



CAPE COD HYDRANGEA SOCIETY

SUMMER 2022

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www.thecapecodhydrangeasociety.org

Summer 2022

What a resoundingly successful Hydrangea Festival we had this year! Beautiful weather, gorgeous gardens and thousands of visitors from near and far. Truly a wonderful celebration of our iconic Cape Cod hydrangeas.



Admission fees and sales at our member gardens totaled \$21,500, exceeding last year's total of \$18,200. These funds will be put to good use in our charitable and education efforts and in our display garden at Heritage.

Thank you to Linda Coven and Joy Bogstad for organizing our society's participation in the opening festival event at the Cape Cod Beer Company in Sandwich. Also, kudos to Cathy Sampson and her hard-working committee who made this year's Hydrangea University a sell-out.

Vice-President Linda McNeilly lined up eight beautiful gardens for this year's tour: those of Marcia and George Chapman, Mary Kay and Mal Condon, Linda Coven, Rick Murray, Joyce Jenks, Mary and Roger Bowker, Cindy and Fred Ecker, and Linda and Dan Pessoni.

JoAnn Trautmann and Michelle Baker organized docents for these gardens as well as the gardens at Heritage. Publicity Chair Nancy Dexter, Calendar and Notecards Chair Joan Brazeau, Sponsorships Chair Cheryl Norioan, and Artists in the Garden Chair Pat Vigliorolo also worked hard to make our festival participation such a success.

Thanks to each of these individuals as well as to the more than 78 society members who served as garden docents. This was truly a team effort!

More good news: since April 40 new members have joined our society! Hopefully, many of them will join us at 10 am on September 24 at the Harwich Community Center, when professional photographer Lynne Damianos will be the speaker at our fall membership meeting. Her topic: creating great garden photographs on your cell phone.

Happy summer to you all and thank you for your support.

See you in September!

Emily Woudenberg *Joyce Halpert*

Emily Woudenberg
Co-President

Joyce Halpert
Co-President



Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly

Connie Spiros and Gene Boylan...Volunteers on the Go!

Connie Spiros and Gene Boylan have found ways to combine volunteer service while learning to care for and nurture hydrangeas, even though that has meant a bit of driving...

Originally from Minnesota, Gene first learned about plants in Glen Head, on the north shore of Long Island, where he helped to maintain a large family garden. Connie grew up in Massachusetts and was a frequent visitor to Cape Cod where she admired and appreciated the beauty and variety of the Cape's hydrangeas. When the couple settled here, it was not surprising that they discovered the "endless" satisfaction of tending hydrangeas.

Even though they previously lived in Milton and now call Canton home, Connie and Gene have regularly found their way to Heritage Museums and Gardens where they have participated in hydrangea workshops, met the gardens' hydrangea curator, Mal Condon, and volunteered for the winter pruning of the gardens' *H. paniculatas*. Eager to do more, and at Mal Condon's suggestion, they joined CCHS and became volunteers in the display and test gardens, traveling bi-weekly from Canton.

The couple credits Linda Coven, former CCHS co-president, with helping them hone their pruning skills and Mal with encouraging them to adopt the "pot-in-a-pot" method of planting in their own gardening efforts. Now they are surrounded by hydrangeas not only in their volunteer work, but also at home, where they enjoy potted hydrangeas that comply with their condominium association's rules.

Connie and Gene's volunteer gardening isn't limited to Heritage. They also offer their services to the Milton Cemetery and Arboretum, and at Francis William Bird Park in Walpole, which is protected by the Trustees of Reservations, a non-profit land conservation organization. The couple's work includes pruning as well as wellness visits to check on the health of "their" plants. In addition, Connie volunteers at the Milton Public Library and Gene serves on their homeowners' condominium board. Finally, both served as docents during the recent hydrangea festival.

It is evident that Connie and Gene do not let a little travel get in the way of meaningful volunteer work. Both their interest and knowledge have grown like the hydrangeas and other plants they lovingly tend. We are so fortunate to have attracted not one, but two dedicated volunteers.

Connie and Gene, welcome to CCHS!





Member in the Spotlight

by Pat Daly

Lorraine Lurvey...A Mutual Find

A camera and a posting on Facebook led Lorraine Lurvey to an interesting find...

Lorraine had vacationed on Cape Cod frequently with family and friends and was well acquainted with the area. A Massachusetts native, her goal in retirement was to remain in New England, but to settle someplace with milder winters; Cape Cod seemed the perfect location. In 2021 she moved into her "forever home" in East Harwich.



