Connecticut Horticultural Society
NEWSLETTER
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How very analog of me—a winter reading list

by Robert Clyde Anderson

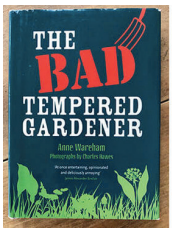
CT Hort is thrilled to present "The Labor Day Garden," a virtual presentation by Robert Clyde Anderson, on Thursday, March 17 at 7pm. You'll receive an email with the link to the Zoom presentation closer to the date.

Winter, for gardeners in our climate, is a time of blessed rest. But also planning, scheming, and above all, reading. This year I'm making a conscious effort to delve back into my actual books, a pretty good collection that's been assembled over the last 30-odd years and recently gets neglected in favor of the quick google when a question arises.

I do regularly read a few garden blogs, many of them written by people with distinctive voices and years of expertise. My Instagram follow list is mostly British and German gardeners, with a smattering of French and Portuguese and even Russians...Americans too, of course. The internet is great for keeping up with what's current in the world horticulture scene, but the information often seems so fleeting, and sometimes so superficial.

Returning to the bookshelves, and the bookstores, has been nourishing. So, here's my winter reading list, so far...

The Bad Tempered Gardener
by Anne Wareham
A book I've had for several years (it was published in 2011) but never got around to reading... and my loss, because what a challenging, maddening, inspiring writer she is. The mistress and creator of "The Veddw", a well-known garden in Wales,



Wareham pokes holes in many a sacred garden cow: plant obsession, television gardening personalities, open garden days, roses...just a few of the topics she skewers with wit and intelligence. Her willingness to question established norms is refreshing, and a sampling of some titles from this collection of essays will give you an idea of their scope: "I Hate Gardening", "Are Gardens for Gardeners?", "Sharing a Garden", "Status", "Roses and Taste" to name a few.

Her irascible style brings to mind the late, great Christopher Lloyd's writing, tempered with a healthy dollop of self-deprecation. She made me think, and re-think, some of my long-established ideas. She's like that long-time friend you have who knows how to push your buttons in an infuriating way... but in the end you know she's right.

Spirit of Place by Bill Noble
A book that was much talked about and promoted last spring, written by a well-known professional gardener and former director of preservation for the Garden Conservatory. It documents the creation and evolution of his property in the Upper Valley of Vermont, an area I know a fair amount about, having visited friends there

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We want your nominations!
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Membership Dues:

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$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
A Lot to Look Forward to this Spring

Dear Members,

February has been a terrific month for our CT Hort members and friends to enjoy an engaging and relevant Symposium as well as Timothy Tilghman's lecture on Untermyer Gardens. I am proud of the work done by Nancy DuBrule-Clemente and her Symposium team in presenting a skilled set of speakers and a polished event. Our organization thrives when we offer informative horticultural principles that support a new ecology to sustain our environment. Now more than ever the planet needs all of us gardeners to lean into supporting all species that depend on plants and breeding habitat.

Gardens can begin to wane in the fall, but our March speaker Robert Clyde Anderson will present a lecture on the Labor Day Garden with ideas to keep visual interest up to the frost. April will bring us back together in person! I hope to see many of you there, and as has become our norm, the presentation with Amy Ziffer will also be available via Zoom. Also, in May we will have our new and improved auction. Be on the lookout for details to come your way soon.

Warmly,
Cheryl Marino

Thank you to our generous business members and contributors!

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Robert Clyde Anderson

The Labor Day Garden

with Robert Clyde Anderson

Thursday, March 17, 2022

During his discussion, Anderson, a lifelong gardener, garden designer, and creative director of Pondside Nursery in Hudson, NY, outlines strategies for keeping our garden interest alive throughout the late summer and early fall, and suggest specific plants and techniques to design for a "second peak" of herbaceous plants at the end of the season.

On April 28, we go back to our in-person and Zoom speaker presentations with

APRIL 28
Structure and Ornament in the Garden
with Amy Ziffer

MAY 19
The World of Peonies
with Dan Furman

JUNE 16
Uprooted: A Gardener Reflects on Beginning Again
with Page Dickey

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.

2022-23 Mehlquist Award

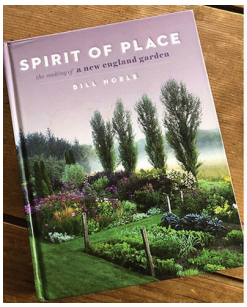
In 1987, on its 100th anniversary, the Connecticut Horticultural Society (CT Hort) established the Gustav Mehlquist award to honor our member Dr. Gustav Mehlquist for his extraordinary contribution to horticulture. Dr. Mehlquist, who had been long recognized as one of the leading horticulturists in the United States, was a member of CT Hort, the American Rhododendron Society, The Connecticut Nurseryman's Association and a professor of Plant Science at the University of Connecticut (UConn).

