Here it comes again, the splendid annual garden tour of the Horticultural Society of Maryland.

This year’s tour, the 27th annual, will be held Sunday, June 3, 2018, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The tour takes place rain or shine, so bring an umbrella if the skies look threatening and be sure to wear comfortable shoes.

According to the organizers, the tour will offer “spectacular views of the northern Maryland countryside and inspired plantings” at five of the area’s finest gardens.

“These extraordinary landscapes have been designed and maintained by serious horticulturists, each with a distinctive sensibility,” the garden tour committee said. “Included are serene Asian gardens in a park-like setting, charming farms with colorful flower beds and historic farm buildings, the bucolic haven of a plant lover, as well as a stunning contemporary garden with native grasses in the New American style.”

HSM members are admitted free with a current membership card.

Non-member tickets cost $35 if purchased by June 2, either online (www.mdhorticulture.org) or at these locations: Kingsdene Nurseries, Monkton; The Perennial Farm, Glen Arm; Green Fields Nursery, Baltimore; Clark’s Ace Hardware, Ellicott City; and Graul’s Markets in Annapolis, Cape St. Claire, Ruxton, Mays Chapel and Hereford.

On the day of the tour, non-member tickets will cost $40 and will be available at the first garden, 13901 Mantua Mill Road, Reisterstown, MD 21136.

Detailed descriptions of the gardens are available in the tour booklet that accompanies this newsletter.
Lecture Series

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2018
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

JOSEPH TYCHONIEVICH
Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style
Tychonievich will discuss the timeless beauty of rock gardens, the basic principles for creating them and suggest plants to get you started. Book signing.

Annual Tool Drive

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2018
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 also accepted.

27th Annual Garden Tour

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rain or shine.
Gardens of northern Baltimore County. See details on page 1.

Delaware Botanic Gardens Volunteer Trip

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018
8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Be a part of the making of this much-anticipated new botanic garden near Dagsboro. See page 8 for details.

2018 Italian Garden Trip

SEPTEMBER 8 through 20, 2018
Co-sponsored by HSM and Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland. Details: HSM web site or contact Claire Jones, jonesb1@comcast.net, 443-927-6285

Smithsonian Garden Tour

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2018
Washington, D.C.
Let Janet Draper, horticulturist for the Smithsonian’s Ripley Garden, be your guide for a tour of the Ripley, Rose and Haupt gardens. Limited to 20 people. Registration details to come.

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 Plant Forum: Nancy Blois, Paula Campos, Catherine Cook, Jennifer Forrence, Michael O’Rourke, Nancy Raskin, Pat Sherman, Mary Jo Sherrod, Paula Simon and Donna Watts

For the PPA/HSM Winter Seminar: Janet Draper, Mary Jo Sherrod, coordinators; Sally Barker, Catherine Cook, Jennifer Forrence, Crystal Patterson, Nancy Raskin, Pat Sherman, Paula Simon and Donna Watts

For the Maryland Home and Garden Show: Peter Bieneman, Catherine Cook, Pat Sherman, judging; and Nancy Raskin, award presentation

For the Fergus Garrett Special Event: Helene Clapperton, Jennifer Forrence, Karen Offutt and Mary Jo Sherrod, planning committee; Catherine Cook, Brent Figlestheler, Michael O’Rourke, Anne Pomykala, Nancy Raskin, Pat Sherman, Paula Simon, Bob Thompson, Marilyn Vantosh and Donna Watts

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

For the Sponsorship Program: Sally Barker

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

For Hospitality (Lectures and Garrett seminar): 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; John Fitzpatrick, December mailing

For the January 2018 issue of THE HORT REPORT: Joel Cohen and John Fitzpatrick, proofreaders; Paula Simon and Darlene Wells, photographs. In addition, the Society thanks Tony Ewin and Sharin Ingleby of the Hardy Plant Society North East Group (England) for permission to use excerpts from an article about Fergus Garrett.

Thank you, Helene Clapperton

Helene Clapperton, the Horticultural Society’s longtime treasurer and one of the most influential people in the organization’s almost-half-century history, has retired.

As treasurer and board member, Helene was instrumental in the success of our fundraisers, lectures, workshops, the annual garden tour and winter seminar. Helene created and managed our web site from its inception.

“Helene has been the backbone and anchor of the Hort Society ever since I joined,” said Leigh Barnes, a former president. “She has filled so many slots, always staying in the background, never taking credit but always keeping the gears in motion. She has a wonderful sense of humor and never let any challenge be treated as a big deal.”

