



CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

WINTER 2022

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www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Winter Greetings from Emily and Joyce!

Our best wishes to you all as we begin a new year together of celebrating our favorite shrub, the hydrangea! Almost fifteen years ago, in September of 2007, eleven enthusiastic people attended the first general meeting of the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society. Today we have 290 members; many projects underway; and more to come in both categories!



We would like to send a big thank-you to our former web designer, Wendy Marshall of FishNet Media. Her professionalism and creativity helped us launch a beautiful website and we are so grateful for the expertise and patience that she brought to the task.

We are about to launch an updated version of the site in a few weeks. The Cole WebDev Company is working with us to make it both easier to access and manage. We are also planning new features, including short instructional videos on the care and feeding (and pruning!) of our favorite shrubs. Many thanks to Joan Brazeau who is leading this video committee.

And speaking of committees—there is more to running them than meets the eye. Members' skills and enthusiasm are very important! We will soon be sending out a list of opportunities to get more involved in our society. Please step up!

Also, make sure you check the calendar of upcoming CCHS events for 2022 on the last page of this newsletter. We have much to look forward to: general meetings with speakers, both in-person and virtual; social and educational gatherings; Hydrangea Fest garden tours; Hydrangea University; and our hands-on maintenance of the hydrangeas at Heritage Gardens.

Meanwhile, have a good and healthy winter until we meet again!

Stay well,

Emily Woudenberg
Co-President

Joyce Halpert
Co-President

Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly



Tonia St. Germain... gardening with a little help from her friends

With a little help from her friends, Tonia St. Germain has successfully established and maintained gardens on the East and West coasts...

Raised in Quincy, MA, Tonia spent family summers on Cape Cod. After she completed her education she moved to Albany, NY and began to garden seriously. There she joined several garden clubs where she met master gardener, Sally Cummings, who became not only an advisor and consultant but also a valued friend.



With her marriage to husband, Ken Bush, Tonia relocated to Oregon, accepting a position at Eastern Oregon University where she taught a course entitled Women in the Law, while Ken taught in the theater department. Tonia and Ken lived in the village of Cove, Oregon which is located on the eastern edge of the Grande Ronde Valley. Their property, situated on Mount Fanny in the Wallowa Range, received abundant sunshine, perfect for sustaining a large perennial garden. The high desert climate was also conducive to growing fruits and berries, but too dry for Cape Cod's iconic hydrangeas to thrive.

In 2016, Tonia and Ken retired to her family home in Brewster, MA, with plans to design an English cottage-style garden. Luckily, her old friend Sally Cummings from Albany offered to split perennials with her. Tonia also gathered volunteer plants from Sally's garden and was the beneficiary of numerous hydrangeas from a contingent of master gardeners in Albany. All of these "Albany transplants" flourished in Tonia's new garden in Brewster.

Sally Cummings, aware of the horticultural offerings on the Cape, encouraged Tonia to become a Master Gardener and to join the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society. She pursued these suggestions and has become an enthusiastic member of both organizations.

Tonia recently joined the CCHS maintenance team for the display garden at Heritage Museums and Gardens. She is also a contributor to the CCHS newsletter, having interviewed Rick Murray as he readied his garden for the 2021 Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival. Presently, she is preparing an article on Hart Farms for the spring newsletter. In late fall, she helped Paula Rushworth's committee with Christmas tree decorations at Heritage.

Oregon's loss is definitely our gain! Welcome, Tonia, to the CCHS... a community of new gardening friends!



Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly

Lynn and Eric Carlson... it was meant to be!

Hydrangea terms such as "macrophylla" and "paniculata" were not always familiar to the Carlsons. Now, not only are these words familiar, but Lynn and Eric have become hydrangea lovers...

Lynn, a licensed clinical social worker, retired from McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA. Eric, a chemical engineer focusing on electric vehicle batteries and fuel cells, worked for Boston Power and Arthur D. Little. The couple's destination upon retirement...Cape Cod.

The Carlsons' move to the Cape from their home in Sudbury, MA was accomplished gradually. Six years ago they purchased a home in Dennis, the attraction being a large yard with a few hydrangeas, but plenty of potential. Initially a vacation home, it became their permanent residence in 2019.

During their transition to full-time life on the Cape, they rented a house in Watertown, MA, while renovating their Dennis home. When they moved to Dennis they brought hydrangea cuttings given to them by their Watertown landlord. To assure the survival of these cuttings as well as the hydrangeas that had been planted by the former owners of their new home, they sought advice from Mal Condon and CCHS.

They have since become CCHS members, have participated in Lunch Bunch events, volunteered as Hydrangea Festival docents, attended Hydrangea University, and plan to help with winter pruning at the CCHS Display Garden. And the status of their own hydrangeas? Doing great!

