

Connecticut Horticultural Society

NEWSLETTER

Volume 53, Number 7

Serving Horticulturists Since 1887

April 2011

Magical Mystery Moss Tour

by Lee May

Mosses grow along a dividing line. On one side stand people who are indifferent to them, or downright hostile. Across the line, people like me can't get enough of these lovely plants; we're trying to keep them happy, so we can keep them growing.

That's because we know there are few gardening pleasures more keen than what you get from mosses. Soft, firm, beautiful, like ground clouds, mosses invite you to walk barefoot, caress them with your feet and hands, get close enough to inhale their fragrance – a fresh combination of earth, sea and grass. As a design element, mosses create a lush, clean background for shrubs and trees. Moreover, they can choke out weeds, don't waste water, don't appeal to deer and, once established, escape even blue jays, squirrels and other rodents.

I've enjoyed mosses all my life, mostly in woods. But, over time I knew the woods were not enough; I needed to make them a large part of my garden. Like so many pleasures cultivated in life, this one would require work.

Oh, what long, hard, sometimes strange, satisfying work it has been.

Moving to Connecticut from Georgia in 2001, I got something I'd always wanted: a blank canvas, two acres growing nothing I wanted to keep. Gardening

on half the property was my plan, and I knew what I had to do:

First, kill the grass.

Easier said than done, but I was motivated. So, as neighbors worked to kill the mosses and sow grass seed, I began scraping the ground, one space at a time, digging out grass and weeds, then covering that space with newspapers, cardboard, old clothing, anything, as long as it was biodegradable. I covered these materials with mulch, mostly pine bark, sometimes straw or pine needles, hoping they would add to the soil the acid that mosses love.

This of course was at the same time I was furiously planting the acre – six "rooms" of trees, shrubs, herbs, sedum, grasses and other perennials. Twelve-hour work days were short days during this period.

Failures aplenty

Naturally, my moss quest here in Connecticut recalled other efforts in other gardens.

In Atlanta, where I gardened in the 1990s around a Victorian home on a small lot, I tried mightily to grow mosses. Twice, I made a paste of spores and water, combining it with all manner of ingredients, including molasses, yeast, eggs, buttermilk, set the concoction out in the sun until it stank real loud, then painted it onto rocks and soil. Then I spray-watered this mess several times a day for two or three weeks. I waited.

No luck.

Several times, I harvested mosses from woods whose owners I knew, brought them home and planted them in shady spots – just like the ones they'd come



Illustration of *Pottia truncata* by Johannes Hedwig, 1787

from. I chose my poorest soil, the kind I thought they favored. I kept them free of leaves, which may smother mosses; they certainly hide them. Again, I watered and waited.

Nothing.

As with the concoctions, these formerly thriving mosses, carefully dug and planted, just sat there, neither spreading nor looking particularly good as I released them from intensive care. Now, I know mosses can go dormant and will perk up with a good shot of water, but these did not look worth keeping. I went back to cultivating Scotch moss and Irish moss, which of course are not real mosses.

So, it was with a history of failures I set out to moss up my Connecticut garden. While this was not my first effort, I realized that, at age 60, it just might be my last, as I knew this garden would be the garden of a lifetime. This time, I had to get the mossaing right.

First, kill the grass.

A few words about grass. I like looking at grass as much as the next gardener; I just
(continued on page 6)

Inside This Issue

Speaker Program Page 3

Garden Tours; Plant Auction Page 5

Spring Marketplace Pages 8-9

Traveling with CHS Pages 10-11



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

FAX: (860) 563-2217
E-MAIL: connhort@aol.com
WEBSITE: www.cthort.org

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

Colleen Fitzpatrick Michelson
CHS Director of Communications
10 Bradley Road
Simsbury, CT 06070
Kalmia.editorial@gmail.com

SEND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
& DIRECT GENERAL QUESTIONS TO:
Bonnie McLachlan,
Office Administrator
2433 Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Membership Dues:

Individual.....	\$40
Individual Senior (65+).....	\$35
Family.....	\$50
Senior Family (65+).....	\$45
Sustaining	\$100
Business & Organization	\$60
Student.....	\$25

Contributions are tax-exempt to the extent permitted under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Reproduction of the CHS Newsletter in whole or part without prior permission is prohibited.
© Copyright 2011

Letter from the President



Dear Gardeners,

It's been a heck of a winter. My driveway turned into a glacier, the ceilings leaked and our snowplow bill could pay off a good chunk of the national debt. Plus, we got flooded. The garden didn't fare much better. At least one tree snapped off at the base, many of my shrubs are now prostrate and the waist-high boxwood hedges are now, well, ankle high. And the snow hasn't melted enough yet to reveal the meanderings of the voles that have no doubt ravaged my hostas.

But, as I write this in early March, the snowdrops are up, with the crocus not far behind. It's going to be a good year for garden touring.

As you may know, CHS began last year offering a series of garden tours throughout the growing season. Taking part is easy. All you need do is show up at the appointed time and place, pay a \$5 entry fee and—enjoy. These are real gardens, tended and, in most cases, designed by the homeowners. You can find out about the tours through handouts at our meetings, and they are noted in our newsletter, on our website and often in the Hartford Courant.

By the way, that \$5 entry fee? It goes directly to CHS. Like so many organizations in these challenging economic times, we need more revenue, not just to provide the kind of programming and information to which you've become accustomed, but also to improve and upgrade our offerings.

Back to touring. I know some homeowners (me, for example) may have some trepidation about sharing their gardens after such a punishing winter, but that brutal season makes it a better time than ever to host or participate in a tour. After all, visiting new gardens is all about seeing different ways to tackle common problems, learning which plants truly thrive in our challenging part of the world and celebrating the beauty and solace of the idealized world of the garden. Tours are also about sharing hard-won, first-hand knowledge, which might be why they have a special value this year. Aren't you curious about what thrived—and what didn't—under all that snow?

