



# CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

SPRING 2021

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

# PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

## Spring 2021

Spring is upon us once again and with it comes much joy and relief. As the natural world around is gradually re-awakening, we too are emerging from our Covid-19 isolation and re-entering the everyday world of gathering socially, albeit cautiously.



Our gardens await our attention; we are anxious to get out there and re-connect with and tend to our plantings. And there is always the great feeling one gets while visiting local nurseries and doing a walk about in the fresh air.

Over the winter we have been hard at work planning for upcoming events such as our annual May business and membership meeting which will take place (virtually) on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 at 6:00 pm. Mal Condon will be speaking on "Hydrangeas of the Azores."

We have also been planning lunch bunch gatherings for June, July and August. Check the calendar on the back page of this newsletter for details. Lastly, planning is well underway for the biggest fundraising events of each year: Hydrangea University and the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival. This year there will be 9, or possibly 10 member gardens, on the tour. Requests have already gone out for docents for these gardens. Volunteering as a docent is a great way to become involved and meet other society members.

We are pleased to announce that Nancy Dexter, a new member, has recently agreed to head up our public relations efforts and soon we hope to announce the consolidation of our Facebook and website efforts under another new member. Finally, the Nominating Committee recently met and has taken on the task of finding our replacement(s) as Co-Presidents as well as a Vice President by September when we complete our tenure.

In short, a lot of winter and spring preparation for a glorious summer of hydrangeas! Stay well,

*Linda Coven*      *Pat Vigliorolo*

Linda Coven  
Co-President

Pat Vigliorolo  
Co-President

# Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly



## Joyce Williams...a lifelong learner

As a child, Joyce Williams' first landscaping endeavor was replanting ferns that surrounded her family's lakeside cabin in northeast Pennsylvania. Instinctively, she chose the location that best suited the plants.

Her continuing interest in plants prompted her to consider a forestry major in college. However, as she became familiar with the curriculum, she realized that horticulture better suited her aspirations. As a result she pursued that major, graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in horticulture, and as she says, "I have never looked back!"



Thirty-five years in the landscaping business on Cape Cod attests to her professional commitment. For eighteen of those years Joyce owned and operated Pine Tree Nursery and Garden Center in Chatham which involved landscape construction and maintenance as well as a retail garden center. A certified landscape designer affiliated with the Association of Professional Landscapers (APLD), Joyce sold Pine Tree Nursery in 2004 to form a company bearing her name. Joyce K. Williams Landscape Design today provides a full range of services from plants to patios.

Joyce is a two-time AP LD Award winner for gardens she designed in Chatham and Brewster. Her gardens often feature a mix of traditional and native plantings. Says Joyce, using native plants is "not just a sales pitch" but a need to re-establish local eco-systems using plants that can withstand climate change.

"There is always something new to learn," says Joyce, and that is most assuredly true for new gardeners. Hydrangea information is requested most frequently...their care and pruning for optimal bloom, size, and color.

Joyce considers the "CCHS gem" founded by Joan Harrison and the availability of Mal Condon's workshops to be valuable resources. She applauds CCHS members who maintain the display garden at Heritage; members who participate in the annual Hydrangea Festival; and the Society's mission to educate the Cape Cod community.

You may spot Joyce, accompanied by Checkerberry, her golden retriever, and Bertie, her Pembroke Welsh corgi, at a project site where she's "hands-on" and supervises everything from design to implementation.

Joyce considers herself a lifelong learner. However, years of advising the gardening public additionally qualify her as a seasoned, lifelong teacher!



# Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly

## Dan Pessoni...more is better!

Who has 650 daylilies, 350 hostas, and 105 hydrangeas labeled in his garden? Dan Pessoni, affectionately known as "Dan, the Lily Man" and his "enabler" and best friend, his wife Linda...

Dan was raised in East Hampton, CT and attended local public schools. A talented athlete, he lettered for all four years of high school in three sports, earning an induction into the East Hampton High School Athletic Hall of Fame.

That enthusiasm for sports easily transferred to his career. For 40 years, he was employed by Monroe Systems for Business in Hartford, CT where he served as general manager, overseeing operations in the Northeast to the upper Midwest. Now retired in Orleans, MA, he has turned his enthusiasm to collecting daylilies, hostas, and hydrangeas.

Visiting the daylily collection at Heritage Museums and Gardens in 1983 inspired Dan to become a serious daylily collector. His garden has been an accredited American Hemerocallis (daylily) Society (AHS) Display Garden since 1995. That designation requires yearly introduction of new plants. Each year Dan hosts a sale of his surplus daylilies which always attracts a crowd!

Dan's interest in daylilies grew through the years, leading him to join several garden societies and organizations. He is a Past President of New England Daylily Society, an accredited AHS Senior Exhibition Daylily Judge, and Treasurer of AHS Region 4. He is also a Trustee of the New England Hosta Society.

Dan's interest in hydrangeas led him to become a CCHS member during the organization's early years. He attributes much of his present hydrangea collection to the information provided by our society.

Interestingly, the present CCHS display garden was the original site of Heritage's daylily garden. The area became too shady for daylilies but perfect for hydrangeas. Dan had a similar situation in his own garden and settled on the same solution – hydrangeas. Now, nearly 500 visitors tour his garden annually during the hydrangea festival!

This "triple treat" garden – daylilies, hosta, and hydrangeas – will be in peak bloom and on display during the Hydrangea Festival on July 17th. It is a must-see garden in terms of quantity, quality, and variety... definitely, more is better!



