



# CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

## SPRING 2022

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# PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

## Spring Greetings from Emily and Joyce!

Spring is arriving in her light green attire decorated with colorful violas and yellow forsythia. The hellebores are in bloom and the daffodils are peeking out. It's been a cold winter on the Cape with three strong windstorms and we are more than ready for spring!



Over the winter we debuted a new CCHS website: [www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org](http://www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org). Be sure to check it out and notify us if there are errors, particularly in your member directory information. You'll see that we've

significantly expanded the information on the site's "Grow" page. In addition, our first hydrangea-care video will be posted soon thanks to Joan Brazeau and her committee.

Our other committee chairs have been busy as well, organizing Hydrangea University, securing gardens and docents for this year's Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival and planning Lunch Bunch social gatherings. The first of these luncheon get-togethers will be held at Linda Coven's home on Wednesday, June 15, 11am-1 pm, with a hands-on demonstration of useful tools for the hydrangea garden.

News just in from our CCHS volunteer maintenance team that works so diligently to keep both our hydrangea display garden and the North American test garden at Heritage ready for visitors: the arbor with the large climbing *Schizophagma hydrangeoides* collapsed during a winter storm. Thanks to the efforts of Mal Condon and Linda Coven a new one will be installed this spring.

Make sure you mark your calendars now for our spring membership meeting which is being held on May 18th at 6pm at the Harwich Community Center. Our speaker that evening will be Russ Norton of the Cape Cod Extension Service. It will be so good to be together again in person!

Finally, please remember that your membership dues should be sent in by May 31. (New members who have joined since December 31 are considered paid.) Dues are \$35 for a single membership and \$45 for a two-person membership. Details including methods of payment will be sent out soon.

Please keep in touch and let us know if you have any questions. Happy spring!

Stay well,

*Emily Woudenberg Joyce Halpert*

Emily Woudenberg  
Co-President

Joyce Halpert  
Co-President



# Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly

## Cheryl Noroian...tapping new resources

Obtaining sponsors for Hydrangea University each year can be a daunting task, but a "virtual HU" can further thwart fundraising efforts, unless new resources are tapped...

Enter Cheryl Noroian. Cheryl is not a newcomer to Massachusetts or to Cape Cod. Raised in Pennsylvania and educated in Massachusetts, she worked summers on the Cape and later as an occupational therapist in Colorado and California. She returned to Massachusetts in 1982 to transition to a career in leadership and organizational development, primarily in technology and bio-tech companies.

After 15 years living in Brighton, she moved to Littleton and purchased a vacation home on the Cape with "obligatory hydrangeas." Later, she decided to sell her Littleton home, reside on the Cape full-time, and commute daily from Dennis to Needham.

Cheryl attended the first and subsequent Hydrangea University events, gaining valuable horticultural information, as well as the events' complimentary hydrangeas which continue to flourish in her garden. As a result, she no longer identifies hydrangeas as merely pink or blue "pom poms!" Still, she is not one to spend countless hours working the soil. Instead, this "low maintenance gardener" prefers to sit back and enjoy the fruits of her labor, hoping that her impulsive spring garden center purchases will survive and thrive!

Recently Cheryl joined CCHS and the maintenance team at Heritage which has allowed her to learn from curator Mal Condon and fellow volunteers. In turn, she has been able to share her business skills with CCHS. Last year she volunteered to chair the CCHS sponsorship committee for HU, the kickoff event of the hydrangea festival. To augment the society's regular contributors, Cheryl reached out to local garden clubs and requested their support. The clubs that provided it helped to make last year's festival a real financial success.

Cheryl will be heading up the HU sponsorship effort again this year and hopes to expand garden club representation. If your local garden club might be interested in sponsorship, contact Cheryl. She's ready, willing, and able!

Editor's Note:

Cheryl can be reached at [hchey11@comcast.net](mailto:hchey11@comcast.net)



*"One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides."*

—W. E. Johns





# A Naturalistic Garden by the Bay

by Pat Vigliorolo



Walking up the stone steps to the top of the rise upon which Mary Ann Staudenmayer's home and garden sits, visitors would be remiss if they did not turn around to drink in the beauty of Cape Cod Bay. Looking out at the stunning vista, one can't help but think about the history of Yarmouth Port when it was a busy commercial port for fishing boats, clipper ships, schooners and even weekly packet services to Boston.

