

# Connecticut Horticultural Society

# NEWSLETTER

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September 2018



Ernst Pagels

## Ernst Pagels: An Exceptional Plantsman

By Robert Herman, 2018 Mehlquist Award winner,  
plantsman, educator, member

Perennial plant enthusiasts all owe a debt of gratitude to one of the great plant breeders and nurserymen of our time, Ernst Pagels. Mr. Pagels affected every one of our lives and gardens, directly or indirectly, with his life's work - an unwavering devotion to perennials from his own unique perspective. He left this world a better place and anyone who was fortunate enough to know him must certainly agree that he was a not only an excellent plantsman but a unique and wonderful person.

I cannot say exactly when I met Ernst Pagels for the first time and I don't know how many times we shared endless pots of East Friesland tea. I can only remember the profound impression he made on me from the first moment we met. I was very lucky to have been able to enjoy long discussions with him, not only on plants but also on the people who had had an impact on his philosophy toward

life and horticulture. He enlightened us all, stating, in his own words, how perennials will bring "joy to the human heart if only we open ourselves to the beauty and wonder of plants."

If you have an interest in *Achillea*, *Salvia* or *Miscanthus*, it is very likely you have some of his plants in your garden or nursery but his repertoire as a breeder included a wide variety of genera, from *Aconitum* to *Veronicastrum*.

There is no doubt that Pagels' mentor was Karl Foerster. His first connection to Foerster as a young man was with the magazine that Foerster and Camillo Schneider had started, *Gartenschönheit* or The Beauty of Gardens. Pagels pored over every issue the moment it arrived. Karl Foerster was in the midst of developing a whole assortment of new perennials and he had a great influence on garden designers of the time. His

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## Membership Renewal News

By Cheryl Marino, Membership Committee

CT Hort has been working to improve the ease of renewing your membership. We are now capable of accommodating "rolling memberships" which simply means your membership will renew in the same month next year. You have the option to renew at a meeting or through the mail but we encourage you to renew online with ease at [cthort.org/join](http://cthort.org/join).

Be sure to enjoy the activities and take advantage of the benefits of membership:

- Regular meetings to socialize and network with horticultural enthusiasts
- Reduced travel pricing for local, national and international trips
- Discounts on workshops, symposiums and other CT Hort events
- Ten newsletters full of gardening news and tips
- Email notification of events and reminders of upcoming speaker meetings
- 10% discount at select nurseries
- Savings of 67% on subscription to Horticulture magazine

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See you at 6:30 on Friday, Sept. 28:

FALL PLANT SALE & AUCTION  
Tolland County Agricultural Center

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Find all the latest Horticultural Happenings at [CTHort.org](http://CTHort.org)



Connecticut Horticultural Society  
2433 Main Street  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067  
(860) 529-8713

email: [office@cthort.org](mailto:office@cthort.org)  
website: [www.cthort.org](http://www.cthort.org)

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

Barbara Skomorowski  
CHS Director of Communications  
[news@cthort.org](mailto:news@cthort.org)

*All announcements, advertising news and articles for publication should be sent to: [news@cthort.org](mailto:news@cthort.org).*

Send Membership Information & Direct General Questions To:  
Mary Anna Martell  
Office Administrator  
2433 Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

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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## Greetings from your President

Dear Friends and Gardeners,

I can't believe that summer is almost over, but I'm excited that a new CHS year is just beginning. We've got a lot to look forward to this year: Fun educational events; a lineup of great speakers; the plant auctions; trips to new, as well as favorite destinations; the flower show and more. We have some fresh faces on the board and committees, alongside many folks who've dedicated themselves tirelessly to this organization for years.

If you're not already on the board or a committee of our member-led organization—this year is your chance to volunteer to join in the fun, make new friends, share your good ideas, and own your experience.

There are so many ways to get the most out of your membership – starting with this newsletter filled with news you can use, including details about the next speaker as well as the lineup for the upcoming season, news about the auction, CHS Travel, and more. Renew now to continue receiving this great newsletter. Don't miss out on the fun.

