

Connecticut Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

Volume 63, Number 8

Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

May 2021

Gardens of Color

By Tom Christopher, Horticulturist, Author, Radio Personality,
2017 Mehlquist Award Winner

Editor's note: [Thomas Christopher](#) hosts 'Growing Greener' on WESU-FM at 88.1. The show airs live on Wednesday evening at 6 pm. Tom's emphasis on environmentally-informed gardening includes conversations with some of the leading voices from the field. Listen to recordings of past shows at <http://www.wesufm.org/schedule/> or [CLICK HERE](#) to listen to Tom's podcast conversation with Abra Lee.

When I interviewed Abra Lee, she spoke to me of the difficulty of "being the only one." What she meant was that in her classes in ornamental horticulture at Auburn University, she was always the only African-American in the room. At that time, it seemed there just weren't any personal role models.

Indeed, it wasn't until 2005 or so, after she had graduated, that she made her first discovery in what has since become a personal quest. While doing research at a library in Atlanta (her home town), Abra came across a description of Wormley Hughes (1781-1858), an enslaved man who had been Thomas Jefferson's head gardener and who was intimately involved in the creation of the famous landscape at Monticello. For Abra, this was a watershed moment, and one that led to a personal as well as professional re-assessment.



Abra Lee

By then, Abra was already embarked on a distinguished career that has included public service jobs such as arborist for the city of Atlanta and extension agent for the state of Georgia as well as the head of beautification and landscape management at two major airports, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport. More recently, in 2019-2020, Abra's experience has included a stint in the prestigious Longwood Fellows Program, 13 months of residence and education at Longwood Gardens aimed at developing the participant's leadership skills. This was followed by six weeks of study at the famous French garden, Chateau de Villandry

Still, it was powerful for Abra to realize that she was part of a tradition,
continued on page 4

Collaboration of Community Organizations and Volunteers Enhances a Newly Established Town Park in Simsbury

By Marilyn Palmer,
Simsbury Garden Club President,
Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge
Board Member, CT Hort member,
and Volunteer Master Gardener

Hop Brook Landing at the Flower Bridge, a new town park located at the site of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge in Simsbury, was completed in the late fall of 2019. While walking the site and inspired by the environmental movement to eliminate invasive plants and replace them with pollinator-friendly native plants, I saw an opportunity. It included clearing invasives from along the meadow edge and the planting of native trees, shrubs, and perennials along the surrounding edges of the meadow to create a self-sustaining pollinator pathway link.

In March of 2020, I met with Jan Lintner, Chair of the Flower Bridge Basket Committee, and with staff from the Simsbury Town Parks and Rec. Dept. to discuss the plan. This project is in keeping with the mission statements of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee, the Simsbury Garden Club,
continued on page 5

This Issue:

Send us a photo of your 'Garden Room'
page 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Letter	2
Horticultural Happenings	6
CT Hort Travel	6-7



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Membership Dues:

Individual.....	\$55
Family.....	\$75
Senior Individual (65+).....	\$50
Senior Family (65+).....	\$70
\$30 under 30 years.....	\$30
Student (full time with valid ID).....	FREE
Horticultural Business Member.....	\$100 or \$250
Organizations.....	\$80

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President's Letter

Dear Members

In a pre-COVID time we would have celebrated members anniversaries, enjoying the ice cream social with our June speaker and traveling with Friendship Tours. I miss the flurry of activity in preparing the Synagogue's meeting place and all the familiar faces who come in to greet each other with fondness. Some of the best people I have met are gardeners; rooted, grounded and understanding of what's important in life.

We are still strong apart thanks to technology! With Brett's experience using Zoom we were able to transition smoothly to a virtual format. Each month James Milne is our tech guru making sure all ends (my end, your end and speaker's end) of the connection are working smoothly. Barb Skomorowski does the difficult job of keeping the organization moving ahead with our newsletter content, professional communication to social media of our Hort happenings, developing procedures for planning events, keeping the website current, and much more. Mary Anna Martell, our office administrator assists all the committees and board members in keeping the organization on time with our traditions and newer ventures. She is our gal Friday; taking your calls giving you direction and reminding all when it's time to renew, sending out links to the speaker if we missed the night, and more!

The organization needs volunteers to keep us strong. Currently we need a Vice-President and many committees are lacking help. I urge you to get involved. Please consider taking a small step toward becoming a big help to our beloved CT Hort.

Cheryl
President

Thank you to our generous business members and contributors!