*"Blossom by blossom the spring begins."  
—Algernon Charles Swinburne*



# Bailey Nurseries Expands Hydrangea Offerings with 'Summer Crush' & 'Little Hottie'

by Suzanne Boas



In 2004, Bailey Nurseries introduced 'Endless Summer' which set a new standard for hydrangea macrophylla, producing blooms on both new and old growth. Today Bailey claims that 'Endless Summer, The Original' is the best-selling hydrangea in the world. Marketed in a unique sky-blue pot, it can be found in garden centers all across the country.

This important macrophylla introduction was followed in succession by other macrophyllas: 'Blushing Bride', 'Twist-n-Shout', 'Bloomstruck' and most recently 'Summer Crush'. Like 'Endless Summer, The Original', all of these macrophyllas are remontant and have been undergoing observation in the North American Test Garden at Heritage Museums and Gardens.

Says Heritage Hydrangea Curator Mal Condon, "The Bailey Nurseries organization was the first to bring macrophyllas to market that exhibited significantly improved winter hardiness. That has been extremely important to gardeners on Cape Cod."

Condon continues, "Over the years, Bailey's introductions have continued to get stronger and stronger. In fact, the horticultural leadership at Heritage voted 'Summer Crush' its best performing plant in 2020 because of its over-winter bud survival. We are also impressed with its striking deep pigmentation, whether in the deep rose as marketed or in deep blue."

Bailey's hydrangea research and development efforts have not been limited to macrophyllas. Bailey has also expanded its panicle hydrangea offerings, marketing them under the First Editions® brand name. Says Bailey Innovations General Manager David Roberts, "Paniculatas are increasingly popular because they do well when planted in full sun and turn fabulous fall colors as nights cool down in locations like Cape Cod."

Bailey markets 6 paniculatas, ranging from 4' to 7' in height: 'Berry White', 'Vanilla Strawberry', 'Tickled Pink', 'Strawberry Sunday', 'White Diamonds', and 'Diamond Rouge'. Vanilla Strawberry is the best-selling of the First Editions® panicle hydrangea while 'Strawberry Sundae®' is proving to be popular for more confined spaces. All of these First Edition hydrangeas can be found at Heritage, with a fabulous planting of 'Vanilla Strawberry' lining the stairs down from the fountain in the test garden.



'Summer Crush'

CONT'D

Bailey Nurseries has recently announced that field trials are complete for a seventh and smaller paniculata, 'Little Hottie', which should be available in garden centers in 2022. 'Little Hottie' is a very compact plant with a heavy bloom load. Light green flower buds open to creamy white blooms which are expected to age to pink in our Cape Cod climate. Another plus for this paniculata – it should stay under 4' in height, a very desirable size for smaller gardens. Look for plantings of 'Little Hottie' in the Heritage Museums and Gardens test garden this summer.



'Little Hottie'

## PHS names *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bobo' as a 2021 Gold Medal Plant

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has awarded 2021 Gold Medal status to seven exceptional plants this spring, one of which is *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bobo'®.

The Gold Medal Plant program evaluates trees, shrubs, vines, and perennials for their ease of cultivation, ready commercial availability, and wildlife value. Gold Medal winners offer multiple seasons of interest for gardeners and are chosen for their hardiness in zones 5 to 7.

Since 1979, the Gold Medal program has honored and promoted woody plants of outstanding merit. In general, plants are nominated from submissions by home gardeners, garden designers, horticulturists, landscape architects, nursery owners and plant propagators. Once nominated, plants are reviewed and award winners selected by a committee of expert horticulturists.

*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Bobo'® was the only hydrangea to be selected this year. A dwarf variety, 'Bobo'® features large conical clusters of white flowers beginning in midsummer, which fade to pink and persist into the fall. Blooming on new wood, 'Bobo'® is tolerant of hard freezes and over-pruning. It is a great choice for the front of the border or a container and generally reaches only 30-36" in height.

*Editor's Note:* This article was summarized from the original which appeared in *Nursery Management*.





# The Plant Doctor is In

by Russ Norton



Dear Plant Doctor,

What's the story with all the advice swirling around these days about putting coffee grounds on plants?

I keep seeing online articles and Facebook postings about the benefits of coffee grounds. I can't judge whether the mostly anonymous authors of these articles are basing their advice on science or just looking for eyeballs, as they say. In any event, gardening with coffee grounds seems to be all the rage. In fact, a serious gardening friend here on the Cape told me she collects buckets of discarded grounds from local coffee shops to put directly on her hydrangeas.

Can you set me straight? I understand composting, but applying grounds directly to hydrangeas?

**No Joe in the Morning for this Hydrangea Lover**



Dear No Joe in the Morning,

It's Iced Black for me, please. But to your question, which is a good one, here's the scoop, in technical terms.

Coffee grounds are the result of processing the fruit from *Coffea arabica* and *Coffea robusta*. The fruit of these plants are berry-like drupes. The drupes are processed by removing the outer layers of the fruit leaving just the seed (bean). The result is green coffee which then goes through a process of roasting (heating), grinding, and then brewing before drinking. The byproduct of the brewing process leaves behind the spent coffee grounds (SCG). The use of SCG has long been known to be an ideal compost feedstock material but has also been evaluated as a fertilizer and as a soil amendment.

