

Connecticut Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

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What If? Turning Landscape Design Dreams Into Reality

By George Siritis

In 2014, I was a regional vice president of sales at a large health insurance company in Connecticut, and I'd had a successful career with the same company for over 20 years. During a company reorganization, I reached a crossroads and found myself at a decision point in my life. I had an opportunity to stay with the company, and pretty much continue with what I was doing – or leave to explore other career paths.

After 20 years, and with my 50th birthday looming, I was ready to do something different with the second part of my career.

So I left my job without a clear sense of what was next, but was fortunate to be in a position where I could take some time to explore my options.

After taking a couple of months off, I was walking my dog in my neighborhood. I was shooting the breeze with one of my neighbors, and we were sort of talking about life and what's next. I mentioned that I had started to poke around at some jobs, but nothing was capturing my interest or getting



Upon completion of the Landscape Design Certificate program at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, NY, designer George Siritis of West Hartford took a trip to France where he visited the gardens at Versailles.

me really excited about returning to another big corporate position.

She said, "Well, I see you out working in your garden a lot, and I know that's a hobby of yours." She went on to tell me that she had completed the Landscape Design Intensive program at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, NY, the prior summer. She suggested I check out their classes. If nothing else, she said, you can at least take a few classes this summer, spend some time learning more about one of your hobbies, and at the same time, you can map out your future career plans.

I went online, and it so happened that the next five-week summer intensive program was going to start in a few short weeks.

My first reaction was – nah – I could never make that work, especially because I live two hours away in West Hartford. I also felt I needed to stay focused on finding another position somewhat related to my field. So I put the whole idea aside. But a few days later I found myself going back online, and I started to think, "What if?"

(continued on page 4)

The Upsides & Downsides of Drought

By Sarah Bailey

One thing was a constant this summer – it was dry! We approached the autumnal equinox with a 5- to 6-inch deficit across the state, placing most of the four southern counties in moderate drought and the rest of the state abnormally dry, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The forecast for the remainder of 2015 puts Connecticut back into the

normal range for precipitation by year's end, but a return to normal rain (and yes, snow) levels would not necessarily make up the current deficit. In the shorter term, rain is expected to remain elusive.

We've been here before recently. Last year at this time most of the state was in a similar situation, with the southeastern third of the state in moderate drought, and the rest of the state abnormally dry

with the exception of Litchfield and northwestern Hartford counties, which were normal. By January the entire state was back in the normal range. Since the beginning of May, however, a majority of the state has again been listed as either abnormally dry or in moderate drought every week.

What has this meant for our gardens?
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CHS Programs & Special Events 2015-2016

We're delighted to announce the lineup of lectures and special events for the coming season. If you haven't yet renewed your membership, please do so now so you won't miss a thing.

Thursday, Oct. 15

Sustainable Landscape Design

Lelaneia Dubai, Dubai Design

The Hartford-based fine arts major-turned-landscape designer discusses definitions, design elements and newer concepts in the field of sustainable landscape design. (See page 3.)

Thursday, Nov. 19

Seed Saving Strategies for Resilient

Gardens Matthew Goldfarb,

Fruition Organic Seeds

Goldfarb is a farmer and co-owner of Fruition Seeds, which grows certified organic, open pollinated and regionally adapted seed on three farms in the heart of the New York's Finger Lakes region.

Thursday, Jan. 21 - CHS Anniversary

Night Annual Physical for Connecticut Forests

Eric Lukingbeal, Board Chair, CT Forest & Park Association

The nonprofit Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) protects forests, parks, walking trails, and open spaces for future generations by connecting people to the land. CFPA directly involves individuals and families, educators, community leaders, and volunteers to enhance and defend Connecticut's rich natural heritage.

Saturday, Feb. 6

CHS Symposium - Gardening With a Purpose

Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford

Speakers include author Ken Druse on *The New Shade Garden: A Lush Oasis in the Age of Climate Change*; Dan Furman, co-owner of Cricket Hill Garden in Thomaston, on *Edible Natives: Pawpaw and Persimmon*; and Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, owner of Natureworks in Northford and a 1976-77 CHS Scholar, on *Plants With a Purpose*. See website for full details.

Thursday, Feb. 18

The Art and Elegance of Composting

Rebecca Louie

Louie is a certified NYC master composter, blogger at TheCompostess.com,

Catskills beekeeper, and author of *Compost City: Practical Composting Know-How for Small-Space Living*.

