



# THE HORT REPORT

NEWSLETTER OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF MARYLAND, INC. | MAY 2019

NANCY LONG BOYD, FOUNDER:

## *Planting the Seeds of Knowledge*

By Harry Merritt

After decades of honing and sharing her extensive knowledge of plants, Nancy Long Boyd, Baltimore's consummate "garden club lady," wanted something more:

A horticultural society for Maryland, one that would offer its members a chance to learn from the experts, attend workshops and tour gardens, all in the name of encouraging the love of flora.

Half a century ago, on June 6, 1969, Nancy Boyd wrote to Ernesta Drinker Ballard, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, asking for her help.

"For years, I have been so immersed in 'Garden Club stuff' that I haven't looked beyond my nose," she wrote. "Now I see that Garden Clubs are not the end of all things and that many people need a horticultural clearing house. ... I want very much to get into the more constructive atmosphere of horticulture, and I need to know how to go about forming such a society."

Within a few months, Nancy Boyd achieved her goal. This year, the organization she founded—your Horticultural Society of Maryland—marks its 50th anniversary. A celebration will be held July 7 at the Cylburn Mansion.

"It was Nancy Boyd who got things organized," Jean Worthley, a former Society president, told an interviewer in 2012. "There were several garden club members who wanted to further their knowledge and this was one way to do it."

Nancy Froome Long's interest in flowers and growing things dated to her early girlhood, encouraged by her mother, an avid gardener who was horticulture chairman of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc.



Born in Baltimore, May 20, 1907, Nancy Long was the daughter of Maurice Alvin Long and Anne (Morris) Long, later Davis. Her father, an engineer and architect, owned a construction firm that built, among other things, St. Mary's Seminary. Anne Long, from a prominent family in Cincinnati, had a summer home on Fisher's Island, New York where she and Nancy spent time gardening.

When Nancy Long was a teenager, her father built a 25-room mansion for the family at 702 Lake Avenue in North Roland Park. The property had "beautiful gardens in the back, a greenhouse and a pond," according to Nancy Boyd's son, Robert F. "Robby" Boyd, a retired banker who lives in Towson. (The house, doubled in size but minus the greenhouse, is now the home of David and Marla Oros.)

Nancy Long graduated from the Bryn Mawr School, then toured the western United States and Canada with an uncle. She received a B.S. in education from the Evening School at The Johns Hopkins University in 1930.

After graduation, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod offered Nancy Long a scholarship, said her daughter, Jane Carr, an accomplished painter who lives in Treadwell, N.Y. "Woods Hole wanted her to come up and do research, but her father wouldn't let her go."

She did study botany, however, amassing a vast knowledge

### LECTURE SERIES

**TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019**  
7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Vollmer Center Auditorium

#### KARL GERCENS

*Making a Garden Great Again!*  
*Paths, Fountains, Art, Water & Plants*

Join Longwood horticulturist Karl Gercens as he travels the globe in search of garden inspiration that works to make any garden great again. We'll look at hardscape that is both functional and beautiful while softening the edges with leaves and flowers that truly pop in any situation.

Free for current members, members may bring one guest free of charge. Admission for non-members is \$10 at the door.

### ANNUAL TOOL DRIVE

**TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019**  
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" maintained by community garden groups. Donations of seeds and plants also accepted.

### 28TH ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2019**  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Gardens of north Baltimore and Towson. See details on page 3.

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2019**  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Cylburn Mansion

The Horticultural Society of Maryland marks 50 years since its founding in 1969. Details to come.

### SPRING IN PORTUGAL GARDEN TOUR: Treasures of Porto, Lisbon & Douro Valley

**MARCH 26 - APRIL 4, 2020**

For more information, contact Claire Jones at [jonesb1@comcast.net](mailto:jonesb1@comcast.net) or 443-927-6285, or visit [mdhorticulture.org/programs-events/trips](http://mdhorticulture.org/programs-events/trips)

*For more information, visit*  
[www.mdhorticulture.org](http://www.mdhorticulture.org)

## HSM VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Nancy Blois

By Peter Bieneman



"Look up and be prepared to explore!" This was Nancy Blois' enthusiastic reply when I asked her for an insider tip. Nancy isn't just a Horticultural Society of Maryland member; she is the current committee chair of the HSM Garden Tour.