Mary Ann grew up in the coastal town of Bridgeport, CT where she remembers fondly the small garden that her parents kept. Her own active involvement in gardening, however, did not come about until after she graduated from college, met and married her husband Bill and settled down in the Rochester, NY area.

Some years later the couple moved to the park-like setting of Pittsford, NY where they lived for the next 35 years. It was quite challenging gardening in this climate because of the extreme cold and the short growing season...very different from Yarmouth Port which Mary Ann and Bill have called home for the last 22 years.

When describing her approach to gardening, Mary Ann says she prefers a presentation more in keeping with the natural world rather than highly structured designs or mass plantings.

Some of her favorite perennials are iris (bearded, Siberian and Japanese), shasta daisy, hosta, bleeding hearts and, a particular favorite, native lupines. There are, of course many hydrangeas





incorporated into her landscape, including varieties of *macrophylla*, *serrata*, *paniculata*, *quercifolia*, *arborescens*, and *petiolaris*. She is particularly fond of *arborescens*, including 'Haas Halo', 'Annabelle' and the 'Invincible' series because of the massive number of blooms they produce, regardless of winter weather. Last summer she also planted the recently introduced cascading hydrangea 'Fairytrail Bride®' which she is growing as a ground cover.

Mary Ann is a member of CCHS as well as a Master Gardener and has been very active in both organizations. She opened her garden last summer for the annual hydrangea festival tour; served for many years as the board secretary of CCHS; has volunteered as a mentor in the Brewster Children's Garden and still helps with the Master Gardeners' annual plant sale held each spring.

In closing, here are some very candid answers to questions I posed to this dedicated, long-time gardener:

**Q. Have you made many gardening mistakes through the years?**

A. Always!

**Q. What do you consider one of your biggest successes?**

A. Growing lupines from seed.

**Q. What do you consider your biggest failure?**

A. An unsuccessful dahlia crop due to poorly amended soil.

**Q. What advice can you share with your fellow gardeners?**

A. Remember nothing happens overnight. Have a plan and keep "to do" lists. Dive in and work your plan. And, finally, read!

# Heritage Garden Maintenance Team Begins 2022 Season

by Barbara Marsala



Spring is upon us and the CCHS maintenance team is already at work with our pruners, loppers and weeding tools. Our stalwart group of volunteers gathered for our first cleanup effort of the season in the Heritage hydrangea display and test gardens several weeks ago and will be working every Thursday morning through May from 9:30 to Noon. We'll also be putting in some extra workdays this spring to get through seasonal pruning chores. Once that work is behind us at the beginning of June, we will move to an every-other-week work schedule.

If you like to learn by doing, why not join us? We promise over the growing season you will be exposed to all aspects of caring for, pruning, and fertilizing different varieties of hydrangeas. And you will be learning from the best – Heritage's hydrangea curator, our own Mal Condon, when the rehab he is currently undergoing after leg surgery is complete – and Linda Coven who will be filling in for him until then.

We work at our own pace, enjoy spending time with our fellow hydrangea lovers and get good exercise in the process! If this sounds interesting to you, please contact me at [barbaramarsala8@gmail.com](mailto:barbaramarsala8@gmail.com). We'd love to have you join us whenever you are available.

## Heritage Gardens Maintenance Schedule 2022

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

.....  
April 7, 14, 21, 28

.....  
May 5, 12, 19, 26

.....  
June 9, 23

.....  
July 7, 21

.....  
August 4, 18

.....  
September 1, 15





# Hydrangeas in the Late Summer Garden

by Peg Black

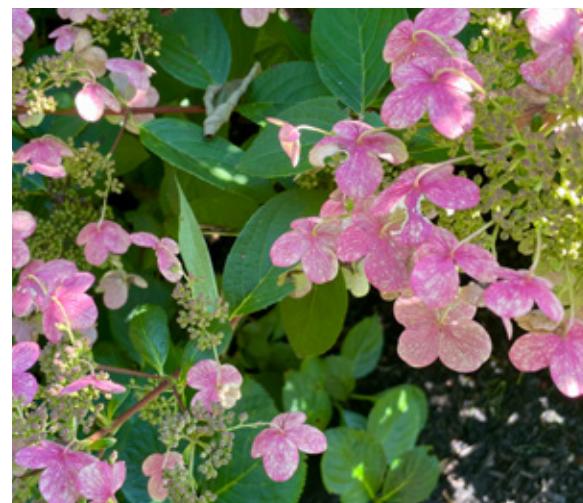
T.S. Elliot must have had the Cape Cod hydrangea grower in mind when he wrote in *The Wasteland*, "April is the cruelest month." When an early spring cold snap freezes the emerging buds on our *Hydrangea macrophyllas* (mopheads and lacecaps), we brace ourselves for a disappointing season of bloom. In defense, we have learned to plant a variety of hydrangeas that are hardier, that bloom on new wood, and that are less affected by late freezes.