Prior to her move, Lorraine lived in New Hampshire and was employed by Fidelity Investments in their Merrimack office. With a business degree in accounting and a master's degree in computer information systems, she worked as a senior human resources analyst until her retirement in 2021.

Lorraine considers herself a "hobbyist photographer" and has long found inspiration through the lens of a camera. From an early age, she has owned a camera, her first being a Kodak 100 Instamatic. Over the years her cameras have become increasingly more sophisticated.

When she moved to the Cape, Lorraine enrolled in a local photography workshop, joined a camera club, and further cultivated the hobby that she loves. Her favorite subjects are drawn from nature: animals, landscapes and flowers, both close to home and as far away as Tanzania. There she was able to photograph many of the iconic wild animals one associates with Africa. She has also found many photo opportunities on the Cape, perhaps not on the scale of African wildlife, but grand by Cape standards, including hydrangeas.

Lorraine wanted to plant some hydrangeas on her property, but had little gardening experience. With camera in hand, she visited several local gardens during last year's hydrangea festival, taking photos of varieties that caught her eye, some of which she posted on Facebook. Among those was one that our newsletter editor, Suzanne Boas, recognized as having been taken in her own garden. Impressed with Lorraine's talent, Suzanne contacted her to request permission to use some of her photos in future CCHS publications.

During the exchange, Lorraine was introduced to CCHS, joined and recently volunteered as a photographer for this year's festival. What a "find" for her and for us. Let's hope we have this talented photographer as a "forever member" of our hydrangea society!

Hydrangea Heroes

by Tim Wood



The year 1823 was significant in annals of horticulture. A young, adventurous, German physician set foot on the man-made island of Dejima, a trading post for the Dutch East India Company, just off the coast of Nagasaki, Japan. Fresh out of medical school at age twenty-seven, Phillip Franz von Siebold, was looking for a bit of adventure and the Dutch East India Company offered him that opportunity as resident physician and scientist in Japan. He was to be the successor to Engelbert Kaempfer and Carl Peter Thunberg, two former resident physicians at Dejima, both also famous plantsman you may recognize from the specific epitaphs on a number of Japanese plant species including *Larix kaempferi* and *Berberis thunbergii*.

Essentially closed to all other Western scientists, Siebold excelled as a physician and botanist, while in Japan. His unique abilities as a cataract surgeon (along with his knowledge of and supply of belladonna used for dilating the pupil) gave him a freedom of travel afforded to few foreigners in this isolated country. Between his personal acquisitions and the gifts paid to him in kind for his doctoring and teaching, Siebold amassed over 1,000 native Japanese plants in his back yard garden. In amongst these plants was *Hydrangea paniculata* (wild type) and *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora' (aka PEE GEE hydrangea), both of which he sent to Europe and are still today common landscape plants.

In my twenty-some years as a plant hunter, I've had some pretty unique opportunities. One of these was visiting the late Jelena DeBelder in the summer of 1996. We met at Hemelrijk, her family estate near Antwerp, Belgium. As she shuttled us about the grounds in her beat up VW Rabbit, filled with pots, shovels and plants, I soon realized I was in the presence of someone special. Her every word was filled with passion. With the pride of a mother she introduced us to her hydrangeas: 'Pink Diamond', 'Unique', 'The Swan', 'Burgundy Lace', 'White Moth' and her personal favorite 'Little Lamb'. "This is a very special plant," she told us, "Little lambs dancing about in joy. Very special."

Soon after I met the renowned plantsman Pieter Zwijnenburg. At the time, Pieter and his wife Anja had a small nursery in the Boskoop area of the Netherlands. The "Heronswood of Europe" his nursery offered over 2,500 different varieties of trees and shrubs. In his career Pieter has introduced over 50 different new plants. On this particular day he showed us his newest development, a new Hydrangea that would soon be named 'Limelight'.

Jelena DeBelder



Pieter and Anja Zwijnenburg

And just down the road a few miles, on another day, Rein and Mark Bulk showed me their new, early flowering hydrangea that had volunteered in his nursery. In a few years, we'd introduce this one as Quick Fire® Hydrangea.

Still later and to the south, we and the world came to know Dr. Johan Van Huylenbroeck of the Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture. Johan's outstanding *Hydrangea paniculata* breeding would give us Mega Mindy®, Pinky Winky® and Bobo®.