Moving to Baltimore from Doylestown, Pa., she brought a lifetime of gardening and volunteering experience. Her "love of gardens and gardeners" coupled with work at both the Henry Schmierer Arboretum of Delaware Valley University, in Bucks County, Pa., and Cylburn Arboretum led her to us about 10 years ago.

She hails from a gardening family in Rhode Island. "It's in my genes. Although a couple of generations away from farming, my siblings and I have always loved growing things," she says. "Living for quite a few years near Philadelphia, 'America's Garden Capital,' with its many educational institutions, public gardens and rich horticultural history nurtured that."

It wasn't until Doylestown, when her children had grown, that she had more time to garden and a bigger lot to work. Taking courses at Swarthmore College and touring "a lot" of public and private gardens helped heighten her interest. "Touring gardens is my second favorite activity after buying plants!"

Being in charge of the HSM Garden Tour has its benefits, she says. "Meeting some amazing gardeners and the collegiality of gardeners" are for her immeasurable. "There is something about the emotional reaction to a garden which is very important, the feeling that you want to go into a garden and explore," she says. To her the gardens on the tour are very personal havens for owners—sanctuaries they have created.

The committee in charge of finding the gardens and organizing the tour works hard all year long. It is a great group that is always having fun finding "new and undiscovered gardens to highlight," she says. Two of Nancy's goals each year include rebuilding the committee after each tour and getting more members involved. "We welcome new volunteers and hope that people will come to us with ideas and inspiration," she adds.

This year, the tour, on June 2 in north Baltimore and Towson, is unique. Nancy elaborates that it "wants to demonstrate that native gardens can be beautiful, inviting and comfortable for people as well as wildlife," and indicates that we will see some wonderful examples.

"I am really impressed with the amount of privacy and seclusion the gardeners are able to achieve on typical suburban lots." She adds, "This is a tour full of ideas you can take home with you."

When asked about tips for our guests on the tour, Nancy has practical advice: "Carpool. We are going to be on some narrow streets!" As an expert on garden tours, she hopes we will broaden our approach this tour. While people tend to focus on the flowers, it is equally important, she says, "to listen for the birds and look for the wildlife."

Most importantly, "look up, absorb and enjoy!"

# The Cedarcroft Farmhouse Garden

By Peter Bieneman

To the owners of the original Farmhouse in Cedarcroft, understanding the relationship between plants and insects is essential. It is exciting to observe not just birds eating berries but the caterpillars eating leaves. "We started as bird watchers first, planting our garden for birds," adds one of the owners.

Although the garden, which is featured on the Society's 2019 garden tour, is predominantly native plants, it is not exclusively native. Non-natives are used when they are reliable pollinators. It went from about 75-80 percent non-natives to 75-80 percent natives.



This incredible change did not happen overnight. Since the present owners bought the property in 2006, they have worked with several designers and landscape professionals to achieve the bucolic landscape that exists today.

Originally, Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) and English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) dominated the garden. These had to go due to their invasive nature. Removal of these and other non-native or undesirable plants left huge open spaces, ripe for design and replanting. The owners dove in with the help of professionals and their own formidable design aesthetic. Out went diseased Boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*) and large Japanese Euonymus (*Euonymus japonicus*). In went shrubs such as Inkberry Holly (*Ilex glabra*) and Southern Rabbiteye Blueberries (*Vaccinium ashel*). Three large Elms were installed early on in the front garden. Affectionately named Elmo, Elma and Elmer, these now provide gracious shade and scale to the large home. Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*), Oak (*Quercus*) and Hickory (*Carya*) were also added to the east and south gardens to help establish a new native canopy.

Swales were created to move water naturally away from the house. River Birch (*Betula nigra*), Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), Wax Myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*) and Larch (*Larix*) are underplanted with hundreds of native perennials. These



## Garden Sanctuaries

Habitats in Towson and North Baltimore that provide beauty and sustenance for people and wildlife

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2019**

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. • rain or shine

Current members of the Society are admitted free.

Non-member tickets cost \$35 if purchased by June 1 through eventbrite.com. There will be a link on the Society web site, [mdhorticulture.org](http://mdhorticulture.org).

On the day of the tour, non-member tickets will cost \$40 and will be available at the first garden, 708 Seabrook Court, Towson, MD 21286.

A list of gardens is enclosed with this newsletter. The gardens may be visited in any order; members will be registered and receive a detailed tour booklet at the first garden visited.

new beds in the south lawn contain plants suitable for thriving in shade and moisture.

