

CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

Summer 2017



Photo by Joan Harrison

*'Frillibet' in our display garden at Heritage
during Hydrangea Festival 2017*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thankfully, it's been a great hydrangea summer – clearly better than our past three. *H. macrophylla* blooming has been good on the western end of the Cape and increasingly superior as you traverse to the outer reaches to the east. Some of the displays in Chatham and Orleans are truly superb. All the other hydrangea species have done well everywhere, especially some of the *H. paniculata* plantings which are just now reaching their flowering peak.

This better blooming gave a boost to the 3rd Annual Cape-wide Hydrangea Festival – July 7 to 16. Our second Hydrangea University event moved to Heritage this year and a strong union between CCHS and HMG moved the program to the 'big-time' with 200 registrants. The morning presentations – CCHS members Joan Harrison, Peg Black, and this ol' scribe – were well received with once again lots of positive feed-back. My special thanks to Dean Joan Brazeau and her excellent supporting team; they worked especially well with the Heritage staff to create a strong, well-run event. And it was a financial success too, with CCHS and HMG each receiving almost \$4,400.

Again this year Spring Meadow Nurseries was most generous in supplying one quart container grown *H. macrophylla* plants; one plant was given to each Hydrangea U attendee. Thanks also to Marcia Chapman who donated a number of similar size plants from Spring Meadow as well and these were sold on site at member tour gardens.

Our Member Tour Gardens numbered seven this year. The gardens of Linda Coven, Dan Pessoni, and the Condons were repeaters. New this year were the gardens of Marcia & George Chapman, Liz O'Shea, Barbara Spillane, and John Posey. These 'new' locations were those of 'new' CCHS members. How great is that!

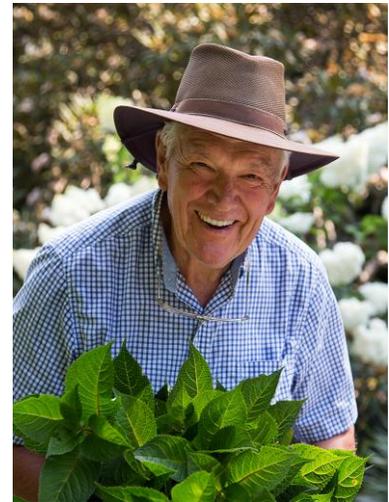
My Mary Kay did a fine job of securing these gardens and arranging some logical scheduling to maximize proximity and minimize driving times. With the strong support from Pat Vigliorolo and her Docent Team, all venues were well staffed. On-site plant sales was a new 'extra' this year. Tom & Judy Bartha – who are the CCHS plant propagators extraordinaire – provided hydrangea plants and handled sales at tour locations. Again, the total financial benefit of the Tours (just over \$5,000.) was very positive for our Society. I am very proud of all our participants for their dedication, hard work, and commitment to success.

Reinforcing my recent reminder email, our Fall Meeting will be held at the Harwich Community Center on Saturday, September 9 beginning at 10:00 am. Our very own Dan the Lily Man Pessoni will be our speaker and his extensive knowledge of daylilies, hostas, and more recently hydrangeas, should make for a very informative session. Our business meeting will be especially important as new senior officers will be installed. I do hope you can join us.

My best, Mal

Planting and Replanting Fall is a Super Time

September is soon upon us and while we have numerous late summer – early autumn non-gardening activities to pursue, it still remains one of the very best times of the year to plant and replant in our landscapes. Temperature and humidity are declining nicely, bright sunny days become almost common, and as good gardeners, we know instinctively that it is the time to give some of our plants a new 'home' to settle into before winter cold arrives. Often these plant candidates are those purchased mid-summer when they went on sale at your local nursery at more favorable prices, and you simply placed inside a deco container to admire more immediately on your deck or patio. The other most favored candidates are those plants that have been residing in 'unsuccessful' locations in your landscape. Replanting them provides a new chance in a different site – and will surely benefit their future performance. No matter, here's some commentary on 'Best Practices' for planting and replanting during the coming months.



For in ground planting, consider your planting site thoughtfully. Your hydrangea macrophylla may be a more tender cultivar so choose a location shielded from the north to west quadrant – the direction of our severest winter cold temps and driest winds. 'Shielding' means buildings, trees, dense shrubbery, fencing, companion evergreens – anything that can mitigate winter harshness.