Tours will kick off in May. My garden will be open in mid June. As one who always advocates letting Darwin's survival-of-the-fittest mantra serve as a guiding light for large swaths of my ever-evolving garden, I'll be put to the test this year. Lots to do. But it's the process, not the finished result, that makes gardening such an enduring pastime.

It's not too late to volunteer your own garden for a tour. If you don't feel up to that, well, I hope to see you out visiting at least a few CHS gardens this season. Participating can help make your garden—and CHS—a better place.

Horticordially yours,

Steve Silk

Directions to the Connecticut Horticultural Society Office & Library

From the south: take I-91 North to Exit 23 West Street, Rocky Hill. Take a right at the end of the exit. At the fourth traffic light, take a left onto Route 99 (Main Street). The office is located at 2433 Main Street in the Prestige Office building, a short distance on your left.

From the north: take I-91 South, take Exit 23. At the end of the ramp, go left onto West Street. Follow the previous directions.

From I-84: take Route 9 to Exit 20 and I-91 North. Follow the directions above.

Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens

April 21 – Speaker Douglas W. Tallamy of Oxford, Penn.

Douglas Tallamy believes that biodiversity is a natural (and national) resource deserving of as much protection as air and groundwater.

“Biodiversity is an essential, non-renewable, natural resource, yet we are forcing it to extinction,” he told an audience at the New England Grows trade show in February.

Evidence shows that the richer the biodiversity, the more stable the ecosystem is, Doug says. He has likened plants and animals to the rivets that hold together the ecosystems that sustain life.

Ninety percent of herbivorous insects are species-specific, meaning they survive by eating a particular native plant. When native plants disappear, so do food sources for the insects, birds and other animals that co-evolved with the plants.

Here’s where gardeners come in: Every time we plant the newest cultivar from Asia or New Zealand or Costa Rica, we do our part to continue to imperil the estimated 33,000 species that are threatened or endangered in the United States, he argues. Thus, he says, gardening is about choices that carry moral and ecological responsibilities.

Doug’s views, expressed in his book “Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants” (Timber Press, 2007, 2009), have gained him an impassioned following. Some people say his message is as seminal as Rachel Carson’s in her 1962 book “Silent Spring” about the use of chemical pesticides, which is credited with started the environmental movement.

Doug’s book “provides the rationale behind the use of native plants, a concept that has rapidly been gaining momentum,” wrote Joel M. Lerner in The Washington Post. “The impact on our environment is huge. The text makes a case for native plants and animals in a compelling and complete fashion.”



Tammar Stein, writing for the St. Petersburg Times, said the book is “a call to arms. There is not much ordinary citizens can do to create large new preserves. But we can make better use of the small green spaces we have around our houses. While the situation in the United States is quite serious, Tallamy offers options that anyone with a garden, even a postage-stamp-sized one like mine, can do to help.”

Doug is a professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark. The loss of habitat has concerned him since he was a boy, when he would spend summer days exploring wild places around him. As those places were bulldozed, giving way to houses, shops and roads, Doug’s way of thinking about nature changed.

Today, he challenges audiences to add more native plants and trees to their landscapes and to help restore open spaces by, for example, ridding them of invasive plants.

“The way we garden today and the way we landscape today is going to de-

CHS Program Meeting

Our meetings are open to members and nonmembers alike, with a \$10 donation requested from nonmembers. We look forward to seeing you!

Date: Thursday, April 21

Time: 7:30 p.m. (7 p.m. for socializing and browsing CHS library books, raffle items and travel fliers)

Location: Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Dr., West Hartford

Directions: From I-84, take exit 43 (West Hartford Center, Park Road). Turn right at exit and go half a block to the next light. Turn left at light onto Trout Brook Drive. Proceed for six lights to Albany Avenue. Turn right on Albany Avenue and continue to the next light, Mohegan Drive. Turn left on Mohegan Drive. Pass two stop signs. Synagogue is on the right.

Bad weather: Tune in to WTIC radio 1080AM or WFSB TV Channel 3, or call the CHS office at 860-529-8713 for a recorded message or visit www.cthort.org.

termine what life looks like tomorrow,” he told Lawn & Landscape magazine. “Let’s not give up on aesthetics, but let’s not give up on function.”

Copies of “Bringing Nature Home,” which won Doug a silver medal from the Garden Writer’s Association in 2008, will be available at the meeting for \$15 (\$3 off the list price). To learn more about Doug, visit www.PlantANative.com.

Native Plant Resources

- Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group: www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/
- Invasive Plant Atlas of New England: <http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/>
- New England Wild Flower Society: www.newfs.org
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center: www.wildflower.org
- USDA National Invasive Species Information Center: www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov

'The Magic' Continues

by Nancy Brennick

The exhibit that almost wasn't turned out to be the one that captured the attention of visitors to the 2011 Connecticut Flower and Garden Show. Our membership message was clear and in keeping with this year's flower-show theme of "Capture the Magic." We encouraged show-goers to capture the magic of CHS membership by learning, growing and traveling with CHS.

CHS President **Steve Silk** designed our beautiful, forced-perspective garden, which featured as its focal point a sculpture created and loaned by **David Hayes** of Coventry.

We watched from Feb. 24-27 as viewers coming upon the display stopped in their tracks. The display was only 16 feet deep, but the foliage, colors, and size and placement of the plants, stonework and steel sculpture in relation to a specially built trellis made the depth appear to be 50 feet or more. The eye had been tricked into seeing a big garden where a small one existed.

The exhibit won the only award given at the show by the American Horticultural Society.

Original plans called for scaling down from a landscape display to a large booth, and the CHS Finance Committee budgeted \$3,000. As the show neared and resources were considered, however, plans reverted back to a landscape exhibit. The Flower Show Committee spent more than \$8,200 on plants, supplies and other items, but the costs were offset by revenue earned from the sale of props, bulbs and plants. CHS also received a stipend from the show promoter. We're pleased to announce that we broke even, financially, and we signed up more than 55 new members. This is good news during economically challenging times.

Other show notables:

- We gave out more than 1,500 business cards with our website address where people could find plant names from our display and learn about future CHS workshops and trips.