A unique group of non-native specimen conifers once occupied the sunny north lawn. These were planted when the house was a Symphony Decorators Show House in the 1990s. Seeing a better use for the space, the owners installed an idyllic vegetable garden and small orchard. A white picket fence encloses generously sized raised beds. Trellised openings lead you into the well-organized space.

This large landscape has evolved and changed much in 13 years. It takes a team of gardeners to assist the owners with its care. Natives now dominate the landscape and insect and wildlife abound. Every season brings its own new discoveries and guests. "As much as I get excited about new people visiting, I really get excited when a new species of bird visits," says one of the owners.

Sounds like they achieved their goal.

Peter Bieneman, general manager of Green Fields Nursery, is president of the Society.

# Nancy Long Boyd, Founder

Continued from page 1

of plants. "I began to take a Ph.D. in that subject just before I became a mother," she wrote in her 1969 letter to Ernesta Ballard. Motherhood, "I found, put an end to staring for hours into a microscope."

Nancy Long was married on June 30, 1934 to Jesse Cookman Boyd Jr., a lawyer, in the garden at her parents' home. Nancy and Cookman Boyd were childless during their first years together, then adopted Jane and Robby. A son, J. Cookman Boyd III, was born in 1947.

The Boyds lived at 105 Taplow Road in Homeland in the 1940s. In the 1950s, they lived at 5802 Roland Avenue, diagonally across from the Lake Avenue residence of Nancy Boyd's mother. The 4½-acre property, with vegetable and flower gardens, cherry trees and an apple orchard, was "a nightmare to maintain," Robby Boyd said. "She'd pull weeds all the time." The vegetable garden had "corn, squash, you name it," he added. "She'd harvest it herself."

Nancy Boyd tried to share her knowledge of plants with her children, who weren't always receptive. "She would drive us all crazy because she would call everything by its botanical name," said Jane Carr, laughing.



Mrs. Boyd in the garden  
circa 1930



Mrs. Boyd in the center of the action  
(back to camera) at Flower Mart

Washington Monument in Baltimore. "I remember being dragged to the Flower Mart when I was 6 or 7," her daughter said. Similarly, the young Robby Boyd accompanied his mother to the Philadelphia Flower Show when she was judging, though he wasn't much interested in flowers.

For many years, Nancy Boyd—almost always referred to as Mrs. J. Cookman Boyd Jr.—worked at the Flower Mart, held in May at the

Every Christmas at Roland Avenue, Jane Carr said, her mother "would order a balled evergreen and then plant it in a hole she had dug in the fall, filled with leaves and the dug-out [soil] covered also." Every fall, "she would pull up her herb garden because she didn't want the different kinds of mint" to intermingle, her daughter said.

Over the years, Nancy Boyd kept a busy schedule of speaking engagements with garden clubs across Maryland. Her debut as a lecturer was born of necessity. As chairman of the garden section of the Woman's Club of Roland Park, it was her job to find speakers on garden topics. One day in 1941, according to an account published years later in *The Baltimore Sun*, she "found herself with a program and no speaker. She had to be the speaker and she spoke of the things that focused her attention" at that time: herbs. "The audience that day seemed to enjoy hearing about herbs" and their many uses, and "from that time Mrs. Boyd was in demand as a speaker."

She was president of the Homeland Garden Club when she lived in Homeland, and president of the Roland Park Garden Club when she lived in North Roland Park. She edited *The Maryland Gardener* for the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland and, from 1953 to 1955, was the organization's president. She was accredited as a Master Flower Show Judge by the National Council of State Garden Clubs.

Among her specialties was Christmas decorations. She made wreaths to adorn the Washington Monument and lamp posts in downtown Baltimore. She was chairman of the annual Christmas greens conservation show at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Her expertise with Christmas displays resulted in a book, *The Pine Cone Book: Cones, Christmas and Recollections*.



Elegant swag by Mrs. Boyd

In 1952, Nancy Boyd went to Japan to visit her sister, Elizabeth, who was married to a U.S. Army general stationed there. "She stayed quite a while," her daughter said, and came back a "master of Ikebana," the ancient Japanese art of flower arrangement. Years later, Nancy Boyd would describe the Japan experience as "the five weeks which changed my life."

