

Garden Conservancy News

PRESERVING, SHARING, AND CELEBRATING AMERICA'S GARDENS

DECEMBER 2020



Greenwood Gardens' restored Reflecting Pool Terrace, with the D-shaped pool completely rebuilt and once again functional, and the sculptures of leaping dolphins restored. The circular beds surrounding the pool feature colorful perennials, annuals, and shrubs that celebrate the Arts & Crafts history of the garden.

Greenwood photos are courtesy of Greenwood Gardens.

Greenwood Gardens: Pathway to Preservation

By Tovah Martin

Greenwood Gardens in Short Hills, NJ, recently undertook a major phase of renovations to the gardens' main axis and fountains, completing the final piece of the main axis—the Garden of the Gods—just in time to reopen to the public on September 13. We asked longtime Garden Conservancy member and prolific garden writer Tovah Martin to provide a perspective on this most recent transformation of the Arts & Crafts garden.

Visitors to Greenwood Gardens can now brush by columns bowered in ultra-fragrant roses and file between borders bedded in dianthus to experience bountiful gardens like they never savored before. Rebooting this lushness and bringing it into the public arena did not happen overnight.

When visitors arrive at Greenwood Gardens, they sail past an allée of London

plane trees before parking and stepping into a verdant experience that feels strikingly patinaed. Abby O'Neill, the executive director of Greenwood Gardens, recalls how perfectly that allée set up the saga when she first visited the Short Hills, NJ, estate in 2014. Abby had traveled to Greenwood for meetings in the house overlooking the gardens when their restoration was merely a goal in the future. At that time, many view lines had not been pruned clear. The fountains were not functional. And yet, she was impressed. It made an impact. Years and a whole lot of hard work later, it is all coming to fruition. And now that she is part of the project, Abby O'Neill is one facet of a unified, extremely dedicated team. As everyone involved will reaffirm: the path to restoring straight axes and impressive allées is not a straight line. Even more so—going

from a private to a public garden is rarely streamlined. It is circuitous; it is fraught with decisions and possible setbacks that can be downright dicey. That said, fulfillment energizes every step along the way. And that is what preservation is all about.

Greenwood Gardens is now stepping into its fruition stage and the public is enthusiastically invited to share the fruits of a second phase of major renovation, the "main axis project" that was recently completed in September. Fountains have been restored, paving stones reset, walls repaired, and perennials installed. The splendor and splash of fountains ringed with plantings and framing the view of further fountains is electrifying. But it is far from finished. Greenwood Gardens has come a long way, but there are still miles to go. Deputy Director Rich Murphy, who has been actively

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Preserving Gardens through Legacy Giving

The Garden Conservancy is a small organization with an outsize national impact. Through our extensive educational programming, we share both resources and inspiration with our vast community of garden lovers. In 2020, we also provided preservation services to more than 45 gardens nationwide.

Because the work of the Conservancy is more relevant than ever, we also need your support more than ever. We are extraordinarily grateful to all of you who have continued to support us, in whatever way possible, through this year of challenges and uncertainty, ensuring that the Garden Conservancy remains as strong and steadfast in our mission as ever.

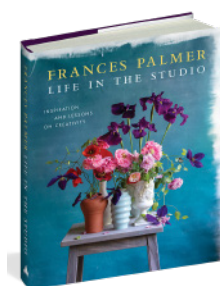
As you all know, there are many ways to support the work of the Garden Conservancy; legacy giving can be one of the most meaningful and creative. Planned gifts of all kinds make a real impact on the long-term health of our organization.

If your estate plan includes the Garden Conservancy, we would love to know! For more information about planned giving, suggested bequest language, or other resources, please contact Sarah Parker, our director of development, at sparker@gardenconservancy.org.

Holiday Books

Books make great holiday gifts for all the garden enthusiasts on your list—including yourself! Be sure to consider all the great new gardening books that were released this year and featured in our Fall 2020 Literary Series.

In addition, renowned potter and frequent Open Days garden host Frances Palmer also has written a new book, ***Life in the Studio: Inspiration and Lessons on Creativity*** (Workman Publishing Co., October 2020). Frances will be presenting a program in February as part of our winter/spring webinar series.



You can also share the celebration of 25 wonderful years of our Open Days program by purchasing extra copies of ***#OpenDays25: A Quarter Century of America's Gardeners and Their Gardens*** through our website, gardenconservancy.org. The creativity and generosity of the thousands of garden creators and owners who have shared their private gardens with the public in 41 states never ceases to inspire us.



In Memoriam

We are deeply saddened by the news of the passing of Coleman P. Burke, the husband of longtime Garden Conservancy board member Susan Burke, in early November. "Coley" was the founder and managing partner of Waterfront Properties, a New York City-based commercial real estate company. He and Susan shared their gardens in Bedford, NY, and Nantucket, MA, through our Open Days program many times, were both active in many Garden Conservancy programs, and were generous supporters of our preservation and education work. They established the Susan and Coleman Burke Distinguished Lecture Fund at the Garden Conservancy. Coley also had a strong interest in archaeology and environmental issues, participating in searches for dinosaur bones in Patagonia and Wyoming, and even had the honor of having a new dinosaur species named after him, *Orcoraptor burkei*. We send our deepest condolences to Susan and the family.



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Seeds have always represented both optimism and continuity for gardeners, farmers, and others. Seeds are also keepers of cultural traditions, shared with friends and passed along through generations.

As we approached the end of a most unusual year, we asked friends around the country to share with us photos of seeds and fruit in their gardens. A few of the submissions are featured here and in our holiday card series.

Left to right: Autumn foliage and berries of our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) submitted by Shaun Spencer-Hester, executive director of the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum in Lynchburg, VA; Himalayan yew (*Taxus wallichiana* var. *chinensis*), part of the extensive plant collection at the John Fairey Garden, submitted by Randy Twaddle, executive director at the Hempstead, TX, garden; and a seed pod of the woodland peony (*Paeonia japonica*) from Sakonnet Garden in Little Compton, RI, submitted by Mikel Folcarelli and John Gwynne.



A Preservation Milestone and Seeds of Renewal

One of the questions that people most frequently ask me is “Can a garden REALLY be preserved?” Not surprisingly, I have strong opinions about the topic and (after a deep breath) I respond, “Of course... gardens *can* and *should* be preserved!”