There are several characteristics of organic materials that can be evaluated to make informed decisions about an organic material's fertilizer value. The characteristics include Carbon: Nitrogen ratio and the amount of plant nutrients in the material. (See the table on the next page) Carbon:Nitrogen ratios determine whether nitrogen will be immobilized or mineralized as the organic matter is decomposed. Mineralization results in nitrogen being released and made available to plants and occurs with C:N ratios below 15:1. Immobilization, on the other hand, results in reduced nitrogen availability to plants, as soil microbes compete for nitrogen to breakdown the carbon. This occurs with C:N ratios above 30:1. C:N ratios between 15-30:1 are considered nitrogen net neutral; SCG typically have a C:N ratio of about 20:1. Therefore, even though SCG have around 2% nitrogen, that nitrogen is unlikely to become readily or quickly available for plants. The other primary macronutrients phosphorus and potassium are found in relatively minor amounts compared to other organic fertilizers. This suggests the value of SCG as a fertilizer source is relatively low. (See the table on the next page)

CONT'D

SCG are an ideal compost feedstock and may also be soil-incorporated and will be decomposed by soil microbes, helping to increase soil organic matter. The benefits of compost and soil organic matter are well known and can improve soil properties including, water holding capacity, water infiltration, nutrient holding capacity, microbial activity and soil aggregation.

SCG have also occasionally been promoted as a soil acidifier, however, this is a common gardening inaccuracy that has also been applied to oak leaves, pine needles and compost. Whether a material is acidic or not does not correlate directly to the effect on soil pH. As organic matter is decomposed some weak acids are produced but these have little impact on overall soil pH, more often the end result is a pH near neutral.

SCG are unlikely to make a great mulch. Mulches conserve soil moisture, reduce weeds, and protect soils from extreme temperature fluctuations. Organic materials used as mulches typically have a high C:N ratio resulting in a long-lasting residual mulch. SCG C:N ratio will result in rapid decomposition and therefore is unlikely to be long lasting. The fine texture of SCG also makes it susceptible to compaction which could decrease moisture infiltration into the soil. Small amounts of SCG applied to the surface of soil or mulch will not harm anything but do not make an ideal mulch.

SCG have also been occasionally promoted as being a deterrent or pest remedy; these reports are primarily anecdotal and have not been substantiated with research.

The bottom line is that SCG are a valuable source of soil organic matter whether directly applied or composted and should not be discarded with household waste. However, SCG are by no means a panacea for plant health or fertility.

### C:N and N-P-K Comparisons

	SCG	North County Pro-gro	Espoma Plant-tone
C:N	15:1 – 32:1	5:1	6:1
Nitrogen	1.87 – 2.45%	5%	5%
Phosphorus	0.02 – 0.5%	3%	3%
Potassium	0.3%	4%	3%

Editor's Note: Russ Norton is the Horticulture and Agriculture Educator at the Cape Cod Extension Service. If you have a hydrangea-related question you would like to see addressed in a future newsletter, email [suzanneboas@gmail.com](mailto:suzanneboas@gmail.com).





# The Tool Shed

by Linda Coven

So many spring gardening tasks and so little time! For the benefit of our new members (as well as a review for long-time members) here are four of my favorite tools for tackling spring gardening chores:



## Ridgid 12 Gallon Wet/Dry Vac

Perfect for getting into all the nooks and crannies of your hydrangeas and other shrubbery. Removing leaves and other debris from the base of your hydrangeas is an absolute must-do spring chore.

## Okatsune Pruners

Simple, effective design for general pruning. Make sure that you keep them sharp!



## Felco 21 Loppers

Fits the bill perfectly for removing dead canes to the basal crown growth in the interior of your hydrangeas. Remember: all the way down – don't leave stubs.



## Dewalt Atomic 20-Volt Max Brushless Compact Reciprocating Saw

A one-handed reciprocating saw to use when loppers aren't strong enough. This saw works especially well when you want to remove larger crossing branches or thin paniculatas.

## On to new suggestions...

I have searched many years for the perfect gardening belt. The [Carhartt Legacy Tool Belt](#) is just the thing for keeping your pruners, cell phone, Hori Hori Garden Knife, and weeding tools all at your fingertips... or hips. No more misplaced tools. Since it is designed as a man's tool belt, I had my tailor remove the tiny back pouch to better fit the belt to my waist/hip size.



[Carhartt Legacy Tool Belt](#): Available at Amazon for \$34.99

My last super find is the [FoldIt 2200 Utility & Garden Cart](#). If you are short on storage space, then this is for you. This fold-up utility cart is made of marine-grade aluminum that prevents rust and corrosion. It occupies under 2 sq. ft. of storage space and carries up to 350 lbs. A tub can be purchased from Tricam Industries, which fits inside the cart for hauling soil or mulch. My cart has been a work horse for 12 years.

[FoldIt 2200 Utility & Garden Cart](#): Available at Amazon for \$229.59  
[Tub-011](#): Available at Tricam Industrial for \$60.00 plus shipping



# Hydrangea U. to Feature 3 Nationally Recognized Speakers

by Suzanne Boas



The 6th annual Hydrangea University will kick off this year's Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival on July 9th. The speakers for this year's program are Tim Wood, Product Development Manager at Spring Meadow Nursery; Nita-Jo Roundtree, a Seattle-based garden designer and educator; and Mal Condon, Hydrangea Curator for Heritage Museums and Gardens.

The program will run from 8:30 am until noon and again this year will be virtual due to the pandemic. Further information will be forthcoming about registration on both the Heritage Museums and Gardens and Cape Cod Hydrangea Society websites.

Tim Wood will be speaking on advances in hydrangea breeding; Nita-Jo Roundtree's topic is perfect partners for hydrangeas and Mal Condon's presentation will be on the North American Hydrangea Test Garden at Heritage.

Says Tim Wood, "From old plants to brand new, we'll examine the evolution of hydrangea breeding and get to know the stories and the breeders behind the plants. In addition, I will share a behind the scenes look into Spring Meadow Nursery's hydrangea breeding program, the various species and goals they're working on, and the trialing processes used to determine if plants make it into the Proven Winners brand."