Thursday, March 17

Native Plants & Ecological Research at the Arboretum

Glenn Dreyer

We hear from the director of the Connecticut College Arboretum, who is also an adjunct associate professor of botany at the school.

Thursday, April 21 - Lois and Herbert Isaacson Endowed Lecture

Attracting Beneficial Bugs to

Your Garden Jessica Walliser,

Horticulturalist and Author

The horticulturalist, author and radio host discusses her fourth book, *Attracting Beneficial Bugs to Your Garden: A Natural Approach to Pest Control*, which was named one of the Top 12 Gardening Books by *Martha Stewart Living* magazine in March 2015.

Friday, April 29

Spring Plant Auction & Sale to Benefit CHS Scholarships

Official date and location to be determined and announced.

Viewing 5:30 p.m., sale starts at 7 p.m. See website for details.

Thursday, May 19

Beautiful Landscapes for Pollinator and Wildlife Habitats

James Gagliardi, Smithsonian Gardens, Washington, D.C.

The 2003-04 CHS Scholar and graduate of UConn's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources currently works as the lead horticulturalist for the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, managing the gardens and landscapes that surround the museum.

Thursday, June 16 - Ice Cream Social, 6:30 p.m.

The Art of Gardening at

Chanticleer R. William Thomas

We're joined by R. William Thomas, executive director and head gardener at Chanticleer. London's *Financial Times* has described the pleasure garden in Wayne, Pa., as "planted to perfection."

Sustainable Landscape Design

Oct. 15 – Speaker Lelaneia Dubai, Landscape Designer, Hartford

The first thing you may want to know about Hartford-based landscape designer Lelaneia Dubai is that her unusual first name, Lelaneia, “is old Welch and means ‘one of the light,’” she says.

After visiting her website, www.dubaydesign.com, and exploring her work for even a few minutes, it’s quite clear she is aptly named.

The founder of Dubai Design has created gardens for a wide variety of clients in a diverse array of settings – from a rain garden for Connecticut Secretary of State Denise Merrill, to a native planting project at Bradley Airport in Windsor, to New York City brownstone garden spaces, to gardens for a large Avon estate, and one for a client on Martha’s Vineyard.

Between projects, she found time to create Landscape Designers Challenge in Hartford, which brings new front landscapes to inner city neighborhoods.

As varied as Dubai’s design work can be, her gardens are the creations of an artist whose passion for beauty is matched by commitments to nature, the environment, and making the world a better place.

Dubai did not begin her professional life in the garden. As a former student of fine arts at Southern Connecticut State University and a landscape painter, she was drawn to gardening by the desire to find subject matter for her canvases. It was while working on a garden for her mother that the garden itself began to take the place of the canvas.

“Landscape design and fine art are two of the closest art disciplines,” says Dubai, who pursued landscape design studies at Landmark Schools, and graduated in 2011 from UConn’s Master Gardener program. “Both rely heavily on 2D and 3D design as a basic road map. I use my artistic skills and education every day. I do believe, from what I have seen in 20 years in the field, the best landscape designers have an arts background.”



Dubai’s work also reflects her commitment to the importance of gardens as places where people rest and restore themselves. “I create outdoor sanctuaries where we can restore ourselves,” Dubai writes on her website. “It has been medically proven that spending some time in nature every day reduces stress and helps in restoring good health. By creating site-specific, eco-conscious and client-specific designs, I am helping each person get back to nature, slow down, and find some peace and solitude, as well as quality family time.”

Each of Dubai’s gardens, no matter how big or small, also manifests a firmly held belief that gardens – and gardeners – should work with nature. “To me, it has always been about integration into the natural world from a design perspective, and having balance as we try to walk a bit more lightly on the planet,” she says. “I believe in eco-responsibility by using native plants in my designs to increase our biodiversity, as well as on-site water responsibility through green infrastructure.”

On October 15, Dubai presents a talk on *Sustainable Garden Design*, in which she will cover “definitions, design elements and newer concepts” in the field of sustainable design.

“Sustainable landscape design is a

CHS Program Meeting

Our meetings are open to members and non-members alike, with a \$10 donation requested from non-members. We look forward to seeing you!

Date: Thursday, October 15, 2015

Time: 7:30 p.m. (6:45 for CHS Annual Bulb Sale, socializing, browsing CHS library books, raffle items, travel fliers, and asking questions)

Location: Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford

holistic approach to crafting an oasis on your property that is energy-wise and in tune with the natural world,” she explains. “By using some of the new concepts such as Integrated Site Design, Green Infrastructure, and Natural Greenways, homeowners can help with climate change and create a healthy, easier-to-maintain exterior living space. It is about being conscious of the carbon foot you have, and how much natural habitat is displaced by your home and how you live. It is asking the question: ‘How can I restore some of that natural habitat?’”

