A Vollmer Garden Update
By Peter Bieneman

Every garden undergoes change, and the Vollmer Center Entrance Garden—a well-designed, well-planted and well-maintained public green space—is no exception.

Last spring, as the garden entered its third year, four *Daphne odora* ‘Aureomarginata’ and three *Daphne x transatlantica* ‘Summer Ice,’ a hybrid of *Daphne caucasica* and *Daphne collina*, were planted as replacements for lost shrubs.

In addition, 120 *Rubus pentalobus* (syn. *R. calycinoides*), or Creeping Raspberry, a hardy, prostrate evergreen groundcover with bronze or purple winter foliage and white spring blooms, were installed to replace *Paxistima canbyi* in the front beds.

Blue & Green LLC, owned by the garden’s designer, John T. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., donated replacement plants for the pink-flowered *Phlox subulata* that were located beneath the standard *Viburnum prunifolium*. The pale lavender-blue cultivar ‘Emerald Blue’ was installed there last spring to align with the original plan.

An *Elliottia racemosa*, or Georgia Plum, was donated from her garden by Jean Silber and installed last year. *Lilium canadense*, or Canada Lily, will be added this fall, as well as more of other bulbs in the garden.

The garden, fully funded by HSM and dedicated on Sept. 9, 2014, provides a welcomed, and welcoming, entrance to the Vollmer Center. The garden was originally planted with well over 2,000 horticulturally distinctive trees, shrubs,
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 Tool Drive: Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff, Jamison Douglas (Community Greening Resource Network coordinator, Parks & People Foundation), Peter Bieneman and Pat Sherman

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

For the Garden Tour and Preview Party: Nancy Backert, Ann Betten, Nancy Blois, Max and Carol Bloom, Glenn Carey, Helene Clapperton, John Fisher, Sally Foley, Jennifer Forrence, Nancy Grabowski, Donna Imhoff, Nancy Johnston, Colleen Lamont, Nancy Mickey, Nancy Raskin, Doug Reichlin, Gretchen Sarkin, Pat Sherman, Mary Jo Sherrod, Megan Shook, Paula Simon (photography), Nell Strachan, Barbara Sutton, Amy Urdang, Salli Ward, Jacqui Weinstock, Dorothy Wells, Cynthia Wilber, Rose Wolford and Byrd Wood

For the Vollmer Birthday Party: Helene Clapperton, Karen Offutt and Mary Jo Sherrod

For the Sponsorship Program: Sally Barker

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

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; Aaron Haslinger, web consultant; Carla Hackley, Facebook manager; Nancy Raskin, event coordinator; and John Fitzpatrick, May mailing

For the May 2016 issue of The Hort Report: John Fitzpatrick, contributor; Ann Betten, David Mizejewski, Stephany Stockton, Paula Simon and Pamela C. Whiteneck (Hershey Community Archives), photographs; Joel Cohen and John Fitzpatrick, proofreaders

About the HSM Lecture Series

As you may have noticed, our membership is growing—and we believe that our spring and fall lectures series are a big reason why. We are pleased to bring first-class horticultural speakers from near and far to our Maryland venue.

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 free of charge. Guests of members also receive free admission. Admission for non-members is $10 at the door.

Come early to check out our plant raffle or other pre-lecture “happenings” and stay for light refreshments after the lecture.

As winter approaches, remember to check the HSM website for cancellations in the event of severe weather.
Many garden situations require a shrub of less than four feet in height—such as at the foreground of a shrub border, underplanting taller woody plants that have bare stems, below a home’s windows, or as an unshaped hedge that stops foot traffic without blocking views. Of the relatively small number of species suitable for these purposes, New Jersey Tea stands out as one of the most adaptable to environmental conditions. It performs well in full sun or shade, sites that are dry or moist (as long as drainage is good), a wide soil pH range and USDA hardiness zones 3 to 8.

New Jersey Tea, *Ceanothus americanus*, occurs naturally throughout eastern North America, commonly on sandy or rocky soils either exposed or in open woodlands. The common name comes from its historic use in preparing a tea. In June, thousands of tiny white flowers emerge in several globose clusters at the end of each new shoot. The flowers attract many types of pollinators as well as hummingbirds that eat tiny insects on the flowers. Curious three-sided capsules develop and persist after the seeds are dispersed, providing some winter interest. Plants of New Jersey Tea produce new stems from the crown of the plant which helps to maintain a dense structure. Some years, the leaves turn yellow before dropping in autumn.