In addition to their volunteer work with CCHS, the Carlsons are also very involved in other community service efforts. Lynn was recently hired as a member of the Dennis Police Department Community Mental Health Outreach Team and serves as chairperson for SUDAC, Dennis's Substance Use Disorder Advisory Council. Eric is active with the Dennis Conservation Land Trust, maintaining nature trails. He also volunteers with Habitat for Humanity, building affordable housing for qualified individuals and families. Both Lynn and Eric are members of the Shoop Community Garden and participated in "Forward at the Rock," a joint project with the Village Garden Club of Dennis and CCHS.

Eric and Lynn's move to the Cape, love of hydrangeas, commitment to community, and cuttings from a friend all brought them to our society...it was meant to be!





There's a New Kid in Town...Beacon Gardens at Osterville

by JoAnn DiRico Trautmann

Jeff Kaschuluk's timing couldn't have been worse. The former Nantucket landscaper turned real estate developer purchased a two-acre, very messy, defunct nursery in Osterville and was clearing the property, re-constructing and re-glazing the dilapidated greenhouses and targeting a "soft opening" for May 2020 when the pandemic hit. Although the locals were a little skeptical that this new nursery would be a significant improvement over its predecessor, it wasn't long before word of mouth had curious "plantaholics" and landscapers from all over the Cape and beyond exclaiming "What a lovely selection of well-cared-for plants!"



Beacon Gardens is truly a unique nursery and I had the pleasure of discovering what makes it special this past summer when I was offered a part-time seasonal job, maintaining perennials and annuals. Of course, I was attracted to the many and varied hydrangea offerings, which are beautifully displayed throughout the property. I'll let the pictures and the sidebar which accompany this article tell that story. Instead, I'd like to introduce you to six of the talented people who run this garden center and whom I interviewed for this article.

Jeff Kaschuluk, Principal Owner

Q: What possessed you to take over a defunct nursery and what are your top three challenges?

A: "I grew up in northern Connecticut where my extended family had many gardens. Vendor trucking, employee training, and watering techniques are my challenges."

Q: Why is exceeding customer expectations such a priority for you?

A: "Business is not one-and-done. My desire is a happy customer who returns and spreads the good word."

Jeff's favorite plants: Arborvitae 'Green Giant' and 'Emerald Green', Colorado Blue Spruce.



Dave Griffith, Nursery Manager

Q: How did your 43 years of nursery experience help Beacon achieve 2021's Best of the Upper Cape award?

A: "Growing up in this industry and making connections with growers and suppliers to get the best nursery stock" is critical as is "being able to help customers choose the right plant for the right place."

Dave's favorite tree? Japanese Umbrella Pine with its large, very glossy needles which shine in his garden in winter.

Zach Stephens, Assistant Nursery Manager

Q: What do you think you have contributed to Beacon's success and how is Beacon different from where you have worked before?

A: "Developing strong, positive relationships with retail customers and landscapers is critical to success. In the busy season if I can get the landscapers in and out quickly, it relieves the stress on both ends. What's different about Beacon is that the smaller size of the property makes it easier to maintain."

Zach's favorite shrub: *Clethra anilfolia* commonly called Sweet Pepper Bush. "I love that it's native to the Cape. When it's blooming, you can smell its fragrance all over and I love the smell." Beacon carries the varietal 'Ruby Spice'.

Ann Moehle just completed her second season at Beacon. In coordination with Dave and Zack, she follows up with growers and deliveries with a sense of humor. Always on the lookout for new and "edgy" plants, Ann tries her best to source from local growers and suppliers.

Q: What are your biggest challenges?

A: "Late frosts which cause delays in shipments, and out-of-stock plant material."

Ann's favorite annuals: long blooming Cuphea and *Salvia guaranitica* 'Black and Blue'. Her favorite perennials: cone-flowers and lupines.

Sara Booras is Ann's sister and the inspiration behind the creative containers which Beacon has begun showcasing. The more unusual the plant, the more fun she has with it, using her Massachusetts College of Art & Design background to focus on texture, height, and a pop of color. While she teams up with her sister, Ann on ordering, Sara's forte is rotating the displays of plants within the front greenhouse and the outside entrance area.

Sara's favorite indoor plants: *Begonia rex* 'Escargot' with its spirally burgundy and silver colors and fox tail fern. "You have to pat it because it's so soft."



New Hydrangea Varieties To Be Featured at Beacon in 2022

H. macrophylla 'Wee Bit 'Giddy'
An improved version of 'Cityline Paris' that is compact and hardy.

H. paniculate 'Firelight Tidbit'
Similar to 'Bobo', this dwarf variety produces large white blooms that mature to raspberry pink.

H. paniculata 'Limelight Prime'
A smaller version of 'Limelight' that is more appropriate for foundation plantings. It blooms earlier with showy white flowers that turn to pink with tones of red.

H. paniculata 'Little Lime Punch'
Similar to 'Little Lime' but with fruit punch red blooms.

H. macrophylla 'Let's Dance Arriba'
A dwarf variety that will rebloom throughout the season and look great into the fall.