For gardeners wishing to incorporate sustainability practices into their own landscapes, she says, “Everything starts with a good design and an understanding of how all the elements work together on a property in an ecosystem.” Anyone “can transform their property by combining good design with permeable pavers, locally sourced native plants, and adding bio-swales and rain gardens for on-property water management. Also, including Natural Greenways, wildlife food and water sources, and a commitment to organic practices increases your sustainability and helps your property

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Landscape Design, from page 1

“What if” I was able to stay in New York during the week with relatives and come home on weekends? And “what if” I got some help taking care of my dog and things around the house? And “what if” I really ended up liking it?

So after talking with my family, friends and my girlfriend, who all were extremely supportive, I enrolled in the Landscape Design Intensive.

I was immediately hooked! NYBG’s Landscape Design Intensive is an expedited five-week program that covers half of all required classroom hours toward a NYBG certificate in Landscape Design. Students spend most of their time at the drafting table. Courses include Landscape Design History, Graphics, Plants for Landscaping, Site Analysis, Site Details, and Design classes. I found it to be extremely challenging, and it allowed me to flex my creative thinking in a way I haven’t really been able to do before. I found myself more motivated and enthusiastic than I had been in a long time, and was hungry to learn as much as I could.

But I have to admit it was also intimidating. I was coming from a career where I was an expert in my field to one where I was pretty much a fish out of water. I was surrounded by students who were, in many cases, much younger than I am, and who also had some background in art or design, which I didn’t have.

The Intensive Program was demanding. You’re in class every day for 8 hours, and frequently have studio time at the end of the day to complete assignments. But as a fellow classmate said, you’re surrounded by like-minded, motivated students who are there because they want to learn, and there is a great creative energy.

The instructors are a diverse group. Many teach while simultaneously running full-time, successful businesses. Their willingness to share their knowledge and real-world experience and to offer their continued support after graduation is a huge part of what makes the NYBG program special.

When I finished the five-week inten-



sive, I was certain I wanted to complete the full certificate program, which I could do by taking classes through the following May, if I went to school full-time. I had a limited window of opportunity (that means both time and money) to complete a career change, so I decided to go for it and complete the Landscape Design certificate program in one year.

I managed to do it. In addition to putting many more miles on my tires, I learned more about plants and planting design, some of the basics of grading and drainage, and was introduced to computer-aided design programs, which I use today in my business.

Following graduation, I started my own design business, Transitions Landscape Design, LLC, in West Hartford. My focus is on residential design and helping people create personal retreats

where they can relax after a long day of work, or enjoy celebrations with family and friends. I also work part-time at a local garden center, selling trees and shrubs, and learning more about the industry. It’s been a good way to gain some hands-on plant knowledge while also working with customers on design questions.

Beyond everything I learned in the classroom and the gardens, I also learned that it’s never too late to try something new. It can be a little scary, and it may require some compromises in your life, but it can also be very fulfilling and satisfying. Just ask yourself – What if? 🌿

For more information about classes at the New York Botanical Garden, visit www.nybg.org. For more information about George Siriotes, visit www.transitionlandscapes.com.

Flower Show: Feb. 18-21, 2016

It all starts now with the CHS Annual Bulb Sale!

At our October meeting, we'll have our **Annual Bulb Sale** featuring first quality varieties—some new, —some old reliable, —and some sold-out elsewhere. They're ready to plant this fall for spring blooming. Bring a check or cash, and arrive early for best selection. All proceeds help offset our Flower Show expense.

Save the Date: Feb. 18 -21, 2016

CT Flower & Garden Show

Volunteer along side us! We once again will host the seminars at the upper level of the show. Volunteers are needed to help with the creative presentation we use to promote CHS membership. Co-chair Keri Milne will be contacting prior volunteers about this year's show. Why don't you get in on the fun? New volunteers: Contact the CHS office at: connhort@gmail.com. **Volunteer during the Show:** Schedules will be ready for **sign-up at our October Program meeting**, later online. We need hosts for our table and for the speaker introductions.

Save the Date!