Ballek's
Garden Center



FRIENDSHIP TOURS
THE SHIP SHOP



Hollister House Garden

McVane, Bellobuono,
Kuzmak, Wieszalis, and
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NATUREWORKS

White Flower Farm
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Bartlett Arboretum

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Go Organic LLC



Tom Christopher

Nature into Art

Thursday, May 20, 2021 – 7 p.m.

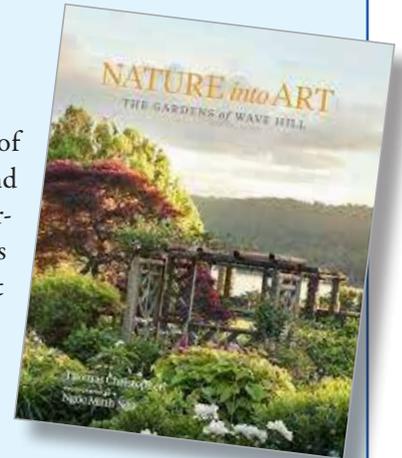
with Tom Christopher, Horticulturist, Author,
Radio Personality, 2017 Mehlquist Award Winner

Join author and gardener Tom Christopher for a tour of Wave Hill, and discover the lessons to be learned in its world-famous gardens. As we revel in Wave Hill's lush beauty, we'll examine the skills and techniques perfected by its crafts-men and women, and in the process gain a new perspective on our own home landscapes.

If he's not planting or pruning, Tom Christopher is probably in the WESU radio studio (88.5 FM), working on his weekly program and podcast, "Growing Greener." Each week, Tom brings listeners across the country an interview with one of the leading voices of gardening in partnership with nature – the goal is to make your landscape healthier, more beautiful, more sustainable, and more fun.

Tom is also the author of 15 books about gardening, and he publishes a syndicated gardening column that circulates to 250,000 readers. His most recent book, *Nature into Art: The Gardens of Wave Hill*, details the horticultural lessons to be learned at that beloved New York public garden.

Tom gardens with his wife in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, where he and Suzanne also pursue their hobby of recreating vintage New England hard ciders.



June Speaker Change

Our scheduled June speaker, Gordon Hayward, prefers to present in person. So we have rescheduled Gordon to be our October 2021 guest, when we expect to be back to live meetings at the Emanuel Synagogue Auditorium.

Christine Froehlich will graciously step in with a Zoom presentation in June. Christine has decades of hands-on experience which she will share with us in her presentation *Gardening with What you Have*. Christine also has a monthly blog with the same name at www.gwwyh.com.

A request from Gordon Hayward for his October talk on GARDEN ROOMS – send in a photo!

Gordon Hayward, writer, designer, and lecturer, is asking members of CT Hort to email him a single picture of a garden room they have created. Between now and late September, Gordon will gather these images and include a dozen or so in his October lecture.

Gordon's presentation will also include garden rooms that he and his wife have on their property as well as others he has designed across the country. With this real-life cross-section of photos, Gordon will explore the principles behind the garden room in a way that will encourage listeners to create their own rooms.

Send your best photo (only one per person) to Office@CTHort.org. Subject line: GARDEN ROOM

Photo from www.haywardgardens.com

Speaker Feedback

After you attend a speaker meeting, please take a moment to tell us what you thought of the presenter. Your candid feedback helps us to arrange for speakers that will hold your interest. Take the six-question survey on our website – cthort.org. Click on the survey icon found on any page then chose the speaker you want to rate. Thank you for your feedback.



“Gardens of Color” from page 1

even if it had been largely unrecognized. There must have been many Wormley Hughes’s across the South, she realized, that helped to shape the landscape of the region. She determined to seek out and revive these personal histories of “ancestors” where she could.

In the course of our conversation, it soon emerged that Abra benefited from her own family and community gardening tradition. As a child growing up in Atlanta, she had gone down with her parents on many weekends to the family farm in Barnesville, Georgia, where her Aunt Lois presided over a flourishing landscape very much in the local vernacular. Abra speaks with great affection of her aunt’s yard and garden – the yard was the area devoted to ornamentals, while the garden within it was the site of food cultivation. Aunt Lois maintained a swept yard, in which ornaments and plantings were carefully placed within a bare, earthen landscape that was swept clean on a regular basis. This is a type of design that had come to America from Africa. The practical purposes it served were to protect the dwelling from fire and to allow a clear view of anyone approaching the house, a feature that could be life-saving given the region’s troubled history.

