



The LAUREL

Connecticut
Master
Gardener
Association
Newsletter

Winter 2020 Volume 33, No. 1

2020 CMGA Garden Symposium

Saturday, March 21
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Doors open at 8:00 am for check-in
and continental breakfast

Connecticut College
270 Mohegan Ave
New London, CT



Please join us for the 27th annual CMGA Garden Symposium on Saturday, March 21 at Connecticut College in New London, CT. Registration opens Jan. 23, 2020. Register and pay on-line at our secure website ctmga.org, and click on **Events > Symposium Registration**. Or, download the mail-in registration form and pay by check.

Continental breakfast and lunch are included. Attend your choice of breakout sessions, enter the raffle, visit our vendors and society tables, or bid at the silent auction (bidding ends at 1:00). Some lectures have demonstrations and samples. Session descriptions begin on page 3. **Don't miss the CMGA event of the year!**



Keynote Speaker: Margaret Roach
**"Non-Stop Plants:
A Garden for 365 Days "**



Closing Speaker: Dan Benarcik
**"Foliage First:
Boom Without the Bloom "**

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The Laurel is published quarterly for CMGA members. Please send information by email to cmganews@gmail.com.

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

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President's Message

Hellooo CMGA Members!

Once again, we find ourselves at the beginning of a new year, and with that a new CMGA president...ME!

First and foremost, I want to thank our immediate past President Theresa Hennessey, for her years of dedication and leadership of CMGA. During those years, Theresa has worked tirelessly for this organization, leading the Board of Directors in our efforts to serve you, our members, support the Master Gardener Program and the Community Outreach projects of Master Gardeners across the state. So, a big round of applause goes out to Theresa!

I'm very excited to serve as your president for 2020. I am also delighted by the number of very strong folks who have recently joined our Board of Directors. They are Linette Branham, Kathye Cipes, Jane Comerford, Susan Demuth, Laura Goldberg, Christine Masztal, Debbie Rosen and Carolyn Wilcox. I am so looking forward to working with them!

Who am I? I graduated from the Master Gardener program in 2005 in West Hartford. I volunteered as a mentor for future MG interns, just like so many of you. In 2011, I was hired as the MG program coordinator in the Tolland office and served for 4+ years. Regrettably, I resigned that position due to conflicts with my professional businesses. What was I to do without Master Gardeners around me? Well, it made perfect sense to join the Board of Directors of CMGA. Yes, I begged! Thankfully, they accepted me, and it was one of the best decisions I ever made! For any of you considering joining the Board, you won't find a more dedicated and FUN group of people!

Looking forward, our next and largest event is our CMGA Garden Symposium on Saturday, March 21 at Connecticut College in New London. Our theme this year is "Gardening Any Time, Any Place" with main speakers Margaret Roach and Dan Benarcik, plus a great line up of breakout speakers.

Continued on page 11

Main Speakers at the 2020 Annual Symposium

Keynote Speaker: Margaret Roach

“Non-Stop Plants: A Garden for 365 Days”

Margaret Roach is one of America’s best-known garden writers, and is the winner of multiple Garden Writers of America medals. She is also the creator and publisher of the popular website awaytogarden.com and the public radio show by the same name. She was the first garden editor of Martha Stewart Living magazine, where she also co-hosted a weekly call-in radio show for several years. She lives in rural New York State, and her garden has been open for Garden Conservancy Open Days for more than 20 years.

Closing Speaker: Dan Benarcik

“Foliage First: Boom Without the Bloom”

Dan Benarcik has been a Horticulturist at Chanticleer Garden in Wayne, PA, for the past 25 years, and is part of the creative gardening team that is responsible for the garden’s seasonal displays. He also conceives and manufactures the wood workings, stone carvings, paintings, and metal works on display throughout the garden. Dan has also worked at Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware as the Woods Path Gardener, and as a Sales Representative for Imperial Nurseries in Pennsylvania. Learn more at his website: danbenarcik.com

Program: *Visit vendors and silent auction, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm*

8:00 am — Registration begins with continental breakfast

9:00 am — Opening remarks followed by our keynote speaker in the main auditorium

11:00 am— Morning sessions begin

12:00 pm— Lunch begins, with an assortment of wrap sandwiches (including vegetarian and gluten-free), green salad, assorted cookies and chips, apples and beverages.

1:30 pm— Afternoon sessions begin

2:45 pm— Closing speaker in the main auditorium

4:00 pm— Event conclusion

Breakout Sessions at the 2020 Annual Symposium

(continued from page 3)

1. **Tovah Martin “The New Terrarium” (Lecture and demo)**

Tovah Martin is an award-winning garden writer and lecturer, with expertise in both indoor and outdoor gardening. She is a passionate perennial, heirloom, vegetable and cottage gardener, and is accredited with NOFA as an Organic Land Care Professional. In addition to the garden outdoors, Tovah’s specialty also includes indoor gardening with tropical plants (especially begonias) in windowsills, greenhouses, and otherwise. Learn more at her website: tovahmartin.com

2. **Lorraine Ballato “Hydrangeas for Cold Climate Gardens”**

Lorraine Ballato is a professional horticulturist who specializes in hydrangeas. She also teaches at the New York Botanical Garden and lectures throughout the Northeast region. She has published numerous gardening books and articles, and is a frequent guest on radio garden shows. As an Advanced Master Gardener, Lorraine works with gardeners of all levels in the 3000 square foot organic demo garden at the Fairfield County Extension Center. Visit her website: lorraineballato.com

3. **Irene Brady Barber “Growing Vertical With Edibles and Non-Edibles”**

Irene Brady Barber is the Horticulture Education Program Coordinator at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, Maine. An experienced educator, Irene has degrees in Communications, Horticulture, and Horticultural Therapy. Irene’s educational programs emphasize ecological balance, therapeutic design and universal access to gardening for people of all abilities. She also founded Greenscapes Design, an ecological landscape company that focuses on therapeutic and interactive garden/landscape spaces. Learn more at irene_barber.houzz.com

4. **Gregory Bugbee “Improving Soil in the Home Garden”**

Gregory Bugbee has worked at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station since 1979, where he is now the head of the soil testing program in New Haven. His research activities include invasive aquatic plants, soil fertility, turfgrass, potting media, composting, and utilization of composted biosolids in horticulture. He holds state licenses in the care of trees, turf, and aquatic weed control. He enjoys working to solve soil and water-related problems, and is available for site visits and speaking engagements.

Visit his website at CAES/Gregory-J-Bugbee

5. **Nancy DuBrule-Clemente “Mulch vs. Groundcovers: A Garden Experiment”**

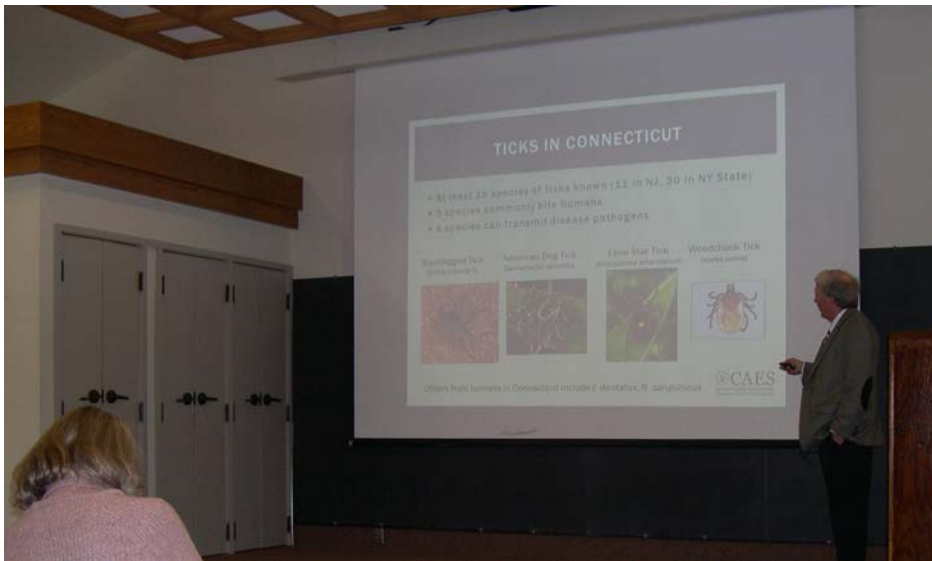
Nancy DuBrule-Clemente is the founder of Natureworks Horticultural Services, an organic garden center, landscape design, consultation, installation and maintenance service in Northford, CT. Started in 1983, the Natureworks crews and retail store have sold and used only organic fertilizers and pest control products since the business began. Nancy also has a degree in Floriculture from the University of Connecticut. Learn more at naturework.com

CMGA Annual Meeting

The 2019 CMGA Annual meeting took place on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at the Jones Auditorium in New Haven, CT. After a delicious breakfast, CMGA featured a very important and informative lecture on Lyme Disease and Tick Control by Entomologist [Dr. Kirby Stafford III](#). A copy of his presentation is available on our website at [CMGA speaker handouts](#)

New board members and officers were also elected, and minor changes to our bylaws were approved. View these changes at [CMGA bylaws](#)

Thanks to Theresa Hennessey, our Annual Meeting chairman, and to all those who donated food and raffle items.



Roses are Better in Ecuador

Ken Zacharias,
CMGA member, class of 2017

In late September of 2019, two CMGA members visited a rose plantation just outside Quito, Ecuador. It was one of the last excursions of a two-week trip throughout Ecuador. This adventure was especially enjoyable, as the roses they'd seen throughout Ecuador had been spectacular.



The plantation, called Rose Success, is one of the many Ecuadorian exporters of roses to the world. Their farm produces 25,000 stems daily and a total of 7,000,000 stems a year. Forty percent of their production goes to the American Market, and they also export to Russia, France, Holland, Germany, Poland, Spain and other countries. The Russian market demands open roses with stems 2 feet or longer while the American market wants somewhat closed blooms on stems of about 18 inches.