August, often another cruel month for the hydrangea grower, is when most of our *H. macrophyllas* have finished their July display and the flowers have gone from gorgeous blue to papery brown, especially if we experience scant rainfall and high temperatures. However, with proper planning, planting and care for their plants, hydrangea lovers can mitigate the challenges Mother Nature delivers and enjoy a long season of stunning hydrangea blooms.

Last summer, as I walked around our garden at the end of August, I made notes about which hydrangeas were flourishing despite the dog days of summer. Many were clearly past their prime, but I was amazed at the flowers on sturdy stems that were still in bloom. The predominant colors had changed from July's blues and purples to late summer's white, deep pinks and burnished reds. As I moved through the garden that late summer day, I was reminded that if we plan for a long season of bloom, we can have a steady progression of color and flowers from summer into fall. The key to this progression is planting hydrangeas that bloom at different times throughout the season and reliably flower despite temperature and rainfall extremes.

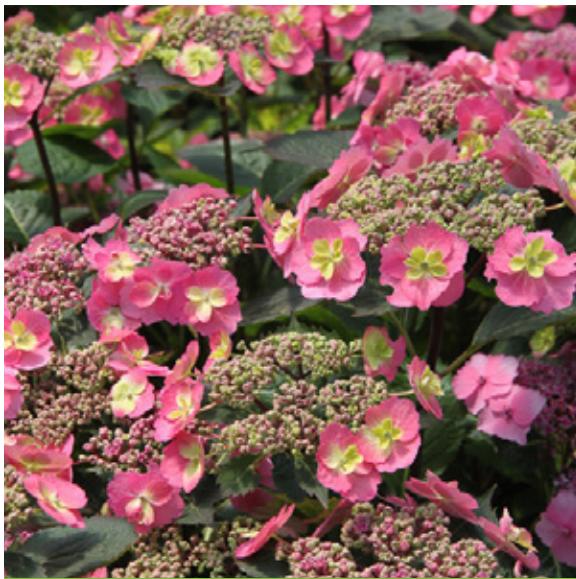


*H. p. 'Bobo'*



*H. p. 'Quick Fire'*

CONT'D

*H. s. Tuff Stuff'**H. a. 'Incrediball'*

Every year in August the panicle hydrangeas have stolen the spotlight from the mopheads. As I strolled around our garden in late August of 2021, I remembered that most of the *Hydrangea paniculatas* had been blooming for more than a month. They were turning from white to pink, except for *H. paniculata* 'Limelight' that was still covered with huge white panicles, as was the more diminutive 'Bobo'. Leading the way with their colorful deep pink flowers were 'Pinky Winky', 'Firelight', and 'Quickfire'.

*Hydrangea serrata*, a cold-tolerant hydrangea in its native Japan, is one of my favorite hydrangeas because of its reliability and long season of bloom. As we approached September last year, the lace-cap flowers on 'Tuff Stuff' had evolved from their earlier blue and purple colors to deep magenta. It still looked good after nearly two months of bloom, as did a newly planted *H. serrata* cultivar, 'Tuff Stuff Ah-Ha'.

*H. arborescens* 'Incrediball' had also been blooming since late June and was still going strong two months later. Its large white flowers had changed from pure white to a greenish white that blended well with the antiqued reds and pinks of nearby hydrangeas.

What surprised me most on that late August day, however, were the many *H. macrophyllas* that still looked good nearly two months after their first blooms in early July. Summer 2021 was an exceptional hydrangea year because we had a mild winter leading into it, or were these noteworthy *H. macrophyllas* dependably colorful in late August regardless of winter temperature and water extremes? Likely, it was both.

