

# Connecticut Horticultural Society

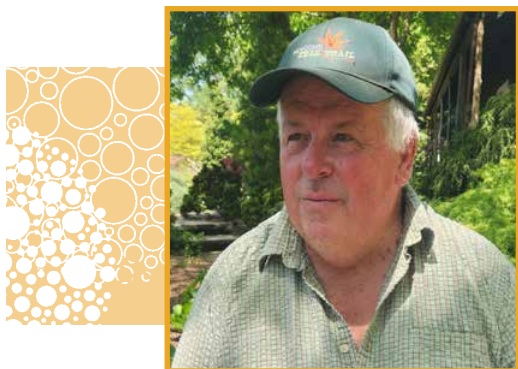
# NEWSLETTER

Volume 67, Number 2

Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

October 2024

## And the Winners are...



**John O'Brien** is the winner of the 2024 Gustav A.L. Mehlquist Award



**Diane Erling** is this year's winner of the Service Award.

The Connecticut Horticultural Society is thrilled to officially announce our two award recipients this year.

"It is hard to think of another individual who has done more to offer first-rate plants in an increasingly beautiful setting." So begins CT Hort member Judy King's nomination of John O'Brien for the Mehlquist Award. "Along with selling plants and giving advice, John also promotes community among gardeners by introducing customers with common interests to each other."

In 1987, on its 100th anniversary, the Connecticut Horticultural Society (CT Hort) established the Gustav Mehlquist award to honor our member Dr. A. L. Gustav Mehlquist for his extraordinary contribution to horticulture. He was recognized as one of the leading horticulturists in the United States.

John will be the first to tell you he loves to introduce like-minded people to each other. "I like when people click," he said. "I like to make people happy with plants. When someone new comes in to the nursery, I love showing them around," he said.

And he loves growing plants, especially when there's a new strain he can grow first and then share with his customers.

"This is my 50th anniversary," he said. "I started working at 15 at a garden center in Vermont. I've owned my own business since 1983—it was a landscape company for the first 20 years."

But it was hostas, he said "that put me on the map. My first love is Japanese maples and dwarf conifers."

Indeed, O'Brien Nurserymen in East Granby started as a pruning company and it has now grown into New England's premier hosta nursery.

In the beginning, they specialized in pruning. "Even from the start we provided our customers with unusual specimen plant selections and expert advice," he said. "As the years passed, we found ourselves working mostly in the shade, so a natural

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**We'll be honoring our award winners before our speaker presentation on Thursday, November 21 at 7pm, at the Elmwood Community Center.**



## It's almost Bulb Sale time!

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Membership Dues:	
Individual.....	\$60
Family .....	\$80
Senior Individual (65+).....	\$55
Senior Family (65+).....	\$75
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Horticultural Business Member.....	\$100 or \$250
Organizations .....	\$80

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## From the Executive Director

Dear CT Hort Family,

As the crisp autumn air begins to settle in and our gardens ripple with a tapestry of fall colors, I am filled with gratitude for our incredible members, volunteers, and partners. Your dedication to our mission fosters growth in knowledge, friendships, and environmental stewardship.

I am proud to say, that this program season is off to a great start. Last week, presenter Lee Reich spoke at the Elmwood Community Center. We learned so much about native plants and got to taste test a few fruits as well—no complaints here! I left feeling inspired to do more research on soil needs for growing blueberries and will definitely be adding persimmons to my grocery list!

With the leaves turning and the days getting shorter, let us also reflect on the abundant harvests of our hard work and commitment to nurturing both our plants and each other.

I encourage you to take advantage of the upcoming events we have planned. Our next speaker meeting will be held October 17th at the Elmwood Community Center, with Marta McDowell as our presenter. She is an author, horticulturalist, garden enthusiast and historian with a wealth of knowledge. Remember, these gatherings are not just about learning; they are about building relationships and strengthening our community bonds. Additionally, I want to remind you that we are currently recruiting to fill our board of directors vacancies. Please spread the word about CT Hort and reach out with any promising candidates.

Thank you for being an essential part of the CT Hort family. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events, and working with me to take our organization to the next level. My virtual door is always open, so don't hesitate to reach out!

Warm regards,  
Ashley

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



Hollister House Garden

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Bibisi, LLP



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**B. Yaeger LLC**

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**Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut**  
**The Garden Barn Nursery**

**Grace Farms**  
**Mountainview Landscaping LLC**



Marta McDowell

## Frederick Law Olmsted: Shaping the American Landscape with Marta McDowell

Thursday, October 17 • 7 pm

**1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, CT and via Zoom (you'll be sent the link on the Sunday before the talk).** (Set your GPS to Burgoyne Street, West Hartford. The entrance to the community center is off Burgoyne Street.)