Ecuador claims to have perfect conditions for growing the world's finest roses. The roses are grown in the Andes at an elevation around 10,000 feet where the intensity, luminosity, and duration of sunlight is very high. Since Ecuador is right on the equator, temperatures are constant year-round. Daytime temperatures reach 68°F while overnight temperatures dip to 39°F. The volcanic soil is rich in silicates and minerals which allow roses to grow tall with strong, thick stems and in the most vibrant colors.



Forty varieties of roses are grown at Rose Success and a license to grow each variety is purchased from the cultivar developer, often in Europe. We were guided through one of the "blocks" which encloses 1 hectare (100 meters x 100 meters). Sun light passes through a plastic-film roof cover which filters out UV rays that affect flower color. Each neat, densely planted row of roses is slightly raised and is watered by drip irrigation. Rose varieties are propagated by bud grafting using a single type of



root stock. As the grafted shoots develop, they are pruned to produce many long, straight stems to the 6 to 7 feet height of the rose bush. At regular intervals, roses at the appropriate stage are harvested.

When brought to the post-harvesting building, bundles of about 30 roses are treated by dipping bloom-down into a solution of calcium hypochlorite followed by dipping stem-down into a solution of citric acid. After chemical treatment, the bundles are taken to the sorting and stripping area, where a skilled worker removes

thorns or leaves on the bottom half of each individual stem. The rose is then compared to a standard measurement and placed bloom-up on a rack for packing with other perfect blooms. Colors, lengths and sizes are extremely uniform. After the sorting, a packer carefully places them in a corrugated cardboard shipping wrap, dozen at a time, carefully arranged in a 3x4 matrix. Once the packing is secured, the ends of the stems are cut off evenly, the package is placed in water, and transported to a cold storage room where orders are packed for air shipping and delivery to consumers within three days of harvesting.



The Peat Moss Controversy

Alicia Cornelio,
Editor, Laurel

Soon Master Gardeners will begin starting seeds indoors. Are you paying attention to your potting mix? Peat moss has long been a favorite soil amendment. But, starting in Europe, always at the forefront of environmental issues, peat harvesting has raised concerns.

Five years ago I went on a swamp tour in Louisiana and learned that cypress trees take over 100 years to grow to maturity. Using cypress for mulch is not sustainable and anyone who sees a store selling cypress mulch should speak up.

This same issue of sustainability is connected to peat moss. Peat moss bogs take thousands of years to develop and store a third of the world's soil carbon. Their harvesting and use releases carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas driving climate change. The release is worse if the peatlands catch fire, as happened in Indonesia in 2015. Peatland fires account for up to 5 percent of human-caused carbon emissions, according to the United Nations, which launched a peatlands conservation initiative.

Most peatlands are in Russia and Canada. Peat moss production is an important business in Canada. Canadian companies claim that their harvesting of peat moss is sustainable. But actually, there is a difference between sphagnum moss and peat moss. Sphagnum moss is a plant that grows on the surface of soil or a swamp. A portion is saved to create new bogs, a cycle which typically takes 5-6 years. Peat moss, on the other hand, is the layer of decaying, water-saturated sphagnum moss that has sunk below the Earth's surface over thousands of years. Disturbing this deep layer is responsible for the release of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



Canadian companies first clear the area of all trees and brush, good sources for absorbing the earth's carbon dioxide. Then the sphagnum moss is harvested, reserving a portion for replanting. The controversy arises by how deep the bog is harvested. Sungro offers both professional and retail grades of moss. The top layer of sphagnum moss is the highest grade and is sold professionally. But the company digs deeper for retail grade moss. This is the layer that releases all the carbon dioxide and takes thousands of years to regenerate. So a question for gardeners, "Must companies dig past the surface layer?"



Often mixed with the mineral perlite, peat moss is valued by horticulturists for its ability to retain moisture and oxygen without becoming waterlogged or heavy. It is generally sterile and naturally suppresses a fungal disease that can afflict seedlings. However, the Royal Horticultural Society has stopped using peat moss at all its gardens and Great Britain will stop offering peat moss to the public in 2020.

Luckily, for gardeners there are many alternatives to peat moss. Mark Highland owner of [Organic Mechanics](#) states, "I think the average gardener has no idea what peat moss is, where it comes from and whether they should even consider an alternative."

The Alternatives

- ◆ Compost: Compost is made from rotted plants, green waste and animal manures. It is inherently renewable, and making your own is cheap and minimizes your carbon footprint (no shipping). Unfortunately, compost takes time and skill but you can buy high-quality bagged compost.
- ◆ Coconut fiber: Coconut fiber, called coir, is a byproduct of fiber processing and has become a favored alternative to peat moss over the past 20 years. It has the same water holding and porosity of peat moss, though it is generally used as one ingredient in a mix. However, shipment to the US raise questions about the carbon footprint and it derives from coconut plantations that may have been carved out of rain forests.
- ◆ Pine bark: Finely shredded and composted pine bark (not pine nuggets, pine needles or pine mulch) is a valuable substitute for peat moss as part of a mixture.
- ◆ PittMoss: PittMoss was created by an inventor in Pittsburgh and consists of reconstituted paper fibers with added proprietary ingredients. It can be used alone or mixed with potting mix, based on the product used.
- ◆ Organic Mechanics: A company that provides various organic products including a substitute for peat moss.



Sources:

Higgins, Adrian. "Is this popular gardening material bad for the planet?" May 11, 2017. www.washingtonpost.com.

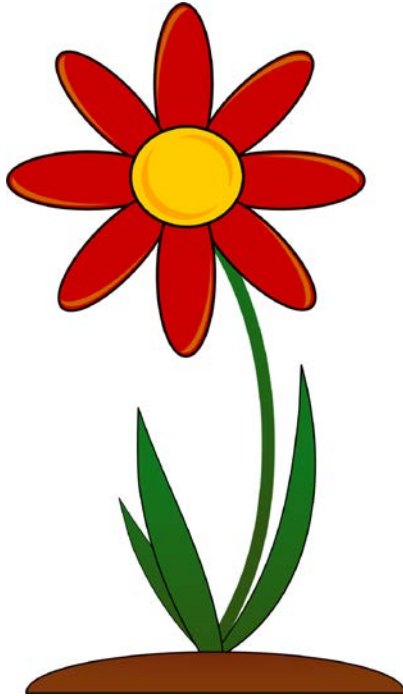
"Peat Moss a Sustainable Resource?" Root Simple. December 15, 2010. www.rootsimple.com.

"Should You Stop Using Peat Moss?". Garden Collage. July 13, 2017. www.gardencollage.com.

"What's the Difference Between Spagmoss and Peat Moss?" Besgrow. 2020. www.besgrow.com.



**Master Gardener Hartford County
Plant Sale
Saturday, May 9, 2020
9 AM – 3 PM
University of St. Joseph
1678 Asylum Ave. West Hartford, CT**



**Volunteers Needed day of the sale
for Advertising, plant donations,
Potting, seed starting**

Contact:
Deb Pike
860 255-7448 or 860 729-6703
dpike53@att.net

*All Extension Spring Plant sales will be
published in the Spring 2020 Laurel.*

President's Message (continued from page 2)

Why Connecticut College again? This location meets all of our site criteria for putting on the outstanding event that you have come to expect. However, many of our members have requested a more central location. Believe me, the Board of Directors hears you loud and clear! Fortunately, we have identified two potential locations for 2021. Stay tuned!

Early Bird symposium registration will be available for members who have paid their 2020 dues by December 31st, and runs from Jan. 19-22. Open registration starts on Jan. 23. Visit our website for all the details:
[2020 Symposium Information](#)

Thanks, and I'll see you at the Garden Symposium!

Master Gardeners are awesome!

Deb Prior
2020 CMGA President

Come to the CT Flower and Garden Show!



"Connecticut Springs into Earth Day"

For show info, visit: ctflowershow.com

CMGA GROUP TICKETS ARE \$14.00 PER TICKET

25% OFF THE ADMISSION PRICE!

DEADLINE FOR GROUP PRICE IS FEBRUARY 1, 2020

39TH ANNUAL CONNECTICUT

Flower & Garden Show[®]

February 20-23, 2020
Connecticut Convention Center
HARTFORD

www.ctflowershow.com • 860-844-8461
Connecticut Springs into Earth Day – Commemorate 50 Years!

Photo of photo submitted by Heather Tunocci - HT Photography

SEMINAR SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

 Craig LeHoullier	 Petra Page-Mann	 Nancy DuBrule- Clements	 Tom Christopher
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Spectacular Landscaped Gardens, Design & Horticulture Competition by the Federated Garden Clubs of CT. **SEMINAR TOPICS:** Organics, Floral Arranging, Natives, Pollinators, Containers, Design, Vegetables and so much more!

Ticket prices include State of CT 10% Amusement Tax —

Adults \$18	Thurs. 10 am – 7 pm
Children 5-12 \$5	Fri. 10 am – 8 pm
Under 5 Free	Sat. 10 am – 8 pm
Seniors \$16	Sun. 10 am – 5 pm

Thurs. & Friday only



Now offering 2 payment options!

** Order your tickets Online: If you order tickets online, you can pay by credit card or mail us a check. CMGA will mail the tickets to you. A small service charge will be added to your order for this service.

** Mail in your order: download the order form, and include your check along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. CMGA will mail the tickets to you in the envelope provided. No fees will be added.

CMGA Ticket Sales Policy:

- Purchasers must be CMGA members.
- Non-members may receive tickets as gifts.
- Group tickets are non-refundable and non-exchangeable.
- Tickets are valid for any day of the show.

Please visit our website under **Membership > Member Offers** and use the password to access this special offer. Offer will be valid until Feb. 1. Limit 5 tickets per order.

CMGA members: check your email to receive the password.