I'm really looking forward to seeing you at our first meeting on September 20th where we'll honor this year's Mehlquist Award winner, Robert Herman—a Connecticut resident, teacher and Plantsman. (Read more about him on pages 3 and 6.)

Yours in friendship,  
Brett Isaacson, President

## CT Hort Attends Plant Science Day in Hamden

*By Cheryl Marino, Membership Committee Chair*

Membership Ambassadors from CT Hort spent Wednesday, August 8 at Lockwood Farm in Hamden. This was our second year in attendance.



Cheryl Marino at Plant Science Day

We handed out our brochures and sample newsletters. We talked about the interesting trips the Society takes along with the lectures and workshops that we organize—all in an effort to build public recognition about the Society and its mission.

This was the 108th Plant Science Day! The event is sponsored by the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station (CAES). Members of the CAES staff are on hand to answer questions or to identify insects, plant disorders, soils and their management, along with other matters experienced by growers and gardeners. All educational activities are free and open to the public.

**Thank you to our generous business members and supporters!**



**FRIENDSHIP TOURS**  
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**White Flower Farm**  
PLANTSMEN SINCE 1950

Ballek's Garden Center  
Bartlett Arboretum  
Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery

MH Landscape Design  
The Garden Barn  
Wild Rose Landscape Design

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



# The Genus Geranium: Cranesbills for Every Garden

Thursday, September 20  
with Robert Herman, Plantsman

Not to be confused with geraniums that fall into the tender Pelargonium species, the hardy Cranesbills are a diverse group of plants suited to practically every gardening situation. The medley of Cranesbills offer up a profusion of blooms in early summer while the fascinating foliage patterns, markings and fall color can provide three-season interest.

As manager of the Countess von Zeppelin Nursery in Germany and Director of Horticulture at White Flower Farm, Mr. Herman cultivated over 30 species and cultivars of the genus Geranium. He will share his knowledge and provide advice on selecting and raising some of the best plants for Connecticut gardens.



Robert Herman

The first meeting of the Connecticut Horticultural Society's (CT Hort) season traditionally begins with the presentation of our prestigious Mehlquist Award to 'a Connecticut resident who deserves to be honored and recognized for their significant and extraordinary contributions in horticulture or the art of gardening.' In addition to being the evening's presenter, Mr. Herman is also the winner of the 2018 Mehlquist Award (see page 6 for more detail).

Please join us for this very special start to the 2018-19 Season! 🦉

Additional knowledge and information about Robert Herman can be found at:

- <https://roberthermansportfolio.weebly.com/>
- [www.plantsman.us](http://www.plantsman.us)

## CHS Program Meeting

Meetings are open to everyone with a drop-in fee of \$10 collected at the door from non-members. For more information, visit [www.cthort.org](http://www.cthort.org).

**Date:** Thursday, September 20

**Time:** Program starts at 7:30 p.m. but come early – 7 p.m. – to socialize, browse through books, participate in raffle items, look at travel fliers or get your plant questions answered by our resident horticulturalist, Kevin Wilcox.

**Location:** Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford



## 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 four-question survey on our website – [cthort.org](http://cthort.org). Click on the survey icon found on any page then chose the speaker you want to rate. Thank you for your feedback.

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.

### Speakers for the 2018-19 Season

September 20, 2018:	<b>Robert Herman</b> . . . . .	The Genus Geranium: Cranesbills for Every Garden
October 25, 2018:	<b>Tovah Martin</b> . . . . .	Boot Camp for Your Senses in the Fall & Winter Garden
November 15, 2018:	<b>Leslie Duthie</b> . . . . .	Fronds with Benefits: Ferns from the Wild to the Garden
January 17, 2019:	<b>Sheri Forster</b> . . . . .	Seasonal Garden Design – Creating Year-Round Interest
February 21, 2019:	<b>Mike McGrath</b>	The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Getting Toads, Birds and Bugs to Eat your Garden Thugs
March 21, 2019:	<b>Sharon Gensler</b> . . . . .	Putting Carbon in its Place: a Gardener's Plan for Sequestration
April 11, 2019:	<b>Kim Eierman</b> . . . . .	Gardening Inspirations from the Smoky Mountains
May 16, 2019:	<b>Rosa Raudales, PhD.</b> . . . .	Old, New and Emerging Applications of Hydroponics
June 20, 2019:	<b>Doug Tallamy, PhD.</b> . . . .	A Chickadee's Guide to Gardening

