

# CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

Spring 2015



Photo by Joan Harrison

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fun Fun Fun! That is what we will be having this season with the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society. Lunch Bunch, Meetings, Conference, and Festival. Wow! There is a lot going on!

### **NEW WEBSITE**

Our new website: [www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org](http://www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org). Check it out!

## **The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society 2015 Program Calendar**

May 2 10:00 Saturday CCHS **Spring Meeting** Harwich Community Center  
New Hydrangeas: Joan Brazeau & Joan Harrison  
Winter Report: Mal Condon

### **2015 CCHS Display Garden Volunteer Dates**

Alternate Fridays Starting May 8- August 28 – Betsey Godley Roberta Gough

June 16 Tuesday **Lunch Bunch**- Mary Ann Staudenmayer

July 7 Tuesday **Lunch Bunch**- Joan Harrison & John Bimshas

### **July 10-19 First Annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival**

<http://www.capecodchamber.org/hydrangea-fest>

July 10 Friday 10- 4 **The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society Open Gardens**  
Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival -Jan Kasper

July 11 Saturday 10- 4 **The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society Open Gardens**  
Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival- Joyce Jenks, Elizabeth Payne, Joan Brazeau, and Mal Condon

July 14,15,16 **Hydrangea Conference Heritage Museums & Gardens**  
<http://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/hydrangeas2015/>

July 16 Thursday 10- 4 **The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society Open Gardens**  
Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival- Dan Pessoni

July 18 Saturday 10- 4 **The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society Open Gardens**  
Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival - Peg Black, Barbara Dunn

July 21 Tuesday **Lunch Bunch** – Location TBA

August 11 Tuesday **Lunch Bunch** – Location TBA

September 26 10:00 Saturday **Fall Meeting** Harwich Community Center  
Speaker: Ann Smith, Harvest of Barnstable, “Design with Hydrangeas”

October 7 Wednesday **Annual Dinner**

See you soon!  
Thanks,  
Jeanie



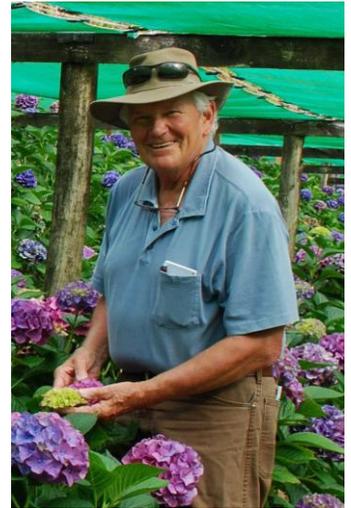
WINTER IS OVER!

BEAUTIFUL HYDRANGEAS ARE  
COMING SOON TO A LOCATION NEAR  
YOU!

## MAL'S CORNER

### Winter Survival 2015

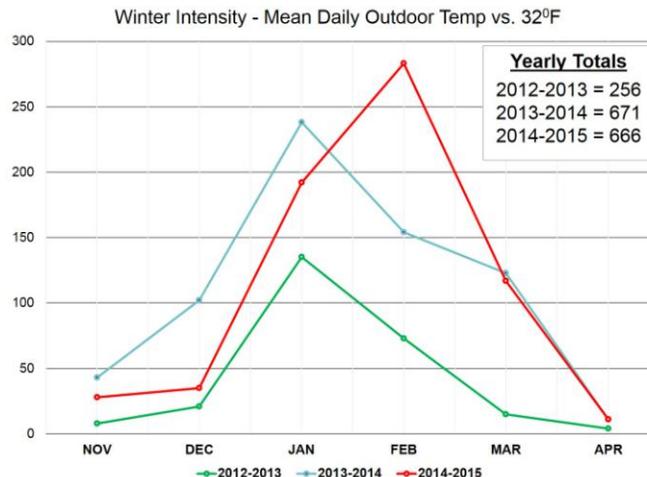
#### Understanding Cold Hardiness It's More Than Just the Coldest Winter Temperature



Winter 2015 was very similar temperature-wise to 2014. Last year at this time, our *Hydrangea macrophyllas* showed little retained bud development; they looked downright awful. Came July, we had very, very few blossoms. The gardens in close proximity to the coastline did a fair bit better but overall, it was the poorest blooming in at least 10 years. But things are different this April. Bud break has been generally good; definitely a little late to develop, but clearly superior to a year ago, and we are very optimistic about seeing some beautiful flowering 2.5 months from now. So let's share some thoughts as to why the year to year difference.