Not a member?? Pay your 2020 dues on our secure website: [CMGA membership application](#)

--Thanks!



The LAUREL

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Spring 2020 Volume 33, No. 2



2020 CMGA Garden Symposium

*Postponed
Until October 10*

In compliance with recent state guidelines regarding the coronavirus, the CMGA Board of Directors has decided to postpone its 27th Annual CMGA Garden Symposium at Connecticut College until **Saturday, October 10, 2020.**

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Our highest priority is for the safety of our CMGA Members and our communities. Please mark your calendars and join us on Oct. 10 for an Autumn Symposium at Connecticut College, with all the usual festivities, and maybe a few more!



**Thank you for your continued support!
We look forward to seeing you at our October Symposium Event.**

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President's Message

Hellooo CMGA Members!

We live in challenging times, and with the onslaught of COVID-19 and the ever-increasing number of infections, we are challenged like never before. Master Gardeners are a resilient group, and we will get through this. Remember that gardening is a healing process!

As you know, our Annual Gardening Symposium has been postponed until October 10th. Refunds have been processed and sent out to everyone. My heartfelt thanks to our treasurer, Paula Russo, for completing this task so quickly.

Early Bird symposium registration will be available again, with the early bird registrants from before getting first priority. The symposium will be at Connecticut College with all of the same breakout speakers. Margaret Roach will return as the keynote speaker. For more details: <https://ctmga.org/symposium-registration>

Grant applications are flowing in, and evaluations are proceeding as planned. The grants process will continue and grants will be awarded. Any grants that are awarded but cannot be implemented due to COVID-19, will be extended! For more information, please go to <https://ctmga.org/grant-application>

Summer Safari update: We will be offering a virtual tour of Raspberry Knoll Farm in North Windham, CT, including an interview with farm owner Mary Conklin. We expect to post this video on our website in early August. We will also post a summary of CMGA news and accomplishments for 2020. Visit the farm's website for more info on their crops and history: <http://www.raspberrynoll.com/>

My gardening friends, these are trying times for all of us. Many of us have been personally impacted by this pandemic, as have I. My heart and best wishes go out to all of you. Please follow the guidelines of our governmental leaders! Master Gardeners are, by nature, community volunteers. Pitch in where you can, but keep yourselves safe! You are in my thoughts every day!

Thanks, and I'll see you in the garden, albeit six feet away! Master Gardeners are awesome!

Deb Prior, 2020 CMGA President

Gardening in Isolation



As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, many of us are preparing to undergo a lengthy period in isolation. So why not spend your extra time in your garden – however big and small. This is the year to step up our games and make a real Victory garden!

1. Read those gardening books

We know you have a library of gardening books at home! Time to reread them, and get new ideas. The [UConn Home & Garden Education Center](#) has factsheets.

2. Make a garden plan

Maybe you have a problem area in your yard, or want to try new vegetables. Use a free [garden planner](#) and order. [Nurseries are accepting online orders and delivering.](#)

3. Get sowing seeds

It is a little late to sow tomato, eggplant, or pepper seeds. But, it's a great time to start cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and flowers to put in your garden in mid-May. Lettuce, radishes, beets, and spinach are some vegetables that can be seeded outside right now.

4. Prepare your soil for outdoor gardening

[UCONN is still analyzing soil samples.](#) Refresh your garden beds with compost.

5. Sharpen and clean your tools

Have you been putting off this task? It's a great way to spend a sunny spring day outside.

6. Think big about what you'd like to do to your garden

This is the year to take out those overgrown trees, prune up those shrubs, reduce your lawn and put in some groundcover, or start a rose garden.

7. Create a compost heap

This was a very popular activity at last year's Symposium. [Learn how to make one here.](#)

8. Tend to your houseplants

If you don't have a large outside space, you may wish to explore a container garden or growing herbs on your kitchen sill. [Guide to houseplant care is here.](#)

9. Build an arbor or support for your beans and cucumbers

It's time to clean out your garage and reuse scraps in a creative way. See some DIY [garden support ideas.](#)

10. Plan and make a spring container

This is the year we are all going to have spectacular containers by our front door. What a wonderful way to beautify our towns. [Great ideas here.](#)

11. Build a bug hotel

Let's not forget our pollinators. They are busy as usual and can always use our help in the garden. [Here are bug hotel ideas.](#)

Source: Bowie-Sell, Daisy. Gardens Illustrated. March 17, 2020. "Gardening you can do in isolation."
<https://www.gardensillustrated.com/feature/gardening-in-isolation-hobby-coronavirus/>

Heirloom Tomatoes for Today's Gardens

Kim Milikowski
Foster Hill Farm, Stafford Springs, CT



Photos by Foster Hill Farm

Whenever I walk by the tomatoes in the grocery store produce aisle, I always long for a plate of our homegrown tomatoes with fresh mozzarella and basil. There is nothing that compares to an heirloom tomato from the garden. Our seeds have been started. Summer is just a few months away and we will be eating delicious tomatoes soon.

Every spring we grow 100 varieties of tomato seedlings for our garden shop. Most are heirlooms but we mix in some of our favorite hybrids and always try a few new varieties. We grow specimens of each variety to maturity to evaluate performance and flavor.

Why Heirlooms?

For me it started with my great grandfather Ben in Pennsylvania. I would spend summer vacations there as a little girl and I helped him in his garden where he grew Henderson's Winsall tomatoes. Each year he saved the seeds for the following year. I can remember him holding a giant tomato in front of me. He then cut the tomato, sprinkled a little salt on it and we ate the tomato together on the swing on his porch.

Heirlooms are considered by most to be any open pollinated variety that was introduced prior to 1949. This was the year that Burpee introduced its popular hybrid Burpee Big Boy. Heirlooms often have interesting stories about how the seeds were saved and passed down. Many originated in other countries and were brought here to share with family and friends.



Ben Specht, Milton, PA Photo by Jim McCarthy

Heirloom tomatoes are perfect for saving and sharing seeds. They are all open pollinated which has made it possible to pass the tomatoes down from generation to generation. The saved seeds will produce a plant and fruit that is identical to the parent. The pollinators get more active as the season progresses. So, it is best to save seeds from one of the first tomatoes that forms on the plant to minimize cross pollination. Heirlooms are indeterminate. They will continue to produce until the frost kills the plant. Most will also grow up to 8 feet tall or more. They need staking and to be planted in the ground or a very large pot.



Photos by Foster Hill Farm

Heirloom vs. Hybrid

A hybrid is an intentional cross of two varieties. Many are bred and known for disease resistance. Seeds saved and planted from a hybrid tomato will not produce a plant like the parent, so the seeds cannot be saved. It is generally our finding that the hybrids are not as flavorful as an heirloom. Take an F1 Hybrid Patio Tomato for example. This variety is perfect for containers because it is determinate and grows only a few feet. It produces many small, uniform tomatoes but it does not have the intense flavor of an heirloom like Mortgage Lifter or Cherokee Purple. One hybrid we grow every year is Sun Gold which is one of the sweetest tomatoes and one of our favorites. It is one of the hybrids that does boast great flavor and disease resistance.

Seed companies were selling open pollinated tomato seeds until the mid-1900s. Breeders started to experiment with hybrids and realized that along with the disease resistance qualities of the hybrid, people would have to purchase seeds every year. Open pollinated seeds were bad for sales because people were saving the seeds and only had to purchase them once. The introduction of Burpee Big Boy in 1949 was a game changer for the seed companies.



Winsall Tomato from Ben's Garden

Heirlooms have withstood the test of time demonstrating their inherent disease resistance. We are preserving history by continuing to save these seeds and plant them each year. No doubt the heirloom tomato plant is sometimes a bit unwieldy as it grows tall throughout the summer and needs a stake. The flavor and preservation of these varieties is well worth the effort.

Favorite Heirloom Varieties

Here are a few of my favorites that we always have in our own garden:

Persimmon – This large, sweet tomato is a vibrant yellow-orange color and is sweet. The flesh is firm and the plant produces a high yield of these beautiful tomatoes. It was said to have been grown by Thomas Jefferson in 1781.



Marianna's Peace – My eye is always drawn to this plant in the garden. The large dark pink tomatoes look like a painting. The plant is rare with its lush potato type leaves. It is named for Marianne Tibbetts of the Czech Republic. Her family grew these on their farm there in the early 1900s. While in route to a labor camp in a truck Marianne and a few others jumped from the truck and escaped from the Czech Republic on foot. Through her sister these seeds made their way to the US and were named to honor Marianne.



Mexico Midget – This delicious small tomato is a wild tomato grown in Mexico. There are large clusters of these sugary sweet, petite tomatoes. They are one of our go to tomatoes for eating right from the plant. You will have more tomatoes than you know what to do with. Great snack to pack in a lunch.



Polish Tomato – This potato leaf variety produces an abundance of large, beefsteak style tomatoes that are dark pink. It is a Polish market tomato. They are uniform and juicy. Perfect for sandwiches or on a burger.



Amish Paste – This is a 12 oz., large and blocky paste tomato from the Amish community in Wisconsin. This larger, fleshy and blocky fruit is perfect for processing. We also love to eat this one fresh in salads or sliced on a platter.



CMGA Exploring Virtual Events

Activities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the state of Connecticut continues its stay at home orders during the pandemic, the Connecticut Master Gardener Association is considering ways to continue its mission of service to its members and the general community.

Please contact us with topic ideas for virtual demonstrations! We also are looking for volunteers to create virtual tours and demonstrations of gardening topics.

Please contact cmganews@ctmga.org with your ideas!

Let's make 2020 a productive year!

Note: The Rocky Hill Garden Club and its webmaster, Laurel editor Alicia Cornelio, are creating garden tutorials for beginners on various topics right now. [See here.](#)



Ordering from Amazon??? Please remember to use the Amazon Smile website (smile.amazon.com), and select CT Master Gardener Association as your charity. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases directly to CMGA. Thank you for your support!