From left, Nancy Shipman, Fairlee Latawic, Nancy Brennick photo: Steve Silk

- We learned how to convert **Steve Silk's** descriptives, like "swath of *Sagina*" into actual plant numbers.
- We worked with Moore's Sawmill in Bloomfield to get the wood trim for our display, being mindful of not moving firewood to help avoid spreading pests such as the Asian longhorned beetle and emerald ash borer.
- We embedded a mini basket of cookies in our display. Its significance was not lost on CHS travelers who know that **Lois Isaacson** always offers cookies and soda at the end of her trips, with the toast: "To CHS, may it continue to bloom and grow!"

Find a thank-you letter to flower show volunteers, donors and patrons at www.cthorticulture.blogspot.com.



Kevin Rescildo of Pondering Creations accepts the CHS award from Ginny Gingras.

CHS Flower Show Award Goes to Terryville Company

CHS gives an award each year to the landscape exhibit that "stimulates an interest in horticulture and inspires the home gardener through the use of distinctive plant material and good design." Kevin Rescildo and John Rierra of Pondering Creations of Terryville created this year's winning exhibit and were awarded \$200 and a plaque.

Their practical design included a retaining wall with a custom-made stone mosaic, a log along a stream with a water chime, and a fire pit partially enclosed by shrubs, forming

an enclave. They designed the exhibit to provide a balance among water features, hardscape and traditional landscaping. Plant textures varied and included a blue Atlas cedar, which served as an anchor plant and a privacy screen. New cultivars included *Aquilegia* hybrid 'Winky Double Red-White', 'Pink Frost' hellebore, *Buddleia* hybrid Lo & Behold 'Blue Chip' and 'Twist-n-Shout' lacecap hydrangea.

A special thanks to the judges: **John O'Brien** of O'Brien Nurserymen in Granby and **Kevin Wilcox** of Farmington Valley Nursery in Avon.

—Virginia Gingras

From the Field

We love hearing about what our talented members are up to. Please share recent or upcoming gardening-related activities or accolades by e-mailing a note to Colleen Fitzpatrick Michelson at kalmia.editorial@gmail.com.



The Portland Senior Center has recognized **Fran Schoell** with its "Spirit of Portland Award" for "quietly and without recognition" making Portland a better place to live. Fran is president of the Portland River Valley Garden Club. She also has served on the town's local drug and alcohol prevention council, clean energy task force and emergency team. She belongs to the Heart of the Valley Quilt Guild and, as a member of the Sojourn Bears group, makes teddy bears for cancer patients. Fran worked in the Portland school system for more than 30 years. Also at the awards ceremony in March, state Rep. Christie Carpino gave Fran an official citation from the state. "My whole family and lots of friends attended," she says. "I had a really great time."

Bid, and Bid Farewell to the Long Winter

by Leslie Shields

Your help with the plant auction on Friday, April 29, which supports scholarships for plant science students in Connecticut, is needed more than ever this year.

Because of the heavy winter snow, some of our commercial growers have faced collapsing structures and the loss or damage of plants. We cannot rely on our usual friends in the trade to donate as in the past and are asking our members to help avoid a shortage of plants. Please ask your local nursery to donate a plant or two. Donor letters may be downloaded from the website (www.cthort.org). Click on "plant auctions," then on "spring" in the headline, then on "donation letter.") The letter identifies you as a representative of the society and is a tax receipt for the nursery.

Please keep the auction in mind as you survey your garden this spring. Digging and dividing your treasures could result in some choice donations. The best-selling items are hard-to-find and named cultivars, and unusual or one-of-a-kind plants. Please arrive early with

your donations. Someone will be at the church by 5 p.m. to accept plants.

The auction returns to its earlier home in West Hartford, at the United Methodist Church, 1358 New Britain Ave. (directions found at www.cthorticulture.blogspot.com). The table plant sale begins at 7 p.m.; people who donate plants have the first choice. The auction begins at 7:20 p.m.

The evening promises to be entertaining, thanks to the commentary of our knowledgeable auctioneers. They include **Kevin Wilcox** of Farmington Valley Nursery in Avon, **Adam Wheeler** of Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden and **John O'Brien** of O'Brien Nurserymen in Granby.

Please consider pitching in with this event, whose proceeds benefit students at the University of Connecticut and Naugatuck Valley Community College. If you have expertise in perennials, houseplants, tropicals, shrubs and trees, we could use your help in tagging donations from 6 to 7 p.m. If you arrive between 5 and 6 p.m. and would like to lend

a hand setting up chairs and tables, jump right in. Finally, we'll need volunteers for about 20 minutes after the auction to help clean up.

To volunteer or to request more information or help in getting your donated plants to the sale, please contact auction co-chairs **Fran Schoell**, 860-342-0376, franschoell1935@comcast.net, or **Leslie Shields**, 860-747-8175, selchie1@comcast.net.

Dig, Divide, Donate

Mark your donations with as much information as possible (name, height, color, width, bloom time). Make plant labels from used cardboard containers, plastic spoons or knives, or wooden Popsicle sticks, using an indelible marker. If a plant typically grows in an area warmer than Connecticut, note its USDA hardiness zone. A list of donated plants would be helpful. Find plant potting guidelines at www.cthort.org. Click on "plant auctions," then on "spring" in the headline.

CHS To Host Second Annual Garden Tour

by Steve Silk

The season-long CHS Garden Tour is on its way to becoming an annual affair, with the schedule for gardens open for visiting in 2011 taking shape as the newsletter went to press.

We're always looking for new gardens. Would you be willing to open yours for the 2011 CHS Garden Tour? The tour is an effort to encourage members to view all kinds of gardens and for us to gain from the society's greatest resource—each other. It's also a chance to help CHS raise money to support operations. Entry fees will be \$5 per person.

To participate, your garden doesn't have to be perfect. We're looking for real people and real gardens. So, if you don't have a staff out there tending your borders and instead do all the work yourself, don't worry. You're just who

we want. Of course, if you do have a staff-maintained garden we'd love to see it, too. Don't be shy, open the gate and share the fruits of your labor.

