

# Connecticut Horticultural Society

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 60, Number 10

Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

Summer 2018

**Editor's note:** As a relative newcomer to CT Hort, at each gathering I meet another member and learn about the varied ways they touch their communities through gardening. Their contributions are as different as the members themselves. If you know of someone or are the 'gardening angel' yourself, please come forward and tell us your story. You can reach me at [news@cthort.org](mailto:news@cthort.org). Thank you and enjoy your summer! ~Barb S.



## FROM THE FIELD



Volunteer Fay Peters at the Giving Garden

## Everything She Grows is Given Away

Member Helena Thomson and the 'Giving Garden' at Newington Senior and Disabled Center

While in the Master Gardener program, Helena Thomson learned that The Newington Senior and Disabled Center had received a grant from the Central Connecticut Health District ACHIEVE program to create a vegetable garden. They needed volunteers and this was a perfect way for Helena to satisfy the 30 hours of Community Outreach that is required of all Master Gardeners.

The original group of volunteers included two other Master Gardener interns, seasoned gardeners and folks who wanted to learn how to garden. An unused shuffleboard was transformed into two 4x50x4-foot raised beds. A contest was held to name the garden with the winner being the Giving Garden.

Over the course of five growing seasons  
(continued on page 4)

## Bringing the Outdoors In

Member Deborah Weik and the Wolcott Public Library Nature Mural

It followed suit that Debbie Weik would be the one. After all, it was 14 years prior that she had painted three murals about the state of Connecticut in the lower level of the Wolcott Public Library. And with more experience as a painter and naturalist under her belt, she began to imagine all that should be included in the massive 10-by-30-foot mural that the Friends of The Wolcott Public Library had commissioned her to create in the gathering space for young-adult patrons.

Debbie began putting her thoughts on paper during the Fall of 2017. There would be weeks of planning before any paint would touch the wall. In the end, the painting alone took six weeks to complete.

The mural evolved into a panorama of familiar Connecticut woodland creatures. But wait... there's more! Each constituent of flora and fauna is documented by  
(continued on page 4)

Happy Summer Gardening.  
See you in September!

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Office & Library Hours  
Tuesday & Thursday  
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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and articles for publication should be  
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Send Membership Information  
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Membership Dues:

Individual.....	\$49
Family.....	\$69
Senior Individual (65+).....	\$44
Senior Family (65+).....	\$64
\$30 under 30 years.....	\$30
Student (full time with valid ID).....	FREE
Horticultural Business Member.....	\$100 or \$250
Organizations.....	\$80

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## Horticultural Happenings & Announcements

Note: Happenings are listed on a space-available basis. To submit an event, send details to [news@cthorth.org](mailto:news@cthorth.org). Please format the announcement to resemble the entries below. Deadline for September issue is August 15.

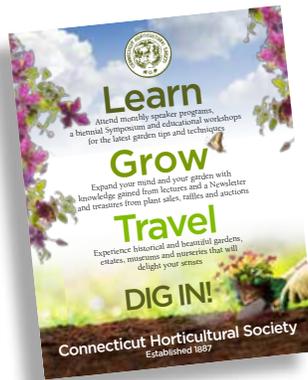
Sat., July 11 to 14 – the American Horticultural Society (AHS) holds its National Children and Youth Garden Symposium in Ithaca, New York. There is a discounted rate for AHS members so if anyone wants to attend, this is a great opportunity to join now for some further savings. This event is for formal and informal educators and designers who work with kids in the garden. Find more information at: [www.ahsgardening.org/ncygs](http://www.ahsgardening.org/ncygs).

