

Connecticut Horticultural Society NEWSLETTER

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Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

September 2025



The Sue B. Hart Perennial Garden is designed to be a four-season garden. The trees that back it up turn spectacular colors in the fall.



The Virginia Creeper will bloom on top of the rose garden's iconic gazebo this fall.

The Joy of Elizabeth Park—in the Fall

By Tracey Weiss, CT Hort Communications Director

Elizabeth Park has a world-wide reputation for its bounty of blooming roses in June. The Helen S. Kaman Rose Garden is the centerpiece of the park's 100+ acres, and the very first municipal rose garden in the United States.

So many know the park for its walkable and stunning green space, walkable paths, recreational facilities, special events, outdoor concerts, tours, lectures and garden workshops, and of course, the Pond House Café.

Elizabeth Park Conservancy also includes some stunning gardens and contemplative spaces that not nearly as many people take the time to enjoy or wander over to see: September and October are two of the most spectacular months of the year to saunter through.

These gardens, according to Mark Gutzmer, Director of Gardens & Grounds, "will bloom into first frost or hard freeze," he said. "Quite a few of the roses in the Kaman garden, for instance, will bloom again in August, September, and October." There's

an added bonus, too: the Virginia Creeper will bloom on top of the rose garden's iconic gazebo.

Horticulture Gardens

The Conservancy collaborates with organizations and their many volunteers who design, plant and maintain the gardens at the park, including the Connecticut Unit of the Herb Society of America's herb gardens. The scents, from lavender and rosemary to mint and thyme, is intoxicating.

"The volunteers here do a wonderful job of taking care of them, and changing things up," said Gutzmer said. "There's a lot of interest here."

Also sharing space with the herbs is the colorful dahlia garden, which peaks this month. It's run by the CT Dahlia Society. "They donated most of the dahlias to the conservancy. We

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**Our Annual
Award Winners are...**

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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.

Ashley Stewart
Executive Director
exec@cthort.org

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:
Mary Anna Martell
Office Administrator
P.O. Box 330966
West Hartford, CT 06133-0966

Membership Dues:	
Individual.....	\$60
Family	\$80
Senior Individual (65+).....	\$55
Senior Family (65+).....	\$75
Student (full time with valid ID).....	FREE
Horticultural Business Member.....	\$100 or \$250
Organizations	\$80

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Leadership Letter

Dear CT Hort Family,

Fall is around the corner, and it's time to cue the pumpkin spice lattes! September marks the fall equinox, a time of balance and transformation; and CT Hort is no exception to the rule. As the leaves begin to turn, we transition into a new program season, and welcome newcomers to our community!

We are thrilled to be welcoming and on-boarding new board members! Together their expertise, passion, and fresh ideas are invaluable as we continue to grow and nurture our mission. Such a commitment to horticulture is inspiring, and we look forward to working together to make a positive impact. Stay tuned for introductions!

In August, our CT Hort Cares Grant cycle came to an end with 25 awesome applicants! We proudly awarded \$2500 in funding, to six deserving grant recipients who are leading projects in community gardening, conservation, and education. These initiatives are vital in enriching our communities across Connecticut and fostering a deeper connection with the natural world. Congratulations to all our grantees—your work is making a real difference!

Last month, we also participated in our first resource fair with the United Way of Central & Northeastern Connecticut hosted by The 224 EcoSpace in Hartford. United Way of Central & Northeastern Connecticut covers 56 communities in the 860 region. It was great to make connections with families and other nonprofits, while spreading the word about CT Hort.

Speaking of spreading the word, we are excited to be starting our speaker meetings again. Over the coming months, our presenters will be covering topics from wicked cool wildlife gardening to innovative urban agriculture. This month, Peter Del Tredici will be kicking us off with his presentation on the recent history of northeastern forests in the United States. Please take a look at our program schedule to check out the lineup.

As always, thank you for your continued support and dedication. Wishing you a joyful and fruitful fall season!

Warm regards,

Ashley Stewart
Executive Director

Thank you to our generous business members and supporters!