With that in mind, I am always looking for great examples to support my case. This edition's feature on Greenwood Gardens in Short Hills, NJ, is a particularly stunning example of a garden restoration that gets everything right, from creating appropriate and sensitive new visitor amenities to innovative responses to the ecological needs of the greater site. As garden historian Judith Tankard reminds us, Greenwood is arguably one of the most important gardens in the Arts & Crafts style that still exists in America. Visitors to this beautiful garden can once again enjoy its remarkable design (with its restored fountains) in a completeness not seen in more than 30 years. The Garden Conservancy is proud of our ongoing relationship with Greenwood Gardens and its visionary leadership team.

When weather, distance, and an unforeseen global pandemic makes visiting gardens both more precious and more problematic, reading about them offers an escape and a chance to learn from examples in the greater world. Thanks to our friend and noted garden writer Tovah Martin for her excellent and very personal glimpse into Greenwood Gardens. Tovah, a Garden Conservancy member, has hosted a number of sold-out Digging Deeper programs during Open Days. In coming issues of our newsletter we look forward to inviting more of our friends as guest writers to bring more garden

voices around America to the fore, and to celebrate a wealth of different points of view.

We are very saddened to have lost a great friend of the Garden Conservancy, Coleman “Coley” Burke, a longtime member of our Society of Fellows, and the beloved husband of Conservancy board member Susan Burke. Coley was truly a gentleman of the old school and deeply committed to making the world a better place. His numerous environmental philanthropies, some of which are noted in a remembrance in this issue, have left a lasting legacy. At the Garden Conservancy, the Susan and Coleman Burke Distinguished Lecture Fund has allowed us to bring thought leaders from the garden world to audiences across America. He will be truly missed.

In the near future we look forward to sharing with you news about next year's Open Days season, which is evolving to recognize the challenges of the continuing pandemic. We will also be publishing our next series of webinars, which will commence early in the new year, and our next garden documentation film, a portrait of Rocky Hills in Mount Kisco, NY, will premiere in December.

Wishing you all lovely and safe holidays and a New Year full of promise,


James Brayton Hall
President and CEO

Greenwood Gardens: Pathway to Preservation continued from page 1

involved in the Greenwood Gardens project for seventeen years is the first to say, "There's no shortage of projects here." Coming on board when Greenwood Gardens was overgrown and consumed in briars and tangled in vines, he has tackled everything from the initial fence upgrades and hedge pruning when he first arrived to flooding and crumbling infrastructure as the property went public. But he is also quick to enthuse on the side perks of preservation, "I love it here. There are so many layers to this place." Thanks to Rich Murphy's insight and efforts to lead a team through the many hoops of preservation, a whole lot of people can now share a green jewel. "The best thing about doing all this work is seeing people's faces when they come," he says.

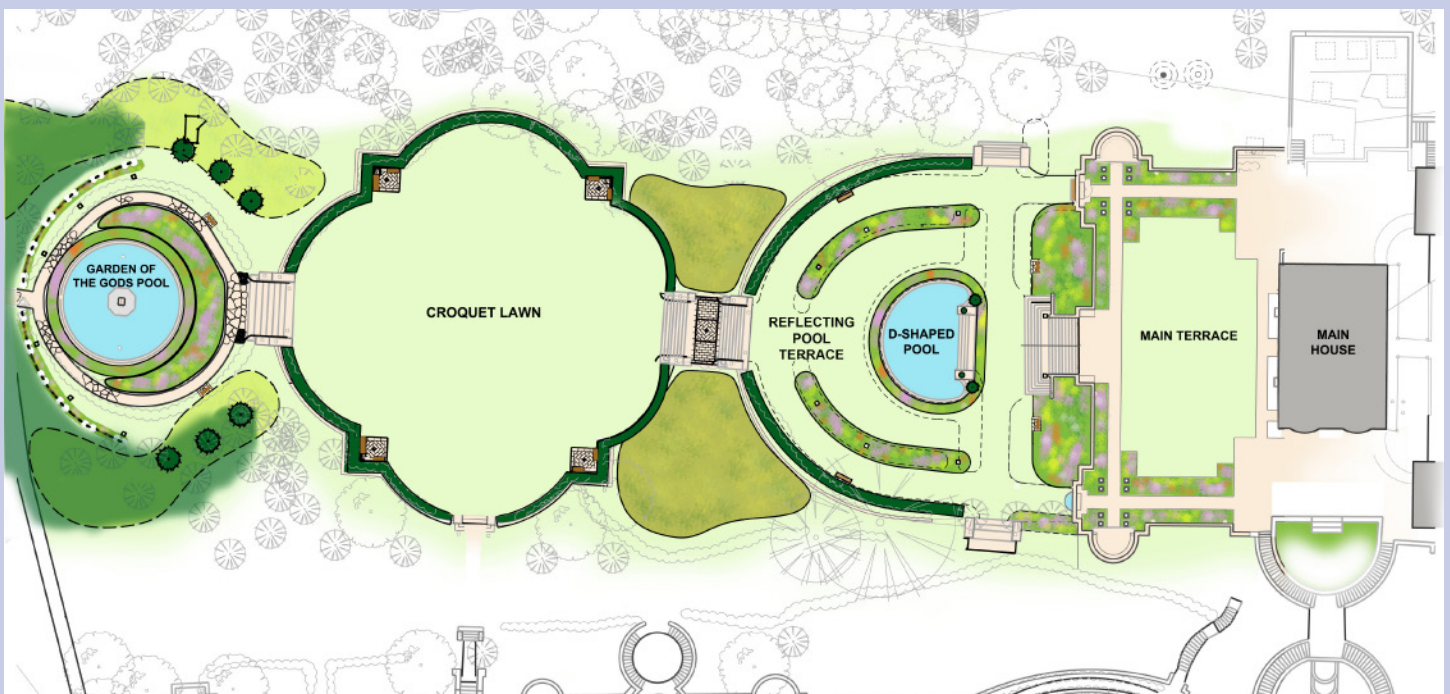
Part of the beauty of Greenwood Gardens is its multi-faceted past. It truly has a lot of jewels to offer. Originally named Pleasant Days and the country home of New York City real estate tycoon Joseph P. Day, the property was purchased in 1906 and evolved as his fortune swelled. Gradually, he laid out a flamboyant ode to floriferous gardens and grand axial symmetry against the backdrop of a wooded ridge. When the original house was destroyed by fire, neighbor and architect William Whetten

Renwick designed a magnificent 28-room Italianate mansion. Flowing down from that house, an equally impressive Arts & Crafts formal garden was developed, complete with loggias, ornate stone pavilions, and fountains accented by sumptuous and idiosyncratic statuary galore. Walls were inlaid with a fanciful collection of Rookwood tiles; a staircase cascade was installed. All those elements remained in the family until Day passed away in 1944. For five years, the garden sat in absentee ownership while many of the original features disappeared due to vandalism and theft. In 1949, lawyer Peter Blanchard, Jr. bought what had become a 28-acre property primarily for the potential of bridle paths that he could explore on horseback with his wife, Adelaide. At that point, the house was in such a state of disrepair that the Blanchards opted to rebuild a more modest brick Colonial Revival home overlooking the garden. The fountains and garden were also showing their age. "The walls had not been built with an eye toward longevity," his son explains.