Thurs., July 26, day trip leaving at 8:15 a.m. – join The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Connecticut and members of The Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum on a day trip to Newport and Middletown Rhode Island. Chartered bus will depart Wethersfield at 8:15 and stop in Old Lyme to pick up participants living in that area. Destinations include The Blue Garden and the Whitehall Museum House. Contact Tita Hyland, [cahdkh@aol.com](mailto:cahdkh@aol.com), (860) 716-4169 or Cindy Greenblatt, [cgreen12@yahoo.com](mailto:cgreen12@yahoo.com), (860) 416-2918 or visit [webb-deane-stevens.org](http://webb-deane-stevens.org)

Weds., August 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine - The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station hosts Plant Science Day 2018 at their Lockwood Farms location, 890 Evergreen Ave, Hamden. A family day that is FREE and open to the public. No pets, please, service animals only. For more information visit: <http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2813&q=376664>

Visit [cthorth.org](http://cthorth.org) for MORE listings and links.

## CT Hort Builds Public Recognition



CT Hort will be represented at the upcoming Plant Science Day 2018 taking place at Lockwood Farm in Hamden. This is an annual family event that is sponsored by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. It is free and open to the general public. The Ambassadors manning our CT Hort table that day will seek to get our name out.

In May we were spotted at the Suffield May Market. CT Hort Ambassadors spend time at gardening events open to the public to increase the visibility of and boost interest in our organization.

If you would like to volunteer as an Ambassador or want to suggest that CT Hort have a presence at a particular event, please contact Cheryl Marino at: [membership@cthorth.org](mailto:membership@cthorth.org). Thank you!

Thank you to our generous business members and supporters!



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Ballek's Garden Center  
Bartlett Arboretum  
Cricket Hill Garden



MH Landscape Design  
The Garden Barn  
Wild Rose Landscape Design

Visit [cthorth.org](http://cthorth.org) for the latest listings and links.

# Here's the 2018-2019 Speaker Line-up!!!

By Brett Isaacson, CHS Vice President

Speakers for the 2018-19 season run the gamut from radio personality to professor. And, once again, our February meeting will take place at the 2019 CT Flower & Garden Show in Hartford, where Mike McGrath will present a special talk for CT Hort members.

## September 20, 2018

**Robert Herman** – plantsman and educator  
*The Genus Geranium: Cranesbills for Every Garden*

## October 18, 2018

**Tovah Martin** – horticulturalist, writer & lecturer  
*Boot Camp for Your Senses in the Fall & Winter Garden*

## November 15, 2018

**Leslie Duthie** – horticulturalist  
*Fronds with Benefits: Ferns from the Wild to the Garden*

## January 17, 2019

**Sheri Forster** – New York Botanical Garden Instructor, New Canaan Nature Center LA  
*Seasonal Garden Design – Creating Year-Round Interest*

**February 21, 2019** – presentation to take place at the CT Flower & Garden Show

**Mike McGrath** – Writer, editor, radio personality  
*How to get Birds & Toads to Eat your Garden Thugs... er Bugs!*

## March 21, 2019

**Sharon Gensler** – NOFA Soil Carbon Outreach Coordinator  
*Putting Carbon in its Place: a Gardener's Plan for Sequestration*

## April 11, 2019

2nd Thursday of the month due to Passover holiday  
**Kim Eierman** – instructor at New York Botanical Garden and Brooklyn Botanic Garden  
*Gardening Inspirations from the Smoky Mountains*

## May 16, 2019

**Rose Raudales, PhD.**, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, UConn  
*Old, New and Emerging Applications of Hydroponics*

## June 20, 2019

**Doug Tallamy, PhD.**, Department of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology professor at University of Delaware  
*A Chickadee's Guide to Gardening*

## 2018-19 Connecticut Horticultural Society Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs

With September the start of our 2018-19 season, membership renewal notices will be sent starting in August. As important as your dues dollars are, your contribution of time serving on a committee or other involvement is just as significant. Please offer to help as much as you are able to. The satisfaction that comes from volunteering cannot be overstated. Contact a committee chair or board member to learn more and participate.