Colorblends Wholesale Flower Bulbs
Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut
The Garden Barn Nursery
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Go Organic LLC
Greater Bridgeport Opportunities
Industrialization Center, Inc.
Mountainview Landscaping LLC



Peter Del Tredici

Deeply Disturbed: The Emergent Forest of the Future

with Peter Del Tredici

Thursday, September 18 • 7 pm

In person and on Zoom.

Elmwood Community Center, 1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford

(The entrance to Elmwood Community Center is on Burgoyne Street. Type "Burgoyne Street, West Hartford" into your GPS.) *Members will receive the Zoom link the Sunday before the talk*

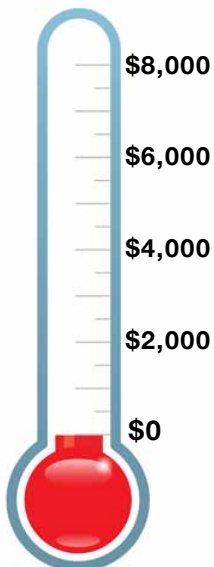
The northeastern United States is a naturally forested landscape and has been so for thousands of years. In his talk, Peter Del Tredici will present an overview of the recent history of the forests of the northeast as impacted by natural disasters, shifting land-use patterns (urbanization and suburban sprawl), introduced pests and pathogens, invasive species, and climate change. He will speculate on how the "emergent" forests that develop in response to these factors differ from those that have existed in the past and what the implications are for our future landscape.

Peter Del Tredici holds a BA degree in Zoology from the University of California, Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Biology from Boston University. He has been doing research with woody plants since 1972, first as a research technician at the Harvard Forest in Petersham, Massachusetts and then for 35 years at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in Boston where he worked through 2014 as Plant Propagator, Curator of the Larz Anderson Bonsai Collection, Editor

of *Arnoldia*, Director of Living Collections and finally as Senior Research Scientist. During his time at the Arnold Arboretum, he has made numerous seed collecting and ecological research expeditions to China, Japan and Korea. Peter was also an Associate Professor in Practice in the Landscape Architecture Department at the Harvard Graduate School of Design from 1992 through 2016. and taught in the Urban Planning Department at MIT from 2016 through 2019.

He has published more than 100 articles on a wide variety of botanical subjects. Recently, his research has focused on climate change and urban ecology, which resulted in the publication of the widely acclaimed, *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide*.

In 2013, he was awarded the Veitch Gold Medal from The Royal Horticultural Society "in recognition of services given in the advancement of the science and practice of horticulture."



2025-2026 Scholarship Fund

The 2025-2026 season begins, and with it, a fresh goal of \$8,000 to provide scholarships to students. We hope you'll consider helping us reach that goal!

Go to chort.org/donate to learn how to give. Thank you!



We have openings on our leadership team for the next term:

- Board Members
- Membership Committee Chair
- Finance Committee

Interested? Email Ashley Stewart at exec@chort.org



2025 Cares Grant Awardees (Round 2)

On August 1, grants were awarded to a second round of recipients of the CT Hort Cares civic grants program. The winners were chosen out of a group of 25 applicants from all over the state. Here are the winning projects:

Growing Roots: Advancing the Arboretum at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, Bridgeport—\$500

This grant will allow our Connecticut gem to advance its arboretum through the acquisition and planting of native trees. The trees have been carefully selected—taking into consideration ecological benefits, overall aesthetic and landscaping best practices. The project to enhance the CBZ's arboretum will be led by the horticultural team, as well as a group of dedicated volunteers. Once the expansion is complete, Bridgeport residents and visitors alike will benefit. The expansion will include a total of 40 new trees, updated interpretive signage and additional educational programming. CBZ has secured several funders and partners to carry this project forward.