Meanwhile, suburbia was being developed nearby, prompting the Blanchards to plant allées of Norway spruce and London plane trees as buffer zones and to block sight lines. They renamed the estate Green-

woods and simplified the plant repertoire, making the gardens less floriferous and more streamlined with yew, boxwood, and other evergreens to replace the flower beds. While all this was going on, Peter Blanchard III was born and grew up on the property. His spare time was spent playing in the woods and enjoying the more natural areas on the property. "It was an unusual and wonderful place to grow up, but it was also isolating to live in such a grand place. I preferred to secret myself in the forest and fields where I developed a love of nature. Those places were full of magic." In Greenwood's wild spaces, he forged the first rustlings of a lifetime devoted to environmental activism and conservation. Today, 2,200 acres of land bounding Greenwood are now protected and conserved parkland.

Peter Blanchard III now lives in New York City and Maine, where he has stewarded two islands as nature preserves. His personal choice is for a simpler lifestyle than would be possible at Greenwood. His father felt strongly that his estate should be preserved. In his later years, his father met with Frank Cabot, knowing that the founder of the Garden Conservancy might be able to steer Greenwood into a public presence. Together they walked the property in 1992. During



Architect's rendering of new design for Greenwood Gardens' main axis. In addition to renovations to the main axis shown above, parking capacity was tripled, the oval garden in the forecourt of the house replanted, a new gatehouse erected, and a rain garden installed near the gatehouse to minimize the environmental impact of storm water runoff.



Closeup of Rookwood tiles in the Greenwood Gardens' Bench Grotto

Greenwood Gardens' Unique Rookwood Tiles

Greenwood Gardens combines formal and informal elements in its design and features, blending Arts & Crafts, Italianate, and rustic structures, all with touches of whimsy and playfulness. In addition to terraces adorned with decorative majolica vases and bright blue elephant-shaped planters, Greenwood is home to an outdoor collection of Rookwood tiles, unparalleled for the breadth and intact condition of its unique ceramics more than a century old. The colorful Arts & Crafts ceramic pieces that adorn Greenwood Gardens' Summerhouse, Teahouse, Reflecting Pool Terrace wall, and cottages were created by the Rookwood Pottery Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Founded in 1880 by pioneering artist Maria Longworth-Nichols, Rookwood

became a world-renowned ceramics studio, attracting the attention of famed artists and ceramicists all over the world.

Landscape historian Judith B. Tankard reports that it is thought that William Renwick (nephew of James Renwick, Jr., famed architect of Saint Patrick's Cathedral) may have designed Greenwood's Rookwood ceramics when he was commissioned in 1912 to create a country mansion and garden for New York real estate tycoon Joseph P. Day. The remnants of the Day estate buildings and landscape became Greenwood Gardens in 2003.

This Rookwood tile information was adapted from information supplied by Greenwood Gardens.



Renovation of the Reflecting Pool Terrace, clockwise from top left: excavation, preparing forms for concrete, new structure taking shape, and grading and planting around the finished pool basin.



Top left, the Garden of the Gods pool circa 1965; top right, installation of large replacement panels around the pool; main photo, new foundation for pool.

that meeting, Frank Cabot was realistic about revealing the hurdles that successful transition to a public garden entail. Nonetheless, Peter Blanchard, Jr. urged his son to share his garden with the public. In 2003, after his father passed away, Peter Blanchard III and his wife, Sofia Blanchard, took the first steps to create a nonprofit organization. When he contacted the Garden Conservancy, Peter found a ready resource to help with the uphill battle. Through the Garden Conservancy, Bill Noble served as advisor to the transition. With his and the Garden Conservancy's crucial help, the Short Hills garden began its first forays into bringing the public to their gem.

Restoration entails a constant litany of physical issues posed by the land and its maintenance. But simultaneously, decisions must be made concerning the translation and transition of the past into the present and future. The team came up with a brilliant pathway to make moving forward more manageable. Any garden with a long history faces difficult decisions about how to proceed. Purely practical issues such as parking, accessibility, and public safety must be addressed and answered. Early in the venture, they realized that limited parking

would curtail the public's ability to experience their landscape, so a new parking lot was high on the priority list. They needed restrooms and appropriate sewage hookups (previously, each building was fitted with its own individual septic system). Staircases were crumbling. Rich Murphy was responsible for organizing teams to tackle solutions for all these issues and more. He handled all the huge impediments and all the minutiae with characteristic energy and effectiveness.

Plenty of practical issues were being solved behind the scenes. But meanwhile, the over-arching philosophy guiding the restoration required examination before creating a game plan for the future. Together with Bill Noble and the Garden Conservancy, a feasibility study was mapped to start the process. With the help of a consultant, a truly ingenious and comprehensive strategic plan was crafted in 2016 to streamline restoration. They created a timeline for defining the various eras of the estate. The Day Era—between 1906 and 1944—was its Arts & Crafts iteration when the idiosyncratic hardscape was established and embellished with elements such as the Rookwood tiles set into the walls, giving the

landscape its inimitable personality. Then came the Blanchard Era between 1949 and 2002, when the garden was simplified to substitute a greener, less fussy palette that could be maintained by a smaller gardening staff. Both of those eras are expressed in the landscape. But the beauty of the plan was to define a new forward-thinking era to move the garden ahead. The current era—which has been named the Greenwood Gardens Era—is its public persona. As Abby O'Neill says, "We can now preserve this place and connect with the public for the common good." Landscapes are forever evolving. To allow the garden to merge the past with current understandings concerning the environment and horticulture, it was critical to create an amalgamation era to allow flexibility. Of course, the staff strives to honor the past in everything they do. But they also need to move forward and incorporate the present into the land rather than slavishly attempting to hold the line in a venue that, by nature, is always changing. The Greenwood Gardens Era is an avenue toward a sustainable garden with a future.