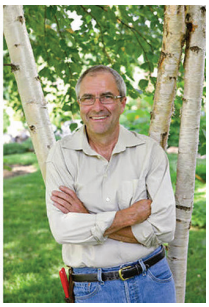
Born in Sweden, Dr. Mehlquist earned his bachelor's degree from UConn in 1936 and earned his doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley in 1939. He was also the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for Biology and Plant Science in 1947 and subsequently studied orchid genetics in England. After many years of outstanding work in plant breeding, specializing in orchids, delphiniums and carnations, Dr. Mehlquist joined the staff at the UConn in 1952 where he continued his work as a horticultural researcher, plant breeder, hybridizer, educator and writer. While at UConn his interest in rhododendrons led to the development of several vigorous cold- hardy rhododendrons.

Every year CT Hort seeks nominations for this prestigious award named in honor of Dr. Gustav Mehlquist. Nominations must be received by April 30.

If you know a Connecticut resident who deserves to be honored and recognized for their significant and extraordinary contributions in horticulture or the art of gardening, please submit a nomination letter describing the background and qualifications of your nominee to Mary Anna Martell or via email to office@cthort.org. Or, mail the office: CT Hort Office, P.O. Box 330966, West Hartford, CT 06133-0966.

"How very analog of me—a winter reading list" from page 1

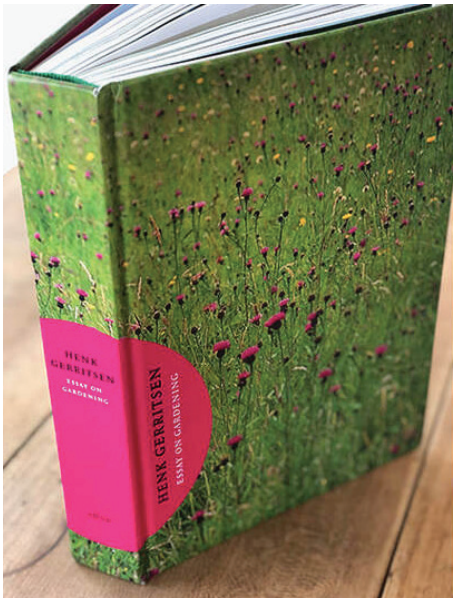




many times. So I was interested to read it. Still, it took me three tries before I was engaged enough to finish the book... the first chapters seemed a replay of a planting style, and a plant palette, that were popular twenty years ago. Plants like Hydrangea paniculata 'Quick Fire', Sedum 'Autumn Joy', and Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster' were thrilling us back at the turn of the century. Now, not so much. Reading further, I began to appreciate his very deep and broad knowledge of plants, and to marvel at the collection he's assembled of really the best of the best shrubs, perennials, and alpines that are hardy in a challenging northern climate zone. And I acknowledge that the garden was, after all, started more than twenty years ago. My own garden being now just half that age, it's encouraging to see how two decades of growth pays off in the maturity of established plantings.

This is definitely a plantsperson's book... beginners will be daunted by the cascade of Latin names and comparison of cultivars and subspecies, although they may enjoy the many good photographs. In the end I found it to be an enjoyable read but one that chronicles a collector's, rather than a designer's, taste. Much of the book is a bed-by-bed documentation of plants therein... interesting enough for plantaholics, but hard to follow without constantly referring back to the plan on the endpapers. I longed too for more of Mr. Noble's personality to shine through, and to visit his garden to see the plantings first-hand... he seems like a nice fellow, and acknowledges towards the end of the book that "much of the garden is outfitted with old-fashioned plants and garden styles not currently in fashion". That raises the question of what our current horticultural obsessions will look like in twenty years... and whether they will age as gracefully as this solid assembly of top-notch cultivars in his garden has done.

Essay on Gardening by Henk Gerritsen
Much more congruent with my own curmudgeonly gardening temperament is this book I'm actually re-reading, for the third time I think. Henk Gerritsen is one of the founding figures of the "Dutch Wave," but little known in this country, partly because he was more of a writer than a designer, and partly because he died at a relatively young age. But he penned



several early books with Piet Oudolf, as well as this one, his definitive collection of thoughts on nature, ecology, and gardens. Gerritsen's original obsession was with the wild plants of Europe, and he only came later to be interested in gardening, creating with his partner Anton Schlepers an idiosyncratic and influential garden they called Priona. This is a book that's perfect for the bedside... there's no straightforward narrative line, so you can dip in and out of it at will. And his take on things horticultural is often challenging, always thoughtful, and usually witty.