Maintaining the yard was also an aesthetic choice, however. Abra compares the swept yard to a Japanese raked gravel garden. Her aunt’s landscape, she says, was as carefully groomed as her hair, and amid the expanses of earth, it featured plenty of color. Abra recalls zinnias, celosias, caladiums, heirloom daffodils, and old fashioned roses, all in beds eclectically edged with bricks, stones, broken plates, and other objects carefully selected for their cumulative effect by her aunt. Cooking pots were set out for the use of those who had passed but still inhabited the landscape in spirit.

Abra remembers coming home from Auburn, having completed a class in landscape design, and criticizing some of these landscape choices to her mother, a history teacher, who pulled Abra up short. There is more than one “right” way

to design a landscape, her mother insisted, and Aunt Lois’ way embodied the skills of generations of African-Americans. Chastened, Abra began to see her regional landscape with a new eye. Yes, many of the outlines were European in heritage, but the vibrancy of the colors and the boldness of the flowers bespeak a distinctly African sensibility. In this respect, she believes, our national landscape is like Jazz, a fusion of all sorts of traditions and influences that came together to produce something wonderfully new.

Currently, Abra is collecting stories and working to complete the manuscript of a book that Timber Press will publish in May of 2022. Titled *Conquer the Soil: Black America and the Untold Stories of Our Country’s Gardeners, Farmers, and Growers* this book will tell the story of 45 figures, ranging from David August Williston, a graduate of Cornell and the first professionally trained African-American landscape architect, who served as a campus planner for many universities including Tuskegee and Howard University,

to Annie Vann Reid, an ex-teacher turned entrepreneur in South Carolina who owned a five-acre greenhouse and nursery in the 1940s that sold millions of plants and seeds, and was instrumental in encouraging other black women to follow their dreams.

Abra calls this book “a love letter to my ancestors.” One of the lessons she has learned from researching and writing this book, Abra says, is that it’s not just the histories of the high achievers who matter. It’s also the stories of all those who have contributed to our gardens landscapes, people like Stan, a Black rosarian in Atlanta that Abra knew while she was in her twenties, as well as people whose names we’ll never know. “The person that you see out there pulling weeds, or even if it’s just digging up their own lawn, it’s important to capture their stories too, and not just on the professional side, because that is where you’ll get the richest of information.” Abra Lee believes we should spread our net wide when it comes to credits for our horticultural achievements. 🦋



“Collaboration of Community Organization” from page 1

the Connecticut Federated Garden Club Presidents Project, and the Uconn Master Garden Program. So, I invited each of these groups to participate!

By the end of May, autumn olive, Japanese barberry, bittersweet, poison ivy, and scrub brush were removed from the site. Volunteers from all of these organizations as well as volunteers from town spent better parts of Saturdays removing rocks, amending soil, and planting. During the growing season, five redbud trees, nine summersweet shrubs, 12 winterberry shrubs, 14 diervilla shrubs, 120 ferns, and 108 perennials were planted. All of the plants were generously donated. Because of the severe drought during the summer, tireless volunteers watered the area almost daily for the entire growing season. The shrubs and trees survived and flowered. A grant from the Master

Garden Association provided plantings, soil amendments, and edging for a rock wall on the property.



Volunteers from several organizations came together

Future plans for the 2021 season include planting of daffodil bulbs, additional perennials, and ground covers along the meadow edge.

The plan was ambitious. But so were the volunteers! The new Hop Brook Landing at the flower Bridge Park is beautiful and the addition of the new garden has enhanced this site and created a haven for our pollinators. I am grateful for the support and hard work from the many volunteers from the Hartford County Master Garden Program, the Simsbury Garden Club, the ODHFB Committee, and from other volunteers from the Simsbury area who came together to help make our community an even better place! 🌱

The Weed Wars Dealing with Weeds Organically

*a Wholistic Approach
with horticulturist
Nancy DuBrule-Clemente*

Thursday, June 24, 7 pm

Learn the all-natural approach to gaining an upper-hand on garden weeds. Nancy DuBrule-Clemente is founder of Natureworks in Northford, which has practiced organic gardening methods for all 38 years of its existence. In this workshop, Nancy will share her organic methods and knowledge of weed control and prevention. Topics include understanding weed life cycles and growing habits, dealing with the dormant seed bank in your soil, passive bed preparation and smothering, timely deadheading, and planting in layers to reduce weed competition.