After that, Jane Carr said, “We had all these Japanese women coming over [to the United States] and staying with us.” Her mother became a judge of Ikebana at the Philadelphia Flower Show and a founding member of the Baltimore Chapter of Ikebana International. The family’s cottage in Lake Shore, Anne Arundel County, decorated with Japanese furnishings, was featured in the *Baltimore Sun Magazine*.



*Mrs. Boyd in Japan with her sister, Elizabeth Cheston*

In the 1950s, Nancy Boyd was a leader of Keep Maryland Beautiful, one of the nation’s first anti-litter campaigns. It grew out of her disgust with the trash and clutter of billboards along state highways, her son said. She even visited the White House to discuss the program with President Dwight D. Eisenhower, according to Robby Boyd. He remembered being impressed when his mother said matter-of-factly one night at the dinner table, “I went to see the President today.”

She was also a founder and board member of Cylburn Wildlife Preserve and Garden Center Inc., known today as Cylburn Arboretum.

In 1955, Nancy Boyd founded the Guild of Flower Artisans. According to an article in *The Sun*, the guild’s membership was “limited to those Maryland women with outstanding talent at flower arranging who wished to raise their own standards of workmanship and advance the knowledge and the art of flower arranging among others.”

In the mid-1960s, the Boyds sold the Roland Avenue house. It was torn down and its contents—millwork, stained-glass windows, parquet floors and an elegant staircase—were sold at auction, Jane Carr said. The buyer of the site was First Christian Church. The new church building at Roland and Bellemore was where the Horticultural Society met in its early years.

The Boyds’ new home, at 1000 Winding Way, became the “birthplace” of the Horticultural Society of Maryland in November 1969 and the official address of the new organization. From June 1969 on, Nancy Boyd corresponded with various figures in the world of horticulture, seeking advice and discussing what to name the new society. (It was supposed to be “Horticultural Society” but a few early records called it “Horticulture,” “an

inadvertence” that was soon remedied, according to undated board minutes.) The society was incorporated on May 4, 1971.

Nancy Boyd did not become president, arranging instead for Jean Worthley’s husband, Elmer, who had a doctorate in botany, to take the post. “Please accept our invitation,” she wrote to him. “We need your enthusiasm and your know-how.”

If you are still reading this, it will come as no surprise that Nancy Boyd took charge of the Society’s lecture series. The first speaker, in April 1970, was—again, no surprise—Ernesta Ballard, discussing “Year-Round Color in the Garden.”

Nancy Boyd also led two workshops, one on terrariums, the other on Christmas greens, that first year. She was also the membership chairman. By March 1971, the Society had 207 dues-paying members—and 50 others who had not yet paid.

She remained active in the Society for a couple of decades, arranging speakers and encouraging new members. She also continued to attend meetings of the Roland Park Garden Club, said Meme Long, who joined the club in 1978. “Mrs. Boyd always wore a hat to the meeting and always knew the Latin name of a plant,” she said. “She would often help the speakers lecturing our club. She probably knew more about plants than the speakers. She did this very graciously.”

Nancy Boyd’s last appearance at a Society event came on April 12, 1994, a celebration of the 25th anniversary. “We were honored to welcome our founder, Mrs. J. Cookman Boyd Jr., as our guest,” Society president Bridget Maginn wrote in the September 1994 newsletter. “Nancy attended the evening lecture and celebration, to the joy of the many members present who knew and admired her over the years.”

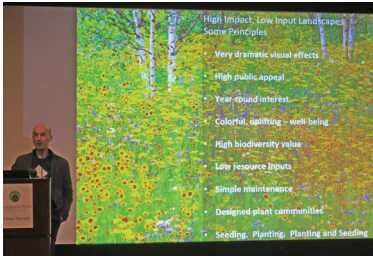
She attended the meeting with her younger son, who now lives in Montana. Her husband—in Bridget Maginn’s words “the kind, charming gentleman who plied the Society volunteers with Cylburn’s famous sticky buns on Market Day” —had died four years earlier.

On Dec. 5, 1996, Nancy Boyd died at the age of 89. A brief tribute in the Society’s February-March 1997 newsletter called her “extremely talented” and praised her many contributions, both to horticulture and to the civic life of her city and state.