Educational Community Garden, Danielson—\$500

The Educational Community Garden program of EASTCONN Head Start provides accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables, for low-income families throughout Windham County. They do this through their continued community garden efforts. Recently, they have taken it a step further, by partnering with Killingly High School's agriculture program to establish a garden at the Killingly Head Start location in Danielson. This garden acts as a "living classroom" for the high school students, the head start children, and school families. Students learn the fundamentals of gardening and develop an appreciation for plants. In addition to the garden beds, there's an outdoor commercial kitchen and shed being installed. The allocated funding will support costs related to the continuation of this project.

Cultivating Communities through Raised Beds, Thomaston—\$500

The funding awarded will be used to purchase construction materials for a new garden at Thomaston High School. All students in grades 7-12 will benefit from this project. CCRB has partnered with the schools SAGE Club, science department, and other departments to provide a wraparound approach. Implementation of this project will begin on the schools Day of Service, engaging students and local community organizations, such as the Thomaston Beautification Committee and the Thomaston Rotary Club.

Noah Webster School Project-Noah Webster Micro Society Magnet School Project, Hartford—\$200

This grant award will support the existing gardens at Noah Webster, by providing soil, seeds and potentially small vegetable plants for two planters. By way of the school's garden club, students in grades K-8 can learn about soil health, sun patterns, how to plant, and garden maintenance. For many students, the school garden is their first encounter with "getting their hands in the dirt". The principal and teachers are excited to get this project started in mid-September.

Anita Ballek Native Plant Memorial Garden, East Haddam—\$500

Members and friends of the First Ecclesiastical Society of East Haddam and the First Church of Christ Congregational of East Haddam will use the grant funds to create a memorial garden for their beloved Anita Ballek. Anita was a staple in the East Haddam garden community, and understood the interconnectedness of plant, animal and insect habitats. This project will repurpose the former playground at the church and turn it into a garden oasis. Anita's daughter will design the garden in her mother's honor, incorporating native plants and perennials, with trees and scrubs to anchor the design. The project is scheduled to begin this fall.

West Hartford Garden Club: Spicebush Swamp Park Parking Lot Edge Native Pollinator Garden, West Hartford—\$300

The West Hartford Garden Club will use the requested funds to complete their pollinator garden along the Northwest side of the Spicebush Swamp Park parking lot. Spicebush Swamp Park is a part of a larger ecological restoration plan that has been underway for some time. For this specific project, three Allegheny Serviceberry trees will be planted and purchased to anchor the corners of the garden, and Wild Strawberry will be installed as ground cover. This portion of the project began in mid-July of this year, and members of the garden club plan to complete it once funding is received. This area of the park is seen and enjoyed by many neighbors and members of the community.



The Joy of Elizabeth Park from page 1

would not have them without their support,” Gutzmer said.

And one of the coolest curiosities at the park is the University of Saint Joseph School of Pharmacy Medicine Garden. Filled with both contemporary and historical remedies, it was founded in 2014 by Dr. Dayne Laskey from USJ.

Plants such as the castor bean or castor oil plant live and grow in the medicinal garden, and bloom with beautiful pink or red flowers.



Plants such as the castor bean or castor oil plant, (from which the poison ricin is extracted, live and grow in the medicinal garden, and bloom with beautiful pink or red flowers.



No two gardens are alike! The plants and flowers in the Robert A. Prill Annual Garden are changed up every year.



Annual, Perennial and Rock Gardens

It's hard to miss the Robert A. Prill Annual Garden as you walk through Elizabeth Park. Beds of flowers and plants stun with colorful blooms through to the first frost of the season. Created in 1911, today's annual garden has crescent-shaped beds surrounding a center circle of flowers. It pays to come back every year for photos: the plantings change up every year. At the end of the season, the flowers are removed to make way for the tulips in spring, also named for Robert A. Prill.

The Sue B. Hart Perennial Garden “is designed to be a four-season garden,” Gutzmer said. “We just planted it last year and doubled the size. We added beds around the central structure. The grasses and shrubs here will give interest throughout the winter. it's also great for the wildlife. We only do big cutbacks in the spring.”