Nancy DuBrule-Clemente

This is a virtual workshop consisting of one hour of instruction followed by a half-hour Q&A session. All registered members will receive a link to the live presentation as well as a link to the recording for future viewing. Cost is \$20 for members of CT Hort, \$30 for non-members and \$10 for students with a valid ID. Registration closes at noon on June 24. [Click here](#) for more info or to register.

Nancy is donating her time and expertise so that every dollar from this event can be deposited into the CT Hort Scholarship Fund. We thank Nancy for her loyal support and unrelenting generosity.



Horticultural Happenings & Announcements

Note: Happenings are listed on a space-available basis. To submit an event, send details to news@cthort.org. Please format the announcement to resemble the entries below. Deadline for June issue is May 15.

Thurs. May 6, 9:00 am to 4 pm – Rather than holding its traditional plant sale at Boy Scout Hall, **The Gardeners of Simsbury** will partner with Gresczyk Farm, 860 Litchfield Tpke. (Rte. 202), New Hartford for their spring fundraiser. On this one day, 20% of sales will be donated to the club. The farm carries a beautiful selection of annuals, perennials, and beautiful hanging baskets. www.gresczykfarm.com

Thurs. May 6, noon – **West Hartford Garden Club** presents Christine Darnell of Christine Darnell Gardens, Old Lyme. She will present ‘Gardening Design for a Changing Climate’ and will share her specialty of plant combinations that are rich in form and texture. The gardens she designs celebrate the beauty of nature and reflect a sense of place. To register for this free Zoom presentation, go to www.WestHartfordGardenClub.org. You will receive a Zoom link to attend a few days prior to the presentation. The club business meeting is 12:30 – 1:00 followed by the speaker at 1:00. Please sign in thru the Zoom link at 12:50 to attend the 1:00 presentation.

Sat. May 8, 10-11:30 am – **Hollister House Barn Talk: Mind Your Matrix: Successful Plant Combinations**, Presented by **Robert Clyde Anderson** Learn about matrix planting! It is the planting of three to five equally competitive plants that are vigorous enough to act as “living mulch,” providing weed suppression and moisture retention around larger perennials and shrubs. Emphasis on, but not exclusively using, native plants. Click here for additional details and to register: <https://hollisterhousegarden.org/event/mind-your-matrix-successful-plant-combinations-to-create-a-living-landscape/>

Weds. May 26, 7:30 to 8:30 pm – **The Hardy Plant Society of New England CT Chapter** zoom presentation **Natives for the Gardener** as well as the **Garden** presented by **Lisa Turoczi of Earth Tones LLC**, Woodbury, CT. Open to members and guests. [Click for additional details or to register.](#)

Native Plant Trust Online Educational Programming
The nation’s first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England’s native plants, offers an abundance of online courses in plant science. [Click here for more information and to register.](#) The Trust has re-opened Garden in the Woods to the public with timed ticketing. [Visit their website to purchase your advance ticket.](#)

UConn Home & Garden Education Center (HGEC)
www.ladybug.uconn.edu

An invaluable horticultural information resource for novice and seasoned gardeners. At present, analysis of physical samples has been suspended but digital images can be sent to ladybug@uconn.edu along with description of symptoms or problems, and any other relevant information/questions.

UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR)

Blog <https://blog.extension.uconn.edu/vegetable-gardening/>
Here you’ll find an abundance of information on current topics from COVID to Vegetable Gardening. Check link regularly as content changes frequently.



Visit cthort.org for the MOST CURRENT listings and links.



2021 CHRISTMAS IN CAPE COD

Saturday-Sunday, December 4-5, 2021

Although unable to make this happen in 2020 due to state health restrictions in place at the time, this overnight was so well received that we have brought it back as the 2021 holiday trip. The weekend will be escorted by Brett Isaacson. You’ll find a flyer with detailed itinerary on our website - CTHort.org/Travel or by calling Friendship Tours.

A deposit of \$75 per person will hold your spot with final payment due October 1, 2021.

Cost: \$439 per person, double occupancy | \$519 per person single | Non-members must 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.

CT Hort Travel

JOIN US! Need a few more! Payment due when booking.

**2021 Philadelphia Flower Show
Saturday–Monday, June 5-7, 2021**



HABITAT: *Nature's Masterpiece*

For the first time in its 200-year history, the **Philadelphia Flower Show** will take place outside—and CT Hort will be there! The backdrop for this year's show will be the beautiful, lush landscape of FDR Park in Philadelphia. Overnight accommodations have been made at the **Marriott Downtown**, in the heart of Philadelphia, just steps from Reading Market.