2019 Master Gardener Graduates

Advancements and Recognition Hours

Fairfield / New Haven

Master Gardener Graduates

Cari Apicella
John Barry
Kate Bojanek
Karen Brown
Ryan Brunelle
Daniel Brubaker
Dana Chaney
Joan Cominski
Susan Demuth
Deb DiCicco
Kenny Faulk
Cheryl Henri
Alicia Jacobsen
Jane Jawlik
Melanie Licwinko
Mayia Mileva
Roland Mullins
Chris Nevins
Jane Ochman
Teresa Pagano
Tammara Schriefer
Kiley Smith
Ron Switzer
Travis Tietjen
Thea Wehmann
Stephanie Woodlock
Nancy Zycek

Master Gardener Advancements Bethel

Allison Buckley
Linda Elder
Robert Fossity
Lindy Hennessy
Holly Marini
Karen Mayhew
Joanne McMillan
Andrea Sarnik
Patricia Sell
Paula Wolf
Jane Yankocy

Bronze:

Henry Bissonnette
Kim Doyle
Hilary Gurdon
Michelle MacKinnon
Barbara Thomas
Richard Wenzel

Silver:

Carol Beerbaum
Barbara Stauder

Outreach Volunteer Awards Bethel

Trowel 100 Hours

Margot Abrams
Joan Cominsky
Kitti Deak
Christine DeCrescenzo
Susan Dieterich
Joan Lord
Leo Moerkins
Karen Murchison
Catherine Riordan
Paula Wolf
Jane Yankocy

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

Ginette Budd
Diane Cooke
Marcia DeBrock
Lou Denaro
Siobhan Deveney
Carol Hamilton
Robin Michalak
Andrea Sarnik

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

Tim Ohsann
Judy Schweitzer
Deb Soresino

**Master Gardener
Advancements New Haven**

Ken Kaye
Pat Sabosik

Bronze:

Amy Estabrook
Trish Helm
Jude Madeux
Lisa Totman
Rosemary Volpe

Silver:

Cheryl Cappiali

Gold:

Margot Abrams
Thomas MacGregor

Ruby:

Siobhan Deveney
Fran Litwin

Ruby Bronze:

Judy Schweitzer

Ruby Silver:

Donna Katsuranis

Sapphire Bronze:

Allan Brown

+3500 Hours

Meg Barnes

**Outreach Volunteer Awards
New Haven**

Trowel 100 Hours

Wendy Bellmore
Cordalie Benoit
Andy Danzig
Marilyn Elsworth
Karyl Evans
Joan Hilliard
Jude Madeux
Tamira Montorsi
Celeste Suggs
Lisa Totman

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

Susan Anton
Sue Burchsted
Lynne Gronostalsi
Pat Sabosik
Susan Turner

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

Cheryl Cappiali
Jim Sicilia

Pinecone 750 Hours

Sue Dielus
Hilary Gurdon
Ellen Visnyei

Sunflower 1000 Hours

Sue Dielus
Donna Katsuranis
Ellen Visnyei

Pruners 1500 Hours

Lorraine Ballato

Gardener's Boot 2000 Hours

Lorraine Ballato

Hartford / Litchfield

Master Gardener Graduates

Margaret Ahlberg
Jennifer Anthony-Bogue
Lillian Bogue
Linette Branham
Sandra Cady
Robin Cahill
Kathye Cipes
Margaret Condron
Troy Dea Brown
Arianna Ege
Debbie Flynn
Suzanne Forand
Karen Gradischer
David Hahn
Adam Histen
Janet Hoefler-Calcinari
Diane Lemelin
Nick Lorenzo
Janet Loynes
Delcy Newell
Nancy Rawn
Annemarie Riemer
Collette Ringie
Beth Ann Loveland Sennett
Jim Sirch
Christine Smulski
Gina Trusiewicz
Jennifer Yanko



Master Gardener Advancements

Kathy Beaty
Susan Caron
Marianne Cassidy
Sheila Dworkin
Mary Dombrowski
Susan Eisenhandler
Jan Manchester
Debrah Pollutro
Gloria Shusdock
Bonnie Zacharias
Ken Zacharias

Bronze:

Gina Amalfitano
Janet Bumstead
Cheryl Johnson
Janine LaPlante
Brenda Malack
Michelle Winkler
Maryann Winnick
Bonnie Zacharias
Ken Zacharias

Silver:

Diana Hughes
Janice Johnston
Michelle Winkler

Gold:

Susan Chapin Manzi

Ruby Gold:

Don Lukaszek
Rebecca Martorelli

Sapphire:

Jean Fletcher

Outreach Volunteer Awards

Trowel 100 Hours

Kathy Beaty
Helen Baldwin
Christina Bozza
Mary Dombrowski
Susan Eisenhandler
Anne Farnum
Suzanne Forand
Kirsten First
Adam Histen
Janet Loynes
Diane Mack
Deborah Pollutro
Beth Ann Loveland Sennett
Diane Vounatso
Susan Williams
Joellen Woodworth

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

Gina Amalfitano
Kathy Beaty
Valerie Bryan
Susan Caron
Sheila Dworkin
Lisa Gould
Robin Kriesberg
Christie Kuriger
Paula Liebovitz
Deborah Pike
Kim Radda
Michael Randich
Janice Sniffin
Glenda Thomas
Ken Zacharias

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

Kathy Beaty
Steve Kovack, Jr.
Jacqueline Wasta
Carolyn Wilcox

Pinecone 750 Hours

Karen Berger
Kathi Mag
Gloria Shusdock
Mary Ann Winnick

Sunflower 1000 Hours

Jennifer Klinger
David Lewis
Lea Anne Moran



Middlesex / New London

Master Gardener Graduates

Cathy Alcorn
John Armstrong
Sue Augustyniak
Sharon Bailey
Holly Baksa
Gail Bergan
Molly Bouffard
Kellie Brady
Geoffrey Burn
Jamey Burns
Kieran Cahill
Leigh Ann Cogle
Carol Cole
Bridget Compagno
Deb Cooney
Caitlin Courtney
Elizabeth Decker
Jessica Degenhardt
Ginni Donovan
Beth Doran
Linda Dunscomb
Lorraine Eichler
Adriana Gabarron
Patricia Gill
Thomas Heidel
Susan Johnson
Scully Keenan
Lynn Keller
Leslie Knightly
Grace Kosciuk
Mary Ellen Kowalewski
Jenny H. Law
Jack Leary
Anne E MacLeod
P.J. Meyer
Kathy Meyering
Catherine Muzio
Susan R. Pagnano
Chris Penniman
Ron Ragaini
Grant Russell-Walsh
Mary-Beth Russo
Patricia Russo
Julie Selberg

Malaine Trecoske
Terry Twigg
Carolyn Tyl
Jennifer Warman
Brian Warman
Sharon Wheeler
Tom Wing

Master Gardener Advancements

Donna Carlson
Ron Cummings
Sylvia Delson
JoAnn Devine
Tricia Halvordson
Lumie Han
Denise Heinrich
Lilian King
Susan Koris
Tina Marsh
Leslie Knightly
Andrea O'Boyle
Margaret Steele-Kaczorowski
John Suhr
Suzi Zitser

Bronze:

RoseMarie Bagioni
Susan Bellefleur
Ron Cummings
Sylvia Delson
Joanne DiCamillo
Deborah Dodds
Lisa Doggart
Diane Earl
Diane Erling
Jean Golicz
Lumie Han

Silver:

RoseMarie Bagioni
 Joanne DiCamillo
 Elaine Lombardi
 Joanne Lukaszewicz
 Sherry Smith

Gold:

Joanne DiCamillo
 Rob Mirer

Ruby:

Joanne DiCamillo

Ruby Silver:

Gail Reynolds

Sapphire Bronze:

Ken Sherrick

Sapphire Silver:

Ken Sherrick

Sapphire Gold:

Ken Sherrick

Emerald :

Ken Sherrick

Outreach Volunteer Awards**Trowel 100 Hours**

RoseMarie Bagioni
 Tad Bartles
 Susan Bellefleur
 Donna Carlson
 Denise Heinrich
 Carol House
 Carissa Johnson

Tina Marsh
 P.J. Meyer
 Jeff Nelson
 Grant Russell-Walsh
 John Smigel
 Anzelma Thibault
 Sherry VanLiere
 Gary Wilson
 Tom Wing

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

RoseMarie Bagioni
 Tad Bartles
 Margaret Blumie
 Ron Cummings
 Victoria Deangelis
 Diane Earl
 Catherine Ferguson
 Ray Hasson
 Joan Lazar
 Sherri-ann Martin
 Denise Slater
 Sherry Vanliere

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

Tad Bartles
 Joanne DiCamillo
 Ray Hasson
 Rob Mirer
 Donna Rini
 Charlie Tefft
 Sherry Vanliere

Sunflower 1000 Hours

Gail Reynolds

Pruners 1500 Hours

John Suhr

Gardener's Boot 2000 Hours

Ken Sherrick

Tolland / Windham

Master Gardener Graduates

Lisa Blanchette
Mary Bylone
Sydney Clements
Glenn Converse
Melissa Cozza
Joanne Curtis
Dee DonFrancisco
Jessica Duers
Paula Gamble
Peter Germano
Pete Halvordson
Rebecca Knowlton
Angelika Ligmann
Christine Masztal
Marissa Purcell
Bonnie Scanlan
Katelyn Scheetz
Jerry Schofield
Robert Siwko
Dianisi Torres
Marie Woodward
Heather Zevetchin

Master Gardener Advancements

Nancy Bowden
Ellen Charpentier
Jess Huey

Bronze:

Nancy Cleary
Mary Ann Gates
Jess Huey

Silver:

Nancy Stearns

Outreach Volunteer Awards

Trowel 100 Hours

Bucky Buckland
Sue Clark
Jessica Duers
Jess Huey
Mary Lawrence
Jerry Schofield
Dianisi Torres
Diane Vounatso
Marie Woodward
Heather Zevetchin