## “Ernst Pagels”, from page 1

goal was to select and distribute hardy plants that met his own exacting standards of garden-worthiness. Pagels dreamed of joining Foerster at his famous nursery in Potsdam and upon graduating from the horticultural college at Orangienburg, he was offered a position there. After work the two of them could often be seen walking through the trial gardens, lost in animated discussions on their observations. Unfortunately, the Second World War intervened and forced conscription sent the young horticulturist into service in France. When it was over, Pagels returned to his family’s home town – Leer – in northwestern Germany. There he started a garden design business and founded a nursery to raise plants for his projects. Eventually, he left the design business behind and concentrated on the nursery and the selection of hardy perennials.

“If you intend to select plants for the money, then nothing will come of it. You must put all of that out of your head and concentrate on the plant” were Ernst Pagels’ words of wisdom to would-be breeders. That Pagels followed this philosophy was certainly clear to any visitor. He lived a very simple if not



*Salvia 'Blue Hill'*

Spartan existence in the home that he integrated into the nursery. A believer in the principles of biodynamic gardening set forth by Rudolf Steiner, he didn’t buy any chemical fertilizers and grew his own vegetables in the greenhouses in winter when they weren’t needed for propagating perennials. All organic waste was recycled and the nursery always had an impressive line of intensively managed compost piles.

The qualities of his own introductions reflected the tough standards maintained by his mentor. He sought cold-hardy, robust, long-blooming and disease-resistant plants that were easy to maintain and propagate. When a visitor mistakenly identified him as the breeder of *Salvia 'Mainacht'* (May Night), Pagels made it clear that he would never have introduced a plant that could be so difficult to produce.

Ernst Pagels is probably best known for his extensive work with the genus *Miscanthus*. Of course, Karl Foerster was mainly responsible for the introduction of hardy ornamental grasses into modern gardens and Pagels was probably infected with the same excitement for this lovely group of plants. At the time he started working with them, most of the *Miscanthus* cultivars



*Miscanthus sinensis 'Purpurascens'*

## “Membership Renewal”, from page 1

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AND PRICING REMAIN THE SAME FOR 2018-2019

• 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

### Sustain and Enhance Your Support of CT Hort

A donation beyond basic dues strengthens our educational offerings by affording the ability to attract superior talent to speak at our meetings. Thank you for considering a higher level of support. Those who join as a Garden Builder (\$125), Plant Expert (\$250), or Dream Designer (\$500) will receive

- All basic membership benefits plus two \$10 member discount tickets to CT Hort Education Workshops
- Plant Experts and Dream Designers receive a dinner ticket to a CT Hort pre-meeting supper with one of our speakers
- Dream Designers also receive a free ticket to the CT Hort Symposium that is held every two years

At any and all levels, we appreciate the continued support your membership provides. Thank you! Renew at [chhort.org/join](http://chhort.org/join)

## “Ernst Pagels”, from page 4

were lanky, weak-stemmed plants that performed poorly in a garden landscape. In order to get the tall grasses to flower in the cold, damp climate of East Friesland, however, he had to bring his stock plants into the greenhouses in the late summer and fall. His efforts brought us improved, now-famous cultivars such as ‘Malepartus,’ ‘Graziela,’ ‘Kaskade,’ ‘Kleine Fontäne,’ ‘Silberspinne,’ ‘Ferner Osten,’ ‘Flamingo’ and ‘Pünktchen.’ In the Royal Horticultural Society Trials at Wisley in 2004, Pagels’ cultivars won eight Awards of Garden Merit.