The **CHS 2016 Symposium: Gardening With a Purpose** takes place Feb. 6, 2016 at the Mark Twain House & Museum, 351 Farmington Ave., Hartford. Speakers are Ken Druse, celebrated lecturer, award-winning photographer, blogger, and author of 20 garden books including the classic *The Natural Garden*. Druse will discuss the topic of his latest book *The New Shade Garden: Creating a Lush Oasis in the Age of Climate Change*. Other speakers include Dan Furman, co-owner of Cricket Hill Garden in Thomaston, nationally known purveyors of peonies and select fruit trees, who will talk about Edibles; and Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, owner of Natureworks organic nursery in Northford and author of two books including, with Marny Smith, *A Country Garden for Your Backyard* (1993, Rodale Press). The title of her presentation is "Plants With a Purpose." The event includes lunch catered by the Kitchen at Billings Forge, flower arrangement demonstrations by Trish Manfredi, a National Garden Club Flower Show Judge, a silent auction, tours of the Twain House, book signings, and the opportunity to shop from vendors.

Horticultural Happenings & Announcements

Note: Happenings are listed on a space-available basis. Listings must include the title, location, time, date and any fee associated with the activity. Kindly format the information in a manner to resemble the entries below, and email it to news@cthorth.org. Deadline for the November/December issue is Oct. 15. Costs given below are for people who are not members of the host organization.

Thursday, Oct. 8 – The West Hartford Garden Club features guest speaker Todd Hansen who will discuss **Bonsai: Illusion vs. Reality**. The award-winning owner of East Hartford's Sanctuary Bonsai demystifies the ancient art of horticultural Bonsai with an introduction that includes information from design theory to container horticulture. The event begins at noon at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2080 Boulevard, West Hartford. Light lunch included. Guest donation \$10. Reservations required: 860-561-0724. For more information, visit www.westhartfordgardenclub.org.

Thursday, Oct. 8 – The North Haven Garden Club welcomes Cricket Hill Garden co-owner Dan Furman for a talk on **The World of Peonies**. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. at the North Haven Congregational Church, 28 Church St., North Haven. Refreshments will be served. Fee: \$5 donation.

Saturday, Oct. 10 – UConn's Master Composter Program presents **Worm Day!**

at Middlesex County Extension Center, 1066 Saybrook Road, Haddam. Featured speakers are Dr. Josef Gorres of the University of Vermont, Carol Quish of the UConn Home and Garden Education Center, and Lisa Krall of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Learn more about the invasive earthworms that are creating havoc in our forested ecosystems as well as in lawns and gardens. Explore vermicomposting and leave with your own worm bin. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fee: \$5. Seating is limited. RSVP to ladybug@uconn.edu or call 877-486-6271. (If you want to make a worm bin, you'll need to bring some worms and other supplies.)

Tuesday, Oct. 13 – The Wallingford Garden Club welcomes Deborah Martonelli, rosarian for the CT Rose Society, for a talk on **Roses**. The event, which includes lunch, begins at 11:30 a.m. at First Congregational Church, 23 South Main St, Wallingford. Fee: \$5 donation.

Monday, Oct. 19 – The Simsbury Garden Club welcomes one and all to their annu-

al Spice and Herb Luncheon at the Simsbury Apple Barn, 60 Old Farms Road, West Simsbury. Members bring their favorite spice and herb dishes along with recipes to share. Joan Palmer, founder of the Institute of Sustainable Nutrition, will discuss **"Medicinal Plants,"** their uses and support of our general health. Luncheon and socializing at 11:30, monthly business meeting at noon with presentation to follow. Non-members: \$5 donation. For more information, visit www.simsburygardenclub.org or call Jan at 860-408-9586.

Friday, Oct. 23–Sunday, Oct. 25 – Friends of the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center, 156 Prospect St., Wethersfield, present **Haunted Habitat 2015, "The Treasure Keeper."** This family friendly event features a haunted house, treasure hunting, and games. Enjoy a tour while you search for treasures. Admission: \$4, ages 3–103; free, ages 2 and under. Games: 50 cents. Come in costume and collect a prize. Hours: Friday, Oct 23, 6–9 p.m.,

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Happenings, from page 5

and Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 24 & 25, 2–8 p.m. For more information, call 860-721-2980, or visit www.friendsofebwnnaturecenter.org.

Saturday, Oct. 24 – The CT Beekeepers Association presents a two-session seminar on honeybees with featured speaker Dr. Christina Grozinger, professor of Entomology, and director of the Center for Pollination Research at Pennsylvania State University. The morning session is **Honey Bee Health: From Genes to Eco Systems**; afternoon session is **Cooperation and Conflict in Honey Bees**. The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station, 123 Huntington St., New Haven. Fee: \$20 donation toward membership. Bring your own lunch. Beverages are provided. For more information, visit www.ctbees.com.