First and foremost, cold hardiness is all about the species *Hydrangea macrophylla*. As we saw last summer, the arborescens and paniculatas bloomed in splendid fashion while our much loved *H.macs* produced very few blooms except near the coastline. Yes, temperature is definitely critical but so is total sustained cold – the duration of winter - or maybe best described as 'Winter Intensity'. Additionally, don't forget the desiccating effect of the cold and very dry winter winds. Snowfall total was very significant this year too, and the 'cover' it provided might well be the major difference. But so was utilizing various winter protection techniques to protect the *H.macs* and deflect some of the direct ravages of the weather.

January-February 2015 had as many as (6) below zero readings in interior areas of the Cape – that's Zone 6. To assess 'Winter Intensity', I applied the 'Degree Days Analysis' concept from the heating industry, and compared daily mean outdoor temperatures vs 32°F for the 'cold' half of the year – November through April. The 'tough' winters of 2014 & 2015 were compared to 2013, which was quite similar to several prior years.



The total cold for the last two winters was essentially identical but varied considerably month to month. Compared to 2013 and earlier years, total cold was twice as severe in 2014 and 2015. This February was the coldest I could find from available data - at least from the last 15 years. What saved

our plants was the snow. While it wasn't very good for us humans, snow cover may be the best winter insulation blanket as it can contain as much as 90% air. And we had plenty of it – as much as 42” of accumulated snow cover by the end of February in areas on the Cape. Even fairly large plants were totally covered - and very nicely thank you - during the extended periods of frigid temps during that month.

We've talked about the desiccating and damaging effect of cold, dry winter winds before. Simple science applies – cold air holds much less absolute moisture than warm air. We know and 'feel' this in our homes in winter; the relative humidity can drop to less than 20%, with cracks appearing in flooring and woodwork. Combined with the strong and bitterly cold winter winds, especially from the NE to NW, the severe drying effect of these winds can easily dehydrate and kill tender *H.macrophylla* bud and stem tissue. The insulating effect of the snow protected them from the wind and maintained ground level temps near freezing.

And there's likely one more factor – plants entering dormancy in a too dry state. 2014 winter damage to *H.macrophyllas* may have been due - at least in part - from the lack of rain late in 2013. Rainfall was well below normal, especially late October through mid-December, and irrigation systems had been shut down. I've noted in times past that deciduous plants entering dormancy in a too dry state have little resistance to sustained cold; the root systems just don't have enough retained moisture.

### Combating Cold Hardiness

From our observations at Heritage and at my own homesite, Winter Protection appears to be an effective practice. Several good techniques were used; wrapping plants with burlap, cages installed over plants and wrapped with burlap or frost cloth, cages over plants and filled with pine straw or saltmarsh hay, and purchased sewn bags to simply cover and tie over plants.

#### So Here's What We Think We Learned

- Plant sites proved to be critical; plants in open, windy sites barely survived, thank goodness they had some protection. Give your *H.macrophyllas* some shelter from the Winter!
- Keep plants well watered in Fall, especially in October and November.
- New plantings – 3 gal. container size and smaller – should be protected for at least their first winter
- Known tender varieties deserve careful site selection – and may dictate annual protection
- All plant protection techniques have merit; develop a technique that works for you.
- *And Pray for Snow in January & February – while you're somewhere Warm!*

*Mal*



## CCHS SPRING MEETING – MAY 2, 2015

Our intended speaker cancelled at the last minute. Joan Brazeau and Joan Harrison filled in with a presentation about new (and newly available) hydrangea varieties, and Mal Condon spoke about our display garden. The hydrangea varieties included all on this list:

1. *Hydrangea macrophylla* – ‘Atlantic’- 4x4’ great for cutting
2. *Hydrangea macrophylla* – ‘Let’s Dance®- Blue Jangles®’- 3’ reblooms
3. *Hydrangea macrophylla* - ‘ Let’s Dance® Diva®’- large flowers 3’ reblooms
4. *Hydrangea macrophylla* - ‘Decatur Blue’- 4’ early rebloomer
5. *Hydrangea macrophylla* – ‘Marissa’- 5’
6. *Hydrangea macrophylla* - ‘Merveille’- introduced 1927 4’
7. *Hydrangea macrophylla* – ‘Oak Hill’- 4’ blooms new wood
8. *Hydrangea macrophylla* – ‘Paraplu’- 3’ name means umbrella
9. *Hydrangea macrophylla* - ‘Ticino’- 3-4’great for pots
10. *Hydrangea paniculata*- ‘Fire Light’- 5-7’ White flowers quickly turn vivid red
11. *Hydrangea paniculata* – ‘Little Quick Fire’- 3’first to bloom
12. *Hydrangea paniculata* – ‘Pillow Talk’- 7’
13. *Hydrangea arborescens* - ‘Lime Rickey™’- 3-4’
14. *Hydrangea serrata*- ‘Tiny Tuff Stuff™’- 2’
15. *Hydrangea serrata* -‘Twirligig™’- 2-3’ reblooms great for pots
16. *Hydrangea quercifolia*- ‘Gatsby Gal™’- 6’
17. *Hydrangea quercifolia* – ‘Gatsby Moon™’- 10’
18. *Hydrangea quercifolia* – ‘Gatsby Star™’- 6’ double flowers