“The Hort Society would not be the strong organization that it is today without her incredible service,” Barnes said. “Her Maine accent and ready laugh are indelibly a part of what ‘the Hort’ means to me.”
The literature indicates the Smoke Tree has few insect problems but is susceptible to Powdery Mildew and Verticillium Wilt. John T. Fitzpatrick, in his Landscape Plant Identification Manual, notes that “a broken twig releases a white sap and an unpleasant odor.” I do not intend to test this.

A Smoke Tree? Not only had I never heard of a Smoke Tree, I was baffled by the timing. Nevertheless, within days a small, cute Cotinus coggygria ‘Purpureus,’ or Purple Smoke Tree, arrived, planted by an earnest young man from Green Fields Nursery.

“Cute” seldom applies to trees or shrubs, but a Smoke Tree—a deciduous shrub that can grow to tree size, 10 feet or more up and out—is cute, thanks to the fluffy puffs of “smoke” it wears in summer. A Missouri Botanical Garden guide says this “striking display” occurs when “the billowy hairs (attached to elongated stalks on the spent flower clusters) ... turn a smoky pink to purplish pink, ... thus covering the tree with fluffy, hazy, smoke-like puffs.”

In autumn, the Smoke Tree’s foliage turns bright orange, yellow, red or burgundy. Once its leaves are gone in winter, the Smoke Tree reveals an interesting, multi-stemmed shape, though the bark looks a little drab to me. Come early summer, it has tiny, yellowish flowers before the “smoke” appears.

Native to southern Europe, east to the Himalayas and China, the Smoke Tree—also known as Smokebush, Venetian Sumac and Wig Tree—can now be found in the Mid-Atlantic, Northeast and midwestern United States. It is considered hardy in USDA Zones 5 to 8.

Smoke Trees are not that fussy, welcoming full sun and moderate watering. They tolerate a variety of well-drained soils. They are considered drought resistant and low maintenance. They are a good choice as a standalone shrub—ours is planted amid many species of ferns and Hosta, near several Azaleas—or in a border.

Clockwise from left: this elegant shrub stands out like no other with its characteristic “smoke.” Seen at eye-level, delicate detail in the haze; and rich red fall leaf color adds more drama at the end of the season.

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PLANT FACTS: Cotinus coggygria
Common Names: Common Smoke Tree, Smokebush
Hardiness: USDA Zones 5 to 8
Family: Anacardiaceae
Size: 10 to 15 feet tall. Spread, about the same unless you prune.
Culture: Well-drained soil. Full sun.

REFERENCES:
Missouri Botanical Garden, missouribotanicalgarden.org
John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., Landscape Plant Identification Manual
Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson, Cotinus coggygria ‘Purpurea,’ Fact Sheet ST-205, University of Florida, hort.ifas.ufl.edu
Finegardening.com

Harry Merritt is editor of The Hort Report.

PHOTOS: Michael Dosmann, Kyle Port
If there’s a name in this part of Maryland that could be called synonymous with plants—perennials, annuals, grasses and ferns—it is Babikow.

The name belongs to a nursery that grew out of a family farm established on 24 acres in southeastern Baltimore County in the 1870s, soon after the Babikows arrived from Germany. Today’s Babikow Greenhouses—known to many as simply “Babikow” or “Babikow Since 1875”—is one of the major wholesalers of high-quality plants on the East Coast. It is still owned by the family, and is run by Tim Babikow, a great-great-grandson of founder William Babikow (1857-1923).

On a sun-drenched afternoon in late February, I spent an hour talking with Babikows representing three generations: Tim, his father Donald and their cousin Paul, a former company president whose father was William and Sophia Babikow’s youngest son. All have been instrumental in enhancing the family legacy, from building greenhouses—there are now 60, some of them visible from Perry Hall Boulevard—to making shrewd judgments about industry trends that have helped the business to flourish.

“Our expansion is because we discovered a market,” said Paul Babikow, who led the company into the modern era. “… I think we made some good decisions. We have become really specialized with native plants.”

The first Babikows in Maryland, according to Census records, included William, his parents Julius and Lucy, natives of Bavaria, and four sisters. Their farm was off Bel Air Road, where they raised Jersey cows, pigs and chickens and grew a wide array of vegetables, from cabbage and spinach to sweet corn and onions, as well as tomatoes and flowers such as Chrysanthemums, Carnations and Lilies.

William and his father sold their produce from three-decker wagons at Belair Market in Baltimore, and eventually William’s many children joined in. “Oh, my little business is a family affair entirely,” William told an interviewer for Philadelphia’s The Country Gentleman in 1913. “Five boys, four girls and myself.”