Deanna Kaschuluk, General Manager of Operations

Deanna is Jeff's sister. She spearheads promotion of the nursery through social media; hires and then schedules employees; sets up accounts and invoices landscapers and suppliers. Connecting with local farmers, she oversees Beacon's ever-popular native corn and vegetable stand and recently-introduced Boston's Charles St. butcher Savenor's fresh meats and poultry.

Rejuvenating the 50-year-old nursery, formerly known as Busch Gardens, and introducing an updated business model is no small feat, but Beacon's devoted employees and loyal customers are a winning combination! Check Beacon out on Instagram and Facebook. I know you'll love what you see!



Prepare Now for Hydrangea Pruning Season

Cyclists, fishermen and farmers have long been champions of arm sleeves. Valued for their ability to protect wearers from scrapes, scratches and cuts, they are made in fabrics that also offer protection from UV rays. If you are concerned about sun exposure or cuts and scrapes when gardening, particularly when pruning, why not consider investing in a pair of arm sleeves? They are manufactured by a number of companies and come in a full range of sizes, colors, patterns and prices. Many claim to wick moisture away as well. Here is a sample of the variety of sleeves that can be found online.



www.skinwardusa.com
\$27.29



www.cyclogyclothing.com
\$26.99



www.farmersdefense.com
\$22.99



The Plant Doctor is In

by Russ Norton



Dear Plant Doctor:

Over the last several years a significant number of my normally blue flowering hydrangeas have turned pink. I've noticed that happening in other gardens as well.

As you know, we have experienced serious drought conditions here on the Cape over the last two summers, during which time I used much more town water than usual to irrigate my plants. Do you think this could be the cause of the color change I am seeing? Also, is there an effective way for me to routinely monitor the pH in my soil short of digging up soil samples?

Thank you in advance for your help!

Hydrangea Blues Singer

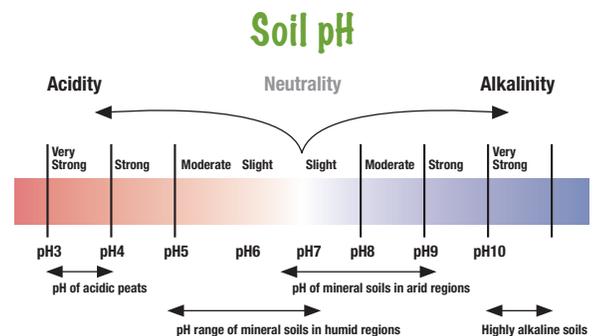


Dear Hydrangea Blues Singer:

The color of bigleaf hydrangea inflorescences has fascinated both gardeners and scientists for a long time. Scientists have researched the topic for more than a hundred years. The current understanding is that hydrangea flower color development happens at the molecular level. It involves a complex containing a pigment (anthocyanin), an acid, and Al^{3+} (aluminum cation). Color variances are a result of the ratio of these three elements as well as molecular pH.

From a gardener's perspective the science behind color change is somewhat simpler. Aluminum is required for blue hydrangea flowers. Aluminum is the third most abundant element in the earth's crust; however its availability for uptake by plants is determined largely by soil pH. At low soil pH levels aluminum is available for uptake and at high pH aluminum is bound to soil and not available for plant uptake. Soil pH of 3.5-5.5 generally produces blue hydrangeas; soil pH of 5.5-7.5 generally yields pinker hues. Of course, generalizations are complicated by cultivar differences and environmental factors that also affect color.

One would expect the color change you have observed to be the result of gradual pH change. Soil samples taken from the area around your hydrangeas tested 5.3-5.4 which would generally



produce blue flowers. Historical pH records would be needed to determine whether there has been an increasing pH trend that would explain the color change. Unfortunately, that information is unavailable and therefore I don't have a conclusive answer.

Soil testing can be helpful to monitor soil pH and observe pH trends. There are numerous options for soil testing including soil labs (UMass), the CCCE Horticulture Clinic, and even some local garden centers. Soil testing can also be done at home with relatively inexpensive kits and meters. All of these options can provide reliable pH measurement and are suitable for monitoring trends over time. However, I recommend using a soil testing lab which includes measurement of both soil pH and reserve pH (buffer/exchangeable pH). With information on both soil pH and reserve pH, the recommendations for pH adjustment are far more precise with respect to your soil's properties.

The impact of irrigation water on soil pH is intriguing and I have contemplated it before in relation to the droughts of 2016 and 2019. The answer is yes, soil pH is likely impacted when there is no natural precipitation and water is only supplied by irrigation water. However, those impacts are likely small and very short-lived, as even during drought years natural precipitation is significant and is the primary driver of low pH locally and worldwide.

I have no clear answer to offer as to why your hydrangea inflorescences changed from blue to pink over time. It could be as simple as gradual change in pH or related to other soil chemistry factors that affect availability and uptake of aluminum. However, in the future consistent testing of pH on a yearly basis will help identify whether pH is the primary factor.