Meanwhile in France, Jean Renault was also breeding *Hydrangea paniculata* which would yield Vanilla Fraise®, aka Vanilla Strawberry™. And back home in Grand Haven, Michigan, while standing on the shoulders of all these giants, I had a hand in the development and introduction of a few good *hydrangea paniculata* plants as well: Little Lime®, Little Quick Fire®, Pillow Talk®, Fire Light® and Zinfin Doll®.

Next year we'll introduce three, exciting new selections. Fire Light Tidbit™ is a front of the border, dwarf, 2-2.5' mounded selection with creamy white flowers that take on strawberry pink hues as the summer progresses towards fall. QuickFire Fab hydrangea is in a class of its own when it comes to color. The delicate, cruciform flowers emerge green, transition to white and then start turning raspberry pink from the bottom up producing a unique two-toned look.

And now, even 'Limelight' has gotten better. Limelight Prime™ has stronger stems that eliminate bloom flopping. It has dark, forest green foliage, unlike 'Limelight' that is prone to yellowing with chlorosis. And Limelight Prime™ has predictable autumn flower color.

Me oh my, how this once unassuming Japanese hydrangea, introduced over one hundred and fifty-seven years ago, has changed and improved. We now have cultivars with stronger stems that do not flop. We have dwarf selections and early blooming selections. We have green flowers and flowers that age with hues that range from green to bubblegum pink to rich pomegranate red. We have big flowers and small flowers, full flowers and lacy flowers.

It has been over a one hundred and fifty-seven years since Pee Gee hydrangea was introduced by Dr. von Siebold. Plant breeding and selection continues to improve our plants, generation after generation and we should all be proud of the role we play in this evolution. Sure I know, it's disruptive, but all change is. And yes, along the journey there have been some plants that should not have been introduced. No one is perfect. Not all of Apple's product launches have been a success. Remember the Newton? In fact, most all of their product introductions are no longer sold! Does this mean that Apple should slow down or stop innovating? Of course not. We are living in the Golden Age of technology. We are also living in the Golden Age of plant breeding. Buckle up and enjoy it! It's going to get even better.

Editor's Note: This article first appeared as a blog entry. It is reprinted here with the generous permission of its author. Tim Wood currently serves as the head of product development and marketing at Spring Hill Nursery.

Johan Van Huylenbroeck



Jean Renault



Hydrangea Gardens Art Exhibit

by Pat Digliorolo

Cindy and Fred Ecker's Garden by Wendi Smith



Linda Coven's Garden by Susie Frost



As in past years, local artists were scheduled to paint en plein air during the recent hydrangea festival garden tours. Working in various media, they were grateful to be invited into the beautiful and welcoming backdrops of these gardens where they found festival visitors intrigued by their presence and creativity.

Harvest of Barnstable, located on Willow Street in Yarmouth Port, hosted the works of these artists during a post-festival exhibit with the finished and framed pieces offered for sale. Pam Parker, owner of Harvest of Barnstable, received and displayed 60 pieces from 23 different artists. Fourteen of the pieces have been sold, 10 of which were purchased on the opening day of the exhibit, July 23. Several artists also received requests to do commissioned work.

Pam reports having received a great deal of positive feedback about the exhibit and the festival. "Everyone has been impressed with the hosts, the gardens, the interactions and the knowledge sharing." Many thanks to Harvest of Barnstable for extending the excitement of the hydrangea festival with this exhibit.



C.L. Fornari's Garden by Betsy Payne Cook

*"Gardening adds years to your life
and life to your years."
— Unknown*



Extending the Life of Your Cut Hydrangeas

by Miranda Niemiec



Hydrangeas are a garden staple for good reason. Their big, bountiful blooms keep us coming back for more season after season. They not only look dreamy outdoors, but they make great cut flowers for vases and floral arrangements too. Here are a few tips to keep them looking fresh.

The key to keeping any cut flowers healthy is water, right from the start. As you venture into the garden to cut flowers, bring a container of water with you. Slightly warm (tepid) water is preferred. Cut the stems at a diagonal angle with sharp clippers for the best results. Remove all leaves on the stems, or at least all the leaves below the water line before placing them in a vase.

While hydrangeas are known for their long-lasting displays in the garden, they're notorious for quickly wilting as cut flowers. Why do hydrangeas wilt, even in fresh water? Some plants exude a sap when they are cut, which normally protects them from diseases or pests entering their vasculature. However, this sap can also clog the stems and prevent uptake of water, which leads to wilting within hours of cutting. Don't worry; there are two techniques to keep the blooms fresh.

