokeberry)

Hardiness: U.S.D.A. Zones 4-9

Family: Rosaceae

Size: About six feet in height, though in optimal growing conditions *A. melanocarpa* can reach 12 feet.

Habit: Open, spreading, leggy, suckering. Black Chokeberry tends to have a more rounded habit and remain more fully leaved to the base.

Culture: Sun to part shade; moist, slightly acidic soil

REFERENCES: Michael Dirr, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*; Missouri Botanical Garden, missouribotanicalgarden.org; Douglas Tallamy, *Bringing Nature Home Website*, bringingnaturehome.net; *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Plant Guides*, wildflower.org/plants; William Cullina and The New England Wildflower Society, *Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants*.

Jean Mellott, ASLA is a landscape designer in Baltimore, with *Grow Landscape Designs, LLC*.

Dr. Norman Highstein: A Fond Remembrance



Known to some as “Dr. Green Thumb,” Dr. Norman Highstein was a tireless and enthusiastic gardener who was always willing to share his knowledge with others.

Dr. Highstein, a longtime HSM member whose garden in Stevenson was on the society’s 2000 tour, died November 2, 2014. He was 88.

He filled his property with trees—many cultivars of Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) plus dozens of species of evergreens. He had Hosta and Hollies (*Ilex*) in profusion, along with Azaleas and Rhododendrons—perhaps 300 species of plants and shrubs. He built a waterfall and a Koi pond. He even had a Sequoia.

“He was amazing with what he could do,” said Sara Seifter, Dr. Highstein’s daughter. Both he and her mother, Donna, who died in 2003, “knew the names of all the plants. He was very artistic.”

Dr. Highstein’s son, Charles, said his father, a dentist, spent many hours working in his office. When that work was done, he loved nothing better than to get outdoors in the fresh air.

“My father loved to solve problems,” Charles Highstein said. “He loved to solve problems with plants.” The son said he worked with his father on several projects. More than once, he said, passersby—thinking the Highsteins were paid help—stopped to ask about their rates.

The Highsteins built three identical houses and had a garden at each. Two were in the Villa Nova neighborhood of Baltimore County; the house in Stevenson was their last, with the most intricate gardens.

“Dr. Norm’s garden was a unique reflection of his personality,” says Dr. Max Bloom, a former HSM president. “He gathered ideas from his friends and wherever he traveled.”

Bloom said he and Dr. Highstein took horticulture classes at the Dundalk campus of the Community College of Baltimore County. “John Sanders, the head of the department, was asked what changes he would have for Norm’s garden,” Bloom recalled. “He felt [it should be] curvilinear, that getting rid of the sharp lines and right angles would make the garden more in keeping with nature.”

Bloom said Dr. Highstein took Sanders’ advice. “It was a big challenge, but ‘big’ was Dr. Norm’s personality. He gave a lot of his time, knowledge and enthusiasm to his friends.”

PHOTO: Sara Seifter

Snapshots from Perennially Inspired 2015



Scores of garden professionals and enthusiasts attended “Perennially Inspired,” the annual winter seminar sponsored by HSM and the Perennial Plant Association.



Stephanie Peer, of Babikow Greenhouses, left, with Dan Benarcik, gardener at Chanticleer, and Janet Draper, PPA regional director and seminar coordinator.



Josh Demers, University of Maryland student, attended as the recipient of the Sidney Silber Scholarship Award.



Speaker Chuck Hinkle, gardener at Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College, discusses underused, unusual or “forgotten” plants. That’s a picture of *Chimonanthus praecox* (Fragrant Wintersweet) behind him.



Peter Bieneman, left, and Robin Wilner of Green Fields Nursery, a seminar sponsor.

PHOTOS: Paula A. Simon



Mary Jo Sherrod, HSM coordinator for the seminar, with speaker Jason Reeves, research horticulturist at the University of Tennessee Gardens in Jackson, Tenn.

The National PPA Flock Gathers in Baltimore this July

The latest in garden design trends, trade shows and programs aimed at growers, designers and retailers will be part of the 33rd Perennial Plant Symposium, to be held July 27 to August 1 in Baltimore.

The event is sponsored by the Perennial Plant Association, the same group that presents the winter seminar in partnership with the Horticultural Society of Maryland. It will be held at the Baltimore Hilton, 401 W. Pratt Street

Programs are open to PPA members and non-members alike, but Steven Still, the PPA’s director, said non-members can expect to pay extra. The PPA had not set the prices for the entire week by THE HORT REPORT’s April press deadline, but Still said that complete information will be available on the group’s web site, www.perennialplant.org.

The day with the broadest appeal would seem to be July 27, when six speakers will present “Perennial Primer: Dig Deeper.”

Lectures that day will include:

Perennials: So Many Choices, So Much Confusion

Allan M. Armitage, Ph.D., professor emeritus of horticulture at the University of Georgia and well-known author.

The Right-Size Flower Garden: Exceptional Plants and Design Solutions for Aging and Time-Pressured Gardeners

Kerry Ann Mendez, of Perennially Yours in Kennebunk, Me., and teacher of low-maintenance perennial gardening.

Beyond the Border: Exotic and Unusual Garden Plants

Troy B. Marden, a garden designer in Nashville and author of *Plant This Instead!*

Making Waves, a Discussion of Ornamental Grasses

Steve Gable, manager and buyer at Merrifield Garden Center, Merrifield, Va.