One of the distinctive features of the plant is the rootstock, which is pink, massive (reaching a diameter of up to 8 inches) and deep in the earth. It enables the plants to recover rapidly from fire or animal browsing. This feature is the source of a second common name, Redroot. New Jersey Tea is in the Buckthorn family but, like many species in the pea family, it fixes nitrogen, i.e., the roots extract nitrogen from the air in the soil through symbiosis with a bacterium. This enables the plants to thrive in nutrient-poor sites.

It appears that no cultivars of New Jersey Tea are in commerce. However, it has been used in breeding with *Ceanothus* species that are less winter-hardy. The most notable is the offspring of *C. americanus* x *C. coerules* (a deep blue Mexican species)—*Ceanothus x delilianus*. This hybrid produces blue flowers on new growth each summer. In our region, smaller shoots are often killed in winter but, in any case, a hard pruning in late winter is advisable. The pale blue ‘Gloire de Versailles’ is the cultivar most often available. A species closely related to New Jersey Tea, *Ceanothus herbaceus* (Inland Ceanothus, formerly called *C. ovatus*), occurs in the western part of the same range and somewhat farther west. It is very similar to New Jersey Tea except that its leaves are somewhat smaller, narrower and glossy.

New Jersey Tea is rarely subject to serious insect or disease damage, does not require pruning to be kept “in bounds” and does not require watering after the first growing season, when it is getting established. Because of production difficulties, it has not been widely available. Renewed public interest in recent years has resulted in improved nursery techniques and in greater availability in the trade. It is worth the search.

**Sources:**
Lazy S’s Farm (www.lazyssfarm.com)  
Prairie Nursery (www.prairienursery.com) 1-800-476-9453  
Rare Find Nursery (www.rarefindnursery.com) 1-732-833-0613

*Dr. Fitzpatrick is an adjunct faculty member in the landscape architecture program at Morgan State University. He designed the Vollmer Center entrance garden, which includes Ceanothus americanus.*
On a hot, sticky morning in July, one of America’s leading experts on Hollies is showing a visitor around his McLean Nurseries, a nine-acre wonderland in Parkville.

The expert is William N. Kuhl—most people call him Bill—and he seems to know, in a self-effacing kind of way, about all there is to know about the members of the genus Ilex we know and love, and some we’ve never heard of.

McLean Nurseries has been in business 70 years, more than 40 of them with Kuhl in charge. The nursery was founded in 1946 by Stewart McLean, “a nurseryman and plantsman who did it for the love,” says Kuhl. “He introduced a lot of good Hollies, he was an early member of the Holly Society of America, and he was well respected in the trade.”

Among Stewart McLean’s introductions was Ilex opaca ‘Miss Helen,’ named for McLean’s wife. His best known introduction, however, was Ilex opaca ‘Satyr Hill,’ named for the nursery’s location, in 1970. “He was a little reluctant to introduce it because he thought it would outshine ‘Miss Helen,’” Kuhl says. “The National Arboretum said to him, If you don’t introduce it, we will.” ‘Satyr Hill,’ the Holly Society’s 2003 Holly of the Year, remains popular. “It’s easy to grow, and it grows like a Holly is supposed to grow,” Kuhl says.

Today at McLean Nurseries, “we grow more than 100 cultivars of Holly, and a fair number of Winterberry (Ilex verticillata), Koehneanas and hybrids,” Kuhl, 73, says. “I pick up a lot of species and cultivars and hybrids through the Holly Society,” of which he is a staunch supporter.

“I like to grow a lot of the oddball ones that people don’t know about,” he adds.

Among others, McLean Nurseries introduced Ilex aquifolium ‘Lewis,’ a female English Holly “that does very well at Christmastime,” Kuhl says, and was Holly of the Year in 2007; Ilex x koehneana ‘Lassie,’ Holly of the Year 2005; and Ilex opaca ‘Glen Ellen’ and ‘Baltimore Buzz.’ There are also several Hollies named for the dogs that have been a cherished part of life at McLean, such as Ilex opaca ‘Charming Cleopatra.’ “We’re kind of a dog nursery as well as a Holly nursery,” says Miriam Miceli, Kuhl’s longtime associate, gesturing toward a bulletin board crowded with photographs of dogs, mostly winsome Golden Retrievers.