Alum Dip

The easiest way to keep your cut hydrangeas fresh might already be in your kitchen cupboard. Alum powder is used in baking and pickling to extend food life and alter flavors and textures. It's also slightly acidic, prevents algae growth, and can prevent stems from clogging with sap. It's as simple as dipping each stem in alum powder before placing them in fresh, room temperature water.

Boiling Water

Boiling water may sound like an odd recommendation, but this method really does work. Bring a pot of water to a boil, then remove from heat. Dip each stem into the water for 15-30 seconds and then place them in room temperature water. The boiling water breaks down the sap, clearing the vasculature for water uptake.

Whichever method you choose to extend the life of your hydrangeas, always remember to change the water in your vases if it starts to turn cloudy.

Hydrangeas...easy to love, indoors or out!

Editor's Note: Miranda Niemiec is Horticulture Content Specialist at Great Garden Plants. This article first appeared in a slightly different form in a July 2022 posting on the Great Garden Plants' website: www.greatgardenplants.com.





Okinawa's Hydrangea Garden Yohena

by Suzanne Boas



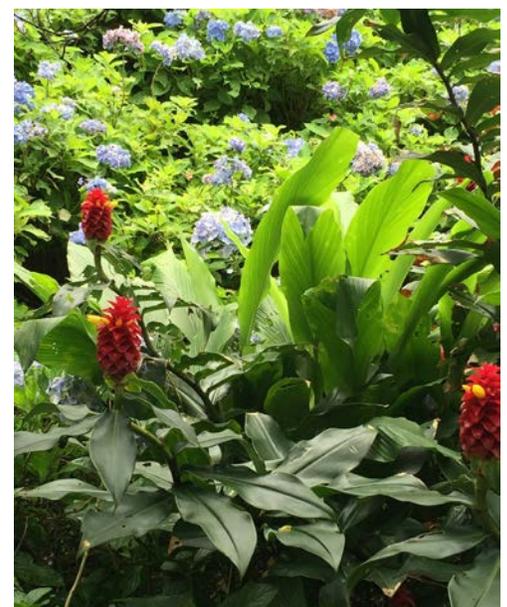
Uto Yohena



Ask most Americans what they know about Okinawa and they may mumble something about World War II. That is because the last major battle of that war was fought on this largest of the Ryukyu Islands of Japan. But Okinawa is much more than a battle site. Today it is known by some as "the island of immortals" because of the longevity of its citizenry and by others as a sub-tropical paradise where gardens, including hydrangeas, thrive. It was also the home for 101+ years of Uto Yohena, the creator of Hydrangea Garden Yohena.

Uto Yohena was born in 1917 and raised 9 children. About the time she turned 60, she found herself with time on her hands. She had always liked gardening, so even though her husband had recently died, she began planting hydrangeas on her property among the trees in her 10,000 sq. ft. hillside tangerine orchard. Every year she raised hydrangea cuttings in pots and then transplanted them into the ground.

Mrs. Yohena, or Uto-san as the Japanese refer to her, diligently added to her hydrangea garden until her death in 2018. At that point the tangerine orchard was a thing of the past with her garden featuring more than 10,000 hydrangeas as well as tree ferns, begonias and the epiphyte *Medinilla magnifica*, commonly known as the rose grape.





Uto-san always welcomed visitors to her garden with a smile, but over time the numbers of people coming to admire her efforts began to significantly increase. When her children reached retirement age, her extended family began managing the garden and opened it for a fee. Today the garden attracts as many as 20,000 visitors annually.

This garden is at its peak from mid-May through the end of June, which coincides with the rainy season in Okinawa. Perhaps, after the COVID pandemic subsides, some of us will have the chance to visit this garden. But we do not need to wait until then or to see her garden in person to take away important lessons from Uto-san's incredible life.

This widow of 45+ years kept active doing what she loved; her garden was her passion. She lived simply and shared the beauty of her creation with others. She was still actively gardening at age 100. That sounds to me like the perfect recipe for a long and gratifying life. May we all enjoy our hydrangea gardens as much as Uto-san!

The Return of the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival Poster!

After a hiatus of 5 years, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, along with the Hydrangea Festival Advisory Board, decided to bring back a poster competition to promote the 2022 Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival.

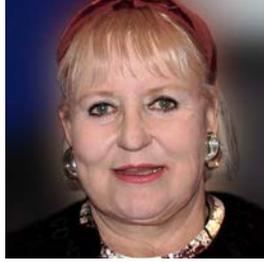
Forty-one works of art reflecting the beautiful gardens open during the Cape's hydrangea celebration were submitted by 28 local artists. The artwork that was chosen for this year's poster was a pastel by artist Wendi Smith. It features the lovely courtyard garden of our society's former co-president, Pat Vigliorolo. Congratulations to both Wendi and Pat!