To host, you'll need to:

- Select a **date** on Saturdays and Sundays through late September or even October, if you have a spectacular late-season garden.
- Provide at least a four-hour **window of time** in which you're willing to accept visitors. Most gardens are open between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., but feel free to open in the evening or early morning, when, as we know, gardens look their best.
- If you prefer to lead **guided tours** rather than have visitors wandering about freely, state that there will be guided tours only and list starting times.
- Provide easy-to-follow **directions** from a well-known highway to your

house and any important details concerning parking or other logistics.

- Provide a brief (100- to 200-word) **description of your garden** that tells something about its ambiance, conditions (sun or shade garden, for example), any specialty items (a garden of woodland ephemerals, of bulbs and woody plants, etc.), and any unusual elements (exotic stonework, water features, sculptural elements). The idea is to share what it is that makes your garden special to you.

Please send the information to me, **Steve Silk**, by mailing it to silk.steve@yahoo.com or 74 Prattling Pond Rd., Farmington, CT 06032. Questions? E-mail or call 860-676-9946. The tour schedule will be posted on the website and published in future newsletters.

Extending Earth Day

For many gardeners, every day is Earth Day, but for those who would like to jazz up their repertoire to commemorate the April 22 event that reminds us to consider the health of the planet, here are a few ideas.

Support Connecticut nurseries and garden centers. Doing business with Connecticut growers and garden centers this spring is especially important in light of the damage caused by one of the snowiest winters on record. As of mid March, 40 operations had reported losing a total of 300 greenhouses, representing \$4.4 million in damages, says Bob Heffernan, executive director of the Connecticut Green Industries Council. That figure includes only structural damage, not the loss of plants and other inventory.

A full assessment of the damage won't come until early summer, Heffernan says. Several factors could mitigate the losses, including federal loan assistance; a fair-weather spring free of diseases, pests and natural disasters; increased business opportunities as homeowners repair winter-damaged houses and landscapes; and increased interest in landscaping, garden-

ing and plants due to people's weariness with the long winter.

Introduce a young person to gardening. Invite your favorite young gardener (and siblings, friends, cousins and anyone else who is the future of gardening) to the CHS meeting June 16 to meet America's first botanist. John Bartram (a.k.a. Kirk Brown) will take us through the nation's horticultural history, starting in 1699 and moving to the Revolutionary War and 1776. Clad in Colonial garb, Brown will deliver a dramatic presentation depicting the life of the man credited with starting the first public garden in America, and whose explorations of Georgia discovered at least one tree species known only through his collection, *Franklinia altamaha*.

Another idea: support the gardening program at the Channel 3 Kids Camp in Andover, where many of the campers are children from urban locations who may lack the chance to learn about and work in a garden. The seventh annual Garden of Hope Auction, a fundraiser for the camp, will be held June 18 in Cromwell and feature personality Scot Haney as

auctioneer. Organizers welcome donations of horticulture-related products or services (such as weeding or landscape design), as well as garden-instructor volunteers at the summer camp. Visit www.channel3kidscamp.org or contact **Kim Dion** at kim.dion@expresswireless.net or 860-729-6310.

Bone up on how to make a difference. Many books offer ideas about how individuals can make a difference to the environment. Two examples: Doug Tallamy's "Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants" (see page 3) and Sue Reed's "Energy-Wise Landscape Design," (New Society Publishers, 2010), which presents practical guidelines, tips and techniques for energy conservation in landscapes. Reed, a landscape architect in Shelburne, Mass., who wrote the lead article in the March CHS Newsletter, says her book will engage people who would like to shrink their energy footprint while enhancing their property and adding value to their home. Visit www.energywiselandscape.com. Both books can be found in bookstores and online. ■

—Colleen Fitzpatrick Michelson

Magical Mystery Tour, from page 1

don't want to grow it. I do enjoy seeing grass and smelling its fresh-cut fragrance at someone else's place. But mosses are my sustainable lawn.

Back to the killing. Visitors to my garden may have noticed the edges of the Hartford Courant or The New York Times peeping out from covers of pine-bark mulch or pine needles bagged in the fall. Alas, following some grass- and weed-killing recipe, I sometimes used half-an-inch of newspaper when one section would have sufficed. The result of over-papering: After several years, scraps of old newspapers would occasionally blow across the garden, showing snippets of ads with prices that had long ago faded, even if the newsprint hadn't. Don't let anybody tell you that newspapers aren't here to stay.

Similarly, during a walk through the garden, it was not unusual to see a button or zipper on the ground, reminders that

they'd once been part of a shirt or pair of pants cum grass-suppressor.

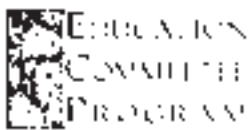
As time went by and the killing materials became part of the earth, little splotches of moss appeared. But not enough and not fast enough. So, I (again) began harvesting from woods. This time, the woods were mine. Bryologists, the botanists who study mosses, say there are as many as 12,000 of these prehistoric plants known botanically as bryophytes. I counted about six varieties I got from myself, including one of my favorites, resembling little pine trees and evocatively named hair cap, known botanically as *Polytrichum commune*. Another I like a lot is *Campylopus*: velvety, bright green and tough, often found growing in sun-baked sidewalk cracks. Then, there's cushion moss, pale, silvery green, resembling . . . a cushion.

I got a lot of help from my friends, too, and from people attending speeches I gave — along with contributions from

strangers who'd heard on the grapevine that some guy *wanted* mosses. More than once, I came home to black plastic bags filled with mosses, deposited next to the garage. Also, there were folks who just wanted to get rid of theirs, in favor of fancy lawn grass. As one neighbor-friend told another, when I'd taken his unused stones for my wall, leaves for composting — and his unwanted moss: "Lee is always looking for stuff people are trying to get rid of."