“Sometimes I have Hollies that they can use in an arboretum,” Kuhl says, rattling off the names of recipients of McLean hollies: the Norfolk Botanical Garden, Dawes Arboretum in Ohio, Cylburn Arboretum, the Elmore Holly Collection at the University of Tennessee Arboretum. “Bill is very generous with his plants,” says Miriam.

“There are people out there who are plant collectors. We cater to them as well as the nurseries,” Kuhl says. McLean also offers Boxwood and other plants suitable for bonsai, Hydrangea, Viburnum and perennials native to the region, welcomes tours by garden clubs and is host for the annual Free State Daylily Society Daylily Sale and Auction.
Bill Kuhl grew up in Skaneateles, in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. “My uncle had a nursery,” he says. “My father worked for the nursery and at 13, I started working for the nursery.”

His father advised him to get a college education, so he attended the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, today known as the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He earned a degree in landscape architecture in 1966.

Soon after that, he arrived in Maryland to take a job with the state highway department. “At that time Maryland was hiring landscape architects to work on highways for Lady Bird Johnson’s Highway Beautification program,” Kuhl says. “I worked on roadsides, rest areas, plantings.”

That work was interrupted by two years in the Army. Soon after Kuhl returned from the service and resumed his Maryland job, Stewart McLean died. Kuhl, who boarded at the McLean home, began working at the nursery part time in 1971, helping Helen McLean, then bought the business from her.

Since then he has grown untold tens of thousands of Hollies, propagating them the traditional way in cold-frame boxes. “We take cuttings starting in late July into September and leave them in the cold frames all winter,” he says. Each box holds 1,500 cuttings.

Nature, though, includes deer, “which eat the new growth,” Kuhl says. “We don’t have to prune some of them.”

Holly is, of course, most closely associated with Christmas time, and that is when McLean Nurseries is at its busiest. Miriam Miceli oversees a crew of “elves” decorating Balsam Fir wreaths for the public and for churches. The Chesapeake Chapter of the Holly Society also decorates wreaths at McLean.

The work, says Miriam, “is extremely labor intensive. You don’t realize it, looking at the final product, but it’s all hand work.”

Growing and tending Hollies is “good, healthy work,” Kuhl says. “We take it seriously, but not too seriously.”

“We enjoy what we’re doing. We’re close to nature, close to plants.”

“I like to grow a lot of the oddball ones that people don’t know about.”

Bill Kuhl stands beside an *Ilex cornuta × pemyi* ‘Hugger,’ a male hybrid.
Dozens of friends visited Pauline Vollmer on July 5th to celebrate her 100th birthday. For 70 years Pauline has been a leading figure in the horticultural community. Her inspiration and contributions over a lifetime culminated in the building of the Vollmer Center at Cylburn Arboretum. Guests enjoyed cake and a stroll through her garden, which was designed by Wolfgang Oehme. The event’s co-hosts were the Horticultural Society of Maryland, Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Cylburn Arboretum Association, and the City of Baltimore, Horticulture Division.

IN CLOCKWISE ORDER FROM TOP LEFT:
- Sally & Tom O’Brien, owners of garden #1
- Megan Shook & Nancy Blois, volunteers
- Susan Fancher & Joe Ruzicka, owners of garden #5, with Kenna Forsyth, owner of garden #3
- Stanley Gabor, with daughter Elizabeth, owner of garden #6
- Anne Gossett, volunteer
- Rosemary Maas & Gibson Porter, sponsors

PHOTOS: Garden tour, Paula A. Simon; Pauline Vollmer and Leigh Barnes, Janet Draper; garden views, Paula A. Simon
The Society’s fifth annual tool drive, in May, collected donations to help support community garden groups. HSM board member Lenel Srochi-Meyerhoff and Jamison Douglas, Community Greening Resource Network coordinator for the Parks & People Foundation, coordinated the event, with help from Peter Bieneman and Pat Sherman.

Charlotte A. L’Esperance, a Master of Landscape Architecture student at Morgan State University, was the 2016 summer intern at Cylburn Arboretum. The internship program is co-sponsored by the Horticultural Society of Maryland, the Cylburn Arboretum Association and the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, each of which contributed $2,500.

Thirty-three Baltimore City Master Gardener interns were given a complimentary HSM membership through the end of the membership year.

The Sidney Silber Scholarship was presented to Yilin Zou, allowing her to attend the 2016 Winter Seminar sponsored by HSM and the Perennial Plant Association. She received a bachelor’s degree in landscape management and sustainability studies from the University of Maryland College Park in May.