Happy Gardening!

The Plant Doctor

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

Soil Testing Kits & Meters

Kensington 3 In 1 Soil Tester
\$12.99

Luster Leaf 1601 Rapid Test Kit
\$15.11

Garden Tutor Soil pH Test Strips
\$12.98

available at
amazon

"What good is the warmth of summer without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

—John Steinbeck





A Summer Garden Celebration

by C.L. Fornari



On a July day four years ago, a group of three 30-something women walked down my driveway. One held an iced coffee and another wore a Boston Red Sox cap. They were all laughing and clearly having a fun friends-day-out. When they reached the end of the drive, they all stopped and looked at the flower garden that surrounds my front porch. One woman put her hands to her face in a gesture of surprise, and said, "Oh! I didn't know this was possible."

This statement is a perfect example of why people open their gardens and landscapes during the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival. It's an opportunity to share the love of plants with current garden geeks, encourage others to be more involved with their own gardens, and raise money for local non-profits at the same time. And now and again, we can open someone's eyes and make them aware of what's possible.

The idea for the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival was planted in my brain around 2013 when I heard a fellow garden writer speak about Garden Walk Buffalo. This weekend of open gardens has been happening for over 25 years, and it brings in over three million dollars to the city of Buffalo in just three days at the end of July. Hearing this, I thought "Hmmm....if Buffalo, New York can draw that kind of attention to gardens, what might we do on Cape Cod?"

As someone who's been involved in several nonprofits over the years, however, I wanted a way that these organizations could benefit from such an event. Most local nonprofits have fundraisers, but these constantly draw from their base. What organizations on the Cape need is a way to make "out of town" money. It seemed to me that a festival of open gardens might be just what Cape groups needed to bring in funds from new sources. And indeed, in most years the festival has generated more than \$50,000 for local nonprofits.



Dan Pessoni's Garden



Carol Condon's Garden



Rick Murray's Garden



Linda Coven's Garden

What most people who share their gardens find is that they gain just as much as, or maybe more than, the organizations that benefit. It's satisfying to share what you've created with others, and to watch friends, neighbors and total strangers get pleasure from your gardens. Most people find that it also stimulates their creativity when, come spring, they start to think, "What can I plant or ornament the garden with that will make people smile?" I also appreciate having a deadline in early to mid-July, when everything will be as planted, trimmed, mulched and weeded as I want to make it. Then I get to enjoy it for the rest of the summer!

Should you want to open your garden during this year's festival, know that it doesn't have to contain a huge number of hydrangeas or other flowers. In fact, showing people what can be done in smaller spaces with limited budgets is valuable in and of itself.

For more information about the Hydrangea festival, go to www.CapeCodHydrangeaFest.com. I hope that many CCHS members will experience the joy of showing others what is possible.

Editor's Note

C.L. Fornari is a life-long garden geek who plants hydrangeas and many other plants at Poison Ivy Acres in Sandwich. Her garden will be open three or four days during the 2022 Hydrangea Festival.

Linda McNeilly, CCHS Vice-President, is coordinating CCHS member garden openings for the festival this year. Linda can be reached at 508-362-7104 or lmcneilly55@comcast.net.



Mary Kay and Mal Condon's Garden

Small on Space, Lovely Beyond Bounds...Pat Vigliorolo's Garden

by Mary Bowker



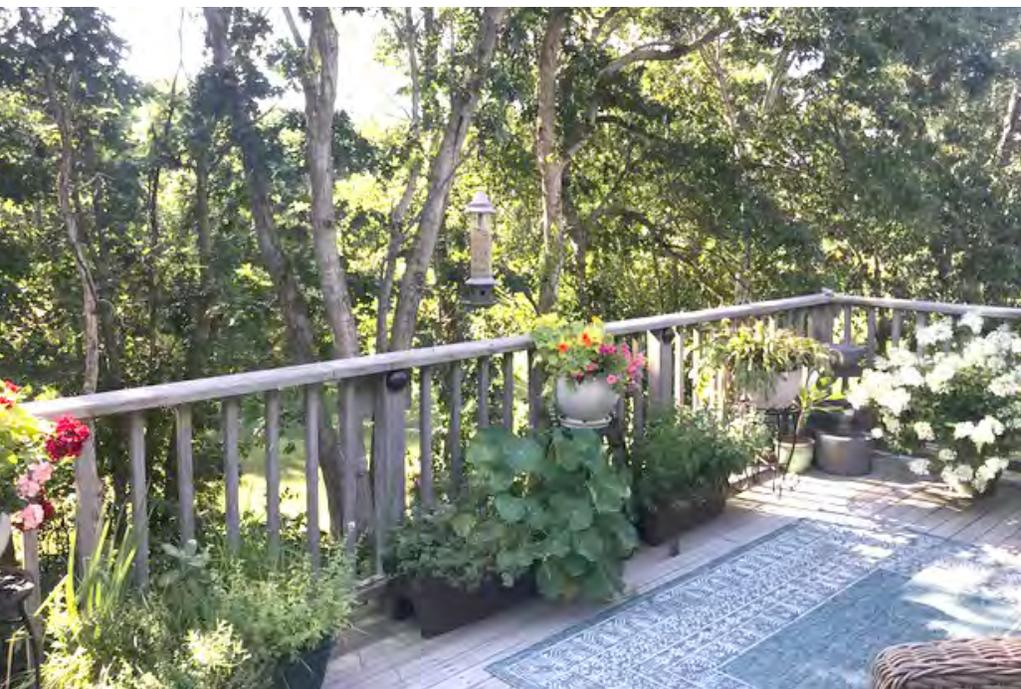
The most telling thing about a garden, no matter the season, is its bones. Plants carefully selected, a welcome atmosphere created, give the garden personality that "fits its owner," as iconic horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll advised...even if that garden is small.