Mixing It Up: Designing Extraordinary Mixed Bed Plantings

Scott C. Scarfone, A.S.L.A., founder and principal of Oasis Design Group, landscape architecture firm in Baltimore.

Get to ‘Know’ Maintenance

Laura Deeter, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Horticulture at the Agricultural Technical Center of The Ohio State University.

“Perennial Primer: Dig Deeper” costs \$95 by July 1, \$105 after July 1. You may register online at www.tinyurl.com/2015PerennialPrimer or by mail at PPA, 3383 Schirtzinger Road, Hilliard, OH 43026. Phone 614-771-8431.

A Gift of Gardening for Two Local Groups

The Horticultural Society of Maryland has awarded \$1,200 grants to two Baltimore organizations that encourage children to get involved with gardening.

One recipient is the **Howard P. Rawlings Conservatory's Community Gardening Day** program. On Gardening Day, teams of students from city and county schools work with volunteers and staff to prepare, plant, water and mulch 17 garden beds on the Conservatory grounds. The volunteers typically include neighbors from Greater Mondawmin, Auchentoroly and Bolton Hill and representatives of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Friends of Druid Hill Park and the Baltimore Conservatory Association.



"The goal of the event is to enhance the public garden, to teach gardening techniques, and to connect the community to the Conservatory," according to the Conservatory's grant proposal. "The work encourages the community to 'buy into' the Conservatory and its mission to foster an appreciation and understanding of plants from around the world and the vital roles they play in our lives."

This year, Gardening Day will be held on May 27. The Conservatory will need people to help with planting, registration and cooking and serving a picnic lunch after the gardening is done. HSM members who would like to help should e-mail Ann Green at conservatoryvolunteering@gmail.com or call her at 410-396-0008. (e-mail preferred)



PHOTOS: Courtesy of the Rawlings Conservatory



The other HSM grant recipient is **Friends of Great Kids Farm Inc.**, a partner to the city schools' Great Kids Farm, a working farm and outdoor education center that offers hands-on gardening experience.

The Friends group sponsors two days of "garden summits," bringing in school children from across the city for workshops intended to teach gardening skills and knowledge. The first day is for beginners from 12 schools with gardens, and the second day offers advanced training to students from 12 schools with more developed gardens. The 2015 summits were held March 31 and April 1.



Great Kids Farm is located at 6601 Baltimore National Pike, Catonsville 21228. For more information, e-mail Chrissa Carlson at chrissa@friendsgkf.org. HSM members interested in becoming volunteers should visit www.friendsgkf.org/volunteer.



PHOTOS: Middle photo by Sheila Kinkade, all courtesy of Friends of Great Kids Farm Inc.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The Problem of Soil Compaction

Q: I have heard gardeners sometimes say that the soil is “too wet” to work, i.e., to dig over, cultivate or prepare for planting. What makes the soil “too wet”?

A: When the soil contains so much water that it cannot be manipulated without destroying its structure, it is said to be too wet. Soil structure refers to the arrangement of soil particles; it greatly affects the movement of water and air in the soil. When wet soil is worked, the porosity of the soil is diminished and plant growth is hindered. When you scoop up a handful of soil and squeeze it, if it retains the squeezed shape it is probably too wet to work. This is a localized soil compaction problem.

Q: What do you mean by soil compaction?

A: In common use, soil compaction refers to the crushing of soil by repeated movement of heavy equipment over soil but it also can result from loads of building materials awaiting use, automobile parking or even long-term pedestrian traffic. Over time, any of these activities can destroy soil structure regardless of its water content. When soil is wet, destruction is quicker. With this “industrial strength” compaction, the density of the soil actually can prevent roots from penetrating the compacted zone.

Q: Can anything be done to reverse soil compaction?

A: Any reparative activities must be undertaken when the water content of the soil is moderate to low. In the latter case, where



the compaction is of greater depth and area, extraordinary means can be employed to foster improved soil structure. Soil can be broken up to reintroduce air spaces and allow soil flora and fauna to thrive again through the use of subsoil tillage, plowing and other methods familiar to farmers. If a garden’s soil structure has been destroyed, double-digging or deep spading along with the incorporation of large amounts of organic matter can restore natural structure.

Q: My garden soil is a loamy clay, so it stays wet for a long time before it dries out enough to work. Can you address how to handle this soil?

A: Good soil structure for plant growth is possible for any type of soil texture, whether sandy, loamy or clayey. Of course, sandy soils dry out quicker than clay soils and this poses a greater delay for working clay soils following a precipitation event. On the other hand, gardens on clay soil do not need to be watered as often as those on sandy soil.

To maintain and improve loamy clay soil, mix in organic matter of any sort whenever the soil is worked. The organic matter can be fresh, decomposed or in-between. It may be wood chips, compost, a cover crop, fallen leaves, peanut shells, manure, sawdust or whatever you can procure. With sufficient organic matter and the free movement of air and water, the natural microorganisms of the soil will multiply and support whatever plants you put in the garden.

— John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D.

PHOTO: StockFresh

Help for THE HORT REPORT

Do you enjoy taking pictures? THE HORT REPORT would welcome help from one or two volunteer photographers to take pictures at HSM events. If interested, please contact Harry Merritt at harrywmerritt@gmail.com or 410-583-9241.



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