

Connecticut Horticultural Society NEWSLETTER

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Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

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A Short History of Hollister House Garden

By George Schoellkopf, President, Hollister House Garden

Over forty years ago when I bought my old farmhouse, the furthest thought in my mind was to create a large complicated garden. What I wanted was a quiet retreat from my busy gallery in New York City where I dealt in 18th and 19th century American furniture and folk art. Picturesquely situated on a hillside deep in the wooded countryside of northwestern Connecticut, the house was a typical 18th century Connecticut saltbox, which is to say, two stories in front sloping down to a single story at the rear. There had been three successive additions to the original house dating from the early to late nineteenth century, but somehow the resulting structural jumble was surprisingly coherent. I called the place Hollister House after the family who had built the house in 1770 and lived in it for the next hundred and fifty years. With its enormous fireplace cum beehive oven, wide board floors and wood paneled walls, the house had great character and charm and I found it to be an ideal setting in which to house my growing collection of New England antiques. There was no garden to speak of, just a small rectangular plot of ground for vegetables and a long pond at the bottom of a sloping meadow behind the house with a steep hill rising up beyond. It seemed idyllic. I had no plans to change anything, blissfully content to leave things just as I found them.

All this changed two years later after a summer vacation touring around the English countryside during which I happened to visit some extraordinarily beautiful gardens. English gardens were a revelation to me, like nothing I had ever seen before. Gardens such as Sissinghurst and Hidcote were designed around a rambling formal plan but were planted informally with a breathtaking abundance of both rare and common plants as they combined to create horticultural magic. I was enchanted. And so when I returned to America, I decided that I would have to make an English garden of my own.

Easier said than done as it turned out. First of all there was the difference in climate since England has warmer winters and cooler summers than what we have to contend with in New England. This meant that a good many of the beautiful plants I had so admired in England would not survive the more rigorous conditions in my Connecticut garden. My American garden books were useful to a certain extent in determining what plants to grow but ultimately I had to experiment in order to find out what worked for me and what didn't. Gradually I developed a repertoire of hardy plants that helped give me the lush abundance I was

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Connecticut
Horticultural Society
P.O. Box 330966
West Hartford, CT 06133-0966
(860) 529-8713

email: office@cthort.org
website: www.cthort.org

Phone Hours
Tuesday & Thursday
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tracey Weiss
CT Hort Director of Communications
news@cthort.org

*All announcements, advertising news
and articles for publication should be
sent to: news@cthort.org.*

Send Membership Information
& Direct General Questions To:
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Office Administrator
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Membership Dues:

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

An exciting spring awaits!

Dear Members

Have you taken advantage of the wealth of great information available on our website under community news? Our Director of Communications, Tracey Weiss, has done an excellent job of providing information with links to events. Also included there are links to *The Connecticut Gardener* and the Federated Garden Club's extensive list of events, workshops and meetings.

Another wonderful feature our website has to offer is under Events and Travel. Our lineup of speakers, travel and workshops reside there. We are able to click on any of the travel offerings and go to Friendship Tours website for more details and reserve a spot.

I hope you will help spread the word about our May 5 Plant Auction. It is an entertaining evening that always provides attendees with unique plants and gardening items provided by our generous business partners and some of your favorite nurseries. Come bring a friend and support our biggest fundraiser of the year.

We are saddened by the news of Rudy Favretti's passing at the age of 90. Those of us who were fortunate enough to meet him will remember him as a vibrant man. I had the privilege to visit him and his wife at their home several years ago. At the age of 82 then, he was still tending to his extensive gardens. His contribution to garden restoration and teaching at UConn will be remembered.

Lastly, we are excited to hear Dr. Nick Goltz of UConn (and a member of the Board of Directors for CT Hort!) on May 18, presenting *Healthy Plants Indoor and Out*. We will also be celebrating special anniversaries of members who have been faithful to CT Hort for 5, 10, 15 years and much longer. (In my letter last month I was mistaken about the timing—we hope you'll please come and hang out with us this month!)

Warmly,
Cheryl

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Dr. Nick Goltz

Healthy Plants, Indoor and Out

with Dr. Nick Goltz

Thursday, May 18 • 7:30 pm

Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford and via Zoom (you'll be sent the link on the Sunday before the talk).



Dr. Goltz will introduce the fundamental techniques of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for the home gardener as well as tips and tricks on how to help any plants—from hardy CT natives to delicate tropical houseplants—live their best lives.