Given the pliability needed to progress, the garden began to take shape. Louis



Two concrete obelisks set atop elephants frame the restored Garden of the Gods at the end of the main axis. The bronze Boy with Waterfowl sculpture in the center of the pool is flanked by a pair of concrete putti and surrounded by carefully restored antique cedar trellises.

Bauer served as director of horticulture at Greenwood Gardens for ten years before taking his current position at Wave Hill. For the last five years, Sonia Uytterhoeven has served as Greenwood Gardens' head of horticulture. Rather than focusing solely on plants that were popular in the past, Greenwood Gardens made the decision to work with the finest plant material available now. "Education is high on our priority list," explains Sonia, "so we want plants that are unusual and interesting." They also hope to share their knowledge of horticulture with visitors. Comprehensive labeling is featured throughout the grounds to share perennials, trees, and shrubs that the team has selected for the site [see a few examples on the next page]. Planting on the terraced landscape of a ridge, these plants are drought-tolerant and hard-working as well as noteworthy for their performance and beauty. Ultra-savvy, well-versed in the state of the art, and a cheerleader for great garden choices, Sonia loves to share what she has learned. "The public can see these plants in action," she enthuses.

Greenwood Gardens has steered the gardens through a series of challenging res-

toration projects. Fountains were repaired while statuary was taken out of storage and readied for display. Rich Murphy is forever sweating the details, working with landscape architect Alan Summers and his team at Robinson, Anderson, and Summers, Inc. to draw up site plans. Every aspect has been carefully considered. For example, when fountains and staircases were repaired and rebuilt this year, the new work was sand-blasted to instantly etch it with a sense of age. New solutions were plugged in when problems arose. When the parking lot was installed, storm water issues were resolved by installing a rain garden planted with thirsty iris, mallow, daylilies, ornamental grasses, winterberries, and dogwood. Occasionally, seemingly obstructing elements were left intact—like the bedrock that was uncovered when repairing a wall. Deemed the remnant from an ancient lava flow, the bedrock was preserved and the wall built around it. While repairing the lattice-work screens around the fountain in the tier known as the Garden of the Gods, the cost was reduced when staff member Joaquin Febrero undertook the craftwork personally. Although every project has its

challenges—especially during the Covid-19 pandemic—this dedicated team is all about solutions. They were deservedly proud to reopen in September when the public desperately needed to commune with nature and beauty.

As a result, Greenwood Gardens is moving gracefully into the future. With two fountains repaired and functional, plus plantings installed on all the terraces, they can offer an experience that brings past and present together. And people are coming to see the results, much to their delight. Everyone involved is eager to point out that the rewards of going public are many and exhilarating. On many weekends, Peter Blanchard III comes to Greenwood Gardens and mingles with visitors just to share the experience and enjoy their reactions. "They walk on the same gravel that was under my feet when I played in the garden. They smell the same scent of lilacs in the air. Seeing other folks becoming part of that experience is incredible. It's not a private world anymore—it's a shared experience," he explains.

Tovah Martin is the author of many books, most recently The Garden in Every Sense and Season.

“Greenwood Gardens has evolved to reflect current understandings. We have added flowering plants, shrubs, and trees for pollinators. Now, Greenwood Gardens resonates with the sounds of frogs, cicadas, crickets, and katydids—just like I heard when I was a child. Great blue herons stalk their prey, wood ducks nest beside ponds, and great horned owls call to each other in the nearby forest. We host the cross-fertilization of horticulture, nature, sculpture, and design. We’re so proud to be a partner in the Garden Conservancy’s national endeavor of advice and support.”

— Peter Blanchard III



GREENWOOD GARDENS: A PREMIUM PLANT PALETTE

By Tovah Martin

In its endeavor to educate as well as dazzle the public, Greenwood Gardens is dedicated to presenting a treasure trove of novel plants in their gardens. From perennials to shrubs and trees, the horticulture team has found the very finest plants to profile. Plus, the team prides itself in providing signage to identify what you see. Bring a pad and pen when you visit! Here are just a handful of the highlights on their grounds:

***Baptisia Decadence*® 'Lemon Meringue':** False indigos have stepped into the fore based on their summer performance to please pollinators. This lemon-yellow version forms a tidy 3-foot mound topped with spires of flowers above gray-silver leaves.

***Calamintha nepeta* 'Montrose White':** A marvelously bulletproof pollinator-pleaser, 'Montrose White' forms neat mounds of deeply scented leaves that send their fragrance up to your nose when you brush past the compact plant. Spires of many tiny snow white flowers top each stalk.

***Calycanthus x raulstonii* 'Hartlage Wine':** In the woodland garden surrounding the Garden of the Gods, this tidy shrub spends the bulk of the season bearing 3-inch, multi-petaled blossoms in a glowing burgundy. A light spicy scent flows from the flowers.

***Dianthus American Pie*® 'Key Lime Pie':** A novelty combining stubborn hardiness with profuse and fragrant flowers in a rare color combo, each white flower of 'Key Lime Pie' bears a marked chartreuse lime “eye” topping stems sufficiently strong to hold the flowers face up.

***Disanthus cercidifolius*:** Throughout most of the growing season, this member of the witch hazel family is simply an elegant presence clothed in tidy rounded leaves. In late summer, it produces tiny blossoms. But the real show comes in autumn when the foliage turns raging orange before floating to the ground.

Top to bottom: *Calycanthus x raulstonii* 'Hartlage Wine', *Disanthus cercidifolius*, *Phlomis russeliana*, *Pulmonaria* 'Raspberry Splash', and *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* 'Henry Eilers'

***Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'St. Ola':** Forming a clean white presence around the house when visitors first arrive at Greenwood Gardens, this hardy geranium is valued for its tidy mounds of notched leaves. Those mounds spend the bulk of the year dappled in pure white blossoms that work beautifully with roses.

***Phlomis russeliana*:** Any perennial that can perform in scorching sun and drought is welcome in a garden, but Turkish sage adds extreme hardiness to its profile. Even before its midsummer flowering spree, heart-shaped felted silver leaves are attractive. When whorls of butter yellow blossoms top the foliage, the perennial is a conversation piece.