A couple of quotes from the book:
"Gardening is the most elusive of all the fine arts. The art of gardening uses living material, which has its own laws and prerogatives and which won't allow itself to be manipulated by the artist without a struggle."

Regarding weeding, he writes...
"I know quite a few gardeners who with satanic pleasure dedicate every free weekend to committing a veritable bloodbath in their garden, so that they may maintain their air of pacifism during the week. And what of the weeds? They lived happily ever after..."

Indeed, Gerritsen has been perhaps the main proponent of what is disparagingly called "the weedy aesthetic" by those skeptical of the current trend towards naturalistic planting. But in his case the scruffiness of his garden seems the result not so much of laziness but of his extremely deep knowledge and appreciation of wild, atypical, and species plants. I haven't had a chance to visit the Priona Garden, but from the many photos in this book it appears that the lavish wildness is balanced by a thoughtful use of topiary, hard paving, and other kinds of structure that act as a design counterpoint to all the effusive planting.

This is also one of the most beautifully designed gardening books I've seen recently, and at almost 400 pages, it's packed with challenging ideas and practical information, especially regarding plant communities and habitat archetypes. If you're seriously interested in ecological gardening and naturalistic planting this is a must-read, seminal work on the subject.

Reprinted with permission from Welcome to Sempervivum, *a regular blog feature by artist-gardener Robert Clyde Anderson.*

Thanks to everyone— speakers, sponsors and guests— who made our 2022 symposium a rousing success!

Our dynamic speakers:

Kelly D. Norris • Katherine Tracey from Avant Gardens • Michael Russo from Trout Lily Farm LLC

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Our wonderful symposium committee:

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2022 Connecticut Flower & Garden Show
CT Hort Best in Show Winner

Congratulations to Aqua Scapes of CT for winning Best in Show at the Connecticut Flower & Garden Show last month. The displays this year were beautiful, so our judges—Richard and Susan Kaminski, and Cheryl Marino—had a challenge on their hands picking just one winner.

Every year, CT Hort picks a display at the show that offers educational value, horticultural interest, good design, effective use of plant material and inspiration to a home gardener.

Congratulations to Richie Beaumont from Aqua Scapes of CT, shown here accepting the annual award (from CT Hort President Cheryl Marino) and thanks to our judges!

Scholarship Fund Status

2022 Service Award

The Connecticut Horticultural Society (CT Hort) exists largely due to the help of many volunteers. They are a source of inspiration, knowledge and encouragement which is valued and enjoyed by all of us. If you've attended lectures, bought a cool plant at the auction, traveled to amazing gardens, participated in workshops, or benefited from any of the offerings CT Hort provides, it was possible because of our amazing volunteers. Think back and try to remember a face you consistently see or a voice you love to hear at our monthly meetings or other various events, they could be our next service award winner.

Please take a moment to recognize an individual who has enhanced your experience with CT Hort by nominating them as the 2022 Service Award recipient. Nominations should include a brief explanation of why you feel they should be considered and as much background about them as you can. Send nominations to:

Mary Anna Martell, CT Hort Office
P.O. Box 330966, West Hartford, CT 06133-0966 or
email: office@cthort.org
Subject line: Service Award

It only takes a few minutes to thank someone who gives so much of themselves.
Nominations must be received by April 4, 2022.

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 April issue is March 15.

Mon., Mar. 7, Bee-ginner's Beekeeping: Basics of Apiculture Course, Rutgers' Online Beekeeping Courses. Learn how to start, maintain, and care for a honey bee colony in this introductory online, self-paced course. Topics include bee biology, disease and mite prevention, hive assembly and management, honey extraction, queen bee purchasing, and more. The cost is $275-$300. Click here to register.

Tues., Mar. 10, 11 am-12 pm — "Earthworms & Soil Health" presented by the Cherry Brook Garden Club, Canton Community Center, 40 Dyer Ave, Collinsville. Dr. Wade Elmer of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station will present an overview of the different kinds of earthworms that are found in Connecticut and their role in processing organic matter. Additionally, he will explain how earthworms help to increase soil health, and speak about his research on how earthworm activity can suppress certain soil-borne diseases of vegetables. $5 guest donation fee; free to members. Call 860-352-8398 for information.