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

Nancy Bowden
Linda Hothan
Gail Marken
Linda Mathes
Nancy Stearns
Deborah Wright

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

Maryellen Donnelly

Sunflower 1000 Hours

Theresa Hennessey
Deborah Kupfer

Gardener's Boot 2000 Hours

John Lorusso

Bartlett

Master Gardener Graduates

Jane Belson
Kate Branch
Sharon Broza-Stone
Monica Buesser
Anthony DiGiacommo
Sean Fitzpatrick
Lindsay Fontana
John Jessey
Lynn Stephens Massey
Mary Ellen McLean
Melanie Smith
Chris Teter
Mary Verel
Dorrie Wahl

Master Gardener Advancements

Rose Bonanno
Alice Ely
Linda Engel
Nathalie Fonteyne Gavrilovic
Elizabeth Gilbert
Susan Hawley
Lucile Oricchio
Annea Rosenberg
Michele Sorensen
Barbara Thanhauser

Bronze: Jim Ellsworth
Eva Klatt

Silver: Toni Simonetti
Colleen Giambo

Gold: Barbara Karp
Phyllis Padro

Ruby Silver: Maryjane Markey

Sapphire: Janet Kruse

Sapphire Gold: Lesley Gehr

Emerald Bronze: Ganga Duleep

Outreach Volunteer Awards

Trowel 100 Hours

Sharon Broza-Stone
Margaret Eustace
Sean Fitzpatrick
Susan Hawley
Ann Huck
Rick Mathieu
Joanne Gabriel
Lucille Oricchio
Michele Sorensen
Mary Verel

Oak Leaf 250 Hours

Laura Cunningham
Linda Engel
Marie Gross
Brigid Flannery
Nathalie Fonteyne Gavrilovic
Patricia Morris
Annea Rosenberg
Kevin Tepas

Wheelbarrow 500 Hours

James Ellsworth
Barbara Eno Karp
Nancy McClelland
Alice Ely
Dana Weinberg

Pinecone 750 Hours

Martina Doshan
Janet Kruse
Phyllis Padro
Barbara Thanhauser

Sunflower 1000 Hours

Lesley Gehr
Eva Klatt

Gardener's Boot 2000 Hours

Linda Albanese
Carrie Sears

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Master Gardener
Association

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The LAUREL

Connecticut
Master
Gardener
Association
Newsletter

Summer 2020 Volume 33, No. 3

Summer Garden Safari



Featuring an interview
with Mary Concklin,
UConn IPM Specialist

Virtual Tour

Raspberry Knoll Farm

North Windham, CT

Coming in August, 2020

Details page 6

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President's Message

To my dear CMGA members:

2020 will certainly be remembered in many different ways. For some, it's been a year of disappointing event cancellations, isolation and personal loss. For others it's a year of reckoning, a time to re-evaluate our priorities and pursue our passions. I suspect that for many of my fellow Master Gardeners, our yards and gardens have never looked better! Spending time outside, listening to the birds and taking in all the beauty and scents of the plant world fills my soul with a sense of peace and well being.

In my message of our previous edition of the Laurel, I announced the postponement of our Annual Gardening Symposium to October. Alas, that event, too, has been cancelled due to COVID 19 concerns. HOWEVER, I am very pleased to announce that we have received a verbal commitment from Manchester Community College for our March 20, 2021 Symposium date! Will that come off as planned? Who knows? But we are keeping our focus with optimism!

While it may seem that the world is at a standstill, Master Gardener Outreach projects are still happening! In fact, CMGA awarded \$5,000 for the first round of grant applications. Round two is now underway with a deadline of July 24th. Be sure to visit the **Grants tab** on our website for more information. We have more money to award!

CMGA held its Nursery Day at McCue Gardens in Wethersfield on June 17, 2020. What a fabulous collection of native plants for sale! Since we are unable to hold our biggest fund raiser of the year (our Garden Symposium), we were hoping that this event would mitigate a portion of our revenue loss. Well, we had a record turnout! One hundred and eleven of you came out to support us! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

(continued page 7)



2021 CMGA Garden Symposium

*Saturday, March 20, 2021
Manchester Community College
Manchester, CT*

Mark your calendars!

We regret to inform you that Connecticut College has proactively decided to cancel all events on their campus for the 2020 fall semester. Therefore, we cannot have our Garden Symposium on Oct. 10, 2020 as planned.

We hope you'll agree that this is a prudent course of action, given the current circumstances.



Companion Planting in the Vegetable Garden

Alicia Cornelio
Editor, Laurel

The mystery of companion planting has intrigued gardeners for centuries. It takes more than sunlight, water and good soil to make plants happy and healthy. Many of them like the company of other plants to ward off unwanted insects and disease.

Reasons to grow certain plants near each other:

- ◆ **Shade** — Larger plants protect smaller plants from the sun.
- ◆ **Support** — Tall plants like corn and sunflowers can support sprawling crops like cucumbers and peas.
- ◆ **Better health** — A plant can absorb substances from the soil, changing soil biochemistry to help other plants.
- ◆ **Soil benefits** — Some plants make more nitrogen available. Other plants bring up nutrients from deep in the soil, which helps plants with shallow roots.
- ◆ **Weed control** — Sprawling plants cover open areas, stopping weeds from growing.

Some common combinations:

Tomatoes: dill and basil can protect the tomatoes from hornworms. Bee balm, chives and mint improve health and flavor

Eggplant: green beans repel Colorado potato beetle

Squash: Marigolds repel beetles. Nasturtiums deter beetles and squash bugs. Oregano protects from pests in general. Borage repels worms, while also helping to improve flavor and growth.

Beans: cucumbers with beans are mutually beneficial

Lettuce: radishes improve flavor, strawberries, carrots, and cucumbers benefit

Peppers: basil with peppers are mutually beneficial, repel insects and improve flavor

Corn: potatoes and squash keep down weeds, keep raccoons from stalks, and enjoy shade of corn, peas and beans restore nitrogen to soil, marigolds repel beetles

Brassica family: (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussel sprout, kale, turnip)
Hyssop, thyme, wormwood repel white cabbage butterfly, onions and potatoes are mutually beneficial

Companion Planting Chart

box.com	PLANTS GROW WELL TOGETHER	BENEFICIAL TO GARDEN IN GENERAL	COMBINATION HELPS BUG CONTROL	CARROTS WILL HAVE GOOD FLAVOR BUT STUNTED ROOTS	DON'T PLANT TOGETHER
BASIL	 OREGANO, PEPPERS, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME	GARLIC	 BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, LETTUCE, STRAWBERRY, TOMATOES, THYME, SAGE, BEANS, PEAS	PEPPERS	 BASIL, CARROTS, CUCUMBER, OREGANO, PARSLEY, PEAS, ROSEMARY, SQUASH, SWISS CHARD, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME, BEANS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER
BEANS	 BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, CORN, CUCUMBER, PEAS, ROSEMARY, STRAWBERRY, SWISS CHARD, TOMATOES, THYME, SAGE, CHIVES, GARLIC, LEEKS, MARIGOLD, ONION, PEPPERS	LEEKs	 CARROTS, ONION, SPINACH, SAGE, THYME, BEANS, PEAS,	ROSEMARY	 BEANS, BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, PEPPERS, SAGE, THYME
BROCCOLI	 BEANS, CARROTS, CHIVES, CUCUMBER, DILL, GARLIC, LETTUCE, NASTURTIUM, ONION, ROSEMARY, SAGE, SPINACH, SWISS CHARD, THYME, OREGANO, PEPPERS, SQUASH, STRAWBERRY, TOMATOES	LETTUCE	 BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, CUCUMBER, DILL, GARLIC, ONION, SPINACH, SQUASH, STRAWBERRY, TOMATOES SAGE, THYME	SAGE	 BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, BASIL, BEANS, CHIVES, CILANTRO, CORN, DILL, GARLIC, LEEKS, LETTUCE, MARIGOLD, MELON, NASTURTIUM, ONION, OREGANO, PARSLEY, PEAS, PEPPERS, ROSEMARY, SAGE, SPINACH, SQUASH, STRAWBERRY, SUNFLOWER, SWISS CHARD, THYME, TOMATOES, CUCUMBER
CARROTS	 BEANS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, CHIVES, LEEKS, LETTUCE, ONION, PARSLEY, PEAS, PEPPERS, ROSEMARY, SAGE, THYME, TOMATOES, DILL	MARIGOLD	 MELON, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME, SQUASH, BEANS	SPINACH	 BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, LEEKS, LETTUCE, PEAS, STRAWBERRY, SAGE, THYME, CILANTRO
CAULIFLOWER	 BEANS, CARROTS, CHIVES, CUCUMBER, DILL, GARLIC, LETTUCE, NASTURTIUM, ONION, ROSEMARY, SAGE, SPINACH, SWISS CHARD, THYME, OREGANO, PEPPERS, SQUASH, STRAWBERRY, TOMATOES	MELON	 CORN, MARIGOLD, NASTURTIUM, SQUASH, SUNFLOWER, SAGE, THYME	SQUASH	 CORN, LETTUCE, MELON, PEAS, PEPPERS, SAGE, THYME, MARIGOLD, NASTURTIUM, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER,
CHIVES	 BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, PARSLEY, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME, PEAS, BEANS	NASTURTIUM	 BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, CUCUMBER, MELON, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME, SQUASH	STRAWBERRY	 BEANS, GARLIC, LETTUCE, ONION, PEAS, SPINACH, THYME, SAGE, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER,
CILANTRO	 SAGE, THYME, SPINACH	ONION	 BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CAULIFLOWER, CUCUMBER, DILL, LEEKS, LETTUCE, PARSLEY, STRAWBERRY, SWISS CHARD, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME, BEANS, PEAS,	SUNFLOWER	 CORN, MELON, SAGE, THYME
CORN	 BEANS, CUCUMBER, DILL, MELON, PARSLEY, PEAS, SQUASH, SUNFLOWER, SAGE, THYME, TOMATOES	OREGANO	 BASIL, PEPPERS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, SAGE, THYME	SWISS CHARD	 BEANS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, ONION, PEPPERS, SAGE, THYME
CUCUMBER	 BEANS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, CORN, DILL, LETTUCE, NASTURTIUM, ONION, PEAS, PEPPERS, TOMATOES, THYME, SAGE	PARSLEY	 CARROTS, CHIVES, CORN, ONION, PEAS, PEPPERS, TOMATOES, SAGE, THYME	THYME	 BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, STRAWBERRY, BASIL, BEANS, CARROTS, CHIVES, CILANTRO, CORN, CUCUMBER, DILL, GARLIC, LEEKS, LETTUCE, MARIGOLD, MELON, NASTURTIUM, ONION, OREGANO, PARSLEY, PEAS, PEPPERS, ROSEMARY, SAGE, SPINACH, SQUASH, SUNFLOWER, SWISS CHARD, THYME, TOMATOES
DILL	 BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, CORN, CUCUMBER, LETTUCE, ONION, SAGE, THYME, CARROTS, TOMATOES	PEAS	 BEANS, CARROTS, CORN, CUCUMBER, PARSLEY, PEPPERS, SPINACH, SQUASH, STRAWBERRY, SAGE, THYME CHIVES, GARLIC, LEEKS, ONION,	TOMATOES	 BASIL, BEANS, CHIVES, CUCUMBER, GARLIC, LETTUCE, MARIGOLD, NASTURTIUM, ONION, PARSLEY, PEPPERS, SAGE, THYME, CARROTS, BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER, CORN, DILL