### Officers

President	Brett Isaacson	860-243-1630
Vice President	open	
Secretary	Karen Bachand	860-225-8852
Treasurer	open	
Past President	Ken Stuebenrauch	860-633-6076

### Directors

		<i>Term Expires</i>
Diane Erling	860-970-5105	August 2019
Clare Meade	860-978-8155	August 2019
Kevin Wilcox	860-243-5256	August 2019
Justine Leeper	203-217-5913	August 2020
Keri Milne	860-257-0434	August 2020
Chris Tuccio	203-231-5128	August 2020
Joan Allen	joan.allen@uconn.edu	August 2021
Elizabeth Valdez	860-408-9438	August 2021
Elaine Widmer	860-284-0534	August 2021

*Emeritus: David Berg, Rudy Favretti*

### Committee Chairpersons

Auctions	Trish Lyons	860-872-8810
Awards	Kathy Niver	860-965-9184
Education/Workshops	Diane Erling	860-970-5105
Finance	open	
Flower & Garden Show	Nancy Brennick	860-665-0222
Historian	Fairlee Latawic	860-627-5277
Hospitality	Elizabeth Valdez	860-408-9438
Library	Karen Bachand	860-225-8852
Long Range Planning	Clare Meade	860-978-8155
Membership	Cheryl Marino	860-989-6149
Nominating	Nancy Brennick	860-665-0222
Planned Giving	Herb Isaacson	860-236-1143
Plant Forum	Kevin Wilcox	860-243-5256
Program	open	
Raffles	Ginny Mills	860-561-2739
Scholarships	Chris Tuccio	203-231-5128
Symposium 2020	Nancy DuBrule-Clemente	203-484-2748
Tours	Heidi Wheeler Isaacson	860-243-1630
Welcoming	Bonnie McLachlan	860-673-7297

### Director of Communications

Barbara Skomorowski news@cthort.org 860-561-5912

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Mary Anna Martell office@cthort.org 860-529-8713

## “Everything She Grows is Given Away”, from page 1

an herb bed, perennial bed, blueberry bushes, corn patch, rhubarb, and a winter squash bed have been added.... all organic! The produce is harvested and distributed to local residents through the Newington Food Pantry.

“Helena is really the core of the garden,” Senior Center Director Dianne Stone points out. “During the dead of winter, when we forget we have a garden outside, she is thinking about the garden.”

That’s why Helena was chosen as the center’s Wall of Honor recipient at a recent ceremony celebrating the work of volunteers. She would never reveal this accolade in regular conversation. In fact, Thomson used her award speech to recruit more volunteers. “Everybody has a different strength,” Helena says of her team.

Center Director, Diane Stone, attests to the team’s collective strength. “Management

and care of the garden is all volunteer-driven. Staff really doesn’t play a role any longer. Volunteers come with their ideas and it’s a way for them to exercise their creativity and passion, while helping the community.

Newington Human Services staff and volunteers who facilitate the Food Bank bear witness to the garden’s impact on the recipients. “It has been an amazing partnership and resource for us,” Human Services Director Carol LaBrecque said. “People are so appreciative of those fresh, healthy options grown at the Giving Garden.”

The group of gardeners has expanded their roles to include holding seminars on such garden topics as: starting seeds, growing herbs, growing potatoes/vegetables/flowers in sacks (many of the Senior and Disabled Center members no longer have traditional gardens). Discussions take place in the garden over a cup of coffee.

Helena developed her love of gardening from her parents. To this day she continues to learn from other volunteers and from the challenges that Mother Nature presents to her every growing season. In addition to the Giving Garden, she enjoys growing flowers, shrubs and vegetable. Helena also enjoys participating in other activities offered by the Newington Senior Center.

*As part of her Master Gardener duties, Helena is one of the Mark Twain House gardening volunteers and on the Hartford Schools Garden Council. 🌿*



Helena Thomson

## “Bringing the Outdoors In”, from page 1

common and scientific names on a key that is available to those who wish to more deeply explore the mural’s subjects. What an enjoyable and entertaining way to expose the inquisitive to the breadth and beauty of wildlife in our state!