Soares Flower Garden Nursery, the sponsor of this year's poster, gave a poster out to each customer purchasing a hydrangea during the festival. It was "a nice customer bonus that was well received," said Terry Soares. Posters were also either given away or sold at various gardens on the tour.



Reflections of an Avid Hydrangea Collector

by Sarah Dunbar



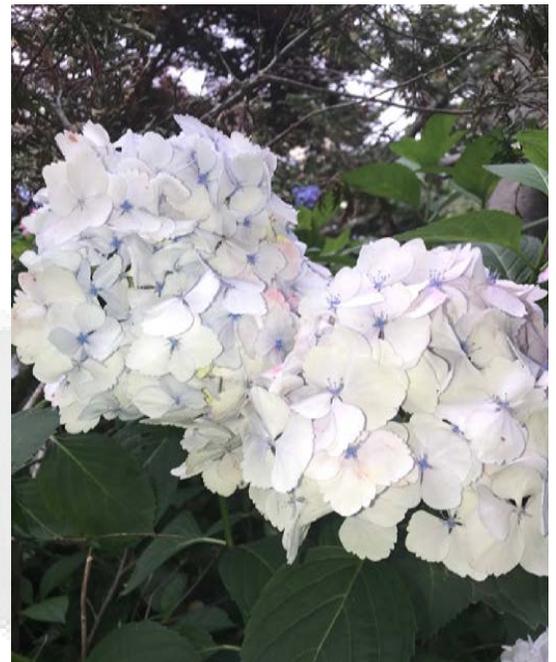
My husband, Prescott, and I married in Boston in 1969. Hoping to stay in the area, we looked for homes on Beacon Hill, but nothing suited us. Prescott then suggested looking on Cape Cod. We drove our real estate agent crazy until we were shown the last house on his list, where we have been ever since.

Our new house was surrounded by 5-1/2 acres of nasty scrub underbrush, dreadful little junk pines, and silver leaf trees. There were only 3 trees that we could think of keeping: 2 large scrub oaks and a big red maple. We wanted that much land so we could have a vegetable garden and I could raise horses. When my mother came to visit, she inspected our very small, ugly vegetable garden and declared us "dirt farmers." Though meant as a proper insult, she was right! We knew nothing about gardening at all.

My mother was an avid gardener, and my inspiration. Our childhood property was 15 acres in Portland, Oregon, full of her passion for rhododendrons and azaleas. It included a three-acre vegetable garden, full of corn, berries, all manner of vegetables – the original farm-to-table experience, before it had a name! Because the soil of Oregon is black gold and the climate similar to that in England, with mild winters and dependable rains throughout the growing seasons, everything grew spectacularly there. It was in Portland that as a small child, I saw my first hydrangeas. These plants had 10-12" blooms; I will never forget them. The memory of them stays with me even now. They were macrophyllas.

From travels as a child and adult, I had seen many European beech trees and that was the very first proper tree that we planted on our property. Originally, we planted native Black Japanese pines, not knowing that they needed regular spraying for borers, which they all got and died. After the debacle of the Japanese Pines, I thought it wise to plant only hardwood trees that had no insect problems. We began our plantings with a small 4' baby Purple Beech from our local nursery, Small's, right here in Chatham. I told Mr. Small I was shocked by the price – \$50 – but he explained to me how slow-growing beeches were. Now that same tree is taller than our house!

H. m. 'Diva' in foreground



H. m. 'Madame Emile Mouliere'

This first beech ignited a passion in us to grow as many European Beech cultivars as we could find. Our most spectacular Weeping Beech came from a fabulous nursery man in Barnstable, Fred Conant. We were enticed into his nursery one day when we saw a beautiful weeping birch tree at its entrance off old Exit 5. Fred was a "tree man" par excellence, growing many of the specimen trees that we had set our sights on finding. Besides buying from him many of the trees that form part of our landscape now, we bought, guess what – our first two hydrangea macrophyllas. Surprisingly, Mr. Conant did not know their cultivar names; he'd just bought them in bloom because they were so beautiful.