Source: Riotte, Louise. "Carrots Love Tomatoes". Storey Communications, Pownal, VT., 1981.

CMGA Grants Transform Eyesores into Beauty

By Katherine M. Kosiba, Advanced Master Gardener (Haddam, 2009)

When I retired and became a Master Gardener in 2007, I decided to focus my volunteerism on projects within my town of Colchester, CT. That same year I became President of the Colchester Garden Club (CGC) and began to see eyesore areas in our community that would create opportunities for beautification and education. Many of these improvement projects became possible with the awarding of CMGA grants to me and other CGC member Master Gardeners.

One of my projects was to recreate the long-neglected oval butterfly garden in the town's new open space park. The new design created a larger garden with a grass pathway through the center, and included pollinator host and nectar plants. This garden was certified as a Monarch Waystation, an educational brochure was created with a waterproof flyer box installed, and plant labels were placed to educate the many visitors. Since 2014, Colchester Garden Club members continue to maintain the garden and provide public educational tours. We are happy so many visitors come to enjoy the garden, many of whom are inspired to start their own pollinator gardens. This year was especially satisfying when Bacon Academy graduates came with their families to take photos after their drive-up graduation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Click on the link to view the [Cohen butterfly garden brochure](#).



2020 Bacon Academy graduates visit the butterfly garden at Cohen Woodlands.

Another eyesore in town was two long rows of red twig dogwood shrubs and junipers on Linwood Avenue near the center of town. In 2017, with approval from Colchester Public Works and a grant from CMGA, I was able to coordinate the transformation of these beds back to their four-season beauty, enhanced with pollinator-friendly perennials, bulbs, and groundcovers. This garden continues to be maintained by the Colchester Garden Club with another Master Gardener as this year's garden steward, coordinating maintenance and Learn and Do sessions.

Another piece of neglected town property was the triangular garden at intersecting sidewalks in the center of town. With approval of Colchester Public Works and the assistance of a CMGA grant, two CGC members (one a Master Gardener) set out to create a Xeriscape Garden in this hot, dry location. In 2018, this colorful, textured garden was recognized for excellence by the Federated Garden Clubs of CT. An educational garden brochure for the Xeriscape Garden was created and will now be available with the installation of waterproof flyer box at the site. Click on the link to view the [Xeriscape Garden brochure](#).



Xeriscape Garden, downtown Colchester

A more recent project involves redesigning the Children's Garden within the Colchester StoryWalk, a literacy/fitness initiative, originally installed 2017. Twenty stations hold pages from books about nature, wildlife and gardening that parents read to children as they walk along the pathway. After a few years, the circular Children's Garden at the end of the path was difficult to maintain and provided a limited view of the flowers and pollinators. The CGC Master Gardener's redesign has a paver pad for a commemorative bench and four paver paths radiating from a central inner circle, creating quadrants for different color blooms. The new design will allow children and other visitors to see plants and pollinators up close. A Parent's Guide to the Children's Garden brochure is being developed to help reinforce early childhood learning concepts - colors, numbers, sizes, relationships - using the garden.

In addition, the Colchester Garden Club has been invited to do the landscaping around the new welcome sign at the intersection of Lake Hayward Road and Rte 85. I took on this project to develop a native pollinator landscape around the sign and along the chain link fencing that will further show Colchester as a Community Wildlife Habitat (as certified by the National Wildlife Federation in 2010). With no funds available from the town, this project is now possible due to a CMGA and the ongoing support of the Colchester Garden Club.

In Colchester, many Master Gardener community service projects are the result of seeing something in need of improvement. I am so thankful to the Connecticut Master Gardener Association for extending financial support through their grant program over the years to these worthy projects through Colchester Garden Club's Master Gardener members for the benefit of our community and visitors.

2020 StoryWalk Children's Garden renovation



Another new project is laid out by CGC president Katherine Kosiba.



CMGA Summer Safari Virtual Tour

Raspberry Knoll Farm

163 N Windham Rd, North Windham, CT 06256

The CMGA Summer Safari will be a special virtual tour this year for the safety of all our members during this year of the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be a unique experience from our traditional summer tour and semi-annual meeting. An email will go out to all members explaining how to connect to this virtual tour that will be available for view in early August, 2020.

Raspberry Knoll offers pick-your-own strawberries (June), raspberries and blackberries (July-early Sept.), and blueberries (July-August) to the public. There are also herbs, tomatoes and cut-your-own flowers.

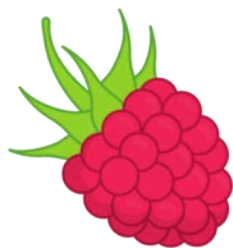
Peter and Mary Concklin purchased the farm in August 2009, prepped the first field that fall and opened for pick-your-own the summer of 2011. The Concklins have expanded each year, planting more berries, vegetables, herbs and flowers.

The farm is currently open with health restrictions. See their website for further instructions: www.raspberryknoll.com. Phone: (860) 786-7486. Hours may change due to weather and berry ripening conditions.



CMGA Announcements and Events

Ordering from Amazon??? Please remember to use the Amazon Smile website (smile.amazon.com), and select CT Master Gardener Association as your charity. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases directly to CMGA. Thank you for your support!



**Virtual Summer Safari 2020:
Raspberry Knoll Farm**
Coming in August, 2020
Check your email for a link to the tour!

CMGA Annual Meeting

Tentative meeting in November, 2020. Watch for email announcement.



(President's Message, continued from page 2)

Last, but not least, we are doing something a little different this year for our Summer Safari. Under the leadership of Theresa Hennessey, we will be touring Mary Conklin's farm, Raspberry Knoll, virtually by video. We are planning this for later in August, so please keep an eye out for an e-mail from us announcing when the video will be posted on our website.

In closing, I want to give a shout out to your Board of Directors. This group has been working very hard behind the scenes on updating our Board Manual and Website, expanding our use of technology and exploring various services and educational opportunities that we can deliver to you, our valued members. We are also in the beginning stages of forming a diversity team in conjunction with some MG Coordinators. If any of you are interested in joining this group of extraordinary people, don't hesitate to contact me. Also, if any of you have ideas of what you would like see from us, please let us know!

My heart and thoughts are with all of you. Please keep yourselves safe and follow the guidelines of the CDC, scientists and medical professionals.

All My Best,

Deb Prior, 2020 CMGA President

Connecticut
Master Gardener
Association

CMGA
PO Box 1842
Manchester, CT 06045

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THE LAUREL 2020



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our website: ctmga.org





The LAUREL

Connecticut
Master
Gardener
Association
Newsletter

Autumn 2020 Volume 33, No. 4

CMGA VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

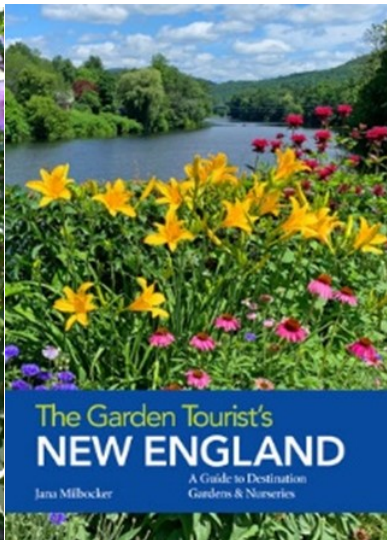
Saturday, November 14, 2020

Join us for our Live 2020 VIRTUAL Annual Meeting !

This Live Event meeting is free of charge and friends and family are welcome to register to attend Jana's presentation.

Online Registration is required - by November 7, 2020

Visit our website: [Events > CMGA](#)
for registration and information.



Our speaker will be Jana Milbocker, the principal of Enchanted Gardens Landscape Design in Holliston, MA.

A popular writer and garden lecturer, Jana published her second book, *The Garden Tourist's New England* in 2019.

She has a passion for landscape design and horticulture, and has been gardening on her two acre property in Holliston's historic district for over 25 years.

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The Laurel is published quarterly for CMGA members.

Please send information by email to cmganews@ctmga.org.