In 1949, the same year Pagels started the nursery, Karl Foerster handed him a package of *Salvia nemorosa* seeds, with the words, “seek and you shall find.” Taking these words to heart, he later sent Foerster the first cuttings of his handsome creation, *Salvia nemorosa* ‘Ostfriesland’ (East Friesland), named after Pagels’ homeland. ‘Ostfriesland’ was followed by the first-class hybrids ‘Blauhügel’ (Blue Hill), ‘Rügen,’ ‘Wesuwe’ and ‘Tänzerin,’ among others.

By crossing *Achillea millefolium* with *A. filipendulina*, he selected numerous exciting new cultivars such as ‘Credo,’ ‘Feuerland,’ ‘Terra Cotta’ and ‘Walter Funcke.’ True to form, they are robust plants that don’t need staking, and add new colors and forms to the standard assortment of yarrows.

Other popular perennials from Ernst Pagels include *Epidendrum grandiflorum* ‘Lilafee’ and *E. x perralchicum* ‘Frohneleiten,’ *Eupatorium purpureum* ‘Riesenschirm’ (Big Umbrella), *Monarda* ‘Kardinal,’ *Phlomis tuberosa* ‘Amazone,’ *Pulmonaria angustifolia* ‘Blaues Meer,’ *Rodgersia* ‘Rotlaub’ and *Veronicastrum virginicum* ‘Diana’ and ‘Lavendelturm.’ *Stachys monnieri* ‘Hummelo’ was a tribute to his long-time friend and colleague, Dutch designer Piet Oudolf. He and his small but intensively and benevolently managed nursery became an inspiration for a whole new movement among idealistic nurserymen/women in The Netherlands. Indeed, it became known as an international meeting place, where one was always welcome to share his/her knowledge and opinions. Energetic into his late eighties,

Pagels spent his last active years crossing several species of *Arun-cus*, creating some fine, dwarf cultivars. I am lucky to have obtained his last ornamental grass introduction, *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* ‘Cordoba,’ which I passed on to the American nursery, Intrinsic Perennial Gardens, for distribution in our part of the world.

While some breeders seek to create a unique or unusual plant without regard for its garden value, Pagels’ association with Karl Foerster and his background in design influenced his focus on practical application and performance. Natural beauty certainly played a primary role in his cultivar selection but it did not outweigh durability and maintenance in importance.

In 1986, Ernst Pagels received Germany’s highest horticultural award, the Georg Arends Memorial Medal. The Perennial Plant Association honored him with the International Contributor’s Award in 2000. 🌿

*Robert Herman lived in Germany for seven years as Meister for the Countess von Zeppelin Perennial Plant Nursery and is a former Director of Horticulture at White Flower Farm. He taught several horticulture courses at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury, where he endeavored to inspire students with the philosophy of Ernst Pagels and other passionate plantsmen/women.*



*Achillea ‘Terracotta’*



## FROM THE FIELD

### Member Rose Riley Cares for Historic Garden

Master Gardener and CT Hort Member Rose Riley is the current official caretaker of the Webb House Colonial Revival garden in Old Wethersfield. An article about her long-term association with the garden appeared in the [Wethersfield edition of Courant Community](#) on July 3rd. In the article, Reporter Joan Hunt observed that as Rose guided visitors along the CT Historic Gardens tour, it soon became apparent that this garden is Rose’s labor of love.

To read the article about Rose in its entirety, go to:

<http://www.courant.com/community/wethersfield/hc-we-wethersfield-garden-tour-0705-20180703-story.html>

For more information about the Webb House Colonial Revival garden, or to join the volunteer Garden Angels group, visit <http://www.cthistoricgardens.org/gardens/webb-deane-stevens-museum/>.

## Recipient of the 2018 Connecticut Horticultural Society Mehlquist Award:

### Robert Herman

By Fairlee Latawic, Awards Committee

Throughout his life, Robert Herman has enjoyed almost parallel careers in both education and horticulture. He spent more than 30 years as a professional horticulturist, almost seven of which were spent in Europe as “Meister” for the Countess von Zeppelin Nursery in Germany. At the Missouri Botanical Garden he served in the horticulture and education departments and he was Director of Horticulture at White Flower Farm in Litchfield, where he initiated an internship to introduce young Europeans to American horticulture. He also managed the greenhouses and gardens at the 450-acre Roger Williams Park in Providence, Rhode Island.