All-out acid assault

Every year, my mosses were multiplying, but the process felt too slow. So, in 2009, I began acidifying the soil with all deliberate speed, using cottonseed meal, peat, vinegar, iron, aluminum sulfate and sulfur granules in places I had not mulched. This assault did away with the grass in one season (summer), opening the way for mosses to start up and spread without
(continued on page 7)



Learn With CHS

Making topiary (big and small), designing with native plants, propagating deciduous plants—these are among the exciting workshops the Education Committee has planned for spring. Sign up early; space is limited. Find full descriptions of all programs, and directions, at www.cthort.org.

Boxwood Topiary Workshop

Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., plus about 1 hour and 45 minutes in travel time; carpooling available. Black Barn Farm Topiary, 937 Summit Rd., Richmond, Mass., 01254, 413-698-3505, www.blackbarnfarm.com. Have you wanted to create a focal point for your garden or sculpt a boxwood topiary? Make your vision a reality by joining Matt Larkin of Black Barn Farm Topiary in Richmond, Mass., in the Berkshires. Two options are offered: 1) Tour the topiary gardens and attend Matt's demonstration on how to create a topiary OR 2) Take the tour, attend the demo and create your own 24- to 30-inch tall Korean boxwood as a topiary. Cost for each program is \$47 for CHS members, \$52 for nonmembers, upon registration. For participants in option two, the wholesale cost for each boxwood will be \$75-\$100, payable in spring. Bring shears or buy them from Matt (he'll be selling Lee Valley Tools). Limit: 20 participants

Designing with Native Plants: Riverfront Park

Sunday, May 1, 2 p.m., Riverfront Park, Portland. Learn why and how to use native plants in your landscape. Landscape architect Sue Fiedler chose native plants in the design of the new Riverfront Park in Portland, which was carved out of the Brownstone Quarry property. She'll lead a tour, give a brief history of the park and share the research she did before planting. (Sue's work can also be seen along the Merritt Parkway, where she has added to the original plantings.) Cost is \$5 for CHS members, \$10 for nonmembers.

Propagation of Deciduous Plants

Saturday, June 4, repeated Saturday, June 11, 8-10 a.m., Farmington Valley Nursery, 138 Waterville Rd., Avon. Nurseryman Kevin Wilcox shows how to take softwood cuttings from woody plants. You go home with a mini-greenhouse containing cuttings for care and planting. Cost: \$5 CHS members; \$10 nonmembers. Limit: 10 participants

Herbal Topiary Creation

Saturday, June 18, 10-11 a.m., Salem Herb Farm, 320 Hartford Rd., Salem. Make your own herbal topiary. Cost, including plant and pot: \$15 CHS members; \$20 nonmembers. Limit: 20

To register, send a note indicating desired program(s), attendee names and contact information, member status and a check payable to CHS to CHS, 2433 Main St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

Magical Mystery Tour, from page 6

competition from grass. New ones grew from spores traveling from here and there, producing a mosaic that only nature could make look so good, so fast.

Ironically, I have always had one small space that has grown moss from the beginning of my time on this land. It's hidden away, behind the garage, undisturbed, safe. I had piled poor soil up, making a knoll and hoping for a moss garden. Winter came, and by spring, mosses had begun there, spreading so fast that, in a year or so, I couldn't tell where I had put the few clumps I tossed onto the pile. This spot has remained constantly mossed on its own, richly

colored in greens and grays with no watering except rain.

This little space reinforces what a friend told me when he watched me put so much effort into attracting mosses to all the other spaces. Do nothing, he urged. "They show up when they want to, when it's time."

Maybe. I do believe in the practice of doing nothing in some situations. And mosses might have appeared as quickly if I'd done nothing. But it would have seemed longer. Einsteinian, you know. So, I did it the hard way.

To be sure, the war on grass is not over; I still have a lot more ground to

Boxwood Topiary Workshop

Saturday, April 16, 2011
Richmond, Mass.

Please select one:

Option 1 (Tour, demo):

Fee: _____ x \$47 per CHS member
 _____ x \$52 per guest

Option 2 (Tour, demo, take-home topiary):

Fee: _____ x \$47 per CHS member
 _____ x \$52 per guest

(Plus an additional cost of \$75-\$100 per participant to be paid at a later date)

Total TODAY \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____
 ()

E-mail address _____

Return your registration form and check payable to CHS to:
 Connecticut Horticultural Society
 2433 Main Street • Rocky Hill, CT 06067

moss. For now, however, I can say I fought the grass, and the moss won.

As did I, getting a priceless view from the windows: mosses, long- and short-haired, dark- and light-green. Grayish. One glows reddish when the sun hits it just right. Another's mustard color. All are a feast for the eyes. And the soul.

Lee May gardens in East Haddam and is the author of "Gardening Life" a collection of essays from his work as a garden columnist for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and "In My Father's Garden," a memoir. He writes for Country Gardens magazine and has started a blog, www.leemaysgardeninglife.com, where this essay first appeared.



Businesses Offering 10 Percent Discount To CHS Members

The following nurseries and garden centers offer a 10 percent discount to CHS members. Please assume your discount applies to non-sale items, and please show your membership card *before* transactions begin.

Bidwell's Yard, Garden & Pet

133 Hopmeadow St. (Rte. 10)
Simsbury 06070, (860) 651-8555

Botticello Farms, 209 Hillstown Rd.,
Manchester 06040, (860) 649-2462

Broken Arrow Nursery

13 Broken Arrow Rd., Hamden 06518
(203) 288-1026

Butler's Florist & Garden Center

416 Park Rd., West Hartford 06110
(860) 561-2148, discount on non-sale plant
material only

Craddock's Heirloom Gardens

59 Main St., Newtown 06470
(203) 241-0301, www.hgllc.us

Cricket Hill Garden

670 Walnut Hill Rd., Thomaston 06787
(860) 283-1042, www.treepeony.com,
discount on non-sale plant material only

Cropley's Garden Center &

Landscaping, 1262 Boston Turnpike,
Bolton 06043, (860) 649-6364

Draghi & Sons Farm Stand, 86 Main
Street, So. Glastonbury 06473, (860) 633-
2197, (discount on plants only)