Pat Vigliorolo moved to a condominium in King's Way in Yarmouth Port eight years ago and started transforming the plain, sparsely-planted courtyard with a brick walk that she inherited from the developer.

That walk, since changed to bluestone and enclosed with an attractive wooden fence, is now lined with intensely planted garden beds. It gathers visitors in a welcoming floral embrace as it pulls them from common ground shared with other owners into Pat's personal space.

Step through the gate onto a winding path and you are in a private, secret garden. Hydrangeas of course—'Zorro' with its black stems, 'Lady in Red' and 'L.A. Dreaming'—anchor the beds. Skimmia, low growing and evergreen, spills out onto the stone as does Japanese forest grass. Fronting the hydrangeas are perennials, planted in a burst of color: lady's mantle, milkweed, lambs ears, bee balm, coneflower, iris and others. One corner is filled with a mature tree form paniculata, 'Tardiva', so vigorous that it currently extends out over the walkway and will be moved to a new, larger home in the spring.

Deck overlooking the green and white garden.



Mid-summer view of courtyard.



A ballroom dancer, Pat had to find a place for these dancing bunnies in her garden.

Near the front door is a Japanese weeping dwarf maple planted in memory of Pat's husband Lou. The left wall of the courtyard formed by the garage is home to trellises of blooming roses, 'America,' a climber and a hearty, prolific yellow 'Knock Out'. Across the walkway is an arbor, smothered by sweet autumn clematis.

Pat has also added plantings to common areas that separate her neighbors' private driveways. Hosta, hellebores, lamium and brunnera are tucked under the rhododendron and arborvitae planted by the builder. Coleus in antique pots grace the space between garage doors. Dwarf hydrangeas also in pots are nestled in the beds: 'Little Lime', 'Little Quick Fire', 'Mini Mauvette' and 'Bobo'. A mature planting of 'Matilde Gutges', 'Amethyst', and 'Let's Dance Rave' flanks the white wooden gate that leads to the small courtyard.

And wait, there is more. In a wooded area, across a lawn from her second story back deck, Pat has planted a white garden in the common space, so she could look at something nicer than the Cape Cod pucker brush that divides her rear yard from the golf course. Two climbing hydrangeas snake their way up trees. Oakleaf hydrangeas 'Alice' and 'Gatsby Moon' share the understory with shade-loving perennials, including Solomon's seal, ostrich ferns, hosta, hellebores, astilbe, mayapple, toad lily and trillium. A dogwood, red buds, and white lilacs dot the woods beneath the oaks and scrub pines. At the front border, hydrangeas bloom: 'Queen of Pearls', 'Grandad', 'Wedding Gown', 'Tokyo Delight' and 'Madame Emile Mouillere', to name a few. High above this view of green and white, on the deck, are large boxes of herbs and pots of hydrangeas.

Pat is a Jersey girl who planted her way through her yards in New Jersey and then Texas as she and her husband Lou moved for work. In the Dallas suburbs she learned xeriscaping. In Houston her yard was a certified wildlife habitat. Along the way she became a Texas Master Gardener. After Lou died in 2012, Pat moved to the Cape full time and transferred to the master gardener program here.

A former nurse who worked for years in high-risk obstetrics and managed care, she took immediately to nurturing this, her smallest garden. She's had help from members of CCHS which she joined in 2007. Recently she stepped down after serving two years as CCHS' co-president with Linda Coven. Pat is now savoring her "retirement" from the responsibilities an office-holder bears and planning...what else? Renovating her latest garden masterpiece, including the addition of enhanced lighting for nighttime enjoyment.

Late-summer view of courtyard.



Painting of Pat's courtyard in mid-summer by local artist, Wendi Smith



Heritage Hydrangeas... Not Just a Summer Affair

by Suzanne Boas

The relationship between Heritage Museums and Gardens and the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society is not just a summer affair. Anything but. Our society's work with Heritage's hydrangea display garden begins in early spring each year and runs all the way into December.