Pictured above, Joan Brazeau speaking about several of the hydrangea varieties. Some of them are not actually new to the plant world, but they are newly available to gardeners nationwide through mail order companies like Hydrangeas Plus. One of these is H.m. ‘Decatur Blue’ which is to hydrangea enthusiasts in Georgia as ‘Nikko Blue’ is to us on Cape Cod. On the next page Joan Harrison (newsletter editor) shares a picture of ‘Decatur Blue’ in our display garden as part of our new series called “Featured Hydrangea”. This is the third plant in the series. The first was H.m. ‘Miss Saori’ and the second was BloomStruck™.

## FEATURED HYDRANGEA: H.m. 'Decatur Blue'



### H.m. 'Decatur Blue'

Rebloomer

Highly rated by Michael Dirr

[www.plantintroductions.com](http://www.plantintroductions.com)

click on Articles

"Hydrangeas: Breeding, Selection, and Marketing" by Michael Dirr (2012)

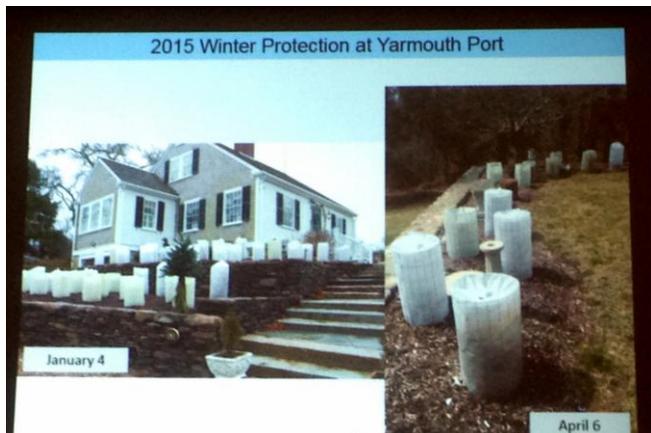
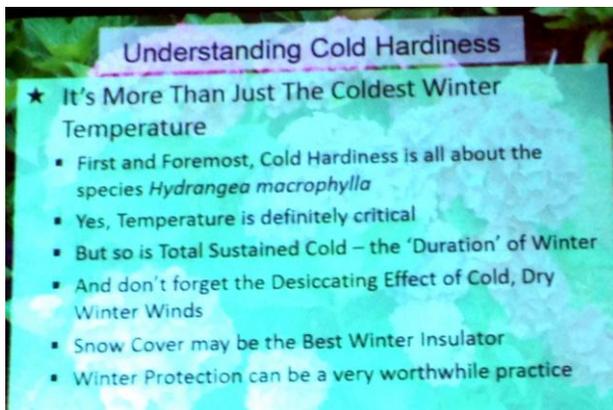
Currently in our display garden at Heritage.

Has a good track record.

We acquired this plant from the Condon's Hydrangea Farm in 2008.



Mal included many helpful slides as part of his presentation on winter conditions affecting blooming. He used frost cloth extensively to protect the plants at his home in Yarmouth Port.



## OUR NEW WEBSITE!!!



Jeanie Gillis made a presentation about our beautiful new website. You will be able to access current program calendar information there, as well as a special section for members only.

### To find the site:

[www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org](http://www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org)

### To enter the members only section:

Click on "Members" in upper right corner.

User name is "member".

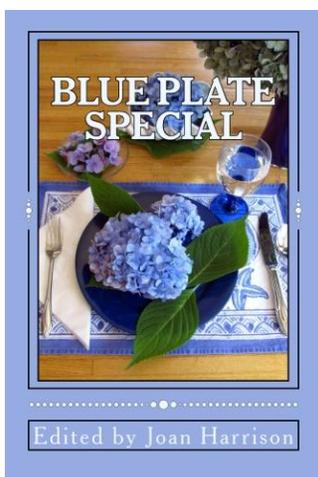
Current password is "limelight".