Edmondson's Farm Gift Shop & Florist

Route 44, Coventry 06238
(860) 742-6124, (discount does not apply to
sale items and mums)

Gazebo Gardens, 54 Hennequin Rd.,
Columbia 06237, (860) 228-0244

Gotta's Farm, 661 Glastonbury Turnpike
Portland 06480, (860) 342-1844

Harken's Garden Center

287 Rte. 5, East Windsor 06088
(860) 528-6806; discount on plants only

Larson's Garden Center

175 Albany Turnpike (Route 44)
Canton 06019; 860-693-8316
www.larsonsgardencenter.com

Maple Meadows Greenhouse

145 Scott Road, Terryville 06786
(860) 582-7778

Moscarillo's

2600 Albany Ave., West Hartford 06117
(860) 236-5487, discount on all products

Natureworks, 518 Forest Rd., Northford
06472, (203) 484-2748

O'Brien Nurserymen, 40 Wells Rd.,
Granby 06035, (860) 653-0163

Paula's Perennials, 219 N. Quaker
Lane, West Hartford, CT 06119
(860) 461-1187

Riverside Nursery & Garden Center
56 River Rd./Route 179 (P.O. Box 435)
Collinsville 06022, (860) 693-2285, www.
riversidenursery-ct.com; discount applies to
plant material only

Salem Country Gardens

380 New London Rd., Salem 06420
(860) 859-2508, discount on all products

Scott's Orchard & Nursery

1838 New London Tpke., Glastonbury
06033, (860) 633-8681

Stone Post Gardens, 1185 Randolph
Rd., Middletown 06457 (860) 343-0360

Twombly Nursery, 163 Barn Hill Rd.,
Monroe 06468, (203) 261-2133

The Variegated Foliage Nursery

245 Westford Rd., Eastford 06242
(860) 974-3951

Warner Nursery & Garden Center

76 Riverside Rd., Simsbury 06070, (860)
651-0204; discount on plant material

Whitham Nursery

Route 6, Bolton 06043, (860) 643-7802

Woodland Gardens, 168 Woodland St.,

Manchester 06040, (860) 643-8474
www.woodlandgardensct.com

Woodland Trails Wildflower Nursery

32 Ashford Rd., Ashford 06278,
(860) 974-2300

Broken Arrow Nursery, LLC



Growers of Rare and Unusual Plants

Events for 2011

Spring Planting Techniques – April 16
Terrarium Workshop with Tovah Martin – May 22
Celebrate Mountain Laurel – June 4
Cutting Propagation – June 28
Hydrangeas – July 27
A Modern Twist to an English Garden – Aug. 14
Ornamental Grasses – Sept. 21
Fall Planting Techniques – Oct. 2
Berried Treasure – Oct. 16

View our catalog and event details at:

www.brokenarrownursery.com

203-288-1026

13 Broken Arrow Rd., Hamden, CT 06518

NATUREWORKS *Revolutionary*
TOP

Come visit us and see why we were named as one of Today's Garden Center's Revolutionary 100!

plants, organic gardening products, design, installation & maintenance

518 Forest Road (Rte. 22), Northford, CT 06472 Tel: 203-484-2748
nature@conn.net www.naturework.com Like Us on Facebook

Pondering Creations LLC
Turning your yard into a work of art...

Kevin Rescilo
Ornamental Horticulturalist
860-302-6741
P.O. Box 221
Terryville CT 06786
email: info@ponderingcreations.com
website: www.ponderingcreations.com

Ballek's Garden Center



Anita M. Ballek
Nancy Ballek Mackinnon
George F. Ballek
Richard A. Ballek
Daniel Ballek

90 MAPLE AVENUE
E. HADDAM, CT 06423
Tel. (860) 873-8878
www.balleksgardencenters.com

ORCHIDS • BEGONIAS • GESNERIADS

Lauray of Salisbury
Judy Becker
4421 Undermountain, Rt. 41
Salisbury, CT 06068 1102
Open by appointment or by phone
(860) 435-2263 www.lauray.com

CACTI • SUCCULENTS

O'BRIEN 
NURSERYMEN, LLC

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN & INSTALLATION • EXPERT PRUNING
GROWER OF CHOICE HOSTAS, DWARF CONIFERS & JAPANESE MAPLES

Open Garden Days
April 9 & 10; 22, 23 & 24
April 29, 30 & May 1
May 13-15

40 Wells Road, Granby, CT 06035
(860) 653-0163 www.obrienhosta.com

AQUA SCAPES of CT, LLC

Sales & Service re quality
Ponds, Streams & Waterfalls
Master Professional Designers

**PERFECT PARADISE
IN YOUR BACKYARD**

Rob Townsend
Owner/Sales
48601 342-7731
505 Wilbur Street
Portland CT 06480
www.aquascapes.com

Garden Sales LLC

We specialize in hostas, hard to find perennials, both evergreen and flowering shrubs, daylilies, roses, peonies, ornamental grasses, dwarf conifers and ornamental trees.

Tel: (860) 649-9406 Fax: (860) 645-8873
308 Oakland St, Manchester, CT 06042
www.GardenSalesLLC.com

State's Best Selection of Perennials



Area's Largest Selection of
Annuals - Perennials - Shrubs
Herbs - Veggies - Mums - Pumpkins
Poinsettias - Christmas Trees
Organic Soils & Pest Control






Open daily mid-March thru Dec 24th

Rt. 147 Middlefield
860-349-3690
www.countryflowerfarms.com





Tenth Annual Nursery Crawl

Great Barrington, Mass.

Windy Hill Farm * Ward's Nursery and Garden Center

Friday, May 20, 2011

The planting season is here—and so is our 10th annual nursery crawl!

First we visit Windy Hill Farm, whose wide variety of plants includes unique annuals and perennials and ornamental grasses. And the garden shop is well stocked. We'll lunch at Chef Michael Ballon's Castle Street Café in Great Barrington. Then it's

off to Ward's Nursery and Garden Center, which has won accolades for its exceptional stock. Statuary, pottery, furniture and hanging baskets are also for sale.