As this past summer wound down, Barbara Marsala and her maintenance crew carefully picked and dried macrophylla and paniculata blooms. More than 75 beautiful burgundy-colored 'Pinky Winky' blooms were slated to be made into garlands for two CCHS Christmas trees featured during Heritage's Gardens Aglow holiday spectacle.

Paula Rushworth led the decorating effort again this year, starting with a work session at her house to gather the dried macrophylla blooms into bouquets, to assemble bows and decorate boxes to go under the trees. Helping her with the preliminary work and/or the tree decorating were Barbara Marsala, Linda McNeilly, Joyce Halpert, Emily Woudenberg, Cheryl Moniz, and Tonia St. Germain.

Another beautiful contribution to Heritage by CCHS. Well done ladies!



Tonia St. Germain and Linda McNeilly prepare boxes and bows for the Heritage trees.



Barbara Marsala adds finishing touches to one of the Heritage trees.

Proper Pruning of *H. paniculata* 'Bobo'

by Linda Coven



In recent years new and smaller *H. paniculata* varieties have been showing up in local garden centers. One of the most popular of these is *H. paniculata* 'Bobo'.

'Bobo' is a vigorous bloomer that is literally engulfed in large white flowers each summer. Perfect as either an in-ground or container plant, its flowers, which are held on upright strong stems, turn to lovely shades of pink as they age.

'Bobo' is regularly marketed as "super compact" and "dwarf in habit," and said to reach only 3-4 ft tall and wide at maturity. However, these claims mean nothing if 'Bobo' is not pruned properly; otherwise, this plant will quickly grow to 5 ft+ tall and wide. You can certainly let your plant grow to that size if you have room in your garden, but if you were counting on the smaller advertised size, you need to take action while the plant is dormant.

The key to keeping 'Bobo' as a dwarf plant is hard pruning.

The 'Bobo' plants in my garden were put in the ground 3 years ago. Pruning them hard each winter while they are dormant has kept them at their advertised size—3 ft tall and wide. If you follow this hard pruning regimen every winter, you will be rewarded in July, as I am, with spectacular dwarf plants covered in blooms. It's time to put your pruners to work!

How to prune 'Bobo' or any other dwarf paniculata to maintain its compact size

STEP 1: Remove all the flowers so you can see the structure of the plant.



STEP 2: Cut back each stem on the entire plant to the first or second node. Also, remove any tiny branches, or what I call "hairs".



STEP 3: Remove all crossing stems and keep any new brown stems that fill in empty spaces or add to the overall shape of the plant.



Platycrater arguta – Tea of Heaven

by Michael Dirr, Ph.D.



In 2019, before the pandemic, I started a new *Hydrangea* tome since seismic taxonomic, breeding and cultivar introduction advances occurred after the publication of my *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* in 2004. Aside from the avalanche of new cultivars, especially prevalent among *H. arborescens*, *H. macrophylla* and *H. paniculata*, one of the most significant changes is the merging of several *Hydrangeaceae* genera into *Hydrangea*. *Decumaria*, *Dichroa*, *Pileostegia*, *Schizophragma* and *Platycrater* are now considered *Hydrangea* species.

I believe that the last of these species, *Platycrater arguta*, referred to commonly as Tea of Heaven, is worthy of consideration for use in partially shaded to shaded situations in Zone 7 to 9 gardens. It is available through Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden, CT (www.brokenarrownursery.com) which lists the species as hardy to Zone 5. I discussed this with them and was told that in colder zones the plant dies to the ground but regenerates and forms a 3' high by 3' wide delicate, graceful flowering shrub by summer. As you can see in photo to the right, *Platycrater arguta* is a graceful, rounded, arching shrub with willow-like leaves.

In Georgia, these plants leaf out in late March with flower buds evident in April. Full expansive flowers cover the plant in June. The emerging leaves are bright green, darkening with maturity and turning yellow in November-December in Zone 8.

Flowers develop from the previous year's wood and on the new growth in June-July, continuing sporadically for a time, never overwhelming, yet elegant and refined. Each flower is composed of 3 to 4 white sepals; they may be fragrant or have no odor. This species is best grown in filtered light with uniform moisture and good drainage.

Platycrater arguta has exhibited significant heat tolerance which is unexpected considering its native habitat in the wild. Foliage is exceedingly clean with no evidence of mildew and *Cercospora*.

If you are looking to add new interest to your garden, I encourage you to give this *Platycrater arguta* a try. You may also want to consider one or more of the following *Platycrater arguta* cultivars for your garden:



Platycrater arguta provides textural contrast with large foliage hydrangeas and other shade-loving plants.



Platycrater arguta flowering habit.



Flower buds of a 'Rosea'.