Wednesday, Oct. 28 – The CT Hardy Plant Society presents **Native Plants as Insect Habitat: Signs of Insect Use & Insect Facts** with Charley Eiseman, co-author of *Tracks & Signs of Insects and Other Invertebrates*. Socializing begins at 7 p.m. with speaker at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.cthardyplantsociety.org.

Saturday, Nov. 14 – Reserve early for discounted admission! Connecticut College in New London presents the **2015 SALT** (Smaller American Lawns Today) **Seminar: Kill Your Lawn**. The seminar focuses on ways to cut back on the size of lawns and also to have beautiful, sustainable, and friendly home grounds as well. Keynote speaker is Mark Richardson, director of horticulture at the New England Wildflower Society. Other speakers include Ruth Parnall, landscape architect and consulting landscape curator at Manitoga; Mike Nadeau, organic landscaper at Wholistic Land Care Consulting; and Jessica Lubell-Brand, associate professor of horticulture at UConn. The seminar runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fee: Members, \$45 before Oct. 23, \$55 after; General public, \$60 before Oct. 23, \$70 after. Includes continental breakfast, lunch, and two breaks. For more information, visit <http://www.conncoll.edu/the-arboretum/programs-and-activities/salt/> 🗨️

Drought, from page 1

We haven't had nearly as many fungal disorders in our gardens or our lawns; without moisture, fungal growth is significantly inhibited. Our late-season tomatoes have fared better against the ubiquitous verticillium and fusarium wilts as long as supplemental irrigation was directed at the roots and not through overhead watering. Zinnias, phlox and other mildew-prone ornamentals have not developed the white coating of powdery mildew that is common this time of year. Even the cedar-apple rust has not been as prevalent as usual.

Those are some of the good aspects of the drought. The downside is that our lawns and gardens are heading into the winter dormancy under some stress. Newly planted material does not have the extensive root system that a healthy well-established plant has and relies on our supplemental watering to get established.

It's important for all plants – trees, shrubs and perennials – to go into their winter dormancy fully hydrated.

While it is easy to remember this detail in the summer heat, it can be overlooked as the temperatures fall. We feel the coolness of the air temperatures and observe the shortening days and don't realize that soil temperatures are still in the active growth range for temperate plants. Root activity can continue into November in mild years, until the soil freezes.

This means your new plantings may need to be watered for a while longer if it doesn't rain, especially evergreens. It's important for all plants – trees, shrubs and perennials – to go into their winter dormancy fully hydrated. Additionally, since evergreens don't lose their foliage they continue to transpire as long as the root zone is active. If rain continues to be elusive, don't forget to water! Cooler temperatures, however, mean you'll be watering less frequently.

Fall is usually a good time to re-seed lawns. This season's unusual heat and dryness has made fall lawn renovations a



challenge; with cooler temperatures there still remains a short window for seeding or re-seeding. Just don't forget to irrigate as needed.

Also, this may be a good year to provide new plantings with a winter mulch once the ground has frozen. If plants are stressed going into the winter, the late season freeze/thaw cycle may kill them without the added insulation.

The return of El Nino in the Pacific will likely bring us a winter that is slightly warmer than the average, and also wetter. We have a good chance of starting 2016 with a normal precipitation level. Of course, that's where we started this year . . . 🗨️

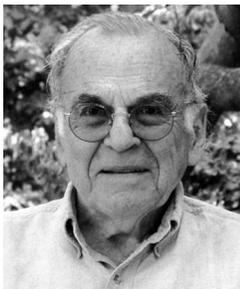
Postscript: Rain from the Hurricane Joaquin storm system will certainly help, but it will be important to monitor soil moisture levels throughout the fall. One big storm does not end drought conditions!

Sarah Bailey is the Hartford County coordinator for the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program and the Extension youth gardening coordinator. She is a Certified Advanced Master Gardener and a Connecticut Accredited Nursery Professional, and has worked in the horticultural industry in a variety of roles for the last two decades.

For more information about drought conditions, visit <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CT>

The Passing of a Friend: A Tribute to Nick Nickou

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Branford physician and longtime CHS member Nick Nickou. In a published obituary, his family wrote that Nick's "grand passions were botany and horticulture. He traveled extensively observing plants in China, Russia, Greece, Patagonia, South Africa and many other destinations. His garden on Sunset Hill Drive was a mecca for plant enthusiasts with numerous rare plants and trees with a specialty in rhododendrons. He loved sharing his vast knowledge and consulted on many town planting projects and hiking trail plant identifications. Nick coordinated the donation, purchase and planting of many special and unusual trees from around the world at the Blackstone Memorial Library. Today they form a beautiful collection on the library grounds. His profound love of the natural world is carried on with his children and grandchildren."