Once we realized that hydrangeas were the ideal shrubs to grow beneath our many trees in their filtered shade, we wholeheartedly began purchasing them. We bought our first group of macrophyllas from Hydrangeas Plus in Oregon. These formed the backdrop of our collection and included Madame Emile Mouilliere, Miss Belgium, Oregon Pride, Blauer Prinz, Blauer Zwerg, and Wayne's White, all of which have grown stupendously. Over the past 40 years, we have added many more hydrangeas, bringing the number of plants to over 200. Now of course, we have branched out, buying many paniculatas, aspera, quercifolias, serratas, and arborescens.

Certainly, as with all plants, success depends on how planting is carried out. We plant all our hydrangeas with a mixture of wet peat moss (squeezed out) and topsoil and compost. We add Bolster plant growth supplement to our soil mixture as it is organic and never burns plants roots. We are also concerned about the amount of sun and shade each variety requires. After planting, the water needs of each hydrangea are evaluated. Currently we have all our hydrangeas on twice weekly irrigation of an hour and a half. We find that when correctly managed, they need little or no care. In fact, we do not feed them once they have been planted.

H. m. 'Miss Satori' named Plant of the Year at the RHS Cheslea Flower Show in 2014.



H. m. 'Starfield'

We are always looking for interesting new cultivars. Although we still love our older macrophyllas, we now search out those plants that have unique aspects to them: picotees with different colorations like Miss Saori, Kimono, Stella, Sabrina and Pistachio; hose-in-hose flowers like Stargazer, Starfield, Love, and Forever and Ever Together; and different shape flower heads like Diva and Inspire.

We feel so blessed that we ended up on Cape Cod where hydrangeas grow with such beautiful, happy abandon year after year.

H. m. 'Love'



2022 Hydrangea University

"Many thanks to the following firms who sponsored our Hydrangea University this year."

Cathy Sampson
Dean, Hydrangea University

Agway of Cape Cod
Barnes Custom Builders
Beacon Gardens
Bloomin' Easy Plants
Café Chew
Crocker Nurseries
Hart Farm Nursery
Harvest of Barnstable
Hyannis Country Garden
Joyce Landscaping, Inc.
Mahoney's Garden Centers
Soares Flower Garden Nursery
Sandwich Garden Club
Strictly Hydrangeas
The Farm
The Green Spot Garden Center
The Nauset Garden Club of Cape Cod
Village Garden Club of Dennis



Hats off to Joan Brazeau!

The CCHS 2023 calendar is another sell-out! What a wonderful gift Joan's creative talent has been for the Hydrangea Society and for the hundreds of garden visitors who bought calendars.





Time to Harvest Hydrangeas

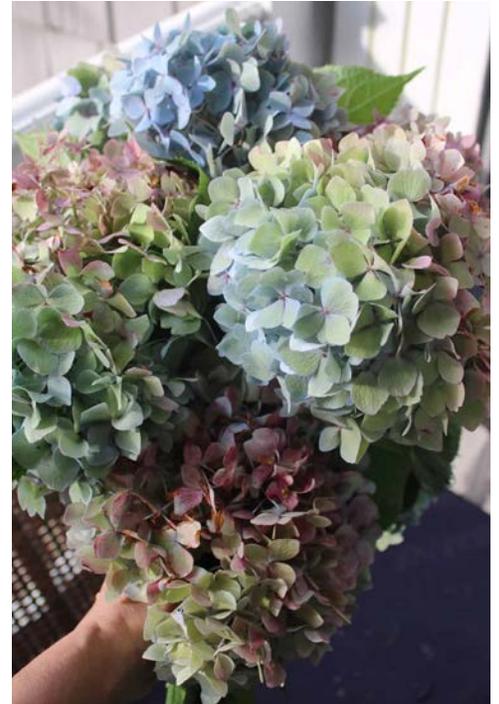
by Suzanne Boas

What a glorious summer bloom season we have experienced this year on the Cape! I don't think my hydrangeas have ever looked lovelier. Fortunately, it is easy to preserve some of these beautiful blossoms for use this fall and winter. That's one of the reasons I think of hydrangeas as plants that "keep on giving."

Two of the most common ways of drying hydrangeas are the vase method and the silica method, with the vase method being both the easiest and cheapest. Silica dried flowers tend to retain their vibrant colors better, but I like the more subdued shades of vase-dried blossoms. More importantly, I like to dry a lot of flowers at the same time which is much more difficult to do using silica. (If you are interested in silica drying, Joan Harrison, founder of our hydrangea society, has step-by-step instructions in her book *Heavenly Hydrangeas, A Practical Guide for the Home Gardener*.)