***Pulmonaria* 'Raspberry Splash':** A novel spin on the traditional lungwort, 'Raspberry Splash' adds a color tweak to the traditional blue spring blossoms that are beloved as a prelude to the major spring rush. Opening raspberry and aging to purple, the flowers are tucked between strong spotted leaves that stand firm through summer.

***Rudbeckia subtomentosa* 'Henry Eilers':** Perennials that perform late in the season are at a premium, so Sonia was delighted to find this novelty as an accent for the upper fountain garden. Taller than your average coneflower, this version stands 4-5 feet topped by flowers accented with quill-shaped, rolled petals.

***Veronica* 'Venice Blue':** True blue is a rare color in the summer garden, making this speedwell a particularly valuable asset. Planted around the upper fountain, the gentian blue spires of 'Venice Blue' can be easily seen to sparkle from a distance.

Virtual Programs Build Community and Extend Our Reach

Everyone who knows the Garden Conservancy knows that we thrive on building and supporting our national community of gardeners and garden lovers. There is nothing that pleases us more than to welcome guests into hundreds of private gardens all across the country through Open Days. We also relish the opportunity to provide deep engagement with gardening topics in our Digging Deeper programs, Garden Masters Series, Society of Fellows garden-study tours, and national speaker series. Unfortunately, none of that was possible in 2020.

Even so, more than ever, all of us recognized the vital importance of connecting with the outdoors through our gardens and the incredible strength that we derive by interacting with our community. During this time it has been even more important for the Garden Conservancy to bring together our community in affirmation of the healing power of gardens. We believe that gardeners all speak a common language. Regardless of whether you garden on a small terrace in New York City, on a large property in the suburbs of Chicago, or on a ranch in San Antonio, our shared love for tending plants and creating places of beauty and respite ties us together as a family. That connection is what makes the Garden Conservancy so special, especially when we cannot travel to see each other's gardens in person.

In that spirit of community and connectedness, the Garden Conservancy launched our first-ever virtual programs in 2020—a series that has been so successful that we are now fully committed to continuing with virtual learning long after the pandemic subsides and in-person visiting and learning opportunities can resume.

This past summer, we partnered with Lord Cultural Resources, an international service agency that advises museums and other cultural nonprofits on organizational planning, to present **"Gardens for a Changing World,"** a four-part webinar series that examined the many ways that gardens can address and help solve some of the greatest cultural, environmental, and economic shifts of our time.

We are now nearing the conclusion of our **Fall 2020 Literary Series**, which is featuring seven authors of some of the year's most celebrated garden books. Thanks to our wonderful partners at Timber Press and Monacelli Press, we were also able to offer books to participants at steep discounts, enabling them to enjoy the books and learn from them at home. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, we have been able to make these webinars available to our members starting at only \$5—the same as the discounted member price for advance purchase of Open Days tickets. After the conclusion of the series in late December, recordings of all of the Literary Series programs will be available for a limited time to everyone, free of charge.

More than 7,700 people have participated in our 2020 virtual learning opportunities to date. Many thanks for your enthusiastic support!

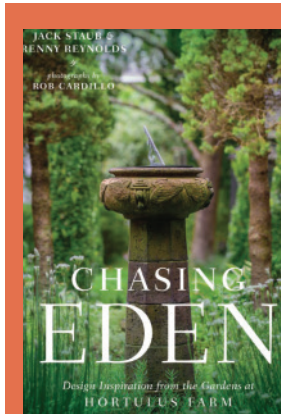
We have exciting programming in the works for 2021, and we look forward to announcing a full program schedule in the near future. Keep an eye out for our winter series of virtual talks, to start in early February and run through May. They will feature an exemplary lineup of artists, authors, garden professionals, and landscape architects.

As a sneak preview, we are thrilled to announce that one of our 2021 headline speakers will be **Walter Hood**, the renowned landscape architect behind Hood Design Studio in Oakland, CA, a social art and design practice with a tripartite focus on art, design, and urbanism. Among his many accolades and awards, Walter was a 2019 recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship, commonly known as the "genius grant." He is the landscape architect commissioned for the renovation of the Oakland Museum of California's rooftop and terrace gardens—a project supported through a Garden Conservancy preservation grant in recognition of the groundbreaking landscape's critical connections to the Oakland community, as well as in recognition of the garden's innovative design of a public space. Walter also co-edited the new book *Black Landscapes Matter* (University of Virginia Press, November 2020), which examines how race, memory, and meaning intersect in the American landscape.

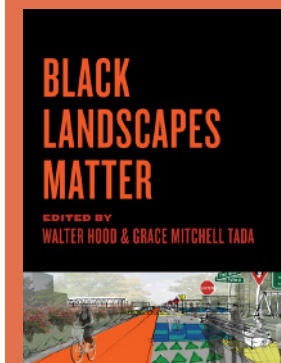
Walter Hood is just one of many acclaimed speakers we will be presenting next year. Many more details are forthcoming, including dates, times, and registration information. There will be programs that will appeal to everyone, from enthusiastic amateur gardener to lifelong professional. Keep an eye on our website and check your mailboxes for more information.

The Garden Conservancy thanks our sponsors for their inspirational generosity. Garden Conservancy education programs are made possible in part by the Susan and Coleman Burke Distinguished Lecture Fund, the Lenhardt Education Fund, and the Celia Hegyi Matching Grant, with additional support from Ritchie Battle, Mrs. Camille Butrus, Melissa and John Ceriale, and Susan and William McKinley.

Our Fall 2020 Literary Series was made possible thanks to additional generous gifts from Courtney and Terrence Daniels, Mary and Steven Read, Philip and Shelley Belling, Diane and Jim Connelly, Robert and Betty Balentine, Mary Randolph Ballinger, John Bernatz and Joseph Marek, Richard and Missy Fisher, Ms. Jane Freeman, Margaret and John Given, Mr. and Mrs. Coleman P. Burke, Mr. and Mrs. J. Patterson McBaine, and Sandra Swanson.



Upcoming webinars will include the final session of our Fall 2020 Literary Series, a presentation by Renny Reynolds (above). Virtual programs in 2021 will include a talk by landscape architect and MacArthur Fellow Walter Hood (below).