Some of our members have their own memories of Nick:

CHS board member Fairlee Latawic, whose parents were part of a close circle of Nickou's friends, writes, "My mother once gave me a piece of her painted fern, which originally came from Nick Nickou's Branford garden, and I still have a clump of it growing in my garden in East Windsor – I suspect it is probably what is now listed in the trade as *Athyrium* 'Branford Beauty.'"

CHS member Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, owner of Natureworks, which opened originally in Stony Creek and later moved to its current location in Northford, writes, "I first met Nick Nickou when he walked into my tiny garden center in Stony Creek. It was in an old gas station, and I had a bunch of perennials out for sale. He told me I had to come see his gardens. I didn't know who he was, but I went anyway. He gave me a private tour. What I most remember is that I was amazed that such a place existed just a few blocks away, and I didn't know many of the plants he was showing me. I also remember him showing me plants that I never imagined could grow in Connecticut, and he kept saying they were 'hardy as a horse.' I couldn't imagine why he would ask me to visit, my plant offerings were so modest and I didn't even have any gardens at that point at my shop . . . Pretty much everyone I know in this industry who propagates, plants, and collects rare plants has plants they have gotten from Nick Nickou. He was and will continue to be legendary in our field."

Finally, CHS member Leslie Shields wrote the following for the CT Hardy Plants newsletter, and she kindly gave us permission to reprint it here: "I was told today that our very dear friend, Nick Nickou, has passed away. [His longtime partner] Carol Hanby said that he died in his sleep with the windows open. It was as if he just went out into the garden. I'm sure that he is in a garden somewhere talking with others like Dick Redfield about all the great plants there." 🌿

The Value of CHS Plant Auctions & Raffles

The following thank you note was sent to CHS by scholarship recipient Austin Vitelli. It sums up better than we can why it's so important for all of us to support CHS plant auctions and raffles.



Dear CHS,

My name is Austin Vitelli and I am a horticultural student at the University of Connecticut. The other day I received a \$1,900 CT Horticultural Society Scholarship in memory of Ludwig Hoffman.

I cannot express to you how much I appreciate this incredibly generous gift. You are helping me achieve my biggest goal thus graduating from the University. Thank you so very very much. The road through school has been a bit rocky and so your faith in me means truly more than you will ever know.

With sincerest thanks & gratitude,
Austin S. Vitelli

Renew Now for Another Year of Great Programs, Newsletters & More

Please renew your membership as soon as possible. Forms can be found in the September newsletter, or online at cthorth.org. Pay online at cthorth.org; it's easy and efficient. Also, consider switching to the online version of the Newsletter. It saves CHS money, you receive it faster, and it's in color.

Society Personalities

Ben Nichols

CHS Board Member

Ben Nichols moved to Newington from Syracuse, N.Y., four years ago. Having been active in a men's garden club there, he looked for garden groups in Connecticut and found CHS. The programs and activities have been very rewarding. Horticulture has been a lifelong interest. He has an associate degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Farmingdale (N.Y.) Agricultural and Technical College and a B.S. in landscape design from Cornell University. Following three years of working for landscape architecture offices, the rest of his career was spent as a designer/draftsman for engineering firms. But for over 40 years, he cultivated perennial gardens at home, growing a wide variety of plants. His current garden is small, featuring a collection of epimediums and an assortment of foliage plants. Ben has two daughters and five grandchildren divided between Naugatuck and North Granby.

Why and when did you join CHS?

I joined four years ago. I wanted the connection with other gardeners, and I found the programs and activities of

CHS to be exciting and stimulating.

Describe your gardening style. (If you don't yet have one, please tell us a little bit about what types of gardens you are drawn to.)

I especially enjoy mixed perennial gardens. It helps if there is some deliberate design to the garden.

If you could be a gardener or horticulturalist from history, who would it be?

Head gardener on a great English estate.

Did someone in your life inspire you to become interested in gardening?

My mother always celebrated the flowers in her garden.

What gardens do you like to visit?

Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston, Mass.

What is your biggest gardening success?

Helping to establish the annual seminars for Syracuse Men's Garden Club of Syracuse, N.Y.



Ben Nichols

What is your biggest gardening mistake?

Planting more than I could take care of.