Gutzmer calls the Julian and Edith Eddy Rock Garden one of his favorite places in the park. According to the park website, the rock garden is “also known as the Shade Garden, it features mixed plantings of herbs, perennials, ornamental grasses, woody shrubs, and small evergreen and deciduous trees.”

“The anemones are starting. They'll bloom through some frosts,”

Gutzmer said. So are the asters. He's just planted pink and white asters along some of the walls in the garden.

All of the gardens are accented by the spectacular trees that ring the whole park. The Metasequoia trees are beautiful in the fall, “The sesequoia will turn yellow and change to golden tones throughout the fall. Trees generally, are amazing here,” Gutzmer said.

Heritage Rose Garden

Even some of the old species of roses in the Heritage Rose Garden may bloom in the fall, according to Gutzmer. Rose lovers will find this garden interesting, since some of the varieties of roses predate 1867. Some of the other plants, including alliums, dahlias, and calamint, will keep blooming in there as well.



According to the park website, the Julian and Edith Eddy Rock Garden “is also known as the Shade Garden, it features mixed plantings of herbs, perennials, ornamental grasses, woody shrubs, and small evergreen and deciduous trees.”

The Connecticut Valley Garden Club renovated the Heritage Garden in 2017 in honor of their 10th anniversary.

Talk a Walk

People who come to Elizabeth Park visit for so many reasons, Gutzmer said. “People who are here are getting married, or in crisis, or grieving, or need sanctuary, or just come to walk.”

For whatever reason, it's just an amazing space to be, blooms or no blooms. “The fact that the Conservancy provides this free of charge is rewarding for us all,” he said.

Go to <https://elizabethparkct.org> for more information. 🐾

We have our winners!

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

We are delighted to share the news that Judith King is the winner of the Gustav A.L. Mehlquist Award and Cheryl Marino is the recipient of the Service Award.



Judy King, (center), with Elizabeth Morin and Sarah Bailey at her home, April, 2024.

Judy King

Judy was nominated by Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, CT Hort Education Committee Chairperson, who had this to say on Judy's behalf:

Judy has one of the most exquisite gardens I have ever seen. When I first visited her, many years ago, I was overwhelmed by all of the plants I didn't know. Gradually, she has taught me all about the plants in her gardens. She has been collecting, planting, and carefully tending her property for decades. And well-tended it is. It is a masterpiece of detail.

Judy has been so generous both with her plants and her knowledge. She always donates a lot of extremely rare and interesting plants to our fundraising auctions. Recently, as she is planning to move within the next few years, she has let a team of volunteers come and dig hundreds of plants each spring. We wash them, repot them, label them, and then sell them at the auction. The Judith King Collection has made so many new gardeners into plant collectors. Her signature popsicle stick with her return address label is now in gardens all over our state.

I learned an important habit from Judith that I now carry on. I dig and pot small plants and have them at the ready. No one who comes to visit leaves without a plant or two. To me, that is the essence of gardening. Sharing.

Sometimes, it is the constancy of action, the steady sharing and giving of plants and knowledge, quietly, over decades, that grows new gardeners.

Thank you, Judith King, for being my friend and my mentor. We all thank you.

In 1987, on its 100th anniversary, 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.

Cheryl Marino

You've seen her at the helm, introducing our speakers and hugging everyone hello, setting up plants and refreshments at the annual plant sale, and attending every event if she is able.



Cheryl Marino

CT Hort is thrilled to share that Cheryl Marino is this year's winner of the annual Service Award. She was nominated by our own Mary Anna Martell, CT Hort's office administrator:

Cheryl exemplifies the spirit of this honor through her unwavering commitment, leadership, and vision for the Society's continued growth and success.

Cheryl's service to CT Hort began as Chair of the Membership Committee, where she worked diligently to welcome and retain members. She later stepped into key leadership roles—first as Vice President, then as President for an extended four-year term, and she currently serves as Past-President. Her tenure as President coincided with the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Cheryl's steady leadership helped guide CT Hort through this period of uncertainty. Under her direction, the Society embraced virtual programming, ensuring that members could remain connected and engaged even when in-person events were not possible. This pivotal transition has had a lasting positive impact on the Society's accessibility and reach.