Targeted primarily to children and young adults, some whimsy has been integrated into the design. For example, the book drop is positioned on the mural wall and was disguised and incorporated into the woodland design. Library staff and patrons who witnessed the wall’s progression became sources of daily creative inspiration.

Debbie was also honored by the request to add Michaela Petit’s Four O’Clock flowers to the existing “Connecticut Signs and Symbols” mural she painted in 2004 at the library. Four O’Clocks were adopted as the Official State Children’s Flower in 2015; the first children’s state flower designation to have been made in the United States.

Debbie has always loved and been involved with nature and art. Growing up in Wisconsin, she was a Girl Scout and her family gardened and camped. Her family moved to New York when she was in High School. Her husband, Fred Weik, hails from Morris Conn. Fred worked under David Smith at White Flower Farm back in the 60s. The Weik’s Wolcott home includes a “Sustainable Homestead Backyard Vegetable Heaven” and Fred teaches others to do the same. He was quite instrumental in bringing an 1800’s farm in Wolcott back into cultivation. (The ornamentals are Debbie’s department.)

For her livelihood, Debbie’s career took her through advertising and publishing as an illustrator, production manager, layout and design artist and art director. In the 2000s, she turned her focus outdoors and began working as a landscape gardener and designer. She achieved her NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professional (AOLCP) accreditation in 2007. Debbie’s love of the natural world is unmistakable in her art and landscape design. 🌿



Above: Debbie Weik, in the ‘wild,’ with a few friends.

Below: Book drop is disguised beneath squirrels’ nest.





# Extracting the Gold from Goldenrod

By Jody Morgan, Garden Writer and CT Hort Member

Can you extract gold from Goldenrod? Five freight cars loaded with Goldenrod arrived in Fort Myers, Florida a month or so after the stock market crashed on October 24, 1929. Thomas Edison considered that the cargo of American native plants was destined to make a significant contribution to the nation's future economic success. In agreement with their friend's assessment, of the potential value of the end product, Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone had invested in the research project. But what kind of wealth could the common roadside wildflower possibly have to offer?

Luther Burbank seems to have planted the seed that grew in Edison's imagination. During a visit to the self-styled "plant engineer's" Santa Rosa, California home in 1915, Edison, Ford, and Burbank discussed the country's dependence on foreign sources for rubber. Dramatic fluctuations in availability and cost during World War I underscored the vulnerability of a nation lacking its own means to satisfy ever-increasing demand. After revisiting the issue repeatedly in conversation, Edison, Ford and Firestone founded the Edison Botanic Research Corporation in 1927 specifically to discover a domestic source for the organic substance from which natural rubber is produced: latex.

Many plants contain the sticky, milky fluid, but few yield sufficient amounts to be used for large-scale production. The tropical Para rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*), the main source of commercial natural rubber, is native to South America. Charles Marie de La Condamine introduced rubber to France in 1736 and penned the first scientific paper on the properties of rubber in 1751. In 1770 Englishman Joseph Priestly remarked on the ability of the material to rub out pencil marks from whence comes the word *rubber*. The Indian rubber plant, *Ficus elastica*, commonly grown as an indoor ornamental specimen, also was used at one time to produce rubber.

Edison sent forth field men in Ford roadsters to collect plants. He tasked himself with reading and re-reading all 3,639 pages of L.H. Bailey's *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* to identify every possible natural source for latex that could be grown in the United States. He studied specimens of *Ficus* and species of *Euphorbia* at the New York Botanical Garden. From western states he received plants gathered by Union Pacific Railroad foremen.