## Late Summer Hydrangeas CONT'D

Last year, with Labor Day right around the corner, I was impressed to see *H. macrophylla* Everlasting 'Revolution' loaded with pale blue, pink, and light green flowers. It is a small shrub with tight blooms and sturdy stems that never need staking. Every year I can count on it being beautiful from early July to late September, no matter how harsh the winter or how hot the summer, as long as it gets enough water.

Another hydrangea I noted on my walkabout that rivaled Everlasting 'Revolution' in its beauty and flower power was *H. macrophylla* Forever & Ever 'Together'. I have a row of five plants along a walkway that blooms nonstop from the beginning of July to almost November. As the weeks go by, the color change from purple to blue to pink to red is enchanting.

Other *H. macrophyllas* that caught my eye that late summer day were 'Mathilde Gutges', Cityline 'Mars', 'Berlin', and 'Vienna', Seaside Serenade 'Cape Cod', and Let's Dance 'Moonlight'. Three newer *H. macrophyllas* that were holding their own in the heat and drought of August were 'Cherry Explosion', Onyx 'Flamingo', and the lace cap, 'Zorro'.

There are many elements involved in successfully growing hydrangeas such as well-drained soil, water availability, and the right light. The wide variety of hydrangea cultivars available to us at our garden centers ensures we can have hydrangeas in bloom from late June into late September. I plan to stroll through our garden with notebook in hand as we approach Labor Day 2022 to see if those hydrangea standouts I noted in late August 2021 are as dependable and beautiful this year as they were then. I have a feeling the answer will be yes.



*H. mp.* 'Onyx Flamingo'



*H. m.* 'Revolution'

# Proven Winners Introduces Ceramic Self-Watering Planter

by Suzanne Boas



Responding to consumer demand, hydrangea breeders have focused in recent years on bringing smaller, more compact hydrangeas to market. That has spawned a growing interest in planting hydrangeas in containers. Potted hydrangeas work well on patios, porches, raised decks and as accents in garden beds. The challenge, of course, is keeping plants in containers adequately hydrated.

That challenge was taken on by Proven Winners which has recently added a line of self-watering premium-quality pottery known as AquaPots® to its offerings. AquaPots feature a complete watering system that is integrated in each planter. Proven Winners claims that "smaller AquaPots last at least a week between waterings; larger...pots last up to one month."

Gardeners add water to an AquaPot via a tube which leads to a reservoir at the bottom of the pot. A rim molded inside the container seals the water off from the soil area. Water is taken up by the plant as it needs it. The risk of overwatering is eliminated by an overflow valve on the side of the pot.

AquaPots are made of high-quality clay which is cured at ultra-high temperatures. As a result, these pots can withstand temperature extremes. The company claims that "northern gardeners" can simply empty the pots and turn them upside down for winter protection. Alternatively, planted AquaPots can be stored in a garage over winter after the water is pumped out of the system.

AquaPots come in a variety of sizes, shapes, colors and finishes. The full line of AquaPots offerings can be found at [www.Aquapots.com](http://www.Aquapots.com). You can order directly from that site or from [www.HomeDepot.com](http://www.HomeDepot.com). To inquire about custom made larger pots not available on these sites, email [sandy@provenwinners.com](mailto:sandy@provenwinners.com). You may also want to encourage your local nursery to carry these unique and practical containers.





# 75 Years Old and Going Strong: Hart Farm Nursery and Garden Center

by Tonia St. Germain



Nancy & Don Kossack

When approached about writing an article for this newsletter, I jumped at the chance to do a story about Hart Farm Nursery & Garden Center in Dennisport because this locally-owned nursery is one I personally enjoy visiting. I love to shop for annuals and perennials there and also to pick up locally-grown veggies and native fruit at their farmers' market. Apparently, I am not alone. Hart Farm won the Best of Cape Cod customer competition silver award in the "farm stand/farmers' market" and "garden center" categories in both 2019 and 2021.

I arranged to meet with the owner Don Kossack on a winter's day before the nursery's official season opening on March 1st, 2022. I asked about how the business evolved and learned that in 1947, Don's dad bought the two-acre farm from Arch Hart. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Father and son developed the business and now Don and his wife Nancy manage a thriving garden shop, greenhouse, farmers' market and nursery that has been a go-to source for gardeners on the Cape for 75 years.