Marta will share her look at the life and legacy of the Hartford-born individual who coined the term “landscape architect.” While most famous for his public parks, Olmsted’s commissions included the Biltmore Estate, the World’s Columbian Exposition, and campuses ranging from Stanford to Amherst. For a century, Olmsted and his sons dominated the profession and left a lasting mark on the landscape and psyche of America.

Marta McDowell lives, writes and gardens in Chatham, New Jersey. She shares her garden with her husband Kirke Bent and assorted wildlife. Her garden writing has appeared in popular publications such as *Woman’s Day*, *Country Gardening*, *The New York Times*, and is a regular contributor to British journal *Hortus*.

Marta’s work typically follows the relationship between the pen and the trowel, that is, authors and their gardens. Her latest book, *Gardening Can Be Murder*, explores the garden as the inspiration for writers of crime fiction. She’s also published *Unearthing The Secret Garden*, *Emily Dickinson’s Gardening Life*, *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder*, *All the*

*Presidents’ Gardens*, and *Beatrix Potter’s Gardening Life*. *All the Presidents’ Gardens* made *The New York Times* bestseller list and won an American Horticultural Society book award in 2017. *Beatrix Potter’s Gardening Life* won the Gold Award from the Garden Writers Association and is now in its ninth printing. Her books have been translated into Chinese, Italian, Japanese, and Korean.

If you visit the Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts, you can stroll the grounds with a landscape audio tour that Marta scripted. She was also the 2018 Gardener-in-Residence at the Museum and frequently coordinates its “Garden Days” for volunteers.

Marta teaches landscape history and horticulture at the New York Botanical Garden where she has been twice awarded “Instructor of the Year.”

She is the 2019 recipient of the Garden Club of America’s Sarah Chapman Francis Medal for outstanding literary achievement. Her garden is included in the Smithsonian’s Archive of American Gardens.

*You’ll receive a link to the recorded presentation.*



## October 17 is also our annual bulb sale!

Come a little early (6:30 pm) for next month’s talk with Marta McDowell and enjoy our annual bulb sale! October 17 at Elmwood Community Center, (1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford).

Every October we sell bulbs to help fund our scholarships, grants, and general programming. So on October 17, when we meet for our program speaker, we will get you in touch with some bargains, some old loves, and some sparks of ‘hope & joy’ in the form of bulbs.



## A Trip to Coastal Maine



According to those who went, the **Coastal New England** trip with special guest tour director Nancy DuBrule-Clemente was beyond beautiful. The three-day trip included stops at Bedrock Gardens, Moffatt Ladd House, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Tower Hill, downtown Portsmouth, NH and more. The trip was coordinated by Friendship Tours/The Ship Shop.

“We have to do this trip again, because anyone who couldn’t go this time has to join us next year,” Nancy said. “We had a blast. We were entirely immersed. Prescott Park was gorgeous, Bedrock Gardens was just incredible. We went hiking to find the trolls at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens.”

Everywhere they went, Nancy said, “there was an incredible mix of tropical, annual, and perennial plants. They blew my mind. We are so blessed to have these gardens in New England.” 🐼





Award Recipients

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evolution for them was into hosta gardening. Hostas were not just a product they offer; they have turned into a passion.

“Our extensive display gardens feature over 1,300 hosta varieties as well as other shady characters including Asarums, Pulmonarias, Epimediums, Polygonatum, and Arisaemas. The gardens also include a wide variety of unusual Dwarf Conifers and over a hundred varieties of Japanese Maples.”

He was “completely surprised” by learning he had won the Mehlquist Award. He’s looking forward to joining us in November at the Elmwood Community Center to receive the award.

\* \* \*

Odds are, at any CT Hort event you've attended over the last several years, Diane Erling has been working at it, or planning it behind the scenes. She is the very definition of a volunteer, enlisting her skills where she is able. Diane’s contributions to CT Hort over the years include staffing the garden sales table

at our monthly meetings, serving as secretary for three years, and serving her 2nd term as a Board Member.

The Education Committee benefits from her stretch as chairperson. At our auctions, she can be counted on to welcome folks at the door, organize the silent auction tables, and cash people out.

“I’m grateful and appreciative for this recognition,” Diane Erling said, after learning she had won the Service Award this year. Being humble, she laid the credit for her win with all of the volunteers she has teamed with over the years.

Now that she is retiring from her career with Pratt & Whitney, she is going to take some time off to enjoy herself, but plans to continue her volunteer work with CT Hort.