The most important factor in successfully preserving hydrangea blossoms is timing. If you clipped hydrangeas from your garden during July to enjoy in your house, you know that blossoms picked when they are at their most vibrant seldom last even a week after they are removed from the plant. However, when late August rolls around, and certainly by September, many of your hydrangea blossoms will have lost their fresh, supple feel and begun to take on a slight papery quality. That means they are beginning to dry on the plant and are good candidates for vase-drying. Joan Harrison suggests that another clue to help you identify the proper timing to harvest blossoms for drying can be found in the eye at the center of the flower which she describes as having "exploded into a kind of starburst shape" from its tight round shape earlier in the growing season.

When you have identified the hydrangea blossoms you want to harvest for drying, choose an afternoon when there is no residual moisture on your plants from rain, irrigation, early morning dew or fog. Cut the stems on an angle and then strip off all the leaves. Place the harvested stems in large clear glass vases or other clear containers with several inches of water in the bottom.



Do not crowd your container; good air circulation is important for the drying process. Even though it may seem counterintuitive, the water at the bottom of the container is also critical, so make sure each of your stems can drink.

You may even need to add a little water in a week or so, if the water is gone and your blossoms are not all dry. The only other precaution you need to take during the drying process is to keep the vases of blossoms out of direct sunlight. Your dried flowers will be ready to use when they are papery to the touch and the stems break easily.

There are countless ways to use your dried blossoms. Pile them in a table-top container that conceals their stems, arrange them into a bowl with small pumpkins at Halloween or Thanksgiving; tuck them into a store-bought swag at Christmas. The design possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

You can also preserve your mature hydrangea blossoms by making a wreath. When making a hydrangea wreath you do not need to dry your mature blossoms before you use them. There are many simple ways to construct a hydrangea wreath. You can find wonderful detailed instructions online at the following sites:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2vc2pcAcZo>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVn_4aAjbdk

Joan Harrison also has very detailed instructions in chapter 17 of *Heavenly Hydrangeas, A Practical Guide for the Home Gardener*. She has held wreath workshops in the past for our hydrangea society and the results were uniformly beautiful. If you don't already own her book, it is worth buying for this chapter alone.



Happy harvesting and designing!

"A late summer garden has a tranquility found no other time of the year."

— William F. Longgood



Hydrangea Festival Photo Gallery

Artist at work in Joyce Jenks' garden.



Docents in the Cindy & Fred Ecker's garden.



Docents in Mary Kay & Mal Condon's garden.



"As a docent in several of the gardens, it was a joy to greet so many enthusiastic garden fans and share the love of hydrangeas! I highly recommend volunteering as a docent next year. It's a wonderful way to spend the day, in a beautiful garden chatting with delighted visitors!"

Linda McNeilly
CCHS Vice President and
2022 Chair of Garden Tours



Water color artist in Mary & Roger Bowker's garden.



Visitors to Dan & Linda Pessoni's garden.



JoAnn Trautmann with visitors in Marcia & George Chapman's garden.



Water! Water! Water!

Greetings to all longtime CCHS members, our many new members and those who may be interested in becoming members. I know you all join me in saying congratulations to everyone who opened their gardens for this year's (the eighth!) Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival! We enjoyed splendid weather, great flowering, and wonderfully appreciative visitors at record levels from near and far. The "far" was surely associated with the great blessing we received from our showing on CBS Sunday Morning last August. And this year's early July weather, and throughout the festival, was just perfect: sunny, pleasantly warm, low humidity, and dry. Perhaps the best-ever for the event.

But, dry in terms of plant condition is once again our great summer problem. As of the 27th, we have had no measurable rainfall during the month of July. And this follows a dry winter and below average spring precipitation. This could be the driest we have been at this time of the year in many years. Sadly, dry summers have been recurring frequently over the past 15 years.

Below is my first summer edition of Mal's Corner published in the CCHS newsletter in 2012 – ten summers ago!

Mal being interviewed by Mo Rocca for the August 8, 2021 edition of CBS' Sunday Morning program.



Greetings to all from Hydrangea Farm. Like you, we've been enjoying the great summer tourist weather – lots of sunny days and warm temperatures. But, no rain! And for us gardeners, we need it very badly.

As I commented in my last 'Corner', 2012 to date has been a very dry year with only the month of May providing decent rainfall. Our June total was just over an inch and for July to date (the 11th) we have only received a few sprinkles – barely enough to wet the surface. Plant watering is a major chore for us now with the sunniest locations receiving daily attention. Thank goodness we installed some major additional irrigation last year in our growing areas.