The nurseries will give special discounts for CHS. **Important:** Bring Popsicle sticks with your name on them or some other means of marking your plant purchases.

The nursery crawl is a great way to acquire new and fun ideas, as well as plants. This trip fills quickly, so don't delay in registering if you'd like to go.

Departs: 7:30 a.m., Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford; 7:45 a.m. Sheraton, East Hartford. **Returns:** 6:30 p.m. East Hartford (depending on traffic). **Cost:** \$72 per member, \$75 per nonmember, based on 40-52 travelers.



The World Flower Show 2011

* Held at Boston Seaport World Trade Center

Friday, June 17, 2011

Hurry! Only a few spaces remain for visiting the World Flower Show. Delegates from 30 countries of the World Association of Flower Arrangers will gather at the Boston Seaport World Trade Centre, as competitors display 600 flower arrange-

ments. This is the first time an American city has hosted the show.

Our summer outing also includes an afternoon narrated cruise on the Charles River aboard the Charles River Boat, with sights of Boston and Cambridge, including the Back Bay, MIT, Harvard and

countless sailboats and rowers. **Departs:** 7:15 a.m., Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford; 7:30 a.m. Sheraton, East Hartford.

Returns: 6:30 p.m., East Hartford. **Cost:** \$76 per member, \$79 per nonmember, based on 40-52 travelers.



Boothbay Harbor, Maine Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

Boothbay Harbor Inn * Portland Museum of Art

Harbor Cruise * Lobster Dinner * Plainview Farm & Nursery

Monday, June 20-Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Place your name on the short waiting list to join our wonderful early-summer trip to coastal Maine.

Day 1: Our motorcoach whisks us northward, where our first highlight in Portland is a docent-led tour of the Portland Art Museum. The collection includes Winslow Homer masterpieces and works by John Singer Sargent, Andrew Wyeth and major European artists. Portland juts into gorgeous, island-studded Casco Bay. We enjoy lunch aboard Dimillo's Floating Restaurant, followed by time to wander among the galleries and boutiques that line Portland's waterfront.

Continuing along the coast, we spend two nights at the Boothbay Harbor Inn

and enjoy the around-town trolley, full breakfast and welcome dinner in the waterfront restaurant.

Day 2: We visit the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens where Bill Cullina, director of horticulture, welcomes us. We enjoy guided tours and time to explore the gardens and the gift shop. We freshen up at the hotel before embarking on a narrated cruise of Boothbay Harbor, whose sights include lighthouses, sea life, the rocky shoreline, boats and working shipyards. A lobster dinner awaits us at McSeagull's on the water.

Day 3: After breakfast overlooking the harbor, we head south to visit to Plainview Farm and Nursery in North Yarmouth. This outstanding nursery

features over 25 gardens (the nursery grows more than 95 percent of the plants it sells), and discounts will be offered to CHS shoppers. Lunch is at the Weather-vane Restaurant in Kittery and then it's homeward bound.

Cost: \$489 per twin member based on 30-45 passengers; \$589 per single member; plus \$40 per nonmember. **Includes:** deluxe motorcoach, two nights hotel; two full breakfasts, one lunch, welcome dinner and Maine lobster dinner; sightseeing; driver gratuity; \$35 per person donation to CHS. Escorted by Lois Isaacson. **Deposit:** \$100 per person with reservation. Final payment by May 5, 2011.

Horticultural Happenings & Announcements

Note: Happenings are listed on a space-available basis. Please remember when submitting material to include relevant information, a contact person's name and phone number. Please send e-mails to kalmia.editorial@gmail.com. Deadline for the May issue is April 11.

Steve Silk at Elizabeth Park

The snow date for CHS President **Steve Silk's** talk on a gardening style that celebrates experimentation, "The Crazy Mixed-up Border: An Eclectic Approach to Using Trees, Shrubs, Annuals, Tropicals, Edibles and Perennials," is Wednesday, April 6, at Pond House Hall, Elizabeth Park, Hartford. The talk, rescheduled from January, is part of the Friends of Elizabeth Park's winter garden lecture series. It begins at 7 p.m.; cost is \$10. Visit www.elizabethpark.org, e-mail elizabeth_park@sbcglobal.net, call 860-231-9443.

African Violets: The Spice of Life

The Windsor African Violet Society's annual judged show and sale will be Saturday, April 9, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Theme: "African Violets: The Spice of Our Lives." Design sections in the judged show include cut-flower arrangements, underwater arrangements, terrariums and dish gardens using African violets. Various other gesneriads will be on display. Location: St. Gabriel's Church, 379 Broad St., Windsor. Free admission. Visit <http://instafax.com/ways> or call 860-242-0162.

Cactus & Succulent Show

The Connecticut Cactus & Succulent Society hosts its 28th annual cactus and succulent show and sale Saturday, April 9, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, April 10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Naugatuck Valley Community College. The judged show opens at noon Saturday. Events also include lectures and plant auctions. Free admission. Contact David Schultz, dmschultzcactus@yahoo.com or 860-489-8356; visit www.ctcactusclub.com.

Gladiolus Corm Auction

The Connecticut Gladiolus Society hosts its free annual corm auction and sale Saturday, April 9, at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Valley Laboratory, 153 Cook Hill Rd., Windsor. The corm sale begins at 10 a.m., as

does the lecture by Todd Mervosh on identifying and controlling weeds in the garden. The corm auction starts at 1 p.m. Contact: 860-930-9022 or cgsociety@sbcglobal.net.

Wake up the Sunken Garden

Help the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington prepare its historic Sunken Garden for the growing season, then enjoy a free light lunch. To volunteer Friday, April 15, and/or Saturday, April 16, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., contact Becky Trutter, 860-677-4787, ext. 132, or trutterb@hillstead.org.

Decorating the Garden

Bleu Willow owner Laura Smigel shares with the Simsbury Garden Club how to reuse materials to create unusual garden decorations Monday, April 25, 7 p.m. Location: Apple Barn, 60 Old Farms Rd., West Simsbury. Free. Contact Diana Hughes, 860-242-5703, dphughes@comcast.net.