Dr. Goltz is the director of UConn's Plant Diagnostic Laboratory. He moved to Connecticut shortly after graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in Plant Medicine. In addition to the plant health experience

gained through his degree, Dr. Goltz worked for the UF Plant Diagnostic Center since 2019, and by working at state and federal regulatory laboratories since 2016, performing research to develop biological control options for the management of invasive snails and insects.

Dr. Goltz has a passion for plant health and integrated pest management and enjoys working with growers and homeowners to find holistic and comprehensive solutions for any plant problem they may be dealing with.

Member anniversaries are also being celebrated at our speaker presentation on May 18! Whether or not you're celebrating a special anniversary with us this year, please join us!

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.

June 15, 2023

The Eye of the Beholder: Is It Messy, or an Acquired Taste?

The rewards of gardening with nature, not against it, are a fabulous mix of process and perception. Landscape designer **Edwina Von Gal** discusses why we need to change the way we garden and how to make it happen.

See the back page for more information about how you can join us for a special event we've coordinated with Edwina *before* her talk!

2022-2023 Scholarship Fund



We hope you'll consider helping us reach our goal!

Go to cthort.org to learn how you can give and support our mission!

Thank you!

Hollister House Garden from page 1



Hollister House Garden

aiming for. I still experiment with new plants as I pore over garden catalogues or—better still—when a knowledgeable friend gives me a hot tip on the latest new hybrids.

The next step was to devise a plan for my new garden. This proved to be difficult since the house was situated on a hillside with no flat space on which to lay out a plan. I don't mind walking on a slope from one place to another but once I arrive, I want to feel firmly planted on level ground. This meant that the land would have to be terraced with retaining walls and stone steps, an expensive construction project with no second chance to change my mind if I didn't get it right the first time. I struggled to devise a plan but found it difficult to work out the different levels. I finally hit on the idea of fashioning a three dimensional model out of plasticine clay. This allowed me to get a visual grasp on my irregular topography and that solved the problem. I was concerned that the elaborate garden I envisioned might seem out of place next to my simple farm house and so I located the main section of the garden beneath the bottom corner of the house so that the house was visible

peeking out above the garden but never lined up on a formal axis. I had an eight foot L-shaped brick retaining wall built that defined two sides of a large rectangular space with a 28 foot long reflecting pool down the center. Bluestone paths bordered three sides of the pool and a tall yew hedge bounded a third side of the garden. On the wall I planted evergreen euonymus and climbing roses, and my ten-foot-deep borders I filled with flowering shrubs and perennials. Two portals in the freestanding section of the wall connected this garden to a broad set of granite steps leading up to a rectangular lawn behind the house. Looking down over the Walled Garden I laid out a boxwood parterre on the diagonal with the wall and the house I called this the Gray Garden since I planned to grow mainly white flowers complemented with gray foliage. It was a good start and these areas have remained the center of the garden as it has expanded through the years to over twice its original size.

One of the first additions I made to the initial layout of the garden was a garden house at the end of the freestanding



Hollister House Garden

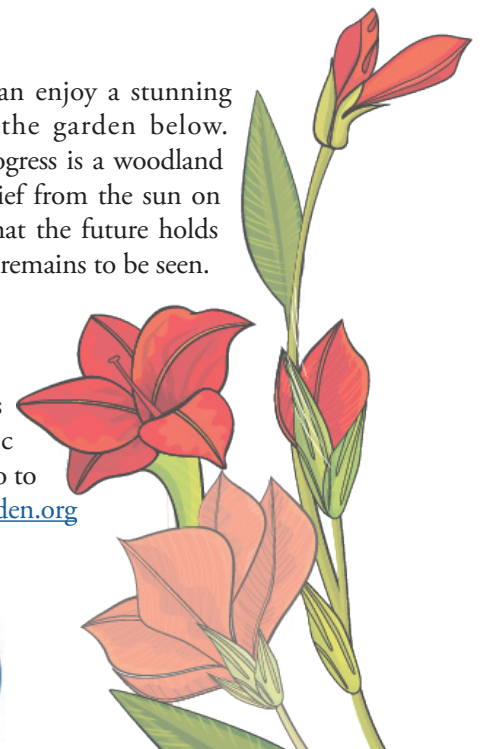
section of the brick wall. It houses a small room for dining and a tool shed and most importantly, it defined the space for a small courtyard terrace where I placed a large antique copper laundry cauldron to be planted each spring with flowering annuals and colorful foliage plants. Other early developments were the additions of a narrow rectangular lawn with steps leading down from the Gray Garden and a long paved stone path extending out from the Walled Garden that we now call the Cobble Walk.