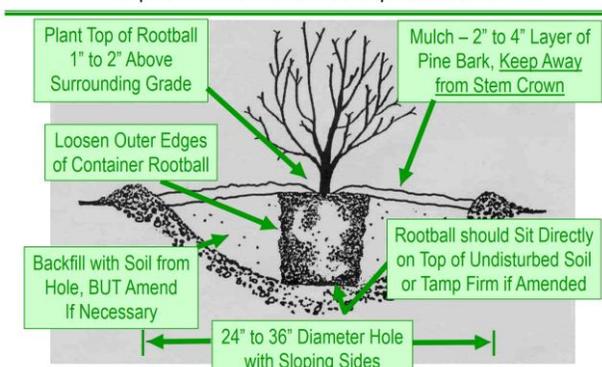
Plant well! The \$25 plant deserves a \$100 start. Sweat equity wins. Dig a generous planting hole irrespective of the plant's current container or root ball size. I typically dig a 24" to 36" hole with slanted sides (wider at the top) as most plant roots expand horizontally before penetrating vertically into the surrounding soil. Amend the existing soil with medium to coarse organic matter creating a blend of 1 : 1 or 1 : 2 by volume, existing vs organic. Clay soils drain poorly but nutrient level is often reasonable – organic matter 'opens' the composition allowing air to reach the root system. By contrast, sandy soils drain quickly and offer low nutrient levels. The addition of organic material – compost – improves moisture retention and provides needed nutrients.

I combine several ingredients to obtain my preferred soil amendment and here's the approx. recipe by volume. (1) Bag, 2.8 cu.ft, SunGro 852F planting mix (available from Crocker Nursery), (5) gallons ProMix BX, (5) gallons 'Condon Compost' (not readily available), and 2 gallons composted cow manure. All ingredients are blended and mixed by hand with a garden hoe. This blend is very friable (air entraining) and free draining and when combined with existing soil creates an excellent growing medium for all woody ornamental plants. Other recipes can work too; keep in mind that the major component - the 'Bag' mix – should contain 50-60% composted pine bark.

Typically we suspend fertilization after September 1st. Even though the foliage is failing, the root system does continue to grow, albeit slowly, until the soil temp drops below 50 F. Although not mandatory, you can give your plant a little 'sweet' in the form of a fish-seaweed liquid blend at half strength two weeks after planting. Just don't overdue it. You want the plant to slowly harden off and slip easily into dormancy with the first killing frost usually around Thanksgiving here on the Cape. The illustration below speaks for itself. A few points are especially worthy.

Planting Details

a \$25. Plant Deserves a \$100. Start



- Amend the soil in total, under the plant as well if necessary. Tamp soil firm and adjust to place root ball at proper planted level – 1" to 2" above surrounding grade.
- Roughen or score the root ball sides and bottom to accelerate new root growth into the planting medium.
- Mulching is most desirable to maintain good soil moisture, reduce soil temperature, and inhibit weed growth. But less is more and 2" to 3" is all that's needed. No mulch should cover the root crown.
- Water daily for first week, then every other day for next month.

'Winter Protection' practices - as we've shared in the past deserve consideration too – at least for the first year the plant is in the ground. Our most recent evolution of protection suggests house wrap (Tyvek) or white poly are better cage cover materials. Filling the cage with pine needles (not leaves) offers some additional shielding as well. We'll be continuing our evaluations on protection going forward and will report further. Do enjoy these next months in your garden.

Hydrangea Plant Series – Part 3

by Joan Harrison

- Part 1 Everlasting Series (Winter 2017)
- Part 2 Cityline® Series (Spring 2017)
- Part 3 Endless Summer® Collection

In each issue another hydrangea series will be covered, in no particular order. The goal of this exercise is to introduce you to (or reacquaint you with) a large number of new hydrangea cultivars. The hydrangea series on the docket this time is the Endless Summer® Collection introduced in 2004 with a breakthrough plant now called The Original. Previous varieties bloomed only on old wood. Endless Summer is the first hydrangea macrophylla variety marketed as a rebloomer, blooming on old and new wood. This distinction is still being emphasized, as reflected in the website copy shown below.



“The Endless Summer® Collection is the world’s first and best-selling brand of re-blooming hydrangeas. With the introduction of [The Original](#) in 2004 by Bailey Nurseries, the world of hydrangeas was revolutionized with this new variety of perennial plants having the ability to bloom on both previous seasons’ growth as well as the current season’s growth. Not only did this allow for the hydrangeas to bloom repeatedly from spring through fall, but also allowed for a greater number of big, beautiful blooms.” (Endless Summer website.)

The story behind the introduction of this plant is delightful. It was originally found growing in the garden of a fifth-grade teacher in Minnesota. Unlike other hydrangeas in that cold (zone 4) climate, it survived the winter. One of his neighbors noticed the plant. He happened to be the foreman at Bailey Nurseries which eventually set up a testing program which lasted ten years, during which time the plant was studied for hardiness and its ability to rebloom. Then along came Dr. Michael Dirr. On a visit to Bailey Nurseries he learned about this plant and was excited enough about it to bring several cuttings back to the University of Georgia with him to start his own test program which lasted another four years. Dr. Dirr had already been testing for remontancy (the ability of a plant to rebloom) and this new variety became part of the ongoing breeding program. Eventually ‘Endless Summer’ (named by Dr. Dirr) was introduced in 2004.