Planning the 2021 Open Days Season



A few of the many hydrangeas in Betty and Walter Montgomery's garden in Campobello, SC.
Photo by Dick Carr

A few highlights: Kentucky and Tennessee to return, South Carolina to expand

Planning is well underway for our 2021 season of Open Days. We look forward to welcoming back the states of Kentucky and Tennessee to our Open Days program next year and are delighted that we will also be expanding Open Days in South Carolina. One of the exciting gardens projected to open in Louisville, KY, belongs to Allen and Rose Bush. A seedsman, Allen is the former director of special projects for Jelitto Perennial Seeds, dealing with 3,700 different seed choices of perennials, alpiners, herbs, and ornamental grasses. Located in the Crescent Hill neighborhood near the Olmsted-designed Cherokee Park, his garden contains many unusual perennials and scree beds. The garden was last part of Open Days in 2009 and also was featured in a Society of Fellows garden-study tour that year.

A 2021 Open Day is also being planned in Knoxville, TN, and will include the garden of new

Garden Conservancy board member Sharon Pryse and her husband, Joseph. Designed by the celebrated and now late Atlanta-based garden designer Ryan Gainey, their garden is on a steep hillside overlooking the Tennessee River and features a formal rose garden with hybrid teas and a meandering walk down to the river through various David Austin roses and hydrangeas, as well as cultivars of daylilies.

In South Carolina, an Open Day at Campobello, just north of Spartanburg, will include the garden of Betty and Walter Montgomery, originally designed by Richard Webel of Innocenti and Webel. Hydrangeas are an important element in this garden and are the topic of Betty's second book, *Hydrangeas: How to Grow, Cultivate, and Enjoy* (James Richards, publisher, 2017), in which she shares her knowledge of growing them for more than twenty years.



A view of Sharon and Joseph Pryse's hillside garden in Knoxville, TN. Photo courtesy of Finch Photography

Gardens are good for health and we plan on keeping it that way!

We are collecting specific data about our 2021 Open Day gardens so that we can orchestrate safe garden visits for everyone: visitors, hosts, and volunteers. As the health situation is uncertain, visitor numbers may be limited. Time slots and pre-registered tickets are some of the options we may put in place, as necessary, to assure safe and wonderful adventures through the gate and down the garden path. The latest state

and federal guidelines and recommendations will always be heeded. Even without these added health precautions, which may change and unfold over the Open Days season, we always encourage you to verify in advance the latest status of all Open Days and other educational programs on our website, where you can find up-to-date information, additional programs, the latest webinars, and other news. www.gardenconservancy.org



Roses in bloom at Blithewold Mansion Gardens & Arboretum in Bristol, RI Photo courtesy of Blithewold Mansion

In Rhode Island: Multiple events and a new nonprofit partner



Saturday, June 12, 2021, is scheduled to be the first of the two consecutive Open Day weekends working with our newest nonprofit partner, the Providence Preservation Society. Its mission is “working to improve Providence by advocating for historic preservation and the enhancement of the city’s unique character through thoughtful design and planning.” The weekend will feature gardens in the city of Providence and with connections to historic properties. One of them, Powder

House, built circa 1765, held gunpowder during the American Revolution. It has since had multiple incarnations, including serving as the coachman’s house for a nearby mansion in the nineteenth century and, in the 1970s, the home and studio of architect David Aldrich and his wife, who started a garden. Since 2018, owners Andrew Raftery and Ned Lochaya, both gardeners, have been adding their own green touches.

On the following Saturday, June 19, together with Blithewold Mansion Gardens & Arboretum, we will be featuring gardens in Bristol and Newport counties. A Digging Deeper educational event, “Landscape in Translation: Arts & Crafts Ideas in the 21st Century,” is also scheduled for that afternoon. It includes a walking tour of Blithewold’s 33-acre garden overlooking the Narragansett Bay, led by John Tschirch, an architectural historian and honorary member of the Garden Club of America; Fred Perry, Blithewold’s director of horticulture; and Gail Read, Blithewold’s gardens and greenhouse manager.

Later next summer, Sakonnet Garden, in Little Compton, also plans to open its garden gates on Sunday, August 22, for a special Open Day event that will benefit local wildflower meadow restoration as well as the broader mission of the Garden Conservancy to preserve, share, and celebrate America’s gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public.



The dome of the Rhode Island State House rises beyond the garden at the historic Powder House in Providence. Photo courtesy of Andrew Raftery



Top to bottom: Memberships are up 50 percent this year at PowellsWood Garden in Federal Way, WA.

Since July, Manitoga, the home, studio, and 75-acre woodland garden of mid-century designer Russel Wright (1904-1976) in Garrison, NY, has experienced a surge in visitation. It welcomed the public to experience nature, art, and design safely through timed visits.

Family Day at LongHouse Reserve, East Hampton, NY



Attendance Soars at Public Gardens

This year has been filled with ups and downs. Turbulent times, however, often reveal what is most important. Our garden partners—a community that reaches across the country—can attest to the fact that public gardens are important to many of us and to our communities.

During the months when many public sites were not accessible, gardens everywhere were blooming and verdant behind their closed gates. Public gardens answered the need by providing livestreams, virtual tours, and other online garden experiences that kept people going during the depth of the pandemic. Even a virtual garden visit made lockdowns a little more bearable. And when the gates were allowed to open, visitors flocked to the gardens in their area—socially distanced, of course! Why are public gardens so important to our communities? The benefits of open space, plants, and trees—green and vibrant resources—became clearer than ever: gardens make people feel good.

It should come as no surprise, then, that over the last few months, the public has “voted” with their feet and their wallets. Garden Conservancy partners tell us that 2020 has

brought record increases in attendance. The Yakima Area Arboretum, 46-acres of cultivated green space in central Washington State, has seen visitation go up 300% this year. Manitoga,

the landmarked, woodland garden and home of mid-century designer Russel Wright in Garrison, NY, has had a 375% increase in visitors, a trend reported by many other historic homes—and people are coming specifically for the landscape.

Not only are people visiting gardens in larger numbers than ever, they are also making a commit-

ment to those gardens. Memberships are up 50 percent this year, says Justin Henderson, garden director at PowellsWood Garden, a three-acre Northwest pleasure garden in Federal Way, WA. Donors, too, are contributing generously to these vital spaces that allow us to be together, experience beauty, and feel hopeful about the future. Randy Twaddle, executive director of the John Fairey Garden, a 39-acre collection of over 3,000 plants in Hempstead, TX, reports that the garden's recent virtual gala rocketed past their original fundraising goal, doubling it! Randy reflects, “There is probably nothing that illustrates ‘this too shall pass’ better than a garden.” We agree!