Tick Management

Kirby Stafford, vice director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and an expert on the ecology and control

of the blacklegged tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, talks to the Hardy Plant Society Wednesday, April 27, 7:30 p.m., about ways to manage ticks that are least toxic to the environment. Location: Solomon Welles House, 220 Hartford Ave., Wethersfield. Suggested \$5 donation for nonmembers. Socializing begins at 7 p.m. Contact Leslie Shields, selchie1@comcast.net, or visit www.cthardyplantsociety.org.

Plant Sale in Hamden

The Southwest Conservation District will hold its annual shrub and perennial plant sale Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30, at Lockwood Farm in Hamden. Available are evergreen bare root seedlings, native and ornamental shrubs, perennials. Volunteer UConn Master Gardeners and members of the North Haven, Daytime Gardeners and Wallingford garden clubs will be on hand to help. Request order forms from SWCD office, 51 Mill Pond Rd., Hamden, CT 06514, or call 203-287-8179 or e-mail swcd43@sbcglobal.net. Visit www.conservect.org.




Pennsylvania Dutch Country

Tuesday, Aug. 2-Friday, Aug. 5, 2011

Join us for a scenic summertime journey through bucolic Pennsylvania Dutch Country. Details are being finalized, but the tour will include taking in a performance of "Joseph" at the Sight & Sound Theater, and visits to President James Buchanan's mansion, a quilt museum and private gardens. Mark your calendars. Details will be posted at www.cthorticulture.blogspot.com, or call Friendship Tours in Bloomfield at 860-243-1630.

For complete information on any CHS trip, including meal choice, contact CHS Travel Chairman Lois Isaacson at Friendship Tours, (860) 243-1630 or (860) 236-1143. There are no refunds on the day trips, so please provide a substitute. Make checks payable to CHS, but mail them to: Friendship Tours, 533 Cottage Grove Road, Bloomfield, CT 06002. Friendship Tours arranges the components of the tours and does not own or operate the independent suppliers of services including motorcoaches. Trips cancelled because of weather conditions are handled on a per-trip basis. Friendship Tours will negotiate with all suppliers of the trip components to secure the best refund. However, it is possible that there would be no refund depending on timing of the cancellation and nature of the components. Friendship Tours reserves the right to adjust cost based on fuel surcharges. Tickets to theaters/events are nonrefundable. Trip Protection Insurance through the National Tour Association Protection Plan is strongly recommended for overnight trips and is handled by the individual passenger. As per the application, preexisting conditions and default are covered only if the application is received by the NTA Protection Plan, postmarked within 14 days of initial deposit. Please review the NTA Protection Plan brochure carefully for details of coverage and call them at (800) 388-1470 if you have any questions.

Dated Material  *Please Rush*

CHS Calendar at a Glance

April 7 – Board meeting

April 11 – April CHS Newsletter
deadline

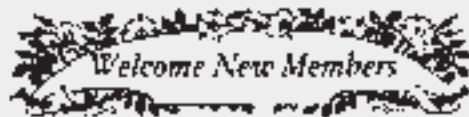
April 21 – Program meeting, Douglas
Tallamy, *How Native Plants Sustain
Wildlife in Our Gardens* (page 3)

April 16 – Education program:
boxwood topiary workshop,
Richmond, Mass. (page 7)

April 29 – Spring plant auction, 7 p.m.,
West Hartford (page 5)

May 1 – Education program:
Riverfront Park walk, 2 p.m.,
Portland (page 7)

The CHS Newsletter is printed
on recycled paper with soya ink.



Sandra Baclaski, Kensington
Karen and Michael Barletta, Cheshire
Tad Bartles and Sherry VanLiere, Farmington
Gail and Ken Beare, Vernon
Vinka Berg, Cheshire
Michael Boyle, Inessa Gelena and Alla Tsipenyuk,
Woodbridge
Marana L. Brooks, Litchfield
Gail Bruhn, Storrs
Bruce and Sue Burchsted, Meriden
Tracy Burrell, Groton
Karen Bussolini, South Kent
Richard and Betty Carlson, Bloomfield
Janet M. Cavanagh, Stafford Springs
Harry and Debi Childs, North Franklin
Nancy P. Clark, Glastonbury
Acer Colt, West Hartford
Country Flower Farms, Middlefield
Sandra Daigle, Colchester
Susan Daury and Ed Hatch, Granby
Nancy Day Sinsteden, Hartford

Kim Dion, Stafford Springs
Sheila Dunn, Vernon
Kathie Green, Middlefield
Cynthia Greenblatt, Wethersfield
Carol and Roger Gregoire, Hebron
Jane Harris, Middletown
Mary Honyak, Plainville
Carol Huber, New Britain
Lavinia Hudak, Wethersfield
Joanne Huelsman, Marlborough
Carolyn and Jeff Jamroge, Ridgefield
Virge Kask, Vernon
Frances M. Keenan, Broad Brook
Kimberly A. Korfel, Kensington
Katherine Kosiba, Colchester
Marcelle Lavoie and Thomas Kaminski, Manchester
Elaine Wascko Lietz, East Windsor
Sheila Maietta, Meriden
Karen Marchetti, Cromwell
Dorcas McHugh, Wethersfield
Rondi Niles, Middletown

Kathy Niver, Hebron
Mary-Ellen O'Brien, Middletown
Debra and Dominick Pasquale, Bloomfield
Christine J. Paul, Newington
Susan Pelton, Enfield
Karen M. Pierson, West Hartford
Lewis Robinson, Hartford
Shannon Schnuerer, Brookfield
Karen Segal, Norwich
Carol Seppa, Watertown
Beverly Sleeper, Glastonbury
John L. Stawicki, Colchester
Lyn Stuart, East Hampton
Stephanie Turner, Pawcatuck
Diana Varese, Cromwell
Kathleen Wallace, Simsbury
Steven Wallach, Middletown
Patricia Wangen, Bristol
Florence Wolff Nicholas, Hartford
Linda Yurasevecz, Granby

Memberships: 855