There are currently four plants in the collection. Notice all are sold in distinctive blue pots, part of the successful marketing plan.



The Original

Blushing Bride

Twist-n-Shout

BloomStruck



Endless Summer® The Original

Because of the wildly successful launch of The Original in the Endless Summer Collection, many other breeders sought their own reblooming hydrangeas. As hydrangea lovers we have been the beneficiaries of this rush to introduce new hydrangea varieties. The new Hydrangea Test Garden at Heritage was created to study the various claims of plant breeders and to see how well the new plants grow in a Cape Cod landscape.



Endless Summer® 'Blushing Bride'

'Blushing Bride' has white semi-double florets. The flowers blush pink or blue depending on the pH of the soil. Not surprisingly, the variety is marketed heavily for wedding displays. They are perfect for mid-summer weddings but they can change color as they age. The photo (below right) was taken on October 13, 2008 at Heritage Gardens.



Blushing Bride in summer



Blushing Bride in October



Twist-n-Shout®

“Twist-n-Shout® is the first re-blooming lacecap hydrangea and boasts beautiful red stems supporting deep pink or periwinkle blooms.” (Endless Summer website description.)



Photo by Joan Harrison

Twist-n-Shout®
Heritage Gardens
July 7, 2017

*Twist-n-Shout is one of my favorite lacecaps.
The flowers are beautiful and are held up
nicely by the sturdy stems.
This is a variety I recommend all the time.*
~Joan Harrison



BloomStruck®

Some of the virtues of this plant (in addition to being a rebloomer) cited by the Endless Summer website are:

- Stems red-purple and extremely strong
- Dark green leaves with red petioles and red veins
- Above average heat tolerance
- Good disease resistance, especially to powdery mildew

Ryan McEnaney from Bailey Nurseries made some very positive comments about BloomStruck® at the 2015 National Hydrangea Conference held at Heritage Gardens. In an email exchange after the conference he was kind enough to share some pictures and commentary with me.

“The stories that Dr. Durr and I were telling were about 2 different occasions. My BloomStruck® from this year survived a similar spring to what you encountered on the Cape. We had a cold winter, then were in the 70s by March and then went back down below freezing. With all of that, my old wood had very little tip dieback and the buds survived; I’ve got over 40 flowers on each shrub.” (Ryan McEnaney)



Ryan McEnaney’s BloomStruck®

“The other event we discussed was the Polar Vortex winter of 2013/2014. That winter we had 50 days below 0 with -28 as a low in Minnesota, and BloomStruck’s old wood buds survived. This photo was taken July 17, 2014 with big, beautiful flowers that came from old wood despite the winter conditions.” (Ryan McEnaney)



BloomStruck® after Polar Vortex winter

Because of the boom in consumer interest in hydrangeas, hydrangea marketing is extensive. Here are some examples of the creative Endless Summer Collection marketing campaign.



In the fall newsletter the Let's Dance® series will be featured. As a preview of coming attractions, here is a wonderful photo of Let's Dance® Rave™ shared by member Betsey Godley along with her comments.



“Here’s my favorite hydrangea photo of the spring. This is Let’s Dance Rave, one of the little plants from Hydrangea U last year. I kept it in the shed for most of the winter and then brought it into a cold room in the house, so it budded and bloomed early. It’s outside now and this photo was taken in the morning when the sun was just hitting the flower, but not the background.”

Another variety from the Let's Dance® series got a lot of attention at Marcia and George Chapman's garden during this year's Hydrangea Festival.



Let's Dance® Starlight



As you can see, Starlight lives in a very large pot. During the winter it rests in their unheated garage, to be brought outside again in the spring for another glorious summer of bloom. It was fun seeing how many people had their picture taken next to the plant, including yours truly. Hydrangeas in containers? YES!

The Chapman Garden – July 10, 2017
by Joan Harrison

Lucky visitors to the Chapman's property were treated to a garden of inspiration. Inspiration came from many sources: plant materials (and how they were used in combinations); garden design with curved paths leading from one lovely area to the next; a centrally located water feature; a balance of textures; natural garden arches including healthy climbing hydrangeas; and several perfectly located seating options where one could rest and admire the view. I was scheduled to be there all day to answer hydrangea questions, and it was happy duty indeed. It struck me how valuable this Hydrangea Festival is. The learning opportunities seem limitless. Beyond the obvious learning from viewing a wonderfully designed garden, there is information gained from conversations with fellow gardeners. Marcia Chapman is manager of Soares Flower Garden Nursery located in East Falmouth. She told me about some nurseries I'd not known about before including Prides Corner in Connecticut. I checked out their website when I got home. I loved seeing Prides Corner's online catalog, especially seeing what hydrangeas will be new in 2018. Here are a few.