SATURDAY includes lunch and a guided tour of the **Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania**. The arboretum is a new kind of ornamental garden inspired by John and Lydia Morris' extensive travels through Europe and Asia and includes native and exotic flora and art from around the world. CT Hort's friend and past speaker Bill Cullina (formerly of Coastal Maine Botanical Garden) will greet us as he was appointed Executive Director of the Arboretum in 2019. Once we reach Philadelphia and settle in to our hotel, the welcome dinner will be held at Maggiano's Little Italy, conveniently located right next door to the hotel.

SUNDAY will be spent at the show. This year's theme, '[HABITAT: Nature's Masterpiece](#)' will explore the beauty of life through nature's kaleidoscopic lens. Visitors should be ready to see exceptional beauty, learn from a diverse line-up of designers and leading horticulturalists and enter a new gardener-centric experience that invites everyone at all skill levels to nurture a lifelong connection to plants and gardening.



After the show, you'll enjoy a **private after-hours tour and wine & cheese reception at the [Barnes Foundation](#)**. The Foundation houses one of the finest collections of 19th and 20th century French paintings in the world. The museum's permanent collection features 181 Renoirs, 69 Cézannes, and 59 Matisse's, along with works by Van Gogh, Manet, Degas, Seurat, Prendergrast, Picasso and more, set among groundbreaking African sculpture and Native American ceramics, jewelry, and textiles. Following the reception, we'll have dinner together at one of Philadelphia's great restaurants.

On **MONDAY**, it's back to the **Philadelphia Flower Show** to catch what you may have missed and to do some shopping. Lunch will be on your own before we head home.

A deposit of \$100 per person will hold your spot with final payment due April 16, 2021.

Cost: \$819 per person, double occupancy | \$999 per person single | **Non-members must 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.**



Dated Material  *Please Rush*

CT Hort Calendar at a Glance

- Thurs., May 6** – Board of Directors
Remote Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Sat., May 15** – Deadline for June
Newsletter
- Thurs, May 20** – CT Hort ONLINE
Program Meeting, 7:00 p.m.,
Thomas Christopher
presents *Nature into Art*
Go to CTHort.org to link
to the meeting.

Printed on recycled paper.



Member Anniversaries Recognized

Member support is the backbone of our beloved Connecticut Horticultural Society. Annually, we celebrate and appreciate the loyalty of our members by recognizing their anniversaries at 5-year intervals.

Here are the members celebrating milestone CT Hort anniversaries in 2021:

- **50+ years:**
Prof. Rudy Favretti
Bob & Nancy Shipman
- **40 years:**
Ingred Boelhouwer
Harriet Samuels
Ed Merritt
Joan-Marie Schaefer
Nancy Scott
Sandy Yar
- **35 years:**
Karen Ellsworth
June Goodrich
David Kuzmenko
- **30 years:**
Carol Bruce
Sally Burgess
Lynn Cavo
- **30 years con't:**
Regina Cirilli
Edna Farrell
Garden Club of Madison
Jane Harris
Charleen Taylor
Marveen Pakalik
Joan Stubenrauch
Rosemarie Tamiso
- **20 years:**
Sarah Bailey and Robert Gale
Janet Conlin
Karla Dalley
Carol Hall
Federated Garden Clubs of CT
Drucilla Shearer
Betty Stanley
Suffield Garden Club
John & Jean Sziklas
- **15 years:**
Gay Vincent-Canal
Connie Gillies
Alison Green
Eileen Umpleby
- **10 years:**
Barry Avery
Arthur & Sandra Blumer
Sue Burchsted
Pamela Cayward
Beth Critton
Doreen Farina
Cynthia Greenblatt
Adelle Hack
Robert Herman
Ellen Hoverkamp
Edward Juskoviak
Kathy Niver
Brie Quinby & Evan Cowles
Lewis Robinson
Jeannine Upson
- **5 years:**
Violet Bell
Nancy Campbell
Mary Fox
Garden Barn Nursery
Irene Hendrickson
Kelly Jarvis
Lisa Knicos
Katherine Kosiba
Maryann Leach
Dianne Libbey
Roy McAlpine & Emily Estes
George & Carol McCleary
Jeanne Mucci
Kerry Mendez
Ruth Pagano
Alison Rabinko
Mark Rowley
Barbara Skomorowski
Barbara Wolf