Nita-Jo Roundtree, a former owner of LeGrand Gardens, a landscape and design and installation company in Atlanta, GA says "Everyone knows that hydrangeas are a spectacular addition to any garden. The challenge in garden design is how to create picture-perfect planting combinations with companion plants." Her presentation will feature beautiful photos to illustrate that by following some of the rules of landscape design, your combinations will be worthy of the cover of a garden magazine.

Mal Condon, who is well known to CCHS members, will round out the morning's offerings. "The North American Hydrangea Test Garden at Heritage was initially planted en masse in the spring of 2016," he says. "This year is the sixth growing season for these original plantings. I will share specific performance details and key take-aways from this data regarding the hydrangea species macrophylla, arborescens, and paniculata."

The 2021 Hydrangea University will be held virtually on July 9 from 8:30 am-Noon.



Tim Wood



Nita-Jo Roundtree



Mal Condon



# Soares Opens for the Season with Optimism and Color Displays

by Mary Bowker

## Soares Flower Garden Nursery

Spring has sprung at Soares Flower Garden Nursery in East Falmouth. Opening day, Saturday, March 20, was the busiest in memory, says owner Terry Soares. And why wouldn't it be? Soares and her staff have insured that the distinctive, boutique-like nursery is colorful and welcoming, a metaphorical shot in the arm for pandemic-weary gardeners.

Cold-tolerant plants such as hellebores and violas stocked the tables. Red, orange, blue and green watering cans hung from the trees over bags of compost. Colorful ceramic pots begged to be transformed into container gardens. And better still, the nursery area was being readied for the 57, and counting, varieties of hydrangeas that nursery manager Marcia Chapman has ordered.

Soares is a big supporter of the annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival and through its participation (and with a little help from Mal Condon) it has "picked up on more varieties than the traditional mopheads," says Terry. "The variety of new introductions is astounding," she says. "There are so many better versions of the tried and true."

By the end of May and into the first weeks of June, the shipments will arrive. Old favorites such as climber *Hydrangea anomala petiolaris*; *H. arborescens* such as 'Annabelle' and the Invincibelle series including 'Limetta', 'Mini Mauvette', 'Ruby', 'Spirit II' will be joined by new introductions Invincibelle 'Garnetta' and 'Pinky Pollen Ring'.

New paniculatas such as 'Firelight Tidbit', 'Limelight Prime' and 'Quick Fire Fab' will be featured as well as a long list of old favorites. Terry especially loves the Quick Fire series. "They have a wide color range throughout the season and bloom, no matter what," she says.

Terry, Marcia Chapman, Reggie Soares and and a "highly-seasoned" staff of 15 are very skilled at advising their customers on the best hydrangea varieties for particular growing conditions. Education of their customers as to what to expect when planting hydrangeas in the region's somewhat fickle climate is an important part of the staff's interaction with gardeners.

Terry & Reggie Soares



CONT'D



With guidance as to placement and expectations, macrophylla enthusiasts can find classics such as 'Mathilde Gutges', 'Elizabeth Ashley' and the 'Endless Summer' series. This year the nursery's customers will also be treated to new introductions such as 'Azure Skies', 'Rock-N-Roll', 'Froggie' and 'Arriba!'. Even container gardeners will find an exciting new variety, hardy to zone 7: a cascading hydrangea, *Hydrangea* x 'Fairytail Bride'.

This year, Soares Flower Garden Nursery is celebrating its 25th anniversary. In 1996, Terry and Reggie Soares, admitted plant geeks who were running a landscape business out of their house, began growing hard-to-find plants for their customers. The idea for the nursery took shape as the demand for unusual landscape plants grew.

Reggie had a clear idea of how their nursery should look, Terry says. He wanted customers to feel like they were entering a lovely backyard with shade trees and meandering paths. The Flower Garden Nursery was birthed on land adjacent to their home and has stood the tests of time. Gardeners flock to its quirky layout, dotted with sheds, pergolas and garden ornaments. Its displays are inviting, its staff friendly, and the hydrangeas many.

The nursery is open through December for onsite shopping, seven days a week. Face coverings are currently required. Visit [soaresflowergardennursery.com](http://soaresflowergardennursery.com); follow the nursery on Facebook and be sure to subscribe to "The Dirt," their e-newsletter full of growing tips.



"Despite the forecast,  
live like it's spring."

—Lilly Pulitzer



# Heritage Garden Maintenance Team Begins Spring Work

by Barbara Marsala



As I start my first year as our society's maintenance team coordinator, I want to offer a very big thank you to Paula Rushworth for the great job she has done for the past four years. Paula was organized, knowledgeable and greeted everyone with a friendly smile.

Under Mal Condon's direction, we are expanding our scope of work this year to include the care of all the hydrangeas in both the North American Test Garden as well as our CCHS Display Garden. Thus, more work. Fortunately, a number of gardeners who have joined our society recently have also volunteered to join our maintenance team.

We are always happy to welcome new members. Our work is a fun, virus-safe outdoor activity in beautiful gardens working alongside other hydrangea society members. Also, it is a great opportunity for hands-on practice and honing of your pruning skills. Volunteers work at their own pace and for as long as is comfortable for them.

Our work season runs from April through September and our primary tasks are to prune the various plants at the appropriate times, weed the garden beds and answer questions from garden visitors, sharing what we know about these beautiful plants.

If you would like to join the maintenance team, or have any questions about our work, email me at [barbaramarsala8@gmail.com](mailto:barbaramarsala8@gmail.com).