After analyzing 17,000 different horticultural candidates including Milkweed and Dogbane, Edison announced the discovery of an all-American winner with leaves capable of producing up to 12 percent latex. From the 100 species of

Goldenrod, Edison selected Leavenworth's Goldenrod (*Solidago leavenworthii*) as the focus of his experiments. Inspired by Burbank's skill in breeding plants for a particular attribute, Edison maximized the latex output by re-engineering the shrubby 4-foot Goldenrod endemic to the Southeastern United States into a 12-foot golden giant. He planned to use parts of the plant leftover from latex extraction to produce paper.

Although Edison did get to drive a Model T outfitted with Goldenrod rubber tires, production of synthetic rubber proved less costly. But now the biomass research abandoned in 1934 is enjoying rejuvenation. This time Goldenrod's lowly cousin Dandelion looks like the likeliest source for latex.

The species Edison bred to produce up to 300 pounds of rubber per acre is named for Melines Conklin Leavenworth (1796-1862). A Yale graduate, Leavenworth collected plant specimens from the Southeastern United States to Central America while serving as an army surgeon.

Goldenrod is dependent on insects to carry its pollen, which is too heavy to be wind-wafted. Once the mistaken belief that Goldenrod causes seasonal allergies had been disproven, horticulturalists began breeding garden worthy cultivars as well as prolifically flowering varieties for the floral trade. The genus name *Solidago* comes from the Latin "*solido*" meaning to heal or make whole. Various species have been used to treat everything from snakebite to sore throats and even asthma. Natural dyes made from the flowers range from mustard yellow to orange, olive and brown.

Migrating butterflies will thank you for growing Goldenrod. Songbirds enjoy the seed. The roots exude a substance that suppresses soil pathogens. Laboratory studies suggest that Goldenrods also produce pre-emergent herbicides that prevent the growth of seeds sown by their competition. Deer have no interest in ingesting any part of these native plants. 🦋



**Editor's note:** Jody writes professionally about the history of horticulture. She has generously agreed to share some of her interesting findings with fellow members of CT Hort. Jody can be reached at [mrgnj3@aol.com](mailto:mrgnj3@aol.com)



## June 13 Jaffe Workshop at Earth Tones Nursery, Woodbury

Clouds hung low and the forecast included possible showers the afternoon of June 13, but we were spared. The outdoor venue at Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery in Woodbridge paired with Dan Jaffe, native plant aficionado, author, and Propagator and Stock Bed Grower at New England Wild Flower Society, was a perfect match. Dan's recent book, co-authored with Mark Richardson (Director of the Botanic Garden at New England Wild Flower Society) is aptly titled: *Native Plants for New England Gardens*.

The idea for Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery developed when owners Lisa and Kyle Turocz, who at the time concentrated only on design and installations, realized the closest place they could buy native plants was in New Jersey! Two decades later, their well-organized nursery, displayed according to site (woodland, wetland, sun, etc) thrives with plants they grow onsite. 🌱



— All photos taken by CT Hort member Keri Milne



## June 23 Cactus & Garden Tour at Cindy Elliman's Garden, Danbury

The day was most enjoyable, despite the cold, damp weather and those who visited lingered and engaged in lengthy conversation about cacti and succulents. Cindy Elliman worked hard to get everything in shape for her Saturday visitors and she has all sorts of interesting plants and gardens to share!! Cindy was very generous with her time, know-how, and plants. Even the president of the Conn. chapter of the Cacti and Succulent Society came by for a tour! 🌱



## Seed Swap Workshop

Coming in July...

You'll receive an email from us once the details have been ironed out!

## 2018 Service Award Recipient *Cheryl Karpeichik Whalen*

At the last Program Meeting of the 2017-18 season, the 2018 Service Award was presented to Cheryl Karpeichik Whalen. Cheryl is Head Gardener at White Flower Farm in Litchfield, where she has worked for decades. Cheryl was a CT Hort Scholarship recipient back in the 1980s. When she started working at White Flower Farm, David Smith encouraged her to get involved with CT Hort. Cheryl has been generous to the Society with her time and resources. She coordinates our fall bulb sale and forces bulbs every year for the CT Hort display at the CT Flower & Garden Show. Thank you for your service, Cheryl, and congratulations!