CONT'D

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Don told me that Hart Farm is a regular sponsor of the annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival and asked his wife Nancy to join us when I asked about hydrangeas. I knew I had met a "sister" hydrangea lover when she started telling me how big her *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Onyx™ Zebra' has grown and that it really deserves its name with gorgeous white flowers and beautiful black stems.

Don explained what being a certified Proven Winners vendor means in terms of his hydrangea selections. Nurseries can't sell Proven Winners hydrangeas unless the staff takes training annually, which is good news for customers seeking help and advice from knowledgeable salespeople. In addition, Proven Winners offers only hydrangeas that have proven garden worthy in its own trials. Don said this really helps him choose high quality shrubs for his customers "especially when it comes to the new series and varieties that flood the market each season."

Hart Farm offers a selection from all of the six major categories of hydrangeas: bigleaf (*macrophylla*), panicle (*paniculata*), oakleaf (*quercifolia*), smooth (*arborescens*), climbing (*petiolaris*), and mountain (*serrata*). The most popular? According to Don, 'Endless Summer', 'Limelight' and the 'Cityline' varieties.

Nancy shared some garden catalogs and reference books that she uses to select companion plants for hydrangea gardens. She told me that she enjoys helping customers plan and organize their gardens and encourages new gardeners "to take pictures of the space they want to fill" so she and the staff can help them succeed.

A visit to Hart Farm for hydrangea nursery stock will be well worth your effort. The nursery offers quality plants at reasonable prices. You might end up like me, making regular visits to see their seasonal displays at Easter, in the fall, and at Christmas too!

**Hart Farm Nursery & Garden Center**  
**21 Upper County Rd.**  
**Dennisport, MA 02639**  
**(508) 394-2693**



*"In spring, everything is full of promise...and nature rejoices in her virgin loveliness."*  
*—Charles Lanman*





# Plant, Water, and Relax with Bloomin'Easy Hydrangeas

by Suzanne Boas



The Canadian-based wholesale plant nursery, Van Belle, launched its Bloomin'Easy brand of shrubs in 2012 with one goal: make gardening easier for young homeowners with limited time to devote to designing and maintaining their landscapes. Says company representative, Kevin Cramer, "We select plants that offer exceptional beauty and color but are more compact and lower maintenance. In addition, we focus on providing after-purchase support like simple how-to videos and seasonal care reminders. We want to meet...homeowners where they're at by making gardening as easy as plant, water, and relax."

Around 2016 Van Belle spun Bloomin'Easy off as a separate entity although Van Belle continues as the leading production source

of Bloomin'Easy in North America. Today there are 30 nurseries across the U.S. and Canada that are licensed to propagate and grow Bloomin'Easy brand shrubs.

Hydrangeas are a major focus for the Bloomin'Easy management which works with hydrangea breeders in Europe to bring new, improved, and unique selections to the highly competitive hydrangea marketplace. Currently there are six hydrangeas sold under the Bloomin'Easy brand – three macrophyllas and three paniculatas. As you might guess from the focus on ease of maintenance, all of the macrophyllas are smaller, compact varieties that require minimal pruning.

The three paniculatas that Bloomin'Easy is currently marketing are also compact.

## Bloomin'Easy 'Kimono'



*H. macrophylla 'Kimono'* is advertised as maturing to 2'-3' tall and wide, which makes it perfect for the front of a border or a container. A rebloomer, its flowers feature wine red margins and pure white centers.

## Bloomin'Easy 'Starfield'



*H. macrophylla 'Starfield'* is also expected to mature to 2'-3' tall and wide. A strong rebloomer, its flowers are bubble gum pink in neutral soil and blue/mauve in acidic soil.

CONT'D

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Look for Bloomin'Easy hydrangeas in local Cape nurseries or on various online sites including Home Depot. More photos of the plants featured can be found at [Bloomineeasyplants.com](http://Bloomineeasyplants.com); you can also sign up on this site for care reminders for any Bloomin'Easy plants you purchase. Finally, the site has information on four additional hydrangeas which Bloomin'Easy expects to be widely available to consumers in 2023 with the possibility of limited availability in 2022: *H. macrophylla* 'Cherry-Go-Round' and 'Frill Ride', *H. serrata* 'Pink Dynamo' and *H. paniculata* 'Torch.'