William, the article said, was “not a typical trucker, for he is a florist as well and equally good in both lines. But what is more to the point, he is a forehanded farmer with a skull full of efficient brains.” The article noted that the family made $10,000 a year, equivalent to seven figures today.
Cut flowers and potted plants became a focus after William Babikow noticed that he made more money selling them, Paul Babikow said. “That was the start of the [flower] business,” he said.

Over the years, Babikow supplied flowers to supermarket chains such as Giant Foods and Safeway and to Frank’s Nursery & Crafts stores and various garden centers. Babikow even sold direct to the public for about a decade, operating two Garden Barn retail greenhouses, then disbanded them. “We had our taste of retail, and we didn’t like it,” said Paul.

Paul Babikow, now in his 70s, started in the business around 1970 and was its president during a time of considerable growth and change. “For me, working at Babikow was a golden opportunity,” he said.

Working closely with Paul was his younger cousin Donald, who juggled many responsibilities. “We built most of the structures ourselves,” Donald said. “When we started there were maybe 18 greenhouses. We’re now up to 60.”

A turning point came in the early 1970s when Babikow, at the suggestion of one of its landscape customers, entered the second annual Mid-Atlantic Trade Show, or MANTS, in Baltimore. “It was one of the smartest things we ever did,” Paul Babikow said. “It gave us exposure.”

More and more, Babikow shifted its efforts to the landscape industry and large garden centers. That meant, in Paul’s words, “no more Poinsettias, no more Easter lilies” for the grocery stores. Over the years Babikow has had close business relationships with Valley View Farms, Merrifield in Virginia, American Native Plants and Kurt Bluemel, to name just a few.

Continued on page 6

Excerpt from 2005 Babikow Catalogue:

One can cultivate a feeling for plants by carefully observing them, growing them, reading about them, and particularly by choosing the company of persons who know and love them.

L. H. Bailey, Home Grounds: Their Planning and Planting, 1918

Above: Donald, Tim and Paul Babikow lead the company as it continues to thrive. Below: Will (Tim’s great-grandfather), Harry, Oliver and Wes Babikow, the second generation of growers.
Babikow also has a longstanding arrangement with eMerge, a nonprofit service for adults with disabilities. The agency operates a wholesale greenhouse and flower farm in Perry Hall. Babikow provides flats of tiny plants to eMerge for its clients to care for, then buys back the resulting plants to sell to clients.

The Babikows do not claim to have succeeded by themselves. They have warm praise for their employees, citing them as a crucial factor in the success of their business. “We have some really, really solid employees,” said Paul Babikow. “The best,” said Tim. “Numerous people have worked here 30 to 40 years,” said Donald, including a salesman who was with the nursery for more than 50 years.

Babikow has enjoyed plenty of recognition from the landscape industry, including the Perennial Plant Association Grower Award in 2008, and members of the family have held leadership roles in various horticultural organizations. Eight decades ago, for example, Harry Babikow, a son of William, was the state director of a Mid-Atlantic association of florists. Tim Babikow is a board member of the American Landscape Institute, a horticulture training program devised by Andreas Grothe, a former Babikow protégé, with the Community College of Baltimore County. “It’s been working out great,” Tim Babikow said of the institute.

Tim represents the fifth generation of Babikows in the family business. This begs the question: Will there be a Generation 6?

Tim has two sons, Nathan, 13, and Reece, 9, both of whom “show interest” in the nursery and occasionally help on weekends, he said.

“The opportunity will be here as long as I’m here,” said Tim Babikow. “I feel honored to continue the legacy.”

For the second year in a row, International Landscaping & Design has won the Horticultural Society of Maryland’s award for “the most effective and practical use of plants” at the spring Home & Garden Show.

ILD, based in Baltimore and Centreville, was recognized for a display featuring, among much other flora, *Pieris japonica* ‘Dorothy Wyckoff,’ or Japanese Andromeda, *Hydrangea quercifolia* (Oakleaf Hydrangea) and *Pulmonaria longifolia* ‘Diana Clare,’ a Lungwort with silvered leaves and, in spring, violet-blue flowers.

“We chose this display because it properly showed plants used in realistic locations,” said Peter Bieneman, who judged the competition along with Catherine Cook and Pat Sherman. “A homeowner could use the combinations successfully on their own yard.”

Ashley Kidner, an ILD partner, said in an email that the firm used “a lot of natives (with wildlife/pollinator value) and exotic pollinator plants, as usual” in its design.
Meet Lauren Makowiecki

A student in the American Landscape Institute program with the Community College of Baltimore County was the 2018 winner of the Horticultural Society’s Sidney Silber Scholarship.