*Justine Leeper, Awards Committee with Cheryl Karpeichik Whalen, 2018 Service Award recipient.*

## CHS Travel

Space is limited—  
sign up today!

### Summer in the Gardens

Wednesday-Friday, August 22-24



This impressive 3-day, 2-night tour escorted by Brett Isaacson begins with a visit to Pennsylvania Horticulture Society's (PHS) Meadowbrook Farm. Originally the home of J.Liddon Pennock and Alice Herkness Pennock, the 25-acre property was bequeathed to the PHS in 2004. Visitors can enjoy formal and informal gardens, seasonal plantings and an extremely diverse plant palette.

Thursday will be devoted to Longwood Gardens and begins with a guided history tour of 'The Longwood Story' followed by a session with Dr. Peter Zale, Breeder & Curator of Plants and past CT Hort speaker. There will be free time for lunch at the garden. In the evening you'll return to experience one of the breathtaking Illuminated Fountain Performances.

The following morning will be enjoyed at Mt. Cuba Center where beauty and purpose intersect. The Center was founded

on an understanding of the importance of native plants, natural lands and conservation. Relax and recharge with a buffet lunch at Mt. Cuba before heading to a private garden in Nutley, New Jersey on the way home.

For the last twenty-three years Richard Hartlage has worked with Silas Mountsier and Graeme Hardie on their garden called Mountsier Garden. Though a strolling garden at its heart, there are spaces to sit, relax and reflect on the vast collection of figurative and modern art interspersed throughout. Graeme has invited us to enjoy our traditional CT Hort Wine & Cheese Party in their garden!

Accommodations have been arranged to stay both nights at the boutique Hotel Warner in West Chester Penn.

**Cost:** \$599 per member for double occupancy, \$759 for member single occupancy. Non-members please add \$50.



**To reserve your spot or for more information, please call Friendship Tours at (860) 243-1630 / toll-free (800) 243-1630 or visit [www.friendshiptours.net](http://www.friendshiptours.net) and select CHS Tours.**

*Dated Material* 🌿 *Please Rush*

**CT Hort Calendar at a Glance**

**Mon., Aug. 17** – Deadline for September  
*Newsletter*

**Thurs., Sept. 6** – Board of Directors Meeting,  
7 p.m., Rocky Hill

**Thurs., Sept. 20** – Program Meeting 7:30 p.m.,  
Robert Herman presents *The Genus*  
*Geranium: Cranesbills for Every Garden*

Printed on recycled paper.



## Important Membership Renewal Information

*By Cheryl Marino, Membership Committee Chairperson*

Great news! We're holding down the cost of membership and it will remain unchanged for the upcoming season that begins on September 1, 2018. And, based on the speakers we have visiting next season (see page 3), you'll certainly get your money's worth:

### 2018 – 2019 Membership Levels

- **Individual** ..... \$49
- **Family** ..... \$69
- **Sr. Individual 65+** ..... \$44
- **Sr. Family 65+** ..... \$64
- **Age 30 or Under** ..... \$30
- **Student Free** . . . . (full time with valid ID)
- **Garden Builder** ..... \$125
- **Plant Expert** ..... \$250
- **Dream Designer** ..... \$500

This year, you can gift an annual membership to an existing member or bring someone new into the fold! To save on paper and hold down costs, your 2018-19 renewal can be handled online with ease starting on August 1. You may recall that starting last year we implemented a 'rolling membership' rather than having all renewals begin on September 1. So, your membership will be up for renewal one year after you last paid.

A month before your membership is due, you will receive an email reminder with a link included for you to be able to renew online. The option to renew at a meeting or through the mail is still valid but we encourage you to save resources and give online a try. Emails will begin to go out in August. I look forward to seeing all of you in the 2018–19 Season.