Platycrater arguta "Rosea" flowers

'Rosea'

'Rosea' has pink flowers and is also offered by Broken Arrow Nursery. You can see its bright pink buds in the photo above on the left. I believe this could prove a pretty garden plant as a textural contrast with larger foliated hydrangeas and other shade-loving plants.

'Pink Moon'

'Pink Moon' has larger fragrant and more sterile flowers than 'Rosea'. It also has a deeper pink sepal color, although the color is on the underside of the sepals so somewhat minimized for the viewer. 'Pink Moon' is available through Issima Plant Works (www.issimaworks.com), a mail order nursery specializing in "under cultivated and garden worthy plants."

'Kaede'

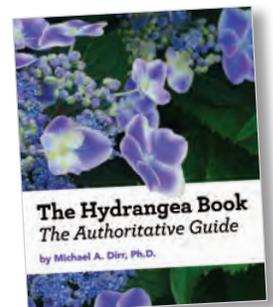
'Kaede' has larger, darker green foliage and flowers twice as large as the straight species. Nurseries Caroliniana (www.nurcar.com) in North Augusta, SC offers this plant which owner Ted Stephens acquired during one of his trips to Japan.

'Honey Moon'

'Honey Moon' has fragrant flowers three times as large as 'Kaede' and foliage significantly larger than both 'Kaede' and 'Rosea'. My own plant is yet to flower, but the balloon-shaped buds are three times as large as those on the straight species. Like 'Pink Moon', this plant is also available from Issima Plant Works in Little Compton, RI.

Additional information on these plants can be found in *The Hydrangea Book: The Authoritative Guide* which I released last summer.

Editor's Note: A longer version of this article first appeared in the August 13, 2021 digital edition of *Nursery Management*. The edited version here is used with the permission of both Kelli Rodda of Nursery Management and Dr. Michael Dirr, its author.





CCHS and Village Garden Club of Dennis Partner on Community Project

by David Kaplan

When leaders of the Village Garden Club of Dennis spotted a large barren island in the circular driveway at FORWARD at the Rock, a newly constructed home for eight adults with developmental disabilities, they realized they could help. The club's scholarship and community outreach committee, which awards grants to community organizations to help create and promote gardens and green spaces, offered labor, expertise, plants and materials for the island.



FORWARD, a nonprofit homebuilder for Cape Codders with disabilities, eagerly accepted the offer. Garden club president and CCHS member, Donna Garrabrant then approached CCHS about helping in the effort. As she said, "Our two organizations can...work...together on this important project, building value and a positive collaborative contribution to this worthwhile organization and our communities as a whole."

As the project gained steam, many other businesses and individuals joined the effort, including three landscapers: Strictly Hydrangeas (plants and material), Anytime Landscaping (sod and three zones of irrigation) and Starboard Side Landscaping (trees and soil). Also contributing were Mal Condon (plants, planting and expertise), Bill Cannon's Holly Farm (plants), Cape Abilities Farm (materials), and the Lighthouse Charter School (labor).

Donna Garrabrant



Current CCHS co-president Joyce Halpert and CCHS Member Joy Bogstad preparing the site for planting.



Mal Condon, former CCHS president, overseeing plant installation



From left to right: David Kaplan, Executive Director of FORWARD; Linda Coven, the owner of Strictly Hydrangeas and past CCHS co-president; Joy Bogstad, CCHS member.

With so many wonderful organizations contributing and more than 50 volunteers who worked to create the garden, the island is now a lovely landscape featuring more than 40 hydrangeas and hollies, 875 daffodils, specimen trees, lighting, irrigation, and a perimeter grass buffer. The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society has also generously volunteered to maintain the site going forward.

We are so grateful to the Village Garden Club of Dennis and the Cape Cod Hydrangea Society for bringing this wonderful idea to fruition. Thanks to the talent, time and contributions of plants and materials from these two organizations, as well as the help of many others, the residents, staff and visitors at FORWARD at the Rock now have a scenic landscape right outside their door, and we at FORWARD are forever grateful to our caring community who together stepped up to give us this wonderful gift.

Editor's Note: David Kaplan is Executive Director of FORWARD—Friends Or Relatives With Autism & Related Disabilities.

Volunteers, including students from the Lighthouse Charter School, help with planting.



"Anyone who thinks that gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream."

— Josephine Nuese





Getting Ready for Spring and Summer

Mary Kay and I are just home from a five-week holiday visit with our daughter Carol in her winter residence in the Bahamas. We had a great time with the lovely weather playing a big part. I did, of course, plant some seeds and such which served to get me primed for our coming veggie seeding time on Cape Cod. So, here's some simple stuff to ponder as you develop your spring and summer plans. Good hydrangea growers can grow good veggies too!

Our favorite small potting pots are 5"x 5". These have become a favorite for so many seeding trials; they are a nice size, reusable and easy to clean. Our favorite soil sifter has 1/2" and 1/4" screens which are useful for obtaining uniform soil blends for seeding and potting up small starts. The soil sifter is a Garland 2-in-1 Sieve and can be purchased online from Lee Valley Tools: <https://www.leevalley.com/en-us/shop/garden/planting/sieves/74003-deep-soil-sieve>.