*Harry Merritt is editor of THE HORT REPORT.*

PHOTOS: Courtesy of Jane Boyd Carr

# 2019 Winter Seminar Highlights



Clockwise from top left: Presenters Nick McCullough, Nigel Dunnett and Ching-Fang Chen; Volunteers Amelia Sifleet, Pat Sherman, Jennifer Forrence, Donna Watts and Mary Jo Sherrod; PPA president Janet Draper with writer Adrian Higgins; presenters Dean Dietrich (left) and Dave Mattern (right) chatting with an audience member; artfully grouped plants for sale by a sponsor; audience members, like Helene Clapperton and Mike Sherlock, enjoy meeting up at this annual event; Dunnett presenting his key principles for high-impact, low-input landscapes.

Chelsea West, a student in the American Landscape Institute program, was the 2019 recipient of the Society's Sidney Silber Scholarship. The award covers fees for the annual Winter Seminar, co-sponsored by the Society and the Perennial Plant Association.



HSM president, Peter Bieneman, with scholarship winner Chelsea West.

Chelsea, from Summerville, S.C., near Charleston, set out to become a teacher, earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Clemson University. "However, after teaching for a couple of years in a number of schools, I realized that teaching was not for me," she told THE HORT REPORT. "I knew I had to make a career change but I was unsure how to go about doing it."

"I have always had an interest in plants and gardening," she said. When a friend told her about ALI, which offers horticulture classes through the Community College of Baltimore County, she applied and was accepted.

"ALI is a great program because I am able to work in the field I love and gain experience," said Chelsea, who has a job in the perennials department at Greenstreet Growers in Lothian. "It is amazing how much knowledge from work I can apply to my studies and vice versa."

Chelsea wants to help people learn how connected they are with nature and to advocate for more sustainable practices, a goal she thinks she could fulfill through landscape design. She wants to work at a public garden or historic house "because I would love to show others how beautiful nature can be and help preserve it." And she wants to continue growing plants "because I find great enjoyment watching plants grow and tending them."

PHOTOS: Paula A. Simon and Janet Draper

## Welcome New Members!

Myra Brosius  
Betty Bryant  
Jane Chell  
Karin DeLaitsch  
Denise Dubin

Mary Evering  
Sybil Hebb  
Doris Kamenetz  
John Lalley

Michele McFadden  
Jackie Moraes  
Susan Miller  
Nicholas Pindale

Christianne Schoedel  
Sandy Shaeffer  
Barbara Small  
Marguerite Sonneborn

Ellina Sorokina  
Dorothy Valakos  
Anthony Venable  
Cathy Wagner

# *Kalmia latifolia*, Mountain Laurel

By Harry Merritt

**D**ark green glossy leaves, abundant spring flowers, four seasons of interest: What's not to like about a Mountain Laurel?



*Kalmia latifolia*, Mountain Laurel

Even as I write this, on a day in February when snow is called for, my young Mountain Laurels look great. There are three, all of them the compact cultivar 'Sarah,' planted in the fall outside our new front porch. Come springtime, I hope they will burst into vivid red blooms, as the plant label promises.

'Sarah' is one of the showy Mountain Laurel cultivars, more colorful than the straight species, which has abundant white and pinkish white bell-shaped blossoms with small purple markings. There are more than 40 known cultivars, such as 'Keepsake' and 'Starburst,' which have red flowers, and 'Olympic Fire,' a bold pink. Many of the cultivars are shrubs of modest size; 'Sarah,' for example, grows to about 4 feet tall and 4 feet wide; another, 'Little Linda,' about 3½ feet tall. Others are 5 to 15 feet in height; in the wild, Mountain Laurel can reach 30 feet.

The Mountain Laurel is native to the eastern United States, from Maine to Florida, throughout the South to Louisiana and as far west as Indiana and Missouri. It is the state flower of Connecticut and Pennsylvania. I wasn't able to establish a connection to Laurel, Maryland, but the city of Laurel in Mississippi and Laurel County in Kentucky are both named for *Kalmia latifolia*. There is also the annual Mountain Laurel Festival in the Cumberland Mountains of southeastern Kentucky, complete with a Mountain Laurel Queen, that dates to 1931.

Mountain Laurels are not, however, the laurels upon which one "rests." Those are *Laurus nobilis*, Laurel or Bay Laurel, of the family Lauraceae, native to the Mediterranean region. In ancient times wreaths of these laurels were placed on the heads of the winners of various competitions; those who stepped away from competition were said to be "resting on their laurels."