Conservation Easements: Communication and Stewardship During the Pandemic

Passing through the ornate iron gate of the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden in Charlotte, NC, visitors see a lush symmetrical grid with pathways that enclose the circular pond. This is the home of author and renowned southern gardener, Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1985), the first licensed female landscape architect to graduate from the University of North Carolina. Here, Elizabeth Lawrence cultivated a wide range of both heirloom plants and modern cultivars, studied their habits, and used the experience as the grist for her columns in the *Charlotte Observer* and for the four books published during her years here. This is also the site of one of the Garden Conservancy's eight conservation easements.

Of the many tools in our preservation toolkit, conservation easements play a very important role, protecting significant American gardens in perpetuity. A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or government agency (the "holder" of the easement), which protects a property's important conservation values (special attributes, like its gardens). Easements permanently limit uses that might damage or destroy those values. Easements remain in effect indefinitely—all subsequent owners of the property are bound by its restrictions. Typical conservation easement restrictions might prohibit activities like subdivision, or construction of any new structures, or modifying the layout of paths and other landscape features.

The Garden Conservancy approaches easement stewardship as a partnership with garden leadership and property owners at the public and private gardens where we hold easements. Our stewardship obligations include monitoring (site visits to observe current conditions at the garden) and, if necessary, following up if there has been a violation of the easement's prohibitions. We have also begun holding regular easement orientations for our partners to review each of our roles and responsibilities and to essentially "renew our vows."

As with all relationships, good communication is key. Under normal circumstances, we visit the gardens

in person for the annual monitoring, and maintain contact throughout the year. With travel restrictions in place, we have turned to *virtual* monitoring with Zoom and FaceTime in place of our boots-on-the-ground garden visits.

During our recent virtual monitoring visit to the Elizabeth Lawrence House & Garden, garden curator Andrea Sprott "Zoomed" us into the garden from our remote workspaces in New York and we saw delicate autumn-blooming snowflakes (*Leucojum autumnale*) in full bloom along with crimson oxblood lilies (*Rhodophiala bifida*). We also witnessed the aftermath of the invasive *Nothoscordum fragrans* bulb in a perennial bed and the restoration of a historic stone wall that was unearthed during excavation of that bed.

This year, we have also increased the frequency of "check-in" calls with easement partners allowing us to keep current and learn about recent developments or achievements (e.g., restoration of a historic terrace or resolution of irrigation problems), and to advise on current challenges (such as replacement strategies for historic trees, or techniques for managing and documenting a horticultural collection). Video calls are a surprisingly good way to maintain personal connections and monitor during this time, but we look forward to walking the gardens and visiting our partners in person again. Until then, as Elizabeth Lawrence said: "Everyone must take time to sit and watch the leaves turn."

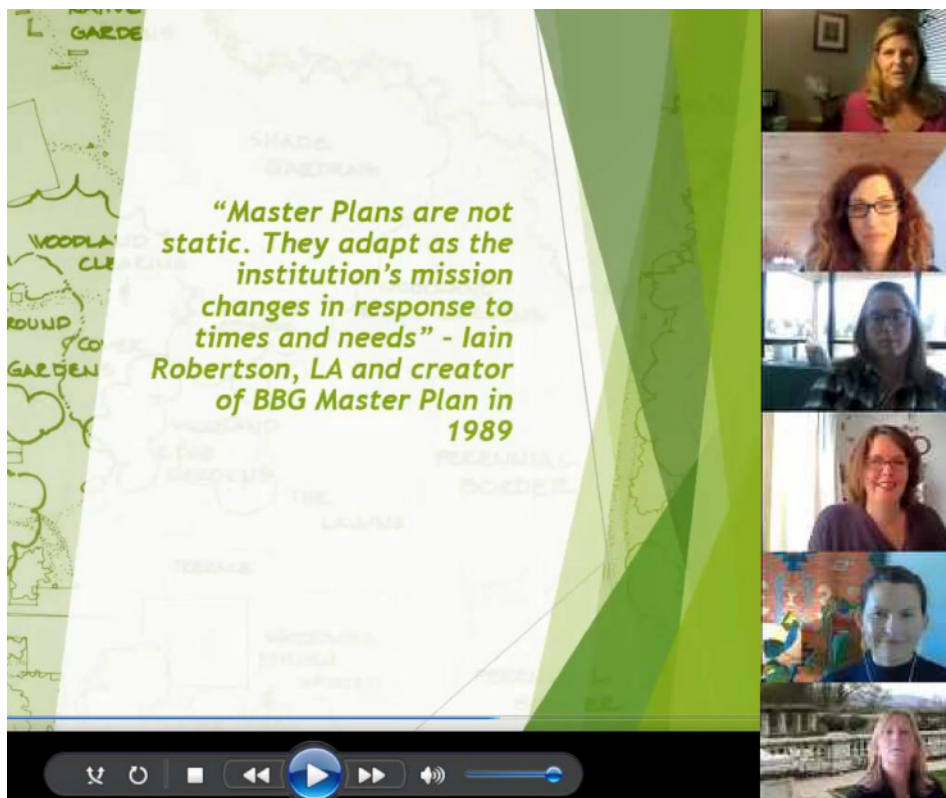


Above: Garden curator Andrea Sprott at the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden

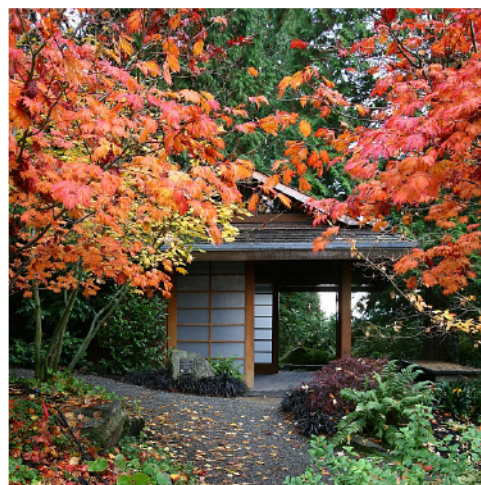
Below: Oxblood lilies at the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden in Charlotte, NC.