#### Bloomin'Easy 'Tilt-a-Swirl'



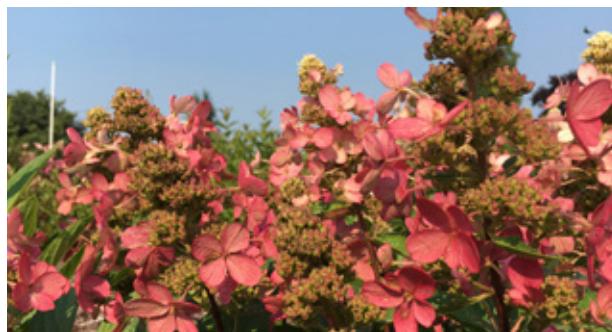
*H. macrophylla* 'Tilt-a-Swirl' is a slightly larger plant, but still compact at 3'-4' feet tall and wide at maturity. It features striking green and red bi-color flowers and dark green foliage.

#### Bloomin'Easy 'Moon Rock'



*H. paniculata* 'Moon Rock' sports creamy blooms with lime green centers which fade to pink in the fall. It is mid-border sized at 4' x 6' tall and wide.

#### Bloomin'Easy 'Flare'



*H. paniculata* 'Flare' is the smallest of the three compact paniculatas. It is advertised as maturing to just 2' x 3' feet tall and wide. Creamy white blossoms turn fire red as the weather cools.

#### Bloomin'Easy 'Candleabra'



*H. paniculata* 'Candleabra' also matures to 4' x 6' tall and wide. It sports red stems and white cone-shaped flowers that turn red in the fall.

# CCHS Announces Format and Speakers for Hydrangea University

by Cathy Sampson



The Cape Cod Hydrangea Society and Heritage Museums and Gardens will once again present Hydrangea University. This year's event will be held in person from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm on Friday, July 8, 2022, in Heritage's Heald Conference Center. Tickets will be available through Heritage's website beginning in mid-May. The price is \$55 for members of either Heritage or CCHS and \$65 for non-members. The program will feature presentations by three experts with a question-and-answer period following each presentation.

Lorraine Ballato is a professional horticulturist, speaker and author of *Success With Hydrangeas: A Gardener's Guide*. An organic gardener, she is an instructor for the New York Botanical Garden, the Connecticut Master Gardener Program, and the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. She will be speaking on [Hydrangea Game Changers That Get Results](#).

Kerry Ann Mendez is an award-winning garden educator, author, design consultant and proprietor of Perennially Yours. She has written four books, publishes an e-newsletter and hosts international gardening webinars. Her books include: *The Budget Wise Gardener* and *The Right-Size Flower Garden*. She will be speaking on ["Bloomful" Native and Pollinator-Friendly Companions for Hydrangeas](#).

Both Ms. Ballato and Ms. Mendez will have their books for sale after their presentations.

DeVonne Friesen, Founder of Van Belle Nurseries' Bloomin' Easy Plants, will round out the morning's program. In his talk, [Confessions of a Reformed Bloom-Killer](#), he will be speaking on the development of Van Belle's Bloomin' Easy compact, low maintenance shrubs, including their six hydrangea offerings.

Each Hydrangea University attendee will go home with a Bloomin' Easy *Hydrangea macrophylla 'Starfield'*, compliments of Van Belle Nurseries.

If you are aware of a business that may be interested in becoming a sponsor of Hydrangea University, please contact Cheryl Noroian at: [hchey11@comcast.net](mailto:hchey11@comcast.net).



Lorraine Ballato



Kerry Ann Mendez



DeVonne Friesen



# Nine CCHS Member Gardens Opening During Hydrangea Festival

by Suzanne Boas

Nine CCHS member gardens will be open to visitors during this year's annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival which runs from Friday, July 8th through Sunday, July 17th. The festival, now in its 8th year, is a major fund raiser for our organization as well as for many other local non-profits.

Many thanks to all the members who will be working hard in the weeks leading up to the festival to get their gardens, as well as the display and test gardens at Heritage, in pristine condition. 'This is such a labor of love for our society,' says Linda McNeilly, Vice President of CCHS.

JoAnn Trautmann and Michele Baker will also be hard at work. They have agreed again this year to recruit and train all the volunteers who are needed as docents. Serving as a docent is both educational and fun. If you have never been a docent before, please consider helping to fill these important positions. JoAnn and Michele can be reached at [pjtrautmann@verizon.net](mailto:pjtrautmann@verizon.net) or [baker.michele52@gmail.com](mailto:baker.michele52@gmail.com).