## Heritage Hydrangea Gardens Maintenance Schedule 2021

Heritage Museums and Gardens  
Sandwich MA  
9:30 am-Noon

.....  
May 6, 13, 20, 27

.....  
August 5, 19

.....  
June 10, 24

.....  
September 2, 16

.....  
July 8, 22



## Dr. Michael Dirr Releases *The Hydrangea Book—The Authoritative Guide*

Good news hydrangea lovers! Renowned hydrangea expert, Dr. Michael Dirr has just completed his most recent book: *The Hydrangea Book—The Authoritative Guide*.

Dirr is no stranger to Cape Cod Hydrangea Society members, having spoken at Hydrangea University and regularly visiting his brainchild, the North American Hydrangea Test Garden as well as our society's display garden at Heritage Museums and Gardens.

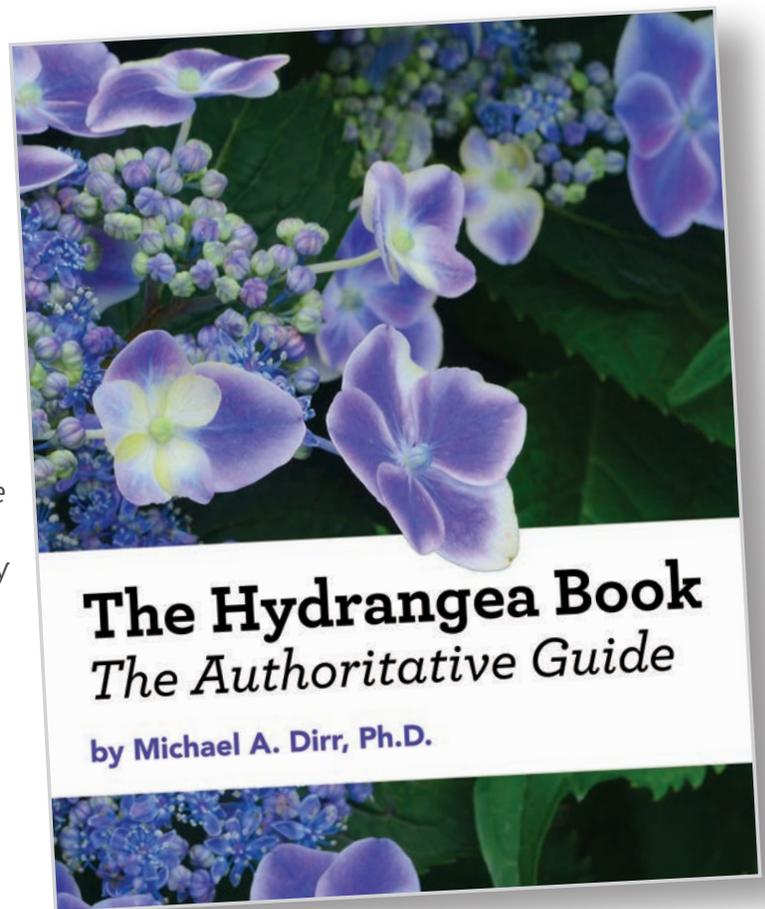
For over 40 years Dirr has taught, researched, and bred hydrangeas. In his latest book he covers all the major hydrangea species – *H. arborescens*, *H. macrophylla*, *H. paniculata*, *H. quercifolia* and *H. serrata* – as well as secondary species such as *H. anomala*, *H. aspera*, *H. heteromalla* and *H. involucrata*. The new taxonomic revision folds *Decumaria*, *Dichroa*, *Pileostegia*, *Platycrater* and *Schizophragma* into *Hydrangea* and Dirr presents these in detail as well. He also discusses his favorite hydrangeas and includes over 500 color photos in this 380-page book.

Says Dirr, "The hydrangea world has expanded exponentially since 2004 when my previous book on hydrangeas was published. Almost every cultivar in this book is new. Also, there are in-depth treatments of pigment chemistry; the role of aluminum in sepal color; propagation from seed, cuttings, divisions and layering; breeding for amateurs and professionals, and pruning."

*The Hydrangea Book—The Authoritative Guide* will be available shortly through Stipes Publishing, L.L.C., 204 W. University Ave, Champaign, IL 61820. The price is yet to be established. Email to [stipes01@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stipes01@sbcglobal.net) or check their website: [www.stipes.com](http://www.stipes.com).

*"In the spring, at the end of the day,  
you should smell like dirt."*

*—Margaret Atwood*



# H.m. 'Wee Bit Grumpy' Wins "Shrub Madness 2021"

The national champion of the 2021 Shrub Madness tournament has been crowned; the winner is H.m. 'Wee Bit Grumpy'.

Shrub Madness is patterned after the March college basketball playoffs. Each year 64 Proven Winners ColorChoice shrubs face off against each other. The shrub that receives the most votes moves on to the next round of the tournament.

Anyone can participate in the tournament by registering for an account and voting for their favorites. This year 13,000 brackets were filled out at [www.shrubmadness.com](http://www.shrubmadness.com) and more than 600,000 votes were cast.

The winning hydrangea was a wee bit of an underdog. It was matched up against *H. paniculata* 'Limelight Prime' in the championship round. As an evolved form of one of the most popular hydrangeas in the world, 'Limelight Prime' was a No. 1 seed in the tournament. And 1,600 voters predicted a 'Limelight' victory before the tournament began, compared to 1,100 predictions that 'Wee Bit Grumpy' would win. But when it came time to vote in the national championship round, on March 30-31, the mophead took 53% of the votes to emerge victorious.

'Wee Bit Grumpy' is hardy in USDA Zones 5-9 and reaches 2' and 2.5' in width. Its flowers can be hot pink, magenta, or moody violet, depending on soil pH.