(Both lower case)

## 2015 HYDRANGEA CONFERENCE AT HERITAGE – SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR CCHS MEMBERS

The idea for the Hydrangeas 2015 Conference at Heritage Museums and Gardens came from Dr. Michael Dirr's visiting Heritage and being impressed with the gardens in general, the much expanded hydrangea plantings throughout the property, and particularly with the CCHS Display Garden. He subsequently met with senior personnel at Heritage and encouraged them to host a major national conference devoted to all things hydrangea. They enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Mal Condon is a longtime friend of Michael Dirr, and given his proximity to and his on-going activities at Heritage, became the Co-Chair of the technical program with additional planning responsibilities for sponsorships and garden tours. From the very beginning, the conference program was geared toward the horticultural professionals in the hydrangea world - breeders, propagators, growers, plant hunters, etc. The speaker and topic line-up is very strong and reflects the best current knowledge about the genus. Dedicated CCHS members could gain much from this exposure; it will be a valuable educational experience to attend all or part of the conference.

Mal has lobbied successfully for a reduced registration fee for CCHS members. Full general registration for the conference is \$650; registration for CCHS members is \$450. This covers all technical programs (scheduled for mornings), lunches each day, transportation to selected gardens to be toured in the afternoons, and the closing dinner event at Heritage on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the final evening of the conference. A preferred single-day option is also available to CCHS members. The regular rate is \$250 per day (available on July 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> only); for CCHS members the rate is \$175 per day (again, only on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>). Contact Mal directly if you would like to register at [hydrangeafarm@comcast.net](mailto:hydrangeafarm@comcast.net) or 508-221-8206. For program details go to <http://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/hydrangeas2015/>.



### Cookbook Ordering information

You may order as many books as you like but note the following:

1. Payment must be made **no later than May 22, 2015.**
2. Make checks out in the amount of 13.00 (x number of books ordered) to Cape Cod Hydrangea Society, Inc.
3. The books will be distributed locally on the Cape, probably in June. We will **NOT** be mailing any books.
4. Contact Joan Harrison and tell her how many copies you wish to order. ([joanofma@hotmail.com](mailto:joanofma@hotmail.com) or 508-468-7869).
5. **Payment should be mailed to Cape Cod Hydrangea Society, Inc., PO Box 681, South Dennis, MA 02660. Please make clear your check is for the cookbook order. It must arrive at the post office by May 22, 2015.**

Questions? Contact Joan Harrison, [joanofma@hotmail.com](mailto:joanofma@hotmail.com) or 508-468-7869.

**Remember: Volunteers are needed to work in our display garden.** It is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our garden, and Heritage gardens, and the camaraderie with fellow members is excellent. Show up at 10am, sign in inside the gift shop (the staff will get out the volunteer book for you), bring gloves and small tools, and expect to be there from 1-2 hours. If you would like to sign up contact Betsey Godley at [betseygodley@gmail.com](mailto:betseygodley@gmail.com). This year's schedule: **May 8, May 22, June 5, June 19, July 3, July 31, August 14, August 28.**



Janet Schultz, our hospitality chairperson, had an entertaining story about acquiring the hydrangeas shown here for our refreshment table at the spring meeting. She said she was at her local swap shop in Eastham when a woman came in with this arrangement. She set it down and *within seconds* Janet scooped it up.

**GREAT TIMING!**

## CAPE COD HYDRANGEA FESTIVAL



### Need for docents

Jeanie Gillis and Joan Brazeau spoke about the need for docents at our display garden and at the other featured gardens during the Cape-wide Hydrangea Festival. Those who volunteer will have at least one informational session to prepare for this experience. Contact Joan Brazeau ([joan\\_brazeau@hotmail.com](mailto:joan_brazeau@hotmail.com), 508-362-1244) if you would like to be a docent or if you have questions.

### NEWSLETTER ASSISTANCE REQUESTED

Joan Harrison, your newsletter editor, is hoping some of you with writing and/or photography skills would agree to be on call for newsletter assignments. This would be invaluable when Joan is unable to attend an event that we'd like to have included in the newsletter. Your decision to help out when needed would be completely your call based on your own availability. If any help is required Joan would send out a general email request. (E.g., "Is anyone available to go to lunch bunch on (specific date)? Details of the event and pictures would be great!")

If you are willing to be on a contact list, please email Joan at [joanofma@hotmail.com](mailto:joanofma@hotmail.com).

**Cape Cod Hydrangea Society**  
**P.O. Box 681**  
**South Dennis, MA 02660**