**“I’ve tried to work as a “bridge” between these cultures by teaching, lecturing and writing on both continents and by creating internships that have led to an exchange of information and to new relationships.”**

~Robert Herman

Several motivating goals, both personal and professional, directed Robert through life. First of all, he wanted to communicate the importance of plants in our world, as well as the joys and rewards that can be had by working with them. Secondly, he yearned to experience different cultures in depth, especially with regards to the field of horticulture. A final goal was to teach on the college level to educate knowledgeable, professional horticulturists, who will improve our environment with responsible attitudes and methods. Robert is quick to add that a rewarding and supportive partnership with wife, Frances, also played into his ability to achieve his goals.

Now retired, Mr. Herman spent over eight years as a full-time instructor in the horticulture program at Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) in Waterbury, where he involved stu-

dents in campus and community projects. He has taught at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) and Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Mass. as well as the International Master of Landscape Architecture program at Anhalt University in Bernburg, Germany.



Robert Speaks with NVCC students.

**“When a student feels that the instructor can be trusted, it means the instructor has acknowledged the student’s own sense of status, worth and dignity.”**

~Robert Herman

In 2009, Robert received a national Award for Teaching Excellence from the University of Texas. In 2010 he was presented with the American Horticultural Society’s Teaching Award, which is “given to an individual whose ability to share his or her horticultural knowledge with others has contributed to a better public understanding of the plant world and its important influence on society.” That same year he also received the

Perennial Plant Association’s Academic Award and was nominated for the U.S. Professor of the Year Award.

Robert’s writings have appeared in *American Nurseryman*, *Fine Gardening*, *Pacific Horticulture*, the German magazine *Garden and Landscape*, and the *Hardy Plant Society Journal* in England.

Heck, he’s even appeared with Martha Stewart!

Where did Robert Herman’s illustrious career begin? In the small town of Lebanon, Illinois where a young Robert enjoyed being in the wild when hunting with his dad. So, he began studies in Forestry in college until he realized the focus was on cutting trees! Perhaps it was the influence of his maternal grandmother, Ida Weygandt, that placed him on track for a degree in horticulture. Her home was named the “Most Beautiful Place in St. Clair County” back in the 1950s. For years, she had worked for wealthy clients who would share their divided plants with her. And without any formal schooling in gardening or design, she proceeded to cultivate magnificent gardens that included a koi pond and a wonderfully designed woodland walk.

It is with great pride that we add Robert Herman to the list of CT Hort Mehlquist Award recipients. 🌿



#### Joan Ellen Allen

May 24, 1958 - August 15, 2018

Born in Battle Creek, Mich.

Resided in Granby, Conn.

It is with deep sadness that we report the sudden and untimely passing of Joan Allen, wife, mother, friend, gardener and educator. Joan was an instructor at UConn Home & Garden Education Center where she taught Plant Pathology to students in the Master Gardener program. Joan also ran the Plant Diagnostic Lab at Storrs. She was passionate about her work and that quiet enthusiasm was infectious. She made plant pathology interesting and relevant and was always willing to share and to teach. Outside of UConn, Joan was involved in land and river preservation and restoration, among other things. CT Hort. was looking forward to having Joan on the Board of Directors for the 2018-2021 seasons. She will be truly missed.

# CT Hort Travel

## Broadway Matinee: THE BAND'S VISIT

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

One of the Most Tony Award®-Winning Musicals in History!



Spend an evening in the company of unforgettable strangers at **The Band's Visit**—now one of the most celebrated musicals ever. It rejoices in the way music brings us to life, brings us to laughter, brings us to tears, and ultimately, brings us together.