Previous national champion winners are featured at the shrub madness site shown above under the Hall of Fame tab.

*Editor's Note:* This article was summarized from the original which appeared in *Nursery Management*.



## Hydrangea Calendars Coming Soon!

CCHS will be debuting a gorgeous 2022 calendar in July just as our iconic Cape Cod plants come into full bloom. This monthly wall calendar will feature gorgeous hydrangea photos by Joan Harrison and a month-by-month guide on proper care and pruning by Mal Condon and Linda Coven.

It will be offered for sale in our member gardens which will be open to visitors during the Hydrangea Festival and also in garden centers around the Cape. A handy, must-have resource for keeping your hydrangeas healthy and happy, these beautiful calendars will also make great gifts for your gardening friends. All calendar proceeds will be used to support CCHS education efforts.



# A Bride with Many Names

by Suzanne Boas



In 2018 the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society named 'Runaway Bride' its plant of the year at the annual R.H.S. Chelsea Flower Show. A year later, under the moniker 'Luxrangea Bridal Shower', the same plant was named flower of the year in Japan. Today you can buy this "bride" here in the United States where it is marketed as 'Fairytrail Bride' under the Proven Winners brand.

Regardless of her name, this is one incredible new hydrangea. It was bred by Ushio Sakazaki who crossed a hydrangea he found in the wild in Japan with *H. macrophylla*. The resulting cascading plant flowers not only from terminal buds but also from lateral buds. Its lovely trailing, horizontal growth habit makes it well-suited for containers and hanging baskets. More sun tolerant than its macrophylla parent, 'Fairytrail Bride' is hardy from zones 9b to 7a. However, given the vagaries of our weather on Cape Cod, it may be best to overwinter this new hydrangea in a garage.

You may not have heard of Sakazaki before, but you are very likely to know some of his other prize-winning plant developments. Born and raised in Japan, Sakazaki's first horticultural job was working in the Brazilian rainforest for a company growing grapes. There he saw a carpet-like petunia that was new to him. Working with this plant, he developed the petunias that are now marketed under the Proven Winners label as Supertunia, Superbells and Superbina, all of which grow so vigorously in containers and gardens on Cape Cod.

*Hydrangea x 'Fairytrail Bride'* is currently available in limited quantities at select Cape Cod nurseries and online in 4" pots directly from Proven Winners.

# CCHS to Open 9 Gardens for Festival Tour

by Suzanne Boas



Nine CCHS member gardens will be open to visitors during this year's annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival, with a potential 10th garden to be added. Located from Sandwich and East Falmouth to South Chatham and Orleans, the gardens reflect the breadth of our society's membership on the Cape. They also reflect the unique talents and visions of their creators and their commitment to meticulous garden maintenance and proper plant care.

CCHS members JoAnn Trautmann and Michele Baker are currently recruiting docents for these gardens as well as the display garden at Heritage. CCHS members will be on hand to direct visitors and answer questions throughout the nine-day festival which runs from July 9-17. To volunteer as a docent email [pjtrautmann@verizon.net](mailto:pjtrautmann@verizon.net) or [baker.michele52@gmail.com](mailto:baker.michele52@gmail.com).

As in previous years, local artists will be painting in member gardens while visitors are touring. Wendi Smith who works in pastels and watercolors, is recruiting the plein air artists again this year. "How lucky for an artist to be invited into these private gardens. We so appreciate the opportunity to paint in such lovely surroundings," she says.

The festival garden paintings will be on display and for sale from July 24 through August 1 at Harvest of Barnstable

*"Spring is proof there is beauty  
in new beginnings."*

*—Matshona Dhliwayo*



## CCHS Member Gardens open during the Hydrangea Festival

.....  
July 10 & 14

Marsha & George Chapman  
28 Sady's Lane, E. Falmouth

.....  
July 11 & 15

Mary Kay & Mal Condon  
181 Thacher Shore Rd, Yarmouth Port

.....  
July 11 & 15

Carol Condon  
85 Wharf Lane, Yarmouth Port

.....  
July 11 & 16

Linda Coven  
21 Camp St., Unit 106, W. Yarmouth

.....  
July 13 & 14

Suzanne & Rob Boas  
299 Landing Drive, Brewster

.....  
July 15

Mary Ann Staudenmayer  
134 Water St. Yarmouth Port

.....  
July 16

Pat & Ulrich Schaafhausen  
56 Fairview Ave. S. Chatham

.....  
July 17

Linda & Dan Pessoni  
4 Driftwood Lane, E. Orleans

.....  
July 17

Jan & George Kasper  
6 Aviators Lane, Sandwich



# The Making and Remaking of a Garden

by Suzanne Boas

Linda Coven moved into her newly built home on the Cape in July of 2015. The landscaping put in by the builder consisted of one pine tree, a struggling dogwood, several large ornamental grasses and the normal complement of standard issue small foundation plants. The backyard contained no plants, only an air conditioner, a stockade fence and a small cement patio.



The first challenge Linda took on soon after moving in was replacing the 4'x4' patio and moving the air conditioner to the side of the house. She also dug out a bed by the stockade fence line and planted a number of macrophyllas, including 'Ayesha' and several 'Forever and Ever' varieties. A very hard winter followed her initial efforts, killing back most of the

plants she had chosen which proved not to be bud hardy. As a result, the following spring she started replanting.

The fence line garden continued to challenge her because of the light it received—shade in the morning and five hours of afternoon sun. In spring 2018 she decided on another plan for this garden, this time planting serratas and paniculatas. Again, Mother Nature won out. The paniculatas under-performed because they weren't getting enough sun, and the serratas did the same for a different reason—they were getting too much sun.