Local plein air artists play an important role during the 10-day festival too. They will be painting in member gardens and offering their creations for sale, with a portion of the proceeds donated to our society. At the conclusion of the festival, their paintings will be on display and for sale at Harvest of Barnstable. Thanks go to Pat Vigliorolo and artist Wendi Smith for coordinating this creative effort.

Finally, make sure you visit our member gardens during the festival! They are each as unique as the gardeners who designed and lovingly maintain them. You are guaranteed to come away with new ideas for your own garden.



## Member Gardens Schedule

10 am-4 pm

July 9 & 13

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

July 10

Joyce Jenks  
145 Captain Noyes Rd., S. Yarmouth

July 10 & 14

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

July 10 & 14

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

July 10 & 14

Rick Murray  
72 Keveney Lane, Cummaquid

July 11 & 13

Gail Johnson  
2390 Main St., W. Barnstable

July 13

Mary & Roger Bowker  
151 Old County Rd., E. Sandwich

July 14

Cindy Ecker  
152 Thacher Shore Rd., Yarmouth Port

July 16

Dan Pessoni  
4 Driftwood Lane, E. Orleans





## Table Top Hydrangeas

Greetings and happy spring to everyone!

We were favored with a very moderate weather pattern throughout winter 2022. As of March 31, my data log reflects no major cold or warming events, only modest storm counts and severity, and relatively minor temperature fluctuations. We did, however, incur a fairly severe cold snap near the end of March, on March 27 to be exact, with temperatures down to the 20°F level for several nighttime hours. A number of the more susceptible *H. macrophylla* cultivars in my garden had begun to unfurl over the previous 10 days, and at this stage can be very susceptible to these sustained cold temperatures. Later investigation suggests damage was minimal, so I am hopeful.

Less encouraging is my physical condition which received a more lasting hit. I took a bad (self-inflicted) fall on March 17 and managed to fracture my right hip. It was orthopedically reconstructed at the Cape Cod Hospital, after which I was transferred to Spaulding Rehab Hospital in Sandwich for an additional 8 days before returning home on March 31. I'm getting around okay now with a walker, but the slowness and deliberate execution of everything is at times overwhelming.

Our newsletter editor Suzanne Boas at first suggested I consider taking a break from Mal's Corner for this issue of the newsletter. When I was reluctant to agree, Suzanne came back with another suggestion: to re-run a previous article that might be timely and appropriate. So here's a piece Suzanne and I collaborated on back in 2019. It remains a relevant subject, especially so with Easter being later in April this year. Additionally, table-top/vanity plants are truly excellent candidates for you to start using the "Pot-N-Pot" and "Bag-N-Pot" growing technique I've been encouraging.

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### Table-Top Hydrangeas...the Vanity Plant Sector of the Hydrangea Production Industry

Ever wonder who produces the myriad of small potted hydrangeas in full bloom that we look forward to buying or receiving as gifts each year around Easter and Mother's Day? These small but beautiful *Hydrangea macrophylla* plants are the product of a distinct group of specialized greenhouse producers located on the east and west coasts of the United States and even in southern Canada. They are a product of the vanity plant world and are commonly referred to as table-top hydrangeas.

Bay City Flowers, a fourth-generation family-owned operation in Half Moon Bay, California, was started in 1910 by Nobuo Higaki, an immigrant from Japan. Their Bay City Flowers and Hana Bay Flowers operations shipped flowers all over the country until they closed in late 2019 because of rising labor costs. Former customers include Whole Food, Trader Joe's, Mahoney's and some Stop and Shop stores on the Cape and the islands.



Kurt Weiss, Inc. is the largest greenhouse operation on the east coast with more than 9 million square feet of environmentally-controlled production space on Long Island, New York and in Connecticut. This company is currently operated by three generations of the Weiss family whose patriarch came to the U.S. from Germany. They produce hydrangeas and several other species for the vanity plant market with production exceeding 1 million plants shipped per week during the peak Easter – Mother's Day period. Yes, one million per week!

The lovely little *H. macrophyllas* produced for in-home enjoyment are special varieties often developed by the growers to satisfy their production capabilities and marketing requirements. The typical plant container size is one to two quarts in volume, although larger containers, with two or more plants, are also offered.