She also sees her recognition as a way to encourage volunteerism. “It’s rewarding to work on things with other people,” she said. “It’s how you get to know all of these cool people who love plants as much as you do.” 🌿

## In Memoriam: Nancy Johnson

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of longtime member Nancy Johnson in September.

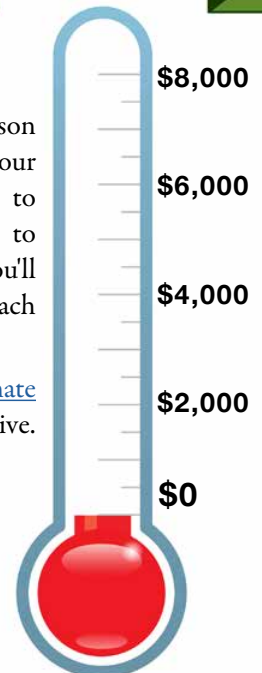
“Nancy was a wealth of gardening information and happy to share that with others. When her gardens were overflowing with plants, she began a driveway garden. After all, driveways are just another place for the plants she loved,” said her husband, Gary Johnson.



“Nancy was one of a kind, a long time traveler with CT Hort, and a true friend to the society plant lover,” Brett Isaacson said. Brett is the president of Friendship Tours/The Ship Shop, as well as a longtime member of CT Hort. “On a personal note, she was an amazing friend to my parents (Herb and Lois Isaacson) and often visited my mother when she became ill. She battled breathing issues the last few years but never lost her love for sharing her knowledge with others or having people visit her home and garden.”

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Nancy’s family and friends.

## 2024-2025 Scholarship Fund



The 2024-2025 season has begun and so has our goal to raise \$8,000 to provide scholarships to students. We hope you'll consider helping us reach that goal!

Go to [cthort.org/donate](http://cthort.org/donate) to learn how to give. Thank you!

## Horticultural Happenings & Announcements

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

**Sat., Oct. 5, 6:30pm—Opening reception of Regarding Nature, art exhibit by artist Julie C. Baer, at Native Plant Trust's Garden in the Woods, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, MA. Native Plant Trust's 2024 Visiting Artist Julie C. Baer's artwork, inspired by her time spent exploring Garden in the Woods. Vines, leaves, lichen, branches, tree fungi, and more fill her canvases. On display through Oct. 15. Admission is free. [www.nativeplanttrust.org](http://www.nativeplanttrust.org)**

**Mon., Oct. 7, 7pm—The Garden Club of Avon presents "Growing a Greener Avon Together," Avon Free Public Library, 281 Country Club Road, Avon. Join the talk to connect with groups and individuals working to replace invasive plants with native species in Avon's open spaces and home gardens. Discover the impact of their efforts and learn how you can contribute. Free admission. <https://www.gardenclubofavonct.org>**

**Sat., Oct. 12, 9am—Composting 101 hosted by the Eastern Connecticut Community Garden Association, via Zoom. Discover the benefits of composting! From reducing waste and nurturing your garden to combating climate change, composting is a simple yet impactful way to make a difference. It's easier than you think and essential for a healthier environment and garden. Free, but register at <https://dpnc.org/event/composting-101/>.**

**Thurs., Oct. 17, 11am—Third Thursday Walks and Talks at the Bartlett, Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens, 151 Brookdale Road, Stamford. A series led by Bartlett Education team members, each "walk and talk" focuses on a specific theme**

or section of the Bartlett, encouraging a deeper relationship with some of the special trees, plants, and animals that live and grow at the Bartlett. Topics explored may be history, arboriculture, plant culture, and geology or wildlife habitats and behaviors. Free for members, \$5 for non-members. <https://www.bartlettarboretum.org>.

**Sat., Oct. 19, 10am—Dried Wreath Making Workshop, Hollister House, 300 Nettleton Hollow Road, Washington. Create your own fabulous dried winter wreath using locally sourced materials in this seasonal workshop. Join Beth Crowell of Meadow Rue Gardens as she shares her experience of drying flowers and offers advice for growing and preparing your own plants for drying. After a demonstration of proper assembly techniques, enjoy creating your own wreath with choice natural materials provided by Meadow Rue Gardens. Members \$110; non-members \$125. Go to [hollisterhousegarden.org](http://hollisterhousegarden.org).**

**Sat., Oct. 19, 10:30am—Grace Farms Tour, 365 Lukes Wood Road, New Canaan. This comprehensive guided tour invites a closer look at the architectural elements of the River building and Barns. Take in 360-degree views of the ever-present nature preserve while exploring aspects of the building, including its sustainable design, curated interiors, and materials choices. The building was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning firm, SANAA. It's resulted in many awards for the firm. Members free; non-members \$25; students \$15. [gracefarms.org](http://gracefarms.org).**