Do you have a favorite plant? Why is it your favorite?

I've had several: daylilies, hosta, ferns, epimediums, heucheras.

What are you working on now in your garden?

My current garden is very limited. Helping to care for the Colonial Revival garden at the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum in Wethersfield helps to satisfy my need for dirty knees.

And when you're not gardening...?

Woodworking and traveling.

Lelaneia Dubai, from page 3

contribute to the environment."

Between juggling landscape design commissions and doing community work, Dubai has started another project, Hartford Flavor Company, with her husband, Tom Dubai. We're "making all-natural botanical liqueurs called Wild Moon," Lelaneia says. "For me, it is about celebrating the plant, and creating a product that is gluten-free, GMO-free and as organic as I can make it. The line has five flavors, Cucumber, Rose, Lavender, Birch, and Chai Spice. Cranberry will launch in October." The couple has a tasting room at 30 Arbor St., Hartford. (For more information, visit www.HartfordFlavor.com.)

Dubai believes that landscape designers and gardeners need to be at the forefront of dealing with issues of sustainability. "Every landscape designer has a responsibility to spread the word and bring a change to the old style of landscapes, where lawn is king and the more chemicals the better," she says. "I feel it is important to learn about sustainability because we are humans living as part of nature, not removed from it. Once we realize our place in the ecosystem and our responsibility to be a caretaker, how can we live any other way?" 🌿

For more information about Lelaneia Dubai's design work, visit www.dubaydesign.com.

'Apart from its other uses, there is no spot like a garden for cultivating the kindly social virtues. Its perfectness puts people upon their best behavior. Its nice refinement secures the mood for politeness. Its heightened beauty produces the disposition that delights in what is beautiful in form and color. Its queenly graciousness of mien inspires the reluctant loyalty of even the stoniest mind. Here, if anywhere, will the human hedgehog unroll himself and deign to be companionable.'

John Sedding
Garden-craft Old and New (1891)

CHS Travel: Fall Day Trips & Fabulous Holiday Adventure

Philadelphia Flower Show

◆ America's Largest Flower Show Plus Historical Highlights in the City of Brotherly Love

A visit to this country's largest flower show combines with highlights from American history when CHS visits the Philadelphia Flower Show on March 6 and 7, 2016. Reserve now for a trip that includes an overnight stay, guided tours of significant historical sights, an 18th century dinner, and a tour of the flower show with thousands of displays, 180 shops, and more. The theme of the 2016 show is "Celebrate Our National Parks." The trip is sponsored by Friendship Tours of Bloomfield. Cost: \$369 per person, double occupancy; \$439 per person, single occupancy. Non-members add \$50. Depart: Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford. A deposit of \$100 is due with each reservation with final payment on Jan. 15, 2016. For reservations, call Barbara at 860-243-1630 or visit www.friendshiptours.net.



Visit Historic Beacon Hill Homes Decked Out for the Holidays

◆ Tour Three Fully Decorated Private Residences in Boston, Mass. Monday, Dec. 7, 2015

See the historic homes of Boston's Beacon Hill decked out for the holidays when CHS takes a Dec. 7 daytrip to this storied neighborhood. The gas lampposts that line the streets will be decked with garlands of greenery and red bows. Historic homes and shop doors will be adorned with wreaths, while window boxes brim full of fragrant evergreens. Step into



three privately owned homes decorated to express each owner's personal style and holiday traditions. The residents will be there to greet you and share the history of each home.

The trip includes a stop at the Prudential Center, home of one of the largest decorated trees in the city of Boston (a giant balsam fir from Halifax). We'll have lunch at the center (on our own) and explore some of the unique shops in time for the holidays. We'll also stop by Oakwood Farm Christmas Barn, in Spencer, Mass., which features a large display of vintage ornaments as well as plenty of unique farm-made wreaths and centerpieces for sale. Our day ends with our annual CHS Christmas Party. Please note: This daytrip requires a good amount of walking through the Beacon Hill neighborhood. If cancellation due to weather conditions occurs, refunds may be subject to conditions governed by motorcoach and tour operators.