Last fall Linda decided to make a third attempt to get this challenging area just right. She initially thought she would put in some of the newer macrophyllas which are both remontant and more sun tolerant due to their thicker leaves. However, after pondering this challenging area over the winter, she decided to try limbing up the



overhanging trees to let in more light, hoping that will improve the performance of the existing plants. Should this not yield the desired result, she plans to replace the underperformers in the fall.

While the fence line area has been an ongoing challenge, the rest of Linda's garden has thrived over the last six years. Particularly successful have been her paniculata standards—'Pinky Winky', 'Limelight', 'Pink Diamond', 'Great Star' and 'Quick Fire'—the last of which she planted in a large container twelve years ago and moved to her current home.

She also has many smaller hydrangeas planted in the "Pot-n-Pot" method which she uses to decorate her patio. Among those are City Line 'Rio,' 'Venice,' 'Vienna,' 'Paris,' Endless Summer 'Summer Crush,' Let's Dance 'Rave,' 'Blue Jangles,' 'Rhythmic Blue,' along with 'Forever and Ever Together' and 'Felicity.' All these smaller potted hydrangeas, which she waters by hand, winter over in hoop houses which she has built behind the shed that she added to her property.

If you are considering making significant changes to one or more of your hydrangea beds, Linda suggests that the two best times to plant are spring and fall. In mid-May to early June the weather is still cool and nursery stock is good: the disadvantage of this window is that your new plants will need to successfully endure the heat of the summer.

The second planting window, which Linda prefers, is mid-September to the end of October when air temperatures are cooling, the ground is warm, and there is generally more consistent moisture. This helps young plants to better settle in; the challenge with this time window is that nurseries generally have more limited stock. Says Linda, "Don't worry about what the foliage looks like on plants you are considering at this time of the year; the most important thing is the size and condition of the root ball." Finally, says Linda, "Make sure you water the new plants well until the first hard frost and consider winter protection for the first year."

In addition to serving as one of our two CCHS co-presidents for the last two years, Linda is the owner of Strictly Hydrangeas, a boutique landscaping service specializing in selecting the right hydrangea for the right place, proper planting techniques, fertilizing, and most important, pruning. She is a Master Gardener (UConn '10 and UMass '17) and is in charge of the hydrangeas offered for sale at the annual Master Gardener plant sale. For the past five years her garden has been open during the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival garden tours.

"I guess the moral of the story," says Linda, "is that even professionals who work with hydrangeas day in and day out often need to keep tinkering with challenging parts of their own gardens. But, when you find the right combination of plants that produce just the look you are after, all the work is worth it!"





## Spring Chores for Summer Hydrangea Success

Our much-favored *H. macrophyllas* are typically the first to emerge from winter dormancy, and given their inherent fragility, they always consume the largest percentage of our available garden maintenance time. The seasonal step approach to pruning this species has helped to better define the best time and practice for our pruning.

That said, **Step 1: Regenerative Pruning** (typically March through early April) is over for this year. As I write this on April 25th, bud break on the *H. macrophyllas* has advanced considerably over the last two weeks and leaves are now more than 50% open on many cultivars, especially those receiving more unrestricted sunlight. Reaching down inside the plant to remove old stem wood will do more damage than good as you'll be knocking off developing leaf and bud clusters. It is best to defer this pruning step on *H. macrophyllas* until next year. Ditto for your *H. serratas* as they are expanding now too. So do note on your calendar now that you should start your Step 1 pruning in March 2022.

**Step 2: Detail Pruning** is the current activity and will be for most of May. In our seasonal pruning strategy, this second phase includes the simple removal of the upper portions of the stems that did not survive. Typically, this effort can be delayed well into May to give the tip and lateral buds every chance to develop. Failed stem sections without obvious growth should be cut back as far as possible. You may need to repeat some minor Step 2 pruning on larger well-established plants.

This second step is a much easier and less time-consuming pruning effort. In Step 1 we left all the seemingly live stems untouched. Much of this wood typically survives; however, some of it does not, often failing for undetermined reasons. Now with active overall plant growth, we can easily see in the photo on the right those stem portions that did not survive and trim back to just above a pair of vital buds.

Step 2 pruning can also include the removal of errant growth of a single stem, or even several stems. Mis-formed stem or branch sections are the likely candidates to improve overall



plant form. The bottom photo on the previous page shows examples of this condition. Pruning for overall plant form is moderately important, not as in an exact style, but in a reasonable random fashion with only vital new stems and developing blooms framing the entire outer surface of a well-tended plant.

Somewhat sadly, detail pruning is too commonly the only pruning many plants receive. It's easy and when dead stem sections are removed from amidst the overall strongly growing plant, the outward appearance of the plant can look fairly respectable. However, the dead and dying wood within the plant remains and eventually plant vigor declines because new regenerative growth has been inhibited by the dense accumulation within the plant's basal growth crown.

### What About the Other Species?

The *anomalas* (climbers), *arborescens*, *quercifolias*, *serratas*, and *paniculatas* all look great everywhere I've examined them this spring. These species are noted in order of their respective bud break. This may help with your pruning schedule. Fortunately, these five species are hardier than *H. macrophyllas* and except for the *serratas*, require less pruning attention. The *H. serratas* are a close cousin to the *H. macrophyllas* and are pruned in similar fashion. Given this past winter's moderation, we should enjoy another excellent blooming season from this group, a true guaranteed prediction every year. That says a lot about what hydrangea species we may wish to add to or expand in our home gardens this year.