H.m. 'Inspire'



H.m. 'Love'



H.m. 'Peacock'

For descriptions of the above plants and a nice browse through their plant catalog go to:
<http://www.pridescorner.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/home.home/index.htm> (Click on "Plant Library").



It's always fun to spend time with fellow CCHS members. Tom Bartha was there with wife Judy to sell plants.



Lucy O'Flaherty and Nancy Warren sold tickets and greeted visitors cheerfully.



Restful scenes in the Chapman garden.



A BIG bonus of touring gardens is learning about plants other than the featured hydrangeas. I loved the arborvitae pictured at left called “DeGroot’s Spire’. Marcia and George commented that it has never been planted in the ground. It has spent its whole life in increasingly larger pots. You may not be able to see it in the picture but it is attached to the garage behind it near the top, to keep it from toppling over in high winds.

It was interesting to see how often plants in pots were integrated into their garden. The lacecap ‘Lanarth White’ (middle picture below) in a big pot was placed next to a hosta with big leaves in a back corner of the property. It was a very effective pairing. The paniculata ‘Quick Fire’ had big impact near the road and behind it, in a pot, they had ‘Little Quick Fire’. (The latter not visible in picture below left.)

And how can you go wrong with a hydrangea floating in a bird bath?

*Thank you, Marcia & George,
for allowing us to see your
inspirational garden!*



I wish I had had the opportunity to see all the other CCHS gardens on tour this year. Unfortunately my husband John ended up in the hospital the day after my stint in the Chapman garden so I was otherwise occupied but I heard the other gardens were also a treat. If anyone has good photos and/or commentary from the other gardens, please send what you have to me and I will coordinate the information for the next newsletter. (joanofma@hotmail.com.) (I am happy to report John is now doing well.)

ICE CREAM PARTY



The new date for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society is Saturday, September 23, 2017, from 2-5pm. (Rain date Sunday, Sept. 24.) Those of you who were with us from the start may recall the meeting at Sturgis Library in 2007 when our membership suddenly grew from 11 to about 60 members. That was September 22, 2007. It seems appropriate to celebrate our anniversary almost exactly 10 years after that momentous meeting.

When: Saturday, September 23, 2017, 2-5pm. (Rain date Sunday, 9/24.)
Where: 34 Thayer Lane, Orleans (the home of John Bimshas and Joan Harrison).
RSVP: There will be a sign up sheet at the fall meeting. Otherwise contact Joan Harrison, joanofma@hotmail.com, 508-468-7869.

Directions will be sent out shortly before the event. Please note, GPS is reliable only from the end of Arey’s Lane that goes through the Arey’s Pond boat yard.

Introducing...

Suzanne Boas who has kindly agreed to be the new newsletter editor. Suzanne will take over starting with the next issue of the newsletter, Fall 2017. I encourage everyone to give Suzanne lots of support as she starts this new venture, especially by sending along photos and hydrangea-related information.

~Joan Harrison
 Newsletter Editor, 2007-2017



The First Ten Years



Ten years ago at this time the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society had 11 members; now we have close to 200. When we started out we had a dream of creating a hydrangea display garden; now our display garden at Heritage is known by hydrangea lovers all over the country. With this garden and Hydrangea University we are fulfilling our mission: To learn all we can about hydrangeas and to share what we learn with the larger community.

Here, in my last newsletter as editor, I'd like to share some personal reflections on what the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society means to me. At one time I wrote the "Making Friends" column for PrimeTime Cape Cod in which I advised people to find people who share similar interests. Finding all of you who share my love of hydrangeas has been wonderful! It thrills me to see all the lasting friendships that have been formed. We have become a caring community and our association with each other has enhanced our lives. I know it has enhanced my life! I love seeing all your cheerful faces at meetings and events. I know some of you quite well now and value your friendship. I look forward to getting to know everyone else. Everything has been fun because of the people involved.

I truly appreciate all of you who have stepped up to positions of leadership and responsibility. Having a continually rotating roster of officers, committee chairs, garden docents, volunteer workers in the display garden, etc. makes for a vital, thriving organization. We have so many members with helpful talents! All of you have contributed to the success we enjoy today.

The 2015 National Hydrangea Conference was held at Heritage because of our garden. The new Hydrangea Test Garden was created at Heritage because our garden was already there, reminding people how wonderful our climate is for hydrangeas. We may not have created the annual Hydrangea Festival but we certainly play a strong role in its success. We helped put hydrangeas on the map. Whenever I visit our display garden, especially on days when lots of visitors are enjoying the beautiful flowers, my heart swells with happiness. Look what we did! Thank you, all!

~Joan Harrison

**Cape Cod Hydrangea Society
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