Urban Designs Inc. of Reistertown received the society’s 2016 award for the Display Garden Demonstrating the Most Effective and Practical Use of Plants. HSM President Nancy Raskin presented the award at the spring Maryland Home and Garden Show at the State Fairgrounds in Timonium. The judges were Peter Bieneman, Pat Sherman and Paula Simon. The garden also satisfied the year’s theme, ‘Art in the Garden.’ Rosy-hued Hellebores establish the foreground for a decorative cement sphere, with vertical Red Twig Dogwood branches and rounded shrubs giving definition to the garden’s artistic background space.

The Horticultural Society of Maryland has awarded $5,000 for Little Leaves, a science-based learning program for Baltimore City second graders at the Howard Peters Rawlings Conservatory.

Little Leaves was developed by the Friends of the Rawlings Conservatory (formerly the Baltimore Conservatory Association) for children from the Druid Hill Park area and Mondawmin, Gwynns Falls and other neighborhoods surrounding the Rawlings Conservatory.

The program, according to the FRC’s Alice Hubbard, allows the children to develop science-based knowledge and skills by “immersing [them] in three diverse worlds—Mediterranean, Tropical and Desert—right in their own neighborhoods.” Little Leaves is intended to support and supplement the Maryland State Science Standards and the Baltimore City School curriculum for the second grade.

Children complete Little Leaves with a better understanding of plants and what plants need to survive in different habitats, as well as how to use their senses to observe natural phenomena and how to illustrate their observations through drawing.

The HSM grant will support the expansion of Little Leaves to more neighborhood schools for up to 16 schools during the 2016-2017 academic year. Several HSM members are working to develop the program.

The students, teachers and parents in these photographs are from Edgecombe Circle Elementary School.
perennials and bulbs to provide a balance of evergreen and deciduous material. These carefully chosen plants have given the entrance a strong horticultural presence and provide a dynamic landscape for all visitors to enjoy.

“I am pleased with the rapid growth and maturing of the planting after only two full years,” said Fitzpatrick, a former HSM president. “I wish that the special bamboo in the back would hurry up and start to reach its full size. HSM has been great at providing professional care for the garden. I’m so pleased to have brought uncommon plants to the attention of Cylburn Arboretum visitors.”

The HSM has committed to maintaining the garden in order to ensure its proper perpetual care. Jackson Lehman, a recent graduate of the Morgan State Landscape Architecture Program and a Cylburn Arboretum Association Gardener, has taken over the primary care. Peter Bieneman, HSM board member, is the garden manager. Fitzpatrick has been available for consultation.

**New groundcover Rubus pentalobus, or Creeping Raspberry, will have white blossoms in the spring.**

Through the efforts of the Cylburn Arboretum Association, the plants in the garden have been labeled with new accession tags and accession numbers. As Fitzpatrick points out, “the display labels were really necessary!” They allow for easy identification of unique specimens. The woody plants are now included in the comprehensive GIS map of the grounds.

**Welcome New Members!**

Donna Anderson  
Sarah Atherton  
Leise Ballou  
Lois Berk  
Sue Bloodgood  
Gayle Boote  
Deborah Bors  
Barbara & Ed Brody  
Christine Corbitt  
Suzi Cordish  
Maureen D’Angelo  
Susan Fancher  
Kenna Forsyth  
Honora Freeman  
Patricia Gingham  
Ruth Goldstein  
Joshua Gruber  
Molly Guenzer  
Marta Harrison  
Suzanne Henneman  
Elizabeth Hopkins  
Hiawatha Howard  
Raissa Kirk  
Deborah Kleiner  
Jaye Kutson  
Eleanor & Peter Landauer  
Debra Levay  
Ellen Menendez  
Michael Moore  
Donna Muehleisen  
Jay & Michele Naish  
Sally & Tom O’Brien  
Barbara Parsons  
Steven Potter  
Terri Kolman Potter  
Pikesville Garden Club  
Matthew Reed  
Debbie & Doug Reichlin  
Jeannette Rickman  
Richard Roth  
Joe Ruzicka  
Gretchen Sarkin  
Charles Saunders  
Kathy Shearin  
Doris Shiffman  
Dean Smouse  
– Urban Gardens Inc.  
Jennifer Townsend  
Debbie Trevathan  
Patricia Webster  
Richard Wilke  
Betsy Yeomans  
Pat Yevics  

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