Thurs., Mar. 10, 12 pm — West Hartford Garden Club Meeting presents "Pruning and Best Tool Care" with Kevin Wilcox of Silver Spring Horticultural Services, Saint John's Episcopal Church, 679 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford. Discover when, what and how much to prune as well as the best way to care for your garden tools. Guest donation of $10. Go to www.WestHartfordGardenClub.org to register.

Thurs., Mar. 10, 7-9 pm — "Explosion in the Paint Factory" presented by the North Haven Garden Club, North Haven Congregational Church, 28 Church St., North Haven. Rich Howard, the owner of CT Daylily of Wallingford, will focus on the care, propagation, and appeal of daylilies. He has registered about 24 daylilies and grows about 1700 named varieties in pots and has about 5,000 seedlings in the ground in various stages of evaluation. $5 fee.

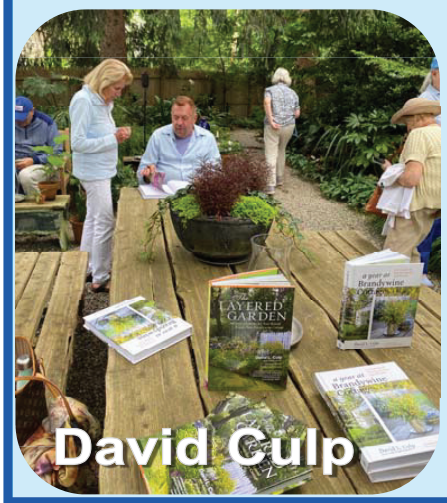
Wed., Mar. 16 & Thurs., Mar. 17, 6-8:30 pm — Cannabis Symposium offered by Tower Hill Botanic Garden, offered online. Exploring the horticultural components of the cannabis and hemp plant. This symposium will bring together experts in the fields of horticulture and science to help understand the many questions and topics surrounding the biology, applications, care, and components of cannabis and hemp plants. The symposium is geared toward anyone with an interest in cannabis and hemp as well as professionals. The cost is $75 for members; $90 for non-members; and $40 per student and includes a gate pass for a future visit. Register Here.

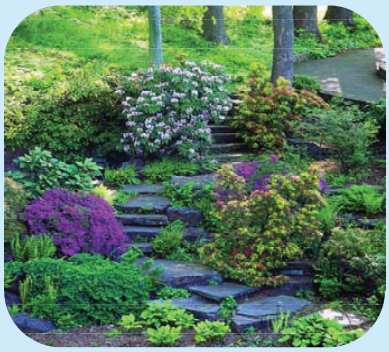
Wed., Mar. 23, 7:30-8:30 pm — "Unlocking the Mysteries of Native Plant Selection: What You Need to Know to Get it Right" presented by Hardy Plant Society of New England CT Chapter, virtual event. Kim Eierman, founder of EcoBeneficial LLC, is an environmental horticulturist, specializing in ecological landscapes and native plants. She will help sort out the mysteries and complexities of native plant selection. Free with HPSNE CT membership; $10 drop-in fee for guests. Click for additional details or to register.

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

Philadelphia Flower Show & Brandywine Valley

June 18 - 22, 2022 Sat - Wed





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Proof of Covid vaccination is required on this trip.

Cost: $1,349 per person, double occupancy | $1,699 per person single

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https://www.friendshiptours.net/tours/chs-philadelphia-flower-show-brandywine-valley

To reserve your spot or for more information, please call Friendship Tours at (860) 243-1630 or toll-free (800) 243-1630 or visit www.friendshiptours.net.

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Dated Material *Please Rush*

CT Hort Calendar at a Glance

Thurs. March 3 – Board of Directors Remote Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tues. March 15 – Deadline for April *Newsletter*

Thurs. March 17 – CT Hort VIRTUAL Program Meeting, 7:00 p.m. **Robert Clyde Anderson** presents **The Labor Day Garden**

Go to CTHort.org for information on these and all other meetings and programs.

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Member anniversaries will be celebrated next month!

In recent years, we recognized member anniversaries at our April meeting.

We plan to recognize the anniversaries of members who have been with us 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 50+ years.

Connecticut Horticultural Society Spring Plant Sale & Auction RETURNS!

Save the Date: Friday, May 13, 2022

Bethany Covenant Church, Route 372, Berlin, CT

Doors open for Plant Sale and Silent Auction at 6:30 pm with LIVE Auction to follow

The evening's proceeds fund scholarships for deserving plant science students at University of Connecticut (UConn) and Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC)