Connecticut Horticultural Society
NEWSLETTER
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Rebecca McMackin, Christine Darnell, and Jennifer McGuinness

Connecticut Horticultural Society presents

2026 Symposium: "Gardening for ALL Ages"

October 24

The Connecticut Horticultural Society's biennial symposium, "**Gardening for ALL Ages**," returns in person on October 24 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Marriott Hartford Cromwell. The daylong event will feature presentations by garden experts **Rebecca McMackin, Christine Darnell,** and **Jennifer McGuinness,** followed by "Gardening at Every Age," a panel discussion and Q&A moderated by **Jim Sirch**. Panelists include gardening experts at various stages of life and career: **Karen Bussolini, Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, Dan Furman, Eric Mason, Jennifer McGuinness,** and **Jillian Shea**.

Clockwise, from left: Karen Bussolini, Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, Dan Furman, Jillian Shea, Eric Mason, and Jennifer McGuinness.

The symposium is designed to inspire, enlighten, and educate novice and expert gardeners alike—of all ages.

Our keynote speaker is Rebecca McMackin, whose talk is "Adventures in Ecological Horticulture." Rebecca McMackin has cultivated gorgeous landscapes in the toughest environments possible: urban parks, school playgrounds, and the sidewalks of New York City. She will take lessons from her work at Brooklyn Bridge Park, the Brooklyn Museum, and decades of research to share how those of us who are fortunate enough to care for land, can do it beautifully and ecologically.

Christine Darnell's will present "Approaching the Garden." She is a garden and planting design specialist. Her firm, Christine Darnell Gardens, offers naturalistic planting design services in the CT area, and specializes in biodiverse landscapes and beautiful sustainable gardens. Christine is the vice-chair of Lyme's Inland Wetlands and Conservation Committee, serves on the Building and Grounds Committee for the Florence Griswold Museum, and teaches landscape design for the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association, training the next generation of gardeners, designers and nursery men and women.

Jennifer McGuinness will discuss "Designing for Birds: Lessons from an Evolving Garden." Jen McGuinness is a lifelong gardener

continued on page 5

Fun photos from June!

Page 6

IN THIS ISSUE:

Leadership Letter	2
Hort Happenings	4
New trips!	7

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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,

Summer is here, and the heat and humidity are gearing up. I can tell because the Maypop Passiflora incarnata popped out of the ground and grew one foot in a day! It should be called "Junepop" here in Connecticut because it usually doesn't pop up until the third week.

Speaking of gardening knowledge, it's with great sadness that I let our members know about the passing of my friend Will Rowlands. Will shared his legacy at Connecticut Gardener Magazine and enriched the lives of so many gardeners with his up-to-date research on invasive plants, thoughtful editing, and meticulous sharing of gardening events throughout the region. Warm thoughts and peace to his wife, Anne, and their family.

If you have never visited the High Line in Manhattan, you'll learn all about it from Yuki Kaneko at our in-person (also online) meeting on Thursday, September 17 at a new location: Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford. We'll be staying at this location for our fall and spring programs. We hope to see you in-person. It's a great way to chat with fellow gardeners and perhaps even win a door prize.

We'll also be chatting about our gardens as we unveil a new program called Plant Chat, starting this evening. If you miss it, not to worry. We plan on holding Plant chat on a quarterly basis; the next one will be September 30. See details on page 8. Thanks to CT Hort Vice President Diane Earling for coordinating this new program.

You won't want to miss our in-person, biennial symposium taking place Saturday, October 24 in Rocky Hill. What a great line-up of speakers and vendors! Registration is now open. Many thanks to Nancy Dubrule-Clemente and committee, as well as CT Hort staff, for making this happen!

Cheers,
Jim Sirch, President

Thank you to our generous business members and supporters!

Friendship Tours The Ship Shop

grace farms

Hollister House Garden

NATUREWORKS

White Flower Farm
PLANTSMEN SINCE 1950

BYNGER LLC LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Colorblends Wholesale Flower Bulbs
Connecticut's Historic Gardens
Elizabeth Park Conservancy
The Garden Barn Nursery
Garden Solutions
Go Organic LLC
Otter Gardens

Yuki Kaneko

Editing the Garden: Advice from the High Line

with Yuki Kaneko

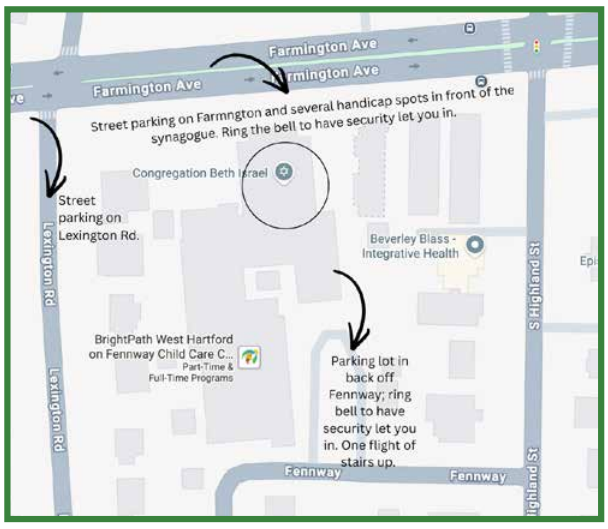
Thursday, September 17 • 7 pm

On Zoom and in person at Congregation Beth Israel, 701 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford
(Members will receive the Zoom link the Sunday before the talk.)

A naturalistic garden may appear effortless, but its beauty is the result of intentional care and thoughtful curation. Drawing from her work stewarding one of the world's most influential naturalistic gardens, Yuki Kaneko will share strategies for managing dynamic plant communities while preserving design intent. The talk covers practical techniques to cultivate naturalistic aesthetics that remain vibrant and intentional across all four seasons. Attendees will walk away with a new perspective on plant selections that enhance texture and structure, learning how to balance ecological function with an artistic vision. Join us to learn the art of "editing"—an essential practice to refine ever-evolving naturalistic gardens.

Yuki Kaneko is the Senior Horticulture Manager at the High Line where she manages the landscape of the internationally celebrated urban public park in New York City. Born in Japan, Yuki earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Fine Arts from Tama Art University and was awarded the Blanchette H. Rockefeller Fellowship to study art in the United States. She received certificates from the New York Botanical Garden in horticulture and botany and further trained through the John Nally Internship at Wave Hill. Since joining the High Line in 2016, she has stewarded its iconic naturalistic gardens designed by Piet Oudolf. With a passion for interpreting designed landscapes in the context of ecological conservation, she manages the High Line's horticulture operations, plant curation, and programming to provide a naturalistic landscape corridor that supports biodiversity and connects people with nature.

Congregation Beth Israel Parking



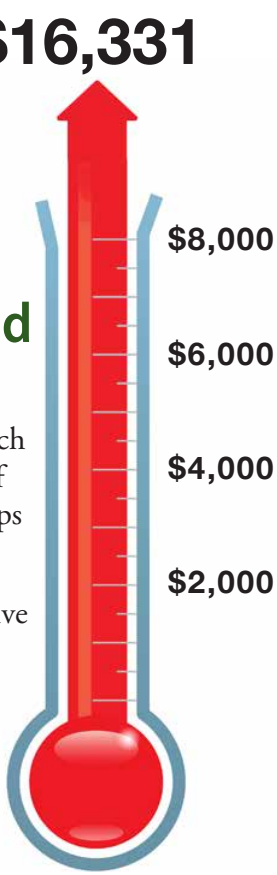
Speaker Feedback

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 choose the speaker you want to rate. Thank you for your feedback.

2025-2026 Scholarship Fund

We did it!
Thank you for helping us reach our goal—and beyond!—of $8,000 to provide scholarships and grants?

Go to cthort.org/donate to give and to learn more and thank you!



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 the September issue is August 15.

Sat., July 11, 10am-noon— The AWE Program Farm-To-Table Day, Keney Park Sustainability Project, 183 Windsor Avenue, Windsor. Participants will gather fresh ingredients from the garden and collaboratively prepare a seasonal table experience that honors local abundance and shared meals. Learn how harvesting, preparing, and sharing food together strengthens community while deepening connections to the land and the seasons. Register at https://www.aweprograms.org/event-details/farm-to-table.

Tues., July 14, 10am-noon—Nature Studio for Children, Grace Farms, 365 Lukes Wood Road, New Canaan. Discover the tiny wonders of nature! Using a digital scope and projector, look at monarch and white cabbage moth caterpillars, ladybugs, wildflowers, and other small creatures in incredible, larger-than-life detail. With friendly guidance from our Education Team, families will discover how these little creatures help keep the Grace Farms ecosystem healthy. Recommended for ages 4 – 11 with adult caregivers. This will be offered weekly on Tuesdays in July and August. This is a drop-in program and is free with registration. https://gracefarms.org/series/nature-studio-for-children.

Thurs., August 20, 10-11am— The Garden Club of Brookfield presents IPM: Integrated Pest Management, Valley Presbyterian Church, 21 West Whisconier Road, Brookfield. Integrated Pest Management is a process gardeners can use to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. To learn more about this important gardening strategy the club welcomes Patricia Dray, Horticulturalist and UCONN Master Gardener, for a presentation. Free program. Email brookfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com or call 917-375-1615.

Tues., August 25, 11am-noon—Daytime Gardeners of North Haven presents Conserving CT's Amphibians and Reptiles with Dennis Quinn, North Haven Recreation Center, Linsley Street 7, North Haven. Dennis Quinn, MA, Herpetologist, Quinn Ecological, LLC, will discuss how amphibians and reptiles are struggling to survive. Learn more about the problems they face and ways to help them manage in the present environment. The program is open to the public. $5 registration fee. Call 203-239-1557 to register.

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

In Memoriam – Will Rowlands

We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Will Rowlands in June. He was the editor of the popular magazine, Connecticut Gardener, which he and his wife, Anne Rowlands, took over in 2010. Our condolences to Anne and family on his loss.

In a post on social media, Anne said "It is with great sadness that I share the news that my husband and business partner, Will Rowlands, passed away on June 12.

Since purchasing Connecticut Gardener in 2010, Will and I worked together to publish 78 issues, sharing a love of gardening and a commitment to providing reliable, locally focused information for gardeners throughout the region.

Will's knowledge, creativity, and dedication helped shape every issue, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

I want to reassure our readers, contributors, and advertisers that Connecticut Gardener will continue. With the help of our son Graham and the support of this wonderful community, I remain committed to carrying the magazine forward.

Thank you for your kindness, support, and friendship during this difficult time."

2026 Symposium from page 1

and the author of the award-winning Bird-Friendly Gardening, published by Cool Springs Press. She is also the garden writer and photographer behind Frau Zinnie (FrauZinnie.com), where she shares personal gardening insights, expert interviews, and seasonal inspiration. Based in Connecticut, she champions organic, wildlife-friendly gardening and brings a background in journalism, communications, and visual storytelling to her work.

Between speakers, symposium attendees can meet our many vendors.

Admission, which is the same as it was in 2020, includes coffee, buffet lunch. Parking is free.

Register by October 1 and the cost is $95 for members, $125 for non-members, and $40 for students with a valid ID. From October 2-14, members are $120, non-members are $150, and students are $65. Seats are limited to 225. Sorry, no walk ins.

Register here or go to cthort.org. https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/agppuue

2026-2027 LEADERSHIP

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Vice President. . . . . Diane Erling
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Devin Savoy (August 2027)
Regina Landsberg (August 2027)
Sarah Bailey (August 2028)
Kasha Furman (August 2028)
James Randall (August 2028)
Mark Gutzmer (August 2029)
Elizabeth Morin (August 2029)
Willow Sirch (August 2029)

Grant applications being accepted through July 31

Applications for the CT Cares grant program are being accepted through July 31, 2026. Go to link to apply. The program expands the Society's efforts to educate our great state on the importance of plants and our precious environment. When reviewing applications, the committee gives priority to projects that support the educational mission of our organization, and the project must take place in Connecticut. The maximum amount per grant is $500. Applications will be accepted from June 1 – July 31, with grants awarded on August 15. If you would like to support our efforts with a monetary donation, please visit https://cthort.org/support/other-ways-to-give/ to donate. You will be able to choose 'Scholarship Fund' or 'Community Grants' as the destination for your donation. Thank you for your support

A Jumping June

We had lots of fun activities happening at CT Hort in June. We held a tour, took a day trip, and hung out at one of the biggest events in Greater Hartford.

Celebrate! West Hartford

We were well represented at Celebrate! West Hartford, the annual event that draws more than 30,000 people each year for a weekend of arts & crafts, food, rides, live music, vendors and more. Clockwise, from left, front row: CT Hort Board member Sue Kaminski, CT Hort Director of Communications Tracey Weiss, CT Hort Treasurer Dick Kaminski, and longtime CT Hort member Laura Crean.

Page Dickey's Church House and Robin Hill with Head Estate Gardener James McGrath

What a tour! For these members, touring two breathtaking gardens—Page Dickey's Church House and Robin Hill with Head Estate Gardener James McGrath—was a huge treat. The group enjoyed Page's property of 17 acres with a view of the Berkshires and Canaan Mountains before touring Robin Hill's 20-acre property bordered by 5000 acres of state forest.

Sakonnet

CT Hort partnered up with Friendship Tours to offer a day trip to Sakonnet Garden in late June. With special guest Nancy DuBrule-Clemente, the bus took members on a road trip to explore Sakonnet. It was followed by lunch at the Brick Alley Pub in historic Newport, and shopping at the Farmer's Daughter in South Kingston. Nancy called this "one of the most unique and artistic and moving gardens" she has ever visited. She took photos: "In the foreground is Mikel; in the background with the plaid shirt and straw hat is John. They each led half the group on a tour. It truly was like being in Alice in Wonderland and going down the rabbit hole!"

CT HORT TRAVEL

Longwood Gardens Christmas

Dec. 11-13, 2026

Experience the beauty of the holidays in Pennsylvania and more. Over the course of our three days together, we'll travel to Lyndhurst Mansion, the famous Winterthur Museum, and then, to Longwood Gardens, before catching the New York Botanical Garden Holiday Train Show
Includes two nights at the hotel, two breakfasts and one lunch and one dinner (with $50 in dining dollars), sightseeing and admissions.

Trip cost: $1169 per person double occupancy / $1119 with CT Hort member discount
$1359 single person single occupancy / $1309 with CT Hort member discount

Register: www.friendshiptours.net/tours/longwood-gardens-christmas-ct-horticultural-society **or call Barbara at Friendship Tours at 860-243-1630**

Philadelphia Flower Show with New York Botanical Garden Orchid Show & Longwood Gardens Orchid Extravaganza

March 12-14, 2027

Join CT Hort, Friendship Tours, and special guest Nancy DuBrule-Clemente for this incredible annual trip to see the famous Philadelphia Flower and more. Includes:

- Philadelphia Flower Show Admission – Help Celebrate Penn Hort Society's 200th Birthday!
- New York Botanical Gardens Orchid Show
- Longwood Gardens
- Two Nights Hotel Accommodations at the Mendenhall Inn with Welcome Reception
- Two breakfast & two dinners
- Friendship Tours Escort

Trip cost: $1045 per person double occupancy / $1219 per person single occupancy (CT Hort members receive a $50 discount)

Register: https://www.friendshiptours.net/tours/philadelphia-flower-show-ct-horticultural-society **or call Barbara at Friendship Tours at 860-243-1630**

Connecticut Horticultural Society
P.O. Box 330966
West Hartford, CT 06133-0966

Dated Material ❦ *Please Rush*

CT Hort Calendar at a Glance

Tuesday, Aug. 15 – Deadline for the September 2026 *Newsletter*

Tuesday, Sept. 15 – Board of Directors Meeting, 7 pm

Thursday, Sept. 17 – Speaker presentation: ***Editing the Garden: Advice from the High Line* with Yuki Kaneko** 7 pm, live at Congregation Beth Israel, 701 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, and on Zoom

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

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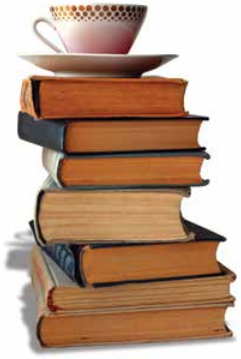
PLANT CHAT... with CT Hort

Give advice. Get Advice. Share.

Plant Chat is a **FREE** open forum where fellow gardeners can connect, share ideas, and learn from one another. Held quarterly on Zoom for one hour, each session offers inspiration, practical tips for fixing common gardening mishaps, and a chance to exchange ideas. Everyone is welcome—you don't need to be a member to participate.

***Tonight*, Wed., July 1, 7pm on Zoom**

***Next Plant Chat:* Wed., Sept. 30 7pm on Zoom**



We need you to review!

Be part of our tradition. We're thinking ahead to winter...but only because we are looking for volunteers to read and review gardening books for our winter edition of the newsletter. We're looking for 300-400 words on your opinion of the book. If you are interested, please call Tracey at 860-796-0185 or send her an email at news@cthort.org and we will assign you something interesting!