The table-top plant is produced totally within its originating container, from striking and rooting the cutting, pinching to express bud development, exposure to limited controlled dormancy, and forced/grown to a vital blooming condition at shipment time. Lots of horticultural science goes into this production for you to receive a superb small *H. macrophylla* plant with multiple blooms.

With reasonable care from the recipient, these plants will bloom nicely for 3-6 weeks in-house for all to appreciate. Proper care includes locating the plant where it receives good light, but not direct sunlight, and faithful but modest watering every 3-4 days depending on location, temperature (cooler is better) and light intensity. I have had good results using a dilute fertigation approach – quarter to half strength water-soluble fertilizer every second or third watering event.

At the end of the indoor phase, the plant can be repotted into a larger container – say from a 1 quart to a 1-gallon container using a good quality potting mix. The “new” plant can then go outdoors in a protected site – no wind and no direct sun. As the location adjustment proceeds, the plant can be introduced progressively to more normal conditions.

Leave the plant outdoors through autumn until a natural hard frost (sub 28°F for 3 hours) defoliates the plant and it enters dormancy. This is critical as *H. macrophyllas* are deciduous and a freeze defines dormancy. Winter (the period of dormancy) must be sustained via a minimum number of chill hours to maximize blooming. Soon after the hard freeze you can move the plant under cover: indoors in an unheated garage, basement, enclosed porch, or even a shed. *H. macrophyllas* can stand modest cold, just not the direct and immediate impact of it. During dormancy, water only sparingly, i.e., every three to four weeks to prevent the plant from totally drying out. Late winter, early March, the plant can be re-introduced to slowly increasing levels of warmth to a max of 70°F. Once new green growth is observed, more normal watering and fertilizing can be resumed.



With any luck your plant will reward you next summer with some nice flowering on your deck or patio. And you will have begun to develop a plant with a larger root mass, increased above-ground stem network size, and greater blooming potential. It's fun and it's easy... and you'll be very pleased to show off the "flowers of your labor." ■

### The Rest of the Story...

When Suzanne shared her re-run idea with me via email, Mary Kay was out grocery shopping. Upon arrival home she presented me with a get-well gift...yes, a table-top *H. macrophylla* she had just purchased at Shaw's in Hyannis. Produced by Schroll (another major producer in the vanity plant market), the lovely little 4" potted plant sports three attractive mophead blossoms, the white sepals edged in deep pink. It even had an identifying plant label: 'Sweethearts 42-12-01', and a US patent 29,895,P2. And all for \$10. You just might see it in my garden the next time you visit!

My special thanks to all who have expressed well wishes and encouragement. I am healing well physically (mentally is likely more challenging) and hoping to see you in a garden somewhere in May.

Best,

*Mal*

The Hydrangea Guy



My new 'Sweethearts' table-top *H. macrophylla* from Shaw's

### *H. paniculata 'Firelight Tidbit'* Wins 2022 Shrub Madness Competition

Each March Proven Winners® conducts "Shrub Madness", an on-line competition for those who are as crazy about gardening as some others are about college basketball.

The winner this year, with almost a half million votes, is the dwarf *paniculata* 'Firelight Tidbit'. Sun tolerant and only 2-3 feet wide and tall, this hydrangea features lovely fall color, both in its foliage and its blooms. Mark your calendar now to join the online competition next spring for this gardener's version of March Madness.



## 2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

### Spring Membership Meeting

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

### Lunch Bunch: Linda Coven's Garden

Date: Wednesday, June 15  
Time: 11 am–1 pm  
Topic: Hands-on demonstration of useful tools for the Hydrangea Garden  
Place: 121 Camp St., Unit 106, W. Yarmouth

### 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

Gene Boylan and Connie Spiros  
Canton, MA

Ellen Donnelly  
Belmont & N. Chatham, MA

Maureen Kelleher  
Worcester & W. Falmouth, MA

Bruce Morgan  
Stow, MA

Dörte Wohmann-Schmieta  
Marietta, GA

### CCHS Board of Directors 2021-2022

Co-Presidents	Joyce Halpert Emily Woudenberg
Vice President	Linda McNeilly
Treasurer	Abby Menard
Asst. Treasurer	Peter Berrien
Secretary	Caroline Weiss
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
Hydrangea Calendar	Joan Brazeau	Sponsorships	Cheryl Noroian
Hydrangea Univ.	Cathy Sampson	Social Affairs	Mary Kay Condon
		Technology	OPEN