She is Lauren Makowiecki—last name pronounced “Mack-o-wicky”—from Joppa in Harford County. She has worked at American Native Plants in Middle River since June 2017, and before that worked at Maryland Aquatic Nurseries in Jarrettsville.

The Silber Scholarship, named for a late Society member and benefactor, pays for a horticulture student to attend the annual Winter Seminar sponsored by the Perennial Plant Association and the Society.

“It’s amazing that you can come here and learn about all these different things,” Lauren said during a break in the seminar at Sheppard Pratt Conference Center.

Lauren said her strongest interest is wetlands restoration. “I would love to work on restoration projects,” she said, “from selecting the plants to being involved with everything.”

ALL, developed by Andreas Grothe of New World Plants and CCBC with support from many Maryland nurseries, pays 80 percent of the tuition for landscape industry workers to take courses in CCBC’s Sustainable Horticulture program.

Above: left, Lauren Makowiecki, scholarship recipient; right, Nancy Raskin, HSM president

2018 Perennially Inspired!

Top: left, presenter Rebecca McMackin and Emily Carter; middle, Catherine Umphrey and David Leaverton; right, presenter Melanie Ruckle with Susan Randall. Middle: left, volunteers Catherine Cook, Crystal Patterson and Donna Watts; right, presenter Kelly Norris with Jennifer Forence. Bottom, signs of spring: left, Hamamelis ‘Barmstadt Gold’; right, pink pussy willow, Salix gracilistyla ‘Mt. Aso’.

Photos: Paula A. Simon

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Photos: Paula A. Simon
An Outing in Delaware

Are you looking for an opportunity to be part of one of the most exciting projects in Mid-Atlantic horticulture?

If so, the Horticultural Society of Maryland has just the thing: a bus trip on June 22, 2018 for volunteers to spend the day working at the Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek. Volunteers will help plant 26,000 grass plants in DBG’s Piet Oudolf Meadow Garden, under construction in Dagsboro.

“We have a variety of tasks that are involved in the total planting process,” said Gregg Tepper, DBG’s director of horticulture, “including moving the pots over to the site, arranging them, planting them, retrieving empty pots, stacking empty pots, watering and other sundry duties.”

Tepper and Janet Point, DBG’s volunteer coordinator, will lead a tour of the garden and discuss plans. The garden is scheduled to open in the summer of 2019.

The bus will leave at 8 a.m. from the Meadowood Regional Park parking lot, 10650 Falls Road. The bus will return at 7 p.m. Box lunches will be provided with a variety of sandwich options. The cost per person is $25, with proceeds to benefit DBG.

The trip is co-sponsored by the Mason-Dixon Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. Signup details will follow at the HSM web site, mdhorticulture.org.

Photos: Ray Bojarski

Want to help HSM grow?

The Horticultural Society of Maryland welcomes the volunteer help of its members for its lecture programs, workshops and tours. If you are interested, please email the committee chairs. See our website or the membership directory for a list of committee email addresses.

THE HORT REPORT could also use your help: suggesting story ideas, taking photos of Society members at various events and writing articles. For matters concerning the newsletter, including any comments or suggestions you may have, please email the editor, Harry Merritt, at newsletter@mdhorticulture.org.

Welcome New Members!

Dmytro Bogunov  
Mary Drain  
Roberta Ficke  
Tracy Franks  
Lois Kissing Key  
Janet Mackey  
Jean McGarry  
Edward Martini  
Carol Nau  
Kathie Offutt  
Lora Tracy  
Marylee Ross  
Amelia Sifleet  
Marianne Willburn

Sara Yoosua  
Kimberly Young

These members of the Baltimore City Master Gardener 2018 class were given complimentary one-year memberships.

Andre Bailey  
Leathornia Bailey  
Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth  
Succora Best  
Rebecca Bradley  
Megan Buresh  
Debra Celnik

Paul Chalmus  
Catherina Chupein  
Njeri Clay  
Darian Closson  
Olivia Donachie  
Wren Douglass  
Anne Emerton  
Precious Fraling  
Floyd Godsey Jr.  
Natasha Jones  
Erik Kiple  
Colleen Lamont  
Zachary Lawhon  
Emily Mendenhall  
Lena Milcarek

Catherine Morneault  
Ed Morneault  
Carissa Mortenson  
Lauren Muhammad  
Thomasin Mullen  
Anthony Nathe  
Sarah Page  
Danielle Pelaez  
Sasha Reamer  
Norah Salamone  
April VaiVai  
Sydney Van Horn  
Erica Ward  
Kristin Warren  
Dominique Wilson

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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