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

### CTHort Speaker Presentations – Coming up!

**October 17, 2024:** Frederick Law Olmsted: Shaping the American Landscape – Marta McDowell

**November 21, 2024:** Invasive Plants in Connecticut: A Winnable War – Christian Allyn

**January 16, 2025:** The Wonders of the Winter Landscape – Vincent Simeone

**February 20, 2025:** Gardening for the Frogs – Jim Sirch

**March 20, 2025:** Gardening in Overtime: Getting the Most out of Your Late-Season Display Dan Benarcik

**April 24, 2025:** Oh! What I didn't plant Nancy DuBrule-Clemente

**May 15, 2025:** Crevice Gardening: Even more than it's cracked up to be – Panayoti Kelaidis

**June 26, 2025:** Designing for Habitat: From Back Yards to Byways – C. Colston Burrell



## CT HORT TRAVEL



### Gardens of Charleston and Savannah March 26-April 2, 2025

Please join us for an unforgettable journey as we survey the beauty and history of the Lowcountry of South Carolina and Georgia, with our special guest tour guide C. Colston Burrell, garden designer, lecturer, author and photographer.

#### TOUR ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Savor a festive Lowcountry Boil in Susan Epstein's private garden
- Explore the Lowcountry's history, culture and cuisine
- Delight in two wine receptions
- Partake of three group lunches featuring local cuisine
- Visit six private gardens
- Tour Brookgreen Garden's plant collections and sculptures, as well as a pontoon boat trip through rice fields to enjoy local wildlife
- Walk in the footsteps of history at Middleton Place and Magnolia Plantation
- Stroll through the history of Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah
- Enjoy a private guided tour of the history and horticulture of Savannah's famous squares
- Discover the secrets of Bonaventure Cemetery, made famous in the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*

**\$5,449 per person double / \$ 6,644 per person single**

**Call 800-243-1630 or go to [www.friendshiptours.net](http://www.friendshiptours.net)**

### Trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show, New York Botanical Garden Orchid Show and Longwood Gardens Orchid Extravaganza March 7-9, 2025



With Nancy DuBrule-Clemente,  
Author & Founder of Natureworks  
Horticultural Services

Trip includes deluxe motor coach, two nights hotel accommodations, tax and baggage, two breakfasts, two dinners, flower show admission, orchid show admission, sightseeing per itinerary, all gratuities, and a Friendship Tour director.

**\$975pp double / \$1129pp single • CT Hort members receive a \$55pp discount**

Deadline to reserve your spot/deposit is January 5, 2025

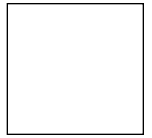
**Contact Barbara at Friendship Tours  
email [barbara@friendshiptours.net](mailto:barbara@friendshiptours.net)  
or call 860-243-1630.**



### AUSTRALIA! March 21-April 5, 2025

Sydney • Ayers Rock • Cairns • Melbourne  
**\$8995 per person Double + Air**

Friendship Tours / The Ship Shop 860-243-1630 or  
[www.friendshiptours.net/tours/australia-2025](http://www.friendshiptours.net/tours/australia-2025)



*Dated Material* 🌸 *Please Rush*

**CT Hort Calendar at a Glance**

**Tuesday, Oct. 1** – Board of Directors  
Remote Meeting, 7 pm

**Tuesday, Oct. 15** – Deadline for our  
Winter Newsletter

**Thursday, Oct., 17** – Speaker presentation:  
*Frederick Law Olmsted:  
Shaping the American  
Landscape*  
with Marta McDowell,  
7 pm (In person at  
Elmwood Community  
Center and on Zoom.)

Go to [CTHort.org](http://CTHort.org) for information on these  
and all other meetings and programs.

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.....Welcome New Members!.....

Barbara Yaeger, B. Yaeger LLC

Lenka Babuska

Charlene Balfour

Hope Battistini

Rashida Bull

Katharine Chapdelaine

John Decarlo

Diane Dugas

Cheri Duquette

Gwyn Grant

Erin Hankey

Stephanie Hanson

Gretchen Kelly

Brenda King

Kimberly Kuzina

James Lombard

Janet Loynes

Erin Mariano

William Marshall

Joanne Mckendry

Joanne Moeller

David Taddei,  
Mountainview Landscaping LLC

Douglas Myers

Brett & Aryn Prestia

Taylor Redford

Sarah Redford

Eliza Renz

Rebecca Rothstein

Paula Snedeker

Jan Sousa

Ashley Stewart

Jane Werthmann

Pamela Wright