In an Israeli desert town where every day feels the same, something different is suddenly in the air. Dina, the local café owner, had long resigned her desires for romance to daydreaming about exotic films and music from her youth. When a band of Egyptian musicians shows up lost at her café, she and her fellow locals take them in for the night. Under the spell of the night sky, their lives intertwine in unexpected ways, and this once sleepy town begins to wake up.

**CARMINE'S Family Style Luncheon:** Garlic Bread, Mixed Green Salad, Gluten-Free Rigatoni, & Broccoli with Garlic and Oil, Penne alla Vodka, Chicken Parmigiana, Vegetarian Option (must be ordered in advance), Tiramisu, Soft Drinks, Ice Tea, Coffee and Tea.

**Cost:** \$224 for members of CT Hort. Non-members please add \$50.

### Louis Raymond Private Garden Tour: Hopkinton Rhode Island Thursday, September 27, 2018

Visit and tour the private garden of master designer and horticulture specialist, Louis Raymond. You may recall that Louis spoke at our May 2018 meeting and promised to invite us to visit his garden! Here are the details...

It's all about explorations, whims, and manias during your extensive private garden tour with Louis! Within "only" a one-and-one-half acre space, few trees or shrubs grow free-range. Instead, hedges, Belgian fences, and espaliers create the narrowest-possible separators. Woodyies are also trained ornamentally as pollards, coppices, portals, standards, pillars and topiary. All of this "horti-tecture" rises from beds crowded with perennials, annuals, and tender woodies. A horde of container plants crowds the grass and the paths leading to the focal spots at the ends of the vistas.

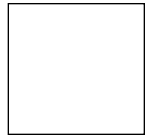
Enjoy a "Welcome Nibble & Sip" Homemade Picnic Style Luncheon: Classic Chicken Salad, Baked Penne with Sweet Italian Sausage, Hot Biscuits with Honey Butter and more.

Farm stop on the way home for "mums."

**Cost:** \$89 for members of CT Hort. Non-members please add \$6.



**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**

- Thurs., Sept. 6** – Board of Directors meeting, 7:00 p.m., Rocky Hill
- Thurs., Sept. 20** – CHS Program Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Robert Herman presents *The Genus Geranium: Cranesbills for Every Garden*, Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford
- Fri., Sept. 28** – Fall Plant Sale & Auction  
6:30 p.m. – Viewing  
7:00 p.m. – Sale & Auction, Tolland County Agricultural Ctr, Vernon.

Printed on recycled paper.



# CT Hort Fall Plant Sale & Auction

## Friday, September 28, 2018

\* \* \* FREE ADMISSION \* \* \*

**Tolland County Agricultural Center**  
**24 Hyde Avenue (Route 30)**  
**Vernon**

**Schedule:**

- 4:30 p.m.** Volunteers arrive  
**5:00 p.m.** Doors open for donations  
**6:30 p.m.** Plant viewing begins  
**7:00 p.m.** Plant sale followed by live auction

The evening's proceeds go to the CT Hort Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships to deserving horticulture and plant science students at the University of Connecticut and the Naugatuck Valley Community College.

To donate plants or for more information, contact the Plant Sale & Auction Committee at [auction@cthort.com](mailto:auction@cthort.com) or call the CT Hort office at (860) 529-8713.

**REMEMBER TO:**

- ▶ **Pot:** When donating from your garden, resist the urge to make small divisions, larger specimens sell better. Include a label with the plant's common and botanical names (if possible) and its cultural preferences. Deliver with a list of plants donated including your name and address so we can provide a receipt for tax purposes.
- ▶ **Ask:** Call on local nurseries, fellow gardeners and garden centers for their tax-deductible plant donations. Bring along the [donation letter](#) and [auction flyer](#) located on our website – [cthort.org](http://cthort.org). Please provide us with a list of the donated plants and the nursery's name and address so we can thank them for their generosity.
- ▶ **Help:** As always, we need volunteers for all sorts of things. Please help to get the word out by printing and posting our [auction flyer](#) at nurseries, grocery stores, libraries, etc. Printed flyers are available at the CT Hort office in Rocky Hill.
- ▶ **Enjoy:** Come have fun and support a great cause!