### Planting & Replanting

April and May are the best months of the year to plant new hydrangeas and to remove, split, and replant existing ones in your garden. In the sequence below, note in the left photo, three "volunteers" (circled below) developed from low-lying stems which rooted in the mulch applied too heavily under the plant. This is a common problem with selected *H. macrophylla* cultivars. The largest "volunteer" in the middle photo was dug up, judiciously root-pruned, and then replanted (photo on the right) to complete this important small garden area expansion.

Doing this important major work early in the spring gives a plant the longest and most favorable growing season to recover and acclimate to its new location. If you nurture the plant with special TLC during the entire summer, superior root development will be your reward; it is a key factor and critical to a plant's first winter survival.



Planting and replanting are major hydrangea cultural issues and one of my most extensive programs in the Hydrangea Success Series at Heritage Museum and Gardens. All programs are virtual these days and this webinar will be presented on Friday, May 14, 10:30 am until noon. You might want to consider this one as registrants will have the opportunity to view it for an additional 48 hours plus receive my handout containing all the program's slides. Here's the link for more details: <https://heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/events-calendar/garden-events/>

### Mulching

You've heard me before on this subject. Mulch is an important positive contributor to plant health; it retains moisture, discourages weed growth, and keeps the plant's root zone cooler. But when added excessively, the accumulating layers of mulch create a problem. The increased depth begins to cover the plant's base, eventually shutting out sunlight and ceasing the development of new basal growth. Low-lying branches make contact with the mulch and the easy rooting nature of the *H. macrophylla* species can, if left unattended, develop expanded root systems, a process called layering or stooling. As previously mentioned, volunteers can expand fairly quickly, creating basal expansion that compromises the plant's total root growth.

That is why I'm always stressing the removal of low-lying branches. Practice keeping the mulch away from the plant base, using your irrigation ring as a good boundary measure! Apply just 1.5"-2" of mulch annually, tapering this depth to zero at the plant's base. Never push mulch under the plant. Just add enough mulch to maintain a 2"-3" total depth. With proper plant to plant spacing, only a minimal amount of the mulched surface should be visible at flowering time. And isn't it the blooms we came to your garden to enjoy – not the mulch?

Enjoy the summer and your hydrangeas in flower! Turn on your irrigation now...or pray for rain. Hope to see ya in a garden somewhere soon.

Mal  
The Hydrangea Guy



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Kelly Anderson  
Rocky River, OH  
Andrea Brandeis  
Duxbury, MA  
Marta M. Cahill  
South Dennis, MA  
Alison Carvourmis  
and John Conlon  
Eastham, MA  
Phyllis Connors  
Chatham, MA

Susan Curran  
Forestdale, MA  
Dianne Davis  
Marstons Mills, MA  
Sharon Donovan  
Stoneham, MA  
Heidi Driscoll  
Chatham, MA  
Megan Gladstone  
Chappaqua, NY

Elise and Jeff Gordon  
North Chatham, MA  
Jennifer Hicks  
Kingston, MA  
Margaret & Jim Hoogasian  
Forestdale, MA  
Aruna and Nitkin Joglekar  
Sandwich, MA  
Sandra McGuire  
Monument Beach, MA

Natalie Piercy and  
Jonathan Montgomery  
Mashpee, MA  
Pamela Phipps  
South Yarmouth, MA  
Donna Sassone  
Pocasset, MA  
Kathy Smith  
East Falmouth MA

# 2021 UPCOMING EVENTS

**General Business Membership Meeting 6:00 pm**  
Wednesday, May 12  
Speaker: Mal Condon, "Hydrangeas of the Azores"  
(Virtual Meeting)

**Lunch Bunch Noon**  
Wednesday, June 16  
Topic: "Pot-n-Pot" Container Gardening  
Linda Coven's Home, West Yarmouth

**Hydrangea U. 8:30 am-Noon**  
Friday, July 9  
(Virtual Meeting)

**Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival**  
July 9-18

**Post-Hydrangea Festival Art Exhibit & Sale**  
July 24-August 8  
Harvest of Barnstable, Yarmouth Port

**Lunch Bunch Noon**  
Wednesday, July 28  
Linda McNeilly's Home, Bridgewater

**Lunch Bunch Noon**  
Wednesday, August 4  
Joyce & Marty Halpert's Home, East Dennis

**General Business Membership Meeting 10:00 am**  
Saturday, September 25  
Speaker: Suzanne Mahler,  
"Great Public Gardens of New England"  
(Virtual Meeting/In-Person TBD)

## CCHS Board of Directors 2021

**Co-Presidents** Pat Vigliorolo  
Linda Coven  
**Vice President** [Open]  
**Treasurer** Rick Murray  
**Asst. Treasurer** Peter Berrien  
**Secretary** Caroline Weiss  
**Membership** Emily Woudenberg

## CCHS Committee Chairs 2021

<b>Display Garden Curator</b>	Mal Condon	<b>Newsletter</b>	Suzanne Boas
<b>Display Garden Maintenance</b>	Barbara Marsala	<b>Publicity</b>	Nancy Dexter
<b>Facebook</b>	Marcia Chapman	<b>Website</b>	[Open]
<b>Garden Docents</b>	Cathy Sampson	<b>Speakers</b>	[Open]
<b>Historian</b>	[Open]	<b>Sponsorships</b>	Cathy Sampson
<b>Hydrangea U.</b>	Joan Brazeau	<b>Social Affairs</b>	Joyce Halpert
<b>Nominating</b>	Emily Woudenberg	<b>Technology</b>	[Open]
		<b>Ways &amp; Means</b>	Mary Kay Condon