The genus *Kalmia* was named by Carl Linnaeus in honor of one of his students, Peter (or Pehr) Kalm (1716-79), a Finnish botanist and explorer who traveled widely in

Europe and North America. 'Latifolia' means "with broad leaves." There is also a *K. angustifolia*, "with narrow leaves," common name Sheep Laurel, a small shrub native to Ontario and Quebec and the northeastern United States, as well as a few lesser known species. *Kalmia* is in the family Ericaceae, which includes Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Blueberries and Cranberry.

One source for this article, a blog on native plants in Kentucky, included the observation that Mountain Laurels are "quite common on dry,

exposed and often rocky soils." Mountain Laurel cultivars, however, seem to do best in well-drained, acidic soil, in part shade. The soil around my house was clay compacted by major construction, so when I planted my Mountain Laurels I added pine fines to lower the pH as well as topsoil with Leafgro and a light layer of mulch.

All parts of the Mountain Laurel are poisonous. Humans can become very ill from ingesting even small amounts; browsing animals such as deer will die.

One of the unexpected characteristics of Mountain Laurels—to me, anyway—is that the plants, in the words of William "Ned" Friedman of Harvard University's Arnold

*Continued on page 8*

**PLANT FACTS:** *Kalmia latifolia*, Mountain Laurel

**Hardiness:** USDA Zones 4 to 9

**Family:** Ericaceae

**Culture:** Part shade. Moist acidic soil.

**Bloom time:** Spring

**Potential problems:** Leaf spot, blight, lace bugs

**REFERENCES:**

"Plant of the Week: Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)," Kentuckynativeplantandwildlife.blogspot

William Friedman, "Mountain Laurels fling pollen!," June 4, 2016, The Arnold Arboretum, arboretum.harvard.edu

"Dispensing pollen via catapult: Explosive pollen release in Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)," American Society of Naturalists, amnat.org

# SNAPSHOTS: *January Plant Forum 2019*



**Left to right:** A special thank you to our terrific presenters: Scott Carbone from Valley View Farms sharing his passion for Hydrangeas with HSM members; aquatic garden expert and author Kelly Billing with HSM secretary/treasurer Bill Yonkers; and member Diana Jacquot chats with cut flower farmer Mary Beth Resnick from Butterbee Farm.

PHOTOS: Paula A. Simon



## *Home & Garden Show Award*

Urban Gardens, Inc. of Glyndon, owned by Dean Smouse, won the Society's annual award for "the most effective and practical use of plants" at the spring 2019 Maryland Home and Garden Show. The display combined a striking and colorful array of evergreens, sedges, grasses, flowering perennials and Dogwood.

**Plants used in the design include:** *Thuja* 'Green Giant,' *Arborvitae* • *Juniperus* 'Andorra compacta' • *Tiarella cordifolia* 'Timbuktu,' *Foamflower* • *Yucca filamentosa* 'Color Guard,' *Adam's Needle* • *Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana,' Japanese garden juniper • *Carex oshimensis* 'Everillo' • *Othiopogon japonicus* 'Nana,' Mondo Grass • *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo' • *Cornus florida* 'Kay's Appalachian Mist' • Hellebores

PHOTO: Catherine Cook

## *Kalmia latifolia*, Mountain Laurel

*Continued from page 7*

Arboretum, "fling pollen" when bees land on them.

"Beyond the clouds of flowers, the amazing thing about Mountain Laurels is the manner in which they dispense pollen," Friedman wrote. "In the small floral bud, the stamens are originally straight, but as the flower expands, each stamen is bent backwards, creating ... a cantilever spring under great stress.

"When the bee comes along, contact with the

stamen releases the spring and the pollen is catapulted, many inches in the blink of an eye."

According to a study summarized by the American Society of Naturalists in 2018, researchers documented "one of the fastest plants ever described," with the pollen reaching a top speed of about eight miles per hour.

Apparently this phenomenon can be witnessed by taking a pencil and gently tapping the flower. I look forward to trying this, but first I need the blooms.

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 Paula A. Simon, *Designer*

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Peter Bieneman, *Manager*  
 Jackson Lehman, *Gardener*

### MEMBERSHIP

For information about membership or to join, visit the society's website: [www.mdhorticulture.org](http://www.mdhorticulture.org) or telephone Christy Fairman 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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