In 2004 Hollister House Garden became a non-profit corporation under the auspices of the Garden Conservancy and it occurred to me that since the garden was now open to visitors, there should be more to see. And so I added several new sections: an Herb Garden, a Kitchen Garden, a rill, an enclosed area called the Horse Court, and a gravel terrace leading down to the long pond with a border limited to yellow flowers on one side and a row of flowering crabapples on the other. More recently I have created a path on the other side of the long pond leading up the hill to two stone benches

from where visitors can enjoy a stunning panoramic view of the garden below. Another project in progress is a woodland path to offer some relief from the sun on hot summer days. What the future holds in store for the garden remains to be seen.

.....

Hollister House is open to the public through October 7. Go to www.hollisterhousegarden.org for more information.



CT Hort Plant Sale & Auction • Friday, May 5, 2023

Bethany Covenant Church, 785 Mill Street (Rt. 372), Berlin, CT

Doors open to the public at 6:30 p.m., \$5 Admission



Mark your calendar to attend this lively, fun-filled, and educational event on Friday, May 5. With growing season and Mother's Day fast-approaching, the Auction a great spot to find just the right plant or gift. The evening begins with a plant sale while bids are accepted for unusual silent auction items and refreshments are served. Then it's on to the LIVE auction!

Horticulturist **Nancy DuBrule-Clemente** will once again curate the night's offerings. Our goal is to secure a broad selection of unusual perennials, annuals, vegetables & herbs, shrubs, and silent auction treasures. Nancy will be joined on the auction stage by horticulturist **Kevin Wilcox**, and educator and naturalist **Jim Sirch**. The plant knowledge these three hold could fill volumes!

Proceeds from the evening provide scholarships to Plant Science students at the University of Connecticut (since 1959), and Naugatuck Valley Community College (since 2011). In addition, funds in excess of our scholarship commitments will spill over to a new civic grants program named **CT Hort Cares** that was started this year. **Cares** grants will support plant science educational efforts in communities and schools across our state. Mini-grants of up to \$500 are available and will be distributed in mid-May.

To maximize the amount we contribute to these worthwhile efforts, we'll be charging a modest \$5 admission fee.

Please come join in the fun! For additional information or questions please email auction@cthort.org.



In Memorium: Rudy Favretti, past CT Hort Vice President



Rudy Favretti, past CT Hort Vice President (1956-58), longtime member of the Board of Directors, and our longest-standing member—he joined CT Hort in 1954—passed away April 13 at the age of 90.

As a professor of Landscape Architecture at UConn, he joined when the organization had about 30 to 40 members.

He had an accomplished career in the industry. He taught until 1988, for 33 years. During that time, he also served for 25 years as an extension landscape architect for Connecticut communities on planning issues.

Professor Favretti wrote 17 books, and he also founded the present nationally accredited landscape architecture program at UConn. In his private practice, Rudy designed landscapes for more than 500 commissions, projects that brought him all over the country. In Connecticut, his projects included plans for schools, town greens, town halls, state parks, cemeteries and libraries.

He was known for his restoration of historic gardens, including plans for the Hill-stead Museum's Sunken Garden, Goodspeed Opera House, Blithewold Gardens and Arboretum in Bristol, R.I., Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park, N.Y., Smithfield Plantation in Blacksburg, Va., Monticello in Charlottesville, Va., Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, Fla., and more. He was a landscape consultant to Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts and designer of the gardens at the Tapping Reeve House in Litchfield (site of the first law school in the United States), the Noah Webster House in West Hartford, and Roseland, an early Gothic Revival cottage in Woodstock.

His work is so well regarded, the Smithsonian owns the plans and slides from his work. He and his wife, Joy, enjoyed their home in Storrs, where they tended to their gardens.

Rudy Favretti left an indelible mark on everything he was involved in. He will be missed.

2022-23 CONNECTICUT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY MEMBER DISCOUNTS

The following nurseries offer CT Hort members a 10% discount. Please present your membership card before your purchase. Discount normally applies to non-sale items.

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Simsbury 06070, (860) 658-2428,
boscosgardencenter.com

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Interested in a leadership position or in joining a committee? Contact us office@cthort.org.



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.

Sat., May 6, 10-11:30 am: Hollister House Barn Talk: Creating Outdoor Garden Rooms with Gordon Hayward, 300 Nettleton Hollow Rd., Washington. Join renowned landscape designer Gordon Hayward as he explores the elements of outdoor garden rooms within your existing larger garden to create a place apart. \$25 members; \$35 non-members. Register: <https://hollisterhousegarden.org>.