One of our recent investigations has been the use of Rockwool Grow Cubes (RGC) for seedlings and cuttings. We have been traditionalists for using fine, uniform soilless mixtures for a long time. The RGC blocks are produced from inert synthetic fiber that is air-formed into segmented blocks. The height, depth and width of the individual cubes are 1.5"; or 2" (see below). They are reasonably dense but it's easy to pre-punch a hole or depression for a cutting or larger seed (like tomato and pepper). They hold water well too, maybe too well in some situations. Maintaining a "just moist" condition is your much preferred objective.

Individual 2" cubes fit nicely into a standard 32-space tray commonly used in propagation; it's clean and neat too. There's no need for the normal 2-1/4" pot filled with rooting or seeding mix. A multi-cube block drops easily into a 5"x 5" seeding tray. It's very easy to create multiple



5"x 5" seeding pot
(in front)



Garland 2-in-1 Sieve



1.5" cubes (left) 2" cubes (right)



2" cubes in 32-space tray



Multi-cube block in 5"x5" tray

depressions in the surface to accept seeds. We've had good success with medium to large seed sizes; a little soilless mix can be sprinkled on top of the block if needed.

We trialed RGC's more extensively toward the end of last year's propagation season for all hydrangea species and results were very good. The photo of *H. macs* shows two October in-cube examples in the foreground and behind them, a first pot-up of a September cutting. In the close-up, note the above ground root development on the right and the root penetration on the left. These cuttings were struck very late in the season.

The seeding season will soon be upon us and trying a few cuttings is always a possibility. For seeding and striking cuttings, high humidity is essential. Large clear plastic domes can be employed but they require space. Covering pots and trays with kitchen plastic wrap can work but handleability is often troubling and usefulness is time-limited.

I'm forever looking to find a second use for many plastic containers that come into our home and here's a true winner. A biscotti with my coffee is special to me; below is a photo of one of my favorite selections. The container is perfect as a mini "humidity dome," about 6"x 6" wide at the top and 7" tall. You will see that I use it upside down. The top lid, now on the bottom, insures a good fit. The "biscotti dome" drops very nicely over a 5"x 5" seeding pot, in this instance loaded with a RGC block of cuttings from an unusual dark red geranium we like. I initially water very modestly and then only mist the cuttings when the moisture is no longer visible on the inside of the dome. And I do mist the inside too. Remember: there is a fine line between rooting and rotting!

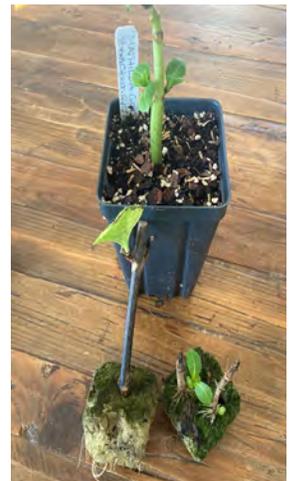
Do get out in your garden on the good days in the weeks and months to come. You can save your seeding efforts for the cold and stormy ones.

Best,

Mal

The Hydrangea Guy

October hydrangea cuttings (foreground); September cuttings (background)



Closeup of root development and penetration



Mini "biscotti" humidity dome



Geranium cuttings

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

Getting the Hydrangea Garden Ready for Spring

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 16
 Time: 5 pm
 Speaker: Linda Coven
 Place: Zoom Presentation

Spring Membership Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 16
 Time: 6-8 pm
 Place: Harwich Community Center
 Speaker: Russ Norton: Hydrangeas 2022: Pests, Diseases and Treatments

Hydrangea University

Date: Friday, July 8
 Time: 8:30 am–Noon

Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival

Dates: July 8–17

Fall Membership Meeting

Date: Saturday, Sept 24
 Time: 10 am–Noon
 Place: Harwich Community Center
 Speaker: TBA



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

John and Molly Curtin
 South Chatham, MA

Kia Ghezel-Ayagh
 Goshen, NY

Leah Schiavoni
 Duxbury, MA

CCHS Board of Directors 2021-2022

Co-Presidents	Joyce Halpert Emily Woudenberg
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Membership	Donna Laemmle

CCHS Committee Chairs 2021-2022

Display Garden Curator	Mal Condon	Nominating	Donna Laemmle
Display Garden Maintenance	Barbara Marsala	Newsletter	Suzanne Boas
Garden Docents	Michele Baker JoAnn Trautmann	Publicity	Nancy Dexter
Garden Tours	Linda McNeilly	Website	OPEN
Heritage Holiday Decorations	Paula Rushworth	Social Media / Facebook	Marcia Chapman
Historian	OPEN	Speakers	OPEN
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		Technology	OPEN