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

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Connecticut Master Gardener Association

President's Message

To My Dear CMGA members:

2020 keeps on happening, and your Board of Directors continue to work tirelessly behind the scenes to make our organization stronger, technically up to date, and to develop new programs for our members.

By now, you all should have received the email with the link to the Summer Safari video tour of Raspberry Knoll Farm. If you have not seen the video yet, the link is now posted to our website. Take a look and plan a visit next year to pick your own batch of raspberries, in five different colors! I have to say that our VP, Theresa Hennessey, did a fantastic job videotaping the farm. I suspect we'll be seeing more of her newfound talent in the future!

I would also like to thank our webmaster Vicky Ambrose for establishing our new CMGA YouTube channel, where you can view videos of our events, projects and activities. Some upcoming events will include our Annual Meeting in November, plus other tours and interviews of interest to our members.

Our 2021 membership drive kicks off this month, so you will be seeing communications regarding renewing your annual membership. We also welcome any Master Gardeners who have not yet joined us. CMGA membership is open to all Master Gardeners, regardless of when or where they graduated.

Our Annual Meeting will be held virtually this year on Saturday, November 14th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The business portion of the meeting will feature a review of the year's events and accomplishments, and we will also vote on the budget and officers for 2021. I'm excited to say that in addition to our returning Board members, we will be voting on ten NEW Board members, representing all 8 counties!

We will be using the WebEx virtual meeting system for the Annual Meeting, which is the same platform that was used for the live Hot Topics presentations. Those of you who attended Hot Topics will be familiar with this format. This time, however, you will be voting, so your attendance at this meeting is especially important.

Our special guest speaker will be Jana Milbocker, and the title of her presentation is "The Magic of the Winter Garden." I recently obtained a copy of her new book "The Garden Tourist's New England: A Guide to Destination Gardens & Nurseries," and it is fabulous! Any guests who are not CMGA members will be welcome to attend this portion of the meeting. So, look for information on how to register!

Finally, I would like to clear up some confusion about Master Gardener "Certification" versus "Active Status" that seems to be holding back some folks from joining CMGA. First, anyone who graduates from the UConn Master Gardener program is considered a CERTIFIED Master Gardener. Therefore, once a Certified Master Gardener, ALWAYS a Certified Master Gardener!

The UConn Master Gardener program has additional requirements (such as office hours, community outreach hours and attending Hot Topics) that keep your certification ACTIVE. Even if you don't fulfill those requirements, you are still a Certified Master Gardener and eligible to join CMGA, the alumni association of the MG program. You are still eligible to enjoy our programs and apply for grants to help fund your community outreach projects. If you still have questions, please email me! We love ALL Master Gardeners!

In closing, I encourage you to renew your 2021 membership today, and invite your Master Gardener friends to join us as well. Since our fundraising efforts this year were seriously curtailed by COVID-19, your membership dues are more important than ever to enable us to continue funding so many invaluable community outreach projects across the state. We're one of the very few gardening organizations that do this. With your help, and with 2020 in the rear-view mirror, we can continue our positive impact on supporting sustainability in our communities, and indeed, on our precious Planet Earth.

All My Best,
Deb Prior
2020 CMGA President

Common Good Gardens

Linda Clough
CMGA Class of 2011



Common Good Gardens was initially imagined in 2001 to 2002 in order to supply produce to the Shoreline Soup Kitchen and Food Pantries on land donated by Grace Episcopal Church in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. In ensuing years, the garden became a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that has received a grant from the Connecticut Master Gardeners. Common Good Gardens relies solely on volunteer workers and donations from private as well as corporate entities. Since then, it has helped spawn and encourage other similar gardens in the region such as Food for All Garden organized by Margaret Larom at the Episcopal Church in Clinton and gardens at Valley Shore YMCA. Common Good Gardens now has a 250-member e-mail list and about 40-50 active volunteers including Master Gardeners.

The many challenges of gardening in a common space have been met with the development of an irrigation system, erecting a ten-foot-high deer fence, and the addition of a squash bed and a blueberry patch enclosure. CGG continues to improve its methods aiming to increase yields.



CGG strives to engage more volunteers for the health of our recipients, our participants and, hopefully, the community at large.

CGG has focused on developing compost full of beneficial microorganisms and nutrients for plants and the propagation of cool and warm season crops with techniques of integrated pest management principles.

CGG experiments with various planting techniques

to better improve yield and nutritional content, such as no-till gardening, companion planting of perennial flowers, rotation of crops, and the addition of organic amendments to the soil.

Through the years, CGG has been the benefactor of efforts by the Naval Submarine Base New London to open and close the garden with strong sailors doing heavy lifting jobs. In this year of COVID, however, this was impossible. The CGG volunteers compensated by expanding normal work hours, reducing the number of workers at any one time, using tools brought from home and, of course, wearing masks! Despite a challenging season, CGG grew 6500 to 8000 pounds of produce and transporting some to local farmer's markets will still be achieved. Several interns in the master gardener program have contributed to these efforts this year as in years past.

CGG encourages all volunteers including those without any experience in vegetable gardening and those who would be interested in non-farming chores such as publicity, accounting, photography, etc. Learn more about CGG at commongoodgardens.org and Facebook. Please come for a tour!



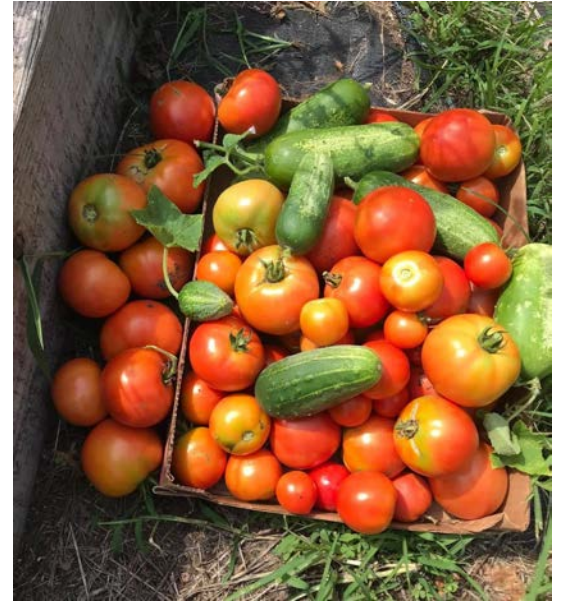


Mutual Aid Growers

Supporting one another in the COVID challenge!

Rachel Heerema
CMGA Class of 2018

I struck up a conversation with former farmer, Karen Grossi, on Facebook in early March. The site swapped seeds. We started dreaming about connecting more gardeners to help one another in the community. Together, we also recruited additional home gardeners to plant seeds and seedlings to help address food insecurity among individuals and families in the Greater New Haven area. We received seeds and seedling donations from Massaro Farms, Gather New Haven, and Common Ground High School. I approached Gather New Haven (formerly New Haven Land Trust) and together we spoke on a Zoom call with their leadership team, including Master Gardener Esther Rose-Wilen (2018). Gather New Haven and West Haven Community Gardens offered plots for our project.



Karen was already volunteering with the Semilla Collective of New Haven, a diverse group of immigrants and allies living on Quinnipiac land in New Haven, distributing food among people. She spoke with people about what foods they would enjoy. Between home-grown food, land trust raised beds, and a large plot of donated land, vegetables such as tomatoes, greens, peppers, were grown. Each Saturday, growers dropped their harvest to Karen's house where she made sure the food got distributed. Rachel grew tomatoes and watermelons for the cause, supported communications, and helped with plant cultivation questions.



The vision is simple: Mutual Aid Growers matches seasoned gardeners with landowners and community gardens to plant fruits and vegetables to share. Newer gardeners are partnered with a seasoned gardener mentor who will help them to grow food to share. In this autumn season, there are work parties scheduled to plant flats of spinach, peas, parsley, lettuce and fennel. There are plans to solarize some areas within the land trust gardens to expand growing areas. Contact Rachel for more information and to join in this effort: 203-747-8606.

Members Share Victory Garden Stories and Pictures

Linette Branham
CMGA Class of 2019



When life gives you too many tomatoes.... make roasted tomato soup! This is just one example of a beauty of a tomato from my garden this summer. Luckily, I found a great recipe for roasted tomato soup....so easy to make, and SO good with fresh garden tomatoes! Definitely on my list for next year's garden, too!

No, it's not a mutant....it's a rampicante squash! Also known as a trombocino squash, this Italian beauty is now my favorite, and has replaced traditional zucchini in my garden. The seeds are all contained in the bulb at the end of the squash, leaving the rest of it as pure squash. It's a bit more firm than a traditional zucchini, and if picked while the outer skin is still green, you can leave the skin on when you eat it, whether raw, grilled, or cooked any other way. If the squash hangs on a trellis (unlike this one), they grow very straight, and then are perfect for making noodles! The squash will stay 'fresh' on the vine for a long period, although the outer skin will turn pale and is then best peeled before eating. What a find this has been for me!



Every year I try at least one new veggie in my gardens. This is a Daikon Radish. I have about 20 of these. I'm thinking about using them for batting practice. One goes a long way. I've pickled, roasted, and fried them as a hash. (The pickled ones aren't so tasty. Fried they're yummy.)



Drying beans for the winter.
View of our gardens.



Penny Howell Heller
CMGA Class of 2017

It was a very good year for squash! The first picture was taken at the St Luke Community Garden in Gales Ferry CT of our butternut crop. All produce from the garden goes to the New London Meal Center. It was also a good squash year in my home garden (pictures 2 & 3) where the butternut grew up and over a fence in one raised bed and up onto our solar roof from a second raised bed. They love the heat and sunshine.





I watched many gardening videos and someone was using the lint roller to remove bugs and eggs that were making a home on the leaves of their plants, especially the underside. It is similar to using masked tape to catch them on the sticky side.