Thurs., May 18, 6:30 pm, Bartlett Arboretum Spring Gala, Rockrimmon Country Club, 2949 Longridge Road, Stamford. NPR personality Ira Flatow will host the gala. Honorees include Bartlett Tree Experts and Dana Weinberg. Cocktails, dinner, and silent auction. Tickets start at \$250. Go to <https://www.bartlettarboretum.org/>

Sat., May 20, 8:30 am-2:30 pm: West Hartford Garden Club Spring Plant Sale, Noah Webster House, 227 South Main, West Hartford. www.WestHartfordGardenClub.org

Sat., May 20, 9 am-1 pm: Simsbury Garden Club Plant Sale Extravaganza, Ice Rink at Simsbury Farms 100 Old Farms Road West Simsbury. Simsbury Garden Club members sell plants from their gardens as well as gardening boutique items to benefit the scholarships they award each year to two students who study horticulture or environmental science. www.simsburygardenclub.org

Sat., May 20, 10 am-2 pm, Connecticut Daylily Society Annual Sale, Avon Senior Center, Sycamore Hills Park, 635 W Avon Rd., Avon. CDS hosts an annual May plant sale at the Avon Senior Center. Our plants are member-grown, freshly dug, bare-root, hardy to our area, and very reasonably priced. <http://ctdaylilyclub.com>

Wed., May 24, 7:30pm, the Hardy Plant Society of New England-CT Chapter presents "Northern-grown Daylilies" with award-winning breeder Rich Howard, Wethersfield Academy for the Arts, 431 Wethersfield Ave., Wethersfield, and on Zoom. Free for members; \$10 drop-in fee. Register: <https://fb.me/e/Twiqwr2Q>



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

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visit learn enjoy

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www.hollisterhousegarden.org
April 21 - October 7

Visiting Hours:
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Nominate someone you know for the 2023 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 2023 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 2023 Service Award

*It only takes a few minutes to thank someone who gives so much of themselves.
Nominations must be received by May 30, 2022.*

CT Hort Travel



Quebec's Eastern Townships Garden Tour Sept 7–11, 2023

Join CT Horticultural Society September 7-11 to travel back in time and take in the old-world flavor of Québec's Eastern Townships. In the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, uncover the delights of charming French villages, lush green valleys, enchanted woods, idyllic farmland and Victorian architecture.

Visits in the Coaticook Valley, lakes and mountains in the Memphrémagog region, all topped off with the naturally urban charm of Sherbrooke.

Eastern Townships are also home to the fabled 'Three Pines' in the Louise Penny, Chief Inspector Gamache series!

Learn more about the tour: [Quebec's Eastern Townships](#)

**Contact Barbara at Friendship Tours
to be on the list for more information when
available. barbara@friendshiptours.net
or 860-243-1630.**



This autumn join Garden and Nature Tours, Minnesota State Horticultural Society, Friendship Tours and Southern World and traveling guide gurus C. Colston Burrell and Peter Gibbs for an unforgettable journey through the enchanting islands of New Zealand.

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Fewer than 15 travelers may result in a small surcharge.
Itinerary subject to change without notice.

**Call Barbara at Friendship Tours:
860-243-1630 or go to www.friendshiptours.net**



Dated Material 🌿 *Please Rush*

CT Hort Calendar at a Glance

- Thurs., May 4** – Board of Directors
Remote Meeting, 7 pm
- Monday, May 15** – Deadline for our June
Newsletter
- Thurs., May 18** – Speaker presentation:
*Healthy Plants,
Indoor and Out* with
Dr. Nick Goltz, 7:30 pm
(In person and on Zoom)

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

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Join us for "A Walkabout" with Edwina von Gal

Thursday, June 15 at 4pm

at the home of CT Hort Board President Cheryl Marino
Unionville, CT



Enjoy a walk around the gardens of CT Hort's own Cheryl Marino for a fun and inspiring afternoon with Edwina von Gal. You'll get to spend some quality time with Ms. von Gal before she speaks to our members at the meeting later that night. You'll also get to listen to her suggestions as she tours the gardens and offers her own suggestions on how to make the property even more earth-friendly.

Edwina von Gal is the founder of the Perfect Earth Project, a non-profit organization in East Hampton, NY that raises consciousness about the dangers of synthetic lawn and garden chemicals to humans, animals, and the environment, and educates homeowners and professionals about natural, PRFCT (toxic-free) techniques that provide beautiful, safe results at no extra cost.

The event is \$25 per person and includes a light dinner and refreshments.

We are limited to 12 people! Register now at cthort.org