Beyond her presidential leadership, Cheryl has been instrumental in the financial stewardship of CT Hort. She has contributed meaningfully to the budgeting process, and has consistently provided reliable oversight and insight into the organization's financial operations.

Cheryl also remains actively involved in one of the Society's most important events—the annual auction. She is the incoming Auction Committee Chair and, for several years, has played a major role in organizing the food and hospitality aspects of the event, contributing to its success and the welcoming atmosphere attendees have come to expect.

What sets Cheryl apart is not only her service but the spirit in which she gives it. She brings to every role a cheerful attitude, a positive outlook, and a forward-thinking vision for CT Hort. She leads by example, encourages collaboration, and inspires those around her to get involved and stay connected.

For her years of dedicated service, her effective and compassionate leadership, and her continued contributions to the vitality of the Connecticut Horticultural Society, Cheryl Marino richly deserves the CT Hort Service Award.

The Connecticut Horticultural Society 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. Every year, we recognize an individual who has enhanced the CT Hort experience by awarding them the Service Award.



Nancy vs. Nancy

Throwdown ends in a literal rainbow finish!

They did it again! Two of the masters of horticulture—Nancy DuBrule-Clemente and Nancy Ballek McKinnon—went head-to-head for two rounds of flora throwdowns, this time at Natureworks Garden Center in Northford! (If you remember, the Nancys started the tradition at Ballek's Garden Center in East Haddam last summer.)



Backed by the amazing Natureworks staff, the evening was fun and educational, culminating in a short downpour that was a welcome relief, followed by a rainbow! As a special bonus, the Natureworks staff let event goers release the monarchs from their butterfly “classroom.”



CT Hort and Friendship Tours present a special day trip to New York Botanical Garden Van Gogh: Painting with Flowers and more! Wed., October 1, 2025

The day-long adventure includes:

- Van Gogh's “Painting with Flowers.” Find yourself immersed in botanical displays and large-scale art as you wander through a breathtaking lawn of monumental sunflowers, and see the expressive masterpieces bloom in recreations made of living flowers.
- A private tour of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, one of the world's premiere collections of botanical literature.
- An all-garden pass admission, which includes access to the garden's outdoor collections, the Tram Tour, the Conservatory and more.
- Lunch on your own in the café and a chance to shop the garden store.

Pricing: \$127pp Seniors, \$130pp Adults (based on 35-50)

To Book On line: www.friendshiptours.net/group-travel and select “Group Sign In.”
Enter the Tour Code 251001CTHORT in the box labeled “Make a New Reservation.”



Dated Material 🌿 *Please Rush*

CT Hort Calendar at a Glance

- Wednesday, Sept. 3** – Board of Directors Remote Meeting, 7 pm
- Monday, Sept. 15** – Deadline for the October *Newsletter*
- Thurs., Sept. 18** – Speaker presentation: *Deeply Disturbed: The Emergent Forest of the Future* with Peter Del Tredici, 7 pm, in person at Elmwood Community Center, 1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, and on Zoom

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

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CTHORT 2025-2026 SPEAKER SERIES

Go to CTHort.org to register.



Peter Del Tredici



Sarah Bailey



Michael Wojtech

CT Horticultural Society • CTHort.org



Julie Zickefoose



Heather Dionne



Darryl Cheng

2025-2026 Speaker Season



Herb Virgo



Kathy Connolly



Uli Lorimer

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Date</u>
Peter Del Tredici	Thursday, September 18, 2025
Sarah Bailey	Thursday, October 16, 2025
Michael Wojtech	Thursday, November 20, 2025
Julie Zickefoose	Thursday, January 15, 2026
Heather Dionne	Thursday, February 19, 2026
Darryl Cheng	Thursday, March 19, 2026
Herb Virgo	Thursday, April 16, 2026
Kathy Connolly	Thursday, May 28, 2026
Uli Lorimer	Thursday, June 18, 2026