Photos courtesy of Andrea Sprott





A snapshot from the “Master Planning for Public Gardens” webinar held on November 5 with Garden Conservancy Northwest Network participants. Two case studies of master planning experiences, one at Yakima Area Arboretum (top right) and the other at Bellevue Garden (lower right), both located in Washington State, were presented at the Master Planning webinar.



Garden Conservancy Northwest Network: Professional Development for Public Garden Leaders

Through the numerous challenges this eventful year has brought, public garden leaders have continued their important work, providing all of us with much-needed access to nature and beauty, and to programming that inspires and educates. The Garden Conservancy has continued to find ways to provide garden leaders with resources that respond to their needs in these turbulent times. The Garden Conservancy Northwest Network (GCNN), an association of gardens, parks, and horticultural organizations located in Oregon, Washington State, and British Columbia, is dedicated to connecting people and gardens, creating engaging educational programming, fostering an appreciation of plants, and preserving gardens as vital cultural resources. Now in its eighteenth year, the GCNN provides professional development and networking opportunities to thirty member gardens. Our new Virtual Coffee Hours help to keep this community connected. Our usual in-person workshops, held twice a year, have not been possible given the pandemic, however. Accordingly, we have taken them virtual, providing two webinars this year via Zoom.

In September, we offered “New Member-

ship Strategies to Engage New Audiences,” with presentations from Caroline Ralston, director of marketing, communications & membership at the Mt. Cuba Center in Hockessin, DE, and Tracy Fletcher, the chief operating officer at the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, CA. This is a great time to be talking about membership. Given the widely seen recent uptick in visitation, gardens have new opportunities to embrace the public and to answer the ever-increasing need of people to be out of doors, enjoying beautiful places.

Caroline and Tracy demonstrated their strategies to engage new audiences and discussed their approaches to structuring and selling memberships. GCNN member Colleen Adams-Schuppe, director of the Yakima Area Arboretum in Federal Way, WA, found the webinar very helpful: “Learning about the creative ways other public gardens engage in member development is inspirational and thought provoking.”

In November, GCNN members attended a virtual webinar, “Master Planning for Public Gardens: Strategies, Insights, and New Perspectives,” which included presentations from Lauren Schmitt (PLA, ASLA, AICP) and

Rachel Edmonds (PLA, ASLA) both with the planning and design firm M.I.G, an award-winning agency with offices in the Pacific Northwest and California.

Lauren and Rachel brought the master planning process to life with examples of their work at Powell Gardens in Kansas City, MO, and Deepwood Museum & Garden in Salem, OR, and discussed how it can help prepare for new challenges and opportunities, using creative and collaborative approaches to problem solving. Their talk was followed by case studies from two GCNN member gardens about their own recent master planning experiences: Nancy Kartes, garden manager at the Bellevue Botanical Garden in Bellevue, WA, and Colleen Adams-Schuppe, director of the Yakima Area Arboretum. During the final panel discussion, the four speakers looked more specifically at how master planning and garden design solutions can be used to address pandemic-related needs for social distancing and manage the flow of visitors in public spaces. Future programs will focus on the individual stages of the master planning process.

Keeping Connected: *In My Garden: A Visual Diary*

In My Garden: A Visual Diary, a weekly series of emails for Garden Conservancy members, began in the spring of 2020 as the world faced the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and social distancing.

Over the last seven months, we've followed nine gardeners: eight Open Days hosts and/or regional ambassadors, plus one preservation partner. The series has offered weekly inspiration with behind-the-scenes snapshots from a diverse group of gardeners across America, highlighting the creativity, optimism, and resilience inherent to the act of gardening.

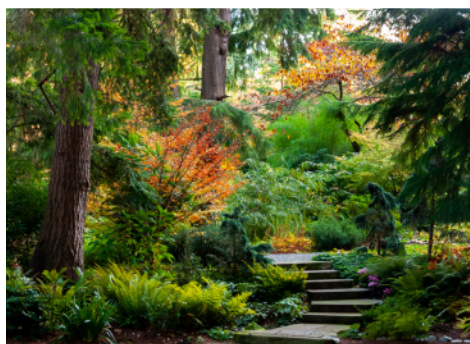
We are deeply grateful for the folks who

have regularly brightened our lives with glimpses into their gardens. Thanks to Cheryl Brickman, Mequon, WI; Shobha Vanchiswar, Chappaqua, NY; Nord Eriksson, Pasadena, CA; James Pettigrew and Sean Stout, San Francisco, CA; Vicki Johnson, Greenwood Gardens, Short Hills, NJ; Christopher Spitzmiller and Anthony Bellomo, Millbrook, NY; Michael Gordon, Peterborough, NH; James Golden, Stockton, NJ; and Andrea Filippone and T Fleisher, Pottersville, NJ, for allowing us all to peer into their gardens for periodic check-ins.

In My Garden, which has issued 32 editions since the end of March, has also

included reader submissions from dozens of intrepid gardeners around the country. The full chronicle of the season can be viewed at gardenconservancy.org/news/inmygarden.

As many of us have put our gardens to bed for the winter, we are also giving *In My Garden* a bit of a hibernation. Over the winter and into the early spring, there will be periodic special editions as we check in with our regular contributors to see how they're spending their winter, and also give readers a sneak peek into some of the creative, whimsical, and outstanding gardens that are on the schedule for Open Days 2021.



Clockwise from top left: Nord Eriksson's Oak Grove project in San Marino, CA; Clove Brook Farm, the home of Christopher Spitzmiller and Anthony Bellomo, Millbrook, NY; succulents in the garden of Jeff Hopkins, San Anselmo, CA; fall woodland at PowellsWood Garden, Federal Way, WA; monarch butterfly on Nancy Pasley's butterfly bush on her New York City terrace; Craig Wakefield's Frog Hollow Farm in Rydal, PA; and (in center) chestnut crabapples at Cheryl Brickman's Dragonfly Farm in Mequon, WI



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All members receive a subscription to our print and electronic communications including a complimentary copy of our *Open Days Directory* (shipping in spring 2021) and *In My Garden* member email series (seasonal).

Members also receive invitations and special pricing for our educational events including our new virtual Literary Series.

The gift of membership starts at just \$50 and lasts all year long! Visit gardenconservancy.org/gift-membership to learn more.

If you have any questions, please contact us at membership@gardenconservancy.org.

The distinctive fruit of harlequin glorybower (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*) from the garden of Erin Sullivan in Sandwich, MA