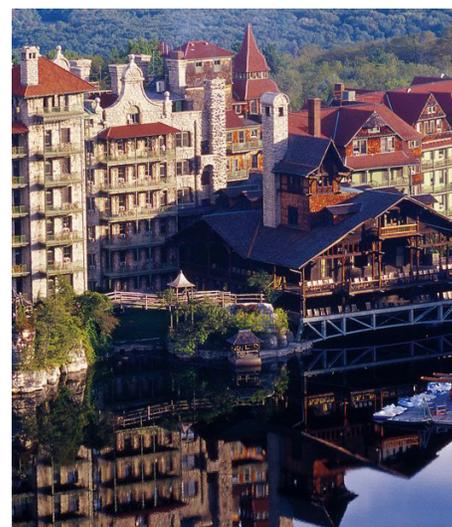
From East Hartford: Depart 8 a.m., return 6:30 p.m. **From West Hartford:** Depart 7:30 a.m., return 7 p.m. **Cost** (payment due at reservation): \$99 per person, members; \$109 per person, non-members. **To reserve:** Call 860-243-1630 or visit www.friendshiptours.net. No refunds on daytrips. Please provide a substitute.

Holiday Getaway at Mohonk Mountain, New Paltz, N.Y.

◆ Sightseeing, Shopping and Relaxation at a Renowned Resort Friday-Sunday, Dec. 11-13

Plan a pre-holiday getaway to spectacular Mohonk Mountain House Resort in New Paltz, N.Y., when CHS heads out of town for a long weekend. Enjoy overnights at the acclaimed Mohonk Mountain Resort, voted a No. 1 resort spa by Conde Nast Traveler. Take a tour of Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill Cottage, the only National Historic site dedicated to a First Lady, and enjoy a stop for some holiday garden shopping. The CHS trip includes travel by deluxe motorcoach, two nights at the hotel, two breakfasts, two dinners, daily tea and cookies, and special resort holiday activities. Special escort for the trip is Brett Issacson, CHS member and president of Friendship Tours.

Depart from: Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford **Cost:** \$679 per person, members, double occupancy; \$789 per person, single occupancy. Non-members add \$50. Fees include a \$25 donation to CHS. Deposit of \$100 due at time of reservation to secure your place. Final payment due: Sept. 11. **To reserve:** Call 860-243-1630 or visit www.friendshiptours.net and select CHS Tours.



CHS Calendar at a Glance

- October 1** – Board meeting, CHS office, Rocky Hill, 7 p.m.
- October 15** – Program meeting, Lelaneia Dubay, “Sustainable Landscape Design,” West Hartford (see page 3)
- October 15** – CHS Annual Bulb Sale, 7 p.m., Program Meeting (see page 5)
- October 16** – Deadline for CHS November/December Newsletter, including Marketplace ads

Dated Material  *Please Rush*

The CHS Newsletter is printed
on recycled paper with soya ink.



A Great Night at the Auction

By Leslie Shields

Another successful auction! Overall our numbers were up from last fall's auction with more attendees and more bidders. And those bidders were enthusiastic and competitive. We added about \$3,000 to the scholarship fund.

Our nursery donors were Bag-gott Family Farms of East Windsor, Ballek's Garden Center of East Haddam, Broken Arrow Nursery of Hamden, Butler's Garden Center of West Hartford, Garden Sales of Manchester, Gotta's Farm Stand of Portland, Juknis Farms of Broad Brook, Silver Spring Nursery of Bloomfield, Larson's Nursery of Burlington, Moscarillo's of West Hartford and Torrington, Natureworks of Northford, Revay's Gardens & Gift Shop of Broad Brook, and Stonehedge Land-

scape & Garden Center of Newington. Please remember our nursery friends when you are shopping. There were many individual CHS members who donated both to the auction and the sale tables.

Our auctioneers were Judy King, Mary Anne Gryboski, Kevin Wilcox, and Nancy DuBrule-Clemente. A big thank you goes to these great people for educating and entertaining us. A special thank you goes to the crew of people who went about the state contacting nurseries for donations, picking them up, and delivering them to the auction: Joan Stubenrauch, Ben Nichols, Christa Sywenkyj, Elaine Widmer, Fairlee Latawic, Deb Pike, Nancy Brennick, Keri Milne, Cheryl Whalen, and Sarah Bailey.

Sarah Bailey and the Master Gardeners did the hard job of getting the room set up – and putting chairs and tables away at the end of the evening. Fairlee Latawic led her crew in the receiving, pricing and distributing of the plants. Cheryl Merino made it possible for us to take credit cards. Elizabeth Morin stepped up to help with keeping everyone fed. Terry Mroczkowaki contributed the most amazing chocolate cake. Ellen Bender took over as the Tolland Agricultural Center liaison.

On a personal note: This will be my last auction as chair. I have made many great friends and had some wonderful times but someone else has to step up. I will work with that person for one auction to smooth the transition. 