You must be very diligent about your plant watering. The sun's ultraviolet rays are particularly severe in the afternoon, and surface watering at this time has yielded good results. The UV effect – even when the temps are in the high 70s, low 80s –

has been particularly damaging to the pale pigmented hydrangea blooms. Plants receiving afternoon shade and adequate watering are performing very well, both flowering-wise and in overall growth. In addition to your hydrangeas, keep a close eye on any trees you've planted over the past few years. They are particularly vulnerable during long periods of low rainfall. A good practice is to do a long, slow soak using your garden hose at a trickle volume. One to two hours of this watering, 2x a week, is not overdoing it.

Let's talk about summer pruning of your macrophyllas. This is a practice we have employed for our container grown plants for several years. We pinch back plant stems to encourage the development of multiple stems to create a fuller looking plant. You can do the same thing with your in-ground hydrangeas – but do confine your pinching (pruning) only to the non-flowering stems. Cut back the tips of these stems, down two or three nodes (where the leaf petioles join the stem)



leaving approx. 3/4 of an inch remaining above the node – just as you would in normal pruning. You will notice that tiny new buds may already be forming in the junction between the petiole and the stem. These buds will develop quite quickly and become substantial new growth complete in all respects with the base stem. And you have produced two new stems from each pinch. At the least, you are doubling your blooming potential for next year. And it can have a modest height checking effect too.

July is the month for pinch pruning. The new growth must have sufficient time to fully develop before the shortening days of early fall when the plant begins to decline. We are in the pinching mode big time here at Hydrangea Farm as I write this, so the sooner you begin, the greater the growth time. And pinching only the non-flowering stems does not detract from the overall appearance of your blooming plant. Another plus is these tip cuttings are excellent propagation material for those of you wanting to make more plants.

But some modest caution is appropriate too. Don't go crazy with this practice. Be selective; choose just a few plants in your garden to trial. Keep track of these plants via photos and notes – and see what happens in July 2013 – and give us some feedback. We'd love to hear from you.

Enjoy the summer, be water-kindly to your hydrangeas, and pray for rain!



This 10-year-old advice is right on once again. Apply surface watering in any way you can, especially for those hydrangeas receiving more than 3 hours of sun. Most of my plants have auto or semi-auto surface irrigation but in some more remote areas I have been using the 'trickling garden hose' technique for 5 or 6 hours just once a week. The long, infrequent soak is the best approach for the larger, well-established specimens. New plantings this year are particularly vulnerable and must receive frequent short drenches to keep their struggling root systems sufficiently hydrated as they become established. Yes, your water bill will increase but you must balance this expense versus plant replacement, cost and labor.

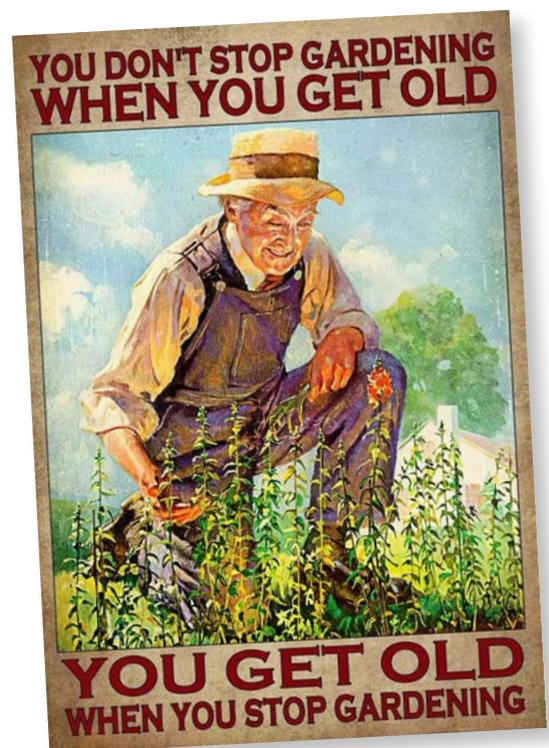
Installing an irrigation system is well within the capabilities of most gardeners, both men and women. Many of you have attended our workshops in the past. And perhaps we should do one again. Components continue to improve, the need is increasing, and there's great satisfaction in completing even a modest installation.

Enjoy your summer, and above all, pray for rain!

Still Ol' Mal

Mal

The Hydrangea Guy



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Beth Wills
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Membership Meeting

When: Saturday, Sept. 24

Time: 10:00 am - Noon

Where: Harwich Community
Center

Speaker: Lorraine Damianos

Professional Photographer and
Photography Teacher

Topic: How to create great garden
photographs on your cell phone

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