The rationale for using the lint roller is to try to gently remove the bugs, larvae or eggs without cutting and/or tearing leaves. Once leaves are damaged, the plant emits chemical-like hormones that tell insects, "Now I'm injured." Then, bugs attack and devour leaves even more voraciously.

Sometimes it works like a charm, but other times it doesn't do much to eliminate eggs that are nestled securely in the veins of leaves and they are damaged. But think, if it's possible to remove the majority of insect critters with one roll of the lint brush, then it's worth using.



Jenny Law
CMGA Class of 2019

I tried amaranth
for the first time.



Toni Leland
CMGA Class of 2006



I didn't have much space at the temporary home I moved into, but what I did have turned into a nice compact little veggie garden!

I planted bush green beans (which I'm still enjoying!), Swiss chard, zucchini, leeks, and two varieties of tomatoes -- Early Girl and Sun Sweet cherry.

I added basil everywhere as natural insect repellent and it worked! No problems with pests. Also marigolds all around the tomatoes. Again, no insects other than one tomato hornworm that the parasitic wasps found. Also planted cilantro.

Not So Victorious Year



Deborah Cooney writes, "Wish my garden was a "victory!" Plagues of chipmunks, necessitating three plantings of some of my seeds...rabbits, squirrels, deer all invaded my five foot high fence. Even the parsley in my herb garden was attacked by swallow-tail butterfly caterpillars! (Which I gathered, placed in a tent and fed until they hatched.) 2020 has been the pits!"

Deborah Pike agrees writing, "How about the not so victorious challenges of drought, well water, deer, rabbits, tobacco hornworm and japanese beetles."

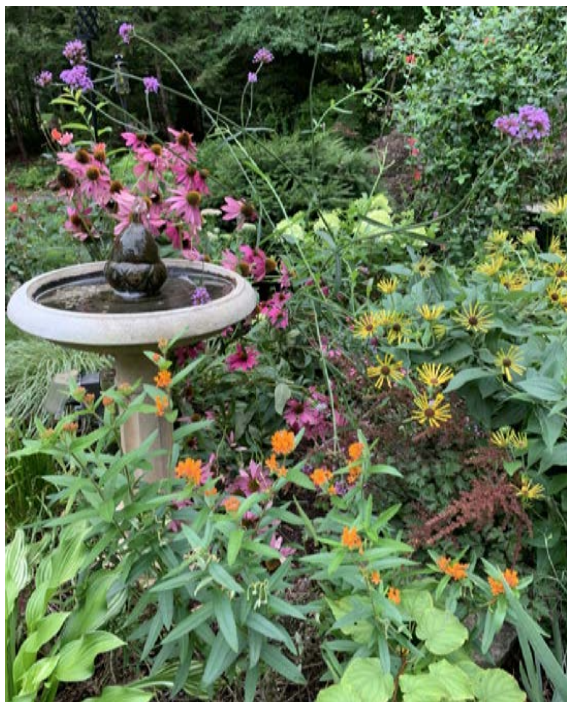
Patty Lacasse
CMGA Class of 2019

I like planting native plants with a splash of daylily and peony for color. My summer flowers are my favorite with different varieties of Salvia, catmint, sage and butterfly weed.



Leslie Knightly
CMGA Class of 2019

I found my backyard an oasis during these trying times. I added some raised beds for herbs, vegetables and some flowers. My daughter and I also raised 6 baby chicks hatched in mid June. A lovely addition to the garden. The hens enjoy the gardens as well when they free range. We continue to enjoy the birds, pollinators and joy the backyard garden brings. Looking forward to the serenity of the winter garden as well as some eggs from our hens. Such a great retreat and distraction.



CMGA Annual Meeting Details

Schedule of events:

9:00 am - Annual Meeting

All are welcome to attend. A brief business meeting will be held to review CMGA's 2020 highlights and plans for 2021. Only CMGA members will be able to vote on several items and elect new Board Members and Executive Officers. CMGA members will be sent an email with details on how to view the relevant documents prior to the meeting.

10:15 am - Presentation by Jana Milbocker, on "The Magic of the Winter Garden," with Q&A after the lecture.

Stripped of summer foliage and flowers, the success of a winter garden lies in its structure, basic design and choice of plant material. This richly illustrated lecture provides inspiration and tips on choosing the best trees, shrubs and perennials, and grouping them to create arresting vignettes for winter interest.

Registration - SPECIAL OFFER!

Buy Jana's book *The Garden Tourist's New England* for only \$20.00 (MSRP \$24.95) After you register for the Annual meeting, a link for the book will be in your confirmation email. Curbside pick-up at your county MG office to be scheduled in November. Quantities are limited, so order yours today!



For more information please visit Jan's website:

www.enchantedgardensdesign.com



Sarah Bailey Honored with CHS 2020 Gustav Mehlquist Award

Sarah Bailey, State Program Coordinator of the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program, received the prestigious Connecticut Horticulture Society's Gustav Mehlquist Award for 2020. Recognizing her extraordinary contribution to horticulture in Connecticut, the Society highlighted Sarah's accomplishments educating and inspiring "hundreds of MGs who in turn have spread out across our state to beautify and inform others."

Sarah has served as coordinator for the Hartford UConn Extension Master Gardener Program since 2005, and as state program coordinator since 2016. She serves on the education committee of the Connecticut Nursery and Landscaping Association, has served on the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Horticultural Society and, of course, is an active member of CMGA.



Congratulations, Sarah! We couldn't agree more. [Click here to read more about Sarah's award.](#)

PayPal Giving Fund

Are you a PayPal user?

You may donate directly to CMGA via the PayPal Giving Fund when you shop. First search for "Connecticut Master Gardener Association" at <https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/hub>

Click on "Set as favorite charity." Then, when you make purchases, PayPal will ask whether you want to make a donation to CMGA.

Whatever the amount, your full donation goes directly to CMGA.

Ordering from Amazon???

Please remember to use the Amazon Smile website link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/06-1221782> and select CT Master Gardener Association as your charity.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases directly to CMGA. Thank you for your support!



CMGA Members

What Have You Been Doing?

Laura Goldberg
CMGA Member Class of 2016



What have you been doing with your Master Gardener certification? Volunteering? Working in the industry? Furthering your certification? All of the above?

We spend nine months with our Coordinators and classmates, whether virtually, or in a Saturday class, or volunteering in a garden, or fielding gardening questions from home gardeners about their flower and veggie gardens (“What is wrong with my tomatoes?”). At the end of the nine months, we graduate and become Certified Master Gardeners. Whew!!! But what then?

The CMGA (Connecticut Master Gardener Association) is the alumni group for Master Gardeners. It’s the hope of this organization that every Master Gardener joins the CMGA. It is the goal of the CMGA to bring together Master Gardeners from across the state, in order to unify us and to build a community that works together to support each other, as well as our communities.

There are MGs that work in the industry. There are MGs who volunteer at famous Connecticut museums, parks, gardens and landmarks. There are MGs mentoring elementary-middle-high school students to create pollinator gardens and other projects. And there are MGs who balance their full-time careers with our ongoing community outreach.

So. What have you been doing since becoming certified? We want to know. Write up a glimpse of you. Include the year you graduated, the county you live in, and how you are utilizing your skills as a Master Gardener. We will include these glimpses in every issue of *The Laurel*, the CMGA newsletter. We would also like to build a friends’ network, accessible to the Master Gardener community, as a way of staying in touch with each other, and to be a resource for questions, guidance or opportunities.

The CMGA is looking forward to hearing from every member of our community!!!

Our New & Improved CMGA Website is One Year Old!



It is unbelievable that the new [CMGA website](#) launched exactly one year ago in October! It was a huge undertaking by the all-volunteer CMGA web design team. They spent over a year on the visual redesign, reorganization of data, and operational processes. Website features include:

- **Responsive Design/Platform.** The CMGA website looks great on all your devices: phone, tablet and computer.
- **[Security & Privacy](#).** Your personal information is secure (HTTPS) when visiting our website and using our online forms and payments. Our e-commerce platform allows for secure checkout and purchases on every device.
- **One Stop Registration for Events.** Add calendar entries, maps, sign-up & pay all in one place. A secure online form and payment in a single transaction is now available.
- **[Member Happenings](#).** Check our CMGA Blog for timely communications about the latest news and events.

The CMGA website is maintained by members for our members. We want to know what you think, so please send your comments and suggestions to us at: webinfo@ctmga.org



CMGA is the alumni association for Connecticut Master Gardeners, providing opportunities to share our knowledge and love of gardening throughout the state. Through sponsorship of events and leadership of volunteer projects, our members help to educate and beautify our communities.

Today, like other nonprofit organizations, we must balance that mission with responsibly meeting state guidelines for COVID-19.

We rely on membership dues and event attendance to fund Master Gardener-led community projects, support the UConn Master Gardener Extension offices and provide scholarships for interns. Your \$30 annual membership dues helped us support UConn Extension Master Gardeners in 2020 including funding over \$7,000 in grant requests for horticulture education projects in every corner of the state. Unfortunately in March, we were forced to cancel the Spring 2020 Symposium, our largest annual event.

In 2021, we are planning a year filled with connecting Connecticut Master Gardeners to current horticulture topics, community projects and events -- and to one another.

Membership for 2021 is \$30. This year, more than ever, CMGA needs your support and welcomes your involvement. To enjoy member benefits and events, please [renew your CMGA membership](#) today!

Your membership dues are critical to help CMGA to:

Educate:

- [November 2020 virtual Annual Meeting Event](#) with guest speaker, Jana Milbocker
- March 2021 Spring Garden Symposium
- July 2021 Summer Safari
- Future educational and social events

Support and Connect:

- [State-wide grants for MG community gardening projects](#)
- MG county extension office support
- Scholarships for incoming MG interns
- [The Laurel quarterly newsletter](#)

Please consider using our secure online application and payment process by visiting our website at [Membership > CMGA Membership](#). Thank you.

(End of Issue)